

**Health Ministry Said on Wednesday  
That the Number of Deaths From  
The Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran  
Increased to 95,647 With 536 More  
Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus  
Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**The Sistan and Baluchestan  
Police Commander Announced  
The Confiscation of Over 1 Ton of  
Narcotics in an Armed Clash  
Between Police Forces and  
Smugglers in Iranshahr County**

VOL. XXVII, No. 7291 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

THURSDAY AUGUST 12, 2021 - MORDAD 21, 1400

**2 DOMESTIC**

**President Stresses  
Importance of Solving  
Issues Through Dialog**



> **SEE PAGE 2**

**3 DOMESTIC**

**Tehran, Shanghai  
Explore New Ways to  
Boost Trade Ties**



> **SEE PAGE 3**

**4 INTERNATIONAL**

**Taliban Take Control of  
65% of Afghanistan**



> **SEE PAGE 4**

**8 SPORTS**

**Opelka Rallies  
Past Kyrgios at  
ATP Toronto Event**



> **SEE PAGE 8**

## President Presents List of Ministerial Picks to Majlis

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi has presented the names of his ministerial picks to the country's parliament for a vote of confidence.

Raisi on Wednesday introduced Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as his pick for foreign minister. Amir Abdollahian was the former deputy foreign minister who was sacked by Mohammad Javad Zarif and later on joined the ex-pop parliament as an advisor to the speaker on the international affairs.

Raisi has also chosen Javad Owji as his oil minister. Owji was a deputy oil minister and the managing director of the state-run National Iranian Gas Company.

Rostam Qassemi who ran for president himself in 2021 is Raisi's pick for the Roads and Urban Development ministry. Qassemi earlier served as oil minister under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The former President of Iran's Radio and TV Organization known as IRIB, Ezzatollah Zarghami, has also been named as Ebrahim's Raisi's pick for Tourism ministry.

**See Page 7**

## Iran Decided to Open 6 More Border Trade Routes to Pakistan

CHAGAI (Dispatches) - Pakistan Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani has said the newly-elected Iranian president has announced opening of six more trade corridors along the Pakistan-Iran border in Balochistan.

He was speaking at a public meeting in his hometown of Nokkundi after arriving in Chagai on a two-day visit on Tuesday.

Speaking about his recent visit to Iran where he attended the oath-taking ceremony of President Ebrahim Raisi, Mr Sanjrani said that he informed the president of the desire of the Baloch living along the border to see more trade routes opened. The Iranian president accepted the proposal.

He said more job opportunities would be created after the opening of the trade corridors as the people living in the districts of Balochistan along the border were largely dependent on border trade.

He also said that the home minister of Balochistan and the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan would be approached to reopen the recently closed border trade corridor at Taftan.

**See Page 7**

Sokhan Gostar Institute

**IRAN  
NEWS**

PRIVATE ENGLISH  
NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department  
**021-44253335-39**  
www.irannewsdaily.com  
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

## Leader Says COVID-19 Spread First And Foremost Issue in the Country



**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei says foreign providers of COVID vaccines initially reneged on their promises and refused sales to Iran, but changed course and started providing Iran with vaccines only after the country successfully managed to produce jabs against the deadly virus at home.

Delivering a televised speech on Wednesday, Ayatollah Khamenei described the coronavirus outbreak as the country's first and foremost issue.

The Leader called on the executives to double their efforts to procure vaccines, whether imported or domestically developed, and made them available to everyone.

"Fortunately, the production of vaccines within the country paved the path for the import of foreign shots as well, whereas before that, foreign suppliers would renege on their promises despite having received the payments," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The Leader called on the people to display the same level of heightened sensitivity to safety precautions to curb the disease as they did when the pandemic first began "so that their lives and those of others would not be endangered."

He stressed that frontline health workers, who have been working under immense pressure since the pandemic began, need a slight break from the strain, which will be provided if people strictly follow safety protocols for a couple of months.

He called for a new and stronger defense against the deformation and mutation of the virus, saying that the death of more than 500 people in a day, as well as tens of thousands of new cases of coronavirus infection, is really painful, so we have a responsibility to deal with it.

The Leader called the president's one-week deadline to gather proposals for confronting the disease and decide on them good measure, saying that at the appointed time, every necessary action must be decided and acted upon decisively.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also considered the extreme fatigue of the medical staff and the physical and mental pressures on them to be a great concern and appreciated them for their efforts.

Ayatollah Khamenei, in his advice to the officials, emphasized providing a wide range of vaccines.

Until then, he said, vaccines will also have been made fully available to everyone, and even though the pandemic will not have gone away, the crisis and the fatalities will have subsided.

The Leader also pointed to the arrival of the lunar month of Muharram, which coincides with the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia imam, advising the people to meticulously and thoroughly observe COVID safety guidelines while attending the mourning rituals and ceremonies observed during this time.

Ayatollah Khamenei hailed an initiative by President Ebrahim Raisi to set a one-week deadline for proposals on a comprehensive national response to the current peak of the outbreak. "At the designated time, the response to the issue should be carefully weighed, and any necessary measures adopted and enforced accordingly," he said.

## Anger Among Palestinians as U.S. Delegation Visits al-Aqsa Mosque

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Palestinian resistance groups have condemned a recent visit by a U.S. delegation to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, saying such provocations embolden the Tel Aviv regime to keep violating Palestinians' rights.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which are both based in the besieged Gaza Strip, reacted to the American delegation's tour of the sacred site while being heavily guarded by Israeli occupation forces. Hamas said in a statement that the entry of the U.S. delegation into the al-Aqsa Mosque under the escort of Israeli police violates international law and resolutions.

"This wrong measure, as we have always emphasized, reflects the United States' policies in support of the positions taken by the Zionist regime, and it is one of the main reasons for the continuation of the Israeli occupation and acts of aggression against the Palestinian nation and sanctities," it added. "The repetition of such moves will encourage the Zionist enemy to commit more foolish acts and will increase tensions by fanning the flames in the occupied territories, especially in al-Quds. The US government will be responsible for all dangerous consequences."

Meanwhile, Islamic Jihad spokesman Tariq Salmi said that the U.S. delegation's visit to al-Quds and the Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as its meetings with Zionist and Palestinian officials are meant to strengthen the so-called "security cooperation" between the Israeli regime and Palestinian Authority. This trip, he added, is also aimed at "returning to the path of fruitless peace talks through the implementation of the tripartite agreement between the United States, the Zionist regime and the Palestinian Authority." Salmi further called on all Palestinian factions to confront the enemy's schemes, which are designed to breach the Palestinians' national rights and principles.

The al-Aqsa Mosque compound is the third-holiest site in Islam. It is located in East al-Quds, which Israel annexed following its invasion in 1967, in a move never recognized by the international community.

Israeli forces and settlers regularly storm the site, which they call the Temple Mount, and violently attack Palestinian worshippers there.

## U.S. Seizes Quranic Tiles From Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - U.S. custom authorities have confiscated a set of Iranian tiles to be used in construction of a new mosque in Virginia, demanding they must be shipped backed to Iran or destroyed.

The tiles, which are adorned with Quranic verses, were shipped in June from the Iranian city of Qom, to be used in construction of the Manassas Mosque in northern Virginia.

However, they were confiscated at Dulles International Airport after they were deemed to violate sanctions on Iran, the mosque's imam Abolfazl Nahidian said on Tuesday.

The tiles were a gift and he paid no money for them, but custom authorities at the airport blocked him from claiming them citing the sanctions, he told a news conference at the mosque. A letter from Customs and Border Protection informed the mosque that the tiles must be either shipped back to Iran or destroyed, the Associated Press cited him as saying.

Destroying the tiles, which are adorned with Quranic verses, "is the same as destroying verses of the Quran, or the whole Qur'an itself", Nahidian said.

The mosque is now asking the Biden administration to release the custom-made tiles.

**See Page 7**

## Iran Fails to Achieve Two-Month Oil Revenues Target

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran report shows that in the first two months of this solar year, only 2.5 percent of the projected oil revenues were realized in the state budget.

The approved sources of oil exports and petroleum products in 1400, about 349,000 billion tomans, a little over 59,000 billion tomans should have been achieved in the first two months of the year, but in practice only 1500 billion tomans, i.e. 2.5 percent, have been realized.

Last year, the government included exports of 1.5 million barrels of oil per day in the budget, which led to a significant budget deficit, with only 17.5 percent realized. This year, 2 million and 300,000 barrels of oil are included in the government's general budget, which roughly equals the amount of oil exports in the pre-sanctions era.

**See Page 7**

## Failure to React to Raids Would Have Emboldened Israel

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - A senior Hezbollah official says the Israeli regime would have carried more acts of aggression in case fighters from the Lebanese resistance movement had not acted promptly to retaliate the recent Israeli raids on southern Lebanon.

"Hezbollah does not want war, but will not hesitate, as seen in recent days, to respond in case Israel invades Lebanon," Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem said during a ceremony on Tuesday, marking the start of the lunar calendar month of Muharram - the 10th day of which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, the third Shia Imam.

He added, "If the Israeli enemy had not been given a befitting response, it would have continued to conduct more acts of aggression against us."

Sheikh Qassem said it was the Tel Aviv regime that violated Lebanon's sovereignty, stressing that the Lebanese people will protect their homeland on their own.

The senior Hezbollah official added that the United States cannot be trusted as an honest broker, and the only way to end the Israeli occupation is resistance and struggle.

**See Page 7**



## President Forwards Budget Bill Amendments for Execution

TEHRAN (MNA) - President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi has announced the current Iranian calendar year's (started on March 20) amended national budget bill to be implemented by the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), IRNA reported.

