

Health Ministry Announced On Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 89,122 With 322 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over The Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Authorities Handed Over 113 Pakistani Illegal Migrants, Who Had Been Arrested in Different Parts of Iran, To the Local Administration at Taftan Border in Chagai District

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IRGC Chief Warns Enemies Over Insecurity On Borders

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) offers his prediction concerning the fate of the dream that is constantly harbored by the Islamic Republic's adversaries of afflicting insecurity on its borders.

"Afflicting insecurity on the Islamic countries' borders, including those of Iran, has invariably formed one of the enemies and foreigners' strategies," Major General Hossein Salami said on Sunday.

"However, they will take this dream to their graves," he added.

"Our borders are safe and strong, and the Islamic Iran's youths are standing strong and preserving the security," noted the commander.

The official passed the remarks during a ceremony entitled to commemorating those who have been martyred in the service of the country's defense from the western border province of Kordestan's Sanandaj County.

He acknowledged the province's decades-old sacrifices in the face of the "vehement invasions" that the global arrogant powers have been waging against the country on various fronts.

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Armed Forces Not to Allow Any Violation of Territorial Integrity



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Armed Forces have made considerable progress in various sectors and currently enjoy superb capabilities, says a senior Iranian commander, putting emphasis on the fact that the forces will never allow any violation against the Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and national interests.

Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari made the remarks on Sunday while addressing a military ceremony in the Iranian capital city.

"The Armed Forces [of Iran] have a mission to defend the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic establishment," the Iranian commander said.

Sayyari added that Iran's Armed Forces "must boost their combat capability in the face of any future threat in such a way that they could announced with full self-confidence that no enemy would be ever allowed to violate the country's interests and territorial integrity."

The commander also stressed the importance of boosting Iran's deterrence power.

"If we are strong and have high deterrent power, the world will count on the Islamic Republic as a proud and revolutionary nation," the senior Iranian commander said.

Sayyari added, "Our deterrence power must be so high and we must have such [powerful] equipment and superb training ... that no enemy would ever think about taking any act of aggression against our country."

Sayyari added that the war theater has changed and new battlefields have emerged, which calls for the preparedness of the Iranian Armed Forces.

Iran has made major breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing important military equipment and systems.

The Islamic Republic says its military might poses no threat to other countries, and that its defense doctrine is based on deterrence.

Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said in April that the enemies of Iran do not dare violate the country's territorial waters thanks to the powerful presence of the naval forces of the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in international waters.

Chinese Customs Claims Oil Imports From Iran Declines in H1

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Chinese customs claimed in new statistics that no oil entered the country from Iran during the first six months of 2021.

This comes after figures from tanker tracking companies reported a doubling of Chinese oil purchases from Iran during this period compared to last year, including tanker Turkers reporting that in the first half of 2021, Iran made an average of 1 million barrels of oil per day to China. That's even 30 percent higher than china's purchase of oil from Iran in the pre-sanctions era.

Recently, Reuters and the Wall Street Journal reported that the U.S. wants to impose sanctions on companies that send Iranian oil to China and stop the Islamic Republic's oil exports if Iran delays continuing its nuclear negotiations and fails efforts to revive the JCPOA.

Chinese customs statistics show that in the first half of 2021, a total of \$3.1 billion in imports from Iran was unchanged from the same period last year, but its exports to Iran dropped from \$4.25 billion in the first six months of last year to \$3.62 billion in the same period this year.

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Iraqi Resistance Group Vows to Keep Targeting U.S. Forces

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - A spokesman for Iraq's al-Nujaba Movement says the country's resistance forces will continue to target American forces regardless of their name being changed from combat forces to trainers and advisers.

"Regarding the U.S. military's presence, names and titles do not matter, and they will still be targets for the weapons of resistance under any title or attribute," Nasr al-Shammari said in an interview with Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television network. Al-Shammari noted that Iraq's prime minister, defense minister, and national security adviser have all emphasized that the country does not need the presence of foreign forces as it enjoys ample defense capabilities.

He said when Iraq was badly in need of American troops and advisers, they were of no use and their presence was not a source of any benefit to Iraqis.

"The Americans are changing the title of their presence in Iraq to deceive the public," he said. "What good can come out of changing the title of 'occupier' to 'adviser'? American troops are present in Iraq; what difference does it make under what title and pretext their presence is defined?"

He reiterated that Iraqi resistance forces will continue to target American forces because "nothing has changed from the perspective of al-Nujaba Movement and Iraq does not need American forces."

The remarks come while Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi is scheduled to meet President Joe Biden on Monday to push for a concrete timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Currently, there are approximately 2,500 U.S. troops in Iraq. In April, the two countries agreed that the U.S. transition to a train-and-advise mission requires the withdrawal of combat troops, without setting a timetable for the withdrawal.

Pentagon and other administration officials say they will remove a small but unspecified number of the American forces currently stationed in Iraq, and by reclassifying on paper the roles of other forces.

Summing up the situation, the New York Times said al-Kadhimi will have a political trophy to take home to satisfy anti-American factions in Iraq and the U.S. military presence will remain.

But while giving al-Kadhimi temporary political cover, a reclassification of U.S. forces rather than a drawdown likely won't satisfy the Iraqis and political parties calling for a withdrawal of all troops, the paper said citing Iraqi officials.

"Changing their name from combat forces to trainers and advisers — we consider it as an attempt at deception," said Mohammad al-Rubai'e, political spokesman for Asaib Ahl al-Haq, which maintains 16 seats in the Iraqi parliament.

West Seeking To Purge MKO

TEHRAN (MNA) - In response to a Newsweek article, the Iranian Mission Counselor at the UN Office in Geneva said that MKO terrorist group still retains its terrorist nature but the West is trying to purge this terrorist group.

On the occasion of organizing a meeting of Mojahedin-e Khalq terrorist organization (MKO also known as MEK) held on July 10, 2021, in a report written by DAVID BRENNAN, by examining the background and performance of MKO terrorist group, he tried to respond to the accusations raised against MKO through the elements affiliated with the group.

In this regard, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Geneva sent a statement to Newsweek, emphasizing that the MKO terrorist group continues to maintain its terrorist nature and has collaborated with the Zionist regime in assassinating Iranian nuclear scientists.

Bahram Heidari, the Counselor of Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Geneva pointed to the meeting of the MKO terrorist group held on July 10 and said that it shows the depth of American political and moral decline of the opposition of the Islamic Republic of Iran which is deceived by such hated terrorist group who committed heinous terrorist crimes such as assassination, bombing and sabotage in a way that this terrorist group has claimed lives of thousands of Iranian people.

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Iran Sets Conditions to Ensure U.S. Not Withdraw From JCPOA

TEHRAN (MNA) - An American newspaper claims that Iran wants Washington to agree to a clause that makes its withdrawal from JCPOA conditional on the permission of United Nations while the United States is excused from accepting this request.

'Wall Street Journal' claimed in an article that after six rounds of talks hosted by Vienna, the United States, which was indirectly involved in these talks, expressed its desire to abandon its most powerful sanctions lever in order to revive JCPOA while the Iranian negotiators want more demands to be met.

According to the newspaper, Iran's latest demand is for Washington administration to agree to a clause that makes U.S. withdrawal conditional on a UN agreement, lest Donald Trump's deliberate mistake of unilaterally withdrawing from JCPOA be repeated. This is while that the United States in continuation of its excuses claims that inclusion of such a clause in the agreement runs contrary to their Constitution and US president cannot persuade the next Congress to change its political approach, even with the approval of the Senate.

The Wall Street Journal had previously claimed that the United States wants to exert pressure on Iranian oil sales to China as a tool to keep the Iranian side at the negotiating table.

Iran Daily Electricity Demand Tops 65,000 MW

TEHRAN (MNA) - Daily electricity consumption in Iran is currently over 65,000 megawatts (65 gigawatts), nearly 11,000 MW more than the country's current power generation, Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi has said.

According to Rajabi Mashhadi, the country's power plants are currently able to generate only 54,000 MW of electricity.

Emphasizing the cooperation between the Energy Ministry and the country's industrial and agriculture sectors for managing the electricity consumption, the official said: "We are now implementing various programs in collaboration with agricultural and industrial subscribers to compensate for the power shortage so that the domestic sector don't face blackouts."

He expressed gratitude for the country's industries, including cement and steel companies, for their maximum cooperation in the ministry's programs and noted that the ministry will reward such collaborations in the future.

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Iran Completes Importing 10m Vaccines From China

TEHRAN (MNA) – Assistant Foreign Minister and Director General of Asia-Pacific department of Iran announced on Sun. that the country has completed imports of 10 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine from China. “By importing 1,095,200 doses of vaccine on Sunday, Iran completed imports of 10 million doses from China,” Reza Zabib tweeted. According to him, China donated 850,000 doses of the said amount to Iran as well. “At the beginning of the pandemic, the Red Cross and the Chinese people provided generous assistance. This valuable collaboration is appreciated.”

