

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 124,256 With 181 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

# IRAN NEWS

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh Has Underlined That the Islamic Republic of Iran Will Not Tolerate the Illegitimate Presence of the Zionist Regime Near Iranian Borderlines

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## Iran, Venezuela to Sign 20-Year Cooperation Accord

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran will sign a 20-year cooperation accord with Venezuela when President Nicolas Maduro visits Tehran "in the next few months".

In a joint press conference with his Venezuelan counterpart Felix Plasencia in Tehran on Monday, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian announced the news and added that a joint economic cooperation commission, which will be formed in Iran's capital before the end of the year which, will finalize the details of the agreement.

"All of this confirms that relations between the two countries are on the rise," Amirabdollahian said, adding that some of the agreements made earlier on cooperation on a wide range of issues, including energy, are currently being implemented.

During the joint press conference, the Iranian foreign minister expressed full support for the people of Venezuela and President Nicholas Maduro, and said U.S. policies on Venezuela are "unconstructive".

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## Tehran Blasts Washington For Weaponizing Dollar



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the United States' extraterrestrial sanctions proved to everyone, including Europeans, that it has weaponized dollar as a mass destruction weapon.

Speaking in a press conference on Monday, Khatibzadeh said that the dollar has been turned into a military weapon in the international financial and monetary system against all, victimizing all geographical regions and monetary systems.

That's why financial and monetary systems in the world have decided to decouple themselves from the dollar system, he continued.

He also said that some countries have established independent inter-bank messaging systems from the existing ones.

The spokesman said that Iran was going to host the next ministerial meeting of Afghanistan neighbors on Wednesday next week. He said foreign ministers of Afghanistan's neighbors would join the one-day meeting in person.

The agenda would be the same as in the first meeting and foreign ministers of six countries would be focused on how to help form an all-inclusive government in Afghanistan and the future of peace and security in the country, he added.

On the talks to lift illegal U.S. sanctions against Iran, Khatibzadeh said that Iran's definite decision was to continue talks, but it demanded the unconditional return of the US to the JCPOA and its commitments under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and under the JCPOA itself.

He underlined that Iran's main goal was to ensure that no one else in Washington could once again humiliate the whole world by exiting a signed agreement. The spokesman was referring to former U.S. President Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to cease U.S. participation in the JCPOA.

He noted Tehran will soon finalize its internal deliberations on the resumption of the JCPOA revival talks.

Khatibzadeh said Deputy Foreign Minister Baqeri-Kani, who is likely to lead Iran's new negotiating team in Vienna, will publicly discuss issues about the challenges and obstacles in the talks.

The spokesman reiterated that the U.S. must uphold its commitments as stipulated in the nuclear deal signed between Iran and the world powers in 2015, noting that no practical steps have been taken so far by Washington.

He said the Joe Biden administration is continuing the former administration's "maximum pressure campaign" against Iran and that there has been "no change in its policies".

In response to a question about Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's statement made on Sunday that the U.S. must take "serious steps" before the resumption of talks in Vienna, Khatibzadeh said the remarks are an "expression of logic" and do not imply any message to the Americans.

He called on the U.S. to "reconsider its policy" toward Iran and "show it in practice" by removing the draconian sanctions and returning to the deal as well as guaranteeing that the agreement won't be breached again.

On the negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia on resumption of normal ties, the diplomat said that four rounds of talks have been held in Baghdad, but the negotiations haven't reached a point that the details could be announced.

He also touched on the accusations made by Azerbaijan Republic officials against Iran, urging Azerbaijani leaders to let the conversations between officials be continued through diplomatic channels and avoid negative media statements.

The Spokesman also said that the relationship between Iran and the Azerbaijan Republic was natural, but stressed that Azerbaijani officials should be cautious not to be trapped by third parties.

## Iran, China Urged to Increase Cooperation for Economic Development

TEHRAN (MNA) - Vice-Chairman of Iranian Parliament said that the two countries of Iran and China must boost their bilateral cooperation for strengthening economic developments.

