

Health Ministry Said on Tuesday  
That the Number of Deaths From  
The Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran  
Increased to 95,111 With 508 More  
Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus  
Over the Past 24 Hours

# IRAN NEWS

The Secretary of Iran's Supreme  
National Security Council (SNSC)  
Ali Shamkhani Met With the Visiting  
Iraqi Foreign Minister in Tehran  
Yesterday and Both Sides Reviewed  
The Latest Regional Developments

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## Japan's FM To Visit Tehran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi is scheduled to visit Iran as part of a tour of the Middle East meant to discuss regional security and the response to the coronavirus pandemic with officials of the new administration to be formed in Tehran soon.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, the top Japanese diplomat said he will travel to Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey, Qatar, and the Israeli-occupied territories on August 15-24.

"Through the visit, I want to reiterate our commitment to the Middle East, which has contributed to its peace and prosperity over the years," he said. In a tweet on Tuesday, Iran's Embassy in Tokyo said that the Japanese Foreign minister's upcoming trip to Tehran "could open a new chapter in deepening and expanding bilateral relations."

"Close consultations between the two countries on important regional and international issues will provide an opportunity to exchange views on issues of mutual interest," the tweet read. Citing diplomatic sources, The Japan Times newspaper reported last month that Motegi "is planning to visit Iran to build ties with its new government" led by President Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi. **See Page 7**

## 2nd Phase Trials Show Iran's Covo-Pars COVID Jab 80% Effective

TEHRAN (IFP) - The spokesman for the Covo-Pars vaccine project of Iran's Razi Institute, which is undergoing clinical trial, says the second phase of its trials show 80 percent effectiveness in protecting people against the coronavirus.

"In the second phase, 500 people received the first and second doses and 400 others also received the third dose. Our initial analysis shows 80 percent effectiveness. Fortunately, no serious problems were reported in the people who were studied, and the result was satisfactory," Mohammad Hossein Fallah Mehrabadi told ISNA news agency.

Mehrabadi added that the institute has already begun mass production of the vaccine.

"We have begun the mass production. Last month, 400,000 doses were produced and were registered in the Food and Drug Administration's system, after completing the quality control process. Starting from August 22, the production capacity will rise to 1 million doses," he said. **See Page 7**

## Tehran Refutes Washington, London Baseless Allegations



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Ambassador and Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN firmly rejected unsubstantiated allegations made by the U.S. and UK against Iran regarding Mercer Street vessel incident.

In her statement addressing the United Nations Security Council on "Maintenance of international peace and security: Enhancing Maritime Security: A case for international cooperation", Zahra Ershadi said that "Regarding the politically motivated statements made by the United States and the United Kingdom in this meeting against Iran concerning the Mercer Street vessel incident, I reiterate, once again, our firm rejection of these unsubstantiated allegations."

"According to the World Bank Group, over 80% of international trade are transported by sea and the volume of seaborne trade is expected to double by 2030 and quadruple by 2050," she added.

"These figures alone prove the importance of oceans and seas in the global economy and confirm the vital importance of, and the need for, the perseverance of maritime security as a global common good," she noted.

"Enjoying the longest coasts in such strategically important waterways as the Persian Gulf, the Oman Sea and the Hormuz Strait, as well as high maritime shipping capacity, and also as an important oil and gas producing country, the Islamic Republic of Iran is highly interested in, and attaches great importance to, maritime security," Iranian diplomat said.

"Maritime security is key in ensuring freedom of navigation, facilitating international communication, promoting peaceful uses of the seas and oceans and their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the preservation of the marine environment, as well as promoting the economic and social advancement of all peoples and strengthening of peace, security, cooperation and friendly relations among all nations," she said.

"As a basic principle, the primary responsibility for ensuring maritime security, including by effectively combating maritime crimes notably piracy and armed robbery at sea, rests with individual States consistent with their relevant obligations under international law," she added.

"When needed, efforts to counter maritime crimes may be complemented, at the regional level, by cooperation and partnership of States of the region concerned, and at the high seas, through international cooperation," Ershadi said.

"Nevertheless, all such activities must be conducted in full conformity with the basic principles of international law, particularly full respect for the sovereignty of States and refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States," she added.

She further said the Israeli regime cannot deflect attention away from its acts of naval terrorism by throwing unproven accusations against Iran of destabilizing activity, says the Islamic Republic's deputy UN envoy.

"Such accusations can, in no way, cover up the Israeli regime's [own] acts of terrorism against commercial naval navigation. Over less than two years, the regime [itself] has attacked more than 10 commercial vessels carrying oil or humanitarian goods in regional waters," she said.

She, meanwhile, pointed to a subsequent accusation that had alleged that the attack on the Israeli tanker had originated from Yemen.

The latter accusation was used towards supposedly explaining a special forces' deployment by the UK to Yemen. The deployment allegedly sought to target the "terrorists," who had been "responsible" for the attack on the Israeli vessel.

British special forces arrive in Yemen to hunt down those whom the UK alleges are behind a drone attack on an Israeli-linked tanker, the Daily Express reports.

She also said such actions showed that the UK and others had not yet "learned from their defeat in invading Yemen."

She was referring to the Western allies' support for a 2015-present Saudi-led war on the Arab nation. The war has stopped short of all of its goals, including bringing the Yemeni people to their knees.

## U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Anti-Terror Resistance Groups

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. State Department has imposed a new round of sanctions on resistance groups in Iraq Syria and Lebanon, in what appears to be a sign of Washington's anger over the successful role they have been playing in the fight against foreign-sponsored terror outfits in the two Arab countries.

In a notice issued on Monday, the Department's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation said the restrictive measures target Iraq's Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq and Kata'ib Hezbollah, which are both subdivisions of Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi along with the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement -- what the US describes as Iran-backed groups. The sanctions were imposed under the so-called Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA), which bans arms transfer to those targeted. **See Page 7**

## ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

### Zionists Need a Real Punishment

The Zionist regime is nowadays busy with accusing Iran of atrocities and terrorism in order to hide its true nature behind these allegations. This occupier regime continues its crimes against the Palestinians and even Lebanese through air attacks and at the same time accusing the Islamic of Iran of causing instability in the region.

Iran's representative to the UN during a UN Security Council meeting said the Israeli regime cannot deflect attention away from its acts of naval terrorism by throwing unproven accusations against Iran of destabilizing activity.

"Such accusations can, in no way, cover up the Israeli regime's [own] acts of terrorism against commercial naval navigation. Over less than two years, the regime [itself] has attacked more than 10 commercial vessels carrying oil or humanitarian goods in regional waters," she said.

The remarks came after the regime accused the Islamic Republic of an attack on an Israeli oil tanker off the coast of Oman without providing any evidence in support of the claim. Its traditional allies, the United States and the UK, however, strongly backed up its accusations.

History has proved that if a country does not react against aliens' bully, it is doomed to collapse and surrender and to be the lackey of the bullying country. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been one of those countries which has stood strongly against any bully from any country since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

According to reports, Israel has become so rude that it has sent its submarine to the region for showing muscles to Iran and other countries in the region. An Israeli submarine has reportedly entered the Red Sea, where it could pass through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and head towards the Persian Gulf, in a heavily discouraged mission potentially meant against Iran.

Reports published on Tuesday said the Dolphin-class submarine had "secretly" entered the Red Sea via the Suez Canal on the previous Wednesday (August 4). The two Israeli destroyers crossed the canal on the same day, apparently escorting the submarine.

The move came after an attack on an Israeli tanker off the coast of Oman earlier in the month and attempts by the regime and its allies, the United States and the UK, to accuse the Islamic Republic of involvement in the incident. Tehran has vehemently rejected the claims. This is not the first time, when the Israeli regime is trying to take malign actions to target the region in the aftermath of the attack. **See Page 7**

## Washington Reportedly To Mull Easing Iran Sanctions

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - With chances of a return to the 2015 nuclear deal fading, the U.S. is considering the possibility of easing sanctions on Iran in return for an agreement that the Islamic Republic freeze any progress on its nuclear project, Bloomberg news reported Monday.

If a wide scale deal cannot be reached, the U.S. is weighing a number of possible interim steps, including sanctions relief, officials familiar with the negotiations were quoted by the news agency as saying.

The move would be different from a full return to the JCPOA, the 2015 deal between Iran and six world powers, as it would only include limited sanctions relief in exchange for Iran freezing its most provocative nuclear proliferation work, the report said, citing the officials.

Western powers fear that the ascension of new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has quashed any realistic chance of a resumption of the now-abrogated agreement.

Former United States president Donald Trump pulled out of the deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions that have choked Iran's oil-dependent economy. Iran responded by walking back measures it had agreed to abide by, including enriching uranium to unprecedented levels, near weapons-grade. **See Page 7**



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# Georgia's President Congratulates Raisi on Presidency

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili congratulated Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi upon his taking presidential office.

Zourabichvili congratulated Raisi on presidency and taking office in a message on behalf of Georgia's people and government.

She underlined that Georgia attaches significant importance to its friendly, close ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran based on mutual respect and cooperation.

## Raisi, Macron Discuss Lebanon Woes, JCPOA Revival

*IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK*

**TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron discussed a wide range of issues, from Lebanon problems to the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), in a phone conversation on Monday.**

During the one-hour phone call, Raisi said the new Iranian government welcomes the development of relations with France based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

He stressed the development of relations between the two countries, especially in the economic and trade fields, and said, "The rights of the Iranian people must be ensured in any negotiations."

