

Health Ministry Said on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From The Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 93,473 With 387 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday Called for Finalizing a Plan For Boosting the National Fight Against COVID-19, Saying Soon a Comprehensive Plan for Fight Against COVID-19 Will Be Drafted

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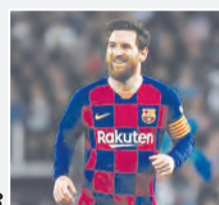


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Barca Say Adios to Messi; Shock the World



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Zionists Trying to Divert Attention From Its Crimes in Palestine

TEHRAN (PressTV) - An Iranian envoy to the United Nations says the Israeli regime is "playing victim" to divert attention from its continuing crimes in Palestine, warning the occupying regime against any acts of "adventurism and miscalculations."

Zahra Ershadi, Iran's deputy permanent representative to the UN, made the remarks in a statement on Friday after a closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council on a recent incident for an Israeli-operated oil tanker in the Sea of Oman.

Tensions simmer in the region in the wake of a suspected drone attack last week on the Israeli-managed tanker -- Mercer Street -- off the Omani coast, where two crew members were killed. With no evidence, the United States, Israel, and Britain blamed Iran for the incident. Tehran categorically rejects the accusation.

The Iranian envoy's comments came in reaction to a highly provocative statement by Israel's minister of military affairs Benny Gantz, who said on Thursday that the regime was prepared to strike Iran, issuing a blatant threat against the Islamic Republic.

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Tehran Will Definitely Continue To Support Palestine

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says the Islamic Republic will continue to support Palestine as the main issue of the Muslim world.

"We have never had and will never have any doubt about this policy. In our view, Palestine has been and will be the first issue of the Muslim world," Raisi said in a Friday meeting with head of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas Ismail Haniyeh, who took part in the swearing-in ceremony of the Iranian president.

Raisi commended Haniyeh's optimistic stance on the liberation of al-Quds and the end of Palestine's occupation and said "Operation al-Quds Sword" -- the Palestinian resistance groups' 11-day retaliatory rocket and missile launches in response to Israel's brutal bombing campaign of Gaza in May -- showed that a great leap has been made in the fight against the occupiers.

"Today, signs of great victory of the resistant movement have emerged and Operation al-Quds Sword was one of the signs of this victory," he said.

In Operation Sword al-Quds, he added, the resistance forces tightened the noose on the Zionist enemy in a way that neither the Zionists themselves nor their supporters could even imagine.

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Enemies to Face Harsh Response In Case of Any Aggression



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Head of the Aerospace Division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned the enemies against any acts of aggression, saying they will face a "harsh response" if they retest Iran's power.

Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh made the remarks on Saturday after Israel and Western countries accused Tehran of a suspected attack on an Israeli-managed tanker off the coast of Oman and threatened a response.

"The Islamic Republic has passed the test and does not need to be re-tested, but if they like, they can retest Iran," he said.

"They have tested us and they know what response they will face. We have both the power and the will to exercise power. We will certainly deliver a harsh response and they cannot make such a mistake."

According to reports, the Liberian-flagged Mercer Street, operated by Israeli-owned Zodiac Maritime Company, was hit near the Omani island of Masirah late on July 29. Two crew members were killed in the incident.

The Tel Aviv regime and its Western allies alleged that Iran had been behind the attack without presenting any shred of evidence to substantiate their claims.

Tehran denied any involvement in the incident and categorically dismissed the baseless accusations.

On January 8, 2020, the IRGC targeted the U.S.-run Ain al-Asad in Iraq's western province of Anbar after launching a wave of attacks to retaliate the assassination of top Iranian anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani.

Iran's mission to the United Nations has also strongly rejected the accusations against Iran over the alleged Mercer Street drone attack and warned the Zionist regime of any 'miscalculation'.

Meanwhile yesterday, Iran's embassy in the United Kingdom reacted to baseless allegations made by the British envoy at the United Nations over the country's involvement in a recent incident for an Israeli-operated oil tanker in the Sea of Oman.

Barbara Woodward, UK's permanent representative to the UN, reiterated the Group of Seven foreign ministers' claim on Friday that Tehran was involved in the last week's attack on the Israeli-managed tanker -- Mercer Street -- off the Omani coast, where two crew members were killed.

Labeling the attack as "deliberate and targeted," Woodward claimed that Iran was "responsible" but said, "The door for diplomacy and dialogue remains open."

Woodward also linked the global economy, goods and food to the security of commercial shipping, saying, "That is why we have international law that protects the freedom of shipping."

The UK's permanent representative to the UN accused Iran of "not respecting those laws," and claimed that Iran's activities "

Forging Document Against Iran Israeli Psychological Operation

TEHRAN (MNA) -- Referring to the recent Israeli regime's psychological war against Iran, a spokesman with the Iranian Armed Forces said that Zionists are professional in preparing forged documents.

"Unlike the US, the UK, and the Zionist and the Saudi media, whose strategy is to create insecurity and escalate Iranophobia, Iran's strategy is to strengthen security in the Persian Gulf," said Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi on Saturday.

"The enemies started a media war against Iran during the inauguration ceremony [of President Raisi], and today they are seeking to document their actions," he added. "That is why today the Americans claim to have pulled parts of Iranian drones out of the water; This becomes a document for them, but which laboratory has realized that the drone belongs to Iran?"

Shekarchi went on to say, "We expect nothing from the enemies but an enmity. The United States has not sought interaction. They have always sought to overthrow Iran, and as long as the Zionist regime overshadows the country [the US], their approach to Iran will not change."

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Iran Urges UN to Deal With Israel's Adventurism'

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations has called on the world body to deal with the Israeli regime's "adventurism" in the region.

In a tweet, Majid Takht Ravanchi noted Tel Aviv tried, in vain, to point the finger at Iran for an attack on an Israeli-managed ship off the coast of Oman.

"Israel and its supporters presented fabricated information on the recent incidents in the regional waters to convince the UN Security Council to condemn Iran, but they failed to," he said.

"We categorically deny these allegations. The UN Security Council should deal with Israel's adventurism in the region and reject its deceptions and fabrications," he added.

Ravanchi's comments came as Iran's deputy ambassador to the UN Zahra Ershadi had also already warned Israel against threatening Iran.

Iran's Forex Revenues Fall By Less Than Half in 2019

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Former Iranian Vice-President published a report on the country's economic situation over the past eight years, announcing the halving of foreign exchange revenues in 2019 and the fall in per capita income.

Mohammad Nahavandian, economic deputy head of President Hassan Rouhani, presented the latest report on changes in economic indicators and bakhsh areas to the former president by comparing the start and end of the government's work.

Rouhani's government has refused to provide any reports on foreign exchange revenues and budgets over the past few years. The central bank's latest statistics on these topics also date back to December 2018.

Statistics provided by Mr. Nahavandian show that last year, the country's total foreign exchange revenues (oil exports, oil products, gas, electricity, non-oil goods and services) were \$48 billion and \$614 million, down a third from 2019, but less than halved since 2018.

In the oil field, the country's exports dropped 37 percent in 2019 from a year earlier to \$18.3 billion. Before the U.S. sanctions, the figure was above \$60 billion.

Exports of non-oil goods also fell about 11 percent last year compared to 2019. The fall in exports and foreign exchange revenues has caused the country's imports to drop from \$67 million in 2012 to \$52.2 billion in 2019, and last year it dropped to \$46.6 billion.

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Latin American States Keen on Enhancing Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Concurrent with the initiation of President Ebrahim Raisi's administration, member states of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) have stressed their readiness to strengthen their relationships with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to cubanews.acn.cu, the ALBA Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) Executive Secretary Sacha Sergio Llorenti Soliz has held a meeting with Reza Nazar Ahari, the Director General of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for American Affairs. Llorenti wrote on his Twitter account that they are committed to enhance and strengthen relationships between ALBA and Iran.

Llorenti Soliz held talks with Iran's new president Raisi during his endorsement ceremony on Tuesday. Raisi emphasized that strengthening political and economic ties with the Latin American countries is one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. During the Tuesday night meeting, Raisi noted that Iran is determined to enhance economic and political relations with member states of the alliance more than ever and it sees this policy in line with common values and stances.

Also, Venezuela's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a press statement, underlining the need for expansion of cooperation and coordination in different bilateral, regional, and international affairs.

Llorenti Soliz told the Iranian Spanish Language TV channel HispanTV, that beyond bilateral relations between Iran and member states of the alliance, "there are great coincidences about how we understand the world should work."

Iran and the Alba alliance have much in common, and both seek to defend the independence and sovereignty of nations and to stand up to excessive US demands, he went on to say.

ALBA, founded initially by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004, has grown to include eleven full member states which are Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Ecuador, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada and the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Slovakia Expresses Readiness to Develop Bilateral Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - The President of the Slovak Republic in a message to Iran's President Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi voiced readiness to develop Bratislava-Tehran bilateral relations.

Zuzana Čaputova congratulated Raisi on his election as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Referring to the position of her country as a member of the European Union, Čaputova said that her words were based on a mutual understanding and adherence to international standards.

Hezbollah Successful Model of Resistance Against Arrogance

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi has hailed “effective deterrence” of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah in the face of the Israeli enemy and Takfiri groups, saying it has turned into a successful model for other countries.

“Lebanon’s Hezbollah has succeeded in displaying effective deterrence against the Zionist enemy, Takfiri groups and, in general, overt and covert conspiracies,” Raisi said in a Friday meeting with Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem.

The Iranian president added that Hezbollah has created hope in the hearts of nations to resist against enemies and thus “the enemy is trying to prevent the spread of this effective model in every possible way” by, namely, closing a number of pro-resistance media outlets.