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony of Eurasian Economic Forum in 2021 on Monday, Abdolreza Mesri stated that Islamic Republic of Iran and China, as two active members at Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), must increase their cooperation for modern trade and economic developments in various trade, industrial, cultural and energy sectors.

He pointed to the geostrategic situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in West Asian region in East-West and North-South trade exchanges and said that Islamic Republic of Iran is a strategic economic hub with safe and short routes for trade and transit of goods in north, south, east and west corridors as well as a communication highway for countries located in these geographical areas for connection with countries around the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, the Black Sea, European countries, as well as the countries of southern part of the Persian Gulf and beyond it.

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## Iran Firm to Boost Military Cooperation With Russia

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top commander says the Islamic Republic is resolute on the improvement of military cooperation with Russia in line with the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi's "Look to the East" policy.

Speaking upon in Moscow, chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, said the new administration attaches special importance to the East and the Eastern countries.

He highlighted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)'s move to accept Iran's full membership in the Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance after the inauguration of the new administration.

In a notable diplomatic success, Iran became a full member of the SCO on September 17, after waiting for years as an observer to join the rapidly expanding Eurasian political, economic and security alliance, led by Russia and China. The accession was announced during the 21st meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State in Tajikistan's capital city of Dushanbe, with President Raisi in attendance.

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## Iran Resumes Exports To Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (MNA) - Spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced the resumption of economic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia under President Raisi's administration.

Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi Spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said on Monday Iran exported a shipment worth \$39,000 to Saudi Arabia, marking the resumption of bilateral economic relations under the new administration in Iran after a year and a half that their bilateral trade were severed.

"After one year and a half of severed relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, exports to Saudi Arabia coincided with the two countries' talks, which is good news," Latifi added. Of total \$39,000 worth of Iran's export of products to Saudi Arabia, \$6,000 of which is related to the export of tile while \$33,000 is related to the export of spherical glasses applicable in the traffic lights.

Resumption of Iran's export of products to Saudi Arabia in the current administration of President Raisi is a sign of a breakthrough in political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries, he added.

## India's Tea Exports To Iran Decline

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Secretary-general of India Tea Association Arijit Raha said exports to Iran were lower due to the sanctions by the U.S.

Exports of tea from India registered a fall of around 14.4% in the first seven months of 2021 as compared to the same period last year.

Total exports of the beverage during January to July of 2021 were 100.78 million kilograms as against 117.56 million kilograms in the same period of 2020, according to Tea Board data.

The data also showed the CIS block remained the largest importer of tea at 24.14 million kilograms, down from 30.53 million kilograms in the previous similar period.

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## EU Optimistic About Fresh Talks On Iran Nuclear Deal

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - EU foreign policy chief says he hopes the Iranian and EU diplomats will have preparatory meetings in Brussels in the days to come to revive nuclear talks.

The 2015 nuclear deal, which gave Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear activities, has been on life support since 2018, when then US president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out.

The European Union's top diplomat Josep Borrell has said he hopes EU and Iranian diplomats would meet soon to try and revive nuclear talks.

"You never know, I am more optimistic today than yesterday," Borrell said on Monday.

But he declined to confirm reports of a meeting in Brussels on Thursday.

Bloomberg News reported that Iran's foreign minister gave the date on Sunday, citing an Iranian lawmaker.

A senior EU official last week confirmed that meetings were planned in Brussels, rather than Vienna, but gave no date.

"No confirmation yet, but things are getting better and I hope we will have preparatory meetings in Brussels in the days to come," Borrell said in Luxembourg as he arrived for an EU foreign ministers meeting.

EU political director Enrique Mora, the chief coordinator for the talks, was in Tehran last Thursday to meet members of Iran's nuclear-negotiating team, four months after discussions broke off between Iran and world powers.



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# Gharibabadi Appointed Deputy Judiciary Chief of Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Judiciary Chief Hojjatolislam Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei appointed Kazem Gharibabadi as his deputy for international affairs and human rights.

Gharibabadi, who used to be Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, was also picked to chair the High Council for Human rights.