President Raisi sent the approved amendments to PBO on Wednesday, according to Article 123 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Majlis (Iranian parliament) had approved the amended national budget bill for the current calendar year in mid-March. The amended bill amounted to about 28.823 quadrillion rials (about \$686.261 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

## President Stresses Importance of Solving Issues Through Dialog

**TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi has stressed the importance of solving issues in the region through dialog, saying neighborly cooperation free from foreign interference is a prerequisite for regional stability and security.**

"Cooperation and synergy among regional countries without foreign interference are prerequisites for regional stability and security, the establishment of peace in countries of the region, and welfare of its nations," Raeisi said in a Tuesday meeting with visiting Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein in Tehran.

Iran believes that dialog among regional countries aimed at finding solutions to the existing problems and improving relations would promote security and stability, while foreign meddling in the region's affairs would increase tensions, he added.

He said that the Islamic Republic has always attached importance to the settlement of problems in Iraq, and that Tehran regards Baghdad's development and advancement as its own.

The Iranian president thanked Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi for inviting him to take part in a conference of Iraq's neighboring countries due to be held later this month.

The Iraqi foreign minister, for his part, said the upcoming conference would support



the political process and economic development in his country.

Hussein said the meeting would also be a step towards collective cooperation among regional countries in establishing lasting security in the region.

He added that durable security in the region would not be achieved without the presence of Iran and Iraq, and that the Baghdad conference would prepare the ground for promoting regional dialog in order to reach a collective understanding.

Tensions simmer in the region in the wake of the July 29 suspected drone attack on the Israeli-managed tanker — Mercer Street — off the Omani coast, where two crew members were killed.

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

## Former Minister Appointed Head of Plan and Budget Organization

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi appointed former Commerce Minister Masoud Mirkazemi as the Head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization (PBO).

Mirkazemi who has previously served as Oil Minister and Commerce Minister in the administration of former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will now serve at the capacity of Vice President and Head of the PBO.

Born in 1960, Mirkazemi has a PhD in Industrial engineering and has also been at high official posts as the Head of APEC (2011), representative of Tehran in Parliament and several other positions.

The PBO has a variety of goals and duties, including the evaluation of the country's resources, the preparation of its medium and long term development plans and policies, the preparation of annual budgets, and the monitoring and evaluation of work done under the implemented plans.



## There Are Opportunities, Challenges for Iran-UK Bilateral Tie

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Newly-appointed UK Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran Simon Shercliff said that there are opportunities and challenges for bilateral relations between Iran and United Kingdom.

The new British ambassador to Tehran released a video of his first working day in Iran, emphasizing the cooperation in Tehran and London relations.

By releasing a view of himself, he said, "Hi, I am Simon Shercliff, the new British Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is the first day of my mission in Tehran."

Turning to the opportunities and challenges in bilateral relations between Iran and UK, the envoy stated, "With this long and complicated history that we have both ups and downs, we want to work with Iranian officials with these opportunities and challenges for the benefit of both countries."

## Tehran Has Learned From Interaction With West



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali stressed the fact that Iran welcomes any diplomatic measure which result in lifting sanctions, adding that Tehran has learned from interactions with the West.

Speaking in the meeting at Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund, Jalali elaborated on different issues, including delays in sending Russian vaccines, Iran nuclear deal, attacks on Israeli tanker, Iran-Russia agreement, and Moscow interaction with new Iranian government.

He said that Iran has done all regarding its agreement with Russia for buying 62 million doses of vaccine but only 1,020,000 doses have so far been sent to Iran.

Referring to long-standing relations between Iran and Russia, Jalali said that common views between leaders of two countries caused better conditions in this regard.

He noted that Iran and Russia have commonalities in global management against unilateralism.

Tehran and Moscow are strong countries in the international community and enjoy various actual and potential capabilities. Elsewhere in his remarks, Jalali highlighted the role of media in informing people of the two countries' capabilities.

He also called for boosting the level of media and academic interactions, saying Iranian and Russian media should maintain serious cooperation.

Commenting on Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, Iranian diplomat said that all five states have held negotiations in this regard and Iran has always participated in these sessions actively.

The government and parliament of Iran are reviewing the bill, but some issues still need to be discussed, he stated.

Regarding Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Jalali said that Iran has complied with its commitments, but the West and the US were not committed.

Iran has never left the negotiating table and has always supported fair and targeted talks.

Referring to Mercer Street vessel incident, he said that as Russian officials earlier said the Zionist regime and the West have not presented any evidence. He noted that the Zionist regime and the West try to wage a propaganda campaign against the new Iranian government.

Elaborating on Iran-Russia agreement, Jalali said the agreement will be automatically be extended after five years.

The senior Iranian and Russian officials have announced their agreement for updating the agreement and its extension.

## President Missions MFA to Accelerate Import of Vaccines

TEHRAN (IP) - President called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take the necessary measures and follow-ups to accelerate and increase the import of vaccines into the country.

Ebrahim Raisi expressed his condolences on the occasion of the days of mourning for the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) and his martyred companions, noting: "I hope that in addition to the spiritual benefit of these days, we will follow the Imam in practice, as Imam Hussein (AS) himself said, the basis is to follow us. Practical obedience to the Imams is necessary for the people and for the of

He further called the control and management of coronavirus the most important issue and problem in the country today.

He added: "Controlling the coronavirus pandemic, which has intensified these days, like all other acute problems, requires all officials to come to the scene and all the country's capacities and facilities in the disposal of the administration or other institutions are used in this field effectively.

The President stressed that it would be difficult to get out of the current unfavorable situation if all the country's capacities were not used to curb the corona outbreak, stating: "Another very important point is to persuade public opinion to participate in helping the administration in this regard. Everyone needs to explain to the public that controlling the recent wave of coronavirus outbreak requires public participation."

"We respect all the steps that have been taken so far to contain COVID-19, but we must work actively and in more effective ways to overcome the problem," Raisi said.

## Iran Closely Monitoring U.S., UK, and Israel's Suspicious Moves

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran is closely monitoring the suspicious behaviors that the United States, Britain, and the Zionist regime have recently started in the region, the secretary of SNSC said.

Rear Admiral Shamkhani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), and the representative of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in the council received Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Shamkhani pointed out the continued presence of US troops and their interference in the internal affairs of countries in the region, adding continuation of these conditions will increase tensions in the region even more.

He further stated that the countries of the region were able to ensure their security without any foreign interference. "The suspicious behaviors that the United States, Britain, and the Zionist regime have recently started in the region are creating insecurity and misunderstanding between the countries of the Persian Gulf," he said.

Shamkhani went on to say, "With full knowledge of the goals and behind the scenes of these measures, we are fully prepared to neutralize the destabilizing factors and plans in the region."

He referred to the sanction of resistance elements in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon and the green light to terrorist groups, saying, "Nations' hatred of the United States and

its allies is due to the double-standard policy and mischievous behavior."

Shamkhani also stressed the need for full and speedy implementation of the Tehran-Baghdad agreements, which could be a big step in increasing the level of comprehensive cooperation and the welfare of the people of the two countries.

Elsewhere in the meeting, the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council referred to some anti- Iran armed terrorist groups in the Kurdistan Region and said: "We call on the Iraqi government to be more serious about expelling these groups from Iraqi Kurdistan."

For his part, Fuad Hussein said: "Political and social stability in Iran makes the Iraqi government and people happy."

He considered any action against Iran from the Iraqi territory contrary to the policy of the Iraqi government and said: "We will fight strongly with any group and current that wants to threaten Iran from Iraqi territory in any way."

Expressing satisfaction with the gradual resolution of Iraq's debt to Iran, Fouad Hussein added: "Although economic and trade relations between Tehran and Baghdad are at a good level, considering the great potential for cooperation between the two countries, Baghdad is ready to improve comprehensive relations with Iran's new administration."

## COVID Vaccination Capacity In Iran to Hit 1m Doses a Day

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The health minister of Iran unveiled plans to administer one million doses of coronavirus vaccine per day across the country.

During a visit to a vaccination center in Iran's northeastern city of Mashhad on Wednesday, Saeed Namaki said around 600,000 Iranian people are getting COVID jabs on a daily basis at present.

He said arrangements have been made to increase the public vaccination capacity to one million doses per day in the near future.

He also hailed the appropriate process of distribution of medication for the coronavirus patients across Iran, noting, however, that the growing demand has caused some problems.

Asked about a shortage of serums in the country, Namaki said the production in one of the serum-making factories had come to a halt, but the necessary supplies have been purchased from abroad and will be distributed among hospitals and pharmacies within the next few days.

According to the Health Ministry's figures, more than 13.52 million Iranians have received the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine, while over 3.27 million have received the second dosage.

The death toll from the pandemic in Iran has exceeded 95,000 as the country has experienced the highest daily death rates in recent days.



## Enemies Desperately Inviting Iran To Come to Negotiations

TEHRAN (MNA) – Today, the thought of Imam Hussein (PBUH) has doubled the honor of the Iranian nation in the world and the enemies are desperately inviting Iranians to come to the table of negotiation, Iranian Army's second-in-command said.

The relations of the countries have been influenced under the heavy shadow of the realism school of thought which is based on arrogance and hegemony, Deputy Commander of the Iranian Army Brigadier General Mohammad Hossein Dadras said Wednesday morning.

In fact, such a sinister school of thought considers power as the basis for determining the rights of countries in all fields, he added.

He went on to say that the Islamic school thought enjoys great role models such as Imam Hussein (PBUH), a great figure who is the manifestation of endurance and resistance against arrogant powers and oppression.

