

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 88,800 With 268 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Chief of Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Revealed the Arrival Of the 9th Shipment of Coronavirus Vaccine Into the Country adding That It was Delivered to the Ministry Of Health and Medical Education

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Iran Self-Sufficient in Manufacturing Drones

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's deputy defense minister says the country has reached self-sufficiency in the production of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as he hails military ties with Russia as a strategic partner.

Afshin Khajeh-Fard, who also heads Iran Aviation Industries Organization, made the remarks on Thursday while talking to IRNA at Iran's pavilion in Russia's international aerospace exhibition, officially known as the International Aviation and Space Salon or MAKS 2021.

"We have made great progress in the area of [manufacturing] drones and we owe these advances to more than four decades of incessant work and indefatigable efforts by our youths," he said.

"Today, we are self-sufficient in building drones from their fuselage to various subsystems and engines," the Iranian official added. Khajeh-Fard said, "We have broken considerable grounds with regard to UAV flight ceiling, their precision, automatic takeoff and landing, as well as nocturnal missions."

The Iranian deputy defense minister said the country has displayed only two of its UAV models at this year's MAKs exhibition, but noted that "our UAV inventory is full with all versions and we have competitive products."

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Iran Posts 44.2% Inflation For Month to Late June

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has published its monthly data on consumer prices showing that inflation in the country reached 44.2% in the fourth calendar month this year.

SCI figures published on Saturday showed that consumer price index (CPI) had increased by 1.2% in the month to June 22 against the previous month.

CPI surged by 43.7% for urban households and by 47.3% for families living in the countryside, showed the figures, adding that consumer goods groups of "food, beverage and smoke" and "non-food and services" had accounted for the largest share of the jump in CPI over the studied period.

On annual point-to-point inflation, the SCI analysis showed that consumer prices had soared 63.6% against May-June 2020. That means consumers in Iran had spent 43.6% more on average to buy goods and services in the month to June 22 compared to similar period last year.

The figures on point-to-point inflation showed that the measure had dropped 4% against the month to late May.

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Iran Officially Opens Oil Terminal Outside Strait of Hormuz



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has formally inaugurated its new crude oil export terminal on the Sea of Oman, a project hailed by President Hassan Rouhani as a historic achievement which could prove vital in the country's energy future.

The Goreh-Jask Crude Oil Transfer Project was inaugurated on Thursday during a video conference session attended by Rouhani and senior Oil Ministry officials in Tehran.

The project allows Iran for a first time in more than 110 years of its oil industry history to export crude from a terminal outside the Persian Gulf.

The terminal is also a first in a region where global oil producers are forced to dispatch crude tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf where ships have been subject to attacks and sabotage in the past.

Oil reaches Jask through a 1,000-kilometer pipeline that starts from old pumping station in Goreh in southwest Iran and stretches around the Persian Gulf while travelling through three southern provinces "Today is a historic and big day for the Iranian nation and as time passes by the significance of this project will become clearer for the people," said Rouhani as he described the launch as a sign of utter failure for U.S.

He said the completion of the project by Iranian engineers using domestic potentials in such a short time of 2 years and a few month is a strong and firm response to all conspirators, especially the United States because oil was one of the most important elements in the list of American sanctions.

President Rouhani further noted the U.S. sanctions targeted two important areas of oil exports and supply of basic goods because they knew if Iran faced a reduction in oil exports, it would it would no longer have any foreign exchange to meet its needs especially at a time it has to provide \$ 6 million in medicine.

The report said some 250 Iranian companies had contributed to the construction and engineering work in a project that took more than two years to complete.

Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the new terminal in Jask kicks off with 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude exports as he insisted that a target of 1 million bpd will be within reach by March when a third and final phase of the project is finished.

A total of 53,000 billion tomans has been invested in the construction of this pipeline, and with its official operation, sustainable employment will be created for 10,000 people.

Explaining the plan and the process of its implementation and operation, Zanganeh described the day as a historical occasion for the Iranian oil industry as the export of the Iranian crude oil from the Makran region begins.

According to the Minister, more than 250 companies have been involved in the project which he described as "huge national project, which was implemented and operated under the harsh sanctions and economic war."

He said the project will pave the way for economic development in the Makran region.

Earlier, the chief of the National Iranian Oil Company announced that pumping oil into strategic Goreh-Jask pipeline will start upon its completion by the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in near future.

Masoud Karbasian said that the pipeline will bring oil from Goreh in Bushehr to Jask, making it strategically important as the country's second-largest crude oil export terminal.

The pipeline is laid from Goreh oil terminal in the southwestern Bushehr Province to Jask oil terminal along the Gulf of Oman.

He added that other operating units in Goreh-Jask pipeline project are in a steady situation to transfer oil to Jask terminal, and pumping oil into strategic Goreh-Jask pipeline is being done in a steady situation.

Referring to the importance of the project, Karbasian added that operations have begun to start injecting oil into the 1,000km Goreh-Jask pipeline.

Iran Slashes Gas Supplies to Iraq's Electric Power Stations

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - The gas supply from Iran to neighboring Iraq's electric power stations feeding the country's southern and central parts was slashed by 19 million cubic meters per day, according to the local government.

"The rates of Iranian gas being supplied to the production stations in the central regions and Baghdad have been reduced from 34 million cubic meters to 20 million cubic meters per day," Iraq's Ministry of Electricity said in a statement. Gas supplied to the southern regions has also declined "from 17 million cubic meters to 12 million cubic meters per day," the statement said, adding that the country lost about 1,000 megawatts of electricity in total.

The statement did not explain the reasons behind the Iranian decision.

It noted that "great and high coordination" has taken place between the country's duo ministries of electricity and oil to compensate for the gas lost following the Iranian move.

There was no comment from Iran on the Iraqi statement.

However, in December last year, Iran's state gas company announced that it had slashed gas supplies to Iraq over non-payment of dues, placing Baghdad at the risk of serious power shortages. The decision was reversed days later after the two countries reached an agreement over the disbursement of outstanding debt.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



The Same Old Nonsense

Since the first day of the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, the international bodies and world powers have just focused on any move in Iran and after any simple incident in the country, they have tried to accuse Iran or blame the country of misbehavior or violation of the human rights while they have obviously closed their eyes on any crime and violation of human rights in other states like Israel and even the U.S. and European states.

And now after some protests in Khuzestan Province over the shortage of water, these bodies have started crying foul against Iran by accusing the Islamic Revolution of Iran of violence and violation of human rights.

Reacting to one of these "nonsenses", the foreign ministry spokesman of Iran dismissed the meddlesome and politically-motivated remarks by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on the recent incidents in the country's Khuzestan Province, saying her words are more like a "political statement with hostile literature" than the remarks of an international human rights official.

Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday that the UN rights chief's statement was "regrettable" in terms of the extent of its invalidity which has been intermingled with false accusations and incorrect information.

"The leveled allegations, regardless of extensive efforts by [the Iranian] administration, judicial, security and media officials to alleviate the sufferings of the people of this province and resolve the existing problems, are the most important evidence of the politicization and invalidity of the statement," Khatibzadeh added.

He emphasized that Bachelet's statement was much like a political declaration with hostile literature rather than remarks made by an international human rights official.

In an interventionist statement, the UN high commissioner for human rights on Friday called on the Iranian authorities to concentrate on taking urgent action to address the chronic water shortage in the province of Khuzestan, rather than using excessive force and widespread arrests to crush the protests about the situation.

"The impact of the devastating water crisis on life, health and prosperity of the people of Khuzestan should be the focus of the Government's attention, not the protests carried out by people driven to desperation by years of neglect," said Bachelet.

Khatibzadeh rejected the UN rights chief's "unprofessional and spiteful" remarks about management of the country's water resources which he said were neither within the purview of the official, nor the body under her responsibility to make any comment on the issue.

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Tehran Voices Decisive Support for Havana in Face of U.S. Pressure

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's UN envoy expresses the Islamic Republic's "decisive support" for Cuba in the face of pressure by the United States, which is increasing its interventionist actions targeting the Latin American nation.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations, made the remarks, addressing an extraordinary meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

"The Islamic Republic announces its solidarity with the Cuban people and government in the fight against the U.S.'s actions," he said. Cuba has been suffering for endless decades under American economic sanctions and political pressure that have been seeking to punish the country for its refusal to submit to the U.S.'s meddlesome and overbearing policies.

Currently, the country is going through unrest apparently triggered by the dire economic conditions that have been brought about by the coercive measures. Amid the situation, Washington has announced a plan to increase the number of the diplomatic staff at its embassy in Havana in, what observers say, seeks nothing but to reinforce America's interventionist approach towards Cuba.

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Global Registration of Iranian-Developed COVID-19 Vaccine Underway

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Registration of an Iran-made COVID-19 vaccine – CovIran Barekat – in the World Health Organization (WHO) is underway, according to an official with the knowledge of the project.

Asghar Abdoli, a board member of Iran's Pasteur Institute, said that Iran is providing the necessary documents to be presented to WHO.

Apart from presenting the documents, experts from Iran have to defend the documents in person, he said. The official added that some 2 million doses of the vaccine will be available next week.