Free Zones; Key to Constructive Interaction With World, Neighbors

TEHRAN (IP) - President Hassan Rouhani said that the development of free zones can put the country on the path of constructive interaction with neighboring countries and the world.

Rouhani, on Monday in the ceremony of exploiting national environmental projects and free economic zones, congratulating the birth anniversary of Imam Hadi (AS) and Eid Ghadir, said: “In the last eight years, the free zones have been very active and have completely corrected the path.”

The President added: “Since the beginning of the administration, we have been trying to turn the free zones so that they would change from importers and suppliers of goods to travelers, into production, export and domestic and foreign investment centers, which were done in the free zones.”

Referring to the fact that today there are 15 free zones in the country, Iran’s President added that the recently approved free zones should be activated in the near future, stressing: “Free zones can put the country on a path of constructive interaction with neighboring countries and countries around the world.”

Rouhani also said that the 11th and 12th administrations can rightly be called the administrations of health and environment, adding that the treatment and development of insurance are also related to the environment of the people.

“We acted in different areas for health, with some parts part related to the environment, another related to healthcare and the part related to the development of insurance, especially health insurance, with which we sought the health of society and people,” Rouhani added.



Rouhani on Monday ordered inauguration of several national projects pertaining to the Department of Environment and free trade zones.

In the 85th edition of the national projects inauguration series in the production surge plan held online, President Rouhani ordered the launch of 13 civil projects, the comprehensive environmental program, and several other environmental projects and those pertaining to free trade zones with the total value of 2,787 billion tomans.

Several automobiles, home appliance, and industrial equipment plants were inaugurated today in Aras, Kish, and Qeshm free trade zones.

Moreover, several projects were launched to study water requirements of 21 wetlands and rivers throughout the country, as the environmental crisis gets worst in Iran with water supply tensions being on top of the list.

Rouhani also unveiled, among many other environmental projects, the comprehensive wetlands native environment management program which is considered to be a framework for any decision to be made on managing wetlands with the intention of bringing these environmental phenomena to a proper condition.

Capability of MSC for Exporting Sour Gas Slab

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – The CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) Mr. Hamid Reza Azimian by pointing to the implementation of the strategic Goreh-Jask pipeline emphasized the necessity for trusting the domestic capability and announced the capability of the company for exporting sour gas slab.



Azimian said that foreign companies and partners due to sanctions refrained to provide National Iranian Oil Company with required sheets for implementing the project for transfer of oil from Goreh to Jask but Mobarakeh Steel Company which has started producing special slab for transfer of sour gas since two years ago and today it is proud that it can export this product and it proved once again the ineffectiveness of sanctions whose outcome has been self-sufficiency and national independence.

He then explained how for the first time National Iranian Oil Company officials came to MSC for providing their need to special slab for transfer of sour gas and they raised this issue for the first time.

Azimian went on to say that after the first meetings, MSC held several meetings in different levels after a collective determination for producing the slab by the company which is required for this national project and finally MSC produced slab for sour gas two years ago.

Iran’s Railway Network Registered on UNESCO’s Cultural Heritage List



TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran’s national railway network has been registered on the global cultural heritage list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The railway known as the North-South Railroad was registered by the world body as Iran’s first industrial heritage structure and the 25th tangible cultural heritage structure.

As many as 22 cultural and historical structures as well as 2 natural sites from Iran had already been registered as tangible cultural heritage, and 16 elements as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.

Moreover, a proposal to register Iran’s Uraman region as global cultural heritage is to be discussed at a meeting of the World Cultural Heritage committee on July 27, 2021.

Iran, Syria to Enhance Scientific, Cultural And Academic Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP) - Rector of the University of Islamic Denominations Of Iran met Syria’s Ambassador to Tehran on Sunday, discussing means of bolstering joint scientific, cultural, and academic cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting held at the headquarters of the Syrian Embassy in Tehran, Shafiq Dayoub stressed the importance of scientific cooperation between the two countries.

“In recent years, we have been partners in the war against terrorism and we hope to be partners in reconstructing what has been destroyed by terrorism in Syria, particularly the educational infrastructure which was greatly damaged as a result of the terrorist acts,” he added.

He underlined that the work is still going strong to enhance the cooperation in the scientific and the technological fields where a draft of the agreement has been prepared in this regard to be signed in the near future, stressing the strong links between the two countries.

For his part, Seyed Mohammad Hosseini said that the relations between Iran and Syria will witness further development and cooperation during the new stage in scientific, cultural, and economic domains.

Hosseini affirmed that wide popular participation in the presidential elections indicates the defeat of the enemies of Syria and the triumph of the resistance.

Hosseini expressed the readiness of the University of Islamic Denominations of Iran to admit Syrian students at all academic levels.

Iran Trustworthy, Reliable Partner; Wishes Well for Neighbors

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President-elect Ebrahim Raisi says Iran has proved itself to be a reliable friend and partner, which wishes well for its neighbors.

“Iran has proven that it is a trustworthy and reliable friend and partner,” Raisi said in a meeting with Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Tehran on Sunday.

“Rest assured that Iran only wishes well for its neighbors,” the Iranian president-elect added.

Raisi further noted, “Tehran attaches special importance to ties with Doha and [relations] with neighbors will be the priority of the next administration’s foreign policy.”

The Iranian and Qatari nations have religious bonds and



are partners in the region, the president-elect said.

Raisi emphasized that regional insecurity is rooted in foreign factors. “The path to sustainable security and stability in the region goes through cooperation among regional countries on the basis of mutual political

trust and practical rejection of foreign interference.”

The Qatari foreign minister, for his part, said his country seeks to consolidate relations and cooperate with Iran to reinforce security in the region.

In separate phone calls with Oman’s Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said Saturday night and Turkmenistan’s President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on Tuesday, the Iranian president-elect emphasized that dialog with neighboring countries is top on the foreign policy agenda of his administration, which is to take office in less than two weeks.

Iran Opens 1st Specialized Nuclear Industry Innovation Center

TEHRAN (MNA) – The First Specialized Nuclear Industry Innovation Center was inaugurated in Tehran on Monday in the presence of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Chief and Vice-President for Science and Technology.

The First Specialized Nuclear Industry Innovation Center was launched with the aim of commercializing the research achievements of the country’s nuclear scientists.

It should be noted that the Center was inaugurated in the presence of AEOI Chief Ali-Akbar Salehi and Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari.

The establishment of this Center is the first step in forming the innovation ecosystem in the nuclear industry and supporting the process of innovation development in this industry.

It is hoped that the nuclear industry of the country will benefit from developing peaceful applications of nuclear technology in medicine, agriculture, industry, etc.

Over 15bTomans Invested to Revive Urmia Lake

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iran’s Department of Environment (DOE) Issa Kalantari said on Monday that the Urmia Lake restoration project has absorbed over 15 billion tomans of investment in the last seven years.

Speaking in a national projects inauguration ceremony attended by President Hassan Rouhani, the DOE head said that Urmia Lake restoration projects have had 98 percent advancement and the lake would reach its ecological level in early 2022.

He named a number of environmental projects implemented during the two terms of Rouhani administration, including forestation, tree planting, watershed management, expanding protected lands and plant species, specification of water rights for over 70 wetlands, locating haze producing areas, and containing parts of them, elevating air pollution-related standards for vehicles, etc.

Kalantari noted that no national project has begun without environmental assessments and no license has been issued for water-intensive industries within inland regions and they have been moved to coastal areas.

President Rouhani inaugurated several national projects today, the bulk of which were pertaining to environment protection.

Before President Hassan Rouhani took the office, no officials had put the issue on agenda to prevent degradation of environment and revitalize Urmia Lake in an important meeting, such as the meeting of cabinet ministers. Dubbed ‘Turquoise Solitaire of Azarbaijan’ by Iranians, the lake is located between East and West Azarbaijan provinces.

Majlis Approves General Points of a New Bill

TEHRAN (IP) - The general points of the bill for obliging the executive bodies to respond to the written and oral reprimands of the Iranian parliament members were approved.

Chaired by the Speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Majlis open session started on Monday to continue the review of the report by the commission on standing orders about the double urgency plan on the necessity of the executive organizations to provide answers to the lawmakers’ oral and written notifications, reported Iran Press.

During the review of the bill to oblige the executive bodies to respond to the written and oral reprimands of the MPs on Monday, the MPs approved the bill with 163 votes in favor, 60 against, and 5 abstentions from a total of 242 votes.

As one of the bill’s opponents and despite agreeing with the general points of the bill, Alireza Salimi stated that the details had some drawbacks.

He noted that the parliament needs written reprimands, and it should not be up to the presiding board to determine the urgency of the MPs’ notices.