Raisi referred to the U.S.' repeated and gross violations and the failure of the three European parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to comply with their obligations under the international agreement, and said, "By imposing new sanctions, the Americans have clearly violated their obligations and even extended the new sanctions to the humanitarian aspects." He said both the United States and the Europeans must fulfil their obligations under the nuclear deal.

"In any negotiation, the rights of the Iranian people must be upheld and the interests of our nation must be ensured."

"The Islamic Republic is very serious about providing security and maintaining deterrence in the Persian Gulf region and the Sea of Oman, and will confront the factors that deprive security," he added.



President Raisi also pointed to the crisis in Lebanon, and said, "We support any action that is aimed at stability, security and improving the economic situation of the Lebanese people, and we welcome France's support in this regard."

Macron, in turn, congratulated Raisi on his inauguration and wished him success, saying, "Iran and France can play a role in establishing peace and stability in the region through their cooperation."

Referring to the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and the suspension of the implementation of the international agreement, Macron said, "We are looking for a solution to this issue and we hope that negotiations will start again." Macron further pointed to maritime security, and said, "First of all, we must create a framework of stability and make sure that there will be stability in various issues, including the state of the seas."

President Macron noted that France has always tried to provide a solution for stability in Lebanon, and expressed hope that with Iran's cooperation, the ground would be laid for stability and solving the country's problems.

At the end of the conversation, the French President called for the continuation of talks between Tehran and Paris with the aim of deepening bilateral relations.

## Iran, Iraq Confer on Latest Regional, Int'l Developments



TEHRAN (IP) - Iraqi and Iranian Foreign Ministers met and discussed the latest regional and international developments.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein, who arrived in Tehran on Tuesday to meet with Iranian officials, held a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. In this meeting, bilateral relations and the latest regional and international developments were examined and consulted.

During the visit, the Iraqi Foreign Minister is expected to present an invitation letter to senior Iranian officials to attend the Baghdad International Conference.

In recent days, some Arab media outlets have announced that Iraq will invite the Iranian president to attend an international meeting in Baghdad.

Iraq is scheduled to hold an international summit with some regional and Western countries later this month.

## Maintaining Persian Gulf Security Iran's Prime Policy



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Embassy in Islamabad has warned of plots by the Israeli regime to invoke regional tensions, saying Tehran's "principal policy" is to protect the security of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the diplomatic mission said that the recent successive security incidents for ships in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman were highly suspicious. It also urged the media to exercise "vigilance" in the face of "the fake and biased hype created for specific political objectives."

"Needless to say that the usurping Zionist regime, due to its long-running hostility towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, is seeking a conspiracy to accuse [others] and create tensions in the region as the new administration is taking office after a peaceful process of power transition in Iran. Unfortunately, certain Western governments have also supported this negative and biased trend," the embassy said.

"The Zionist regime has always been trying to seriously disrupt the constructive process of Iran's negotiations with other countries within the framework of the JCPOA. The regime's recent desperate attempts in this regard should be thoroughly examined," it added, referring to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal by the acronym of its official name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Israeli-managed tanker MT Mercer Street was hit near the Omani island of Masirah late on July 29. Two crew members were killed in the incident. Iran has vehemently denied any hand in Thursday's attack on an Israeli tanker off the coast of Oman, dismissing allegations leveled by Tel Aviv and its American and British allies.

The embassy said, "While being prepared for a decisive response, the Islamic Republic has always shown the utmost restraint in reacting to such unfounded accusations and provocative actions. This is because the principal policy of the Islamic Republic is to establish and maintain stability and security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman."

It also said the Iranian naval forces stand ready to help passing ships in the region and provide them with maritime support services in case they experience problems with their navigation systems. "The Islamic Republic has repeatedly stated its full readiness to cooperate with the countries of the region in this regard. Therefore, the free and truth-seeking media are requested to be aware of the hype created by the biased media and only refer to official, independent and credible sources for the publication of materials related to these incidents," it said.

## Majlis to Make Its Utmost Efforts to Contain Novel Coronavirus Wave

TEHRAN (IP) - Majlis Speaker said that the Health and Medical Commission of the Parliament has been instructed to examine the necessary solutions to reduce the pressure on the medical staff.

In an open session of Iran's Parliament, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that the Parliament would make its best efforts to contain the worrying coronavirus wave.

Offering condolences due to the arrival of Muharram, Qalibaf stated: "This year, due to the spread of the coronavirus, the wisdom and the Shari'a invite us to comply with the maximum health protocols approved by the National Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus because feeling responsible for major issues is one of the lessons of Ashura."

Iran's Parliament also held a closed session on Tuesday to examine the bill of 'Regulation of Virtual Space'.

The Parliament is also to receive the list of the President Raisi's suggested cabinet members to review the qualification of the proposed ministers.

## Homegrown "Dena" Destroyer Ready for Naval Missions

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran Army's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said that domestically-manufactured 'Dena' Destroyer is ready for carrying out naval-related missions.

Homegrown 'Dena' Destroyer will soon join the Third Naval Zone of Navy Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to increase naval capacity of Iran Army Navy's fleet.

Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi Commander of Iran Army Navy made the remarks on Tuesday while paying visit to southern bases of the force.

Turning to the significance of developing maritime civilization under the shadow of sustainable security and construction of completely indigenous vessel, he said that presence of strategic naval fleets of Iran Army in international waters, in addition to hoisting the sacred flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran and ensuring

security of sea lines in order to protect Iran's interests, shows a manifestation of country's authority and pride in international arenas.

The Commander emphasized the need to strengthen trans-regional presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in international waters and stated that homegrown 'Dena' Destroyer, which was manufactured by expert domestic engineers, will soon join the Third Naval Zone of Iran Army Navy, stationed in Konarak, in line with increasing the capacity of Iran's Army Naval fleet.

The capability of Iran Army Navy Force is constantly increasing in all areas to pave suitable ways for next generation of Iranian seafarers to be able to carry out their assigned missions more easily and take an important step towards the development of maritime civilization with the motto of peace and friendship, Commander of Iran Army Navy Force Rear Admiral Khanzadi added.

## Journalists Urged to Defend Truth to Fulfill Their Mission Properly

TEHRAN (IP) - Meeting with reporters on Monday in the Parliament's hall, Iran's Parliament speaker stressed that journalists must defend the truth to fulfill their mission properly.

In the meeting, the reporters raised their concerns with Mohammad Baqer Baqeri, referring to the difficult job of journalism in the coronavirus situation.

Qalibaf also confirmed the journalists' concerns in this regard and stated that journalists should have job security, and this issue should be addressed through a transparent bill.

Elaborating on journalists' duties in society, he emphasized that the journalists must defend the truth, and if it does not happen, they will fail to fulfill their mission properly.

The Speaker also stressed that one of the journalists' duties was to send accurate and complete news so that the enemy could not take advantage of the media inside the country by receiving an incomplete message.

## Resalah ul-Valayah Unveiled in Turkish

TEHRAN (IP)- The book 'Resalah ul-Valayah' by Allameh Tabatabai was translated and published in Turkish by the Iranian Cultural Attaché Office in Turkey. This book was unveiled by the Center for Translation and Publication of Islamic Education and Humanities of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Communication.

In this ceremony, Abuzar Ebrahimi Turkman, Head of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Communication, Mahmoud Sedghizadeh, Cultural Attaché of Iran in Ankara; Qana'atli, the translator of the book in Turkish, gave a speech in the form of a video conference.

The ceremony was held on Tuesday in the conference hall of the Islamic Culture and Communication Organization.

Expressing the moral characteristics of this prominent Iranian figure, the head of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Communication said that the most important feature of this book is the harmony between mysticism, argument, and the Qur'an.

In the ceremony, which was held in the form of a video conference, Hassan Qana'atli, the translator of the book into Turkish, said that the works of -Allameh Tabatabai bring the Iranian and Turkish governments closer together.

## WHO Recognizes Sahand as First Awarded Healthy City in Iran



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Sahand, a new town in the East Azerbaijan Province of Iran, has just been awarded as a healthy city under WHO's Healthy Cities Program.

The award was officially presented during a formal ceremony today, Tuesday August 10, by WHO Representative to Iran Jaffar Hussain to the Ministry of Health and Medical Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Governorship of Osku County in the virtual presence of WHO Regional Director for Eastern Mediterranean Office Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari.

The ceremony was attended by Health Minister Saeed Namaki, Jaffar Hussain, Ahmed Al-Mandhari, representatives from Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, and local authorities of Sahand, where they delivered closing remarks, and the Iranian minister of Health cited various factors of a healthy city. The website of the National Healthy Cities Network was also unveiled at the event.

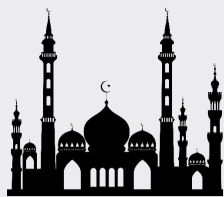
The awarding is an important milestone for Iran and in WHO's Healthy Cities Program in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, as Iran was the first country in the region to adopt the program for implementation in 1991 in three settlements in Tehran.

Iran is also among the countries with the highest number of registered cities in the Regional Healthy Cities Network (RHCN). Currently 22 Iranian cities are registered in the RHCN. Sahand is the first city among the registered ones to be evaluated by WHO and receive the three-year Healthy City Award.

Sahand is located 20km southwest of Tabriz, with a population of about 161,000. The city is still being developed with a steadily growing population, and it is expected to feature future-proof urban spaces and services.

