

Health Ministry Said on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From The Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 94,015 With Record 542 More Iranians Killed by the Covid-19 Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

TEDPIX, the Main Index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Gained 10,100 Points to 1.417mn on Sunday And Over 7.458b Securities Worth 55.225 trillion rials (About \$1.314b) Were Traded at the TSE

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Stage Set for Israel's Collapse in Future War

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Chief Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami says the stage is set for the "collapse" of Israel in a next war initiated by a mistake on the part of the occupying regime.

Salami made the comments in a meeting with Sheikh Naim Qassem, deputy secretary general of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement, in Tehran on Saturday.

The IRGC chief said Hezbollah is not just a military force, but it enjoys a high status among all the Lebanese people as the nation's main supporter.

The resistance group brings about honor to Lebanon and guarantees the security of its people, he said. "Since Hezbollah was born and raised in the field of jihad (endeavor for the sake of God), the Zionist enemy has been well aware of the scope and depth of its power."

Salami said the power of the resistance front is increasing by the day while that of the enemy is on the decline.

On Wednesday, Israel struck an area in southern Lebanon in response to alleged rocket fire towards the occupied lands.

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Iran Raises Alarm At U.S. Modernization of Nuclear Arsenal

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has expressed concerns about the modernization of atomic arsenal by nuclear-weapon states, namely the United States, in breach of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), urging global cooperation towards disarmament.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh made the remarks on Saturday, in commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

"The Hiroshima incident shows the fact that the country (the US) spares no inhumane efforts and acts to achieve its illegitimate and irrational objectives," he said.

"The commemoration of the victims of this tragedy reminds the world of the need to seriously pursue and realize the lofty ideal of a world free of nuclear weapons. It also states that the ominous shadow and constant threat of such arms always endanger international peace and security."

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Raisi Picks Mokhber as First Vice President



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - New President of Iran, Hojjatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, appointed his first vice president and the chief of staff of his office on Sunday.

In a decree issued on Sunday, President Raisi appointed Mohammad Mokhber as the vice president. On Thursday the President Office refuted some media outlets' reports on the appointment of Mokhber.

With a PhD in international law, Mokhber has been the chairman of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini since 2007. His institution has produced the first homegrown vaccine for the coronavirus.

Mokhber possesses 2 doctoral degrees, consisting: a doctorate academic paper (and a MA) in the subject of "international rights"; he has also a doctorate degree in the subject of management. As well as doctoral, Mokhber holds a MA in management field, too.

He was formerly head of the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO), the chairman of board at Sina Bank and deputy governor of Khuzestan Province. He was born in Dezful, Iran.

Meanwhile in another presidential decree, Gholam Hossein Esmaili was appointed as the chief of staff of the president's office. The war veteran used to serve as the Judiciary spokesperson.

Esmaili was born in 1344 in Birjand. From 2009 to May 2014, he was the head of the Iranian Prisons Organization. Raisi was sworn in as the eighth president of Iran in an inauguration ceremony at the Parliament on August 5.

He has two weeks to present his ministers to the legislature.

According to reports, President Raisi is to announce his picks for cabinet and to introduce them to Majlis for the vote of confidence. Raisi was to unveil his ministers yesterday but due to some unknown reasons it was postponed to the upcoming days. It is said Raisi and Mokhber are finalizing their pick for economy minister.

Yemeni FM Says Saudi Arabia Unable To Play Hegemonic Role Anymore

SANAA (Dispatches) - The foreign minister of Yemen's National Salvation Government says it is time for Saudi Arabia to put an end to intervention in its southern neighbor's internal affairs, and stop attempts to undermine the Arab nation's independence.

"The peace that the Sana'a government is trying to achieve is real, just and sustainable, and serves the entire Yemeni nation. It falls within the framework of Yemen's national sovereignty, and secures withdrawal of foreign forces from Yemeni soil. It also preserves Yemen's independence and territorial integrity," Hisham Sharaf Abdullah told Yemen's official Saba news agency in an exclusive interview.

He said Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud should not try to suggest as if Riyadh had the upper hand following the appointment of Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg as the United Nations' new special envoy for Yemen.

"He (Saudi foreign minister) must realize that it is the Yemeni people's duty to establish peace across the nation, and help establish security and stability, besides restoring the national government's sovereignty to impose law and order, achieve justice and prosperity for the entire nation, and alleviate their sufferings after seven years of aggression," Sharaf Abdullah said. "The peace in Yemen can neither be imposed nor stipulated by Saudi Arabia for the sake of its own benefits or those of its allies. The Riyadh regime cannot play a dominant and hegemonic role anymore," he said.

Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni foreign minister said, should strive for bilateral relations with Yemen on the basis of good neighborliness, mutual respect and non-interference in its internal affairs. Earlier on Saturday, the Saudi foreign minister welcomed the appointment of Grundberg as the UN special envoy to Yemen.

The top diplomat alleged in a post published on Twitter that the kingdom "will continue to support all efforts to reach a political solution that helps bring peace and prosperity to Yemen."

Yemeni army troops and fighters from allied Popular Committees on Saturday carried out an offensive in Saudi Arabia's southern border region of Jizan, inflicting losses on the kingdom's mercenaries. According to the media bureau of Yemen's Operations Command Center, Yemeni forces took control of several Saudi-led bases near the border with Yemen, killing and wounding more than a dozen militants in the process.

The operation, which reportedly lasted four hours, took place in a border area between the northwestern Yemeni province of Sa'ada and the Saudi Jizan region, and dealt heavy blows to the positions of Sudanese militants fighting for Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, backed by the US and regional allies, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah resistance movement. Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country. The war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions more. It has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases.

ViewPoint The Beaten Road Is the Safest

There is a proverb which says "the beaten road is the safest" and it literally means that it is a mistake to test something which has been tested before and now the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran are committing the same mistake by threatening to take offensive actions while they have forgotten what have been Iran's reactions towards the aggressions in the past.

Nowadays Israel and the Western countries have created hype against Iran over a drone attack on a ship and also an attempt to hijack a ship while there is no evidence that Iran has been behind it. Iran has vehemently denied it but the Israelis are insisting on this matter and they want to paint a picture of as culprit and unfortunately the West is supporting such a baseless claim of the Israelis.

Reacting to threats and claims, Head of the Aerospace Division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Saturday 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 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.

Also on Saturday, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman of the Iranian Armed Forces, said that unlike Iran, whose strategy is to strengthen security in the Persian Gulf, the United States, Britain and Israel are trying to create insecurity while the Saudi media are intensifying Iranophobia.

"If we want to confront the enemies, we will not let the battlefield be around us. The enemies started the media war at the time of the inauguration of the president of our country, and today they are seeking to forge documents for their actions," he added.

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Iran Nuclear Talks Could Resume in September

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Iran is ready to resume talks reviving the nuclear deal with world powers under new president Ebrahim Raisi, and meetings could take place in Vienna from early September, an EU official said.

The senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the EU's negotiator on the file, Enrique Mora, attended Raisi's swearing-in in Tehran Thursday and spoke with the Iranian official designated to take charge of the nuclear talks, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Amir-Abdollahian "is supposed to be the new foreign minister" in Raisi's cabinet, but that has not yet been announced, the EU official said in a statement.

He added that it was unclear whether the nuclear talks would remain under the responsibility of the Iranian foreign ministry or be taken over by another body, such as Iran's National Security Council.

Raisi succeeds the relatively moderate Hassan Rouhani whose landmark achievement during his own two-term presidency was the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers.

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Leader Thanks Iran's Olympian Medalists

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei thanks Iranian medalists for their stellar performance in Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

"I thank the Olympian medalists, who delighted the Iranian nation through their endeavor," Ayatollah Khamenei stated in a message on Saturday.

The Leader's expression of gratitude towards the athletes came as the country wrapped up its attendance in the historic event.

Iranian Forces Stand by Iraq's Anti-Terror PMU

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami says the Iranian force stands by Iraq's anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, in its battle against foreign occupation.

During a meeting with Hashd al-Sha'abi chariman Falih al-Fayyadh in Tehran on Sunday, Gen. Salami hailed the resistance group for playing a strategic role in the victory of the Iraqi nation over the Daesh terrorist group and maintaining the country's security and stability.

"Real political powers are the field powers and Hashd al-Sha'abi is extraordinary in this regard and God willing, its power will expand as a defense force on the back of great ideals, strong faith, internal unity and high discipline," he added.

Salami also described the bond of the resistance and Hashd al-Sha'abi with the people as key to their success, saying, "You and all of us must be vigilant so that people are not affected by the psychological operations of the enemy. Although you have put behind the difficult stages of the struggle, you should never neglect the enemy's tricks."

"An important part of what we are now calling America's decline on the world stage took place in Iraq. It means that the resistance that was formed in this country has weakened and worn out the Americans, and by raising their costs, it has put them between two evils; if they stay they will be harmed, and if they leave Iraq, they will be defeated," he explained.

The IRGC chief further stressed that the bond between the IRGC and Hashd al-Sha'abi



is a religious one based on the holy faith of Islam, regardless of geographical borders.

"We are your supporters in the resistance front and the continuation of this great battle. We hope that the Iraqi parliamentary resolution on the withdrawal of American troops from the country will be implemented practically and effectively and that an independent, sovereign and secure Iraq will continue its path without the presence of the occupiers."