Iran Reports 10% Surge in Loading/Unloading Operations at Ports

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures by Iran Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) show loading and unloading operations at ports located south and north of the country soared by nearly 10% in the four months to July 22 against similar period last year.

A senior PMO official said on Sunday that loading and unloading at 22 Iranian ports had picked up by 9.8% in the first four months of the current calendar year to a total of 46.18 million metric tons.

Ravanbakhsh Behzadian, who serves as PMO’s head of ports affairs, said loading and unloading of petroleum products including crude at Iranian ports had soared by 22.7% to 17.46 million tons in late July this year.

Behzadian said the amount of liquid bulk cargoes handled at the ports had increased by nearly 40% to 1.47 million tons while general cargo handling surged by 25.3% to a total of 6.89 million tons over the same period.

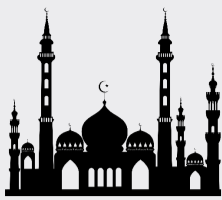
Loading and unloading of dry bulk and container cargoes had declined slightly compared with the four months to July 2020, said the PMO official.

He said the figures were related to operations in 22 major Iranian ports, including five trade gateways on the Caspian Sea in northern Iran which mostly process Iran’s trade with Russia and other former Soviet Union countries.

A bulk of loading and unloading operations, however, took place in ports of Shahid Rajaei, in the south, and Imam Khomeini, located in southwestern Iran. The two ports on the Persian Gulf are responsible for a major part of Iran’s bulk and container cargo handling.

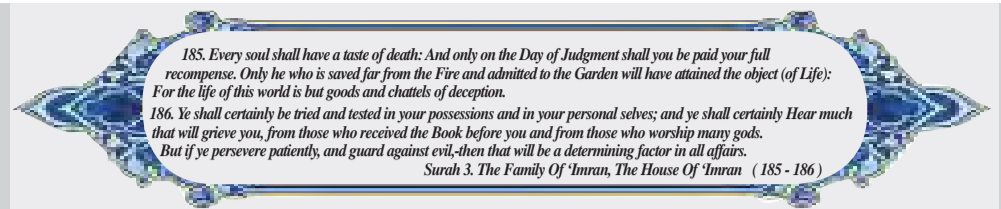
The 22.7% surge in loading and unloading of petroleum products is a sign Iran has increased its crude exports this year despite US efforts to cut to zero the country’s crude sales through its regime of sanctions.

Latest PMO figures are also a sign that Iran’s trade with the rest of the world have hardly been affected by U.S. sanctions and the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:33
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:31
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:09



S. Korean Big Companies Waiting for Iran Deal With West

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – New South Korea's Ambassador to Tehran Yun Kanghyeon in meeting with head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce Mr. Masoud Khansari said major South Korean companies are waiting for Iran's deal with the West to resume cooperation with Tehran.

In the meeting, Yun said that South Korea's oil and petrochemical industry suffered the most from the U.S. sanctions against Iran, and said fortunately it seems the governments have reached agreement at the negotiation table and in case sanctions against Iran are removed, South Korea will resume its cooperation in Iran especially in the fields of infrastructures like railway or equipping Iran's internet network with the 5G technology.

Yun claimed after the removal of sanctions, South Korea's investment in Iran will be in a way that Iran's frozen assets in South Korean banks will be considered insignificant comparing to the volume of investment, adding that South Korea is committed to help Iranians and in the past years and after issuance of license for humanitarian trade by the U.S., it has sent huge volume of medicine and medical equipment.

He then pointed to the payment of Iran's membership fees to the UN which was around \$60m and it was paid through Iran's frozen assets in the two South Korean banks, adding that recent developments in the past one year indicate the sanctions against Iran are being removed and after the final agreement with the West, big South Korean companies will move towards Iran.

Yun reiterated that South Korean government does not get order from the U.S.



for its ties with Iran, adding that ignoring the U.S. sanctions will cost the offender companies too much and currently one of the South Korean banks has frozen some part of Iran's oil sale money and it faced heavy fines due to its cooperation in recent years.

He added that the level of cooperation between Korean companies with the U.S. is very higher than with Iran and therefore they are not ready to be penalized by the U.S. for the sake of cooperation with Iran.

Yun said Iranian and South Korean currently can cooperate in exchange of humanitarian items like medicines through the frozen assets of Iran in the two Korean banks.

Meanwhile Khansari, for his part, called for release of Iran's frozen assets which is estimated to be around \$7b and called it the major demand of Iranian nation and economic activists. He added before reimposition of the U.S. sanctions, the trade volume between Iran and South Korea was around \$17b but after the pullout of the U.S. from the JCPOA, the trade volume fell to less than \$2b. He reiterated that South Koreans suffered more loss because of the sanctions while Iranians tried to focus more on their own capabilities.

He also announced readiness of Iran for expansion of economic cooperation with Korean companies, adding that holding trade webinars between enterprises of the two countries is of the major actions of Tehran Chamber of Commerce for making the business activists with capacities of the two countries and cooperation with South Korean Embassy can be put on the agenda of the both sides.

“Bahman Mohassess in Rome” Featured in a New Documentary by Italian Embassy in Tehran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The life and Art of Bahman Mohassess, known as the “Persian Picasso”, was featured in a new documentary presented yesterday at the residence of the Italian Ambassador in Iran, Giuseppe Perrone, as part of the video-series “From Tehran to Rome. A Journey through Art”.

“Art is an act of destruction. It seeks to arouse people and unshackle them from daily life either by praising beauty or by unveiling dreadful deities”. This was Mohassess' motto and the leitmotif of this new documentary, focused on the strength of the creative process which led Mohassess to produce and destroy, at the same time, many of his masterpieces. What remains of it today is mostly in the hands of Iranian and international collectors and offered at the most famous auction houses in the world.

Born in Rasht in 1931, Mohassess moved at the age of 23 to Italy where he studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. In the capital of Italy he quickly



became an integral part of the Italian contemporary art scene. Painter, sculptor, theatre set designer, translator - during his long artistic career he has experienced a profound stylistic evolution which can be admired in his numerous art collections. Particularly noteworthy are the mythological figures, in part man and in part bull, from the “Minotaurs” series, which represent the

conceptual core of Mohassess' vision of humanity and of his artistic expression.

Mohassess died in Rome in 2010 at the age of 79 while interpreting himself in Mitra Farahani's documentary “Fifi Howls from Happiness”. He left an artistic collection of inestimable value, although unknown in its real entity, which includes wide selection of paintings and sculptures from the collections “Fifi”, “Human Bodies”, “Minotaurs”, “Still Life”, “Collages”, and “Birds and Fish”.

The documentary “Bahman Mohassess in Rome. The Persian Picasso” was produced in cooperation with local artists, with Mitra Farahani and the “Estate of Bahman Mohassess” foundation. The video, and the previous episodes of the series (“Tapes” feat. Bizhan Bassiri, “Hands in Earth” feat. Mohsen Vaziri Moqaddam & “King of the Scene” feat. Khosrow Khorshidi) are available for viewing on the social media platforms of the Italian Embassy in Tehran (YouTube, Instagram, Twitter).

850 Illegal Water Pumps Discovered in Isfahan

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

ISFAHAN – With the launch of operation for identifying the illegal water pumps, some 850 illegal water pumps were discovered in the city of Isfahan last month.

The manager of the public relations and public education of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company announced the news and said that most of the discovered illegal water pumps have been at the district 5 with 410 pumps and District 4 with 324 pumps.

Mehrdad Khorsandi added that direct installation of pump on the water distribution network is an offence and the offender will be persecuted. He noted that the groups in charge of promoting efficient water consumption in the province are allowed in cooperation with the law enforcement forces to identify the offenders and to cut their water subscription.

He said the groups after discovering the illegal pumps first warn the offender subscribers and in case the warning is disregarded, they sever subscription temporarily till the offender stop offence.

Khorsandi noted that illegal pumps will lead to the drop in the water pressure in the network and for the subscribers who are close to the offender subscribers. He also urged the public to inform the company by contacting with Tel No. 122 in case they face with those who use illegal pumps.



Esfarayen Steel Plant Exports €4.2b in Q1

BOJNOURD (IRNA) - Esfarayen Industrial Complex (EICO) CEO said that the plant has exported 4.218 billion euros of steel products in the first quarter of the current Iranian year (started March 21, 2021).

Ali Malek said that the unit has produced over 26,700 tons of alloy steel in this period, from which 18,337 tons have been sold in the domestic market, with another 7,019 tons having been exported. He added that the exported alloy steel of the plant has seen a 10 percent increase in value and 20 percent in weight compared to the same period last year. The company's total production has grown 38 percent compared to the first quarter of the previous Persian year (March 10, 2020-June 10, 2020) and its domestic and foreign sales have increased by 60 percent in terms of value.