Qassem, for his part, said Hezbollah is the only group that has managed to maintain



its unity and solidarity with the Lebanese people in the face of the Zionist enemy’s aggression and conspiracies.

He conveyed the Hezbollah chief’s greetings to Raisi and said the Lebanese resistance movement currently has an acceptable condition despite tough social difficulties thanks to the real cooperation of people.

The meeting came hours after Hezbollah unleashed rockets on the Israeli positions in occupied Shebaa Farms in response to the regime’s aggression on Lebanon the day before.

Speaker Blames U.S. Sanction for Decrease In Iran-Turkey Ties



TEHRAN (MNA) – In a meeting with the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Iran’s Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf blamed the U.S. sanction for the decrease in Iran-Turkey economic ties.

In his meeting with Mustafa Şentop, Qalibaf referred to the decrease in the volume of economic exchanges between the two countries and said, “The oppressive sanctions and the coronavirus epidemic have significantly reduced the level of exchanges between the two countries.”

He underlined that the officials of the two countries should pay special attention to the development of cooperation and the removal of obstacles so that the two sides can return to the previous level of exchanges quickly. Expressing his condolences over the death of a number of Turkish citizens in the forest fires of this country, he said, “The occurrence of fires in the forests of Turkey is a matter of concern.”

“Cooperation under the framework of the Astana Peace Talks showed that the Iran-Turkey talks can provide peace, stability, and tranquility to the nations of the region, so we welcome regional talks between the governments and parliaments of the two countries,” he added.

Şentop, who traveled to Tehran to attend the inauguration of President Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahi Raisi, said Turkey hopes that this election would bring progress for the Iranian nation.

“Our relations are fraternal, sincere and beyond the friendships of the two neighboring countries,” he said.

He added that his country welcomes the development of bilateral relations and cooperation with the Iranian parliaments on regional and international issues.

He noted that “Iran-Turkey anti-terrorism consultations and talks on regional issues, including developments in Afghanistan, are essential. We believe that the talks between the two countries prevent the interference of foreigners and serve the interests of the people of the region.”

Iran’s Talks With U.S. Never Been Taboo

TEHRAN (IFP) - Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who is said to be the final nominee for the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs in Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi’s administration, says negotiations with the United States have never been a “taboo.”

“Talks with the U.S. has never been a taboo. Dozens of meetings were held between the foreign ministers of the two countries at [the time when] the JCPOA [was being discussed] as well as during three rounds of



talks in Baghdad where I was also present,” tweeted Amir-Abdollahian, who is currently the Parliament Speaker’s special aide for international affairs.

“The problem is not negotiations,” he explained.

“Rather, it is the United States’ bullying behavior, major crimes and repeated breaches of promises,” he added.

“Savoir faire and might are two pillars of any diplomatic dialogue,” he said.

Iran Defense Developments a Thorn in Eyes of Enemies

TEHRAN (MNA) – Today, Iran’s defense developments in all areas of warfare, especially in the missiles, and UAVs, have become a thorn in the eyes of the enemies of the Islamic Republic, Iranian Minister of Defense stressed.

The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Force in ensuring the national security of the country is of strategic importance, Minister of Defense Brigadier General Amir Hatami said on Saturday while addressing a host of Army Ground Force commanders in Tehran.

The ill-wishers and enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have always resorted to many plots to invade the soil of this country, said Brigadier General Amir Hatami, adding, “However, with vigilance, readiness, authority and the stabilizing presence of the armed forces, especially the Army Ground Force the enemies do not dare to invade our country.”

The Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys a special strategic and geopolitical position in the West Asian region, and throughout history, arrogant powers have always had greedy eyes over Iran’s unique geography.

“Undoubtedly, full protection of our homeland and the holy establishment of the Islamic Republic is one of the obligatory duties as Imam Khomeini (RA) instructed”, Hatami said.

“Today, under the wise guidelines of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, we have achieved astonishing progress in the field of the defense industry”, the Iranian defense minister said. “We’re not dependent on any country or power and we are ready to export most of our advanced products and achievements to other countries”, he stressed.

“Today, our defense developments in all areas of warfare, especially in the areas of missiles, and UAVs, have become a thorn in the eyes of the enemies of Islamic Republic”, Hatami stressed.

Iran, OPEC Meeting, Fruitful

TEHRAN (IP) - The Guardian Council spokesman stressed that the OPEC secretary-general meeting with Iran’s Guardian Council secretary on August 5, 2021 was really fruitful.

Reacting to the OPEC Secretary General’s response regarding coordinating to return Iran’s oil to export markets once the country is relieved of sanctions, Guardian Council Spokesman Hadi Tahan Nazif highlighted that various approaches, challenges, sanctions, and mutual cooperation were discussed in the meeting between the Guardian Council Secretary, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati and Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, OPEC Secretary-General.

Both Barkindo and Ayatollah Jannati also stressed the lifting of the US anti-Iran sanctions, selling of Iran’s oil

as well as its exporting.

Tahan Nazif asserted that oil selling policy is the government’s defined duty, but all organizations try to help the government to do so.

Attending his first press conference, Tahan Nazif pointed out that the Iran- Brazil draft of the extradition treaty and draft agreement on mutual legal assistance in civil matters as well as the Iran-Afghanistan draft on international railway relations was sent to the Expediency Council; they have not yet been approved, though.

Regarding the protection of Iranian users’ rights at cyberspace plan, the Guardian Council Spokesman, Hadi Tahan Nazif said: “Nothing has been done or approved yet, and protecting Iranians’ rights is our priority.”

addition to significantly reducing security and even political tensions in Iraq, is a big step towards establishing more stability

and security in the region.” Rear Admiral Shamkhani described the upcoming elections in Iraq as an important arena for the continuation of democracy and the consolidation of the effective political role of the Iraqi people in determining their own destiny.

The sagacity and cohesion of political, religious and ethnic groups are one of the inevitable requirements for holding healthy elections and preventing foreign interference in this important political process in Iraq. In this meeting, Fali Al-Fayyadh also congratulated the successful and glorious holding of the presidential election in Iran, stating that political and security stability in the Islamic Republic of Iran is very important and influential in maintaining lasting security in the region.

Praising the valuable role of martyrs Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani and Abu-Mahdi al-Muhandis in the formation and growth of PMU in Iraq, he added: “Today, Iraq has reached an acceptable and developing security with the guidance of the supreme religious authority and the sacrifice of the armed forces and Hashad al-Sha’abi.”

Tehran, Dhaka Discuss Promotion of Mutual Cooperation

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks with Shahriar Alam, the State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, who is in Tehran on behalf of his government to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran’s new president.



In the Friday meeting, the Bangladeshi diplomat and the Iranian Foreign Minister conferred on issues in bilateral relations in different political, economic, and cultural spheres.

Foreign Minister Zarif thanked the Bangladeshi government for sending a high-ranking delegation headed by the country’s State Minister of Foreign Affairs to the inauguration ceremony of the Iranian president.

He also reviewed different aspects of relations between the two countries in bilateral and multilateral areas, especially collaborations at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Dhaka’s stances regarding the issue of Palestine. Foreign Minister Zarif further praised the Bangladeshi government’s cooperation in the past eight years on promoting its ties with Iran.

He also pointed to President Ebrahim Raisi’s special attention to Iran’s ties with the regional countries, especially the country’s neighbors, and expressed hope that relations and collaborations between Tehran and Dhaka would further expand in the coming period, and the use of creative ways to promote mutual cooperation will continue.

The Bangladeshi diplomat, in turn, highlighted the grounds for promotion of mutual cooperation in various bilateral fields as well as other areas of cooperation. He also praised Foreign Minister Zarif’s eight-year efforts for bilateral relations between the two countries.

Issues related to the Rohingya refugees, cooperation at the OIC, and direct flights between the two countries were among other topics discussed by the two top diplomats.

Iran Committed to Persian Gulf Safety

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh condemned the unfounded statement by G7 foreign minister and EU foreign policy chief on the recent Oman Sea incident, stating that Iran is committed to the safety of the Persian Gulf waterway.

He said that Iran strongly condemned the unfounded statement of G7 foreign ministers and the EU foreign policy chief who by lodging groundless allegations have accused Iran.

Referring to the attack on the Japanese ship operated by an Israeli company off the coast of Oman which led to the death of a British and a Romanian citizen, Khatibzadeh stated that the incident had been planned as scenario a few days before the inauguration of the new president in Iran.

Such baseless scenario buildings which in most cases have the Israeli regime behind them, the spokesman added, are designed to make mischief, but unfortunately have their own customers who are ready to make their false, imprudent conclusions. He opined that such repeated conspiracies by the Israeli regime are nothing new for those who are familiar with the history of West Asia region.

Iran is committed to secure the safety of the Persian Gulf waterway and the Strait of Hormuz and considers it as part of its own security, the spokesman stated.

He also said that Iran was ready to work with regional states on establishing a collective security system in the region, while it wouldn’t hesitate in defending its sovereign rights.

Iran-Belarus Relations Are of Great Importance

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that Iran-Belarus relations in economic, trade, industrial, agricultural, scientific, educational, and financial exchanges field are of importance, calling for normalizing financial relations between the countries.

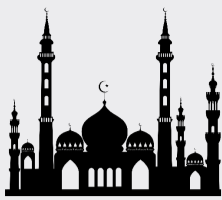
In a meeting with Vladimir Andreichenko, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Belarus, Qalibaf said that the development of economic activities depends on the normalization of financial relations between the two countries, adding: “We should streamline the banking relations between the two countries to use the capacities of industry, technical services, transportation, agriculture, petrochemicals, and oil.” Qalibaf also stressed developing parliamentary relations between the two countries.