On January 3, 2020, the U.S. assassinated Iran's legendary anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Hashd al-Sha'abi, in a drone strike near Baghdad International Airport.

During Sunday's meeting, Fayyadh appreciated the support of the Iranian nation and the IRGC for the Iraqi people and Hashd al-Sha'abi.

"Martyr Soleimani was the inspirer of Hashd al-Sha'abi. Today, Hashd al-Sha'abi owes its existence to General Soleimani and the endeavors of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, both of whom sacrificed their lives," he said. "No power or country can be hostile to Hashd al-Sha'abi while being a friend of Iraq."

Destabilizers Should Leave West Asia

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution underlined that those who are the source of instability and insecurity should pull out their forces from the region.

Velayati made the remark in a meeting with Ziad al-Nakhala, the secretary general of the Islamic Jihad of Palestine, on Sunday, saying that those who are the root cause of insecurity and instability in the region should withdraw and the recent victories will definitely bring about precious developments for the Resistance front.

The path of confrontation and resistance has attained significant and indescribable progress, he said, adding that it could bring numerous triumphs for the oppressed nation of Palestine and other nations, so the way will continue proudly.

Al-Nakhala, for his part, expressed congratulation for President Ebrahim Raisi's victory in Iran's 2021 election, saying that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always stood with the resistance movement and the Palestinians' goals. He went on to say that the Islamic Jihad and the oppressed people of Gaza Strip succeeded in resisting in the face of the Israeli occupiers and defeated them in the recent war.

The Palestinian resistance follows up the path of martyrs such as Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the late commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), he added.

The martyrs and the resistance movement are stepping in a path of Imam Khomeini, depicting the US as the Great Satan, Israel as a cancerous tumor, and al-Quds as the axis of Islamic unity, the Palestinian official argued.

Al-Nakhala, who has traveled to Tehran to take part in Ebrahim Raisi's taking oath of office, has met with some Iranian officials and emphasized the need for continuing resistance to reach final victory.

Nicaragua Welcomes Iranian-Made "COV-Iran Barakat" Vaccine

TEHRAN (MNA) – Nicaragua welcomed the Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine entitled "COV-Iran Barakat" due to its high effectiveness in the fight against coronavirus.

In a meeting held with scientists of Iran's Shafa Pharmed Pharmaceutical Group, as chief producer of COV-Iran Barakat vaccine against COVID-19, the Secretary-General of Ministry of Health of Nicaragua praised the progress of this Iranian pharmaceutical company in producing coronavirus vaccine and emphasized strengthening pharmaceutical cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in this respect.

According to a press release published in the official Nicaraguan media, representatives of Nicaragua and Iran discussed the cooperation of the Iranian

pharmaceutical industry with Nicaragua in Tehran.

During the meeting, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health of Nicaragua Carlos Sanz said that Shafa Pharmed Pharmaceutical Company is the second largest pharmaceutical company in the Islamic Republic of Iran which produces 40% of the domestic demand for medicines and pharmaceuticals and exports 60 its products to 12 countries.

It should be noted that Secretary-General of Nicaraguan Ministry of Health along with a high-ranking delegation of Nicaragua arrived in Iran a couple of days ago to take part in the inauguration ceremony of Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi as new president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran Seeking Security of Int'l Ways



TEHRAN (MNA) – Saying that Iran seeks the security of international ways and energy transportation, the Iranian Parliament added that the Zionist regime is at the top of the terrorists.

Speaking on the sidelines of the open session of the Parliament on Sunday, the Speaker of Iranian Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf answered a question raised by reporters over G7 countries' statement on the attack on a Zionist tanker off Oman.

"We have always said the fact that we are against any illegal or terrorist act", the Speaker of Iranian Parliament said and added that but now those who have trained and supported ISIL and other terrorists themselves are taking such an approach. Every day, you witness the problems and the movement of ships in the Red Sea, he said, adding, if there is a terrorist there, the Zionist regime is at the top of them.

The Islamic Republic of Iran always obeys the law and regulations and seeks the security of international paths and energy transportation, he stated.

Researchers Announce New Discovery in Historical Graveyard in Northern Iran

TEHRAN (IFP)- New excavations at Liar Sang Bon Cemetery in Iran's northern province of Gilan have found a direct connection between the size of the graves and the social rank and status of the people buried there.

According to the public relations office of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, radiocarbon dating shows the graves, found at the site, go back to somewhere between the mid-Parthian era and the end of the Sassanid period.

Liar Sang Bon historical site is located in a remote area of Gilan province. It spans a vast area of nearly 27 hectares. Researchers conducted have different phases of rescue excavation there in 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018 and finally in 2019. But, according to the head of Liar Sang Bon archeological team, their work remained unfinished.

"This historical site includes a burial ground and has scattered evidence of residence [beginning] from the historic period all the way to the middle centuries of the Islamic period," said, Vali Jahani, who leads the team.

He added that they have conducted new excavations at the site in Amlash area of Gilan province.

"In this [sixth] season, excavations were carried out in four different locations in Liar Sang Bon cemetery covering an area of around 2 hectares. 19 graves (21 burials) including pit and urn graves as well as towers of silence were found and valuable information was obtained including different clay vessels, objects with everyday use and weapons made of iron," Jahani said.

"The pit graves, which lack any specific structure and consist of an oval pit, accounted for the large proportion of the graves discovered in this cemetery."

He further explained that there are also towers of silence, which consist of a vertical pit with a special structure that leads to a room, called a Dakhma. Instances of such graves have been spotted in Mazandaran province, which borders Gilan province, as well as several other sites in the north, northwest and northeast of the Caspian Sea.

Jahani noted that several urn burials have also been discovered at the site. This, he said, resembles the burial method used during the Parthian period in the Iranian plateau.

Warring Sides in Afghanistan Urged to End Conflict, Fratricide

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry has urged all warring sides in Afghanistan to end the conflict and fratricide and settle their disputes through negotiations, expressing the country's readiness to continue facilitating and hosting intra-Afghan talks.

The ministry issued a statement on Saturday on the eve of the martyrdom anniversary of Iranian diplomats and a journalist in a terrorist attack at the Iranian consulate in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif in 1998 in violation of all recognized international treaties and regulations.

In July, Tehran hosted intra-Afghan talks between senior Taliban negotiators led by Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the head of Taliban's political office in Qatar's Doha, and officials from the Afghan government headed by former Vice President of Afghanistan Yunus Qanuni.

Opening the talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the Islamic Republic stands ready to help the neighboring country resolve its conflicts and achieve lasting peace.

According to the Foreign Ministry's statement, deep-rooted and genuine bonds between the Iran and Afghan nations leave no choice but to "adopt constructive approaches that serve the interests of the two countries."

It noted that the Iranian nation and government stand by the Afghan people as in the past and would support any solution that will help Afghanistan end more than four decades of a devastating war and protect the nation's achievements.

The ministry once again strongly condemned the terrorist attack and commemorated its victims and said it would continue to follow up on the case to shed light on the hidden aspects of it as a "definite demand of the Iranian government and people."

August 8 has been designated National Journalists' Day in Iran after Taliban militants in Afghanistan killed Mahmoud Saremi, the correspondent of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), along with eight Iranian diplomats, at the Iranian consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif in 1998.

Zakani Elected as Mayor of Tehran

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a Sunday meeting of the Tehran City Council, Alireza Zakani was elected as the mayor of Tehran with 18 out of 21 votes.



Today, the members of the Tehran City Council discussed the qualification of Alireza Zakani so as to appoint him as the Mayor of Tehran, the capital of Iran.

Accordingly, in the election of the Tehran City Council members, Alireza Zakani was elected as the mayor of Tehran with 18 votes out of 21 votes.

It is worth mentioning that Alireza Zakani was one of the seven candidates qualified to run in Iran's presidential elections in June 2021.

As it will take days before Zakani can be officially named the mayor, the Council elected Alireza Javid as the caretaker of Tehran Municipality.

Azerbaijan Appoints New Ambassador to Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – President Ilham Aliyev has appointed the former Azeri consul general to the Iranian city of Tabriz as the country's new ambassador to Tehran.

At the behest of President Ilham Aliyev, Ali Alizade has replaced Bonyad Hosseinov as Baku's Ambassador to Tehran.

The 43-year-old Ali Alizade was the consul general to the Iranian city of Tabriz, the provincial capital of East Azerbaijan of Iran, between 2010- 2016.

Prior to this, the new Azeri envoy to Tehran also served as the Azerbaijani ambassador to Pakistan.

Gharibabadi Urges Total Destruction of Nuclear Weapons

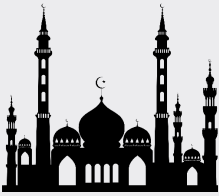
TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations in his latest tweet to mark the 76th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki said that to have a safe and secure world, nuclear weapons should be destroyed totally.

Kazem Gharibabadi tweeted, "Yesterday marked 76th anniversary of atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which killed up to 226000 civilians."

"That was a genocide and crimes against humanity," he stressed.

"The U.S. is the first who used nuclear weapons, and still develops its arsenal and even threatens others to their use," added Gharibabadi.

Gharibabadi concluded: "To have a safe and secure world, nuclear weapons should be destroyed totally."