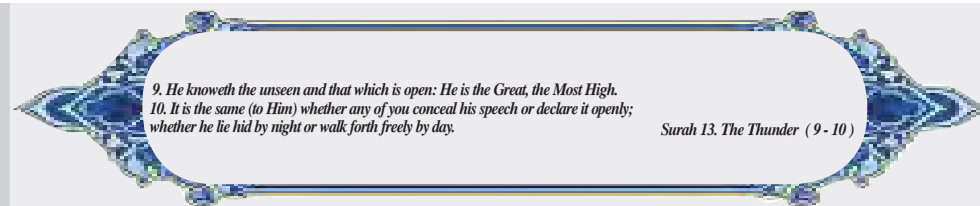
The healthy city program in Sahand started in 2015 with the vision to create "a safe and healthy community for the happy livelihood of every person".

A final evaluation visit was conducted on May 23-25 by experts from the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office to assess the city's "Healthy City" eligibility. The visit was the second, and final, part of the assessment as the first part was conducted through a virtual desk review in December 2020 due to restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual desk review was the first of its kind to be performed during the Healthy Cities evaluation process against the backdrop of COVID-19.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:09
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:17
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:48
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:21



# Turkey Replaces India As Iran's Export Market

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Export Confederation Mohammad Lahooti says Turkey has replaced India as one of Iran's major destinations for its exports, adding that Iran's exports this year has grown.**

Speaking in a press conference, Lahooti said that according to the released statistics on Iran's exports in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year, Iran's exports have grown by 65 percent in terms of exports and at the same time its imports have also increased by 32 percent comparing to the same period last year.

He said that despite closure of borders and problems for exporting to Iraq and Afghanistan last year, the rise in of exports this year likely is because of reopening of borders, and even the export items of Iran has increased comparing to the same period in two years ago.

Lahooti noted that Iran's exports basket is comprised of the same goods that were exported in the past and the difference between value and the weight of the exported goods means that Iran exports goods with more added value.

He said Iran's exports and imports markets are the same, and except India which was among Iran's top five destinations for its exports and now Turkey has replaced it, no change has happened. He blamed the sanctions for the exit of India from Iran's top five export destinations.

Lahooti also added that in terms of imports, the UAE replaced China as the top exporting country to Iran but one should consider this point that the UAE is not a producer country and most of the goods have imported into Iran via the UAE due to different reasons like sanctions.

He went on to say that two European countries, Germany and Switzerland,



have also been added to the list of Iran's importing destinations which indicates the improvement of the quality of their goods.

Lahooti also criticized the forex policy of the country, saying that although the devaluation of the national currency could be a good opportunity for exports, Iran experienced a negative growth in this field. He said today the country is fully ready to meet its required forex demands for imports through exports but some policies which were adopted in 2018 because of the sanctions were anti-exports and they made most of exporters weak or forced them out of the business.

He reiterated that if the trust of exporters is restored, the export figures and statistics can increase and the resulted forex can be used for the imports.

Lahooti also said that resumption of Vienna talks had its psycho impacts on the forex market but the talks have come to a halt in order that the new Iranian government sends its team for talks. He stated that the presence of Germany and Switzerland in Iran's import basket can be a positive signal for the future of the nuclear talks.

Touching upon recent developments in Afghanistan, he said wherever there is insecurity and violence, capital flies, and recent insecurity in Afghanistan has increased the risk of trade and it can lead to a complete halt of Iran's exports to this country. He added that since Afghanistan is the second or third trade partner of Iran in the region, its security is very important for Iran.

## Fire at Petrochemical Facility Fully Contained

TEHRAN (IFP) - The blaze raging through a petrochemical complex on Kharg Island off the southern Iranian coast has been fully contained, with no one being hurt.

"At 2 am local time, a spark, whose reason remains unclear, triggered a fire at the daily gasoline tank, and operations to extinguish the flames got underway from the very early minutes," said the spokesperson for the petrochemical facility.

"The fire at the tank was brought under control at 6 am and has now been fully contained an currently cooling operations are underway," he said.

## Iran-Afghanistan Trading Process Halted

TEHRAN (IP) - The head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce stated that Afghanistan's conflicts and problems together with the Taliban's confrontation with Afghan government forces, as well as the U.S. bombing on the country, has completely halted trade and closed borders.



Speaking about the state of trade between Iran and Afghanistan due to the recent unrest in this country, Hossein Salimi stated: "The trading risk in this situation is very high and both Iranian sellers and Afghan buyers are not willing to accept this risk because it is not clear whether the cargo will reach the buyer when it enters Afghanistan or not. Furthermore, these shipments are not covered by any insurance and this greatly increases the risk."

The head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, in response to a question about the extent of damage to Iranian goods in the recent unrest in Afghanistan, said: "Since trade process has been stopped, the damage has been small, but there are no exact statistics in this regard which means that it is not possible to determine how many of the Iranian goods have reached the buyers. In the current situation, it is not possible to get accurate statistics from Afghanistan."

"We are all waiting for the situation in Afghanistan to improve, and we have to wait to see what will happen," he said.

## Iran, Brazil Ready To Expand Ties

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's ambassador to Brazil announced the two countries' readiness to expand relations, saying that there is no conflict of interest between Iran and Brazil.

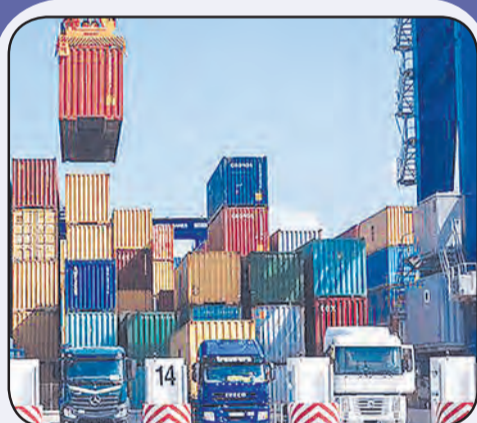
In an interview, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Brazil, Hossein Gharibi, said: "Iran-Brazil relations are so deep that meeting between the two countries is inevitable."

The ambassador pointed out: "Iran's economy has a capacity that foreign trade volume can certainly be many times more than the current volume."

Gharibi has emphasized that the direct and indirect trade volume between the two countries has reached nearly five billion dollars and that it has a much higher capacity.



## July Exports Top \$3.649b



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's non-crude exports rose by over 50% in value terms in the month to July 22 compared to the same month in 2020, according to Iran's customs office IRICA.

IRICA figures published Monday showed that exports in the fourth month this fiscal year had amounted to \$3.649 billion, up 53% against similar period last year.

IRICA spokesman Rouhollah Latifi said that July sales were responsible for roughly a fourth of the total value of exports reported for the first four months of the current fiscal year at \$14.3 billion.

China's July purchases rose by 94% compared to July 2020 to \$1.252 billion, said Latifi, adding that Iraq had taken delivery of \$473 million worth of goods from Iran over the same period, a 2% decline against last year.

Exports to the United Arab Emirates and Turkey were up 39% and 110% over the month to July to \$350 million and \$350 million, respectively, he said, adding that sales to Afghanistan had also increased by 18% year on year to reach a total of \$258 million.

IRICA figures showed Iran had a trade deficit of \$714 million in July as imports topped \$4.363 billion. Main exporters to Iran over the period were the UAE at \$1.51 billion, followed by China at \$1.09 billion and Turkey at \$487 million. Switzerland and Germany came fourth and fifth in the list at \$155 million and \$149 million, respectively.

The four-month balance of trade showed a slight deficit of \$200 million, according to the figures which showed the value of imports recorded between late March and late July had reached \$14.5 billion.

## Iran Cuts Electricity Exports to Iraq

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has stopped supplying electricity to neighboring Iraq amid a surge in domestic demand that is blamed on a return of hot weather and increased cryptocurrency mining.

"Our country's need to electricity supplies caused a halt in exports to Iraq," said Mostafa Rajabi, a spokesman of state electricity company Tavanir, on Monday.

Iran has continued to supply Iraq with stable levels of electricity in recent months despite a shortage seen inside the country.

However, supplies from Iran can only meet a small part of Iraq's growing need for electricity. The Arab country has an electricity output of nearly 20 gigawatts which is well short of a demand of over 30 gigawatts in peak periods of consumption in hot summer days.

Power plants in Iraq rely on natural gas supplied from Iran for



more than a third of their total output. That comes as Iranian Oil Ministry has reduced gas supplies to Iraq since earlier this year because of arrears in payments that have been caused by US sanctions.

Rajabi said that rising demand for electricity has caused a sharp drop in Iran's electricity exports this summer. He said current exports are estimated at 150 megawatts, down from nearly 2,000 megawatts recorded in August 2020.

The official said electricity supply to Afghanistan had also declined to only 13 megawatts against 100 megawatts reported last week.

Tavanir had warned on Sunday that power cuts in some areas in Iran would be unavoidable this week, adding that hot weather and a renewed surge in illegal crypto mining activities had caused demand to reach a record of 66 gigawatts in peak hours.

## Raising Capital to Boost Employment, Production

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that the country's production units and companies can boost their employment and production by raising capital through the stock market.

"When people's resources are directed into the capital market, enterprises and companies listed on the stock exchange can have stronger financing from this market, and consequently have more investment and increases production and employment," Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi told IRNA on Monday.