Official Hails Rise in Production at SAIPA Group

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Mr. Mohsen Salehinia during his visit of SAIPA Group hailed the brave action of the group in halting the production of Pride cars in the heat of sanctions and increasing the number of its daily production by 130 percent comparing to 2018 and called it an example of dynamic capability and flexibility of auto industry and serious development at SAIPA Group.

According to the head of policy-making body for auto production in the country, attention to the tough condition of auto industry due to the international sanctions and Coronavirus restrictions will double the value of these changes.

Salehinia also said that the increase of products from four in 2018 to seven products

in the current year with better quality is the sign of efforts of this industry to attract the satisfaction of its customers, adding that although it is praiseworthy, this trend for improvement should be pursued strongly.

He said that despite early shocks for reimposition of the U.S. sanctions in the past two years, Iran's auto industry has reached higher level of its capability with relying on its international cooperation experiences and focusing on indigenization of auto parts.

Then the CEO of SAIPA Group Mr. Seyed Javad Soleimani, for his part, pointed to the expertly supports of IDRO as the policy-making body for auto production, and said the rise in the number of production despite the halt in production of Pride cars which accounted for 700 percent of SAIPA's products is a serious step.



Key Role of Jask Oil Terminal In Iran's Energy Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) believes the Jask Oil Terminal will play a key role internationally in the future of Iran's energy trade and with diversification of avenues for exports, the country can provide a new route with high economic advantages for Iran's overseas oil buyers in the Persian Gulf.



Speaking in the official inauguration ceremony of the project for transfer of crude oil from Goreh to the Jask oil terminal on Thursday, the CEO of POGC Mr. Mohammad Meshkinfam explained some details of this important project. He said that for the Jask Oil Terminal project in its final phase, three targets of completing transfer, measuring and loading the crude oil as well as industrial installations and backup quay have been set by the yearend.

He went on to say that this project beside diversifying the geography of energy transfer and increasing the capacity of storing will lead to the ground for building Makran Refinery and downstream industries through attracting investment and creating jobs.

Meshkinfam noted that the project began in early 2020 despite sanctions and restrictions which were aimed at zeroing Iran's oil revenues, adding that offshore installation for crude oil exports of Jask began with an investment around \$300m by Iranian experts by two Iranian companies whose first phase comes into operation today.

He added that the priority of this project is to use native forces, adding that two companies in charge of the project created some 1200 direct jobs during implementing the project and 300 sustainable jobs during its exploitation.

Meshkinfam added that the Jask Oil Terminal project is aimed at exporting on average of one million barrels of light and heavy crude oil per day via the under the sea pipelines and three single point moorings (SPMs) floating six kilometers off the Oman Sea coasts.

KSC Exports Its First Consignment to Kazakhstan

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) announced the export of the first consignment of the company to Kazakhstan last month.



Kasra Ghafoori said that for the first time, the final product of the company, including 500 tons of steel construction structures, was exported to Kazakhstan last month via Amirabad Port and from Mazandaran Sea. He added that this export package includes 500 tons of rebar with sizes 14 and 20 which will enter Kazakhstan via the marine route in the upcoming days.

Ghafoori went on to say that in the first quarter of the current year, KSC succeeded in exporting 55,000 tons of steel ingots and over 33,000 tons of construction structures to different countries despite all hurdles created by the U.S. sanctions, and added that creating new trade relations and finding new markets for exports is of the important strategies of the company in its foreign trade, and for this reason the first consignment of the light construction structures to new countries in the Central Asia like Kazakhstan is very important for the company.

He reiterated that support of responsible bodies for opening the new export markets to steel producers can be of the exact example for materializing the slogan of the year which the Supreme Leader has set.

Meanwhile head of sales department of the company Mr. Hossein Bakhtiari said that the value and volume of exports by the company has been doubled in the first four months of the current year comparing to the same period, adding that the company has enjoyed considerable growth in selling its final products.

South Korea Steps Up COVID-19 Curbs

SEOUL (Reuters) - South Korea said on Sunday it will tighten social distancing rules across most of the country this week, warning that its worst-ever COVID-19 wave might spread further in the summer holiday season.

The curbs will be increased to Level 3 on a four-level scale, which will mean a 10 p.m. dining curfew and ban on gatherings of more than four people, from Tuesday for two weeks for most areas except for some small counties.

"What's most concerning is the virus' recent spread in the non-capital areas," President Moon Jae-in told an intra-agency meeting reviewing efforts in the campaign against the coronavirus.



Greek Police Clash With Protesters

ATHENS (Dispatches) - Greek police used teargas and water cannon to disperse people who had gathered in central Athens on Saturday to protest against mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations.

More than 4,000 people rallied outside the Greek parliament for a third time this month to oppose mandatory inoculations for some workers, such as healthcare and nursing staff.

A police official, who asked not to be named, said some protesters had thrown petrol bombs, prompting the police to respond with tear gas.

A rally on Wednesday was also marred by violence.



Afghan Forces Capture Four Taliban for Eid Rocket Attack



KABUL (Dispatches) - Afghan forces have captured four Taliban fighters including a militant commander for carrying out this week's rocket attack targeting the presidential palace in Kabul during the Muslim Eid al-Adha prayers, officials said Sunday.

At least three rockets landed near the palace on Tuesday as President Ashraf Ghani and his top officials performed outdoor prayers to mark the start of the Muslim holiday.

The interior ministry said police had arrested four Taliban fighters in an operation in Kabul who were behind the attack, which was claimed by the jihadist Islamic State group.

"A Taliban commander, Momin, along with his three other men, have been arrested. They all belong to the Taliban group," ministry spokesman Mirwais Stanikzai told reporters in a video message.

He said Momin was a key organiser of the rocket attack, and the group was also involved in other attacks.

The palace was also attacked last year as hundreds gathered for Ghani's inauguration for a second term as president. That attack was also claimed by IS.

The Taliban have announced ceasefires during past Islamic holidays in recent years, offering respite to Afghans who can visit family in relative safety, but no such offer was made on this occasion.

The rocket attack on Tuesday came as the Taliban capitalise on the last stages of the withdrawal of US-led foreign forces from Afghanistan, capturing scores of districts, border crossings and encircling several provincial capitals.

The fighting continues across the rugged countryside as peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban have so far failed to reach a deal to end the war. Meanwhile more than 22,000 Afghan families have fled from their homes to escape fighting in the former Taliban bastion of Kandahar, officials said Sunday, as authorities arrested four suspected insurgents over this week's rocket attack on Kabul.

Since early May, violence has surged across several provinces including in Kandahar after the insurgents launched a sweeping offensive just days after the U.S.-led foreign forces began their final withdrawal.

The Taliban's deadly assault has seen the insurgents capture scores of districts, border crossings and encircle several provincial capitals.

"The fighting has displaced 22,000 families in the past one month in Kandahar," Dost Mohammad Daryab, head of the provincial refugee department, told AFP.

"They have all moved from the volatile districts of the city to safer areas."

On Sunday, fighting continued on the outskirts of Kandahar city.

"The negligence of some security forces, especially the police, has made way for the Taliban to come that close," Lalai Dastageeri, deputy governor of Kandahar province, told AFP.

Macron Pressured to Apologize for Nuclear Tests in French Polynesia

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron faced pressure to apologize for the devastating impact of decades of nuclear testing as he kicked off his first official trip to French Polynesia.

During his four-day visit, Macron plans to address the legacy of nuclear testing from 1966 to 1996 as France developed atomic weapons, as well as discuss the South Pacific territory's strategic role and the existential risk of rising seas posed by global warming.

Residents in the sprawling archipelago of more than 100 islands located midway between Mexico and Australia are hoping Macron apologizes and confirms compensation for radiation victims.

The tests remain a source of deep resentment, seen as evidence of racist colonial attitudes that disregarded the lives of islanders.

After touching down Saturday, Macron, whose 2020 trip was postponed due to the pandemic, met hospital workers fighting Covid-19 in the semi-autonomous territory where many are wary of vaccines.



Protests Across Tunisia Target Ennahda Party Over Political Crisis

TUNIS (Reuters) -Police and protesters clashed in several Tunisian cities on Sunday as demonstrators demanding the government step down attacked offices of Ennahda, the moderate Islamist party that is the biggest in parliament.

Witnesses said protesters stormed or tried to storm Ennahda offices in Monastir, Sfax, El Kef and Sousse, while in Touzeur they set fire to the party's local headquarters. The violence came as hundreds of protesters rallied in each of the main cities after a spike in COVID-19 cases that has aggravated economic troubles and exposed the failings of a squabbling political class.

The protests, the biggest in Tunisia for months and the biggest to target Ennahda for years, were called by social media activists. No political parties publicly backed the rallies. In Tunis, police used pepper spray against protesters who threw stones and shouted slogans demanding that Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi quit and parliament be dissolved. There were other big protests in Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid and Nabeul.