PRAYER TIME

Noon (Zohr)

Evening (Maghreb)

Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

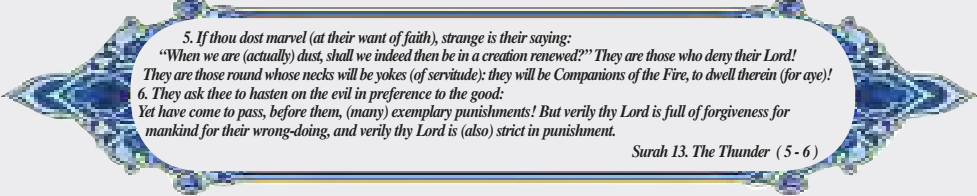
Tomorrow's Sunrise

13:10

20:20

04:46

06:19



5. If thou dost marvel (at their want of faith), strange is their saying:
"When we are (actually) dust, shall we indeed then be in a creation renewed?" They are those who deny thy Lord!
They are those round whose necks will be yokes (of servitude); they will be Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (for aye)!

6. They ask thee to hasten on the evil in preference to the good:
Yet have come to pass, before them, (many) exemplary punishments! But verily thy Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind for their wrong-doing, and verily thy Lord is (also) strict in punishment.

Surah 13. The Thunder (5 - 6)

Iran Trade With EAEU States Falls By 3% Last Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran’s trade with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) members stood at \$3.4b last year which shows 3 percent decline comparing to the preceding year.

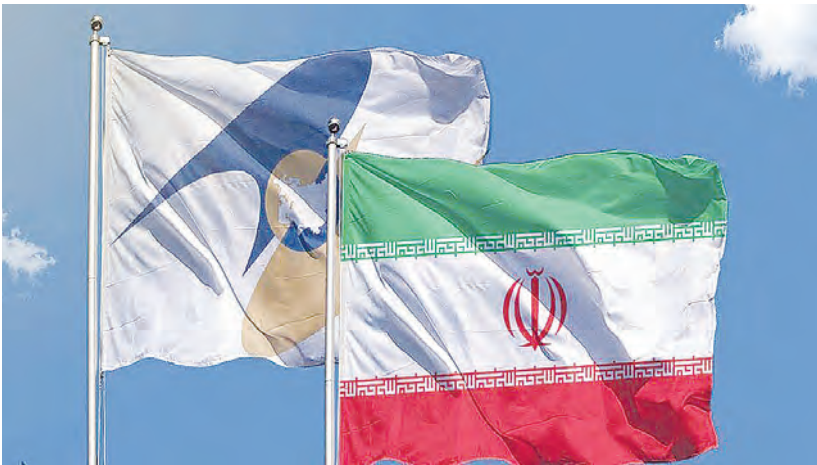
The fourth meeting of the national work group on regulations in the field of Eurasia was held at Iran’s Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and was chaired by head of the international affairs department of ICCIMA Mr. Mohammad Reza Karbasi.

In the meeting, Iran has not successful experience in taking advantage of the regional trade agreements and these agreements have not ever had any important place in the country’s trade diplomacy while a country like Turkey is member of several regional trade agreements and bilateral and multilateral agreements.

He went on to say that signing the preferential trade agreement between Iran and EAEU as a new experience in the regional trade cooperation has this capacity that in case of the government support and active presence of private sector in the country’s foreign trade, it can bring considerable changes in the future.

Karbasi noted that according to the statistics released by Iran’s Custom Administration, the value of Iran’s trade with the Eurasian Economic Union member states stood at \$3.4m last year which shows 3 percent decline comparing to the preceding year.

He went on to say that the total imports of Iran from EAEU states was \$2.358b last year which shows One percent growth comparing to the preceding year while in the same period, exports to these countries faced 3 percent decline.



Karbasi went on to say that Iran’s exports of the items from the list of preferential items to Eurasia hit \$1.487b last year which indicates 22 percent decline comparing to the preceding year.

He also warned the exporters to the EAEU states of observing all regulations and urged them to export good quality goods to those countries. He also said that exporters should consider the needs of their target destinations and to avoid exporting more than the market’s needs because it has had huge political and economic cost for the country.

Karbasi also said that those exporters and companies which do not observe the rules and commit offences should be dealt properly in order to avoid heavy cost of their offences.

He reiterated that the chamber is ready to annual the business cards of the offender economic activists who present false information and data.

Then the participants in the work group explored ways to remove hurdles in way of trade with EAEU states.

In July, Iran held the first exclusive Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) exhibition which was a platform to showcase the capabilities of the EAEU members and their Iranian counterparts.

In addition to Iranian companies, 30 companies from Russia, 30 companies from Kyrgyzstan, more than 10 companies from Armenia, over 10 companies from Kazakhstan, and companies from Belarus have participated in the exhibition.

CBI CB Reports 50% Rise In Banks’ Assets

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Assets owned by banks reached 84,606.4 trillion rials (\$338 billion) by the end of the previous quarter on June 21, 50.3% higher y/y.

Foreign assets grew 60% y/y from 12,586.4 trillion rials (\$50.3b) in June 2020 to 20,134 trillion rials (\$80b) by June 2021, according to data released by the Central Bank of Iran.

Non-government sectors owed 25,660.4 trillion rials (\$102.6b) to banks by the end of previous quarter -- an annual rise of 51.1%.

Government and state-owned companies held 6,475.6 trillion rials (\$25.9b) in debt to banks, up 45% compared to the corresponding period last year.

Special Gift of Hamrahe Aval For Reporters and Journalists

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - At the threshold of “National Journalists’ Day” and also on the occasion of 27th anniversary of supply of the first SIM Card by Iran’s Leading Mobile Operator, Hamrahe Aval (Mobile Company of Iran, MCI), like previous years, has prepared a special package for dear reporters and journalists across the nationwide in order to appreciate and honor their unflinching efforts.

Accordingly, in cooperation and collaboration made with the CEO of Hamrahe Aval, a special yearlong Internet package with total 200 gigabytes has been considered for all dear reporters and journalists across the country whose names have been received and registered by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for Press and Information Affairs as main responsible body for following up activities related to reporters and journalists.

Refinery Calibrates Gas Ultrasonic Flowmeters



TEHRAN (Shana) – The repair division of the Persian Gulf Bidboland Refinery has calibrated 12-inch ultrasonic flowmeters during operation with software and hardware modifications for the first time in the country.

According to Persian Gulf Bidboland Gas Refining Company, with the successful implementation of this project by a group of instrumentation repair experts, the calibration of 12 and 14-inch ultrasonic flowmeters has been provided domestically and there is a capacity to implement this plan for 24-inch flowmeters in the refinery.

Mehdi Omidizadeh, Head of Repairs of Persian Gulf Bidboland Gas Refining Company, said: “Previously, this equipment was sent abroad to perform calibration operations of with considerable time and costs, but given the scientific capacity and technical staff of Persian Gulf Bidboland Refinery, the operation was carried out domestically.”

Iran Plans Changes to Draft Deal With India on Chabahar Port Operations



TEHRAN (PressTV) - An Iranian parliament lawmaker says a draft deal with India on terminal operations in the southeastern port of Cahabahar is expected to change so that the two countries can agree on a dispute settlement mechanism in the contract.

Mohammad Reza Rezayi Kouchi, who chairs the Iranian parliament’s Construction Committee, said on Saturday that the 10-year deal with India on running the Shahaid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar port will be signed between the two countries once changes to the draft agreement are ratified in the parliament.

“The two sides have agreed on these changes and there remains only the issue of formalities,” Rezayi Kouchi was quoted as saying by the semi-official ILNA news agency.

The lawmaker said that the Indian company involved in the agreement will be represented with a new name under the revised deal, adding that a local partner company that has been working with the Indians in Chabahar will be removed from the agreement.

India has committed to \$85 million worth of investment on six cranes and other equipment before it starts running the Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar, Iran’s only ocean port on the Sea of Oman.

Iranian officials say Indians have fulfilled only a third of their investment pledges in the port by supplying the six cranes although reports suggest that the rest of the equipment will be delivered to the port before March next year.

Rezayi Kouchi said that India’s activity in Chabahar had dropped to almost zero on recent weeks mainly because of rising tensions in Afghanistan which has led to closure of border crossings with Iran. He said increased activity in the rival port of Gwadar in neighboring Pakistan was also to blame.

The lawmaker added the Shahid Kalantari Complex, the other major terminal in Chabahar which is run by Iranian contractors, have continued to process Iranian basic goods cargoes in the meantime.

Iran Export to Afghanistan Shrinks Due to Insecurities

Nearly \$480m of Non-Oil Products Exported From Sistan-Baluchestan

TEHRAN (MNA) – Pointing to the reduced export of Iran to Afghanistan due to insecurities, Chairman of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said that if this trend continues, Iran will lose a part of its annual export to this country.

Pointing to the reduced export of Iran to Afghanistan due to the recent insecurity events in this country, Chairman of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said that if this trend continues, Iran will lose a part of its annual export to this country.

Speaking to FNA, Hossein Salimi referred to the reduced volume of trade between Iran and Afghanistan due to attack of Taliban to some parts of Afghanistan and stated that Iran’s trade and economic situation with Afghanistan is heavily affected by the insecurity situation overshadowing Afghanistan, so that Iranian businesspersons and traders do not show willingness to do trade and business with Afghanistan.

Presently, the two border crossings of “Milak” and “Gamshad” between Iran and Afghanistan have been shut down while the two other border crossings of Mahirud and Dogharoon are open for bilateral trade activities, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salimi put the annual export of Islamic Republic of Iran to neighboring Afghanistan at \$2.7 billion.