Referring to the government's performance in directing people's capital to the stock market, Dehnavi said: "SEO believes the government has a great role to play in the country's economy, the government is the macro policy-maker and the main regulator of the country's economy, therefore in countries like Iran where the government is directly involved in the economic decisions, it should also be present in the production sector."

Dehqan Dehnavi further emphasized that the government's duty is to invite people into the capital market, adding: "The stock market is a platform that provides financing for production."

According to the official, his organization has considered several incentive programs for supporting the shareholders and for protecting the newly joined members.

Following the supportive measures taken by the government, the Iranian stock market has been gradually getting back on track and experts believe that the market is regaining people's trust.

## 152-ton Topside of Forouzan Offshore Platform Installed

TEHRAN (Shana) - The Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) has installed the QB Topside of Forouzan offshore oil field weighing 152 tons on the QA floor of this platform.

According to IOOC, the operation was successfully carried out on Monday (August 9); earlier in mid-July, the 160-ton QA topside was located on the Cellar and Main floors.

Thus, with the completion of these two operations



and the planning of the roof and heli floors on the complex, construction of the FYA platform with a total weight of 1,300 tons will be completed by late September.

Completion of the construction and installation of the FYA residential platform with a capacity to accommodate 70 people will help solve the problem of housing the operational staff of the Forouzan joint oil field.

## Czech Gov't Opts for Interim Spymaster

PRAGUE (Dispatches) - The Czech government delayed appointing a new head of its BIS counterintelligence agency on Monday in a move seen as allowing Prime Minister Andrej Babis to keep the country's president on his side going into an October election.

President Milos Zeman has attacked the BIS's work on numerous occasions, berating it for warning about the intelligence activities of his Chinese and Russian allies in the country.

Zeman's support is crucial for Babis, whose ANO party is leading in opinion polls ahead of the Oct. 8-9 election, as only the president has the power to appoint a new prime minister.



## Italian Police Seize Envelope With Bullets Sent to Pope

ROME (Reuters) - An envelope addressed to Pope Francis containing three pistol bullets has been seized in a mail sorting facility close to the northern Italian city of Milan, police said on Monday.

Postal workers called the police after intercepting the envelope overnight in the small town of Peschiera Borromeo.

Police told Reuters the envelope, sent from France, was addressed to "The Pope, Vatican City, St Peter's Square". A Vatican spokesperson had no immediate comment.



## Taliban Capture Sixth Afghan Provincial Capital



KABUL (Dispatches) - Taliban militants captured a sixth provincial Afghan capital on Monday, a lawmaker said, after ousting Afghan security forces from border towns and trade routes as U.S.-led foreign forces pull out.

The Taliban, fighting to reimpose strict Islamic law after their 2001 ouster, have stepped up their campaign to defeat the government as foreign forces withdraw after 20 years of war.

On Monday, they took Aybak, capital of the northern province of Samangan.

"Right now the Taliban are fighting with Afghan forces to capture the police headquarters and compound of the provincial governor," said Ziauddin Zia, a lawmaker in Aybak.

"Several parts of the capital have fallen to the Taliban."

The insurgents took three provincial capitals over the weekend - Zaranj, the capital of the southern province of Nimroz, Sar-e-Pul, the capital of the northern province of the same name, and Taloqan, the capital of northeastern Takhar province.

They had already taken the northern provincial capital of Kunduz and Lashkar Gah, capital of southwestern Helmand province.

The Taliban gains have sparked recriminations over the withdrawal of foreign forces. British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace told the Daily Mail that the accord struck last year between the United States and the Taliban was a "rotten deal".

Wallace said his government had asked some NATO allies to keep their troops in Afghanistan once the U.S. troops departed, but failed to garner enough support. "Some said they were keen, but their parliaments weren't. It became apparent pretty quickly that without the United States as the framework nation it had been, these options were closed off," Wallace said. Germany's defence minister rejected calls for its soldiers to return to Afghanistan after Taliban insurgents took Kunduz where German troops were deployed for a decade.

Afghan commandoes had launched a counter-attack to try to beat back Taliban fighters who overran Kunduz, with residents fleeing the conflict describing the almost constant sound of gunfire and explosions.

A Taliban spokesman warned the United States on Sunday against intervening following U.S. airstrikes to support beleaguered Afghan government forces. The United States has vowed to pull out most troops by the end of the month, ending its longest war.

In the West, near the border with Iran, security officials said heavy fighting was under way on the outskirts of Herat. Arif Jalali, head of Herat Zonal Hospital, said 36 people had been killed and 220 wounded over the past 11 days. More than half of the wounded were civilians, he said, and women and children were among the dead.

UNICEF in a statement on Monday said 20 children were killed and 130 children had been injured in southern Kandahar province in the last 72 hours.

## Belarus Dismisses Criticism Over Activist's Death, Athlete

MINSK (Dispatches) - Belarus's strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko dismissed international criticism on Monday, denying that his country had any involvement in the death of an activist in Ukraine or in trying to forcibly bring home an athlete from the Tokyo Olympics.

In power since 1994, Lukashenko has been cracking down on unprecedented protests in the ex-Soviet country since he claimed an election last year deemed unfair by the West.

During an annual press conference a year after the election, the moustachioed leader insisted that he won the "totally transparent" vote and accused the opposition of preparing a "coup".

He also denied any involvement of his country's KGB security services in the death of 26-year-old Belarusian activist Vitaly Shisho, who was found hanged in a Kiev park last week.

"He was a nobody for us," Lukashenko said. "We have enough people to deal with without Shishov," he said, adding that the death had strained relations with Ukraine.

He also accused runner Krystsina Tsimanouskaya -- who claimed the Belarus team tried to forcibly bring her home from the Tokyo Olympics and has since sought refuge in Poland -- of being "controlled" by Warsaw.

He denied that the country's political leadership tried to force the athlete onto a plane to Minsk. There was "not a single" KGB agent at the Tokyo Olympics, he claimed.

Lukashenko's regime has faced increased criticism this summer after the Olympian's defection and the activist's death.

Lukashenko -- who claims to have won more than 80 percent of the 2020 vote -- vowed to resist Western pressure and accused the Belarusian opposition of trying to stage a "coup" last year.

In power since 1994, Lukashenko has been cracking down on opponents since the mass protests that erupted after the vote, deemed unfair by the West. "Some were preparing for fair and honest elections, while others were calling for a coup d'etat," he told officials and journalists.

The opposition believes Svetlana Tikhonovskaya -- who had stood in the election in the place of her jailed husband and now lives in exile -- to be the election's real winner.



## U.S., China Trade Barbs at U.N. Over South China Sea

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called out bullying in the South China Sea on Monday and warned the U.N. Security Council that a conflict "would have serious global consequences for security and for commerce," sparking a strong rebuke from China.

The South China Sea has become one of many flashpoints in the testy relationship between China and the United States, with Washington rejecting what it calls unlawful territorial claims by Beijing in the resource-rich waters.

"Conflict in the South China Sea, or in any ocean, would have serious global consequences for security, and for commerce," Blinken told a Security Council meeting on maritime security. "When a state faces no consequences for ignoring these rules, it fuels greater impunity and instability everywhere."

China claims vast swaths of the South China Sea which overlap with the exclusive economic zones of Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines. Trillions of dollars in trade flow every year through the waterway, which also contains rich fishing grounds and gas fields.

"We have seen dangerous encounters between vessels at sea and provocative actions to advance unlawful maritime claims," said Blinken, adding that Washington was concerned by actions that "intimidate and bully other states from lawfully accessing their maritime resources."

China's deputy U.N. Ambassador Dai Bing accused the United States of "stirring up trouble out nothing, arbitrarily sending advanced military vessels and aircraft into the South China Sea as provocations and publicly trying to drive a wedge into regional countries."

"This country itself has become the biggest threat to peace and stability in the South China Sea," Dai said. Blinken said it was the responsibility of all countries, not just claimants to the islands and waters of the South China Sea, to defend the rules they had all agreed to follow to peacefully resolve maritime disputes.

## Suspected Jihadists Kill 40 Villagers in Mali

BAMAKO (AFP) - Suspected jihadists massacred more than 40 civilians in northern Mali and killed 12 troops in an ambush in neighbouring Burkina Faso, officials said Monday, highlighting the security crisis gripping the two fragile states.

More than 40 people were killed on Sunday when "terrorists" invaded the villages of Karou, Ouatagouna and Daoutegeft near Mali's border with Niger, a military officer told AFP.

"The terrorists went into the villages and massacred everyone," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A local official, who also asked not to be identified for security reasons, said that "20 civilians were massacred in Karou. Fourteen civilians were killed in Ouatagouna, and other civilians were killed in the hamlet of Daoutegeft."

The assailants arrived on motorbike, taking the villagers by surprise, he said.

An official at a fourth village said his locality had

also come under attack.

An army unit has been sent to provide help, a military officer said, but a source in a Malian NGO said communications with the area were poor after jihadists had attacked telecoms sites.

Mali, a landlocked and impoverished state in the heart of the West Africa's Sahel region, has been battling a jihadist insurgency since 2012.

The crisis began with unrest in the north of the country that spread to Mali's ethnically volatile center and then to neighboring Niger and Burkina Faso.

Armed groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group are steering the campaign today.

Thousands of civilians and troops have died and hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes.

Mali has suffered two coups since August last year, and on July 20 military leader Colonel Assimi Goita survived an attempted assassination at a mosque in Bamako.