The protests raise pressure on a fragile government that is enmeshed in a political struggle with President Kais Saied, as the government tries to avert a looming fiscal crisis amid a weeks-long spike in COVID-19 cases and increased death rates.

The pandemic has hammered the economy which was already struggling in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution that ousted long-time authoritarian leader Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.

Public support for democracy has waned amid surging unemployment and crumbling state services.

"Our patience has run out... there are no solutions for the unemployed," said Nourredine Selmi, 28, a jobless protester. "They cannot control the epidemic ... They can't give us vaccines."

Last week, Mechichi sacked the health minister after chaotic scenes at walk-in vaccination centres during the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday, where large crowds queued for inadequate supplies of vaccine.

Russian Navy Can Carry Out Unpreventable Strike If Needed

MOSCOW (Reuters) - The Russian navy can detect any enemy and launch an "unpreventable strike" if needed, President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday, weeks after a UK warship angered Moscow by passing the Crimea peninsula.

"We are capable of detecting any underwater, above-water, airborne enemy and, if required, carry out an unpreventable strike against it," Putin said speaking at a navy day parade in St Petersburg.

Putin's words follow an incident in the Black Sea in June when Russia said it had fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of a British warship to chase it out of Crimea waters.

Britain rejected Russia's account of the incident, saying it believed any shots fired were a pre-announced Russian "gunnery exercise", and that no bombs had been dropped.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 but Britain and most of the world recognize the Black Sea peninsula as part of Ukraine, not Russia.

Putin said last month Russia could have sunk the British warship HMS Defender, that it accused of illegally entering its territorial waters, without starting World War Three and said the United States played a role in the "provocation".



Maduro Aims for Dialogue With Opposition in August

CARACAS (Reuters) -

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said that he was aiming to begin a dialogue with the country's political opposition next month in Mexico facilitated by Norway, a process he hoped the United States would embrace.

In May the opposition changed strategy and indicated its willingness to return to negotiations to resolve the political crisis in OPEC member Venezuela.

Maduro has overseen an economic collapse in once-prosperous Venezuela since taking office in 2013, and stands accused by his domestic opponents, the United States and the European Union of corruption, human rights violations and rigging his 2018 re-election. Maduro denies the accusations.

In June, top diplomats in Washington, Brussels and Ottawa said they would be willing to revise their sanctions on Maduro's government if the dialogue with the opposition led to significant progress toward free and fair elections.

"I can tell you that we are ready to go to Mexico," Maduro said in an interview on the state-funded Telesur television network late on Saturday. "We have begun to discuss a complicated, difficult agenda."

Venezuela's opposition, led by Juan Guaido, has accused Maduro of using previous rounds to buy time in the face of diplomatic and sanctions pressure by the United States and others. Guaido is recognized by Washington and several other Western democracies as the country's rightful leader.

Opposition groups have said they are willing to negotiate the conditions for presidential and parliamentary elections with Maduro's government.

Maduro, in turn, has said he wants the negotiations to focus on the lifting of U.S. sanctions targeting the financial and oil sectors.

He added that the negotiations would include "all the oppositions," a reference to opposition politicians who broke with Guaido's call to boycott the 2020 parliamentary elections, which were won handily by Maduro's ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela.





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S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

△△△ Parsian △△△

Kamranieh (\$2800) 300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F
Mahmoodieh (\$3000) 400sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F
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Russia Sends Aid to Cuba

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has sent two plane loads of humanitarian aid to Cuba, with the country facing a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases, and an ongoing U.S. economic embargo.

The Russian government announced on Saturday it had sent two AN-124 'Ruslan' aircraft from the Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday, to Cuba, on the orders of President Vladimir Putin.

"The planes will deliver food, personal protective equipment and more than a million medical masks to Cuba. In total, more than 88 tons," the defense ministry said in a statement.

The island of 11 million inhabitants is currently experiencing a worrying increase in the number of infections and deaths due to COVID-19: 316,383 and 2,203 respectively since the start of the pandemic, according to official figures from Friday.



Lebanon Signs Fuel Deal With Iraq to Ease Crisis

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq has signed an agreement allowing the cash-strapped Lebanese government to pay for 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil a year in goods and services, helping Lebanon ease its acute power shortage, the two sides said on Saturday.

Lebanon is in the throes of an economic meltdown threatening its stability. It has all but run down foreign reserves and faces a growing shortage of fuel, medicine and other basic goods.

Most Lebanese face power cuts for many hours a day.

Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Allawi and Lebanese caretaker Energy Minister Raymond Ghajar co-signed the agreement in the presence of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

Lebanese officials have said the Iraqi supplies will ease the situation at home.

Ghajar, speaking on his return to Beirut after signing the deal, said the fuel would be used for electricity generation and was enough for four months. He said it was worth about \$300m to \$400m.

Iraq's Oil Ministry said in a statement it would supply Lebanon with surplus heavy fuel oil from its refineries.

Lebanon is experiencing its worst economic crisis since its 15-year civil war ended in 1990.

The country, which has struggled to meet electricity demand at the best of times, has imposed increasingly long power cuts across the nation as fuel supplies have run short during the crisis that erupted in late 2019.

Many Lebanese rely on private generators that use diesel, which is also in short supply.

A shortage of foreign currency had made it impossible for Lebanon to secure fuel and other essential goods.

Hospitals said this week their generators were at risk of running out of fuel, putting critical patients at risk.

On Saturday, a top hospital director warned that the deepening economic crisis has piled pressure on hospitals, leaving them ill-equipped to face any new wave of the coronavirus.

"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.

Even the Rafik Hariri University Hospital he runs has been struggling to cope.

"We only get two to three hours of mains electricity, and for the rest of the time it's up to the generators," Abiad told AFP news agency.

Global Insurance Recovery Will Be Faster, Stronger

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The global insurance industry is poised to recover more quickly and forcefully from the pandemic than it did after the 2008 financial crisis, despite such obstacles as low interest rates and inflation risk, insurer Swiss Re AG's chief Americas economist said.

Unlike the prior crisis, the pandemic did not weaken insurers' overall capitalization or financial strength, which allows companies to write new coverage and increase revenue, economist Thomas Holzhau told Reuters.

Writing new policies was more difficult in 2009 and 2010 when insurers were reeling from capital losses, slow economic growth and depleted incomes of companies and individuals.

In contrast, businesses and individuals now have more money from government stimulus and support programs, and are more conscious of the need to buy protection against risks, he added.

"We see a much stronger, more resilient demand for insurance - last year, this year, and we expect for the next few years - compared with the financial crisis, when the industry was a part of the financial markets issues," he said.

Swiss Re's view aligns with other bullish signs. Global commercial insurance prices, for example, rose 18% in the first quarter of 2021 from a year earlier, on average, insurance broker Marsh McLennan Cos Inc said in May. Rates have risen since late 2017. Swiss Re said it expects annual growth for all premiums, not just commercial, to reach 3.3% this year and 3.9% in 2022, after falling just 1.3% last year. That compares with a 3.7% decline in 2008, during the financial crisis, and a slower rebound of 0.5% and 2.1% in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

Sector bellwether Travelers Companies Inc on Tuesday beat second-quarter Wall Street estimates by more than \$1.00 a share.

Many G20 Nations Want More Urgent Climate Goals

ROME (Dispatches) - Many of the climate and energy ministers at a Group of 20 meeting hosted by Italy agreed to work toward even more ambitious goals for fighting climate change than those established in the 2015 Paris accords, an Italian official said.

Italy's minister of ecological transition, Roberto Cingolani, also said during a news conference that concern over last week's devastating flooding in Germany, Belgium

and the Netherlands was palpable during the two days of negotiations in Naples. Germany and the European Union are G-20 members.

"All began by offering condolences" to the representatives of the affected countries, Cingolani said. Such natural disasters are "changing consciences," even on a political level, he said.

Climate scientists say the link between extreme weather and global warming is unmistakable, making it clear that urgent action is needed. The G-20 nations collectively account for some 80% of the world's gross domestic product and some 60% of the planet's population.

At the Naples talks, the United States, the European Union, Japan and Canada made clear they "firmly intend to go faster than the Paris agreement by the (end of) the decade, and below 1.5 degrees," Cingolani said.

World leaders agreed six years ago in Paris to work to keep global temperatures from increasing more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and ideally no more than 1.5 degrees C (2.7 F) by the end of the century. Scientists say both goals will be missed by a wide margin unless drastic steps are taken to reduce emissions.

"That half degree could make an enormous difference in terms of glacial melting" and other phenomena linked to climate change, Cingolani said.

In any case, Cingolani said, all G-20 members agreed to at least meet the Paris goals. "There is no country which puts the Paris accords in doubt," he said.