He replaces Ali Baqeri Kani judiciary deputy chief for international affairs and human rights.

## Tehran Determined to Expand Ties With Latin American Countries

**TEHRAN (MNA) – President Ebrahim Raisi told visiting Venezuelan foreign minister on Monday that the Islamic Republic of Iran wants to significantly develop relations with developing countries, independence-seeking countries.**

President Ebrahim Raisi received visiting Venezuelan Foreign Minister, Felix Plasencia for a meeting in Tehran on Monday.

"Latin America, especially Venezuela, is one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran's economic diplomacy, and we are determined to develop our relations with these countries," President Raisi said.

Iran is determined to develop its relations with Latin American countries, he stressed.

The president added, "With a long-term cooperation program between the two countries, there is a clear prospect for expanding and deepening relations."

Referring to the visit of the Venezuelan President to Tehran in the near future, Raisi said that during this visit new steps will be taken for long-term cooperation between the two countries.



The Venezuelan Foreign Minister for his part said, "The two friendly countries of Iran and Venezuela are united against the hegemonic powers and those who want to harm the independence of these two countries."

Venezuelan FM called Iran an important and influential country in the regions, saying that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, along with Iran, is committed to defending multilateralism and countering the US intervention.

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister, Felix Plasencia arrived in Tehran to meet with Iranian high-ranking officials on Monday.

## Iraqi Minister of Justice in Tehran

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iraqi Minister of Justice and his accompanying delegation arrived in Tehran at the invitation of the Iranian Minister of Justice.

Iraqi Minister of Justice Abdul Sattar Mohammad and his accompanying delegation arrived in Tehran Monday at the invitation of the Iranian Justice Minister Amin Hussein Rahimi.

The four-day visit is aimed at holding meetings with Iran's Minister of Justice, senior officials of the Iranian Judiciary as well as exploring ways to expand and deepen relations legally and judicially.

Welcoming the Iraqi Minister of Justice, Mahmoud Abbasi, Deputy Minister of Justice for Human Rights and International Affairs, expressed hope that the visit would expand and deepen relations between the two countries and pave the way for the exchange of convicts between the two countries.

## Chabahar, Karachi Start Academic Cooperation

CHABAHAR (IRNA) - Chabahar International University supervisor Naser Abravesh said in line with boosting international academic interactions, chancellors of Chabahar University and University of Karachi in a webinar discussed issues of mutual interest.

Abravesh said that international scholarships, IELTS exams and cultural issues were among topics discussed by both sides. Accordingly, students whose families are living at both sides of Rimdan border and in a particular way hold dual citizenships of both countries of Iran and Pakistan will receive scholarships, he added.

Noting that several universities in Karachi are offering Persian language courses, the Iranian official said that those Pakistani students who can speak Persian will receive scholarships for the next couple of years.

Abravesh stressed Chabahar and Karachi universities' mutual capacities for establishing cooperation in animation, petrochemical, IT, steel and tourism fields.

## Iran Has Not Boycotted Vienna Talks on Reviving JCPOA

TEHRAN (MNA) – Spokesman for Iran's Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission said that Iran has not boycotted the Vienna talks, adding that lifting sanctions by US and Europe is the first step to resume the talks.

Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, the Spokesman for the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission said that the country does not need JCPOA and negotiating with the West in order to rule the country.

"We have not boycotted our return to JCPOA but the ball is in the court of Western countries," he said, adding that those countries that withdraw from JCPOA and failed to live up to their commitments should first embark on fulfilling their JCPOA obligations."

In the current situation, it is the Islamic Republic of Iran that should set pre-conditions for the other parties since they withdrew from nuclear deal and failed to live up to their commitments.

If European Union intends to mediate between 4+1 and Iran, it should blame U.S. and E3 troika including Germany, France and UK that did not comply with their JCPOA commitments, he emphasized.

Elsewhere, he reiterated that lifting sanctions and implementing JCPOA commitments by the United States and European Union is the first step to resume the nuclear talks.