## Germany Rejects Calls for Troops to Return to Afghanistan

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's defense minister rejected on Monday calls for its soldiers to return to Afghanistan after Taliban insurgents took Kunduz city where German troops were deployed for a decade.

Germany had the second largest military contingent in Afghanistan after the United States, losing more troops in combat in Kunduz than anywhere else since World War Two.

The Taliban overran three provincial capitals including Kunduz at the weekend as it pressed an offensive since foreign troops began a withdrawal.

"The reports from Kunduz and from all over Afghanistan are bitter and hurt a lot," Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said on Twitter.

"Are society and parliament prepared to send the armed forces into a war and remain there with lots of troops for at least a generation? If we are not, then the joint withdrawal with the partners remains the right decision."

Some within her own conservative party want German troops to participate in an intervention against the Taliban, but Kramp-Karrenbauer said defeating them would require a long and hard campaign.

Since the United States announced plans in April to pull out troops by Sept. 11, and the transatlantic alliance NATO followed suit, violence has escalated as the Taliban seize territory.

Kramp-Karrenbauer blamed former U.S. President Donald Trump for undermining the Afghanistan operation, even though it is his successor Joe Biden implementing the withdrawal policy.

"Trump's unfortunate deal with the Taliban was the beginning of the end," she said of an agreement Trump struck with the Islamist militants in 2020 for U.S. troops to leave.



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## Euro zone Investor Morale Falls to 3-Month Low

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Investor morale in the euro zone fell in August to a three-month low on a sharp drop in expectations due to concerns that new lockdown restrictions could loom in the autumn and beyond, a survey showed on Monday.

Sentix's index for the euro zone fell to 22.2 points in August from 29.8 in July. A Reuters poll had pointed to an August reading of 29.0.

An expectations sub-index suffered its third decline in a row and fell to its lowest since May 2020. A current conditions index rose for the sixth month in a row, hitting its highest level since October 2018. "The euro zone economy is booming, but the pace is slowing noticeably," Sentix Managing Director Patrick Hussy said.



## Russia's Inflation Moderates, Remains at 5-Year High

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Food prices across Russia have started to moderate after months of sharp increases, data published by the Rosstat federal statistics agency has shown.

Inflation for food products came in at an annual rate of 7.4% in July — down from the 7.9% registered in June, Rosstat said.

Cooling prices will be welcome news both in the Kremlin, given how politically sensitive the issue of food prices are in Russia, as well as the Central Bank, which has aggressively hiked interest rates in a bid to tame surging inflation and keep Russia's economic recovery on track.

Russia's overall inflation rate was 6.5% in July, unchanged from June but slightly below analysts' expectations. The slowdown triggered economists, including at VTB Capital and Sovia Capital, to trim their forecasts for where inflation will be by the end of the year, and prompted a wave of speculation that the Central Bank could take a less hawkish approach to interest rate hikes over the coming months.

Sovia Capital's chief economist Artem Zaigrin also said the reopening of key tourist destinations and the improved global situation with coronavirus would also ease inflationary pressures in Russia. The Central Bank estimates Russians spent at least an extra \$30 billion at home in 2020 due to border closures — an increase in demand which pushed inflation higher.

But core inflation — a measure of price rises which strips out the most volatile goods and services and is sometimes seen as a more reliable measure of mid-term inflation — continued to climb during July, registering 6.8% on an annualized basis.

"The key issue is this year's harvest, which could increase the pressure on the headline inflation rate in the coming months following droughts and smaller harvests of fruits and vegetables," added Zaigrin.

VTB Capital's Alexander Isakov said Russia remains on track for a good harvest, and global trends are also showing a moderation in food prices around the world — factors which should help keep Russia's inflation rate in check.

Price rises have been running above the Central Bank's official 4% target for the last 10 months, forcing the regulator into a series of sharp interest rate hikes.

Of particular concern for Governor Elvira Nabiullina is the public's perception of price rises. Given Russia's history of financial crises, devaluations and double-digit inflation, she fears Russian consumers' behaviour threatens to push the country into a vicious inflation spiral — where fears of more price hikes in the future prompt consumers to accelerate their spending, thus pushing prices up.

Rising prices have also created unrest in the Kremlin as it prepares for next month's crucial parliamentary vote, prompting the introduction of price caps and export blocks on key food products.

## Economic Impact of Tokyo Games Estimated at 1.6 Trillion Yens

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's economy stands to gain a ¥1.6771 trillion windfall from the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, according to Takahide Kiuchi, executive economist at Nomura Research Institute, Ltd.

The estimate included factors such as revenue from the sale of officially licensed merchandise and the construction of temporary facilities for the Games.

The figure was down from an earlier estimate of ¥1.8108 trillion, when the decision was made to bar overseas spectators. The absence of domestic spectators at most venues may have resulted in a ¥133.7 billion hit, including lost ticket and accommodation revenue. The government has declared a state of emergency, in effect until August 31, for six prefectures including Tokyo and Osaka. Since the fourth state of emergency went into effect in Tokyo on July 12, there have been fewer opportunities to dine out and stay at hotels or other lodgings. Kiuchi projects that the economic loss from the states of emergency could total ¥2.19 trillion.

Yet the strong performance of Japanese athletes at the Tokyo Games stands poised to stimulate new consumption. Katsuhiro Miyamoto, professor emeritus at Kansai University, has said that if major department stores and supermarkets were to hold post-Olympics sales in honor of the athletes for about a week or so in August, they could cash-in on a gold rush of their own, to the tune of ¥143.6 billion.



## German Exports Jump Despite Supply Bottlenecks

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German exports rose more than expected in June despite persisting supply bottlenecks in manufacturing, data showed on Monday, suggesting a solid recovery in Europe's biggest economy.

The data, released by the Federal Statistics Office on Monday, brought some relief after manufacturing figures showed on Friday that industrial output unexpectedly fell in June due to supply bottlenecks for intermediate goods.

"Exports are now up for the 14th month in a row. What a run!" VP Bank analyst Thomas Gitzel said.

Seasonally adjusted exports jumped by 1.3% on the month in June after a slightly revised rise of 0.4% in May. Imports rose 0.6% after an increase of 3.4% the prior month.

The strong rise in exports widened the trade surplus to 13.6 billion euros from a revised 12.8 billion euros in May.

A Reuters poll had pointed to a 0.4% increase in exports, a 0.5% rise in imports and a trade balance of 13.4 billion euros. Compared to February 2020, the month before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany, seasonally adjusted exports rose by 1.1% and imports jumped by 10%, underlining strong domestic demand and massive state spending during the crisis.

The monthly trade data did not include a breakdown by country.

On the year, exports jumped 23.6% and imports soared 27%, mainly driven by business with the United States and China, Germany's two most important trading partners outside the European Union's single market. Exports of "Made in Germany" goods to the United States were up by nearly 40% on the year in June and exports to China rose 16%.

Exports to Britain increased 11% on the year while imports from the UK were up by 11.5%. VP Bank analyst Gitzel cautioned there was risk that the supply bottlenecks for intermediate products in manufacturing could soon be reflected more clearly in the export figures.

## World Bank Urges Pakistan to Stay Course on Reforms

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The World Bank publicly urged Pakistan to "stay the course on the structural reforms" after telling in private that any future budget support loans will be conditioned to revival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program.

The WB local office released a detailed statement at the conclusion of the week-long visit of its vice president for South Asia, Hartwig Schafer. He was on a reconnaissance mission to gauge whether Pakistan is still committed to put the economy on a sustainable path.

"Mr Schafer emphasized the importance of staying the course on the structural reform programme launched by the government, particularly in the power sector and with respect to fiscal sustainability," said the WB statement.

It said the vice president gave this message during his meetings with Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin, Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan and Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar.

The WB's words of caution came amid an ongoing dissension in the Ministry of Finance on the issue of whether to stay on the course of fiscal prudence or follow an irrational path in pursuit of the government's bid to enter the next general elections on the back of a Rs1.6 trillion package.

"We urge the government to accelerate the pace of power sector reforms as these are critical for Pakistan to achieve higher economic growth and resilient recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic," said Hartwig Schafer.

The vice president further said: "The key issue for the power sector is to be on a financially viable footing to support the country's green, resilient, and more inclusive development."

The WB's advice about power sector reforms came days after Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Energy Tabish Gohar too showed his frustration with no reforms in the sector in a letter written to energy minister and sent to all top government functionaries.

Due to disagreement on the set of reforms in the energy and fiscal sectors, Pakistan and the IMF could not complete the 6th review of the program in June. The sources said Schafer plainly told the Pakistani authorities that any future budget support and balance of payments loans by the WB would be conditioned with the revival of the IMF program.

Pakistan's external sector may also now face troubles as its imports remain over \$5 billion, which may now again cause ballooning of the current account deficit to double-digits.

The WB said the vice president's visit was aimed at discussing "the country's development priorities and how the bank can continue to support the government's reform agenda".

Mr Schafer was joined in his meetings by the Country Director for Pakistan Najy Benhassine, and the Pakistan Alternate Executive Director for the World Bank, Naveed Kamran Baloch.

## Turkish Lira Slides To Month Low Ahead of Key Central Bank Meeting

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's lira fell to its weakest level in a month on concern that the central bank may decide to ease monetary policy at a meeting on Thursday even after inflation accelerated.

The lira dropped to as low as 8.67 per dollar in Istanbul, close to a record low just beyond 8.8 per dollar. It was trading down 0.5 percent at 8.65 against the U.S. currency at 12:29 p.m. local time.