Iran, Vatican Urged to Support Oppressed People

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President-elect Ebrahim Raisi says Iran and the Vatican, as representatives of Islam and Christianity, should base their cooperation on defending the world's oppressed people and confronting oppressive powers.

In a phone call with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, on Eid al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice), Raisi said the Muslim occasion could be considered a "day of interactions among Abrahamic religions" and serve as a basis for inter-religion dialog.

He added that Iran's domestic and foreign policies are based on protecting human rights, and that the country, "which has religious democracy, welcomes any interaction and dialog among [followers of] Abrahamic religions, especially Christianity."

The president-elect said Iran's concern for human rights lies at the root of its regional policies, including supporting the Palestinian cause against Israeli occupation, backing the Yemeni nation in the face of a brutal Saudi-led war, as well as helping Iraq and Syria fight terror.

Raisi pointed to the heroic counter-terror struggles of senior Iranian commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani — who was assassinated by the US in Iraq in January 2020 — and said his great efforts to fight terrorism and save the lives of Muslims and Christians from the clutches of criminal terrorists would never be erased from history.

"I believe that Iran and Vatican should, based on the teachings of Abrahamic religions, stand by the world's oppressed people and against cruel powers," Raisi said. "Today, defending the rights of human beings should serve as the main basis for cooperation and interactions among Abrahamic religions, including Islam and Christianity."



He added that arrogant powers use terrorism and sanctions to impose their oppressive policies on others, saying all followers of Abrahamic religions are duty-bound to bolster cooperation to counter them.

"Terrorism and sanctions act like the blades of scissors in violating human rights and eliminating human beings. Today, we, as followers of Abrahamic religions, share a duty to confront them," Raisi said.

The Vatican can play a leading role in defeating the oppressive powers to help establish peace across the world, Raisi said.

Parolin, for his part, said followers of Abrahamic religions should boost interactions to promote peace and stability in the world. He expressed hope that Tehran and the Vatican would promote friendly and constructive cooperation.

Dialogue With Neighbors, At Top of Agenda for New Gov't

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President-elect Ebrahim Raisi termed expansion of Iran-Oman relations as an achievable goal thanks to the mutual political trust exists between the two countries and stressed that dialogue with neighbors will be a priority for his government.

In a telephone conversation with Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said on Saturday, he said no regional and international developments could ever undermine friendly relations between the two nations.

Describing Tehran-Muscat ties as ever expanding, he further believed the present state of interactions between the two countries are far from the expected level.

Raisi described Iran as a reliable neighbor and valuable partner for Oman and said interaction, dialogue, consultation and sympathy with neighbors are important issues in the region will also be the priority for his country.

Haitham bin Tariq wished success for Ayatollah Raisi as Iran's next President and said mutual political trust is one of the most important factors in the proximity of Tehran and Muscat and closer relations between the two countries.

Tehran, New Delhi Moving To Finalize Trade Agreement

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian trade official says Iran and India have finalized a draft agreement on preferential trade after five rounds of high-level talks.

Reza Seyyed Aghazadeh, from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), said on Saturday that Iran was waiting for India's approval on a list of goods that would give Iranian exporters some \$1.5 billion worth of tariff cuts a year.

"We think this agreement would have a considerable influence on disciplined and well-organized trade between the two sides and would open up new doors to (exports of) Iranian goods," said the official who heads TPO's Asia and Oceania Office.

Aghazadeh said exports to India had soared by 240% in value terms in the quarter to late June against similar period last year.

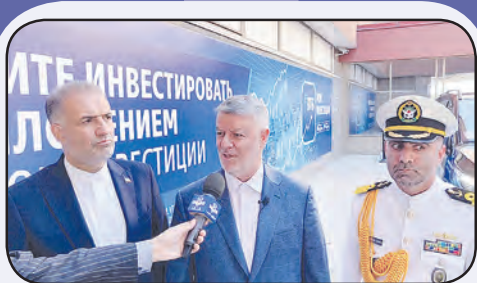
The official did not elaborate on exact figures although he mentioned pandemic-related border closures imposed over June quarter 2020 that had seriously affected trade between Iran and India.

Figures by the Iranian government shows India was the fifth largest purchaser of Iranian goods in the first quarter of the current calendar year although exports to the country had amounted to only 3.2% of Iran's total exports over the period.

India was sixth largest supplier of goods to Iran over the same quarter as it was responsible for just 2.5% of goods imported into Iran. Aghazadeh insisted that India would definitely seek to expand its trade and economic relations with Iran once the country is relieved of U.S. sanctions.

He said the value of trade between Iran and India have never dropped below \$4 billion even at times when U.S. economic pressure on Iran has been at its highest in recent years.

Navy Chief Hails Historic Presence of Iranian Ships In Finland Gulf



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Navy chief Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi has described the sailing of Iranian ships to the Gulf of Finland, the easternmost arm of the Baltic Sea, as "a historic event."

He made the remark on Saturday upon arrival in St. Petersburg, where he is expected to attend the annual parade celebrating the Day of the Russian Navy.

Iranian Navy destroyer Sahand and accompanying support vessel Makran have already arrived in the Russian port city to join the parade.

Khanzadi said that the two Iranian ships, which began their voyage a few months ago, have now reached the Gulf of Finland and St. Petersburg waters.

"In this long voyage, these ships entered the world's strategic areas, something that is unprecedented," he added.

The Gulf of Finland extends between Finland to the north and Estonia to the south, to Saint Petersburg in Russia to the east, where the Neva River drains into it.

The presence of Sahand and Makran in the Gulf of Finland is "a historic event," Khanzadi said. "This success means the opening of the gates of the North Sea and Finland to the fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army."

The Iranian Navy chief also said that during his trip, he would meet with high-ranking Russian military and defense officials as well as his counterparts from the countries participating in the Russian naval parade.

Khanzadi has traveled to Russia at the invitation of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

On Sunday, the Russian Navy celebrated its 325th anniversary with the parade of "54 ships, including frigates from India, Iran and Pakistan, and more than 4,000 military personnel," according to Shoigu.

U.S. Sanctions Caused Problems for Tehran-Seoul Relations

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Hassan Rouhani said that the U.S. cruel sanctions have caused problems for the relations of Iran and South Korea.

He made the remarks during a meeting in which he received the credential of the newly-appointed ambassador of South Korea to Iran Yun Kang-Hyeon, calling for the resolving the problems of both sides' relations.



He pointed out that Iran has a right to make use of its funds in South Korean banks.

Despite promises made by South Korea, banking and financial problems persist between the two states, Rouhani pointed out.

In the field of purchasing medical equipment and even vaccines, Iran still encounter difficulty using its funds in Seoul's banks, he added.

IRGC to Stay With People of Sacred Khuzestan to Resolve Problems

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, says the force will stay with the people of Khuzestan until problems in the southwestern province are resolved.

Speaking on the sidelines of his visit to Khuzestan, Gen. Salami said the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbia Construction Headquarters has laid hundreds of kilometers of water pipes in different areas and stationed tankers in villages to alleviate the water shortage problem. Regarding the sewage system in the provincial capital of Ahvaz, Khatam al-Anbia Construction Headquarters has signed a contract and provided equipment for the project, he added.

"The important point I want to make is that we are committed and loyal to these people. We will not leave them alone and we will stand with them during hardships, as it was the case in the 2019 flood," Salami asserted.

"We will work with these people until the work is done and we will never leave them alone."

Referring to Khuzestan's resistance during the eight years of war imposed on Iran by Iraq's former dictator Saddam Hussein, the IRGC chief said the province "is not only important but also sacred to us."

Khuzestan has been the scene of protests in recent weeks over water shortage. The demonstrations, however, have been hijacked by enemy forces, resulting in some incidents of violence.

Iran, Pakistan to Exchange High Level Delegations on Anti-Narcotics

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - The visit of Pakistan's Minister for Narcotics Control to Iran and meeting of the Chiefs of Anti-Narcotics Police of Sistan and Baluchestan and Balochistan Province are on the agenda of the two neighboring countries to strengthen joint cooperation.

Pakistani Secretary for Narcotics Control, Akbar Durrani and Drug Liaison Officer of Iran, Col. Sarwari during a meeting in Islamabad discussed the visit, bilateral relations and the situation developing in Afghanistan.

The two sides discussed bilateral relations and strategic approach to curb illicit drug trafficking across Pakistan and Iranian border.

"We need mutual cooperation to completely eradicate the social evil" Akbar Durrani said during the meeting. Iran's Anti-Narcotics Police Liaison Officer appreciated the



efforts of Pakistan to eliminate the menace of drugs from society. He said that Iran was willing to enhance cooperation and extend support in all possible ways to curb drugs from society.

He said keeping in view the current political situation in Afghanistan the unscrupulous elements are likely to take advantage of the situation, specially areas around borders of Pakistan and Iran.

He also described the planned visit of Pakistani Minister of Narcotics Control Ijaz Ahmad Shah to Iran in the coming months, as well as the holding of a joint meeting of our country's Sistan and Baluchestan Anti-Narcotics Police Chiefs and Pakistan's Balochistan province to strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

Considering this possibility, both countries mutually agreed to remain vigilant till the time stability is restored in the neighborhood.