Under such circumstances, it is expected that Iran’s export to Afghanistan will shrink due to the spread of insecurity in this country.

TEHRAN (MNA) - Over 1.506 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$478.997 million was exported from Sistan-Baluchestan province in the southeast of Iran during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), a provincial official announced.

Mohammad-Ali Khashi, the director-general of the customs department of Zahedan (the center of province), named cement and clinker, dates, gas, coriander seeds and other agricultural products as the main exported products, and Pakistan, Afghanistan, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the major export destinations.

The official also announced that 540,217 tons of products valued at \$328.697 million has been imported to the province in the first four months of the year.

He mentioned rice, wheat, corn and barley, mango, sesame, spare parts, tangerines, and livestock as the major imported items and Russia, Germany, Denmark, Pakistan, India, and the UAE

Tabriz Refinery Moving Towards Asia’s Top 10 Refineries

TEHRAN (MNA) - Managing Director of Tabriz Refinery in northwestern Iran has said his company is taking new steps for placing among Asia’s top ten refineries in the coming years, IRNA reported.

“In line with the second stage of the company’s strategic planning which began in the second half of the previous [Iranian calendar] year (September 22, 2020) new steps are being taken for Tabriz Refinery to place among Asia’s top ten refineries,” Gholamreza Baqeri said in a press conference on Sunday.

According to Baqeri, the first stage of the refinery’s strategic planning was made in the Iranian calendar year 1394 (ended in March 2016), and with the completion and realization of the first stage, the second part of the planning was prepared and started in the second half of the previous year.

The company’s planning is mainly focused on supplying feedstock, the

production and supply of high-quality products needed by customers, sustainable development and improvement of the business system through supply chain management, branding, and product quality improvement using domestic capabilities, the official said.

Baqeri mentioned the refinery’s daily processing capacity of 110,000 barrels and noted that the refinery accounts for seven percent of the country’s total refining capacity.

He mentioned liquefied gas, Euro 5 gasoline, ordinary gas oil, Euro 5 gas oil, furnace oil, and aircraft fuel as the main products of the refinery, adding that currently, special petroleum products such as light naphtha, vacuum bottom, granular sulfur, ethane, butane, hexane, lube cut, base oil, isofeed, isoricyclic, petroleum solvent 406-404-402, benzene, bitumen, anti-corrosion, antifreeze, and reformate are also among the refinery’s products basket.

Uzbek President Mirziyoyev Set to Run for 2nd Term

TASHKENT (Dispatches) - Uzbekistan's ruling Liberal Democratic party plans to nominate President Shavkat Mirziyoyev as its candidate in the Oct. 24 election, the party said on Saturday.

Mirziyoyev, 64, is widely expected to run for a second term, and win, but has so far made no comment on his plans. He came to power in 2016 following the death of Islam Karimov, the Central Asian nation's former Soviet leader and first president.

Since assuming office, Mirziyoyev has launched an ambitious economic reform program, opening up the nation of 34 million to foreign trade and investment, and eased restrictions on religious and media freedoms, but the political system remains highly centralized.



Australia Suffers Worst COVID Day This Year

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Australia saw a record daily number of new coronavirus cases this year on Saturday, with the country's most populous states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland recording a total of 361 cases of the highly infectious Delta variant.

With about 15 million people in the three states, or 60% of Australia's population, under a strict lockdown, the country also reported five coronavirus-related deaths, one of the highest this year.

NSW suffered its worst pandemic day, reporting 319 new locally acquired COVID-19 cases, with Sydney and neighboring regional centers spanning 200 km (120 miles) of coastline under a stay-at-home order for six weeks already.



New Protests as France Set to Implement Macron's Health Pass



PARIS (AFP) - Protesters took to the streets across France on Saturday for the fourth weekend in a row to rally against a new health pass needed to enter a cafe or travel on an inter-city train, two days before the new rules come into force.

The new rules championed by President Emmanuel Macron make it obligatory to have either a full course of vaccination against Covid-19, be in possession of a negative test or be recently recovered from the virus to enjoy usually routine activities.

Macron, who faces re-election next year, hopes the new rules will encourage all French to be vaccinated against Covid-19 and defeat the virus and its fast-spreading Delta variant.

But opponents, who have turned out en masse in the streets in the past weeks, argue that the rules encroach on civil liberties in a country where individual freedom is prized. From Monday, the health pass will be needed to eat in a restaurant or enjoy a drink in a cafe both indoors and on a terrace. It will be obligatory on inter-city transport including high-speed trains and domestic flights although will not be needed on metro systems and suburban transport.

The pass has already been required since July 21 to visit cultural venues such as cinemas, theatres and museums. Its extension was approved by France's Constitutional Council on Thursday.

In one of several protests planned in Paris alone, hundreds began gathering at Pont de Neuilly metro station on the outskirts for a march to the center, chanting "freedom!" and "no to the health pass".

Wearing a mask, Alexandre Fourez, 34, said he was protesting for the first time and that he had himself recovered from Covid. "The problem with the health pass is that our hand is being forced," said the marketing employee, adding he "really has difficulty believing its use will be temporary".

Other protests were planned later in the afternoon across the country including Lille in the northeast and Toulon on the Mediterranean coast.

The interior ministry said over 200,000 people turned out last weekend and more than 160,000 the weekend before for the protests. Police do not expect the numbers to decrease this weekend.

Although many of the protesters are among those refusing to be vaccinated, some have taken the jabs but object to the principle of the health pass.

Government spokesman Gabriel Attal said that the pass, which under current rules will be required until November 15, was needed to avoid further restrictions as the country fights the fourth wave of the Covid-19 epidemic.

"It is an additional constraint but a constraint that will allow places to stay open," he said, while emphasizing that there would be a one week "grace period" for consumers and businesses to get used to the new rules.

Taliban Capture Second Afghan Provincial Capital

KABUL (Dispatches) - The Taliban seized the stronghold of a notorious Afghan warlord Saturday, officials said, the second provincial capital to fall to the insurgents in less than 24 hours.

The deputy governor of Sheberghan city in Jawzjan said government forces and officials had retreated to the airport on the outskirts of the northern Afghan city, where they were preparing to defend themselves.

"The city has unfortunately fallen completely," Jawzjan deputy governor Qader Malia told AFP.

The city is home to notorious warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, who only returned to Afghanistan this week from medical treatment in Turkey but is believed to be in Kabul.

The Taliban have gained vast parts of rural Afghanistan since launching a series of offensives in May to coincide with the start of the final withdrawal of foreign troops.

On Friday, Zaranj city in Nimroz fell to the Taliban "without a fight", according to its deputy governor, becoming the first provincial capital to be taken by the insurgents. There was more resistance in Sheberghan, several sources told AFP, but an aide to Dostum confirmed the city had been taken.



Italy's 5-Star Movement Elects Former PM Conte as Leader

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy's former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has been officially elected leader of the 5-Star Movement, ending months of uncertainty and division since he was first asked to head up the troubled party in February.

5-Star is the largest group in parliament following its triumph at 2018 elections when it took 32% of the vote, but its support has ebbed due to infighting and policy U-turns and it is now polling at around 16%.

Conte, who opinion polls show is Italy's second most popular politician after Prime Minister Mario Draghi having earned widespread respect for guiding Italy through the worst of the coronavirus crisis, was elected late on Friday after a two-day online vote by the party's members.

Some 93% of those who voted answered yes to the question "are you in favour of the election of professor Giuseppe Conte as president of the 5-Star Movement." There were no other candidates.

"The hard work of these last months has paid off and now we can start from a solid base," Conte said on Facebook. He promised to tour Italy from September to meet 5-Star supporters and gather ideas for its program.

5-Star is part of Draghi's national unity government but often appears uneasy in the ruling coalition. In the most recent example, after drawn-out negotiations it secured changes to a reform of the justice system that had been backed by most of the other parties.

Conte, a former law professor who previously had no party affiliation, agreed to take the reins of 5-Star after his coalition government collapsed seven months ago and he was replaced by Draghi as premier.

He was asked to take charge by 73-year-old former comedian Beppe Grillo, who founded 5-Star in 2009 as an anti-establishment protest movement.

However, the former premier's appointment proved far more problematic than expected as the two men argued over Grillo's future role in the party, and at one point Conte appeared on the verge of pulling out. In recent years 5-Star has gradually abandoned its anti-establishment roots and moved towards the center-left political mainstream.

Thai Anti-Gov't Protesters Clash With police in Bangkok

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - More than a thousand Thai anti-government protesters clashed with police on Saturday, as they demonstrated against the government's failure to handle coronavirus outbreaks and its impact on the economy.

About a hundred police officers in riot gear sealed off a road near Victory Monument in the capital Bangkok with containers and used water cannon, tear gas and rubber bullets to stop a march toward Government House, the office of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha.

"Tear gas and rubber bullets were used for crowd control. Our goal is to maintain order," Krisana Pattanacharoen, a police spokesman, told reporters.

The demonstrators threw ping pong bombs, stones and marbles, he added.

Dozens of protesters were seen being carried away on motorcycles and in ambulances. The Erawan Emergency Medical Centre said at least two civilians and three officers had been injured.

"We want Prayuth to resign because people aren't getting vaccines," said a 23-year-old male protester, who only gave his first name "Aom", for fear of repercussions.