## Warsaw Expresses Readiness to Cooperate With Tehran



TEHRAN (IP) - Polish ambassador to Tehran said Warsaw is ready to cooperate with Tehran in academic, political, economic, cultural, and health.

Speaking on the sidelines of the joint meeting of Iran's Health Minister with the ambassadors in Tehran, Maciej Falkowski, Polish ambassador to Tehran, stressed that Poland is ready to cooperate with Iran academic, political, economic, cultural, and health.

Poland and Iran have a long-standing relationship.

In 1918, after the end of World War I, Poland regained its independence. In 1919, Iran recognized Polish independence, and both states established diplomatic relations. In 1927, both nations signed a Friendship Treaty, and in 1928, Poland opened a consulate in Tabriz.

In September 1939, Poland was invaded by Germany and the Soviet Union, which sparked the beginning of World War II. In 1942, approximately 120,000 Polish refugees arrived in Iran.

After World War II, Iran and Poland re-established diplomatic relations in August 1945. Their relations were elevated to embassies in 1962.

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in Iran, relations between the two sides continued uninterrupted ever since, and several high-level visits have taken place between leaders of both nations.

This relationship, although challenging at times, continued to date.

## Daesh Terrorism Aims to Complete West's Failed Mission in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says Daesh terrorism seeks to complete a failed mission pursued by Western occupiers in Afghanistan, calling on Afghan officials to use national capacities and ensure security in the country.

The Iranian president made the remarks in a cabinet session on Sunday after naming Hassan Kazemi Qomi as Iran's special representative for Afghanistan.

Raisi also offered his condolences over the Friday terrorist bombings at a mosque in Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar and said, "Such attacks are carried out with the purpose of creating discord, war and religious bloodshed."

"The increasing number of terrorist acts, which are conducted in line with Washington's destabilizing strategy in Afghanistan, indicate the expansion of the circle of terrorist measures in this country. Therefore, the rulers of this country are expected to fulfill their responsibility in ensuring the nation's security and use the security-building potentials of the public."

He also invited Muslim clerics and international bodies to pay heed to the sufferings of the Afghan people. The Iranian chief executive once again reaffirmed the country's support for Afghanistan and said the Islamic Republic "is ready to help and have all-out cooperation [with Afghanistan] to establish sustainable stability and security for the Afghan people."

## China-Iran Cultural Interactions Flourish Human Civilization

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy ambassador of Chinese embassy in Tehran Li Fu Hua has said that cultural interactions between the two great civilizations of China and Iran helped develop human civilization.

The Chinese diplomat made the remark in the inauguration ceremony of the second round of "Second Chinese Cinema at a Glance," which was held at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on Saturday night in the presence of some Iranian and foreign cultural officials.

The deputy ambassador, Chinese cultural attaché, Austrian cultural attaché, Finnish diplomat, Sri Lankan ambassador, as well as some Iranian activists and authorities, took part in the event.

Li Fu Hua noticed that 2021 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of China-Iran ties, stressing that the two countries are among the ancient civilizations, which enjoy brilliant culture and history.



The cultural interactions of these two great civilizations paved the way for the flourishing of human civilization, she noted, adding that China-Iran cooperation has uninterruptedly continued and borne many fruits.

The Chinese diplomat expressed hope that the two nations will utilize the long-term interactions and cooperation to expand mutual understanding and help improve human values such as peace, development, justice, democracy and freedom to make a better world. The Chinese embassy in Tehran in collaboration with the Art and Experience Cinema of Iran hold the event to increase cinematic collaborations between Iranian and Chinese cinema activists, she said, noting that seven Chinese movies have been selected to be displayed.

Ja'far Sanei Moghaddam, managing director of the Art and Experience Cinema, expressed hope that holding the 12th week of screening foreign movies, which is dedicated to Chinese films, will help bolster cooperation between China and Iran.

## Majlis Does Not Intend to Restrict Internet

TEHRAN (IP) - The spokesman for the joint commission meeting to review the plan to protect users in cyberspace in Iran's Parliament stressed that MPs and commission members do not intend to restrict the internet and cyberspace.