Azerbaijan, Armenia Urged to Exercise Restraint Amid Border Clashes

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has voiced regret over reported casualties as a result of sporadic border clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia, urging the two neighbors to exercise restraint.

In a statement on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh lamented the deaths and injuries on both sides and highlighted the need for Baku and Yerevan to resolve their border disputes peacefully.

Khatibzadeh also stressed the necessity of overcoming tensions and conflicts and achieving lasting peace in the South Caucasus as soon as possible.

He added that the Islamic Republic stands ready to help the two sides reach sustainable peace.

One Azerbaijani soldier was reportedly killed and three Armenian soldiers injured in the latest round of tensions between the two countries, which saw Azerbaijani and Armenian forces exchanging fire for several hours along a section of their border.

In a statement on Friday, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said the incident took place at the part of the border formed by its Kalbajar district, part of territory reclaimed by Azerbaijan last November.

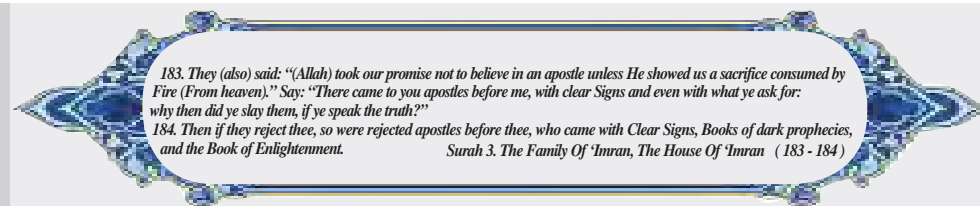
It said Armenia's "regular recent provocations, the attempts to aggravate the situation in the region by shelling the Azerbaijani positions are unacceptable and Armenia is responsible for the development of such a situation."

For its part, Armenia said Azerbaijan tried to fly a drone into the Armenian airspace, drawing a response from the air defense units of the Armenian armed forces.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:33
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:30
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:08



Iran Indirect Exports To Syria Stood at \$660m Last Year

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A businessman says some 8% of Iran's exports to Iraq, estimated at \$660 million, is rerouted to Syria.

A significant part of Iran's exports shipments sent to neighboring Iraq ends up in Syria, says a businessman as he hopes Iran can increase its formal trade ties with Syria now that the Arab country is emerging from almost a decade of terrorism and war.

Keyvan Kashefi, who chairs the Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce, said on Wednesday that some 8 percent of Iran's exports to Iraq is rerouted to Syria mostly via the semi-autonomous Iraqi region of Kurdistan.

"People are very active in this case in the Kurdistan territory as they buy goods from Iran and send them to Syria," said Kashefi.

The businessman estimated that Iran's indirect exports to Syria over the calendar year to late March had reached \$660 million as officially-declared exports from Iran to Iraq stood at \$8 billion over the period.

That comes on top of around \$120 million in direct Iranian exports to Syria in the year to March. Exports soared to nearly \$50 million in the quarter to late June, up 73% against the same period in 2020, according to figures by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran.

Iranian authorities hope exports to Syria could jump to over \$1 billion in 2023 as



the two countries plan to ease tariffs and other restrictions on trade.

Iran was a major supplier of goods and services to Syria before the Arab country slid into a massive war led by terrorist groups in March 2011. Government figures show exports from Iran to Syria had topped \$500 million in the year before that.

Kashefi said Iran can easily rival China and Turkey in the Syrian import market if the government in Tehran removes bans on exports of certain goods.

He said closure of land routes to Syria through Iraq means that Iranian export shipments should travel 25-30 days through a shipping line between Iran's Bandar Abbas and Syria's Latakia to reach customers in the Arab country.

99% Rise in Gas Extraction From South Pars Field



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The gas extraction from the South Pars gas field reached 183 billion cubic meters in the last Iranian year (ended March 20, 2021), showing a 99 percent growth compared to around 92 billion cubic meters in 2013.

The South Pars/North Dome field is the largest gas reservoir in the world, which is located on the borderline of Qatar and Iran. This is one of the main energy sources, holding an estimated 51 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and 7.9 billion cubic meters of natural gas condensates. The gas field engulfs an area of 9,700 square kilometers, of which 3,700 square kilometers is located in Iran's territorial waters.

The Islamic Republic of Iran kicked off development projects of the South Pars gas field nearly 20 years ago. Iranians succeeded in extracting some 12 billion cubic meters of gas in 2002, which was only 10 percent of Iran's gas production in that year. Now, thanks to a 90 billion dollar investment, the South Pars supplies more than 70 percent of Iran's gas requirement.

Iran's daily extraction of natural gas from the field stood at 700 million cubic meters in the last winter; then, the country could provide households, industries, and power plants with a constant stream of gas in the last year.

The Iranian government has started a breathtaking marathon to increase the extraction and production of gas, especially from the field. The completion of disputed phases of the South Pars gas field will increase gas extraction by more than 120 million cubic meters per day.

The increase of natural gas extraction from the South Pars gas field led to a 90 percent growth in Iran's gas export. The official figures show that the country exports about 80 million cubic meters on a daily average.

The natural gas production in the South Pars field has helped the environment because people stopped using firewood for cooking and warming their homes.

New Episode of "Domus Eyes on Iran" Series Released

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The eight episode of the video series "Domus Eyes on Iran", produced by the Italian Embassy in Tehran in cooperation with the Milan-based renowned international magazine Domus, was released last week.

"Pouya Khazaeli Parsa. Persian Modernism and the Social Function of Architecture" is the title of the new episode, screened yesterday at an event hosted by the Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone at his residence in Farmaniyeh, as part of the celebrations of Italian Design Day 2021 in Tehran.

The documentary features Pouya Khazaeli Parsa, the Iranian architect with the highest number of works published by Domus magazine. Among his works that have attracted Domus' attention in recent years are Khazaeli Parsa's residential villas in Mazandaran, on the Caspian Sea, and in Darvishabad.

A key feature of these works is the successful combination of the influence of European rationalist and modernist architecture with architectural elements typical of Persian tradition, such as the use of a central courtyard around which the construction revolves.

Another distinctive element in Mr. Khazaeli Parsa's work, as explains the architect himself, is the social function assigned to architecture in improving the quality of life of ordinary people, especially the most disadvantaged ones.

In the episode screened by the Italian Embassy special attention has been devoted also to two special projects, covered as well by Domus magazine, which visibly



illustrate the social function of architecture as conceived by Khazaeli Parsa.

The first one is a bamboo structure built in the forests of Katalom, in northern Iran. The second one relates to the buildings designed for Afghan refugees in the Kerman region, and to the "Rebuild" project developed for the benefit of Syrian displaced people in Jordan. The latter was made possible thanks to the funding provided by Pilosio, one of the leading Italian companies in the field of construction equipment.

The series "Domus Eyes on Iran" takes inspiration from stories published by Domus magazine about Iran from the 1940s until present, focusing on each work's features and exploring their subsequent evolution, as a showcase of an unhindered history of long-lasting cooperation and exchange between Italy and Iran.

The video-documentary "Pouya Khazaeli Parsa. Persian Modernism and the Social Function of Architecture" and the previous episodes of the series ("Isfahan Persian Gardens and New Urban Trends", "The Tehran's Contemporary Museum. The Anti-Monument", "Qajar Tehran. The Glass & Ceramics Museum and the Italian Residence", "Orsi Khaneh. A Window on Iran's Unique Blend of History & Modernity", "Architecture Meets Nature by Sara Kalantary & Reza Sayadian", "Gaetano Pesce and the Tehran National Library", "Villa for an Older Brother") are available for viewing on the social media platforms of the Italian Embassy in Tehran (YouTube, Instagram, Twitter).

Several Economic Cooperation Fields for Serbia, Fars Province

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Serbian ambassador to Iran says Fars province and Serbia have many fields of economic cooperation and more economic development can be provided through mutual cooperation.

In his meeting with the Vice President of the Fars Chamber of Commerce, Dragan Todorovic highlighted the significance of expanding ties between Serbia and the Iranian province.

"Iran and Serbia are two friendly countries that have good friendly and political relations, and at the Serbian Embassy in Iran, we are working to expand economic relations between the two countries," he added.

"Now, we are focused on increasing economic relations and resolving problems for the development of relations and exchanges between Serbia, Iran, and Fars Province."

"Our job is to act as a mediator and transfer the potentials and capacities of the economic actors of Fars and Serbia to each of the parties," Todorovic noted.

"The Serbian government is launching a program to expand relations with Iran, according to which a joint economic commission between two countries will be established in Tehran."

For his turn, Vice President of the Fars Chamber of Commerce Mohammad Sadegh Hamidian emphasized the need to develop economic cooperation and increase trade relations between the two sides. "Cooperation between Fars province and Serbia in the fields of agriculture, industry, mining, and tourism is of very importance," he said.

Iran Signs Agreement On Exports to Eurasia

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Cooperation agreement on boosting exports of goods and water equipment to Eurasia has been inked between Iran and Russia.

One of the most significant markets for export and marketing for Iran, particularly in the field of water and electricity, is the Eurasian market and CIS.

Chairman of Iran-Russia joint Chamber of Commerce Hadi Tizhoosh Taban was one of the main participants of this event.