"We also obey such a school of thought and consider this great figure as a role model", the Iranian Army's second-in-command noted.

Today, the thought of Imam Hussein (PBUH) has doubled the honor of the Iranian nation in the world, Dadras said, adding that today the enemies are desperately inviting Iranians to come to the table of negotiation.

"On the other hand, some regional countries, supporting their American allies to achieve their interests, are weak and they are being humiliated by the United States", he added.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:09
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:16
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:49
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:22

11. For each (such person) there are (angels) in succession, before and behind him: They guard him by command of Allah. Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls). But when (once) Allah willeth a people's punishment, there can be no turning it back, nor will they find, besides Him, any to protect.  
12. It is He Who doth show you the lightning, by way both of fear and of hope: It is He Who doth raise up the clouds, heavy with (fertilising) rain!  
Surah 13. The Thunder ( 11 - 12 )

# Tehran, Shanghai Explore New Ways to Boost Trade Ties

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN – Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Shanghai (CCPIT) in a webinar on joint trade explored reviewed opportunities and capacities for promoting and expansion of economic ties between Iran and China and especially with Shanghai Zone.**

In the webinar which was held on Tuesday, the participants explored ways for broadening economic cooperation between Iran and China and especially with Shanghai. During the webinar, Head of TCCIMA Ms. Masoud Khansari raised some suggestions for expansion of economic and commercial ties between Iran and China and Head of CCPIT Mr. Zhou Minhao also announced the launch of the platform for Shanghai virtual exhibition with cooperation of the e-trade website of Alibaba Company and support of Shanghai Municipality, and stipulated that the platform can be innovative ways for expansion of cooperation between Iranian economic enterprises with Shanghai.

Addressing the webinar, Khansari pointed to the unilateral and unfair sanctions of the U.S. against Iran and some other countries like China, and called for taking a new and effective strategy for regulating relations between the aligned countries. He also pointed to the 25-year cooperation agreement between Iran and China and noted that this opportunity should be used as a foundation for the infrastructural cooperation between the two states for long cooperation in the future. Khansari also underscored the development of ties between Iran and China under the project of One Belt and One Road, adding that the private sector and especially the TCCIMA have plans on its agenda to concentrate on interactions with China's provinces like Shanghai.

Khansari also said the chamber is keen for the launch of a permanent connection channel between TCCIMA and CCPIT for expansion of ties and emphasized the exchange of the website links of these two private sector bodies of the two states for



an easy and safe access of economic activists and traders of the both countries.

He also called for activating the joint arbitration committee between the two countries which has been agreed by the both sides and called it a necessity. He further said that the draft for MoU on cooperation between TCCIMA and CCPIT has been prepared and reminded that this cooperation document will be a new opportunity for enhancing improvement of the level of cooperation between the two countries.

Then Zhou Minhao, for his part, said that Iran and China will celebrate their 50th anniversary of their diplomatic ties this year and expansion of the One Belt and One Road project by China is a proof for China's strategies of open doors and reciprocal benefits, reiterating that this has provided a valuable opportunity for cooperation enterprises worldwide and especially Iran.

Zhou also pointed to China's policy during the COVID-19 pandemic era, saying that holding international exhibition on import and export in Shanghai is one of the policies of the country, adding that the launch of platform for Shanghai virtual exhibition is another step for easing the ties of the trade communities from different countries like Iran with Shanghai Economic Zone. Then he pointed to some facilities and services that the CCPIT can provide to the economic enterprises and called for growing cooperation between the CCPIT and TCCIMA.

Then Iran's counselor in Shanghai Mr. Ramezan Parvaz, for his part, revealed the decline in trade volume between Iran and Shanghai and said in 2019, the trade volume between Iran and Shanghai was \$2.321b as Iran's exports accounted for \$1.416b of the total amount and Shanghai's share was \$905m. He added the figure faced 13 percent decline in 2020 as the bilateral trade of Iran and Shanghai slumped to below \$2b.

He noted that one of the problems ahead of economic ties of the two countries is the transfer of money and called for finding a solution for this woe.

## Canned Fish Exports Earn Iran \$24m

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Director General of Improving Quality, Processing and Promoting the Market of Aquatic Animals Department of Iran Fisheries Organization says according to the statistics, Iran exported 6,210 tons of canned fish in the last Iranian calendar year which ended on March 21 and it earned the country some \$24m.

Speaking to IRNA, Isa Golshahi said that Iran exported some 6,210 tons of the canned fish in the past Iranian year which earned the country some \$24m while the figure in the preceding year was some 3,115 tons with the approximate value of \$15m.

He went on to say that the canned fish is exported to countries and it can help the factories especially those factories which use the imported fish in their products.

Golshahi noted that some part of the produced canned fish in the country is exported annually to Iraq, CIS states, the Persian Gulf countries and Armenia. He reiterated the price of the canned fish is determined by the direct factor of the price of can, oil, salt and fish as well as indirect factor of expenses like salary, energy and transportation.

He reiterated that in recent years, the price of the raw material for producing fish has drastically soared and subsequently the price of the canned fish has increased in the country.

He refuted reports on the decline in demand for the canned fish in the country and said that it may happen in some certain parts of some provinces and it cannot be generalized, reiterating that there has been no fall in the canned fish production in the factories.

Iran's fishery production has increased noticeably in the country in the recent years and it is its production to surpass 1.5m tons this year and its exports to face considerable rise.

## Iran Imports Over 21m Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Deputy President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) for Technical and Customs Affairs said that over 21 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine were imported into the country over past seven months.

Mehrdad Jamal Arvanashi broke the news and reiterated that more than 21 million doses of coronavirus vaccine were imported into the country over the past seven months.

In a letter penned to the Deputy Ministry of Health and Medical Education Mohammadreza Shanehsaz, he stated that 21,014,610 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were imported into the country from Feb. 4 to August 9, 2021, via Customs Office of Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) and after carrying out customs formalities, and all of the aforementioned doses of COVID-19 vaccine were handed to the representatives of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

It should be noted that 2,911,810 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines were imported from Japan, 1,020,000 doses of Sputnik V vaccine from Russia, 14,490,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccine from China, 700,800,000 doses of coronavirus vaccine from South Korea, 125,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine from India's Bharat and 1,452,000 doses of COVAX vaccine from Italy, Arvanaghi added.



## NIOC Launches Monitoring Center



TEHRAN (Shana) -- The monitoring center of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), which was established with the aim of collecting, aggregating and displaying online and continuous data on production, domestic distribution and foreign trade of oil, gas, gas condensate, gaseous liquids and naphtha, has been launched officially.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh, NIOC CEO Masoud Karbasian and a number of NIOC top-brass officials attended the NIOC center building to launch the center on Sunday.

Farrokh Alikhani, the NIOC Deputy CEO for Production, who was in charge of the establishment and operation of this center, said the system is aimed at streamlining decision making at NIOC.

In the real time monitoring center of the NIOC, all the data regarding oil and gas production zones and their quantity and quality and the flow of fluid from the origin to the destination is fully known and the real time amount of production is displayed online at any given time.

"Based on the information of this center, the share of each province, city and even facilities in oil and gas production is clear and this information can help the National Iranian Oil Company in determining the share of each facility in the process," the official said.

Alikhani said the center was designed by an Iranian representing a foreign company that was employed as the consultant to the project.

## Milak Border Crossing Between Iran, Afghanistan Reopens

TEHRAN (IP) - The spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that the Milak border crossing between Iran and Afghanistan would be reopened on Wednesday.

"The reopening of the Milak border is currently for trucks stopped at the border. We hope that from Saturday, customs managers and traders will be able to send new shipments to this border for export to Afghanistan in coordination with Milak Customs," Ruhollah Latifi stated.

Milak is a village in Jahanabad Rural District, in the central district of Afghanistan's Hirmand County, Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

Latifi also said: "The traffic of trucks in the borders of Dogarun in Khorasan Razavi Province (northeast of Iran) and Mahirud in South Khorasan Province (east of Iran) to Afghanistan continues, and the news of a complete cessation of trade with this country is basically untrue."

Iran's Customs spokesman added: "Trade at the



Mahirud border has grown by 50 percent, and more than 500 trucks deliver their cargo to Afghan trucks on a daily basis."

He added: "At the Dogarun border, about 250 trucks are transporting their commercial cargo to Afghan trucks and traders, and the news of a complete cessation of trade with Afghanistan is rejected."

His comments came after Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Tuesday that trade with Afghanistan has fully stopped amid rising tensions in the neighboring country, adding that even the Afghan traders have stopped processing Iranian export cargoes destined for Afghanistan.

In the last month, the Taliban overran Afghan areas bordering five countries.

The Taliban say they are in control of 85 percent of Afghanistan after seizing key border crossings with Iran and Turkmenistan.

As of Friday, due to the developments in Afghanistan, the Milak border has been closed.

## Abu-Ali Sina Hospital, World's First Liver, Kidney Transplant Center

SHIRAZ (IP) - The father of liver transplant in Iran, Professor Ali Malek-Hosseini, believes Iran has made significant progress in performing various types of transplant surgeries and has a good position globally.

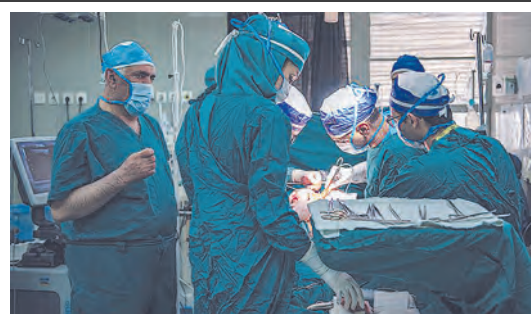
Dr. Malek-Hosseini said: "Shiraz Abu-Ali Sina Hospital is one of the largest transplant hospitals in Iran and even in the world; it has a liver, kidney, heart and pancreas transplant departments, and there have been more than 6,000 liver transplants so far."