TEHRAN (IP) - Chairman of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) met with the Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council on Saturday.

In this meeting, the Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani praised the decisive role of Iraq’s the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) known as Al-Hashd Al-Sha’abi in ensuring security and stability in Iraq, and described this popular institution as a valuable and lasting legacy of the great commanders of the Islamic Resistance, Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani and Abu-Mahdi al-Muhandis. Rear Admiral Shamkhani stressed the need to maintain and strengthen the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) in Iraq and the need for coordination and synergy of this powerful popular force with the Iraqi army and stated: “The unity and cohesion of the Iraqi people, government and armed forces will pave the way for lasting security in this country.”

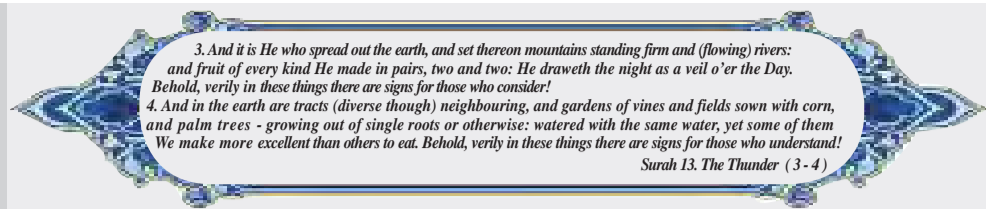
The Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran referred to the resolution of the Iraqi National Assembly regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops from this country, saying: “Accelerating the accurate and complete implementation of this resolution, in

Iran’s SNSC Secretary, Iraq’s PMU Head Meet



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:21
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:45
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:18



Iran, Switzerland Increases Agro-Medical Transactions

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Iran-Switzerland Joint Chamber of Commerce announced that the increase in the transactions of agricultural and medical products has been the main reason behind the rise in the bilateral trade of Iran and Switzerland.

Sharif Nezam-Mafi, Head of the Iran-Switzerland Joint Chamber of Commerce, said that Iran-Switzerland trade has continued in the past decades despite the unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran, adding that in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year Switzerland was the fifth exporting country to Iran by exporting 672,000 tons of goods worth of \$539m and it has happened while in recent years Iran's trade with Switzerland had experienced a considerable decline.

He went on to say that both countries economically complete each other, adding that while Swiss goods and industries provide Iran with its needs, Iranian products are also met the demands in the progress of industry in Switzerland.

Nezam-Mafi went on to say that some of companies trading with Iran are not Swiss but their trade offices are established in Geneva and they provide Iran with its required goods or they provide their required goods from Iran.

He noted that Iran has good quality products for presenting to Switzerland, reiterating that some Iranian-made medical devices, semi-industrial products and agro items are of the items which are welcomed by the companies in Switzerland.

He added that despite all financial and banking problems, both countries are facing a growth in their trade although the amount and volume of the exchanges is less than the predicted capacity.

Nezam-Mafi also said that Swiss companies did not leave Iran during the sanctions



era and the reason behind the decline in the bilateral trade is mostly the hurdles in way of their trade than the lack of interests.

"The interest of companies based in this country to buy Iranian agricultural and medical products is one of the reasons for the increase in trade between the two countries," he said.

The head of Iran-Switzerland Joint Chamber of Commerce added: "In the first months of this year, trade exchanges have been expanding, and the main imported goods are related to cereals and medical equipment."

He reiterated that in case Iran can reach international agreements during the new government, then both countries can expect considerable growth in their trade. He reiterated that interaction with the world should reach a point where exchanges with those countries which are interested to increase.

Nezam-Mafi stated that with the revival of the JCPOA, Iran and Switzerland can boost their 10-billion-dollar trade capacity which will be possible through normalization of banking operation that is possible only through removal of sanctions.

Statistics show that in the first four months of the current year, Switzerland, with 672 thousand tons of goods worth of 539 million dollars, accounts for one fifth of Iran's imports.

Zangeneh Voices Iran Full Readiness to Return to Oil Market



TEHRAN (Shana) – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh announced the country's full technical readiness to return to the global crude oil markets at the highest level after the political agreement and the lifting of the sanctions.

In a Friday meeting with Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, Secretary General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Mr. Zangeneh stated that after the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) back in May 2018, Iran lost about 2 billion barrels of oil exports, an equivalent of roughly \$120 billion.

Noting that OPEC is the only third world economic organization influential in world economic interactions, he said: "The key concept that OPEC has been able to act on and succeed has been cooperation while competing and political differences, as we saw in the recent meeting and dispute between Saudi Arabia and the UAE."

For his part, the OPEC Secretary General praised Zangeneh's work and actions during his tenure, and said that all OPEC ministers remembered him well, adding: "We hope that Iran will continue its key and important role in OPEC and the oil market."

Addressing Zangeneh, he said: "You are a valuable asset for Iran and you have done well in these four decades due to the difficult conditions in Iran. OPEC will always remain your home."

At the end of the meeting, OPEC Secretary General presented Mr. Zangeneh with an album of his photos from the beginning of his presence in OPEC.

Commutes of Iranian Trucks at Milak Border Banned

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization banned the deployment of the Iranian road transportation fleet to the Milak border terminal and joint border market with Afghanistan.

Accordingly, dispatching transportation fleet (buses, trucks and etc.) to export and transit or unloading cargoes at the border markets of Iran and Afghanistan in the north of Iran's Sistan and Balouchestan provinces is prohibited.

In order to avoid any problems for businesses, Iranian traders and businesspersons have been urged to refrain from exporting their transit cargo to Milak Border Terminal until further notice.

In this regard, the exit of Iranian and transit trucks towards Afghanistan will not be possible until further notice.

As reported earlier, Iranian trucks and commercial cargoes which are returning from Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran will be able to enter the country with the previous arrangements made in this respect.

It should be noted that Milak Border Terminal is located in the vicinity of Helmand city, a neighborhood of Nimruz province of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a gateway to Central Asian countries and the existence of the Milak Border Terminal at this point in the province has led to a significant amount of goods being exported from this border.



Meanwhile on Friday, Head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said exports from Iran to Afghanistan have declined more than 85 percent due to the increasing tensions in the country.

"With the escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan, the number of trucks carrying Iranian goods to this country has decreased from 100 trucks every day to two or three trucks per day," Hossein Salimi said.

According to Salimi, Iranian exports to Afghanistan over the past two weeks have been only 15 percent of the figure for the same period in the previous year.

"When turmoil or conflict arises in a country, the first area that will suffer is that country's economy and trade," he said, adding: "Unfortunately, the situation is so bad that at the moment it is not easy to predict what awaits us. We still do not have an accurate estimate of the amount of damage inflicted on Iranian traders. We have to see how long this situation will last."

In response to the question that if the Taliban finally takes control and peace is restored, the economic relations between Iran and Afghanistan will continue in the same way or not? Salimi said: "In any case, the needs of that country will not be eliminated. Any group that gains power in Afghanistan, the country will still need food and construction materials and so on and their best option [for meeting those needs] would be Iran."

Iran Seeking to Produce Nano Products With Turkey, Indonesia

TEHRAN (MNA) – According to the secretary-general of the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council (INIC), Turkey and Indonesia are Iran's target countries for establishing joint units for producing and exporting nano products.

Iran enjoys a good geographical position for exporting nano products, the secretary-general of Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council (INIC) said, adding, "We have to work hard to export Iran's high-tech products to other countries." Saeed Sarkar spoke about one of the programs of the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council in the field of export, saying that the establishment of some production units in foreign countries in the framework of joint investment is one of these programs. With the implementation of this plan, the technical knowledge of the Iranian scientists enters into a deal with investors from other countries, so that the Iranian nanoproducts can be produced there, he added.

Turkey and Indonesia are Iran's target countries for implementing such plans, he said.

"We are following these two countries seriously", Sarkar said, adding, "This will be a right model for other countries in this field."

About 10,000 km
Of Railway Projects
Under Study

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's outgoing transport minister said that about 10,000 kilometers of railway projects are currently under study.

Pointing out that the length of the country's railway network has reached 14,000 kilometers, Mohammad Eslami said, "Eight rail lines in three provinces will be connected to the country's railway network.

The projects for connecting Kordestan, Ardebil, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari provinces to the national network have a noticeable progress at the moment and will be inaugurated in the coming months." As the deputy minister has recently announced, 825 kilometers of railroads are going to be constructed across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

This year, eight railway projects are in priority, and with their opening, 825 km will be added to Iran's railway, Kheirollah Khademi, who is also the managing director of Iran's Construction and

Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), stated.

One of the priority railway lines in the present year was the Khaf-Herat railway, 140 km of which was built inside Afghanistan and was put into operation in recent months, and the second is the Yazd-Eqlid 271-km railway, which is almost completed, the official explained. The Zahedan-Khash railway is also part of the north-south corridor, 150 km of which has been laid, and the process of adjusting its line is underway, and it seems that its operation will be final this year, he said, adding that the Bostan Abad-Tabriz railway with a progress of about 90 percent and a length of 44 km will be ready to open in the near future.

The Rasht-Caspian Railway, as an important part of the 37-kilometer north-south corridor with a progress of about 70 percent can be put into operation as one of the country's rail priorities by the end of this year, he noted. Also, the Hamedan-Sanandaj railway line is 151 km long and has a physical progress of 76 percent, Khademi added.