U.S. President Joe Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, participated in the Naples talks. Earlier in the week, Kerry called on China to join the United States in urgently cutting greenhouse gases.

The majority of the countries at the conference also backed a goal of moving faster to reduce the use of coal, the Italian minister said, without naming all of the nations.

But during the talks, China, as well as Russia and India, were "more prudent" in embracing more ambitious goals, Cingolani said.

India's Largest Refiner Plans to Ramp Up Capacity This Decade

LONDON (Oil Price) - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the largest oil refiner in the country, looks to boost its crude oil refining capacity by one-third over the next half-decade as it believes gasoline and diesel demand will continue to rise in India, IOC's chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya told Bloomberg.

"I firmly believe all forms of fuel will have a place to stay -- fossil fuels will be there," Vaidya told Bloomberg in an interview published yesterday.

"Consumption is going from leaps and bounds and energy security is the primary concern for me, which may not be the concern to the developed world," IOC's top executive said.

IOC is investing \$13 billion in its capacity expansion, which will raise its crude oil processing capabilities to as much as 2.15 million barrels per day (bpd).

IOC operates 11 of India's 23 refineries and has a 51-percent share of crude and product pipelines (by length) and a 42-percent share in number of fuel retail outlets, Fitch Ratings said last week, when it affirmed IOC's rating at BBB-.

The top Indian oil refiner is taking some steps in investing in low-carbon energy, its chairman told Bloomberg. IOC experiments with hydrogen for transport, invests in solar, wind and battery technology, and plans to power new units with renewable energy, Vaidya said.

IOC's strategy continues to be based on demand for fossil fuels, unlike that of oil-to-telecoms conglomerate Reliance Industries. Last month, chairman Mukesh Ambani said that Reliance Industries plans to invest more than \$10 billion in three years in a new business unit that will build a solar module, battery storage, electrolyser, and fuel cell factories.



India's Economic Rebound Faces Rising Risk From Virus Variants

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India's economic rebound, already weakened in recent months, could lose further momentum as coronavirus variants pose the greatest threat and inflation rises, a Reuters poll of economists found.

The latest survey results suggest difficult policy decisions lie ahead for the Reserve Bank of India, which has already seen two consecutive months of inflation above the 6% upper limit of the range it tolerates.

The RBI said last week that prospects for the economy had brightened and the inflation rise would be transitory, echoing the views of most major central banks.

But the fast spread of the Delta variant in some states - and it is becoming dominant around the world - has raised doubts as the country contends with a devastating wave of COVID-19.

The July 15-22 poll of 52 economists showed a third consecutive downgrade to the growth outlook for the current fiscal year 2021-22, but also the third such upgrade to the following year. About two-thirds of economists, or 23 of 36, who responded to an extra question said virus variants were the biggest risk, while only a handful cited high inflation.

"Resurgence in cases and (any) emergence of fresh variants are notable risks for the economy for the rest of the year, particularly at a time when vaccination coverage is short of achieving a critical mass," said DBS economist Radhika Rao.

"Reinstatement of movement curbs risks deepening the damage inflicted on the informal sector, which contributes to nearly half of the national output and employs a majority." A separate Reuters survey of global health experts last month concluded another wave of infections and COVID-19 in India was likely by October.

After contracting in the previous fiscal year at its fastest annual pace since records began over four decades ago - one of the worst-hit in Asia, the economy was predicted to expand 9.4% in the current fiscal year.

The last time the economy grew that quickly was in 2010.

The latest consensus forecast was a downgrade from 9.8% in the previous poll in May, itself down from 11.0% in April, and slightly below the RBI's latest projection of 9.5%.

Asked for their worst-case scenario this fiscal year, economists provided a median 7.0%, in a 5.0%-9.0% range. Growth in any case was expected to slow to 6.9% in fiscal 2022-23.

Although inflation was forecast to ease from 6.3% at the last measure, the consensus was for it to average above the mid-point of the RBI's medium-term target of 2%-6% at least until early 2023.

New Lockdowns in Asia Cast Doubt On Growth Recoveries



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - As new variant of the deadly coronavirus begins to engulf Asian countries, economists remain concerned about the pace of economic recovery. Restrictions imposed to contain the spread pose renewed headwinds to growth in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, while tech exports may keep North Asia relatively insulated amid vaccination rollouts which remain slow, global investment bank Barclays said.

Asia's relative success at containing covid-19 in 2020 appears to have been undone by the spread of the delta variant, just as an economic recovery was starting to take hold across the region. Health costs are climbing, with more than 10,000 new infections and nearly 3,000 deaths reported across the eight countries on 21 July alone. Healthcare systems are under great strain. Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia appear to be the current hotspots, reporting the highest number of cases and deaths. In contrast, new cases are receding in India, the Philippines and Taiwan.

Restrictions of varying degrees have been imposed across the region. However, mobility indicators show a milder economic impact compared with the lockdowns imposed in 2020, possibly due to low levels of compliance despite very strict restrictions being imposed, particularly in Thailand and Indonesia, said Barclays.

According to Barclays, if new cases continue to surge, with deaths picking up in tandem, harsher lockdowns or more protracted periods of restrictions cannot be ruled out, which would imply headwinds to growth. This has already been seen in Singapore, despite relatively high level of vaccinations in the country.

Even as the spike in India is receding, the Covid wave has moved eastwards, with Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Korea reporting record numbers of daily infections.

“Beautiful Iran” Exhibition Opens in Tokyo

TOKYO (IRNA) - An exhibition of Iranian works of art, culture and handicrafts opened at the Iranian embassy in Tokyo on Monday.

The exhibition, themed “beautiful Iran”, is being held while the Olympic Games are underway in the Japanese capital. A number of senior Iranian sports officials, as well as the Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Koichi Hagiuda, participated in the opening ceremony of the exhibition. The event will continue until August 6.



Turkey Hits Back at UNESCO Concern Over Hagia Sophia

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The UN cultural agency had voiced “grave concern” for the World Heritage Site in Istanbul after it was changed from a museum to a mosque. Turkey said there was “no negative impact” to the building.

Turkey's foreign ministry on Saturday rejected UNESCO criticism over Ankara reopening the Hagia Sophia, once a Christian temple, as place of Muslim worship a year ago.

The United Nations cultural agency expressed “grave concern” on Friday over the fate of Istanbul's most famous temple. But Turkey dismissed the comments as “biased and political” and said Ankara was “astonished” by the move.

The Turkish foreign ministry said the changes to the Hagia Sophia had “no negative impact” on UNESCO standards.

“Turkey disassociates itself from the relevant articles of the decision on the 'Historic Areas of Istanbul' based on biased, unfair wording prepared with political intentions,” said its foreign ministry.

The Turkish government said it is “fully aware of its rights, prerogatives and responsibilities towards its properties on UNESCO World Heritage List.”

In an apparent signal to the public, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tweeted a video of Hagia Sophia on Saturday, calling it “a symbol of the re-rising of the sun of our civilization.”

He expressed his hopes that the sounds of Muslim prayers and worship would “echo the domes of this mighty shrine until the end of the world.”

The World Heritage Committee of UNESCO meeting in China for its annual session asked Turkey to provide “an updated report on the state of conservation” of the Hagia Sophia.

The building was built in 537 and was the largest cathedral in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. The Ottoman Empire captured what is now called Istanbul in 1453 and converted the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.



The secular Turkish Republic established it as a museum in 1935 but President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reopened it as a mosque in July 2020.

The conversion of the Hagia Sophia and an ancient Othodox church called the Holy Saviour in Chora to mosques come as Erdogan tries to muster nationalist supporters in the midst of an economic crisis created by the pandemic.

The UNESCO committee said it “deeply regrets the lack of dialogue and information” on the changes and asked Turkey to engage in better international communication about its plans for these sites.

U.S. Trade Agency Drops Tariff Threat Against Vietnam



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Trade Representative's office said it had determined that no tariff action against Vietnam was warranted after its central bank agreed with the U.S. Treasury not to manipulate its currency for an export advantage.

In a statement, USTR said it found that the U.S. Treasury-State Bank of Vietnam agreement earlier this week “provides a satisfactory resolution of the matter subject to investigation and accordingly that no trade action is warranted at this time.”

The State Bank of Vietnam on Monday pledged in an agreement with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to refrain from “competitive devaluation” of its dong currency and make its monetary and exchange rate policies more transparent.

The deal follows months of U.S. pressure on Vietnam over its currency practices and ballooning U.S. trade surplus. The Trump administration in its final weeks had declared Vietnam a currency manipulator and had threatened to impose punitive tariffs on imports from Vietnam over its currency practices.

The USTR determination, outlined in a federal register notice, only pertains to its Section 301 investigation into Vietnam's currency practices. It does not affect a separate Section 301 investigation into Vietnam's use of illegally harvested or traded timber that could lead to tariffs on furniture and other wood products imported from Vietnam.