At the end of the joint commission meeting to review the plan for protecting users in cyberspace on Sunday, Lutfollah Siahkali added: "In the forum, 23 members present

sensitively followed and reviewed the relevant issues." The spokesman for the commission said, "We must finally try to reach a comprehensive solution and respect the rights of all activists in cyberspace so that people can do their business in a suitable and safe environment."

"Currently, the Iranian people are facing many dangers in cyberspace, and we must make the

environment safe for the people," Siahkali added.

The plan to protect users' rights in cyberspace and organize social media was first published as a draft to support social media in the 10th Parliament and was published in October 1997 on a monthly basis. In the end, the review of this plan did not reach the life of this Parliament, and its review was left to the 11th Parliament with changes in it.

## Greece to Extend Cooperation With Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - Athens is looking for more cooperation with Tehran and is eager to exchange students, experts, professors, and medical researches," said the Greek Ambassador to Tehran.

Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of Iran's Health Minister with the ambassadors, Dimitri Alexandrakis said: "On a broader level, of course, Iran and Greece are cooperating in cultural, economic and political fields."

Greece and Iran are linked by thousands of years of shared history.

Greek Prime Minister, Mr. Alexis, visited Tehran in 2016 and laid the basis for closer cooperation between the two countries. During his visit, the following agreements were signed:

a) A Memorandum of Understanding on political consultations.

b) An agreement was exempting diplomatic and service passports from visa requirements.

c) A road map on reinforcing bilateral cooperation.

Greece also welcomes the signing and implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program, considering it a significant positive development for the wider region.



شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۰۹۳۵۰

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مرف ۳۵۲۳





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:42
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:51
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:15

46. "O Joseph!" (he said) "O man of truth! Expound to us (the dream) of seven fat kine whom seven lean ones devour, and of seven green ears of corn and (seven) others withered: that I may return to the people, and that they may understand." Surah 12. Joseph ( 46 )

## Iran-Kazakhstan Relations Being Revived

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – Ambassador of Republic of Kazakhstan to Tehran Askhat Orazbay hopes by removal of the cruel sanctions, the economic ties between Iran and Kazakhstan would broaden, adding that recent visit of the 30-man Kazakh trade delegation to Tehran and signing the MoUs in the fields of exports, imports and logistics indicate the relations of the two countries are being revived in different fields.**

ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran on Sunday held a roundtable on achievements of Kazakhstan in its 30 years of independence. Addressing the meeting, Orazbay termed Iran of the first countries which immediately recognized Kazakhstan's independence in 1991 and set up its embassy in Nur-Sultan.

He said Kazakhstan understands very well the stance of Iran in the region and the world and respects it, adding that Kazakhstan has not taken any action against Iran even during the harshest, cruel and unfair sanctions against Tehran.

He noted that Kazakhstan has very deep-rooted social, cultural and lingual commonalities with Iran and it has never had border, economic and political disputes with Tehran. He expressed hope in the near future and with the containing the COVID-19 and removal of sanctions, both countries would witness broadened trade and economic relations.

Orazbay went on to say that currently some major steps have been taken in the bilateral relations and a couple of days ago a 30-man Kazakh trade delegation visited Tehran and they signed important MoUs and it indicates that Iran and Kazakhstan's relations in different field are being revived.

Direct flight between Iran and Kazakhstan was one of the issues which was touched upon by the Kazakh diplomat as he said currently there are regular direct flights between the city of Gorgan of Iran to Aktau Port of Kazakhstan and the direct flight between Tehran and Almaty is available and even passengers of the neighboring countries take advantage of this flight.

He then pointed to the achievements of Kazakhstan since the fall of the former Soviet Unions and independence of Kazakhstan in 1991. He said that after gaining independence, President Nursultan Nazarbayev immediately began economic reforms and now Kazakhstan has been among the most successful republics of the former Soviet Union which has been able to change its economy from communist to free economy.