Tehran, Beijing Trade Capacity Could Reach \$60b

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iran-China Chamber of Commerce Majidreza Hariiri said that trading between the two countries stood at an annual 60 billion dollars before the U.S. sanctions against Iran, stressing that the figure could be easily achieved again if the U.S. sanction are removed.

As one of the world's leading economies, China has been a main trade partner of Iran in the last 4 decades and has topped the list of foreign trade partners of Iran, maintaining a good economic relationship, the official noted.

The 10-year trade capacity between Iran and China was announced 600 billion dollars in 2016 which means 60 billion dollars on a yearly basis, Hariiri said.

He said that the number could be easily achieved once the U.S. sanctions were lifted which would lead to removal of trade barriers between Iran and China.

Iran-China trade ties will not be affected by administration change or political conditions in Iran, Hariiri noted, adding that the trade between the two countries have always kept an increasing pace and Beijing was Iran's first trade partner in the last decade, despite many hurdles in their path.

In the first quarter of the Persian year (March 10-June 10), Iran exported 7.1 tons of goods worth 3.1 billion dollars to China and imported 683,000 tons of goods worth 2.2 billion dollars.

Iran's Strategic Stocks of Goods in Ideal Condition

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A state official says the strategic stocks of essential consumer goods such as cooking oil, rice, sugar and bread are in an ideal condition in Iran.

The Iranian consumer staples sector has witnessed some shortages of grocery products such as cooking oil and sugar in recent months, which director general of grain and commercial services of Tehran province Abbas Arshadi attributed to "certain conditions".

Thanks to measures taken by Iran's state purchasing agency the Government Trading Corporation (GTC) and continuous supplies to the market, the shortages have been eliminated, he told IRNA news agency.

"The GTC's strategic reserves of essential goods are in ideal conditions and they will be released to the market in the shortest time whenever people need them," Arshadi said.

Boosting food stocks is a vital issue before a government transition when the food distribution system is often put into new hands, and the new administrations have to deal with the state of the country left to them by their predecessors.

Outgoing President Hassan Rouhani once recalled that wheat stocks in some provinces could support demand only for a maximum of two weeks when he took over from his predecessor in mid-2013.

Government buyers, including the GTC, are playing a big role to maintain strategic stocks, but they are under pressure to import and allocate enough goods in the face of US sanctions.

While food trade is exempt from the sanctions, many foreign banks are reluctant to finance it for fear of drawing fire from the US government simply for doing business with Iran.

Wheat is Iran's most important crop, accounting for about half of its cultivated acreage and 70 percent of its grain output.

The country is estimated to consume around 15.5 million tons of wheat a year, but supplies have varied over years due to erratic domestic production.

Self-sufficiency in wheat has been a cornerstone of the country's food security policy in recent years. The Rouhani administration snapped the achievement last year when Iran imported more than 3 million tons of the strategic staple food at a cost of \$3.8 billion.

Exports to Russia, Azerbaijan Increased Last Year

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures by Iran's customs office IRICA shows exports to Russia and Azerbaijan soared in the year to March 2021 despite intermittent restrictions imposed at borders to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

IRICA spokesman Rouhollah Latifi said that Azerbaijan had played a key role in Iran's growing exports to Russia over the past calendar year.

Latifi said exports to Russia had surged by 10% year on year in late March to reach a total value of \$504.575 million for 1.051 million metric tons of cargoes.

He said exports to Azerbaijan also grew by 18% to nearly \$511 million for 1.003 million tons of shipments over the same period. The official said that some 57% of Iran's exports to Russia had passed through Azerbaijan, meaning that borders with the northern neighbor

had been responsible for nearly \$800 million worth of Iranian exports over the past calendar year.

That comes as Azerbaijan continued to process Iranian trade even at the height of travel restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus last year. Latifi said exports to Russia had reached over \$135 million in value terms in the quarter to late June this year while shipments to Azerbaijan stood at \$86.395 million over the same period.

Iran has been able to increase its exports to Russia since October 2019 when it reached a preferential trade agreement with a Moscow-led economic union that operates in the Eurasian region. Trade with Azerbaijan is expected to surge as the country has introduced plans to improve economic ties with Iran since it emerged of a war with neighboring Armenia in November last year.

Lebanon Can't Handle Next Covid Wave

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon's deepening economic crisis has piled pressure on hospitals, leaving them ill-equipped to face any new wave of the coronavirus, a top hospital director has warned.

Already struggling with shortages of medicine and an exodus of staff abroad, the country's health facilities are now also having to contend with almost round-the-clock power cuts.

"All hospitals... are now less prepared than they were during the wave at the start of the year," said Firass Abiad, the manager of the largest public hospital in the country battling Covid. "Medical and nursing staff have left, medicine that was once available has run out," and ever lengthening cuts to the mains power supply have left hospitals under constant threat.



Bali Hit by Oxygen Crisis

BALI (Dispatches) - The Indonesian island of Bali is running out of oxygen for its COVID-19 patients as infections surge, the chief of its health agency has said, as Southeast Asia's biggest country struggles with the region's worst COVID-19 outbreak.

Bali, famous for its tourist beaches and temples, along with the main island of Java and 15 other regions, is under tight coronavirus restrictions that were due to expire on Sunday.

The government is debating whether to extend them.



Iraqi Resistance Lambasts FM's Remarks on Need for U.S. Troops



BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein's recent statements about the need for U.S. forces in the Arab country have drawn strong criticism from anti-terror resistance groups and political leaders.

Speaking at a joint press conference alongside his American counterpart Antony Blinken in Washington on Friday, the Iraqi foreign minister said that Baghdad still required Washington's help, and called for maintaining bilateral security cooperation. "We need to work with the International Coalition, led by the United States, against the terrorists of Daesh," Hussein alleged. "We need cooperation in the field of intelligence. We need help with training. We need troops to help us in the air."

The comments came at a time when American and Iraqi officials are finalizing a shift in the US military mission in Iraq to what they call "a purely advisory role" by the end of the year.

Citing a U.S. official and two people familiar with the matter, Politico reported on Thursday that the change is planned to be announced on Monday after Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi meets with U.S. President Joe Biden at the White House.

The announcement would mark the culmination of a number of strategic dialogues between Iraq and U.S. officials over the American military presence in Iraq over the past few years.

It would also mark the official end of the US combat mission in Iraq, but won't include a troop drawdown as a number of American service members will remain in the country indefinitely. The U.S. personnel will "provide logistics and advisory support, as well as air power, intelligence and surveillance capability in the purported fight against Daesh."

Thus, the overall numbers won't change much -- there are roughly 2,500 U.S. soldiers in Iraq today -- as the remaining combat forces will likely redeploy, replaced with personnel focused "on the advisory mission", by the year's end.

In response, the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee, which consists of representatives of anti-terror factions within the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi, underlined the need for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country.

In a statement carried by Lebanon's al-Mayadeen TV channel, the committee warned that the meddling of foreign forces in Iraq's security is meant to spy on the work of the country's security agencies, adding that the mission of the U.S. Air Force in Iraq is to defend the security of the Zionist regime and spy on the resistance.

"We stress the resistance's conditions not to allow the presence of any foreign military personnel on Iraqi soil," it added. "The pullout of foreign occupying forces from Iraq must be done completely from all Iraqi territory in order for the process to be real."

Biden Assures Afghan President of Continued U.S. Support

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - With the last U.S. forces on the way out of Afghanistan, U.S. President Joe Biden assured President Ashraf Ghani of U.S. diplomatic and humanitarian support as Taliban advances piled pressure on the U.S.-backed government in Kabul.

In a phone call, Biden and Ghani "agreed that the Taliban's current offensive is in direct contradiction to the movement's claim to support a negotiated settlement of the conflict," a White House statement said.

Biden has set a formal end to the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan for Aug. 31 as he looks to disengage from a conflict that started after al Qaeda attacked the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

Violence has risen sharply since the withdrawal plan was announced in April, with the Taliban launching offensives, taking districts and important border crossings, and encircling or closing in on several provincial capitals.

The Taliban control about half of Afghanistan's district centers, the senior U.S. general said this week, indicating a rapidly deteriorating security situation. Biden told Ghani the United States would remain engaged diplomatically "in support of a durable and just political settlement," the White House said.



Pakistan Seeks U.N. Probe of India's Use of Pegasus Spyware

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) - Pakistan called on the United Nations to investigate whether India used Israeli-made Pegasus spyware to spy on public figures including Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The Pakistani leader's phone number was on a list of what an investigation by a group of 17 international media organizations and Amnesty International said were potential surveillance targets for countries that bought the spyware.

Pakistan's foreign office issued a statement accusing India of "state-sponsored, continuing and widespread surveillance and spying operations in clear breach of global norms of responsible state behavior."

"In view of the gravity of these reports, we call on the relevant UN bodies to thoroughly investigate the matter, bring the facts to light, and hold the Indian perpetrators to account," it said. India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the statement.

The Indian government has already faced calls by domestic political opponents to investigate allegations of spying on officials including the main opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi.

Delhi has not responded to the allegations.