IME Trade on IME Doubled Last Week

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 1,026,000 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$555m, showing 14% and 99% of growth in volume and value of trades respectively as compared to the previous week.

According to a report by the IME's international affairs and PR, the exchange sold 603,573 tons of commodities on its metals and minerals trading floor worth more than \$345m.

On this floor the IME traded 369,793 tons of steel, 5,200 tons of copper, 7,075 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 30 tons of precious metals concentrate, 85,000 tons of zinc dust, 210 tons of zinc ingots, 105,670 tons of cement, 25,000 tons of iron ore, 24 kg of gold bars and 5,500 tons of DRI.

The next trading floor was the oil and petrochemical on which the exchange saw trade of 390,250 tons of commodities valued at more than \$194m.

Commodities purchased on this floor included 99,9540 tons of vacuum bottom, 113,850 tons of bitumen, 78,200 tons of polymeric products, 33,695 tons of chemicals, 55,500 tons of lube cut, 2,338 tons of base oil, 50 tons of argon, 290 tons of insulation and 5,100 tons of sulfur.

It's worth noting that the IME played host to trade of 32,492 tons of commodities on its side market as well.



MoU Signed for Sustainable Water Supply for Nomads of Isfahan



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

ISFAHAN – Senior officials of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company (ABFA of Isfahan) and Nomads Affairs Directorate of Isfahan Province signed a MoU for providing sustainable water supply to the nomads of the province.

On Wednesday, the CEO of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company Eng. Hashem Amini and Manager of Nomads Affairs Directorate of Isfahan Province Mr. Mokhtar Esfandiari signed the MoU for cooperation and completing the water supply installation of the rural complex of Dolat Abad and the nomads-based areas of Kougang in the town of Chadegan.

According to the signed MoU, with spending some 72b rials and implementing 33,500 meters of transfer line with different diameters, construction of a concrete reservoir with capacity of 100 cubic meters and construction of a composite 20-cubic-meter reserve and drilling a well, the sustainable water supply will be provided for a population over 1420 people of nomads and villagers of the Kougang areas, and rural water supply complexes of Dolat Abad, Kharsanak and Kharmanak in the town of Chadegan.

The project is to be carried out in 3 years and with 68-percent participation of ABFA of Isfahan and 32-percent participant of Nomads Affairs Directorate of Isfahan Province.

After signing the deal, Mr. Amini said that after integration of the rural and urban water and wastewater companies, the gap for serving the villagers is narrowing qualitatively and quantitatively, adding that one of the concerns of ABFA of Isfahan is how to offer favorable services to the nomads of the province. He reiterated that the company has put on the agenda programs for preparing the required infrastructures for the access of the citizens to the healthy drinking water in the towns of Fereydoonshahr, Samirom, Chadegan and Jargouyeh where the nomads live.

Russia Records About 463,000 Excess Deaths in Pandemic

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia recorded around 463,000 excess deaths from April 2020 to June this year during the coronavirus pandemic, according to Reuters calculations based on data released by the state statistics service on Friday.

Some epidemiologists say excess deaths are the best way to measure the real death toll from COVID-19. Russia's coronavirus task force has confirmed a toll of 163,301 related deaths since the pandemic began. Excess deaths are typically defined as the difference between the observed numbers of deaths in specific time periods and expected numbers of deaths in the same time periods. Reuters based its calculations on a comparison with the annual average of deaths in 2015-19 calculated on a monthly basis.



Resurgent Taliban Take Provincial Capital, Kill Afghan Gov't Spokesman



KABUL (Dispatches) - Taliban insurgents captured an Afghan provincial capital and killed the government's senior media officer in Kabul on Friday amid a deteriorating security situation as U.S. and other foreign troops withdraw.

A police spokesman in southern Nimroz province said the capital Zaranj had fallen to the hardline Islamists because of a lack of reinforcements from the Western-backed government.

Fighting to reimpose a strict Islamic regime 20 years after they were ousted from power by U.S.-led forces, the Taliban have intensified their campaign to defeat the government.

The insurgents have taken dozens of districts and border crossings in recent months and put pressure on several provincial capitals, including Herat in the west and Kandahar in the south, as the foreign forces pull out.

In New York, U.N. special envoy for Afghanistan Deborah Lyons questioned the Taliban's commitment to a political settlement, telling the U.N. Security Council the war had entered a deadlier and more destructive phase "reminiscent of Syria, recently, or Sarajevo, in the not-so-distant past". Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said the prospects of Afghanistan slipping into full-scale and protracted civil war "is a stark reality".

Senior U.S. diplomat Jeffrey DeLaurentis urged the Taliban to halt their offensive, pursue a political settlement and protect Afghanistan's infrastructure and people. Zaranj was the first provincial capital to fall to the Taliban since the United States reached a deal with it in February 2020 for a U.S. troop pullout. A local source said the Taliban had seized the governor's office, the police headquarters and an encampment near the Iranian border.

Taliban sources said the group was celebrating and Zaranj's fall would lift the morale of their fighters. A Taliban commander, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Zaranj has strategic importance as it is on the border with Iran.

In Kabul, Taliban attackers killed Dawa Khan Menapal, head of the Government Media and Information Centre, in the latest in a series of killings aimed at weakening President Ashraf Ghani's democratically elected government.

U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ross Wilson said he was saddened and disgusted by the death of Menapal, whom he said provided truthful information to all Afghans.

"These murders are an affront to Afghans' human rights & freedom of speech," he said in a Tweet. Scores of social activists, journalists, bureaucrats, judges and public figures fighting to sustain a liberal Islamic administration have been killed by Taliban fighters in a bid to silence voices of dissent.

An official in the federal interior ministry said "savagely terrorists" killed Menapal during Friday prayers.

"He (Menapal) was a young man who stood like a mountain in the face of enemy propaganda, and who was always a major supporter of the (Afghan) regime," said Mirwais Stanikzai, an Interior Ministry spokesperson.

Zuma Admitted to S. Africa Hospital for Medical Observation

CAPE TOWN (Dispatches) - South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma, jailed for contempt of court last month, has been admitted to a hospital outside prison for "medical observation", according to officials.

"Everyone who is detained, including every sentenced prisoner, has the right to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including ... medical treatment," the Department of Correctional Services said in a statement on Friday. No reason was given for the hospitalization on Friday, apart from that it was prompted by "a routine observation".

The department added that as a former president, Zuma's healthcare needs required the involvement of the South African Military Health Service.



Hezbollah Launches Rocket Fire In Response to Israeli Air Raids

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The Lebanese group, Hezbollah, has said it fired rockets at open ground near Israeli positions in response to Israeli air raids on southern Lebanon, drawing retaliatory Israeli strikes.

In a statement on Friday, Hezbollah said it had fired "dozens" of rockets in the disputed Shebaa Farms area after Israeli fighters early on Thursday launched rare air raids on neighboring Lebanon following a second day of rocket fire across the border.

The heavily armed Shia group also said the Israeli air attacks had hit open ground in Lebanon.

Later on Friday, the Israeli military said it had struck "the rocket launch sites in Lebanon".

Israel said it did not wish to escalate to a full war, though it was ready for one.

"More than 10 rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory. Most of the rockets were intercepted by the ... aerial defence system while the rest of them landed in open areas adjacent to Har Dov," the disputed Shebaa Farms border district, the air force said on Twitter. Israel's Army Radio also reported that the military fired shells and artillery towards parts of southern Lebanon under the control of Hezbollah.

Air raid sirens sounded in the Upper Galilee in northern Israel, and in the Golan Heights, part of the territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

It was the third day of cross-border hostilities that threaten a period of calm prevailing since 2006, when Israel and Hezbollah fought a one-month war.

Zeina Khodr, reporting from Lebanon, said that the situation was precarious after the marked escalation along the border but noted that both sides were "very careful in avoiding casualties".

"[They are] treading carefully because any wrong move here could lead to all-out war," said Khodr. "These are two longtime enemies who are now sending messages to each other," said Khodr. "But many in Lebanon will also tell you that this escalation in undoubtedly linked to what is going on in the region, because Lebanon is entangled, with Hezbollah of course being an ally of Iran."

She added that figures close to Hezbollah told Al Jazeera that the movement's response was "a message" and "warning" to Israel.

India, China Pull Back From Part of Contested Himalayan Border

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India and China have pulled back troops from a flashpoint zone on their disputed border where they fought a deadly battle last year, the Indian government said Friday.

The world's two most populous nations had poured tens of thousands of extra troops into the high-altitude Ladakh region in the Himalayas after the clash last year.

But the Indian Army said that following talks, rival troops in the Gogra area had moved back in a "phased, coordinated and verified manner" over the last two days.

"The troops in this area have been in a face-off situation since May last year," the statement said.

"With this, one more sensitive area of face-off has been resolved."

Indian and Chinese troops fought a hand-to-hand battle in the nearby Galwan valley on June 15 last year that left at least 20 Indians and an unspecified number of Chinese forces dead.

The increased tensions caused a nosedive in relations between the countries. India and China, who fought a full-scale border war in 1962, have long accused each other of trying to take territory along their unofficial border known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

While sending in the huge reinforcements, the two countries have held multiple rounds of military and diplomatic talks. The last talks were held last Saturday.

The Indian Army said all temporary structures set up in the Gogra area by both sides had been "dismantled".

"This agreement ensures that the LAC in this area will be strictly observed and respected by both sides, and that there is no unilateral change in status quo," the army said. The two militaries in February also pulled back from another showdown at Pangong Lake.