Orazbay reiterated that in 2001, namely 10 years after its independence, Kazakhstan was the first republic of the former Soviet Union which was recognized by the West as a country with free economy. He added in terms of area, Kazakhstan is the seventh country in the world, adding that Kazakhstan is also peace-loving country which has no enemy and it has no border dispute with any country.

He said his country has some 7,500 kilometers of border land with Russia which has been registered in the Guinness Book of Records. He said some 137 different races and ethnic groups live in Kazakhstan with respecting each other.

He then said Kazakhstan built the city of Astana from scratch as for its capital which was later named Nur-Sultan after its first president Nazarbayev.



Congratulating Iran on joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Orazbay added that they expect the first vice president of the Islamic Republic of Iran to travel to Kazakhstan and attend this important meeting for the first time.

Orazbay went on to say that Kazakhstan has the biggest economy in the Central Asia and said the GDP of the country is more than the total GDPs of four other countries in the region. He said during the Soviet Union era Kazakhstan was famous for producing wheat but it began other industries like planemaking and car-making.

The Kazakh Ambassador reiterated that Kazakhstan since its independence in 1991 has attracted \$350b of direct foreign investment and in the 2020 World Bank rankings, the country was ranked 20 in terms of value of currency.

On the tourism activities, he said that the historic and sacred city of Turkistan will turn into a tourism hub as the country spent \$1b for its tourism infrastructures in 2020 despite the pandemic.

The roundtable was held by the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Iran, jointly with the Cultural Institute of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the participation of representatives of Iranian expert and "think tanks", the business community, prominent cultural figures of Iran, as well as friends of Kazakhstan.

Meanwhile the President of the ECO Cultural Center S.Bakhti called the wide acknowledgment of the country's leadership in its region as the main success of Kazakhstan over the years of independent development. As proof of it, he cited high economic indicators of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the volume of attracted investments over \$350 billion. Achievements in the scientific and educational development of the state were especially highlighted while the President K.Tokayev's project known as "500 scientists" was given a high appraisal.

The key speakers of the roundtable were the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Iran A.Orazbay, the President of the ECO Cultural Institute Bakhti, the ex-Ambassador of Iran to the Republic of Kazakhstan M.Damirchilu, leading experts on the CIS and Central Asia – Head of the International Academic Cooperation of the Allameh Tabataba'i University Professor M.Tisheyar and Head of Center for Eurasia of the University of Tehran Professor E.Koolae.

Likewise, within the framework of the roundtable there were launched a photo exhibition demonstrating the main milestones of independence and significant events, as well as historical monuments and picturesque corners of Kazakhstan.

Kazakh musical compositions were performed and national souvenir exhibits were displayed to the guests.

## HOSCO Feted With Top Professional Manager Award



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) was presented with the top award during the Third Congress on the Professional Managers of Iran which was held last week.

According to reports, the CEO of Hormuzgan Steel Company Mr. Ataollah Maroufkhani received the award for the performance of the company in professional management.

On the sidelines of the congress and after receiving the statue of the top award, Mr. Maroufkhani said that lives of companies rely on their developments and HOSCO has set up a committee for removing obstacles in way of production and development in order to materialize the Supreme Leader's recommendations for removing hurdles in way of production.

He said that the company has been able to expand its domestic and international activities through playing its sustainable role in sales of slab in the target export markets and sustainable presence in the domestic and international markets.

He reiterated that the company has put the Supreme Leader's emphasis on indigenizing and supporting qualitative domestic production in its strategic program.

Maroufkhani stated that the company has a new approach on organizing, providing, maintaining and sustainable development of human resources in line with increasing the productivity of the human capitals of HOSCO.

He said HOSCO is now considered as one of the biggest steel producers in the country and the company tries its best to meet expectations of the society through increasing interactions with the society and observing its social responsibilities.

He reiterated that he believes the existence of the companies relies on their development and for this reason the company is focused on its development.

## Iran Exports to Oman Up 67%

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran saw its exports to the neighboring Oman increase by more than two thirds to a total of \$277 million in the six months to September 22, according to a businessman coordinating trade between the two countries.