The investigation published by the media organizations on Sunday said spyware made and licensed by Israeli company NSO had been used in attempted and successful hacks of 37 smartphones belonging to journalists, government officials and human rights activists. NSO has said its product was intended only for use by vetted government intelligence and law enforcement agencies to fight terrorism and crime.

Arch-rivals and neighbors, Pakistan and India have fought two of their three wars over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, which both claim in full.

The statement by Pakistan's foreign office said Delhi had long been using such tactics in Indian-administered Kashmir, an accusation to which India did not immediately respond.

"We are closely following these revelations and will bring the Indian abuses to the attention of appropriate global platforms," the statement said.

Heavy Rain in India Kills at Least 125

MUMBAI (Reuters) - Rescue teams in India struggled through thick sludge and debris on Saturday to reach dozens of submerged homes as the death toll from landslides and accidents caused by torrential monsoon rain rose to 125.

Maharashtra state is being hit by the heaviest rain in July in four decades, experts say. Downpours lasting several days have severely affected the lives of hundreds of thousands, while major rivers are in danger of bursting their banks.

In Taliye, about 180 km (110 miles) southeast of the financial capital of Mumbai, the death toll rose to 42 with the recovery of four more bodies after landslides flattened most homes in the village, a senior Maharashtra government official said.

"About 40 people are still trapped. The possibility of rescuing them alive is thin as they've been trapped in mud for more than 36 hours," said the official, who declined to be identified as he is not authorized to talk to the media.

Harsh weather has hit several parts of the world in recent weeks, with floods in China and Western Europe and heat waves in North America, raising new fears about the impact of climate change.

Parts of India's west coast have received up to 594 mm (23 inches) of rain, forcing authorities to move people out of vulnerable areas as they released water from dams

about to overflow. The hill station of Mahabaleshwar recorded its highest ever rainfall - 60 cm in 24 hours.

Rescuers were searching for victims of landslides in four other places in the state, the official said.

"Around 90,000 people were rescued from flood affected areas," the Maharashtra government said in a statement, as authorities released water from overflowing dams. Thousands of trucks were stuck for more than 24 hours on a highway linking Mumbai with the southern technology hub of Bengaluru, with the road submerged in some places.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was in anguish over the loss of lives.

"The situation in Maharashtra due to heavy rains is being closely monitored and assistance is being provided to the affected," Modi said on Twitter on Friday.

In the southern state of Telangana, heavy rain caused flooding in the state capital of Hyderabad and other low-lying areas. Indian environmentalists have warned that climate change and indiscriminate construction in fragile coastal regions could lead to more disasters.

"The rain fury that lashed Mahabaleshwar ... is a strong warning against any more tampering with the ecologically fragile Western Ghats," environment economist Devendra Sharma said on Twitter referring to the range of hills along India's west coast.



China Imposes Sanctions On U.S. Citizens

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China said that it has imposed counter-sanctions on U.S. individuals including former U.S. commerce secretary Wilbur Ross in response to recent U.S. sanctions on Chinese officials in Hong Kong.

The sanctions are the first imposed by China under its new anti-foreign sanction law, passed in June, and come days before U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman is due to visit China amid deeply strained ties.

China also imposed unspecified "reciprocal counter-sanctions" on current and former representatives of a range of organizations, including the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Other institutions named included the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Republican Institute, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and the Washington-based Hong Kong Democracy Council (HKDC).

"The U.S. side concocted the so-called Hong Kong business advisory, baselessly smeared Hong Kong's commercial environment, and illegally sanctioned Chinese officials in Hong Kong," China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"These actions seriously violated international law and the basic principles of international relations, and seriously interfered in China's internal affairs," the ministry said.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki told a regular news briefing that the United States was "undeterred" by China's move, which came after Washington last week issued its business advisory for Hong Kong and imposed sanctions on more Chinese officials over Beijing's crackdown on democracy in the former British colony. "These actions are the latest examples of how Beijing punishes private citizens, companies and civil society organizations as a way to send political signals," Psaki said, adding that they illustrated the very risks about which the U.S. government had warned.

Ross could not be immediately reached for comment.

It was the second time this year that China has imposed sanctions on officials who served under former President Donald Trump, who adopted a tough line on Beijing and confronted it over trade, business practices, human rights and other issues.

Shanon
(adviser)

Aghdasieh (\$2500)
260sq.m, 3bdrs
balcony, pkg
marble fl
fireplace
Nicely Furn

Farmanieh bldg (\$10000)
5storey bldg
20bdrs, S/p
S, J, pkg lots
enough pkgs

Parsian

Dibaji Apt (\$1700)
2bdrs, S/p, & F.F

Apt (\$2200)
Zaferanieh
240sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, pkg, F.F

Vanak Villa (\$2800)
800sq.m, 4bdrs, yard

Jordan (\$1500)
2bdrs, 130sq.m

Vali-e-Asr office
200sq.m (\$25 per sq.m)

Kamranieh (\$2200)
200sq.m, 3bdrs, & F.F

Niavarna Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m, 5bdrs, & yard

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U.S. Leading Indicator Points to Further Economic Recovery

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A gauge of future U.S. economic activity increased in June, suggesting the economy continued to recover from the recession caused by the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The Conference Board on Thursday said its index of leading economic indicators (LEI) rose 0.7% last month to 115.1, topping its previous peak reached in May.

That was shy of economists' expectations of a 0.9% increase, according to a Reuters poll.

"June's gain in the U.S. LEI was broad-based and, despite negative contributions from housing permits and average workweek, suggests that strong economic growth will continue in the near term," said Ataman Ozylidirim, senior director of economic research at The Conference Board in Washington.



Lagarde's Communication Revolution Falls Short of Hype

FRANKFURT (Reuters) - Christine Lagarde's attempt to reform the European Central Bank's communication fell short of a revolution on Thursday as she struggled to simplify concepts and make the message more accessible to a broader public, ECB-watchers said.

Having spent 18 months poring over its strategy, the ECB set out this month to make communication shorter, crisper and clearer. But ECB President Lagarde's first attempt since the strategy review received only middling grades from regular watchers of the euro zone's central bank.

"I think on that point the ECB over-promised and under-delivered," Christoph Rieger, head of rates and credit research at Commerzbank, told Reuters.

He added that the decision itself was much longer and the prepared remarks, or monetary policy statement, not really "crisper" as Lagarde had promised.

"If my analysts are writing such cumbersome, convoluted sentences, I would have them re-do their work," Rieger added.

Although ECB and European Commission surveys show public faith in the euro itself is high, trust in the ECB -- Europe's most powerful institution -- has lagged ever since the 2008-09 financial crisis. That trust gap worries policymakers, even if the ECB has made some progress in recent years.

Carsten Brzeski, ING's global head of macro, said that except for some colourful headlines and an attempt to kick off Lagarde's televised news conference with something other than monetary policy, he did not spot substantial changes.

"I also wonder whether the people on the streets found today's show crisper or easier to understand. I doubt it," he said.

Some analysts said the central bank's goal of simplifying its message may be misguided as it also needs to address sophisticated financial investors who determine the price of assets and are the ultimate judges of the bank's success.

"The policy decision and the press conference are for financial markets, ECB-watchers and journalists. This is not made for dumbing down," ING's Brzeski said. "The ECB should simply find other opportunities to talk to the 'normal' people but should stop trying to combine the two."

Journalists also appeared to struggle to grasp the key takeaways of the ECB's decision and repeatedly returned to seek an explanation of the bank's new guidance on interest rates.

"The big change that we were all looking for was the forward guidance and it took Christine Lagarde almost one hour to explain it," Pictet strategist Frederik Ducrozet said.

Ducrozet said that if the ECB wanted to communicate directly with the broader public, it should try other channels than the news conferences and policy statements, and provide accessible, good quality educational materials.

"What matters most -- and people are making fun of it -- are the cartoons, the website, the videos on YouTube. That is what makes a difference with the broader public."

Global Venture Capital Investments Hit Record High

LONDON (Dispatches) - Global venture capital investments are at record levels this year, boosted by a surge in equities, higher liquidity and an increased interest in sectors that have benefited from the coronavirus pandemic.

According to Refinitiv data, global venture capital funds invested \$268.7 billion so far in 2021, far outstripping their total investments of \$251.2 billion a year earlier.

The bulk of those deals were in software, e-commerce, digital healthcare and fin-tech companies, whose products and services have seen strong demand during the pandemic, data showed.

"(Lockdowns) and changes in consumer behaviour have fuelled growth for digital startups, in turn, accelerating investor appetite," said Jaime Moreno, chief operating officer of Secfi, a San Francisco-based provider of equity planning tools for startup employees.

Late-stage startups have attracted the lion's share of the funds, with venture capital firms pumping in \$195.3 billion, or about 73% of their total investments, while early-stage companies have received \$73.4 billion.

"Venture capital continues to flow into later-stage startups. This is driven by the euphoria of several large later stage exits recently," said Swati Chaturvedi, chief executive officer of San Francisco-based angel investing platform Propel X.

"Additionally, venture capital firms are sitting on lots of dry powder."

Rock-bottom interest rates, a rush to diversify their portfolios and a string of successful exits have also prompted global investors to set aside more money for venture capital funds this year.