He noted that the hospital is the first in the world due to organ transplant from brain death, and Iran ranks first in the world in liver and kidney transplant.

He said the hospital is one of the best medical centers globally in terms of patient survival after organ transplant. He also stated that people from countries in the region come to Abu-Ali Sina medical center for organ transplants, and this issue has led to an increase in the trend.

Right now, Abu-Ali Sina Hospital in Shiraz performs 638 liver transplants annually and ranks first globally. Previously, the United States had the highest liver transplant rate, with 561 transplants per year. Around 250-260 kidney transplants from brain death and 30 to 40 pancreas transplants are performed annually in Abu-Ali Sina Hospital.

Dr. Ali Malek-Hosseini performed the first liver transplant in Iran from a living person and has been introduced in the medical encyclopedia as the father of liver transplantation in Iran. In September 2020, he was one of the four scientists to receive the award of the Transplantation Society for his tremendous impact on the advancement of transplant knowledge.



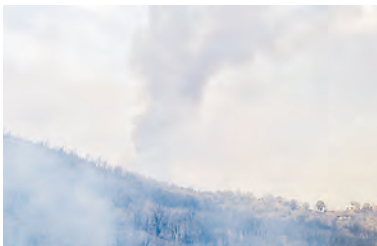


## Seven Dead as Wildfires Rage Across Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) - Wildfires fanned by blistering temperatures and tinder-dry conditions have killed at least seven people in Algeria, the interior minister said Tuesday, adding the fires had criminal origins.

Photographs posted on social media show huge walls of flame and billowing clouds of smoke towering over villages in the forested hills of the Kabylie region, east of the capital Algiers.

Algeria is the latest Mediterranean country to be hit by wildfires, after blazes hit Greece, Turkey and Cyprus.



## Myanmar Junta Leader Aims To Solidify Grip on Power

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The U.N. special envoy on Myanmar said on Tuesday the country's military leader appears determined to solidify his grip on power following a February coup and ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi's political party could soon be disbanded.

Christine Schraner Burgener cited military ruler Min Aung Hlaing's announcement this month that he was now prime minister in a newly formed caretaker government and also a formal annulment of the results of a November election, which was won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).



## Taliban Take Control of 65% of Afghanistan



KABUL (Dispatches) - Taliban insurgents tightened their grip on captured Afghan territory on Tuesday as civilians hid in their homes, and a European Union official said the militants now control 65% of the country after a string of gains as foreign forces pull out.

Pul-e-Khumri, capital of the northern province of Baghlan, fell to the Taliban on Tuesday evening, according to residents who reported Afghan security forces retreating towards the Kelagi desert, home to a large Afghan army base.

Pul-e-Khumri became the seventh regional capital to come under the control of the Taliban in about a week, though the White House said on Tuesday the United States did not see a Taliban takeover of the entire country as inevitable.

President Ashraf Ghani called on regional strongmen to support his government, while a U.N. official said advances made in human rights in the 20 years since the hardline Islamists were ousted from power were in danger of being erased.

In the national capital Kabul, Ghani's aides said he was seeking help from regional militias he has squabbled with for years to defend his government. He had also appealed to civilians to defend Afghanistan's "democratic fabric".

In the town of Aibak, capital of Samangan province on the main road between the northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul, Taliban fighters were consolidating their control, moving into government buildings, residents said.

Most government security forces appeared to have withdrawn.

"The only way is self-imposed house arrest or to find a way to leave for Kabul," said Sher Mohamed Abbas, a provincial tax officer, when asked about living conditions in Aibak.

"But then even Kabul is not a safe option anymore," said Abbas, the sole bread winner for a family of nine.

Abbas said the Taliban had arrived at his office and told workers to go home. He and other residents said they had neither seen nor heard fighting on Tuesday.

For years, the north was the most peaceful part of the country with an only minimal Taliban presence.

The militants' strategy appears to be to take the north, as well as the main border crossings in the north, west and south, and then close in on Kabul.

The Taliban, battling to defeat the U.S-backed government and reimpose strict Islamic law with peace talks at an impasse, swept into Aibak on Monday meeting little resistance.

Taliban forces now control 65% of Afghan territory, are threatening to take 11 provincial capitals and are trying to deprive Kabul of its traditional support from national forces in the north, a senior EU official said on Tuesday.

The government has withdrawn forces from hard-to-defend rural districts to focus on holding major population centers, while officials have appealed for pressure on neighboring Pakistan to stop Taliban reinforcements and supplies flowing over the porous border. Pakistan denies backing the Taliban.

## Bolsonaro Flexes Muscles With Military Parade

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro drew criticism Tuesday for presiding over a military parade outside the presidential palace, a show of strength as he fends off sinking popularity and a raft of investigations.

Smiling with military top brass at his side, the far-right leader stood atop the palace steps as a long convoy of tanks and armored vehicles filed through the seat of power in Brazil, where Bolsonaro trails in the polls for presidential elections next year.

Critics said the display was reminiscent of Brazil's 1964-1985 military dictatorship, for which Bolsonaro, a former army captain, is openly nostalgic.

"This is pathetic.... Our democracy has the means to defend itself from a coup-mongering outburst," said Senator Omar Aziz, chair of a Senate committee investigating the Bolsonaro government's widely criticized handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Bolsonaro, 66, is also facing investigations over his attacks on Brazil's electronic voting system, which he alleges -- without evidence -- is riddled with fraud.

The Supreme Court and Supreme Electoral Court have ordered him investigated for potential crimes in his unrelenting campaign against the system, which Brazil has used since 1996. The military parade came on the same day Congress debates a Bolsonaro-backed bill to overhaul the system.

The president wants "printable and auditable" paper ballots for every vote cast, in addition to the electronic system.

Opponents accuse him of setting the stage to claim widespread fraud if he loses the October 2022 election, following in the footsteps of his political idol, former US president Donald Trump.

Bolsonaro insisted there was no link between the military parade and the bill before Congress.

Officially, the event was for the armed forces to give the president an invitation to upcoming military exercises outside the capital.

However, it is the first time tanks have filed past the presidential palace, Congress and high court since the dictatorship era.



## Thai Police Fire Rubber Bullets, Tear Gas at Bangkok Protest

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at protesters in Bangkok Tuesday as hundreds rallied for democratic reform and against the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Demonstrators defied a ban on public gatherings as Thailand tries to quash its worst virus outbreak so far, with new cases hovering around the 20,000 mark daily.

The slow start to the coronavirus vaccination program in Thailand and economic pain from restrictions and business closures has heaped pressure on Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha's government.

Hundreds of protesters wove their way through Bangkok streets on motorbikes and in cars and by early evening there were clashes.

A police traffic booth was set ablaze and some demonstrators threw firecrackers and fireworks at police, who responded by firing water cannon, rubber bullets and tear gas.

Protesters defaced a logo of Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction -- a company with links to Public Health Minister Anutin Chamvirakul -- with pig's blood.

They also targeted the logo of King Power, a major duty free company, over its perceived support for the government.

"The authoritarian Prayut Chan-O-Cha government continues to seek, allocate, and distribute benefits for the ruling class, allowing people to get sick and die on their own fate," student activist Benja Apan told the rally.

Ahead of the protest, police warned demonstrators not to jeopardise public health by violating coronavirus restrictions.

Thailand's Civil Court on Tuesday ordered police to "exercise caution" when performing crowd control duties but dismissed a motion from human rights lawyers asking for a ban on rubber bullet use.

A youth-led democracy movement that kicked off in Thailand last year drew tens of thousands of people to rallies demanding the resignation of Prayut, the former army chief who came to power in a 2014 coup.

## Latvia Declares State of Emergency Over Belarus Migrant Influx

RIGA (Dispatches) - Latvia declared a state of emergency Tuesday at its Belarus border, authorising border guards, armed forces and police to use physical force to return migrants to the country from which they came. Latvia, like neighbouring Lithuania, has faced an influx of mostly Iraqi migrants in the past few months coming from Belarus.

Latvia and Lithuania's borders with Belarus are also the European Union's external border. Latvia has a nearly 175km (109-mile) border with Belarus. Normally only border guards can patrol the frontier.

The state of emergency will run from August 11 until November 10, the Baltic News Service said, and would also enable the Armed Forces and the state police to assist the Border Guard with the prevention of illegal immigration. The Baltic News Service, quoting Latvia's State Border Guard, said between August 6 and August 10, some 283 people were detained for crossing the border from Belarus, bringing the total for 2021 so far to 343 people.

The three Baltic countries, which all are members of the 27-nation EU, have accused the government of Belarus's authoritarian President Lukashenko of encouraging the migrant flow in retaliation for the EU sanctions against his country following the diversion of a passenger plane in May to arrest a dissident journalist aboard.

Tensions have been strained between Belarus and European nations since a disputed election on August 9 last year returned President Alexander Lukashenko

to power despite mass protests against his regime.

Two Belarusian sports coaches were stripped of their Tokyo Olympics accreditations last week over an alleged attempt to force a sprinter to fly home, an incident that drew international condemnation.

Poland, another EU member that borders Belarus, says it is also seeing a rising number of Iraqi and Afghan migrants trying to enter from Belarus in what a government official called part of Belarus's "hybrid war" against the EU.

The United States, Britain and Canada levied more sanctions against Belarus on Monday. Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya spoke at a rally on Monday in central Vilnius to mark one year since the disputed election in which she ran against Lukashenko. The rally was also attended by Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte.