“American workers and businesses are stronger when our partners value their currency fairly and compete on a level playing field,” U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai said in a statement.

“Going forward, in coordination with Treasury, we will work together with Vietnam to ensure implementation, and we will continue to examine the currency practices of other major trading partners,” Tai added.

Vietnam welcomed the USTR's decision to take no action, its foreign minister, Bui Thanh Son, said.

“Constructive efforts and goodwill help resolve outstanding issues and contribute to the building of a better and stronger partnership,” Son said on Twitter on Saturday.

The Vietnamese dong closed at 23,005 to the dollar on Friday, compared with 23,191 on Oct. 2, 2020, the day that USTR launched its currency probe.

Singapore Full-Year Inflation Forecast Raised to 1% to 2%

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) yesterday raised their full-year forecast for overall inflation to between 1 per cent and 2 per cent, up from the range of 0.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent previously.

The forecast for core inflation was kept unchanged, at 0 per cent to 1 per cent.

This comes as the latest monthly consumer price data showed that overall or all-items inflation last month remained at a seven-year high of 2.4 per cent - a rate unchanged from May. Consumer prices have now risen for six straight months.

A bigger drop in the price of retail and other goods was broadly offset by the pickup in private transport and accommodation costs, MAS and MTI explained in a joint statement.

However, core inflation - which excludes private transport and accommodation costs - eased to 0.6 per cent last month, down from 0.8 per cent in May, due mainly to the steeper decline in the cost of retail and other goods.

Barclays economist Brian Tan said that tighter social distancing measures continued to weigh on price pressures. MAS and MTI said core inflation in Singapore will continue to gradually increase in the coming quarters, but the return to tighter measures under phase two (heightened alert) will dampen the momentum in underlying inflation. “Uncertainty in the economic outlook will weigh on consumer sentiment and hence price increases in the near term,” they added.

The central bank uses core inflation as a gauge for its exchange rate-based monetary policy.

MAS and MTI projected that overall inflation should ease in the latter part of the year.

Private transport and accommodation costs should remain resilient on the back of firm demand for cars and rental accommodation.

But the pace of increase in private transport costs is likely to slow as base effects fade, they said.

Ms Selena Ling, head of treasury research and strategy at OCBC Bank, said the raised forecast for overall inflation took into account rising external inflation amid higher global oil prices and also factory gate inflation in some major economies, including China.

But continued negative output gaps in many economies should help to moderate Singapore's overall import prices, she noted.

“Looking at the recent Delta virus increase and tightened lockdowns in many regional economies that are Singapore's key trading partners, this should also help cap imported inflation,” she said, adding that supply chain disruptions could affect segments of import prices as well.

Led by a steeper increase in car prices, private transport inflation jumped 14.9 per cent year on year last month, from 14.5 per cent in May.

Accommodation inflation increased to 1.1 per cent year on year last month, from 0.9 per cent in May, as housing rents rose at a faster pace.

Meanwhile, the cost of retail and other goods fell by a sharper 1.8 per cent year on year last month, from 0.8 per cent in May, mostly due to a steeper decline in the price of clothing and footwear.

Electricity and gas expenses also saw a smaller decline of 1.8 per cent, from 1.9 per cent before, as take-up in the Open Electricity Market rose at a slower pace, reducing its dampening effect on electricity prices.

Food inflation came in at 0.9 per cent, from 1 per cent the month before, on the back of lower non-cooked food inflation.

Services inflation remained unchanged at 1.4 per cent from May as lower inflation for point-to-point transport services was broadly offset by higher inflation for tuition and other fees, as well as recreational and cultural services.

Brazil Sees Power Generation at Limit in November

RIO DE JANEIRO

(Reuters) - Brazil's national power grid operator (ONS) said that severe drought is likely to push the country's power generation capacity to its absolute limit by November, as hydroelectric plants struggle with the water shortages.

Latin America's biggest economy is facing its worst drought in almost a century, which is disrupting hydroelectric dams - Brazil's main source of power generation.

Despite the stretched power system, the ONS said it did not forecast power shortages for consumers.

“With regard to meeting power requirements, there are significantly reduced surpluses in the month of October, with the exhaustion of practically all



resources in the month of November,” the ONS said in a technical note.

Earlier this month the ONS asked electricity generators to postpone maintenance and technical work for as long as possible to avoid worsening the energy crisis, but has insisted there is no risk of energy rationing.

Hydro dams have reported the lowest water inflows in more than 90 years amid the drought, pushing up prices and boosting broader inflation rates.

Brazil's Mines and Energy Minister Bento Albuquerque has said the drought is part of extreme dryness in many parts of the world, including the U.S. West Coast, and is linked to global climate change.

IRGC...

FROM PAGE 1

General Salami also paid tribute to the province's ongoing endeavors towards ensuring the country's security.

Given its hugely strategic position in the Middle East region, the Islamic Republic's borders are continually subject to infiltration, sabotage, and terrorist operations by the foreign-backed and -funded elements, who are holed up in the neighboring countries.

The situation holds especially true for the borders that run along Iraq and Syria to the west, and Afghanistan and Pakistan to the east.

The border provinces that lie in the areas, including Kordestan, have in the past come under countless such vicious operations. The provinces have, however, managed to fend for the country thanks to prompt action by the IRGC, the Army, and the Law Enforcement Force.

The Islamic Republic is, meanwhile, providing military advisory assistance to Iraq and Syria towards curbing foreign-backed militancy and Takfiri terrorism there. It is also in a state of constant cooperation with Pakistan and Afghanistan in the face of potential terrorist activities targeting the common borders.

The country has warned that it would not hesitate to chase potential attackers back into the countries they could come from.

Chinese Customs...

FROM PAGE 1

China, Iran's largest trading partner, and after Syria, is the only country that imports oil from Iran despite U.S. sanctions.

Bloomberg and Reuters news agencies have reported that part of Iran's oil is delivered to China by dealers and under the oil names of other countries such as Iraq, the UAE, Oman, Malaysia and Indonesia.

West Seeking...

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He went on to say that MKO terrorists have maintained their terrorist nature and have continued to carry out assassinations inside Iran, including the assassination of Iranian scientists in collusion with the Israeli regime.

However, the United States and European Union have tried to ignore and purify the terrorist nature of this terrorist sect and use it as leverage against Iran, he emphasized.

Heidari also rejected the accusations against Assadollah Asadi, an Iranian diplomat imprisoned in Belgium, calling the accusations far from the truth.

He called the accusations raised against Asadi a conspiracy hatched by MKO terrorist group.

Iran Daily...

FROM PAGE 1

He also mentioned electricity exports, noting that the country's power exports are nearly zeroed and the Energy Ministry is currently importing about 500 MW of electricity from the neighboring countries.

Rajabi Mashhadi also announced that over 200,000 illegal cryptocurrency mining devices with a total electricity consumption of about 585 MW have been identified and collected across the country.

Over the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

This year, however, new deteriorating factors like severe drought and the decline in the country's water resources as well as a new wave of illegal cryptocurrency mining across the country have also worsened the situation.

Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) has previously announced that the company is implementing over 40 different programs for managing the situation and preventing blackouts in the country.

Covid Forces Rahm, DeChambeau Out of Olympic Golf

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The Olympic golf tournament lost two of its top stars to coronavirus on Sunday, as world number one Jon Rahm and 2020 US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau were forced to withdraw from the Tokyo Games. The PGA announced that big-hitting DeChambeau was being replaced by Patrick Reed and hours later the Spanish Olympic Committee said Rahm had pulled out after testing positive for Covid-19 for the second time in two months.

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Horigome Crowned Skateboarding's First Olympic Champion

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese world champion Yuto Horigome was crowned skateboarding's first Olympic gold medalist when he won a tense street competition in Tokyo on Sunday. The 22-year-old, who grew up just a stone's throw from the Olympic venue, landed three huge tricks in a row to eclipse American favourite Nyjah Huston, who imploded to finish seventh. In searing heat at Ariake Urban Sports Centre, Horigome finished with scores of 9.35, 9.50 and 9.30 for a total of 37.18, with Brazil's Kelvin Hoefler second and US skater Jagger Eaton third.

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SPORTS

TUESDAY JULY 27, 2021

France Stun U.S. In Men's Basketball

TOKYO (Dispatches) - France's Evan Fournier scored 28 points and sank a 3-pointer in the final minute of play, leading his team to an 83-76 upset of the star-studded US squad in men's basketball in Tokyo.

For the first time since 2004, the U.S. men's basketball team has lost in the Olympics. And the Americans' quest for a fourth consecutive gold medal is already in serious trouble.