Last week, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said a rate cut would help Turkey win its battle against inflation, which accelerated to 18.95 percent last month. Political pressure has meant Turkey's central bank left its benchmark interest rate at 19 percent since March, even as price increases gathered pace. Erdoğan replaced the bank's governor in March after he hiked rates.

Turkey has the fastest inflation in Europe, including ex-Soviet block countries, and only trails crisis-hit Argentina among major emerging markets. It has the 13th highest inflation rate in the world, ranking it between South Sudan and Nigeria.

"High interest will bring us high inflation, but low interest will bring low inflation. August is the breaking point, and with August, we will hopefully move to low inflation," Erdoğan told news channel A Haber in an interview on Wednesday. Higher interest rates are recognised as a key tool to battle inflation, according to traditional economic theory.

Galloping inflation in Turkey has meant that top international banks including Goldman Sachs have scaled back their predictions for interest rate cuts, with several now predicting an easing from the fourth quarter of the year. Any premature reduction is likely to send the lira to fresh record lows.

Clashes between Erdoğan and the central bank over policy have led him to replace three of the bank's governors in just over two years, most recently in March, when he brought in academic Şahap Kavcıoğlu for Naci Ağbal, a former finance minister who had hiked rates to 19 percent from 10.25 percent during his four-month tenure.

Several members of the central bank's Monetary Policy Committee have also been fired since Kavcıoğlu's arrival and heads of departments moved or dismissed. That has intensified concern among investors that a premature rate cut might be in the works. Erdoğan has also replaced board members at the Turkish Statistical Institute, which is responsible for collating and reporting inflation data.

Forecasts for inflation in Turkey are increasing. A monthly central bank survey of market participants published on Friday showed the average prediction for year-end inflation at 16.3 percent compared with 15.6 percent in July. The estimate had stood at 11.2 percent in February. Inflation in two years was seen at 10.5 percent.

The central bank has pledged to keep interest rates at above inflation and to retain tight monetary policy until a medium-term goal of 5 percent is achieved.

## Kuwait's 2020-21 Budget Deficit Increases 175% to Record 10.8b Dinars



KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) - Kuwait's budget deficit increased 174.8% in the 2020-21 year to 10.8 billion dinars (\$35.5 billion), the finance ministry said, noting it was the highest deficit in the country's fiscal history.

Revenue dropped to 10.5 billion dinars in the financial year that ended on March 31, down 38.9%, while expenditure increased 0.7% to 21.3 billion dinars, the ministry said in a statement.

Kuwait's parliament in June approved the 2021-22 state budget proposed by the government in January, which projected 23.05 billion dinars in expenditure and a deficit of 12.1 billion dinars.

The parliamentary vote came amid a stand-off between government and parliament that has delayed reforms in the OPEC member state.

Oil revenue slumped 42.8% in 2020-21 to 8.8 billion dinars, while other revenue fell 6.5% to 1.7 billion, the ministry said. Wages and subsidies accounted for 73% of total expenditure, while capital and infrastructure expenditure accounted for 9%.

The average Kuwaiti crude selling price for the fiscal year reached \$42.36 per barrel, with average oil production of 2.5 million barrels per day, the ministry said.

"The deficit is attributed to the sharp decline in oil prices and minimal government operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," Finance Minister, Khalifa Hamada, said in the statement.

"The cabinet is prepared to discuss the closing accounts with the parliament and to move forward in implementing real, effective, and sustainable solutions to the challenges facing public finances."

The State's closing accounts must be ratified by parliament in order to be considered final.

Earlier this year, Hamada said an increase in oil revenue due to higher oil prices does not cover the Persian Gulf state's budget obligations and Kuwait would need oil prices of \$90 per barrel to balance the budget.

## Foreign Students in Shiraz University Up 250%

SHIRAZ (IRNA) - Chancellor of Shiraz University said thanks to the decisions made in time of COVID19 pandemic to develop on line learning infrastructures, the number of foreign students increased 250%.

Hamid Nadgaran said the number of foreign students in Shiraz University increased from 90 students last year to 180 this year. He also hailed the pace of the establishment of academic knowledge-based companies and startups in Shiraz over the last four years. He noted that despite the coronavirus pandemic, Shiraz University did not stop its scientific interactions and held webinars to developing international relations.



## U.N. Sounds Deafening Warning on Climate Change

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The United Nations panel on climate change told the world on Monday that global warming was dangerously close to being out of control – and that humans were “unequivocally” to blame.

Already, greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere are high enough to guarantee climate disruption for decades if not centuries, the report from the scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned.

In other words, the deadly heat waves, gargantuan hurricanes and other weather extremes that are already happening will only become more severe.

Monday alone saw 500,000 acres of forest burning in California, while in Venice tourists waded through ankle-deep water in St Mark’s Square.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres described the report as a “code red for humanity”. “The alarm bells are deafening,” he said in a statement. “This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet.”

In an interview with Reuters, activist Greta Thunberg called on the public and media to put “massive” pressure on governments to act.

In three months’ time, the U.N. COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, will try to wring much more ambitious climate action out of the nations of the world, and the money to go with it.

Drawing on more than 14,000 scientific studies, the IPCC report gives the most comprehensive and detailed picture yet of how climate change is altering the natural world - and what could still be ahead.

Unless immediate, rapid and large-scale action is taken to reduce emissions, the report says, the average global temperature is likely to reach or cross the 1.5-degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warming threshold within 20 years.

The pledges to cut emissions made so far are nowhere near enough to start reducing level of greenhouse gases - mostly carbon dioxide (CO2) from burning fossil fuels - accumulated in the atmosphere.

Governments and campaigners reacted to the findings with alarm.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he hoped the report would be “a wake-up call for the world to take action now, before we meet in Glasgow”.

The report says emissions “unequivocally caused by human activities” have already pushed the average global temperature up 1.1C from its pre-industrial average - and would have raised it 0.5C further without the tempering effect of pollution in the atmosphere.

That means that, even as societies move away from fossil fuels, temperatures will be pushed up again by the loss of the airborne pollutants that come with them and currently reflect away some of the sun’s heat.

A rise of 1.5C is generally seen as the most that humanity could cope with without suffering widespread economic and social upheaval.

The 1.1C warming already recorded has been enough to unleash disastrous weather. This year, heat waves killed hundreds in the Pacific Northwest and smashed records around the world. Wildfires fuelled by heat and drought are sweeping away



entire towns in the U.S. West, releasing record carbon dioxide emissions from Siberian forests, and driving Greeks to flee their homes by ferry.

Further warming could mean that in some places, people could die just from going outside. “The more we push the climate system ... the greater the odds we cross thresholds that we can only poorly project,” said IPCC co-author Bob Kopp, a climate scientist at Rutgers University.

Some changes are already “locked in”. Greenland’s sheet of land-ice is “virtually certain” to continue melting, and raising the sea level, which will continue to rise for centuries to come as the oceans warm and expand.

“We are now committed to some aspects of climate change, some of which are irreversible for hundreds to thousands of years,” said IPCC co-author Tamsin Edwards, a climate scientist at King’s College London. “But the more we limit warming, the more we can avoid or slow down those changes.”

But even to slow climate change, the report says, the world is running out of time. If emissions are slashed in the next decade, average temperatures could still be up 1.5C by 2040 and possibly 1.6C by 2060 before stabilising.

And if, instead the world continues on its current trajectory, the rise could be 2.0C by 2060 and 2.7C by the century’s end.

The Earth has not been that warm since the Pliocene Epoch roughly 3 million years ago - when humanity’s first ancestors were appearing, and the oceans were 25 metres (82 feet) higher than they are today.

It could get even worse, if warming triggers feedback loops that release even more climate-warming carbon emissions -- such as the melting of Arctic permafrost or the dieback of global forests. Under these high-emissions scenarios, Earth could broil at temperatures 4.4C above the preindustrial average by the last two decades of this century.

## UK Recovery Still Unsteady Despite July Job Surge



LONDON (Dispatches) - The relaxation of lockdown rules in July sparked a surge of hiring among UK firms, but staff shortages caused by the pandemic and Brexit could still undermine the recovery, the professional services group BDO reported on Monday.

BDO’s latest business trends report found that the jobs market strengthened last month, as hospitality venues such as restaurants and bars were allowed to operate without Covid-related capacity limits.

But many firms reported labour shortages, partly due to the pandemic – with workers being told to self-isolate by the NHS Covid app – and Brexit, BDO said. This created a scramble for workers, pushing up wages and leaving bosses fretting about rising costs. BDO’s employment index rose by 1.57 points, from 106.05 in June to 107.62 in July, showing the strongest pickup in hiring so far this year. Business optimism dipped back from the record high recorded in June, while BDO’s inflation index – which tracks rising prices – was close to June’s four-year high.

Pressure on global supply chains, and problems importing goods and materials due to the UK’s exit from the EU, both pushed up costs, BDO reported, along with rising wages as employers paid more to attract and retain talent.

Some companies have recently introduced signing-on bonuses of up to £10,000 to attract job applications.

Last week, the Bank of England predicted that unemployment had peaked, with a tight labour market leaving some employers struggling to hire staff. The Bank also forecast that inflation would hit a 10-year high of 4% by the end of the year.

“The surge in employment is a timely boost and shows how quickly the relaxation of restrictions has impacted the economy,” said Kaley Crossthwaite, a partner at BDO LLP. “It now appears that one of the biggest problems faced by employers will be filling roles as both the pandemic and Brexit give rise to staff shortages.”