"We don't have jobs and income, so we have no choice but protest."

Some 6% of Thailand's population of more than 66 million has been fully vaccinated and most of the country including Bangkok is under lockdown with a night-time curfew. Gatherings of more than five people are currently banned.

Nonetheless, street protests against the government have been held in recent weeks by several groups, including Prayuth's former political allies, as frustrations mount over its management of the health crisis.

Thailand reported on Saturday a record of nearly 22,000 new COVID-19 infections in a single day and the highest deaths, 212 fatalities.

The Southeast Asian country has reported 736,522 total cases and 6,066 deaths from the coronavirus since the pandemic began last year.



Clashes Kill at Least 30 South Sudanese Soldiers

JUBA (Dispatches) - At least 30 South Sudanese soldiers were killed and 13 injured in clashes between forces loyal to Vice President Riek Machar and a splinter group, Machar's party spokesman said in a statement.

In a move that risks derailing the country's already fragile peace process, rival military leaders of Machar's party SPLM/A-IO, announced on Wednesday that the vice president was ousted as head of his party and its armed forces.

As a result, the party's chief of staff, First Lieutenant General Simon Gatwech Dual, was nominated interim party leader from the military wing.

On Thursday Machar, who played a leading role in brokering a peace deal in 2018 with President Salva Kiir, accused the rival military leaders of trying to block the country's peace process.

The latest clashes occurred in Magenis, in the country's Upper Nile region, between forces loyal to General Dual and those backing Machar.

Machar's party's spokesman Lam Paul Gabriel said the party's forces responded "in self defence" and killed two major Generals and over 27 soldiers. He said those fighting on the side of the SPLM/A-IO lost 3 soldiers during the attack.

Reuters could not independently verify the report of killings. The military wing was not immediately available for comment and communication networks are patchy in the Upper Nile region. The other side denied having suffered heavy losses and having launched an offensive.

"We have so far lost one soldier and two others sustained injuries. The fighting is ongoing," Chuol Deng, deputy spokesman for General Dual told Radio Tamazuj, a south Sudanese radio station earlier on Saturday.

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 but descended into fighting two years later when forces loyal to Kiir and Machar clashed in the capital. That sparked the massacre of hundreds of civilians in Juba from Machar's Nuer ethnic group and a spiral of brutal ethnic violence and revenge killings.

The civil war killed 400,000 people and triggered Africa's biggest refugee crisis since the 1994 Rwandan genocide.





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Fully Furn

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4bdrs, S/p
green yard
Nicely Furn

Parsian

Darrous (\$1600)
3bdrs, baclony, F.F

Apt (\$3000)
Kamranieh Apt
260sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J
balcony, pkg, Fully Furn

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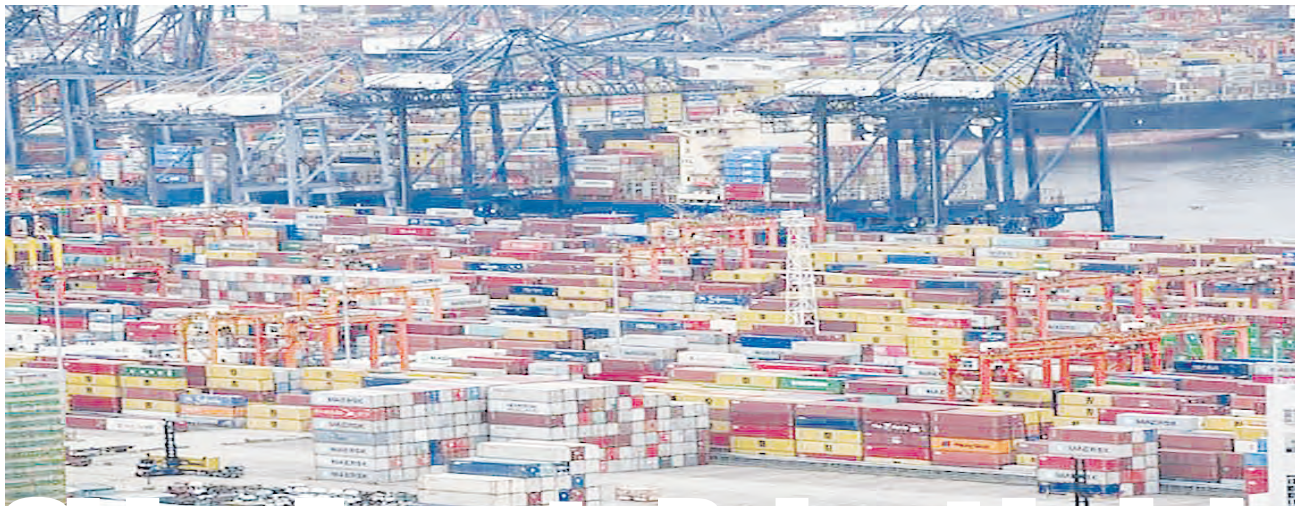


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Pakistan, South Korea Agree on Business Cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - At a meeting of the Pakistan-South Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group, Chairman Senate Commerce Committee Zeeshan Khanzada said Pakistan will become a transit hub in future. Sang-Pyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call to convener Senator Zeeshan Khanzada and members of the Pak-South Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Parliament House. Senator Khanzada thanked the Ambassador for making this visit possible on short notice. The Korean envoy thanked members of the Pak-South Korea Friendship Group. Senator Samina Muntaz while welcoming the Korean Ambassador, said that Pak-South Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group Forum will enhance economic development.



China Exports Robust in July As Port Activity Rebounds

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's exports remained robust in July despite losing some steam, customs data showed Saturday, with analysts noting a rebound in port activity but warning that the recent spread of the Delta variant could act as a drag on growth.

Outbound shipments from the world's second-largest economy have remained resilient this year, boosted by demand for goods like medical gear and electronics needed to work from home -- with a resurgence in coronavirus cases elsewhere increasing reliance on Chinese products.

With strict lockdowns and mass testing, business activity has largely returned to normal in China, although the country is now stepping up measures to contain the spread of the Delta variant with local outbreaks detected in more than a dozen provinces.

But trade remained strong in July, with exports growing slightly less than expected at 19.3 percent from a year ago, said the Customs Administration.

A Bloomberg poll of analysts had forecast the rise at 19.9 percent year-on-year, after a surprise spike of 32.2 percent in June.

Imports, meanwhile, grew 28.1 percent from the same period last year, official data showed.

With the latest figures, China's overall trade surplus came in at \$56.6 billion in July, up from \$51.5 billion in June.

Electronic products continued to support export growth in the first seven months of the year even as demand for mask exports eased from last year, official data showed.

ANZ Research Asia senior strategist Irene Cheung noted this week that there has been a "rebound in port activities" following the previous disruption.

"On the other hand, imports could have received a boost from the increase in commodity prices," she added.

China has been working to temper the rising costs of bulk commodities, which have piled pressure on smaller enterprises.

But ING economists added in a note that stricter social distancing measures due to China's Covid-19 resurgence in recent weeks are likely to cause some damage, even if the impact may be somewhat offset by exports of electronic parts and products.

"In addition to the Delta variant, China is dealing with other negative shocks to its near-term growth," Nomura economists said this week.

On top of natural disasters including heavy rainfall and flooding in the central Henan province, which have constrained economic activity, Beijing has also introduced tightened measures in the property sector and high-polluting industries.

Zhiwei Zhang, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management said there were signs "export may weaken in coming months."

"The imports of processing trade... slowed in July," Zhang said in a note, adding that the Covid outbreak was among "the main sources of uncertainty in China for the next few months." Our goal is to create a safe and engaging place for users to connect over interests and passions. In order to improve our community experience, we are temporarily suspending article commenting.

Indonesia Exits Recession With 7% GDP Growth in Q2

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia pulled out of recession in the second quarter, reporting its strongest annual growth rate in 17 years, but analysts warned its economic recovery will suffer a setback due to a recent surge in Covid-19 infections.

South-East Asia's largest economy grew 7.07% in the April-June quarter compared with a year earlier, its first expansion in five quarters, Statistics Indonesia reported.

The expansion rate beat a 6.57% forecast by analysts in a Reuters poll and was the highest since the October-December quarter of 2004. The first quarter's contraction was revised to 0.71%.

Surging exports - including impressive 56% growth in commodity shipments - a rebound in consumption and investment, and bigger government spending boosted activity. However, the statistics bureau said the high growth rate was also due to low base effects when compared to the weak pandemic-stricken second quarter last year.

Despite the better-than-expected outcome, analysts are downgrading their outlooks for the economy due to the virus' resurgence and mobility restrictions imposed since July.

Indonesia recorded a grim milestone of more than 100,000 deaths from COVID-19 on Wednesday, with 3.57 million people infected, though health experts believe the true numbers may be far higher.

"Indonesia's GDP bounce will be short-lived," said Krystal Tan, an economist with ANZ who is among those pencilling in slower growth this year. ANZ's new forecast is 3.8%, down from 4%.

"The pace of recovery will be capped until Covid-19 risks fade."

The central bank had already lowered its projection to a range of 3.5% to 4.3%, from 4.1% to 5.1%, slightly below the government's 3.7% to 4.5% outlook. Indonesia's economy shrank last year for the first time since 1998, by 2.1%.