Hungary PM Braces for U.S. Interference in 2022 Election

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said he is "prepared" for outside "interference" including from the United States in an election next year that could see the nationalist premier's removal.

"That will happen, we are not worried about it, we are prepared for it," Orban said in an interview broadcast early Friday with US television host Tucker Carlson, who had asked him if he was "worried that there will be international interference" in the election.

"Obviously the international left will do everything that they can do, probably even more, to change the government here in Hungary."

The vote expected in April 2022 is shaping up to be a tight race with opinion polls showing Orban's ruling right-wing Fidesz party neck-and-neck with a coalition of opposition parties from left to right.

In power since 2010, Orban has moulded Hungary into what he calls an "illiberal" stronghold, but has faced repeated accusations of democratic backsliding from Brussels and Washington.

During his election campaign last year, US President Joe Biden cited Hungary in his criticism of predecessor Donald Trump's foreign policy.

"You see what's happened in everything, from Belarus to Poland to Hungary, and the rise of totalitarian regimes in the world ... this president



[Trump] embraces all the thugs in the world," Biden said on Fox News.

Asked if he expects Biden's administration will try to "prevent" his re-election, Orban said, "Sooner or later the Americans will realise that issues in Hungary must be decided by the Hungarians."

"It is better even for the leftist liberal government in the US to have a good partner that is conservative Christian democratic and supported long-term by the Hungarian people," said Orban.

"It's better to have that than a government which is supported by America and takes its position but loses after several months, creating destabilisation and uncertainty," he said.

"A not loved but stable partner is better than an uncertain new one. I hope the Americans will understand that."

The 58-year-old Hungarian's anti-immigration policies, such as building border fences, earned him praise from Trump, whom Orban called "a great friend of Hungary".

Trump's "America First" policy was "a very positive message here in Central Europe ... it means Hungary could be first as well", Orban told Carlson, who has broadcast from Hungary all week.

He also regretted the election loss in June of former Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The Hungarian conservative Christian, Judaeo-Christian democratic thinking lost two major

Philippine Ruling Party Leaders Endorse Duterte for VP in 2022

MANILA (Reuters) - Leaders of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's political party have endorsed him to be a vice presidential candidate in next year's elections, paving the way for him to stay in power for six more years after he steps down in 2022.

The move needs to be approved by the party general assembly, which meets next month.

In the Philippines, the president is limited to one six-year term. Duterte's term ends in June next year, but he has said he is seriously thinking about running for vice president, which political observers and critics say could be a backdoor to the presidency.

Next year's polls will be a referendum on Duterte's policies, including his bloody war on drugs, in which thousands of people have been killed, and the handling of the pandemic, many political analysts say.

The backing for Duterte was announced by Melvin Matibag, secretary-general of the ruling PDP-Laban party, who said the endorsement by the key officers will be presented to a national assembly of the party next month for approval.

For its presidential candidate, the party leadership endorsed Duterte's top aide and incumbent senator Christopher "Bong" Go, Matibag said, describing Go and Duterte as a "formidable" team.

"We are hoping the entire membership can carry it. That is the popular and logical choice of PDP-Laban leaders," Matibag told a media briefing.

Duterte, who has portrayed himself as a reluctant president with no desire for power, has on several occasions said he wanted Go to be his successor. His endorsement in 2019 helped Go to become a senator, a job he combines with being Duterte's personal aide.

Go has repeatedly said he was not interested in the presidency, and the only thing that could change his mind was if Duterte agreed to be his running mate.

Duterte's daughter Sara Duterte-Carpio, the mayor of the southern city of Davao, has outshone Go in opinion polls among possible presidential contenders. But Sara and her father have both said they are against the idea of her running.

The filing of candidacy papers for next year's polls will start in October. Until then everything is just speculation and "every noise could just be posturing," said political analyst Victor Manhit.





Niavaran Apt (\$2400)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
yard, pkg
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Pasdaran Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

Farmanieh (\$2400) 300sq.m, 4bdrs, balcony, & F.F
Zaferanieh (\$2200) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, balcony, & F.F
Gheitarieh (\$1800) 160sq.m, 2bdrs, balcony, & F.F

Elahieh Apt (\$2000) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, & F.F

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U.S. Crude Stockpiles Rise, Gasoline Draws Down

LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S. crude oil stockpiles rose, while gasoline inventories fell, in a signal of steady demand for fuel, the Energy Information Administration said.

Crude inventories rose by 3.6 million barrels in the week to July 30 to 439.2 million barrels, compared with analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a

3.1 million-barrel drop.

Stocks at the Cushing, Oklahoma, delivery hub for U.S. crude futures, however, fell for an eighth straight week, dropping by 543,000 barrels to 34.9 million barrels, their lowest since January 2020, the EIA said.

Gasoline stocks fell by 5.3 million barrels, the EIA said, far more than expectations for a 1.8 million-barrel drop.



Venezuela to Slash Six Zeroes From Currency

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela will slash six zeroes off its inflation-battered currency the bolivar to make it easier to use, the central bank said.

The change will take effect on October 1 with the issuance of new currency notes, called the digital bolivar.

"All monetary amounts expressed in national currency will be divided by one million," the central bank of President Nicolas Maduro's beleaguered leftist government said.

It said the goal of the change is to "facilitate" the use of the bolivar.

It is the third time in 13 years that Venezuela -- suffering the worst economic crisis in its modern era -- has used such a measure.

In August 2018, the government lopped five zeros off its bank notes, having taken off three in 2008.

In 2018, the government replaced the ironically named strong bolivar with the sovereign bolivar.

The once-wealthy oil producer is enduring its fourth year of hyperinflation and its eighth year of recession.

From January through to May prices rose 265 percent.

Inflation was almost 3,000 percent in 2020 and more than 9,500 percent the year before, according to central bank figures.

"It was an expected decision," economist Cesar Aristimuno, director of Aristimuno Herrera & Associates, told AFP.

"By itself it was necessary ... the billing and accounting processes for companies were already practically impossible."

People had even resorted to using a shorthand for prices, saying "thousands" instead of "millions."

There is such a shortage of bolivars that long queues are a regular sight outside banks.

Transactions made in the local currency are usually done by card payment or bank transfer rather than in cash. Inflation is so bad that the everyday economy now works mainly in dollars, with many stores listing prices in the U.S. currency.

Back in May the government tripled the minimum monthly wage but the new amount was still not even enough to buy a kilogram of meat.

However, Aristimuno warned that while "convenient" this measure will not transform Venezuela's battered economy. "We cannot hope for economic miracles from this decision, taking into account that ... it comes without any underlying economic announcements" that could reduce inflation or boost GDP.

The Maduro government is under international sanctions championed by the United States, which is pushing for his ouster and does not recognize him as the country's legitimate president.

With the currency overhaul, the central bank will issue new notes with face values of five, 10, 20, 50 and 100 bolivars and a one-bolivar coin, Communications Minister Freddy Nanez said on Twitter.

German Industrial Orders Bounce Back

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German industrial orders rose more than twice as much as expected in June, driven by bookings from domestic clients for large manufacturing products, but weaker turnover suggested that supply bottlenecks continued to hold back production.

The figures published by the Federal Statistics Office showed orders for goods 'Made in Germany' jumped by 4.1% on the month in seasonally adjusted terms.

This was the strongest increase in 10 months and easily beat a Reuters forecast of a 1.9% increase, more than offsetting a slightly revised drop of 3.2% in May.

Excluding major orders, new orders in manufacturing still rose 1.7% on the month.

Domestic orders soared nearly 10%, with producers of data processing equipment, lens systems, planes and ships benefiting from unusually strong demand, the economy ministry said.

"Incoming orders also rose in the important car and mechanical engineering sectors," the ministry added.

Orders for engineering companies soared 53% in June from the previous year due to stronger demand from both domestic and foreign customers, industry association VDMA said on Thursday.

"Investments in equipment, machines and services are high on the agenda around the world," VDMA chief economist Ralph Wiechers said. The German economy, Europe's largest, returned to growth in the second quarter but bounced back less strongly than expected as manufacturers struggle to get intermediate goods and building materials to ramp up production.

"Although the order backlog is high, it cannot be processed quickly due to ongoing delivery bottlenecks for intermediate

products and materials," Bankhaus Lampe analyst Bastian Hepperle said.

In a further sign that more orders are currently not translating into higher output, real turnover in manufacturing fell by 1.4% on the month in June in seasonally adjusted terms, the office said. On the year, real turnover rose by 8.6%.

The supply bottlenecks in manufacturing will continue to hold back production, so industry is likely to slow down the economic recovery in the third quarter as well, Hepperle added.

Undersupply of semiconductors, as outbreaks of the Delta coronavirus variant in Southeast Asia have crippled its factory sector, is leading to production downtimes in the car industry and many other industrial sectors.

Huawei Reports Biggest Ever Revenue Drop

SHENZHEN (Dispatches) - Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei Technologies reported its biggest ever revenue drop in the first half of 2021, after U.S. sanctions drove it to sell a chunk of its once-dominant handset business and before new growth areas have fully matured.

The company generated revenue of 320.4 billion yuan (\$49.56 billion), it said on Friday.

The biggest decline came from Huawei's consumer business group, which includes handsets, where revenue fell 47% to 135.7 billion yuan. It eked out a 0.6 percentage point rise in its net profit margin to 9.8%, largely due to efficiency improvements, a company spokesperson said.

In 2019 former U.S. President Donald Trump put Huawei on an export blacklist and barred it from accessing critical technology of U.S. origin, affecting its ability to design its own chips and source components from outside vendors. The sanctions hobbled Huawei's handset business, with Huawei dropping out of the top five vendors in China for the first time in more than seven years in the second quarter, shipping 6.4 million units, according to consultancy Canalys.