"We will not stop," Tikhanovskaya said. "We will fight on so that thousands of people can return home from prison. We will fight on to free ourselves from the fear that has gripped our country." Tikhanovskaya decided to run after the candidacy of her husband, an opposition blogger, was blocked and he was arrested. She ran a popular campaign and claimed victory but fled to Lithuania in the days after the election, fearing for her safety after a violent crackdown by the authorities against mass protests against the Lukashenko regime.

Since then she has rallied Western support and recently met US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.



## Norway Gov't Faces Big Defeat In Sept. Election

OSLO (Dispatches) -

Norway's center-left opposition parties are expected to defeat the incumbent Conservative-led coalition government by a two-to-one margin in next month's election for parliament, a new opinion poll showed on Tuesday.

The Sept. 13 vote could thus end Prime Minister Erna Solberg's quest for a third consecutive term and instead give Labor Party leader Jonas Gahr Støre a chance to negotiate a power-sharing agreement with left-leaning groups.

Widely praised last year for a swift coronavirus lockdown, giving Norway one of Europe's lowest COVID-19 mortality rates, Solberg nevertheless faces a backlash over economic inequality and public sector reforms that have proven unpopular.

In April the prime minister was fined by police for breaking social distancing rules at her birthday gathering, further damaging her standing.

The Conservatives and smaller parties on the center-right look set to win 55 seats in the 169-member assembly, down from 88, while the center-left could grow to 114 from 81, the survey showed.

The Aug. 2-6 poll by the Kantar agency for independent TV2 comes just as the election campaign kicks off and confirms a downwards trend shown in earlier polls. Campaigning on a slogan that it is now the "common people's turn", Labor promises tax relief for low and middle income families, an end to privatization of public services, more money for hospitals and a tax hike on the top 20% of incomes.

Norway's Green Party is also set to boost its presence in parliament, as is the far-left Red, and both will seek to influence a Labor-led government.

Adding to the complexity, Centre leader Trygve Slagsvold Vedum has declared himself a candidate for prime minister, rivaling Støre, although his party now polls around 16%, lagging Labor's 23.5%.

A growing rural-urban divide, in which many voters objected to the reorganization of police, healthcare and municipalities, in many cases centralizing key functions, has been a boost for Vedum, who got just 10.3% in 2017.







**Farmanieh Apt (\$2400)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/pool, Saun  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
Fully Furn

**Shanon (adviser)**

**Pasdaran Villa (\$4000)**  
1000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
S, J, & pkg  
green garden  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

**Jordan (\$1300)** 140sq.m, 2bdrs, pkg, balcony, & F.F  
**Darrous (\$2000)** 200sq.m, 3bdrs, pkg, balcony, & F.F  
**Elahieh (\$2500)** 250sq.m, 4bdrs, pkg, balcony, & F.F

**Vanak (\$800)** 130sq.m, 2bdrs, F.F

**Zaferanieh (\$1500)**  
140sq.m, 2bdrs, S/p, S, J  
green yard, balcony, & F.F

Cell: +989121907875  
Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com  
Tel : 88510081  
Fax : 88506474

**Jordan Villa (\$4000)**  
200sq.m, 6bdrs, green yard  
outdoor pool, pkg lots, F.F



**IRAN NEWS**  
**ADVERTISING**  
44253401

**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**  
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate  
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865



**IRAN NEWS**  
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS  
**ADVERTISING**

TEL: 44253448-50  
FAX: 44253234  
ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM



## Boeing Delivers 28 Airplanes in July; 787s Still Halted

SEATTLE (Dispatches) - Boeing Co said on Tuesday it handed over 28 airplanes to buyers in July as revived domestic travel fuels 737 MAX deliveries, but the U.S. planemaker's 787 remained in inventory for a fourth month due to defects.

The closely watched monthly orders and deliveries snapshot comes as Boeing bids to recoup billions of dollars in lost sales from the coronavirus pandemic, and move beyond the safety

scandal caused by two fatal 737 MAX crashes.

Of the aircraft Boeing delivered to airlines and other buyers in July, 22 were 737 MAX single-aisle jets, one was a P-8 maritime patrol aircraft for the U.S. Navy, and the remaining five were widebodies. The widebodies included one KC-46 tanker to the U.S. Air Force and four freighters.



## S. Korea Showing Signs of Economic Decoupling With China

SEOUL (Dispatches) - The ongoing confrontation between Washington and Beijing over various issues is affecting South Korea's long-time economic relations with China with analysts saying Seoul is considering rolling back its reliance on Beijing in terms of export volume.

Given their geopolitical proximity, and China accounting for around a quarter of Korea's annual exports in 2019, Seoul and Beijing have been developing deep trade and investment ties in recent decades. However, Korea is showing signs of economic decoupling from China, as Asia's fourth-largest economy is expected to reduce its export reliance on the long-time trade partner in a post-coronavirus world, analysts said Tuesday.

"Korea's exports have entered a super-cycle, but it is showing a different pattern in that this is driven by developed nations — such as the U.S. — unlike ones in the past when China drove Korea's export super-cycles," Park Sang-hyun, an economist at a securities firm, said. This means China's economic doldrums or financial market instability will have a limited impact on the Korean economy, he added.

Even if the South Korean economy remains somewhat dependent on exports to China, chances are this will not be as strong as before, as the U.S. will continue to tighten its grip on global supply chains and Seoul is expected to expand the portion of its exports to Western countries, according to park.

Data released by Hi Investment & Securities showed that the portion of Korea's exports to the United States and European Union countries reached 21.2 percent on average between 2010 and 2017.

But the figure has begun increasing at a rapid pace due to the pandemic — it went up by 3.2 percentage points to 24.4 percent between January 2020 and July 2021. Analysts claim the bilateral "economic decoupling" will continue to weaken due to the global economic paradigm shift induced by the pandemic.

New large-cap Korean companies have also arisen whose Chinese reliance is not as huge as firms in the KOSPI's top-ten category a decade ago.

In 2010, manufacturing players such as POSCO, Hyundai Motor and Hyundai Mobis were among the nation's top-five companies by market capitalization; but now online platform giants including Naver and Kakao are rapidly expanding their presence and replaced the manufacturing firms on the list in 2021.

"Platform or secondary battery companies have risen to the list of KOSPI's top-ten companies, and this can be interpreted as a sign of Korean firms' reduced reliance on China," the analyst said. "This implies that the Korean economy and local stock markets will be less exposed to any China risks than before."

## Turkey Reaches the Highest Point In the Misery Index



ANKARA (Dispatches) - In light of economic uncertainty and rising unemployment and inflation, Turkey has reached the top of the Global Misery Index, reaching the highest point of the index in recent years with a media of 32.2 points.

Furthermore, Turkey has increased in the misery index, which was calculated with the aim of showing the economic situation of the average citizen. The report prepared by the parliamentary group of the Republican People's Party indicated that Turkey has reached the highest point in the last few years in the misery index with a media of 32.2 points. It is expected to increase further in the next period.

According to the Sozju newspaper, the report contained that "the cost of living is rising in uncontrollable way and the government and central bank are doing nothing.

The misery index, which is the sum of unemployment and inflation (13.2% + 18.95%), has reached its highest point in recent years, with a media of 32.2 points.

While the index was 30.73 points last month. In other words, inflation and the cost of living continue to rise in uncontrolled manner.

The inflation rate rose to 1.8 percent in July's quest year. This is the highest rate of increase in consumer prices in July in the past 20 years. The annual inflation rate reached 18.95%. This rate is the highest annual inflation rate of the past 27 months.

According to the Labor Force Survey, which puts in strong doubt that the Statistical Authority reflects the truth, the employment rate has decreased by 216,000 people, the number of unemployed has decreased by 265,000 people, while the number of citizens aged 15 and over in su increased by 84,000 in May from the previous month. The workforce decreased by 481,000 from the previous month. Of the 216,000 people who lost their jobs, 265,000 people who looked for work in the previous month and 84,000 people were removed from the job market instead of finding work for them.

## ASEAN Banks' Asset Risks Rise

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Asset risks for banks will rise in most parts of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and India as the region battles new waves of coronavirus infections amid low vaccination rates, according to a report by Moody's Investors Service.

However, continued policy support and strong loss-absorbing buffers mitigate the negative impact for banks in ASEAN and India, coronavirus outbreaks triggering strict containment steps will impede economic recovery and erode borrowers' debt repayment capacity, increasing their asset risks, said the report.

It further said that banks' strong loss-absorbing buffers, policy support and the virus impact focused on a few segments will keep their credit strength intact.

"Banks in Thailand (Baa1 stable), the Philippines (Baa2 stable), and Indonesia (Baa2 stable) are particularly vulnerable as their economies struggle with elevated numbers of virus cases, spiking uncertainties regarding their economies reopening. Yet, policy support for borrowers and the concentration of the impact on a few economic segments will limit the deterioration in banks' overall asset quality," said Rebecca Tan, a Moody's Vice President and Senior Analyst.

For India (Baa3 negative), Moody's projects the economy will return to growth in the fiscal year ending March 2022 (fiscal 2021), but the severe second coronavirus outbreak will delay improvements in asset quality.

By contrast, the resumption of global economic activity will boost trade growth in Vietnam (Ba3 positive), Malaysia (A3 stable) and Singapore (Aaa stable). This will help offset domestic economic disruptions from the pandemic, although slow deployment of vaccines is a risk for Vietnam, the report noted.