The current stay-at-home order, applied in areas with high infection numbers including much of Java and Bali islands, has been extended until at least Aug. 9, but authorities are eyeing a September reopening. Only essential and critical sectors of the economy are allowed to operate at varying capacities now.

A few analysts flagged a risk of a double-dip recession if curbs are extended for longer.

The government is trying to bring down the number of people being treated with Covid-19 to around 100,000 per day, from 500,000 now, so that the economy can regain momentum in the fourth quarter and grow more than 5%, chief economic minister Airlangga Hartarto said.



U.S. Labor Market Powers Ahead With Strong Job Gains

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. employers hired the most workers in nearly a year in July and continued to raise wages, giving the economy a powerful boost as it started the second half of what many economists believe will be the best year for growth in almost four decades.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report also showed the unemployment rate dropped to a 16-month low of 5.4% and more people waded back into the labor force. The report followed on the heels of news last week that the economy fully recovered in the second quarter the sharp loss in output suffered during the very brief pandemic recession.

"We are charting new economic expansion territory in the third quarter," said Brian Bethune, professor of practice at Boston College in Boston. "The overall momentum of the recovery continues to build." Nonfarm payrolls increased by 943,000 jobs last month, the largest gain since August 2020, the survey of establishments showed. Data for May and June were revised to show 119,000 more jobs created than previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls would increase by 870,000 jobs.

The economy has created 4.3 million jobs this year, leaving employment 5.7 million jobs below its peak in February 2020. President Joe Biden cheered the strong employment report. "More than 4 million jobs created since we took office," Biden wrote on Twitter. "It's historic - and proof our economic plan is working."

Hiring is being fueled by pent-up demand for workers in the labor-intensive services sector. Nearly \$6 trillion in pandemic relief money from the government and COVID-19 vaccinations are driving domestic demand. But a resurgence in infections, driven by the Delta variant of the coronavirus, could discourage some unemployed people from returning to the labor force.

July's employment report could bring the Federal Reserve a step closer to announcing plans to start scaling back its monthly bond-buying program. The U.S. central bank last year slashed its benchmark overnight interest rate to near zero and is pumping money into the economy through the bond purchases. "This is the last employment report Chair (Jerome) Powell sees before Jackson



Hole, and we have to imagine that he lays the groundwork for a potential September tapering announcement," said Conrad DeQuadros, senior economic advisor at Brean Capital in New York. "We think the odds continue to rise that tapering begins before the end of 2021."

Stocks on Wall Street rose, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) and the S&P 500 (SPX) index hitting record highs. The dollar jumped against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices fell. Employment in the leisure and hospitality sector increased by 380,000 jobs, accounting for 40% of the job gains, with payrolls at restaurants and bars advancing by 253,000.

Government payrolls increased by a whopping 240,000 jobs as employment in local government education rose by 221,000. Education jobs were flattered by a seasonal quirk.

India's Target of \$400b In Export Attainable



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's target of \$400b in exports this year, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) called it 'attainable', given the current global situation of post-pandemic economic recovery and rising competitiveness of Indian goods.

"The strategy for exports along with taking all players on board would yield notable outcomes with the comprehensive policy announcements and will help India take a winning leap forward as a \$5 trillion economy in the near future," CII said in a statement.

Chandrajit Banerjee, the Director-General of CII said, "The PM has set an aspirational, but very much attainable target of USD 400 billion in exports for the year. At the current juncture when global value chains are in flux, the multifold strategies to promote exports coupled with a whole-of-government approach make this a moment for India to seize. The draft National Logistic Policy, boost for project exports and enhancing export insurance cover offer significant encouragement to catalyse exports to new peaks."

"PM's address today speaks volumes of the Government's commitment towards Atmanirbhar Bharat mission for economic growth, a vision based on net exports and making India competitive. The Government's focus on new and existing markets and products and simplification of procedures will greatly enhance the competitiveness of Indian exports. The industry would work with the Government on the Districts as Export Hubs initiative and level with the state and district authorities for capacity building of potential exporters," Banerjee added.

Lauding the Central government for its efforts to foster globally competitive firms, the Director-General said, "Over the recent few years, the Government of India has been at the forefront in creating a conducive regulatory environment that fosters globally competitive firms. Several reform initiatives have been introduced in the domain of trade and investment which have been the key to enhance the export potential of the Indian economy. The Government has been very proactive during the lockdown period and has extended all possible help and support to the industry as a whole and exporters in particular. Industry concerns were resolved on an almost real-time basis."

Cuba Legalizes Small and Medium Enterprises

HAVANA (Dispatches) - The Cuban government approved a law authorizing the creation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), a major shift in the communist-ruled country where state-owned companies are the norm.

The change comes nearly a month after thousands of Cubans flocked to the streets decrying dictatorship and complaining of hunger in the largest demonstrations since the revolution that brought the late Fidel Castro to power in 1959. At least one person died and hundreds were arrested in the unusual mass protests, which the government claimed were provoked by the United States.

President Joe Biden has slapped fresh sanctions on Cuban police for suppressing the unrest, and warned of additional punitive measures if the communist regime does not address the protesters' demands for sweeping change.

In recent months the Cuban government has accelerated reforms to modernize the economy and staunch the worst economic crisis the island nation has experienced in 30 years. In part driven by US sanctions, the downtown and chronic shortages of food, electricity and medicine have been exacerbated by stringent measures against Covid-19. In February, the government decided to open up much of the controlled economy to the fledgling private sector, except for key areas such as health, media and education. Around 2,000 activities were made available to self-employed workers.

Roughly 600,000 Cubans are estimated to be working in the private sector, about 13 percent of the workforce. But these so-called "cuentapropistas" have called for a legal structure that would explicitly permit their businesses.

AERC Expects Kazakhstan's Real GDP to Continue Its Recovery

NUR-SULTAN (Dispatches) - The Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC) shared its macroeconomic report on Kazakhstan, projecting the country's 2021 real GDP growth to reach about 3.9 percent and expressing concern that the economic recovery could be affected by a new coronavirus lockdown.

The experts at the AERC rely on three main

factors for their prognosis. The first is the fact that the price of Brent crude oil is expected to be \$65 per barrel in 2021. The second is that the economies of Kazakhstan's trading partner countries will grow by 4.9 percent this year. The third is that the volume of oil and gas condensate production in Kazakhstan is expected to reach 86 million tons in 2021.

The AERC also improved its forecast of nominal cash income in the country from its initial April forecast due to higher growth in nominal wages. The current projected nominal cash income growth rate for 2021 is 10.5 percent.

The prognosis of the average annual consumer inflation in comparison to 2020 was also adjusted by the AERC from an initial 7.4 percent to 7 percent. The inflation rate is negotiated by a gradual slowdown in the growth rate of food prices against the background of a number of measures by the government aimed at curbing food inflation.

According to the AERC estimates for 2021, the excess of exports of goods over imports in Kazakhstan's foreign trade will amount to \$10.9 billion.

Mass vaccination has allowed for significant improvement of the Kazakh economy so far this year. Despite the fact that the current epidemiological situation in the country still requires maintaining a stimulating fiscal policy, the AERC predicts lower state budget expenditures of \$36.5 billion due to a gradual recovery of business activity in the country since May.

However, the mutation of the virus and the expansion of the delta variant have the capacity to negate the economic achievements due to the introduction of new lockdown measures. The AERC experts stress the importance of further vaccination for preserving the positive dynamic of Kazakhstan's economy.

The AERC is Nur-Sultan-based institution established in 2010 and specializing in legal, analytical, and consulting services.

“Miss Ronaldo” to Be Screened At American Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian short documentary, ‘Miss Ronaldo’, by Kioumar Mohammad-Chenari is to be screened at the 2nd Crazy About Film Festival. The documentary narrates a story of a football player girl and her dreams. The Crazy About Film Festival is a community-driven showcase hosted in Mineral Wells, Texas. The event will be held on August 20-21.



ADB Okays \$500m to Help Pakistan Procure Covid Vaccines

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday approved and immediately signed a \$500 million loan to help Pakistan procure and deploy safe and effective vaccines for coronavirus disease and strengthen the country’s capacity to implement its vaccination program.

The loan will support Pakistan’s National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) through purchase and delivery of an estimated 39.8 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine, safety boxes and syringes, sufficient to vaccinate at least 18.1 million people from priority groups, the ADB said in a statement.

Soon after the approval of the Covid-19 Vaccine Support Project under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility, the financing agreement was signed by Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MEA) Zulfiqar Haider and ADB’s Acting Country Director Cleo Kawawaki.

The signing took place within three hours, on fast track basis, after approval of the loan by the ADB’s Board of Directors earlier in the day. Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan witnessed the signing ceremony.

Later last month, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet had directed the MEA and Ministry of National Health Services to acquire donor funding for the vaccine procurement to ward off a run-down on the country’s tight foreign exchange reserves.

Under the loan agreement, the ADB will disburse up to \$150 million as retroactive financing for already procured vaccines while remaining \$350 million will be utilised in coming months for procurement of new vaccines.

“Vaccines help reduce the spread and mortality of Covid-19, restore confidence among citizens, and are vital for the economic recovery,” said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. “The ADB reaffirms its full commitment to supporting Pakistan,” Mr Asakawa was quoted as saying.

He said the loan would help protect vulnerable groups in the country and it was an integral part of the development partner package to help the government mitigate the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

Minister Omar Ayub thanked the ADB Management and Board of Directors for extending timely and fast track processing of



financial support to Pakistan at this difficult time when the country was facing increasing health-related and socioeconomic challenges amid Covid-19 pandemic.