That compares with 27.4 million handsets shipped in China in Q2 2020, excluding shipments of Honor budget handsets. Huawei sold the brand in November.

The consumer business brought in over half of the company's revenue in 2019.

Revenue also fell 14% in the first half from Huawei's telecoms equipment business, which a spokesperson said was partially down to the slowdown in China's 5G rollout.

Qatar Airways Ordered to Ground 13 Airbus Planes

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar Airways said that it had been ordered by regulators in the Persian Gulf state to ground 13 of its Airbus A350 aircraft over the rapid degradation of fuselage surfaces.

The airline, one of the Persian Gulf "big three" carriers, previously stopped accepting delivery of the aircraft over the issue, according to media reports in June.

Qatar Airways said in a statement that it had been forced to press out-of-service Airbus

A330 aircraft back into operation to fill the gap left by the grounding of the 13 aircraft.

Qatar Airways has 34 A350-900 types and 19 A350-1000s in its fleet, according to an Airbus document.

"The airline is working with its regulator to ensure the continued safety of all passengers... and following the explicit written instruction of (the airline's) regulator, thirteen aircraft have now been grounded," the airline said.

Qatar Airways is regulated by the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority.

The airline's chief executive Akbar al-Baker said he expects "Airbus treats this matter with the proper attention that it requires".

"Qatar Airways will not accept anything other than aircraft that continue to offer its customers the highest possible standard of safety and the best travel experience that they deserve," he said in the statement.

"Qatar Airways expects Airbus to have established the root cause and permanently corrected the underlying condition to the satisfaction of Qatar Airways and our regulator before we take delivery of any further A350 aircraft."

The statement said the airline was "cooperating with all the leasing companies affected by this A350 grounding who have started to inspect their impacted aircraft", without giving details of other affected parties.

Through the coronavirus pandemic, Qatar Airways positioned itself as the leading airline for repatriating stranded travellers, winning plaudits from Britain and France among other countries whose flag carriers were virtually mothballed.

More than half of the airline's fleet is made up of the mid-sized but long-range U.S.-made Boeing 787 and French-built Airbus A350.

"We do not comment on our customers operations. As a leading aircraft manufacturer, we are always in talks with our customers. Those talks we keep confidential," Airbus said in a statement.

China's Export, Import Growth Seen Moderating in July

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's robust export growth likely moderated in July amid an acceleration in COVID-19 cases globally and continuing severe pressure on global supply chains, a Reuters poll showed on Friday.

Although there are signs China's strong industrial recovery in the first half of the year may be losing some momentum, overseas demand has remained strong in recent months even as factories in many countries return from lockdowns.

Headline trade numbers are also being helped by the statistical base effects when compared with sharp declines a year ago.

Exports are expected to have risen 20.8% in July from a year earlier, according to the median forecast in a Reuters poll of 21 economists, compared with a 32.2% gain in June.

Imports likely rose 33.0% last month year-on-year, the poll showed, compared to 36.7% growth in May. Despite China's attempts to cool surging raw materials prices, commodity prices remain elevated.

Exports grew much faster than expected in June, as solid global demand led by easing lockdowns and vaccination drives eclipsed fresh virus outbreaks and port delays.

But overall trade growth in the world's second-biggest economy may slow in the second half of 2021, a customs official warned last month.

"Export growth has likely slowed further in July both in year-over-year and month-over-month terms...Korea also reported weaker growth of imports from China. A typhoon around Yangtze River Delta might have also reduced total trade growth in the month due to port disruptions," said analysts from Goldman Sachs in a note.

Exporters are grappling with higher freight costs and lingering logistics bottlenecks.

The acceleration in Delta-variant coronavirus outbreaks in several countries, coupled with natural disasters, has put huge pressure on global supply chains and slowed global container turnaround times.

Container shipping rates from China to the United States have scaled fresh highs above \$20,000 per 40-foot box amid rising retailer orders ahead of the peak year-end U.S. shopping season.

China reported on Friday its highest daily count for new coronavirus cases in its current outbreak at 124, fuelled by a surge in locally transmitted infections in a growing number of cities. "The next two weeks would be critical to see whether (China is) still effective in dealing with the Delta variant. In any case, consumption, especially summer tourism, is under heavy pressure," Larry Hu from Macquarie Capital Limited said in a note.

Erdogan's Call for Rate Cut Compounds Lira's Rapid Slide



ANKARA (Dispatches) - The rapid reversal of the lira over three days underscores how fragile investor sentiment is towards Turkey's currency.

Three days was all it took to wipe out about half the Turkish lira's gains since June.

The decline was compounded by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's latest call for lower interest rates, about a week before the central bank's next policy meeting. It sent the lira tumbling to as low as 8.5719 against the dollar, down more than 3% from a two-month high touched on Tuesday.

The rapid reversal underscores how fragile investor sentiment remains, where the risk of unwarranted monetary easing threatens to stoke inflation and bruise traders lured by the currency's juicy yield. Options traders now see a 54% probability that the lira will weaken to 9.5 per dollar at the end of the year, which would eclipse the record low of 8.8008 reached in early June.

"It's not today's move, but that period of strength, which was the aberration," said Tatha Ghose, a senior emerging-market economist at Commerzbank AG in London, who expects the currency to slide to 10 per dollar by year-end.

Central Bank Governor Sahap Kavcioglu has so far looked past the president's calls for looser policy and held benchmark rates unchanged at 19% since March. While that's among the highest rates in the developing world, it's done little to cool inflation which is running at the fastest pace in more than two years.

Now, with Erdogan's ratings hurt by a limping economy and the government grappling with mounting criticism over its flailing response to Turkey's worst wildfires in decades, the pressure to cut interest rates on Aug. 12 is growing.

For its part, the central bank has promised to keep policy rates above actual and forecast inflation. Data this week showed consumer prices accelerated to 18.95% in July, just shy of the one-week repo rate, in principle reducing the likelihood of a summer interest-rate cut sought by the president.



Ganjzadeh Wins Gold, Iran's Last Medal in Olympics

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran karateka Sajjad Ganjzadeh has won the final match of men’s Kumite +75 kg at Olympics karate contests to win the 3rd gold medal and 7th medal in total for Iran. Sajjad Ganjzadeh defeated Saudi Arabia opponent T. Hamedei at men’s Kumite +75 kg on Saturday afternoon to win the 3rd gold medal for Iran so far in the Tokyo Olympics games. He beat the Saudi opponent 4-0 by Hansoku. The Iranian karate practitioner had beaten Turkish U. Aktas to reach the final. With seven medals, Iran is now standing at 27th place in the medal tally of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.



Japan's Q2 Economic Rebound Likely Feeble

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan’s economy likely recovered slightly in the second quarter from a steep slump at the start of the year, a Reuters poll showed, as solid exports and capital expenditure cushioned some of the blow to consumption from the coronavirus pandemic. But analysts expect the world’s third-largest economy to lag other advanced nations emerging from the doldrums, as expanded state of emergency curbs and a resurgence in infections weigh on household spending. “There won’t be much of a rebound from the first quarter’s big contraction. The data will show the economy continues to stagnate,” said Yoshiki Shinke, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute. “Conditions won’t improve much in July-September, as expanded COVID-19 curbs and surging infections hurt consumption during the summer.” Preliminary gross domestic product (GDP) data will show the economy grew an annualised 0.7% in April-June, after a 3.9% slump in the first quarter, according to analysts polled by Reuters. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, GDP likely grew 0.2%, the poll showed. Capital expenditure is forecast to have expanded 1.7% as manufacturers ramped up spending to make up for investment delays caused by the pandemic last year, the poll showed. Consumption shrank 0.1% as the health crisis continued to weigh on service spending, though the drop is smaller than the previous quarter’s 1.5% decline, the poll showed. While exports remain strong, external demand likely shaved 0.1% point off growth as imports rose more than overseas shipments, according to the poll. The government will release the GDP data at 8:50 a.m. on Aug. 16 (2350GMT, Aug. 15). Separate data is expected to show wholesale inflation hit 5.0% in July from a year earlier, a sign rising raw material costs were hitting corporate margins, the poll showed.



Japan’s economic contraction in the first quarter marked the first fall in three quarters, as curbs on activity to combat the pandemic hit consumption. While robust global demand has boosted exports and capital expenditure, a worldwide chip shortage has disrupted auto production and clouded the outlook for Japanese manufacturers. “Growth in exports and output appears to be slowing,” said Mari Iwashita, chief market economist at Daiwa Securities. “Japan’s factory output may experience some volatility if the chip shortage lasts longer than expected.”

Surging Oil Exports Lead to Largest Canadian Trade Surplus Since 2008



OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Canada booked in June its highest trade surplus since 2008 as energy exports jumped to their highest level since March 2019, Statistics Canada said on Thursday. Canada’s trade balance turned into a surplus in June after a trade deficit in May, thanks to a surge in exports. Nearly half of the rise came from energy exports led by crude oil, the statistics office said. Canadian trade surplus stood at US\$2.56 billion (C\$3.2 billion) in June, as exports rose 8.7 percent while imports declined by 1.0 percent. Total exports reached a record, while exports of energy products jumped by 22.9 percent to US\$9 billion (C\$11.3 billion) in June, the highest level since March 2019, Statistics Canada said. The US\$1.7 billion (C\$2.1 billion) rise, which accounted for almost half of the gain in total exports, was mainly attributable to a 25.7-percent surge in crude oil exports. “While crude oil prices increased in June, the rise in export value was mainly the result of higher volumes, which were up following a slowdown in crude oil production in Canada in April and May,” Statistics Canada said. The country’s exports of refined petroleum energy products and natural gas also jumped in June, by 37.1 percent and 23.3 percent, respectively. Canada’s exports to its main trade partner, the United States, also rose to a record in June, driven by increased exports of crude oil, passenger cars, and light trucks. Canada’s trade surplus with the United States widened from US\$4.7 billion (C\$5.9 billion) in May to US\$6.6 billion (C\$8.3 billion) in June, the largest surplus since August 2008, Statistics Canada said. In May this year, Argus reported that Canadian crude oil exports to the United States were going to increase this year as additional pipeline capacity comes online and oil sands output increases. Moreover, demand for heavy crude has also been on the rise, with few producers available.