U.S. venture capital funds raised \$70 billion in the first half of the year, a 65% increase from a year earlier, according to Refinitiv data. Asian and European funds raised \$16.1 billion and \$8.2 billion, respectively, much higher than in 2020.

"This record breaking year for venture capital funding globally is the result of the creative economy being a legitimate asset class and investors knowing they need to have an allocation," said Jeff Ransdell, managing director of Miami, Florida-based Fuel Venture Capital said.

IMF Sees Major Shortfall in Green Investments

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that additional global investments of as much as \$10 trillion are needed to stave off the impacts of climate change.

"Radically transforming our energy system will require investments to be scaled up to finance the shift from fossil fuels to

renewables as well as for smart electricity networks, energy efficiency measures, and electrification in sectors like transport, buildings, and industry," economists Florence Jaumotte and Gregor Schwerhoff wrote.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a report on global decarbonisation efforts that emissions of CO2 will reach record levels within two years and continue to increase from there. To address the mounting challenges from climate change brought on by elevated atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases, the IMF said an additional \$6 trillion to \$10 trillion, or as much as 10% of annual global GDP, is needed.

Governments have set aside around \$380bn for clean energy measures as part of their post-coronavirus economic recovery plans, and this should add \$350bn/yr to spending on clean energy and electricity networks between 2021 and 2023. But this is still only 35% of the amount of investment that the Paris-based IEA sees as necessary for the world to remain on track for net-zero emissions by 2050.

The IMF said the world's largest polluters are also among the biggest backers of the energy transition.

"Still, without a global climate policy, today's smaller emitters will become major emitters as their populations and incomes grow," the IMF economists wrote. "These are also the countries, often harder hit by the effects of climate change, for which the transition costs are more difficult to bear, due to fast-growing energy needs and less budgetary space to finance green investments."

In its report, the IEA estimated that advanced economies are allocating 60% of the necessary investment to reach net zero, while emerging and developing economies are only spending 20%.

U.S., Germany Reach Deal On Controversial Russian Gas Pipeline

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States and Germany have reached a deal that will allow the completion of a controversial Russian gas pipeline to Europe without the imposition of further U.S. sanctions, a senior U.S. official said.

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland told Congress that the two governments would shortly announce details of the pact that is intended to address U.S. and eastern and central European concerns about the impact of the Nord Stream 2 project.

However, there is strong bipartisan opposition to the pipeline in Congress as well as in Ukraine and Poland, which fear Nord Stream 2 will undermine European energy security. Like the Trump administration before it, the Biden administration also opposes the pipeline but it insists that sanctions won't stop it.

Nuland, the third-ranking US diplomat, told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that the U.S. and Germany would release a joint statement later Wednesday regarding the pipeline. She said Washington and Berlin had committed to imposing sanctions on Russia and German companies should Moscow use the pipeline as a political weapon.

Nuland did not elaborate, although congressional aides briefed on the outlines of the deal said Tuesday it would allow the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline without either Germany or Russia facing new U.S. sanctions. In return, the US and Germany will make certain concessions to Ukraine and Poland, they said.

Nuland categorically denied reports that Ukraine had been warned against publicly complaining about the agreement and noted that State Department Counsellor Derek Chollet was visiting both Kyiv and Warsaw this week to inform them of the deal. Also Wednesday, the White House announced that President Joe Biden would welcome Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the White House on August 31.

"The visit will affirm the U.S.' unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russia's ongoing aggression in the Donbas and Crimea, our close cooperation on energy security, and our backing for President Zelenskyy's efforts to tackle corruption and implement a reform agenda based on our shared democratic values," the White House said in a statement.

The Nord Stream 2 project has posed a major foreign policy dilemma for the Biden administration. U.S. officials from both parties have long feared that it would give Russia too much power over European gas supplies, potentially shutting off gas to Russian adversaries Ukraine and Poland. But the pipeline is almost completed and the U.S. has been determined to rebuild ties with Germany that were damaged during the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Malaysia's Economy Faces Challenges In Recovery Momentum



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysian economy is anticipated to face challenges in preserving the recovery momentum as the Leading Index (LI) which acts as an indicator of the future movement of the overall economy eased to 6.9 per cent in May 2021 year-on-year (y-o-y) after rising 15.7 per cent in April, said the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM).

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the growth was driven by real imports of other basic precious and other non-ferrous metals and the number of housing units approved.

At the same time, he said, the LI declined by 2.9 per cent month-on-month with real imports of other basic precious and other non-ferrous metals (-1.2 per cent) particularly platinum was among the components that underpinned the decrease of LI.

"The growth rate of 'smoothed LI' remained above trend, however, moving downwards indicating the Malaysian economy is anticipated to face challenges in preserving the recovery momentum.

"The emergence of a new lethal variant of the Covid-19 has triggered pessimistic sentiment at global and national frontiers. Further to this, prolong movement restrictions in safeguarding lives may affect the prospects of recovery," Mohd Uzir said in a statement today.

The Coincident Index (CI), which indicates the economic performance in the reference month, slowed to 10 per cent in May 2021 after registering 20.2 per cent annual growth in April 2021, he noted.

On the contrary, the monthly performance of CI decreased 1.3 per cent in May 2021 attributed to a significant dropped in the volume index of retail trade (-1.2 per cent), primarily caused by the descent of 15.8 per cent in the retail sale of automotive fuel in specialised stores, he added.

Japan to Cut LNG, Coal in Power Sector

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The world's largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and one of the biggest importers of coal, Japan, aims to significantly raise the share of renewable power in its electricity sector and reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, according to a draft energy policy plan through 2030.

Japan, like many other developed nations, aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, or as Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) said last month "a carbon neutral society by 2050."

Under the draft new policy, Japan will target to have renewable energy sources make up between 36 percent and 38 percent of the country's power generation by the end of this decade. The previous target was to have renewable energy generate between 22 percent and 24 percent of Japan's electricity mix by 2030.

The new plan hasn't changed the target for nuclear power generation, which was left at 20-22 percent of electricity generation. But the share of coal is now targeted to drop to 19 percent by 2030, from 26 percent now, while the share of LNG is planned to decline to 41 percent from 56 percent.

The world's top LNG importer aiming to reduce the use of the super-chilled fuel for power generation is likely to rattle the market. According to estimates from Lloyd's List Intelligence, Japan was the single largest importer of LNG in the world in the first half of 2021, holding a 20.49-percent share of all LNG imports globally. To compare, all 27 members of the European Union (EU), plus the UK, combined, accounted for 20.94 percent of global LNG imports.



The fastest-growing market for LNG, China—which is expected to soon surpass Japan as the largest LNG importer—accounted for 18.22 percent of LNG imports in the first half this year, Lloyd's List Intelligence data showed.

Reduced future use of coal and LNG in Japan is set to create disturbances in the Asian markets of those fossil fuels, especially for Australia, which supplies two-thirds of Japan's thermal coal and is Japan's top LNG supplier, too, Reuters columnist Clyde Russell notes.

Iran Exports Over 221k Tons of Agro Products to Iraq in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) – About 221,613 tons of agricultural products were exported from Iran’s Qasr-e Shirin County in Kermanshah province to neighboring Iraq in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year.

Manager of Agricultural Department of Qasr-e Shirin Morad Mahmoudianfar said that 221,613 tons of various types of

agricultural products including fresh fruits and vegetable were exported from borders of Kermanshah province to Iraq in the first quarter of the current year (from March 21 to June 21).

He put the value of agricultural products exported from Qasr-e Shirin County to neighboring Iraq from March 21 to June 21 at \$55.8 million.



Water Now Threatens Germany

BAD MUENSTEREIFEL (Dispatches) - Bad Muenstereifel’s transformation from picturesque but sleepy German tourist town into an outlet shopping center put it on the map for millions of visitors.

Then floods laid waste to its medieval streets and half-timbered buildings, highlighting the vulnerability of Europe’s top economy to an increasingly unpredictable climate.

Beyond the town, the flooding stretched from an area close to the western city of Cologne down to southern Bavaria, hitting the historic centers of Aachen and Trier and leaving a trail of destruction behind it.

In recent years, other heavy floods have hit other parts of Germany, overflowing the banks of the waterways that have played such a key role in its prosperity.

Those floods have caused tens of billions of euros of damage - a much bigger economic hit than any of Germany’s neighbors have suffered from inundations, according to a study by Swiss Re, which insures insurers.

In Bad Muenstereifel, the focus was on the immediate damage. As scores of soldiers passed orange buckets of debris and sludge, Marita Hochguertel recalled the town’s revamp after 2014, when an investor brought in dozens of outlet shops to fill empty storefronts.

Visitors more than doubled to 2.5 million a year, sparking a renovation boom, said Hochguertel, who has worked for the town government for 42 years.

“It brought life to the town,” she said outside the council building as muddy crews worked with bulldozers to clear wreckage, from broken chairs to the stray legs of mannequins.

Rubbish piles grew bigger as the day wore on. The smells of diesel-fuelled water pumps and dust polluted the air. A crushed car lay lodged sideways in the narrow river.

The images have shocked Germany, prompting a debate ahead of national elections that could loosen the hold on power of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s Christian Democrats and bolster the Green party.