France — the team that knocked the Americans out of contention in the Basketball World Cup two years ago — dealt the U.S. a major blow once again. Evan Fournier's 3-pointer with just under a minute left put France ahead to stay in what became a 83-76 win over the Americans on Sunday in the opening game for both teams at the Tokyo Olympics.

The U.S. had won 25 consecutive Olympic Games, last losing at the Athens Games 17 years ago and settling for a bronze medal there.

"I think that's a little bit of hubris if you think the Americans are supposed to just roll out the balls and win," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said. "We've got to work for it just like everybody else. And for those 40 minutes, they played better than we did."

Fournier had 28 points for France, while Rudy Gobert scored 14 and Nando de Colo had 13. Jrue Holiday had 18 points for the U.S., Bam Adebayo had 12, Damian Lillard 11 and Kevin Durant had 10 for the Americans — who are just 2-3 in their games this summer, the first four of them exhibitions in Las Vegas that weren't supposed to mean much.

The Olympics, they were supposed to be different.

They weren't. Going back to the World Cup in China two years ago, the Americans are 3-5 in their last eight games with NBA players in the lineup.

"I mean, it's great," Gobert said. "But until we have what we want to have



around our neck it doesn't really matter."

The idea of anyone else leaving an Olympics with gold hasn't been all that realistic in recent years. Now, it's very real.

A 10-point U.S. lead in the third quarter was wasted, and so was a 12-point barrage from Holiday in the opening 4 ½ minutes of the fourth quarter as the Americans went from six points down to start the period to six points up with 5:23 remaining.

The lead was seven with 3:30 left. France outscored the U.S. 16-2 from there, and the Americans missed all nine of their shots — five of them in a 21-second span on the same trip down the floor in the final minute, three of those from 3-point range.

The dagger came off a broken play; Guerschon Yabusele dove to save a ball from going out of bounds on the French offensive end, flailing and slapping it to Fournier. He caught the ball in front of the U.S. bench and made a 3-pointer that put France up for good with 57 seconds remaining.

The loss doesn't knock the U.S. out of medal contention, but it essentially eliminates the margin for error. The Americans play Iran on Wednesday and then the Czech Republic on Saturday in its final two Group A games; win both of those, and the U.S. will be in the quarterfinals. Lose another one, and the Americans might not even finish in the top eight of this 12-team tournament.

The lead was 10 for the U.S. early in the third quarter after Durant scored the opening basket of the second half. But the offense went into a complete sputter for much of that period -- and that, combined with Durant's foul trouble, led to big problems.

Lewandowski Voted German Player of the Year

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski was voted Germany's Footballer of the Year for the second year running on Sunday.

The 32-year-old Pole was once again the runaway winner of the title awarded by the football magazine Kicker, following a vote by journalists.

Lewandowski, who equalled Gerd Mueller's 49-year-old scoring record in May as he netted his 41st Bundesliga goal of the season, received 356 of the 563 votes on offer.

"I am aware of how big this honour is. It is a reason for great pride and joy for me, because it is rare to win the title of Footballer of the Year in Germany twice in a row," Lewandowski said.

Second-placed Thomas Mueller of Bayern Munich was 315 votes behind, while third place went to Erling Haaland of Borussia Dortmund, who received 38 votes.

"Of course I am happy that I have scored 41 goals in 29 Bundesliga games. This number of goals fills me with great pride and is certainly a spectacular achievement in view of my injury," said Lewandowski, who was out for three weeks from late March with a knee problem.

Lewandowski's former manager Hansi Flick, who was named the second-best manager behind Chelsea's Thomas Tuchel, said he was an "absolute professional with enormous quality" and "the best there is as a centre-forward".

Since joining Bayern in 2014, Lewandowski has scored 203 goals in 219 games.

Kiesenhofers Trumps Dutch for Olympic Road Race Gold

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Austrian mathematician Anna Kiesenhofer upstaged a heralded Dutch quartet to win a shock gold in the women's Olympic road race on Sunday.

The 30-year-old national time trial champion, a maths graduate of Cambridge and Catalonia universities, held her nerve after a long breakaway that the main peloton never managed to reel in.

Dutch rider Annemiek van Vleuten made up for a horrific crash at the Rio Games in 2016 with silver, while Italian Elisa Longo Borghini bagged bronze for the second consecutive time.

In a dramatic finale to a long day's ride, the peloton reeled in France's Juliette Labous and with under four kilometres to go, the gap to Kiesenhofer was cut to under three minutes.

First, two-time world champion Anna van der Breggen, who was targeting back-to-back golds after winning in Rio, and then Van Vleuten cut loose at the 2km mark in a desperate bid to catch the Austrian, but it was too much too late.

Kiesenhofer shot through the 1km run-in smiling and constantly looking over her shoulder in full knowledge that the gold was hers in a massive upset of the formbook.

Drenched in sweat, she collapsed to the ground after coming through the finish line, screaming in delight, hands on helmet in near-disbelief.

As with the men's road race, tens of thousands of Japanese fans lined the gruelling 137km route between Musashinonomori Park and the Fuji International Speedway that featured 2,692 metres of elevation gain.

There was earlier drama for Van Vleuten, who sustained concussion and a fractured spine in a horrific crash in Rio, after she took a tumble when Denmark's Emma Joergensen fell and veered into her path.

Barty Suffers Shock Defeat in First Round



TOKYO (Dispatches) - World number one Ashleigh Barty crashed out of the Olympics women's singles tennis tournament in the opening round on Sunday, losing 6-4, 6-3 to Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo.

Barty, the reigning Wimbledon champion, dropped serve twice in each set as 48th-ranked

Sorribes Tormo made just five unforced errors to the Australian's 27 to earn a shock win. "It's an amazing feeling, I still can't believe it," said Sorribes Tormo, who will go on to face France's Fiona Ferro in the second round.

"It's something incredible for me. It's something that I've been dreaming of all my life, being here and even more so beating the world number one. I'm super, super happy."

While Barty's bid to become the first Australian singles gold medalist in tennis ended prematurely, she and partner Storm Sanders are through to the second round of the women's doubles.

Qatar, Mexico Reach Gold Cup Semis

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Mexico took another step towards defending their CONCACAF Gold Cup title, scoring three first-half goals en route to a 3-0 rout of short-handed Honduras in a quarter-final match.

The holders cruised past a depleted Honduras squad that had lost several players to injury and Covid-19 safety protocols.

Striker Rogelio Funes Mori scored a header in the 26th minute to open the scoring for Mexico, who will next face either Canada or Costa Rica.

Jonathan Dos Santos and Orbelin Pineda then scored seven minutes apart to break the game open at the State Farm Stadium in Phoenix, Arizona. Dos Santos took advantage of a Honduras defensive mistake to volley a shot from the semi-circle into the back of the net in the 31st minute.

Pineda took a cross from teammate Jesus Corona and headed it in to give the Mexicans a sizeable lead at the half and they cruised from there. In the other game, Al Moez Ali scored twice as Qatar became the first team to reach the semi-finals, holding on to beat El Salvador 3-2.

Abdelaziz Hatim also scored for the reigning Asian champions in the quarter-final clash in Arizona. Joaquin Rivas had both goals for El Salvador, who mounted a comeback in the second half.

Ali opened the scoring in the second minute by capitalizing on an El Salvador giveaway. Just six minutes later, Hatim hammered a right-footed shot into the goal to make it 2-0.

El Salvador were called for a handball in the 55th minute, which resulted in Ali scoring his second of the game off a spot kick to give Qatar a commanding three-goal lead.

But El Salvador were not about to go quietly as their comeback started in the 63rd minute when Amando Moreno made a touch pass to Rivas, who scored to cut the lead to 3-1.



Murray Out of Olympics Singles With Injury

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Two-time defending Olympic tennis champion Andy Murray withdrew Sunday from the men's singles tournament due to a muscle injury, Team GB said in a statement.

Murray, 34, will stay in Tokyo to play doubles with Joe Salisbury. The pair won their opening match of the competition on Saturday.

"I am really disappointed at having to withdraw but the medical staff have advised me against playing in both events, so I have made the difficult decision to withdraw from the singles and focus on playing doubles with Joe," Murray said in a statement.

"The decision follows consultation with medical staff in relation to a quad strain," it added.

The Scot was scratched from the order of play just hours before he was due to face Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime in the first round. He was replaced in the draw by Australia's Max Purcell.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray is the only player to win two Olympics singles titles. He was bidding for a third successive gold following his victories at London 2012 and Rio 2016.

Murray's career has been blighted by injury in recent years, twice undergoing hip surgery since rising to world number one at the end of 2016.

He recently suffered his earliest Wimbledon exit in 16 years when he was knocked out in the third round by Canada's Denis Shapovalov.

Murray and Salisbury will play Germany's Tim Puetz and Kevin Krawietz for a spot in the Olympic men's doubles quarter-finals after dumping out French second seeds Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut in the first round.