Russian Ministry Proposes Extra State Spending to Offset Rate Hikes

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia should consider increasing state spending to help offset the impact of the central bank’s monetary policy tightening that poses downside economic risks, Economy Minister Maxim Reshetnikov said. The central bank raised its key rate by a hefty 100 basis points to 6.5% last month, making borrowing more expensive for the fourth time so far this year in an attempt to rein in stubbornly high inflation. “It is very important not to have monetary policy tightening boosted by fiscal policy tightening,” Reshetnikov told reporters. The economy ministry is now in talks with the finance ministry to channel extra proceeds from taxes to state spending, but not to cut the state borrowing plan, Reshetnikov said. The economy ministry’s proposal echoes suggestions by Russia’s state development bank VEB which said last month that rising proceeds from oil and gas exports gave Russia room to increase regular state spending. Analysts have warned that tighter monetary policy coupled with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic could pose economic headwinds. There were already signs that the economic recovery was losing momentum in July, Reshetnikov said. After shrinking by 3% in 2020, the sharpest contraction in 11 years, the economy had by June recovered to levels recorded in the fourth quarter of 2019. But Russia’s oil production has not recovered to pre-crisis levels due to the global OPEC+ supply agreement, air travel remains subdued compared to before the pandemic, and the services sector has also not fully rebounded, Reshetnikov said. He added that his ministry proposed setting a limit on spending by the National Wealth Fund (NWF) of 1.6 trillion roubles (\$21.9 billion) in 2022-2024. The economy ministry also proposed using extra NWF money on large state projects that rely heavily on imports, such as Ust Luga port. The finance ministry, which manages NWF spending, did not disagree, Reshetnikov said.

India's Economic Growth May Drop to 6%

New DELHI (Dispatches) - Nobel laureate Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee, who heads the Global Advisory Board set up by the Mamata Banerjee-administration to advise the West Bengal government on pandemic issues, said that the country’s economic growth may drop to as low as 6% due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. “The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut its economic growth forecast for India from 12.5% to 9.5% for the fiscal year to March 31, 2022. But I suspect it may drop to 6% to 7% at the end. I can’t give it in writing. But if another wave hits it may drop further. I hope it doesn’t happen,” he said. The Indian-American economist, who won the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics, along with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer was speaking to the media at the state secretariat after attending a meeting of the GAB to discuss the impending third wave of Covid-19. He also criticized the Narendra Modi-government at the Centre over rising fuel prices saying that the government should have been more open-handed with their spending during the pandemic.



“The Union government has a fiscal problem. The government is trying to use this one instrument it has, given the fact that other forms of tax collection are not keeping pace because economy has slowed down. It is using this to balance the budget. This a moment in which the government should have been more open handed with their spending. The Centre is too unwilling to do what the US and European countries are doing which is printing money and spending it. That would have been a better policy in the current context particularly when we are not avoiding inflation. Being less mindful of the strategy would have been the right strategy now.” Swarup Sarkar, former regional director of WHO (World Health Organisation); Tom Frieden, ex-CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S.); Jishnu Das, economist, World Bank; and JVR Prasad Rao, a former union health secretary, were among the other experts along with senior health experts and doctors from the state. “It will not be possible to check another wave of Covid-19 till the time 80%-90% of the citizens are vaccinated. Till then chances are high that mutant variants of the virus would continue to surface. Government figures suggest that it won’t be possible to vaccinate 80%-90% of the people before June 2022. Till then we need to continue other preventive measures,” said Sarkar, who joined the meeting virtually. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over inadequate supply of vaccines to West Bengal. She wrote that the Centre was discriminating while supplying vaccines and BJP-ruled states like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh were getting more vaccines. “I don’t follow the numbers (of vaccines being provided by the Centre to the states). My sense is the biggest problem is that the Centre is not capable of generating the supply of vaccines needed for the whole country. If there were enough vaccines, may be all these claims and counter claims wouldn’t arise. I think the core problem is that we have not reached the promised level of supply for the entire nation,” Abhijit Banerjee said when asked to comment on the Centre’s alleged discrimination.

Iran, Nicaragua FMs Confer on Expanding Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister of the Republic of Nicaragua Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres has met and held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Nicaragua in the meeting with his Iranian counterpart conferred the latest developments in the relations between the two countries and the main issues of the Latin American region. Both sides exchanged views on resistance of two states against unilateralism and interference of some parties in the affairs of independent countries. Zarif, for his part, urged the relations between the two countries in different fields and called for the use of appropriate ways for the resumption of cooperation. Iranian Foreign Minister also pointed out that the aspects of the similarity between the two countries in the field of enduring economic pressures exerted by the US Administration and stressed the success of both countries in this stage.



Zionists...

FROM PAGE 1

“Immediately following this event, Israeli officials accused Iran of the incident. This is what they usually do. It is a standard practice of the Israeli regime. Its aim is to divert attention of the world public opinion from the regime’s crimes and inhumane practices in the region. To that end, they accuse others of wrongdoing. In almost all incidents in the Middle East, Israel accuses Iran. They do it immediately and provide no evidence. Playing victim, lying and deception are part of their toolbox,” said Ershadi in her statement. She also said that the occupying regime’s hue and cry on the Mercer Street incident was aimed, in particular, at concealing its terrorist acts against commercial navigation. The Iranian envoy then referred to reports by the Syrian government and mainstream media outlets that Israel attacked at least 10 oil tankers en route to Syria during the past two years, killing at least two crew members of the targeted vessels. “These are only a few examples of adventurism and destabilizing activities of the Israeli regime at regional seas. Such unlawful and terrorist acts seriously threaten maritime security, disrupt freedom of navigation and endanger energy security,” Ershadi added. She also stressed that such attacks by the occupying entity are gross violations of international law and the UN Charter and “shall not go unpunished”, stressing that the UNSC must prevent Israel’s “unbridled adventurism” in the region, and must prove that it is not “trapped” by the regime’s “deceptions and fabrications.” “We categorically reject the unfounded accusation of Israel on the Mercer Street vessel incident as we have written in our recent letter to the council’s president,” the Iranian envoy stressed, adding that the Tel Aviv regime “cannot whitewash its destabilizing practices and vicious policies by blaming and accusing others.” Referring to Gantz’s military threat against Iran, Ershadi said that Israel continues to brazenly threaten to use force against regional countries. “Iran warns against any such adventurism and miscalculations. Yet, Iran will not hesitate to defend itself and secure its national interests,” she stressed.

Tehran Will...

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He noted that the Palestinians’ victory in the operation brought hope to the friends and disappointed the enemies of the resistance and said, “The most important message of this victory was that the theory of resistance in Palestine has worked and will work.” For his part, Haniyeh said many hostile positions of the Israeli regime, the United States, and some other countries against Iran are rooted in the Islamic Republic’s support for resistance movements and its refusal to accept the US plans for Palestine and emphasized that Hamas stands by Iran in the face of such hostile policies. He added that Iran has always attached special significance to the issue of Palestine since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Haniyeh expressed his optimism about the future of Hamas and noted that Operation al-Quds Sword has changed the international community’s perception of resistance movements and the balance of power in the region. The Hamas official said the U.S. plans for regional countries have failed, referring to the withdrawal of the American forces from Afghanistan and Iraq after years of occupation as a good proof in this regard.

Forging Document...

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“If we seek to confront the enemies, we will announce it openly; Like what we did in Ain al-Assad base. Therefore, the enemies’ forging document against Iran is a psychological operation, and this is due to their fear of the unity of Iran,” the spokesman of the Armed force noted. “Of course, it is not very difficult to prepare a forged document, because the Zionists are professional in preparing forged documents, and even making an explosion on a ship is not a difficult task.”

Iran's Forex...

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Iran had about \$11 billion in service exports annually over the past few years, but last year it fell to \$3.3 billion. The widespread coronavirus outbreak in Iran and border closures appears to have been the main cause of the fall in service exports. The service sector accounts for half of the country’s economy and more than half of the country’s workers are active in this field. Statistics provided by Mr. Nahavandian show that more than one million jobs were lost last year, and the country’s average per capita income fell from 6.1 million toman in 2013 (at a fixed price in 2011) to about 4.9 million toman in the last solar year. The country’s per capita income is the division of GDP into the number of citizens of the country.

Laura Kenny Wins Fifth Olympic Gold Medal

TOKYO (Dispatches) - British cyclist Laura Kenny won the fifth Olympic gold medal of her career on Friday as she powered to victory alongside Katie Archibald in the first women's madison at a Games.

An emotional Kenny, one half of Britain's golden cycling couple with husband Jason Kenny, sobbed after winning her first gold since giving birth to her son Albie in 2017 and said she had considered quitting the sport during the pregnancy.