A separate survey from the accountancy firm Azets found that two-thirds of UK small businesses felt positive about the UK’s economic outlook over the next 12 months, with more than half of firms expecting to expand their workforces.

## France’s Economic Activity Close to Pre-Epidemic Level

PARIS (Dispatches) -The French economic activity ran at 1 to 1.5 percent below normal levels in July, nearing the pre-coronavirus epidemic levels as the services sector nudged higher due to eased sanitary rules, the central bank BdF said on Monday.

In its monthly economic report, the bank confirmed a positive economic trend in the country, notably due to continued improvement in hotels, restaurants, transport, leisure and cultural activities. In July, the services sector, worst-hit by restrictions, was “increasing significantly” after a return to normal. The level of activity in the restaurant business rose to 79 percent of the level considered normal, against 69 percent in the previous month, while in accommodation, it reached 72 percent after 54 percent in June.

Activity is expected to be stable overall in August, although food services are likely to see a decline due to the health pass required to enter bars and restaurants, according to the central bank.

### 2nd Phase Trials...

FROM PAGE 1

“We are planning to produce 15 to 20 million doses by the end of the year [March 2022]. Production can begin after the vaccine successfully completes the first phase of its clinical study and the required dose is determined, given that the second and third phases are also verified. The production and quality control processes are time consuming, so we should plan in advance and begin the production.”

Mehrabadi also expressed hopes the third and final phase of the trials begin later this month. He further explained that the second phase trials ended two weeks ago and the report is sent to the Food and Drug Administration. Mehrabadi said there will be a meeting with the organization’s officials next week to discuss the permit for third phase trials.

“We have two planned scenarios for the third phase

with regard to the situation in the society where different age groups and job categories would enter the clinical trial. One of the proposals, set forth by the Committee on Ethics and the Food and Drug Administration, is to compare Covo-Pars jab with a verified vaccine (which is now being injected to people) to study their effectiveness. For this to take place, we need some 48,000 volunteers and, if this scenario is confirmed, the Health Ministry will be responsible for the supply of the other vaccine,” he said.

“The second scenario is to inject the vaccine to the first group and inject placebos to the second group [of volunteers] and to examine the rate of the disease in both groups to decide the effectiveness of the vaccine. For this scenario some 27,000 volunteers are needed.”

### U.S. Imposes...

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Two Syrian entities, Wael Issa Trading Establishment and Ayman Al Sabbagh Trading, as well as three Russian firms, Charter Green Light Moscow, Asia-Invest LLC and NPP Pulsar LLC, were also included in the US sanctions list.

According to the notice, the sanctions were applied on July 29 under the INKSNA, which authorizes Washington to sanction foreign individuals, private entities, and governments that it deems to be engaged in proliferation activities. The ban forbids U.S. government departments, agencies and personnel from signing contracts with or from providing licenses or government assistance to the targeted groups and organizations.

“These measures shall be implemented by the responsible departments and agencies of the U.S. government and will remain in place for two years from the effective date, except to the extent that the Secretary of State may subsequently determine otherwise,” read the notice. Saad al-Saadi, a member of the Asa’ib politburo, said that the sanctions show that the US sees the resistance factions as a “stumbling block” to the Zionist-American projects in Iraq.

“This indicates that we have achieved the results that the Iraqi people want and thwarted these projects that were and still remain the cause of all the crises that the country is going through on the economic, political, and security levels,” he told Iraq’s Shafaq news agency. “We, the sons of resistance and national movements representing the Iraqi people, consider these sanctions as a [source of] pride and dignity for the Iraqi people... These sanctions only increase our resolve and steadfastness in adhering to our principles and values and the project of resisting the occupation and the illegal foreign presence in Iraq,” he added. American occupation forces are required to leave Iraq under a resolution passed by the Arab country’s parliament on January 5, 2020. It was approved two days after the US assassinated Iran’s anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Hashd al-Sha’abi, two influential figures in the fight against the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group. However, Washington has been dragging its feet on the troop pullout and targeting anti-terror groups from time to time.

### Zionists Need...

FROM PAGE 1

Also on August 4, it was reported that the Israeli regime’s spy agency Mossad had transferred state-of-the-art cyber sabotage units to the United Arab Emirates in order to interfere with the regional air and maritime navigation. Doing so, Tel Aviv could give rise to some uncalled-for incidents that could stoke potential misunderstanding among the regional states and force them into likely conflict. Reports about the submarine mission came amid ongoing strong warnings urging the regime not to try to challenge Iran in the waters and the contiguous Sea of Oman given the Islamic Republic’s military superiority there.



But once and for all, the Zionists should be dealt properly as they need a serious kick in the ass in order to stop threatening other states otherwise they will continue rudely their atrocities by the support of its allies.

As Chief Commander of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has said that the final collapse of the Zionist regime in Tel Aviv is not just an aspiration, but a reality, which will materialize in the near future. Major General Hossein Salami said, “In view of undeniable realities on the ground, we believe that the collapse and fall of the Zionist regime is far beyond a mere aspiration and is a reality, which will be realized in the near future.” Salami said only power can harness the rebellious Zionists and emphasized that strengthening Palestine is a strategy that should never be stopped.

The Islamic Republic of Iran does not seek any war with anyone but in case it faces any aggression, it will give a proper response and the Zionists are better to forget any offence against Iran otherwise they will receive a strong kick in the ass that it has never tasted it before.

Unfortunately the West and international bodies’ silence regarding the false claims and crimes of Israel have emboldened the Zionists to continue their claims and crimes but they should not forget that the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only country which can bring them down and they are better not to test it and if they want, it is enough for them to fire the first bullet and to get hell of fire.

As the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic has repeatedly reiterated, the Islamic Republic of Iran should be strong enough so that no country be able to even think of attack and fortunately the country is today in a position that it can give proper response to any bully and attack and the era of hit-and-run has ended for the Zionists and the world arrogance.

The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks peace and security but it does not mean that it is ready to accept any contempt by aliens because now it is 2021 and not 1980 that the war with Iraq broke out when Iran was weak in its defense power. Iran is now enjoys good and strong defensive and even attacking powers which is enough for bringing down any invader.

### Japan’s FM...

FROM PAGE 1

“Motegi is expected to meet his Iranian counterpart, possibly in mid-August, as Japan aims to strengthen its traditionally friendly ties with Iran and discuss issues related to Tehran’s nuclear program,” the report said.

Japan’s official NHK TV channel also reported that Motegi would sit down for talks with his Iranian counterpart as well as other high-ranking officials of the new administration to be formed by Raeisi.

The reported predicted that the top Japanese diplomat would announce Tokyo’s readiness to strengthen traditional friendship between the two sides during the trip.

It said Motegi and the Iranian authorities would likely discuss a resumption of the negotiations on a potential revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which the United States, a close Tokyo ally, has abandoned in defiance of international law.

Motegi’s trip would be the first visit to Iran by a senior Japanese government figure since the June 2019 trips by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and foreign minister Taro Kono.

### Washington...

FROM PAGE 1

Talks kicked off in April in Vienna to find a way to bring both parties back to the deal. But the last round took place on June 20, with no date set for when they would resume. The EU chairs the meetings.

The US has said it is “an urgent priority” to get Iran back to the table.

Raisi told his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Monday that negotiations with world powers to revive the 2015 nuclear deal must guarantee Tehran’s “rights.”

## Kim Implodes With 13 on Par-Three Hole at TPC Southwind

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - South Korea's Kim Si-woo had a forgettable day as he fired five balls into the water en route to an abysmal 13 on a par-three hole during the final round of the WGC-FedEx St. Jude Invitational in Memphis, Tennessee.

Kim, playing in his first event since finishing in a share of 32nd in the men's golf competition at the Tokyo Olympics, was even par on the day when he stepped up to TPC Southwind's 155-yard 11th hole that features an island green.

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## Petkovic Wins Title In Romania

BUCHAREST (Dispatches) - Germany's Andrea Petkovic smashed Mayar Sherif of Egypt 6-1, 6-1 to win her first singles title in more than six years at the inaugural Winners Open in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

It is the seventh career trophy for the second-seeded Petkovic, 33, and her first since February 2015 at Antwerp, Belgium.

Petkovic converted five of 10 break chances and never faced a break point during the 61-minute match against the unseeded Sherif, 25, who hadn't lost a set all week while becoming the first Egyptian woman ever to reach a WTA singles final.

# Cost-Benefit Weighs In Favor of Messi at PSG

PARIS (AFP) - Barcelona could not afford to keep Lionel Messi but Paris Saint-Germain have made their move for the 34-year-old and, while the cost of the deal may be astronomical, it is still likely to be a very smart bit of business if or when it goes through.

Barca -- swimming in debt of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.4 billion) -- ultimately found themselves in a no-win situation with their talisman.

Keeping him would have maintained salaries at an untenable 110 percent of revenue.

Even letting him go leaves that figure at 95 percent with the Catalan club a prime example of how living beyond one's means eventually ends in the tears Messi shed Sunday in confirming his departure, Barca unable to defy financial gravity any longer.

An annual salary north of 70 million euros (\$82 million) net per season, while breaking Spanish league salary cap requirements, was a price that made sense for Barcelona.

Marc Ciria, director general of Diagonal Inversiones consultancy, recently calculated Messi generated some 235 million euros more than he earned over the past four years.