Much of Germany’s industry, including metals giant Thyssen Krupp and chemicals giants Bayer and BASF, developed in centers close to waterways such as the Rhine - which was also impacted in the recent flooding.

The network of rivers and canals remains the most extensive in Europe and is used to move around 200 million tons of freight each year, from grain to coal and oil. But it is fast becoming a threat.

These were the third major floods to hit Germany since the turn of the century.

In 2002, the Elbe river flooded, affecting Dresden and other cities. In 2013, floods hit Bavaria hard along the Danube and Inn rivers.

Damage for both years totalled 42 billion euros, and less than a quarter of it was insured, according to Swiss Re.

July’s floods are set to be Germany’s costliest ever, according to the German Insurance Association, which estimated claims alone at up to 5 billion euros.

The total cost, with torn roads, train tracks and phone lines, already seen in the billions, will far outstrip that.

ICEYE, which monitors flood zones for insurers using satellite images, estimates that more than 37,000 German buildings have been affected by in July, compared with fewer than 1,700 in the neighboring Netherlands.

Even before this most recent catastrophe, Swiss Re estimated the economic cost of flooding in Germany in recent decades at more than twice that of France or Britain.

But public debate, in a heavily industrialized country that relies on diesel cars, machinery and other goods to prosper, had been muted among large parts of the population.

That may be about to change.



Anders Levermann, who has advised the German government on the climate, said he feared that floods could upend the economy and political order if they become much more common events.

“What will happen if weather extremes become so frequent that we don’t have time to recover in between?” he said. Germany’s role as exporter means that supply chains across the globe could also be at risk, Levermann added. In the Netherlands, where roughly half the country is below sea level and where they have spent centuries holding back water, planning has been ongoing for decades. It fared better in the recent floods.

“We’ve been anticipating this for a long time,” said Marjolijn Haasnoot, a Dutch climate scientist.

“This amount of flooding will occur much more frequently ... because of climate change.”

The Dutch are also slowly embarking on a debate that may have to be had in Germany - over whether they should just surrender land to advancing water.

“A lot of people think they can protect everything with dykes. What they don’t realise is that sea water is seeping inland under the dykes,” said Maarten Kleinhans of Utrecht University.

“In the long term, half of the country is under threat,” he said, of Holland. “We’ve seen it in the past - that villages and towns were washed away or disappeared into the ground. You can build sea walls to defend the cities, but you can’t do that everywhere.”

In Bad Muenstereifel, Michael Starkel, a hotel owner and head of the local business association, fears people will pack up and not return.

“I’ve talked to many people in the old town who really have thoughts to leave,” he said during a break from helping thecleanup crews clear riverbeds of tree trunks and other detritus.

If history is any indicator, people in the disaster zone are in for a long slog. Deggendorf, a town of 37,000 residents in Bavaria hit by floods and a dam break in 2013, is still recovering, Viola Muehlbauer, the head of the mayor’s office, said.

“It will surely be a very, very long process until everything is back to normal.”

Iran Petrochemical Sector Fights Its Way Out of U.S. Chokehold

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran’s petrochemical revenues will top a record \$20 billion in the current Persian year of 1400 which ends on March 20, 2022, Managing Director of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi says.

“About \$14 billion of this will be in foreign exchange earnings and \$7 billion in domestic sales, which is a significant record and this amount of income will be reached for the first time in the petrochemical industry,” he added.

Six petrochemical projects will come online by the time and another five in the first half of the next Iranian year, enabling the country to hit a new milestone in its burgeoning industry.

They are part of 50 projects which the NPC has pitched for development, Mohammadi said, adding they are expected to raise Iran’s total petrochemical production to 137 million tons and its revenues to \$37 billion in the Persian year of 1404.

In 1406, overall production will reach 167 million tons worth \$50 billion, when three mixed feed projects for a variety of petrochemical products and 33 projects to meet the needs of downstream industries will come on stream, he said.

“This issue is very important for the role of the National Petrochemical Company and the petrochemical industry in the country’s macroeconomy,” Mohammadi added.

The Persian Gulf port city of Mahshahr is the oldest petrochemical hub where one-third of Iran’s production capacity using associated gas is based.

In January, Iran inaugurated the \$3.4 billion Persian Gulf Bidboland gas refinery to process associated gas from crude oil production, rather than burn it through flaring.

The plant, built by Iranian companies, has a daily capacity to process 56 million cubic meters per day of associated gas, including 13.5 million tons per year of sour gas and 2.25 million tons per year of sweet gas.

Iran-Cuba COVID-19 Vaccine, Unique in World

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran’s health minister says the Iran-Cuba COVID-19 vaccine is one of the world’s most successful and effective vaccines.

Speaking at the meeting to evaluate the Iran-Cuba COVID vaccine’s progress, Saeed Namaki stated that the newly-made vaccines must be absolutely resistant and effective against the new virus mutations.

He also noted that the Health Ministry had made significant efforts to import vaccines, adding: “Iran’s homemade vaccines will also enter the market within the next months (Iran-Russia joint Sputnik V, COVIran Barekat, and others).”

In a further remark, he reiterated that in Khuzestan, Bushehr, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Hormozgan provinces, which were the Delta COVID entry gates, vaccination must be done for people over 45.

Stressing that the nationwide vaccination should be accelerated, he pointed out that public transportation drivers, teachers, nomads, and people with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes are (all over 18 years) in priority for getting vaccinated.

“The entry of Afghan refugees due to new events, non-compliance with protocols, and the opening of restaurants in the red areas caused the fifth COVID wave in Iran,” Namaki said.

He added that observing all hygienic protocols, social distancing, and limiting any unnecessary trips, would contain the virus.

The meeting on the progress of the joint vaccine of Cuban Finlay and Iran’s Pasteur Institutes was held at the Health Ministry on Sunday, with the attendance of Iran’s Health Minister Saeed Namki, Cuba’s Finlay Institute Managing-Director Vicente Várez, and other high-ranking health officials.

Iran Posts 44.2% Inflation...

FROM PAGE 1

Monthly inflation was up 1% against the month to May to reach 3.5%, showed the SCI figures as they indicated that prices had gained 3.6% in the urban context and 3.2% in the countryside.

Iran has seen high but controlled levels of inflation in recent years as the economy has been battling the impacts of the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic.

Consumer prices have soared amid lower imports of foods and medicine into Iran as a result of the sanctions.

That comes as the country has managed to boost domestic output in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing to respond to a growing demand for various goods in the local market.

Tehran Voices Decisive...

FROM PAGE 1

The Iranian envoy pointed to the hostile and provocative nature of the U.S.’s policies concerning Cuba, saying the approach amounted to clear violation of the basic norms and principles of the international law. Such approach, he added, also worked to undermine the human rights and democracy.

The ambassador noted how the U.S. has been using similar approaches towards some other NAM countries too, including Iran, against which Washington has been deploying the harshest of punitive measures.

These measures “seek nothing but to weaken the will power and independence of the [targeted] countries,” he said.

Takht-Ravanchi, therefore, urged NAM to work towards developing of “better ways” to confront America’s pressure and its violation of the international law and the UN’s resolutions.

The Same Old Nonsense

FROM PAGE 1

“The water crisis in Khuzestan is the outcome of a series of natural phenomena, particularly this year’s drought, and is also one of the consequences of unilateral coercive measures imposed on our country, which have prevented the transfer of technology and investment in the water sector in Khuzestan,” the Iranian spokesman said.

He criticized Bachelet for refusing so far to condemn the “illegal sanctions imposed by the United States against the Iranian people which have led to violation of several fundamental human rights of this honorable nation,” saying she has just made few short statements in this regard.

It seems that the UN rights body is making efforts to sow discord among the united Iranian nation in line with the political agenda of a few certain countries that harbor grudge against Iranians, Khatibzadeh said, adding that they are the very countries that abuse the noble concept of human rights and are the main supporters of politically-tainted inhumane resolutions against Iran in the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

Khatibzadeh reiterated the Islamic Republic’s respect for the right of its citizens to peaceful gatherings and said high-ranking Iranian officials have recognized the problem of water shortage in Khuzestan.

On Friday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said the grievances are valid, noting that the people’s complaints should have been addressed before to prevent them from being upset over the situation.

Ayatollah Khamenei hailed the people of the border province as “loyal and selfless” and said they remained on the “forefront” during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.

The Leader urged the authorities to seriously follow the demands of the people.

Ayatollah Khamenei cautioned the people against playing into the hands of trouble-makers, noting that, “The enemy seeks to use everything against the [Islamic] Revolution, the country and the interests of the people; therefore, care must be taken not to give it an excuse.”

So it is better for the western bodies not to meddle biasedly in the domestic affairs of the countries, and if they want to do so, they are better to take action against the inhumane sanctions which are imposed by the Western states against the nations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the nation will not bow down to the aliens’ pressure and the country can resolve their problems by itself if some infiltrators among the nation who act in favor of the enemies let it happen.

Iranians through the history have shown that they will not bow down to aliens’ meddling and pressures and aliens are better to find another place for sowing discord for dictating their own will as this proverb says, “You want a thing done, do it yourself.”

Iran Self-Sufficient...