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Man City Sign Grealish From Villa

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City have signed England midfielder Jack Grealish on a six-year contract after paying the 100-million pound (\$139.27 million) release clause, Aston Villa announced on Thursday, making him the most expensive player in Premier League history.

Grealish's move to Premier League champions City breaks the previous record held by France midfielder Paul Pogba, who rejoined Manchester United from Juventus in 2016 for a reported fee of 89.3 million pounds.

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SPORTS

SUNDAY AUGUST 8, 2021

Barca Say Adios to Messi; Shock the World

MADRID (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi racked up the goals and the trophies -- and earned hundreds of millions for a club which now has somehow to replace him.

When Lionel Messi won an unprecedented sixth Ballon d'Or in December last year, the speculation had already begun over his career at Barcelona after he sought to trigger an exit clause and leave as a free agent.

An April consolation prize of a Spanish Cup success -- his 35th club trophy -- was scant reward.

The 34-year-old Argentine footballing genius has countless times over 17 years with the Catalan club been able to propel the side to glory.

But the club has been imploding off the pitch amid a soaring debt mountain.

Now there are fears for the future on the pitch after the club said Thursday that agreement on a new deal could not be reached "due to economic and structural obstacles" under Spanish League rules, scotching plans for him to remain with his only club for another five years, until 2026, when he would be 39.

The 34-year-old signed his first contract with Barcelona in 2000 on a napkin when he was just 13 but his contract expired on June 30, meaning he could look once again further afield.

In truth, he has been eyeing different horizons for at least two years, however.

Meanwhile Barcelona's shock announcement that superstar Messi would be leaving the club is a "bombshell" of global proportions, according to Argentine media.

Less than a month after the six-time Ballon d'Or winner inspired his country to end their 27-year wait for a major international title in a 1-0 Copa America final victory over arch rivals Brazil, Messi's homeland was left stupefied.



Television channel TyCSports said the news was "difficult to believe" in a tweet, adding that it was "the end of an era that has forever marked the history of football."

Just as the football world began immediately to speculate on which moneybags club Messi would end up at next, teams in Argentina cheekily allowed themselves to dream, even though the economic reality in the recession-hit South American country would make a homecoming an even more astonishing event.

The hashtag "Welcome Leo" started trending on Twitter as mock up pictures of Messi wearing the jerseys of domestic giants Boca Juniors, River Plate, Newell's Old Boys and San Lorenzo appeared, as well as more modest outfits such as Sacachispas FC.

The local press, though, took an instant interest in where Messi, 34, will really end up next.

"Global shock will Paris Saint-Germain be his new club," said Clarin, speculating that the French Ligue 1 club was "the main candidate to add him to their galacticos" including Kylian Mbappe and Neymar.

"Messi is in his prime and with his sights set on the Qatar World Cup, that's why he is continuing to bet on European football," added the newspaper, which pointed out he has been courted by the Qatari owned PSG for many years.

Social media was also awash with memes, including several featuring Messi's Argentine countryman Sergio Aguero, who last month joined Barcelona on a free transfer from Manchester City saying he was looking forward to playing with his friend.

Federer Pulls Out of Toronto, Cincinnati to Raise U.S. Open Doubts

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Roger Federer withdrew from the ATP Toronto and Cincinnati Masters events, adding to fitness concerns and fears the 20-time Grand Slam champion might not play in the U.S. Open.

The Swiss legend, who turns 40 on Sunday, reached the Wimbledon quarter-finals but skipped the Tokyo Olympics due to a knee injury.

Federer, whose last Slam title came at the 2018 Australian Open, pulled out of the last major tune-ups for the U.S. Open.

The Toronto event begins on Monday and Cincinnati opens on August 16, two weeks before the Flushing Meadows fortnight begins for the year's final Grand Slam tournament. Federer has not played at the US Open since reaching the 2019 quarter-finals, missing last year's event.

Arthur Ashe Stadium was the site of an epic run of five consecutive U.S. Open titles for Federer from 2004 through 2008. He reached the final again in 2009 only to lose in five sets to Juan Martin del Potro. Federer has reached the U.S. Open final only once since then, losing to Djokovic in the 2015 championship match.

Federer, who has played five events this year, underwent two right knee operations in 2020 following the Australian Open before returning to ATP play at Doha in March.

IOC Removes Two Belarus Coaches

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Two Belarus coaches who cut short sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya's Tokyo Olympics have had their accreditation revoked and been removed from the athletes village, the IOC said on Friday.

Athletics head coach Yuri Moisevich and team official Artur Shumak were asked to leave the Olympic village, the International Olympic Committee said, days after they ordered Tsimanouskaya pack her bags and go to the airport.

In an exclusive interview with Reuters in Warsaw on Thursday, Tsimanouskaya said the two officials had told her the order to send her home came from "high up" in Belarus.

In a saga reminiscent of Cold War sporting defections, Tsimanouskaya refused to board a flight home on Sunday and sought protection from Japanese police before gaining asylum in Poland, where she was reunited with her husband on Thursday.

The 24-year-old athlete's case threatens to further isolate Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who is under Western sanctions after a brutal crackdown on opponents since last year and whose son heads the country's Olympic Committee.

"We are not the ones who made the decision, we are only executing it," Tsimanouskaya said the two officials told her. "You have 40 minutes. You have to pack your things and go to the airport."

Lukashenko's spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment after Tsimanouskaya's interview.

The two coaches would return to Minsk immediately, the Belarus Olympic committee said in a statement on Friday, adding that they could appeal the decision and they hoped to continue a dialogue with the IOC.

Reuters witnesses saw Shumak and Moisevich as they checked in for their flight at Tokyo's Haneda airport on Friday evening. Both declined to comment.

IOC president Thomas Bach called Tsimanouskaya's case "deplorable" on Friday and said the disciplinary commission over her case would continue.

"We are happy Krystsina Tsimanouskaya is safe in Poland," Bach said.

"It is the end of a unique and undoubtedly unmatched legend," wrote sports newspaper Ole.

"One of the most beautiful stories in world football is ending: the day we never imagined has finally arrived," added Ole in a tweet.

Newspaper La Nacion said this "unexpected turn" of events was "a bombshell that has shaken world football."



Kimmich Set to Sign New Deal at Bayern Munich

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany midfielder Joshua Kimmich is poised to sign a new bumper contract extension with Bayern Munich, according to media reports.

The new Bundesliga starts on August 13 with Kimmich set to line up for defending champions Bayern at Borussia Moenchengladbach.

According to several German media outlets, Kimmich, 26, is set to ink a three-year extension to his contract which would keep him at Bayern until 2026.

German daily Bild claims Kimmich's new deal could be worth up to 20 million euros

(\$23 million) per year making him one of Bayern's top earners.

Bayern are eager to keep Kimmich, who has matured into one of Europe's best midfielders since moving to Munich from Bundesliga rivals RB Leipzig in 2015.

Both Germany midfielder Leon Goretzka and France winger Kingsley Coman, who are both out of contract next June, are stalling over signing extensions.

Bayern are eager to avoid a repeat of last season when Austria defender David Alaba left on a free transfer to Real Madrid after his pay demands were not met.

Meanwhile, Kimmich and Goretzka have channelled 100,000 euros from their 'WeKickCorona' fundraising campaign to help victims of the recent flooding in western Germany.

The donation by the Bayern Munich midfielders will help rebuild sport facilities in the affected regions.

Severe flooding in North Rhein-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate claimed 187 lives last month.

Nadal Drops Shocker to Lloyd In Washington

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Spain's Rafael Nadal was beaten in his second match of his comeback after a two-month layoff, falling to South African Lloyd Harris at the ATP Citi Open.

Rafael Nadal crashed out of his ATP comeback event after a two-month layoff on Thursday, but said his injured foot is improved and that keeps him believing "important things are possible."

The 35-year-old Spanish left-hander, a 20-time Grand Slam champion, lost to South Africa's Lloyd Harris 6-4, 1-6, 6-4 in a third-round match at the Citi Open.

Nadal aggravated a foot injury in a three-set victory Wednesday over American Jack Sock on the Washington hardcourts in his first match since losing a French Open semi-final to Novak Djokovic.

"Best news, the foot was better," Nadal said. "I was able to move a bit better, so that's very important, especially for me personally, to keep enjoying the sport and keep having energy, believing that important things are possible." The most important thing on Nadal's upcoming schedule is the US Open, which begins on August 30.

Djokovic, Nadal and Roger Federer all enter the US Open with a men's record 20 career Slam titles, with Djokovic trying to complete the first men's calendar-year Grand Slam since Rod Laver in 1969.



Solskjaer Positive Over Pogba's Man Utd Future

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer says his talks with Paul Pogba have been "positive" amid reports linking the France midfielder with a move to Paris Saint Germain.

Pogba is out of contract at the end of the coming season and is yet to agree a new deal with United.

The 28-year-old has repeatedly been linked with a transfer away from Old Trafford during his second spell with the club. Going home to France could appeal to Pogba if PSG make a bid and United could decide to sell now rather than risk losing him on a free transfer.

But Solskjaer insists the World Cup winner remains positive about his United future.

"I hope every player thinks this is the place to be to win trophies," Solskjaer told reporters. "When you sign for Manchester United, you have to rise to the challenge."

"Paul has come back and he's fresh and he's always such a positive boy. The talks I've had with him have all been positive."

Having finished second in the Premier League last season before losing the Europa League final against Villarreal, United have added Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane to their squad.

England forward Sancho arrived from Borussia Dortmund before United agreed a deal for Real Madrid's French centre-back Varane.

Solskjaer admits further high-profile additions are less likely following that spree.