Continued policy support for borrowers from governments and central banks will prevent sharp increases in defaults on bank loans. And the financial impact of a prolonged pandemic is concentrated on a few economic segments, which will limit the deterioration in banks' overall asset quality.

More fundamentally, various regulatory measures implemented in the past decade to strengthen banks' balance sheets have led banks to face the pandemic on a strong footing. Since the onset of the pandemic, most banks in the region have built sufficient loan loss buffers to cover likely increases in nonperforming loans, it added.

## Lebanese Queue for Cooking Gas Amid Economic Crisis

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanese lined up in long queues Tuesday to stock up on cooking gas following warnings of imminent shortages, as an economic crisis eats away at supplies of basic imports.

Lebanon, grappling with an economic crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the planet's worse since the mid-19th century, has been hit in recent months by a wave of shortages of basic items from medicine to fuel.

Liquefied petroleum gas, usually sold in canisters and used widely in homes and businesses for cooking and heating, had been readily available in the market.

But importers warned it would soon join the list of scarce goods, prompting a country-wide panic.

"Our current stock will last one week," said Farid Zeynoun, who heads a syndicate of petroleum gas distributors. "After which, if no solution is found, gas used in homes will be sold on the black market."

Zeynoun blamed the crisis on a delay by the central bank in opening credit lines to fund imports.

Gas is subsidized by the government with a set price, but dealers warn that if official supplies run dry, prices could shoot up by more than a third. Foreign currency reserves are rapidly depleting, forcing the country to scale-down imports to shore up the little money it has left. Zeynoun said that a vessel carrying 5,000 tons of liquefied petroleum docked in Lebanese waters 17 days ago, but is awaiting approval by the authorities to unload its cargo.

The official National News Agency reported "unprecedented" demand for gas in the northern Akkar district. "Importing companies have stopped meeting our gas needs," said Walid al-Hayek, the head of a gas distribution company, according to NNA.

## Japan's July Economy Sentiment Up

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Business sentiment among workers with jobs sensitive to economic trends in Japan edged up in July for the second straight month of increase after the government's coronavirus state of emergency on 10 prefectures was mostly lifted, official data showed Tuesday.

The diffusion index of confidence in their current conditions compared with three months earlier among "economy watchers," such as taxi drivers and restaurant staff, rose 0.8 point from

June to 48.4, according to the Cabinet Office.

A reading below 50 indicates that more respondents reported worsening conditions than improving ones. The office polled 2,050 workers from July 25 to 31, of whom 1,841, or 89.8 percent, responded.

A resurgence in COVID-19 infections caused by the highly contagious delta variant of the virus led to the fourth virus emergency for Tokyo in mid-July, three weeks after the third emergency was lifted for the capital.

Under the virus emergency, people were requested to stay home, and restaurants and bars were asked to stop serving alcohol.

In July, "the areas under the full-scale virus emergency were limited, and a (less strict) quasi-state of emergency was lifted in some other areas," which led to some improvement in economic activities, a government official told reporters.

The official also said the Tokyo Olympics, which opened on July 23, helped increase spending on items consumed at home, while easing of emergency measures benefited the accommodation sector.

A worker at an amusement park in northeastern Japan was quoted as saying that relatively favorable weather brought many guests during the four-day weekend from July 22, and the park's monthly business performance "recovered to a pre-pandemic level."

A worker at a restaurant in western Japan voiced expectations that business conditions would become more severe until progress in the government's vaccine program reduces the number of COVID-19 cases.

In addition to Tokyo and Okinawa, emergency measures were reinstated for some prefectures in early August, clouding the economic outlook.

The diffusion index gauging business sentiment for the coming months fell 4.0 points from the previous month to 48.4, down for the first time in three months.

## U.S. Small Business Optimism Drops

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Small business owners across the United States grew less confident in the economic recovery in July as labor shortages remained an issue, according to a survey released on Tuesday.

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) Optimism Index fell 2.8 points to a reading of 99.7 in July, almost erasing all of June's gain. Six of the 10 index components declined, three improved and one was left unchanged.

"Small business owners are losing confidence in the strength of the economy and expect a slowdown in job creation," Bill Dunkelberg, the NFIB's chief economist, said in a statement.

While the economy is projected to expand this year at its fastest pace since the 1980s, there are signs it may be cooling. Supply chain bottlenecks continue to dent manufacturing growth, and consumer sentiment has declined recently amid concerns about inflation. A net 27% of businesses plan to create new jobs in the next three months, down one point from the month prior, the NFIB survey showed.

Last week, the trade group said in its monthly jobs report that a record high 49% of small business owners reported unfilled job openings in July on a seasonally adjusted basis.



The quality of labor ranked as businesses' "single most important problem," with 26% of respondents selecting it among 10 issues, near the survey high of 27%, the NFIB said in its latest optimism survey.

"As owners look for qualified workers, they are also reporting that supply chain disruptions are having an impact on their businesses," Dunkelberg said. "Ultimately, owners could sell more if they could acquire more supplies and inventories from their supply chains."

Some 57% of respondents said they had few or no qualified applicants for open jobs in July, up one point from June.

Businesses in the NFIB survey also flagged inflation as a worry, with 44% planning to increase prices in the next three months, which was unchanged from June's record high reading.



## Iran Role in Region Significant

LONDON (IRNA) - Iran's Embassy in Britain here on Tuesday reacting to a talk between the U.S. and Saudi foreign ministers emphasized that Tehran's role in regional developments is quite significant, reiterating: Iran cannot be the subject of others' negotiations.

"Everyone should realize that Iran cannot be the subject of

others' negotiations, as it has been proved that such methods are useless and defeated," wrote the Iranian Embassy in a tweet.

The Iranian Embassy added in the message: On the contrary, Iran can be a strong side of any negotiation, on condition that its power as a pillar of the region's security will be recognized and its interests will be duly respected.



## U.S. Health Care System Ranks Last Among 11 Wealthy Countries



LONDON (Dispatches) - Despite spending more on health care than any other country in the world, the U.S. health care system lags far behind many other high-income nations recently analyzed.

A new report from the Commonwealth Fund found that among 11 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the U.S. ranks last. "We ranked last when it comes to care, affordability, administrative inefficiency, equity, and health care outcomes," David Blumenthal, president of the Commonwealth Fund, said on a press call. "In no other country does income inequality so profoundly limit access to care as it does here."

The countries ranking ahead of the U.S. were Norway, the Netherlands, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, France, Switzerland, and Canada. (These countries, chosen due to existing partnerships with the Commonwealth Fund, have been featured in this annual report since 2004.)

"Other countries have much better primary care than we do in the United States," Blumenthal said. "They invest more in primary care and social services than we do, and they have health systems that are more equitable."

The main categories used to determine the rankings were access to care, care process, administrative efficiency, equity, and health care outcomes. The U.S. ranked last in every category except for care process.

The American health care system is no stranger to criticism.

Health care spending in the U.S. has grown rapidly since 1980, significantly quicker than in other nations. In 2019, national health expenditures increased to \$3.8 trillion, which accounted for 17.7% of gross domestic product (GDP).

"One might think that such a high level of spending would enable the U.S. to achieve the best-performing health care system," Eric Snyder, senior vice president for policy and research at the Commonwealth Fund, said. "Our results suggest that isn't true."

Care process was the only category in which the U.S. excelled, which Snyder attributed to provisions in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). These include services like counseling for diet, tobacco, and alcohol; preventative services including vaccinations and mammograms for older adults; documentation of patients' preferences for care; and the availability of technology for patients to use to communicate with their providers.

"Overall, of our \$4 trillion in U.S. health expenditures, we spend less than 3% on public health, 5% on preventative services, and 6-7% on primary care," Dr. Anand Parekh, chief medical advisor at the Bipartisan Policy Center, told Yahoo Finance. "If we really want to improve population health, we must invest in these three areas."

One particular area in which the U.S. struggles compared to other countries is how doctors have trouble getting medication or treatment for their patients due to restrictions in insurance coverage. "Compared to most of the other countries, larger percentages of adults in the U.S. say they spend a lot of time on paperwork related to medical bills," the report stated.

Another unfortunate category where the U.S. ranks last is health care outcomes. Among the 11 countries, the U.S. has the highest infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, lowest life expectancy, and highest rate of avoidable mortality.

Dr. Parekh agreed that the lack of universal health care and the costliness of the current system are primary factors for America's relative failings.

"We've known for some time that the combination of high costs of care, lack of access to timely and high-value care, uneven quality of care, and disparities in health care are holding us back in achieving a high-functioning health care system," he told Yahoo Finance. "The combination of high prices of medical services as well as the continued existence of fee-for-service payment yields high health care costs." This was only exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, Parekh argued, after record job losses showed how dependent the country is on employer-sponsored health coverage. According to Health and Human Services (HHS), 30 million U.S. residents lacked health insurance in the first half of 2020.

According to the report, there are four "clear opportunities" for solutions: Providing universal coverage and removing cost barriers (given that many Americans — particularly low-income people — cannot afford needed care at times); investing in primary care systems to ensure services are equitably available across all communities; reducing the administrative burdens on patients and providers; and investing in social services to increase equitable access to things like nutrition, education, and housing, which the report argued would lessen the demands placed on the health care system.

"The lack of universal primary care and a well-financed primary care system in the country has made it more difficult to prevent and manage chronic conditions during the pandemic as well as counter vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccine uptake," he said. "Ultimately, where we spend our resources reflect our priorities, and our priorities reflect our values. The question for us is: How healthy of a country do we want to be?"

## Iran Ready to Export Laboratory Engineering Services

TEHRAN (MNA) - Managing Director of Iran's Technical and Soil Mechanics Lab Company (TSML) has said his company is ready for the exports of engineering-related laboratory services to foreign markets especially neighboring countries, IRIB reported on Wednesday.