Qatari-owned PSG, who bought Messi's close friend Neymar from Barcelona for 222 million euros in 2017, can afford the Argentinian wizard, who they see as the final piece in the jigsaw to land a first Champions League crown.

Messi, who had agreed to a 50 percent wage cut with Barcelona and a five-year deal taking him to the age of 39, is reputedly being offered some 40 million euros a year over two seasons in Paris with the possibility of a third.

Neymar, whose transfer will ultimately cost PSG more than 500 million euros wages included, earns an after-tax salary of 30 million euros annually according to documents released in 2018 by Football Leaks.

Messi, nicknamed "La Pulga" (the flea), boosts overall annual earnings to around 110 million euros thanks to lucrative sponsorships with the likes of Pepsi and Adidas, ahead of the likes of long-time La Liga rival Cristiano Ronaldo, LeBron James or Roger Federer.

"We're on another planet here -- it's stratospheric" with Messi, says sports marketing analyst Virgile Caillet, adding a putative arrival at the Parc des Princes would constitute "an event such as (has happened) only once or twice in football -- with (Diego) Maradona when he signed for Napoli or (Zinedine) Zidane going to Real."

PSG have essentially taken over the Real Madrid mantle of the home for "galacticos" -- megastars whose global status lifts their clubs to another level.

## Collins Outlasts Kasatkina for Second WTA Title

SAN JOSE (Dispatches) - American Danielle Collins grabbed her second WTA tour title just two weeks after claiming her first with a hard-fought victory over Daria Kasatkina in San Jose, California.

Collins, the 27-year-old who became the tour's 14th first-time champion of 2021 with her claycourt title in Palermo last month, kept the momentum going on the hardcourts of California with a 6-3, 6-7 (10/12), 6-1 victory.

It took longer than it might have, seventh-seeded Collins serving for the match at 5-3 in the second set but letting five match points go begging as fourth-seeded Kasatkina forced a decisive third set.

Collins had lost her two previous matches against Russia's Kasatkina, including a semi-final defeat at the Phillip Island Trophy in Melbourne this year.

But after Kasatkina grabbed the second-set tiebreaker on her fifth set point, Collins, ranked 36th in the world and projected to return to the top 30 after the victory, was able to settle herself and regain the upper hand.

Collins converted five of her eight break points in the match, breaking Kasatkina at love for a 5-3 lead in the first set.

Three aces in a row and a service winner in the next game gave her the opening frame, and Collins went up an early break in the second.

But when Collins was unable to convert two match points against Kasatkina's serve in the ninth game of the second set, the Russian began to gain ground. She broke Collins to level the set, and seized a 4-0 lead in a tiebreaker that would eventually feature three more match points for the American before Kasatkina finally levelled the match.

## Tsitsipas Calls for Coaching to Be Allowed During Matches

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Stefanos Tsitsipas said coaching during matches still takes place on the ATP Tour and that rules in place banning such instruction need to be changed.

Tsitsipas, speaking in Toronto where he is the third seed for the Masters 1000 hardcourt event, feels there needs to be a way to allow communication between coaches and players that is not overly intrusive to the flow of a match.



Although the pandemic knocked a 125 million-euro dent in PSG's finances across 2019-20 alone, the club's ownership by Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) means their pockets are deep enough to close a deal.

The recent relaxation of UEFA's financial fair play rules because of the pandemic helps too. "That leaves more margin than previously," says Christophe Lepetit, director of France's Centre for the Law and Economics of Sport in Limoges.

Getting Messi aboard would mean PSG "developing new marketing approaches. That dovetails perfectly with the PSG strategy," says Caillet.

"Messi is a cast-iron guarantee. From the moment you recruit him you have a number of additional revenue streams which flow almost automatically: derivative merchandise, ticketing, partnerships. It's an unmissable opportunity."

A further plus compared with the 400 million euros shelled out in 2017 to buy Neymar and Kylian Mbappe is the fact PSG don't have to pay a transfer fee for the out-of-contract Messi. "In terms of amortisation (costs) there is just the salary -- I'd say that makes it much more affordable," smiled Caillet.

A decade into their ownership of PSG, QSI have pushed a policy of capturing big names -- even those in the twilight of their careers, notably David Beckham and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

PSG are the seventh-richest club in the world according to the most recent Deloitte Football Money League, still trailing the likes of Barca, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich and Manchester United.

For Caillet, Messi will lift them to even greater heights on and off the pitch.

"A second stage was needed for the PSG rocket. Messi will bring an acceleration," says Caillet.

"It seems paradoxical given his age -- but Messi incarnates PSG's future both economically and in sporting terms," says Caillet as "his arrival brings together three iconic brands -- Paris, Jordan (PSG's kit manufacturer) and Messi."



# Yakin Named New Switzerland Coach

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Murat Yakin was appointed Monday as the new boss of the Swiss national football team, with an eye on greater success after their impressive run to the Euro 2020 quarter-finals.

Yakin, 46, takes over from Vladimir Petkovic, who stepped down after seven years in charge of the "Nati" to take over at French Ligue 1 team Bordeaux.

Yakin, who played 49 times for Switzerland, leaves his post as the manager of Swiss second-tier side Schaffhausen.

"Murat Yakin is the new coach of the Nati," the Swiss Football Association (SFA) announced.

"Welcome back, Murat!"

Yakin's contract runs until the end of the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, with an option for an extension. "The Nati was already an affair of the heart for me as a player. It is a great honour and a pleasure for me to be able to represent our country as a coach," he said.

"I have no doubts that we will qualify for the World Cup with this great team and that we will celebrate further successes."

Petkovic had been in charge of the national team since 2014.

Under his leadership, Switzerland pulled off one of their best-ever performances at a major international tournament, reaching the European Championships quarter-finals, where they were eliminated by Spain on penalties in Saint Petersburg on July 2. Along the way, Switzerland knocked out reigning world champions France in the last 16, triggering wild celebrations throughout the country.

## Belarusian Sprinter Auctions Medal to Support Athletes Caught Up in Crackdown

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya, who was removed from the Tokyo Olympics by the Belarusian team after she criticised her coaches, is auctioning a medal from the 2019 European Games to support athletes who say they have been targeted by authorities.

Belarusian team officials took the 24-year-old to Tokyo's Haneda airport against her wishes on Aug. 1, a day before she had been set to run the 200m.

She refused to board the flight home and has since sought refuge in Poland, fearing for her safety if she returned to Belarus.

Tsimanouskaya told Reuters the reason she had been removed from the team was her public criticism of "the negligence of our coaches."

Also read: Treated like a 'toy' - Another Belarusian athlete on life under Lukashenko

She said she had been entered in the 4x400m relay without her knowledge after some team members were found to be ineligible to compete because they had not undergone enough doping tests. The Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation, a group that supports athletes jailed or sidelined for their political views, said on Monday the medal was being auctioned at Tsimanouskaya's request in support of Belarusian athletes "who suffered from the actions of Lukashenko's regime." As of Monday morning, bids for the medal had reached \$5,200 on eBay.



## Nadal Hopes to Find Footing at Toronto Hardcourt Event

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Rafa Nadal said on Sunday he had not yet fully recovered from a foot issue that kept him out of Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics but hopes a U.S. Open tune-up event in Toronto will help him to regain confidence in his on-court movements.

Nadal's first event since his semi-final loss at the French Open ended in a shock third-round exit in Washington on Thursday and the Spaniard admitted his left foot was holding him back.

"It's been a couple of tough months for me in terms of physical issues," world number three Nadal told reporters at the Masters 1000 event in Toronto, where first-round action starts on Monday.

"I know I am not at my peak yet but I think I have been practising better than what I played in Washington so I am excited to keep going here and be able to play a little bit better than there."

Nadal said a recurring foot issue he has been dealing with since 2005 returned at Roland Garros, where he fell to eventual champion Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals before deciding to sit out two of the year's biggest events.

"Some moments the situation is worse and some moments the situation is better," said Nadal.

"After Paris my foot was not recovering. I was in a lot of pain for a couple of weeks so I couldn't train. I stayed around 20 days without touching a racquet, trying to recover."



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Italy's Jannik Sinner, the ATP's top-ranked teen, captured his third career title, outlasting American Mackenzie McDonald 7-5, 4-6, 7-5 in the Citi Open final.

World number 24 Sinner, a 19-year-old who won at Sofia last year and Melbourne in January, took the top prize of \$350,755 on the Washington hardcourts.

"I'm very happy about this tournament and win," Sinner said. McDonald, ranked 107th and playing in his first ATP final, denied Sinner on 16 of 21 break chances, 10 in the first set, and battled from 5-2 down to level the final set before falling.

"A big fight... in every single part of the game," Sinner said. "I tried to stay calm and work for my chances."

Sinner became the youngest ATP 500-level champion in 146 events since the category was created in 2009, breaking the mark 20-year-old Alexander Zverev set at Washington in 2017.

"I don't put much weight on that," Sinner said. "There are a lot of players who have done much better than me. It's not about the youngest. I just want to work hard and play good matches."

Eight days shy of his 20th birthday, Sinner became the third-youngest Washington champion after 18-year-old Andy Roddick in 2001 and 19-year-old Juan Martin del Potro in 2008. "I'm not looking if I'm the youngest because the road is long," he said. "There's still much work to do. I'm already focusing on next week."

Sinner, who made the last eight at the 2020 French Open, was the first Italian finalist in the US capital event's 52-year history.