FROM PAGE 1

In response to IRNA’s question about Iran’s technical and military relations with Russia, Khajeh-Fard said, “We regard Russia as a strategic partner. Our cooperation has taken a very good turn in various aspects.”

The Iranian official added, “We have a long history of cooperation with Russia in the aviation industry and we will definitely expand this cooperation. To that end, we have good strategies and plans on the agenda.”

The 15th International Aviation and Space Salon MAKs started on Tuesday with the active presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and 55 other countries at the Zhukovsky Air Exhibition Complex in eastern Moscow.

The international exhibition, which runs from July 20 to 25, is attended by the Iranian Defense Ministry and 35 knowledge-based companies of the Islamic Republic featuring their latest scientific and technological achievements. Iran has always had an active and significant presence in the Russia exhibition.

Last month, Major General Hossein Salami, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), hailed Iran’s achievements in different fields, saying the country is in possession of drones that have a range of 7,000 kilometers.

Iran Slashes Gas...

FROM PAGE 1

In recent weeks, electricity transmission lines have been the target of attacks by suspected Daesh terrorist group militants in the northern provinces of Salahuddin, Diyala, and Kirkuk. Iraq generates between 19,000-21,000 megawatts while the actual need exceeds 30,000 megawatts, according to officials in the Electricity Ministry. For years, Baghdad has imported 1,200 megawatts of electricity from neighboring Iran to feed local electric power plants.



Son Extends Contract At Tottenham

LONDON (AP) — At least one star forward wants to stay at Tottenham. Son Heung-min signed a four-year contract extension Friday to keep him at the Premier League club through June 2025.

Harry Kane's future is another question. He's under contract with the north London team until 2024 but has indicated he wants a change of scenery.

Not so for South Korea captain Son.

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Karpin Takes Over as Russia Manager

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Russian football federation on Friday named former international midfielder Valery Karpin as manager of the national football team.

Karpin, who was coaching FK Rostov, will replace Stanislav Cherchesov, sacked after Russia was eliminated in the group stage of Euro 2020.

The federation said Karpin, who is 52, had agreed to a contract until the end of the year, "with the possibility of the further extension of the agreement."

Antetokounmpo's 50 Power Milwaukee Bucks to First NBA Title Since 1971

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Giannis Antetokounmpo ended one of the greatest NBA finals ever with 50 points and a championship Milwaukee waited 50 years to win again.

Antetokounmpo added 14 rebounds and five blocked shots as the Bucks beat the Phoenix Suns 105-98 on Tuesday night to win the series 4-2. It was the third game this series with at least 40 points and 10 rebounds for Antetokounmpo, a dominant debut finals performance that takes its place among some of the game's greatest.

He shot 16 for 25 from the field and made an unbelievable 17-of-19 free throws - a spectacular showing for any shooter, let alone one who was hitting just 55.6% in the postseason and was ridiculed for it at times.

"People told me I can't make free throws and I made them tonight. And I'm a freaking champion," Antetokounmpo said.

He hopped around the court waving his arms with 20 seconds remaining to encourage fans to cheer, but there was no need. Their voices had been booming inside and outside for hours by then, having waited 50 years to celebrate a winner after Lew Alcindor (later Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and Oscar Robertson led the Bucks to the championship in 1971.

In a season played largely without fans, the Bucks had 65,000 of them packed into the Deer District precinct outside the stadium, a wild party that seemed set to last deep into the Midwestern night. The party wasn't bad inside, either: confetti rained down inside as fans chanted "Bucks in 6! Bucks in 6!" a hopeful boast by a former player that turned out to be a prophetic rallying cry.

The Bucks became the fifth team to win the NBA finals after trailing 2-0 and the first to do it by then winning the next four games since Miami against Dallas in 2006.

Chris Paul scored 26 points to end his first NBA finals appearance in his 16th season. Devin Booker added 19 points but shot just 8 for 22 and missed all seven three-pointers after scoring 40 points in each of the last two games.

"There's just a pain that goes with your season being over," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "But I've never dealt with this and so I'm grateful, like I said, but I know this is going to



hurt for a while."

The teams that came into the NBA together as expansion clubs in 1968 delivered a fine finals, with the last three games all in the balance deep into the fourth quarter.

The Bucks won them largely because of Antetokounmpo, a two-time MVP in the regular season who raised his game even higher in the finals and was voted the unanimous NBA finals MVP.

He was the star of these finals in every way, from his powerful play on the court to his humble thoughts in interviews to taking time after Tuesday night's win to find children to high-five amid the celebrations. And he did it all after missing the final two games of the Eastern Conference finals with a hyperextended left knee, an injury that at first he feared could be serious to end his season.

Just think what people would have missed.

Khris Middleton scored 17 points for the Bucks and Bobby Portis came off the bench with 16. Jrue Holiday had 12 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds to go along with his usual sturdy defense that helped finally cool off Booker.

Pochettino Pens New PSG Deal

PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino on Friday penned a one-year extension to his contract to stay with the French giants until 2023 despite a below-par start to his reign.

The Argentine took over from the sacked Thomas Tuchel in January but PSG were dethroned as champions by Lille and were knocked out in the semi-finals of the Champions League.

Their European campaign was ended by Manchester City but PSG saw off Barcelona and Bayern Munich on their way to the last-four. PSG did win the French Cup with a 2-0 victory over Monaco.

"I'm really very happy, for myself and also for my staff," said former PSG captain Pochettino, who had been rumored to be on the verge of quitting.

"It's very important for us to feel the confidence of the club and we will give our maximum so that the supporters are proud of Paris Saint-Germain.

"That's why we will try and reach our objectives all together, as one. Twenty years ago I was captain of this club and today I am the coach. It's a dream come true."

PSG have been active in the transfer market this summer with midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum arriving from Liverpool, veteran defender Sergio Ramos from Real Madrid while goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma arrived from AC Milan on the back of helping Italy to the Euro 2020 title.

Sri Lanka Squad Hits Back at Criticism

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's head coach Mickey Arthur ordered the national squad off social media on Saturday after disgruntled fans launched a campaign to boycott players following a string of defeats overseas.

The South African coach said players were getting "absolutely hammered" and it was affecting their judgment and mood as they prepare for the T20 World Cup later this year.

"Some of the stuff listed there is beyond comprehensible," Arthur said ahead of Sri Lanka's three-match T20 tournament against India starting Sunday.

Man United Sign Sancho on Five-Year Deal



English player of all time behind new United team-mate Harry Maguire.

Sancho is set to stay at United until June 2026, with the option of a further year.

"I'll always be grateful to Dortmund for giving me the opportunity to play first team football,

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United have signed England winger Jadon Sancho from Borussia Dortmund on a five-year contract, the Premier League club announced Friday.

No fee was disclosed but British media reports said Sancho had moved from Germany in a deal worth £73 million (100 million dollars) -- which would make him the second-most expensive

although I always knew that I would return to England one day," Sancho told manutd.com.

"The chance to join Manchester United is a dream come true and I just cannot wait to perform in the Premier League," the 21-year-old added.

"This is a young and exciting squad and I know, together, we can develop into something special to bring the success that the fans deserve."

His move to Old Trafford follows a year-long pursuit by United, who were reportedly put by Dortmund's initial £100m valuation of Sancho, a former Manchester City youth team player.

The deal was announced just weeks after Sancho, together with new United team-mate Marcus Rashford and Bukayo Saka, received racist abuse following the trio's penalty shoot-out misses in England's Euro 2020 final loss to Italy at Wembley.

Solskjaer Delighted to Sign New Deal

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has signed a new-three year deal, the Premier League club announced on Saturday.

The Norwegian, who took over from Jose Mourinho in 2018, will stay at Old Trafford until at least 2024, with the option of an extra year.

"Everyone knows the feeling I have for this club, and I am delighted to have signed this new contract," Solskjaer told the club website.

"It is an exciting time for Manchester United, we have built a squad with a good balance of youth and experienced players that are hungry for success."

Solskjaer led United to a second-placed finish in last season's Premier League while losing in the Europa League final to Villarreal.

However, the 48-year-old, who this week added England winger Jadon Sancho to his squad, has his eyes firmly on the biggest prizes in English and European football.

"I have a fantastic coaching team around me, and we are all ready to take that next step on our journey," he said.



Djokovic Cruises in Olympic Opener

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic, in pursuit of history, made short work of his opening-round Olympic opponent on Saturday. Which was good news for the Serbian star given the heat, humidity and lack of any breeze.

The top-seeded and world No. 1 Djokovic beat Bolivia's Hugo Dellien 6-2, 6-2 in just 61 minutes, with the temperature at Ariake Tennis Park hovering around 90 degrees and the humidity over 60 percent.

After the match, Djokovic made a point to wonder to media why the International Tennis Federation decided to have matches begin at 11 a.m. in Tokyo, when they could have been played later in the day and even at night, as there are lights for the courts.

"Playing in extreme heat and humidity, it's very challenging," Djokovic said. "Obviously it's the same for everyone; it's something we've known coming into Tokyo, we heard and expected the conditions would be very tough, but before you come here and experience that, you don't really know how difficult it is."

Djokovic believes he doesn't play his best in conditions like players are experiencing in Tokyo, but Dellien would likely disagree.