"In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Technical and Soil Mechanics Lab Company is ready to enter new international markets to provide technical and engineering services," Majid Kianpour said.

Kianpour pointed out that his company's motto for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) is "entering new markets and exporting technical and engineering services", adding: "Since the beginning of this year, we have been taking new measures to enter international markets, especially in neighboring countries and the region, and the efforts are increasing in this regard."

"Plans have been carried out for presence in the countries of the region, especially Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, UAE, Armenia, Qatar, and Oman, in cooperation with the joint chambers of commerce with these countries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," he explained.

Some proposals have also been prepared for cooperation with some European countries, he stated.

He noted that currently, TSML's specialized services are exported to several neighboring countries through Iranian contractors that are active in international projects.

"Providing services and studies in Garmsar-Inchah Borun and Khaf-Herat railway projects, the Friendship Dam, Shah Arous Dam, and several other important projects are among the cases that have been done in partnership with domestic and foreign contractors that have had experience in international markets," Kianpour said.

## Europeans Urged to Find Solution for Afghanistan

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Director General of Department of South Asian Affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry informed of his talks with European envoys and charge d'affaires residing in Tehran to find a solution for Afghan crisis.

In a tweet on Wed., Seyed Rasoul Mousavi wrote, "If Europe wants to do something for achieving peace in Afghanistan, it must act today, because, it will be too late tomorrow."

During the meeting with European ambassadors in Tehran, Mousavi called on them to take urgent measure in line with establishing peace in Afghanistan.

If Europe wants to do something for establishment of peace in Afghanistan, it must act today, for, tomorrow it will be too late, he reiterated. Effective steps must be taken for peace in Afghanistan before collapse of all structures, Director General of Department of South Asian Affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry added.

## New Child Safety Features for Google, YouTube

WASHINGTON (Dispatches)

- Google on Tuesday unveiled a series of online safety measures for children including a private setting for videos uploaded by teens and safeguard for ads shown to users under 18.

The new features, which come amid heightened concerns about online child exploitation and safety at a time of growing internet usage during the global pandemic, affect Google's YouTube video platform as well its online services such as search and Google Assistant.

"As kids and teens spend more time online, parents, educators, child safety and privacy experts, and policy makers are rightly concerned about how to keep them safe," said Google product and user experience director Mindy Brooks.

"We engage with these groups regularly, and share these concerns."

Google's "safe search" -- which excludes sensitive or mature content -- will be the default setting for users under 18, which up to now had been the case only for under-13 users.

On the massively popular YouTube platform, content from 13- to 17-year-olds will be private by default, the tech giant said.



"With private uploads, content can only be seen by the user and whomever they choose," said a blog post by James Beser, head of product management for YouTube Kids and Family.

"We want to help younger users make informed decisions about their online footprint and digital privacy... If the user would like to make their content

public, they can change the default upload visibility setting and we'll provide reminders indicating who can see their video."

Google will also make it easier for families to request removal of a child's photos from image search requests.

"Of course, removing an image from search doesn't remove it from the web, but we believe this change will help give young people more control of their images online," Brooks said.

In another safety move, Google will turn off location history for all users under 18 globally, without an option to turn it back on. This is already in place for those under 13.

Google will also make changes in how it shows ads to minors, blocking any "age-sensitive" categories and banning targeting based on the age, gender or interests of people under 18.

## Failure to...

FROM PAGE 1

Israel carried out its first air raids on Lebanese soil in years on August 5, prompting Hezbollah to fire rockets back at Israel the following day.

Hezbollah announced in a statement that its units hit open fields near Israeli positions at 11:15 a.m. local time (0815 GMT) on August 6, using dozens of 122mm-caliber rockets.

Al-Mayadeen television news network said at least 20 rockets had been fired at Israel's military positions. Al-Manar TV said a number of the rockets had targeted the Douf military base.

Israeli media said residents of settlements in the north of the occupied territories had been asked to stay in homes.

The senior Hezbollah official pointed out that the United States cannot be trusted as an honest broker, and the only way to confront the Israeli occupation lies in resistance and struggle.

Following the retaliatory rocket attack, Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett and the regime's minister of military affairs Benny Gantz held an emergency session amid reports of a massive number of sorties conducted by Israeli warplanes over southern Lebanon.

On Saturday, Hezbollah's Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the Lebanese resistance movement does not pursue war, but is not afraid of one either since it is certain about its chances of victory.

## President Presents List...

FROM PAGE 1

***Here is the full list of Raisi's proposed cabinet:***

\*Agriculture Ministry: Javad Sadatinejad  
 \*Economy and Finance Ministry: Ehsan Khandouzi  
 \*Defense Ministry: Mohammad-Reza Ashtiani  
 \*Education Ministry: Hossein Baghgoli  
 \*Energy Ministry: Ali Akbar Mehrabian  
 \*Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Ministry: Ezzatollah Zarqami  
 \*Foreign Ministry: Hossein Amir Abdollahian  
 \*Health Ministry: Bahram Einollahi  
 \*Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry: Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili  
 \*Justice Ministry: Amin Hossein Rahimi  
 \*Intelligence Ministry: Esmaili Khatib  
 \*Science, Research and Technology Ministry: Mohammad-Ali Zolfigol  
 \*Sports and Youth Ministry: Hamidreza Sajjadi  
 \*Roads and Urban Development Ministry: Rostam Qassemi  
 Interior Ministry: Ahmad Vahidi

Labour and Social Welfare Ministry: Hojjat Abdolmaleki  
 Petrochemical Ministry: Javad Owji  
 Communications and Information Technology Ministry: Issa Zarepour

Industry, Mine and Trade Ministry: Reza Fatemi-Amin  
 During the last week, Raisi also appointed Mohammad Mokhber as First Vice President and Gholam-Hossein Esmaili as his Chief of Staff.

## Iran Decided to...

FROM PAGE 1

Mr Sanjrani thanked the Iranian president for announcing the reopening of new trade corridors and termed the decision a good gesture.

Earlier, Mr Sanjrani was received by tribal elders, political figures and government officials on his arrival at Dalbandin airport.

The Senate chairman laid down the foundation-stone of 103-kilometre-long Nokkundi-Mashkel road and inaugurated the Ghat Water Supply Scheme before addressing the public gathering. Talking about development projects, Mr Sanjrani said that roads would be constructed between Dalbandin and Ziarat Balanosh. Washuk would also be connected with Gwadar a road.

"At the moment development projects worth Rs20 billion are being undertaken in Chagai and these projects would provide a lot of job opportunities to the masses in near future," he said.

## U.S. Seizes...

FROM PAGE 1

Nahidian said he has received other tile shipments throughout the years without incident, including one shipment that arrived eight months ago. He has led the mosque for nearly three decades.

The Biden administration is locked in a standoff over the US return to a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, showing an aversion to remove the most draconian sanctions which its predecessor imposed on the Islamic Republic. President Joe Biden has admitted that Washington was wrong to abandon the nuclear agreement, but he is showing an urge to retain some aspects of the sanctions as leverage to pressure Iran.

Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said whatever one's views are of the Iranian sanctions, it makes no sense to enforce the rules on a benign piece of religious art.

"We believe the government should have common sense," he told the Associated Press.

At Tuesday's news conference, speakers suggested that anti-Islam sentiment may have also played a role in the confiscation.

## Iran Fails...

FROM PAGE 1

The treasury report shows that the performance of resources and budget expenditures in the first two months of this year was slightly more than 97,000 billion Tomans, which is nearly 40,000 billion tomans, more than 40 percent of the figure provided by the Treasury Battalion.

Last year, for the second year in a row, one-third of the government's budget came from borrowing, and this is expected to continue this year.

The IMF says Iran's net debt has more than doubled over the past two years.



## New Zealand Cricket Great Cairns on Life Support

WELLINGTON (AFP) - Former New Zealand cricket star Chris Cairns was on life support in Australia following a serious cardiac problem, the Newshub website reported Tuesday. Cairns, one of New Zealand's all-time greats, suffered an aortic dissection -- a tear in the body's main artery -- last week in Canberra and is understood to have had several surgeries since, Newshub said. However, the former Black Caps skipper "has not responded to treatment as hoped", Newshub said, adding that the 51-year-old "will be transferred to a specialist hospital in Sydney".

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

### Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

### Public Relations Tel:

(+98)(21) 44253450

Editorial Board: 44253449

### Public Relations Fax:

(+98)(21) 44253395

### Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234

### Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

### E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

### ISSN 1024-6053

P.O. Box: 15875-8551

Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz

### Distributed by:

Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute

Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

## Southampton Bolster Attack With Armstrong

LONDON (Dispatches) - Southampton completed the signing of striker Adam Armstrong from Blackburn on a four-year deal for a reported £15 million on Tuesday. Armstrong's arrival helps fill the void left by the departure of last season's top goalscorer Danny Ings to Aston Villa earlier this month. "It's unbelievable to be here - such a massive club with a great fanbase and it's just something that I'm really looking forward to," said the 24-year-old, who scored 28 goals in the Championship last season.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

THURSDAY AUGUST 12, 2021

# Opelka Rallies Past Kyrgios At ATP Toronto Event

TORONTO (Dispatches) - A ruling from the chair rattled Nick Kyrgios, sparking the Australian's 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 first-round loss to Reilly Opelka at the ATP Toronto Masters. Kyrgios came undone after he protested that his American opponent illegally touched the net with his foot late in the second set. When the umpire failed to act on his complaint the number 80 lost concentration.