He committed to ensuring timely procurement of the vaccine with uninterrupted supply chain to meet the target of inoculating people.

The government has been aiming to vaccinate the entire eligible population, around 119 million people comprising all those aged 18 and over, prioritising frontline healthcare workers, the elderly, marginalised groups including refugees and internally displaced persons, and people with comorbidities.

The loan is financed through the ADB’s \$9 billion Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility launched in December 2020 to offer rapid and equitable vaccine-related support to ADB developing member countries.

The ADB’s assistance will also help strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, and the Federal Expanded Program on Immunization to effectively implement the Covid-19 vaccination program.

Uzbekistan and UNESCO Strengthen Ties in Education



TASHKENT (Dispatches) - During a visit to Uzbekistan to represent UNESCO at the International Conference on “Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities” convened at the initiative of H.E. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the Assistant Director-General for Education Stefania Giannini met with national authorities to strengthen cooperation at all levels of education.

Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Mr Aziz Abdulkhakimov, she asserted her personal implication in the EU-funded project on “Skills Development for Employability in Rural Areas of Uzbekistan” implemented by UNESCO, stating its importance for socio-economic development. She proposed UNESCO’s technical expertise in data analytics and capacity building for education policies and planning, during a meeting with the Minister of Public Education, who shared with her the President’s five-pronged initiative for promoting lifelong learning among youth. She affirmed UNESCO’s commitment to cooperate on promoting human rights education during a discussion with Mr Akmal Saidov, First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and Director of the National Center for Human Rights. Ms Agrippina Shin, Minister of Preschool Education, conveyed how the government had quadrupled the number of preschool educational institutions in the past three years and expressed the country’s commitment to achieve SDG 4.2. The Government reconfirmed its intention to host the Global Forum on ECCE in Tashkent in autumn of 2022.

Ms Giannini also moderated a panel at the high-level conference on regional connectivity, affirming that “Culture is the power of peace and development. Central Asia is one of the priority regions of our Heritage for Peace program launched last year. It will also host an international symposium later this year on the revitalization of historic cities along the Silk Road in Central Asia. Our partnership project with the European Union in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran is aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage, as well as improving living standards through heritage tourism”.

Malaysia’s Economic Growth Model Is on the Brink of Collapse

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia’s handling of the Covid-19 crisis and the resulting lockdown has come under severe criticism.

Adding to the injury is a crisis of political leadership, with frequent claims by opposition politicians that the current government does not command a parliamentary majority.

Still, a more critical and enduring salvo has come from foreign investors. More specifically, from the Japanese, Dutch and German trade associations that represent them.

The Japanese Chamber of Trade and Industry Malaysia, the Japan External Trade Organization, the Malaysian-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Malaysian Dutch Business Council have each written scathing letters to the Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin pointing out flaws in his government’s Covid containment strategy, as well as its implementation.

These trade associations have a long list of complaints that focus mainly on poorly designed movement control orders, a lack of understanding of the needs of industry and inadequate implementation.

The bottom line is that their members, and the billions of dollars worth of business investment they represent, may want to move out of Malaysia.

This hits at the heart of the Malaysian development model, a model that depends on foreign direct investment.

For decades, the Malaysian model has relied on its export-oriented manufacturing sector. An essential ingredient of this was the dependence on relatively cheap labor, the main source for which has been migrant labor, often including undocumented foreign workers.

There are no clear estimates of the number of undocumented



foreign workers in Malaysia, with estimates ranging from three to six million, a staggering number for a country with an official population of 33 million.

Turning a blind eye to the influx of migrant labor has not been the only mistake the authorities have committed. Other lapses include not paying attention to the living conditions for

such workers and ignoring their health.

Nobody could have anticipated an eventuality as severe as the current pandemic, but cutting corners now has its payback time.

The unhealthy and congested quarters these workers live in has made it hard to control the spread of the virus. Nor are undocumented workers who fear deportation rushing to be among the first to be vaccinated.

The real trouble lies in the demands made by Malaysia’s foreign investors who want the government to reopen the economy, at least to the extent that manufacturers can resume production. Complying with the government’s severe Covid restrictions means many foreign-owned factories cannot function.

Those that can are being forced to operate at a much lower capacity, meaning that companies cannot meet either demand coming from other countries, or the production targets being set by the parent company.

Simply, being part of a supply chain entails obligations. If one link in the chain fails, the entire network fails. That is the problem that foreign investors face, a problem that affects domestic companies that have their own links with these multinationals.

Malaysia’s domestic companies are also demanding an opening up of the economy, a euphemism for the right to get on with doing business.

Iran Raises...

FROM PAGE 1

The U.S. dropped the world’s first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. It dropped a second bomb three days later on Nagasaki, killing another 70,000.

“Nuclear-weapon states, including the US, have stated their explicit commitment to permanent nuclear disarmament in the framework of international agreements, in particular the NPT,” Khatibzadeh said. “So far, however, no practical and serious measure has been taken in this regard, while these countries, led by the United States, have been increasingly modernizing their weapons and upgrading the status of nuclear arms in their military-security doctrine.”

The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. Within the framework of its principled policy of international disarmament, Iran has decisively stressed the need for equal and peaceful use of nuclear energy, Khatibzadeh noted.

The Islamic Republic, he added, “always considers the possession, use and threat to use such unconventional weapons contrary to all humanitarian standards and international legal requirements. It also declares its determination to advance and realize the ideal of a world free of nuclear weapons and stands ready to cooperate constructively with the international community.”

“Accordingly, it is necessary that all countries take cooperative practical and legal steps towards full nuclear disarmament under Article 6 of the NPT, far from the biased and political approaches adopted by some nuclear-weapon states.”

The Beaten Road...

FROM PAGE 1

The commander also noted that the United States has never pursued interaction, but sought to overthrow the Iranian administration.

“If we opt to confront the enemies, we will announce it openly; Like what we did in Ain al-Asad base. Therefore, the enemies’ recent forging of stories against Iran is in line with a psychological operation, and this is due to their fear of the unity of the Islamic establishment.”

So if the West and Israelis want to once against test Iran, no problem, this time they should wait for harsher response to any aggressive action. They have seen Iran’s power in the previous responses like what happened on January 8, 2020 when 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 martyr General Qassem Soleimani.

Americans have not yet forgotten Iran’s defensive and drone power regarding the shooting down of the U.S.’s sophisticated drone over the Persian Gulf space. These have been just simple examples of Iran’s military power which do not let any country to escape unpunished from aggression against this country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is now in a condition that it can defend itself well and give appropriate responses to any aggressions of its ill-wishers. The world should not be fooled by the Israelis’ claim against the Islamic Republic of Iran as this occupier regime is itself one of the most dangerous countries threatening the world and innocent people.

As Iranian officials have reiterated, Iran does not tolerate any bullying from anyone and any country and it has appropriate response for the aggressions and bullying. Now Israel and its Western allies are better to find other pretexts or charges for war or sanctions against Iran and for overshadowing the nuclear talks because whenever the talks near to a result, Israelis shows their concerns and disappointment to Iran’s success and therefore they resort to such false claims.

But the Zionists should realize this fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran is now in a new era with a revolutionary president and with a revolutionary strategy and it will not bow to any pressure, threat and enemies, and ill-wishers of the country are better not to test once again Iran’s tolerance because this time they see a harsher and different response.

Stage Set for...

FROM PAGE 1

Two days later, Hezbollah units hit “open fields” near Israeli positions, using “dozens” of 122mm-caliber rockets. Israeli media said that Hezbollah’s retaliatory rocket attack sent settlers in the occupied Golan Heights and Galilee scrambling to shelters.

Salami said, “Hezbollah’s recent epic move to stop the Zionist army showed the fake regime’s new prime minister that equations are set elsewhere and that nothing has changed.”

“The Zionists have clearly realized that if Hezbollah’s engine is turned on, they will have to flee the occupied territories,” Salami said the rise in the exodus of Zionists from the occupied territories has turned into a psychological crisis for the regime.

“This situation will lead to the collapse of the Zionist regime,” he said. “Now, the stage is set for such collapse. The conditions on the ground coupled with a blunder will be enough to turn the next war into the war of their death.”

The IRGC chief stressed the continued support of the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian nation for the Lebanese resistance and hailed the role played by top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in strengthening the resistance front.

Sheikh Qassem, for his part, appreciated the backing of the Iranian nation, especially the IRGC, for Lebanon’s Islamic resistance. “Hezbollah and the Lebanese people owe their achievements and success to the support of the Islamic Republic and the sacrifices of the martyrs and resistance fighters, especially Martyr Soleimani, who considered himself a Hezbollah member,” he said.

Sheikh Qassem said Hezbollah’s popularity in Lebanon has caused “despair and concern” among the enemies. “Despite some problems and the efforts of the enemies to impose sanctions and exert pressure on Lebanon and destroy the security of its people, we have been able to maintain our position.”

Iran Nuclear...

FROM PAGE 1

Former U.S. president Donald Trump pulled out of the deal in 2018 and reimposed sanctions that have choked Iran’s oil-dependent economy. Iran responded by walking back measures it had agreed to abide by.

Talks have been happening since April in Vienna to find a way to bring both sides back into full compliance.