Despite standing two points from victory in the eighth game of the set, Kyrgios slowly came undone as the towering 2.11-metre Opelka turned the tide in a comeback effort in two hours.

Kyrgios is currently saddled with his lowest standing since he stood 144th at the start of Wimbledon seven years ago.

The Australian, who has played a limited schedule during the Covid-19 pandemic, was unable to focus on his game, constantly chattering angrily to his coaching box of two.

Opelka finished with 22 aces while Kyrgios struck 16; the Aussie saved eight of nine break chances while earning just two on his opponent's serve. Opelka now faces 14th seed Grigor Dimitrov.

Fabio Fognini needed all of his skills to survive into the second round as the Italian showman beat Jan-Lennard Struff 6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 6-4.

An exhausted Fognini tossed a racquet over his shoulder into the nearby crowd after his effort, lasting almost two and a half hours, against the 46th-ranked German.

Along the way, the unseeded Italian was seen by both the doctor and a physio in the second set before drawing a warning for time wasting as he went off court after levelling at a set apiece.

Fognini trailed 3-1 in the final set, but fought back with a break for 4-4 after Struff saved five break points but could not manage on a sixth. A double-fault from the German two games later gave Fognini a match point, which he converted without hesitation.

Fognini finished with 26 winners while between them the pair committed nearly 90 unforced errors. Out of a cumulative total of 25 break points, only nine were converted.

## Italy's Citizenship Law Back in Focus After Olympics Wins

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy's enthusiasm over its Olympics success, driven in part by multicultural athletes, has once again reignited debate over its citizenship law and the bureaucratic hurdles faced by thousands of young people.

The debate comes on the heels of Italy's best performance in history at the Olympic Games, with 40 gold medals from a diverse band of athletes from a variety of backgrounds, including the country's new star, Texas-born sprinter Lamont Marcell Jacobs.

The debate was sparked anew after the head of Italy's National Olympic Committee, Giovanni Malago, complained of the bureaucratic headaches confronting Italian-born athletes who want to compete for their country, but lack citizenship. Under its current path to citizenship, Italy is an outlier in Europe, providing rights based on blood ties rather than based on where children are born - an idea known as "ius soli", or "right of the soil".

Children born in Italy to foreign parents must await their 18th birthdays before applying for citizenship, beginning an arduous process that can take four years, one that Malago described as "a Dante-esque circle".

After Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese said Malago's criticism was valid, far-right leader Matteo Salvini, head of the populist Lega party, retorted that the minister would be better served controlling the countries' borders than rekindling "ius soli". In Italy, the far-right has linked the debate over citizenship with the ongoing migrant crisis, which this year has seen 31,777 migrants land on the country's coasts, more than double that in the same period in 2020, according to interior ministry figures. "I think the important thing is that for these kids we have to think of social inclusion," Lamorgese told La Stampa daily on Tuesday, noting that the issue went beyond Italy's young athletes.

"They have to feel an integral part of society," she said. There are various paths to citizenship in Italy -- Jacobs' citizenship was accorded through his Italian mother despite being born in the United States to an American father -- but that involving children of two foreign-born parents is the most complicated. Case in point is 17-year-old pole vaulter Great Nnachi, who was born in Turin to Nigerian parents, and is already a champion. Having broken records throughout her teens, she most recently won a junior title with her personal best of 4.01 metres in February.

But her records are not recognised by the state, as she is not technically Italian, and she cannot compete for Italy in international competitions.

"Despite being a full-fledged Italian, I can't represent my country in sports," Nnachi told La Stampa Tuesday. "I'm an Italian champion but I can't demonstrate it outside the border."



Harris will next play second seed and defending champion Rafael Nadal in a rematch of last week's Washington third-round match won by the South African.

Kazakh Alexander Bublik defeated British number one Dan Evans and will face top seed Daniil Medvedev.

Australians John Millman and James Duckworth also advanced. Duckworth's opponent Taylor Fritz, beaten 7-6 (7/2), 6-3, needed to have his blood pressure and heart rate checked mid-match.

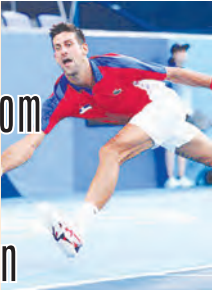
"Guys, I'm fine. It's one of the weirdest things that ever happened to me. My heart started to go crazy for no reason," the American posted on social media. "I just kept playing because it was so strange I thought I could go back to normal."

Olympic medallist Marin Cilic booked a second-round spot against sixth seed Casper Ruud with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Albert Ramos-Vinolas.

The Croatian, who combined at the Tokyo Games with compatriot Ivan Dodig to win the silver medal in an historic all-countryman final against Nikola Mektic and Mate Pavic, will serve as the summer's first hardcourt opponent for Norway's Ruud.

Ruud won their only prior encounter on clay in Rome last season. Halle winner Ugo Humbert of France defeated Italy's Lorenzo Sonego 6-3, 6-4.

## Djokovic Withdraws From Western and Southern Open



LONDON (Dispatches) - World number one Novak Djokovic withdrew on Monday from this month's Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati, saying he needed more time to recuperate from a season in which he won three Grand Slam tournaments and competed at the Tokyo Olympics.

"I'm taking a bit longer to recover after quite a physically taxing journey from Australian Open up to Tokyo," he wrote on Twitter.

"Sadly, this means I won't be ready to compete in Cincinnati this year so I'll be turning my focus to the U.S. Open and spending more time with my family.

"Can't wait to see you in New York soon!"

Djokovic, a 20-time Grand Slam champion, is a two-time champion at the Masters 1000 hardcourt event played at the Lindner Family Tennis Center in Ohio.

Djokovic had won all three of the Grand Slam tournaments he entered this year and had sought to be the first man to win all four and an Olympic gold in a calendar year.

But those plans were dashed when he lost to eventual gold medallist Alexander Zverev of Germany in the Olympic semi-final and then to Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta in the bronze medal match.

The Western & Southern Open runs from Aug. 14 to Aug. 22.



## Robertson Suffers Ankle Ligament Damage

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool will be without Andy Robertson for the opening weeks of the Premier League season, but manager Jurgen Klopp believes the Scotland captain "got lucky" after initial fears his ankle injury could have been much worse.

Robertson had to be helped off the pitch in Sunday's friendly against Athletic Bilbao after his ankle twisted as he blocked a cross.

"I think we got lucky with Andy, it could have been much worse," said Klopp.

## Messi Gets Hero's Welcome In France

LE BOURGET (Dispatches) - Six-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi received a hero's welcome after flying to France on Tuesday to join Paris Saint Germain (PSG) following his shock departure from Barcelona.

The agreement to sign the 34-year-old Argentine is a major coup for wealthy PSG, who will add one of the best soccer players of all time to an already formidable front line that includes Brazil's Neymar and young Frenchman Kylian Mbappe.

Wearing a T-shirt that read "This is Paris," Messi beamed and waved at scores of fans who had come to greet him at Le Bourget airport on the outskirts of the French capital after his flight from Barcelona.

Chanting "Messi, Messi, Messi," the fans cheered and let off firecrackers. "It's going to be mad. After all, it's a legend who is arriving," said Florent Chauveau, a PSG fan who has been back and forth to the airport every day since Sunday in the hope of seeing Messi arrive.

Messi gave no details of the deal, which was reached days after Barcelona said it could not afford to keep the midfielder because of Spain's La Liga's fair play rules.

But his father, speaking to reporters at Barcelona's airport, confirmed reports by French newspaper L'Equipe and Spanish newspaper Mundo Deportivo that Messi had reached an agreement with PSG, which is owned by Qatar Sports Investment.

L'Equipe said the deal would be for two years. It also said Messi would have medical tests on Tuesday, and that a news conference to mark his arrival was likely on Wednesday.

PSG did not comment on the reports but released a short video showing scenes of Paris, a plane landing and a close-up of someone putting pen to paper. In the background, upbeat music can heard and the words "new diamond in Paris" and "mercato update" appear.



## U.S. Ratings for Tokyo Olympics Plunge To Half of 2012 Games

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - U.S. viewership for the Summer Olympics in Tokyo, a competition clouded by the COVID-19 pandemic, dropped to about half the audience for the London Games in 2012, according to data released by Comcast Corp's NBCUniversal on Monday.

The 17-day event averaged 15.5 million primetime viewers on the NBC broadcast network and digital platforms including the Peacock streaming service, the company said in a statement. That represented the smallest audience for the Summer Games since NBC began broadcasting them in 1988.

The total slumped below the 31.1 million viewers who watched the Summer Olympics in London via TV and online outlets, and 26.7 million who tuned in for the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro, an NBC spokesman said.

Comparisons with previous Olympic Games are imperfect given the different times zones, the pandemic and fewer streaming options in the past. The Tokyo events, delayed a year due to the global health crisis, were held without spectators and offered less of the usual spectacle.

Executives at NBCUniversal have said they expect to turn a profit despite the ratings declines. The competitions still pulled in the biggest audiences on television when they aired, making them attractive showcases for advertisers.

"There is nothing more powerful in media than the 17 straight days of Olympics dominance," NBC Sports Chairman Pete Bevacqua said in a statement. "Despite being thrown a series of curveballs over the last 18 months, the power of the Olympics delivered to audiences across the various platforms of NBCU has proven itself unequalled."

The company said viewers streamed nearly 6 billion minutes of Tokyo Olympics programming, a record for an Olympics, across NBC's digital and social media platforms, the company said. NBCUniversal aired the Games across two broadcast networks, six cable networks, and multiple digital platforms including Peacock. That left some viewers confused and struggling to find the events they wanted to watch.