The last round took place on June 20 with no date set for when they would continue. The EU chairs the meetings.

Lasitskene Soars To High Jump Gold

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Russian Mariya Lasitskene added Olympic gold to her three world titles, winning the women's high jump at the Tokyo Games with a leap of 2.04 meters.

Australia's Nicola McDermott won silver with 2.02 meters and Ukrainian Yaroslava Mahuchikh claimed the bronze with 2.00.

An emotional Lasitskene knelt on the track and buried her face in her hands after winning the Russian Olympic Committee team's first athletics gold medal of the Games.

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Korda Completes U.S. Golf Sweep

TOKYO (Dispatches) - World number one Nelly Korda held her nerve during a delay for a lightning storm to win Olympic gold and make it an American golf clean sweep at Tokyo 2020.

Korda carded a final-round 69 to finish at 17-under-par 267 and win by one stroke from Lydia Ko of New Zealand and Mone Inami of Japan, days after Xander Schauffele won the men's event.

Inami secured a silver medal for the host nation at the first extra hole when Ko missed a 10-foot putt for a par.

Brazil Repeat Olympic Soccer Gold With Win Over Spain

YOKOHAMA (Dispatches) - From the World Cup to Olympics, Brazil's men are champions again in Yokohama 19 years apart.

Malcom scored in the 108th minute in extra time to give Brazil a 2-1 win over Spain on Saturday to defend Olympic soccer gold on the scene of its last world title in 2002.

It's a third straight Olympic soccer medal for Brazil after also collecting bronze in 2012. But Spain's quest to emulate its 1992 run to gold goes on — despite six members of the starting lineup coming straight from the run to the European Championship.

They got the exemptions from their clubs to come to Japan that Neymar could not secure from Paris Saint-Germain.

Even Malcolm was only a late addition to the squad after Brazil convinced Zenit St. Petersburg to release the 24-year-old forward as an injury replacement. Malcom, who came off the bench for extra time, held off Jesus Vallejo before racing forward and seeing his shot from a tight angle deflect off goalkeeper Unai Simon's left boot and fly into the net.

Where winning men's soccer gold at the Olympics ranks in a career depends on the rest of a player's medal collection.

At 38, Dani Alves came to the Olympics eager to be an Olympic champion. Now the winner's medal joins ones from the Copa America, Champions League and league title wins in Spain, Italy and France.

Certainly for Richarlison coming to Japan was deemed worth it, despite playing four weeks ago in the Copa America final — losing to Argentina.

Even FIFA, on its Twitter feed, called Richarlison's workload “insane” —



Sadulaev Beats Snyder In Clash of Titans

CHIBA (Dispatches) - Russian Abdurashid Sadulaev beat American Kyle Snyder 6-3 in the men's Olympic freestyle heavyweight gold medal bout in an absorbing contest between two Rio 2016 champions.

Snyder was reigning champion in the category while Sadulaev won the middleweight gold in Rio. The two had met twice before, winning one each, and the highly-anticipated third bout was dubbed “Snyderlaev III”.

Sadulaev had yet to concede a point in Tokyo and it was the Russian who methodically went about scoring points in the clash of titans, leading 2-0 at the break. The Russian then scored with two tilts to take a 6-0 lead in the second period.

Snyder hit back with a takedown and forced a headset but Sadulaev held on for his second Olympic gold medal.

“Unbelievable, I know this feeling because five years (ago) I became Olympic champion,” Sadulaev said. “It was more difficult to defend than conquer, so it was much more difficult this time.”

He added: “I was afraid of making mistakes because every little error can be very costly at this stage. I fought a safe fight and avoided mistakes.”

France Win Olympic Gold In Volleyball for First Time

PARIS (Dispatches) - France beat the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) team in the men's volleyball final in a sensational five-set match to grab their first Olympic gold medal in the sport.

The ROC took the silver medal and Argentina upset 2016 gold medallists Brazil to take the bronze at Ariake Arena.

France, ranked fourth in the world, edged the second-ranked Russians 25-23 25-17 21-25 21-25 15-12, repeating their success in the preliminary round.

The French took the first two sets with consistent defence and a barrage of clever serves and attacks but the ROC recovered momentum to win the following two, leading to a dramatic ending after a tight rally in the final set.

Chopra Wins Javelin for India's First Ever Olympic Athletics Gold

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Neeraj Chopra won the men's javelin on Saturday for India's first ever Olympic athletics gold.

Chopra, 23, managed a winning best of 87.58 metres to go one better than India's previous best -- two silver medals won in the 200m and now-defunct 200m hurdles at the 1900 Paris Games by British-Indian Norman Pritchard.

The Czech Republic filled out the podium at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium, Jakub Vadlejch taking silver with 86.67m and Vitezslav Vesely claiming bronze with 85.44m.

Bollywood music boomed out on the stadium tannoy after Chopra had launched his sixth and final throw, in the knowledge he had won gold.

The farmer's son sprinted the length of the infield, an Indian flag fluttering over his shoulders.

Chopra had come into the Olympics with the fourth best throw of the year and lived up to his form as a faltering Johannes Vetter of Germany struggled and failed to qualify as one of the top eight.

Kane Says He Never Refused Training

Vetter, who threw seven times over 90m between April and June, including a season's best of 96.29m, eventually finished down in ninth.

“It was a tough competition,” the 28-year-old said, complaining that he was having problems not over-running his launch on the surface.

“If you watch the throws again, you can see it's not the right surface for me. It's a good surface for all the runners, for all the nice world records and Olympic records on the track, but not for a javelin thrower like me. So it really makes me sad.”

Vetter added: “It's like driving a car on autopilot. You can't brake, and I have to brake to throw far.

“I was trying everything. I was trying in every throw and every warm-up throw to find the right technique for this surface.

“I was trying to change some technical things to get the right block on this surface, but it was impossible today.”

Chopra, Vetter said, had done a “good job”.

“He's a really talented guy, always really friendly,” the German said.

“I'm happy for him, but he has another blocking technique as he showed in the qualification.”

Guardiola Quashes Talk of Messi Move

LONDON (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola has ruled out a Manchester City move for Lionel Messi after Barcelona's shock announcement that the Argentina superstar will leave the Camp Nou.

City boss Guardiola was Messi's manager at Barcelona for four successful years and the Premier League champions were immediately linked with the forward following Thursday's bombshell news.

But Guardiola had just wrapped up a British record £100 million (\$139 million) swoop for Aston Villa playmaker Jack Grealish when Messi unexpectedly became a free agent.

And, speaking at a press conference, Guardiola insisted a reunion with Messi was not in his plans at present.

“Right now it is not in our thoughts (to sign Messi), absolutely not,” Guardiola said.

“We spent £40 million on Jack Grealish. £100 million we pay and £60 million we earned in the last year and he will bring the number 10 because we were convinced for Jack Grealish.

“It looked like it finished well in terms of (Messi) continuing with Barcelona. In the end it was a surprise for everyone, me included of course, but I think Laporta was clear today the reason why.”

Barcelona president Joan Laporta said the club have been forced to end their long relationship with Messi because of “awful” financial problems inherited from the previous regime.



Kane Says He Never Refused Training

LONDON (Dispatches) - England captain Harry Kane insisted on Friday that he had “never refused” to train at Tottenham Hotspur in spite of failing to show up for pre-season tests on Monday.

The 28-year-old forward, who remained on holiday in the Bahamas this week before travelling to Florida amid speculation that he was trying to force a transfer to Manchester City, said he returned to training on Saturday.

His absence, however, has prompted heavy criticism from Spurs' supporters on social media.

“It's almost 10 years since I made my Spurs debut. For every one of those years, you -- the fans -- have shown me total support and love,” Kane tweeted.

“That's why it hurts to read some of the comments that have been made this week, questioning my professionalism.

“While I won't go into the specifics of the situation, I want to clarify that I would never, and have never, refused to train. I will be returning to the club tomorrow (Saturday), as planned.”

Local boy Kane has been a fan favorite since breaking into the side under Mauricio Pochettino and has gone on to score 221 goals for Tottenham, second only to Jimmy Greaves' 266, the club's all-time scoring record.

“I wouldn't do anything to jeopardize the relationship I have with the fans who have given me such unwavering support during my time with the club,” he said.

“This has always been the case as it is today.”



Nishikori Advances to First ATP Semifinal In Two Years

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Japan's Kei Nishikori advanced to his first ATP semi-final in more than two years by defeating South Africa's 50th-ranked Lloyd Harris 6-3, 7-5 at the Citi Open.

Nishikori had lost six consecutive tour-level quarter-finals, including one to Harris in March at Dubai, but this time dispatched the 24-year-old, who defeated Rafael Nadal on Thursday.

“Every match I've been playing well but especially today, I played very good,” Nishikori said.

“This feeling, I hope I can carry couple more weeks until US Open. This makes me great confidence. I hope I can keep going two more matches.”

World number 67 Nishikori will face 107th-ranked Mackenzie McDonald, who eliminated fellow American Denis Kudla 6-3, 6-2, for a berth in Sunday's final on the Washington hardcourts.

The other semi-final will send 20-year-old American wildcard Jenson Brooksby against 24th-ranked Italian 19-year-old Jannik Sinner.

Nishikori, the 2015 Washington champion, arrived after a Tokyo Olympic quarter-final loss to top-ranked Novak Djokovic and battled jet lag when the week began.