Mohsen Zarrabi, who chairs the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce, said on Sunday that Iranian shipments sent to Oman in the first half of the current calendar year had increased by 67% against the previous similar period.

Zarrabi said that total trade between the two countries had also increased by 49% to \$547 million over the same period.

Oman is a major re-exporting hub in the Persian Gulf. Exports directed from the Arab sultanate into Iran between March and September had amounted to \$270 million, an increase of 32% against the same period in 2020, said Zarrabi.

Iran has increased its trade with neighboring countries in recent years despite being subject to a series of harsh economic sanctions by the United States.

The Iranian customs administration (IRICA) announced on Sunday that trade with neighbors had reached a total value of \$22.558 billion in the six months to September 22.

IRICA spokesman Rouhollah Latifi told the state TV that trade with 15 countries with whom Iran has land or sea borders had increased by 52% in value terms against the similar period last year.

On the size of exports to the neighbors, Latifi said that shipments had increased by 41% in value terms and by 33% in volume terms between March and September.

Shipments sent to the neighbors has also accounted for 51.5% of Iran's total exports over the period, he said.

## Tehran, Belgrade to Hold Economic Commission

TEHRAN (IP)- Serbian ambassador to Iran says Tehran and Belgrade will hold a joint economic commission in Tehran in the upcoming months.

On the sidelines of a meeting between the Iranian Health Minister and Ambassadors in Tehran, Dragan Todorovic, Serbian ambassador, said: "Relations between Iran and Serbia are at its best state in the history of two countries' relation, and Belgrade is willing to expand the ties with Tehran in any field."

The ambassador further noted that Serbia tries to extend relations with Iran in tourism, culture, science, and economy.

The Republic of Serbia is a democratic state located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, on the most important route linking Europe and Asia.

Serbia is in the West European time zone. Its climate is temperate continental, with a gradual transition between the four seasons of the year.

Iran and Serbia have diplomatic ties. The government of Serbia announced that to improve bilateral relations and attract tourists and investors to Serbia, it has passed legislation to abolish visa requirements for Iranian citizens.

There are many commonalities between Iran and Serbia in the cultural arena. Over 130 volumes of Farsi books have been translated into Serbian, and many Serbians know famous Iranian poets.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy, Mehdi Safari, said in a meeting with the Serbian foreign minister on Oct. 12 in Belgrade that Iran views its relations with Serbia as strategic.



## Neighbor States Prioritized for Broader Economic Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The head of Exports Promotion Organization (EPO) said here that Iran prioritizes its neighbors for development of economic ties and export destinations.

Ali-Reza Peymankhah who was speaking at the 17th Session of the EPO representatives said that the trade infrastructures need to be modernized and the diversity of export goods is also important for promotion of the country's exports.

He referred to the country's focusing on further activation of trade with Armenia, reiterating that agreements on establishment of 6 new shipping line in the Caspian Sea have been reached.

The EPO head focusing on the trade treaties and agreements, particularly those related to Eurasia, said that in doing trade bilateral interactions with the private sector is needed, which means the economic activists can through effective cooperation, contribute to the improvement of the trade infrastructures.

## Iranian Entertainment Firm Targets Stronger Revenue

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's entertainment conglomerate Owj Media says it is making god profit despite cinema closures.

A fast-growing Iranian entertainment company which is linked to the government says it is eyeing stronger revenues after the easing of coronavirus restrictions in the upcoming years.

President of the Owj Media Mohammad Hassani said that the company's revenues had reached 900 billion rials (over \$3.3 million) in the calendar year to late March despite closures imposed on cinemas in Iran because of the pandemic.

## Contract for Transfer of Knowhow on Agro, Natural Resources Announced

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

ISFAHAN - Head of Agricultural and Natural Resources Engineering Organization of Isfahan Province announced the compilation and notification of the contract for transfer and promotion of knowhow and technology in the agro and natural resources sector.

During a meeting, Mr. Mehdi Taghipoor announced the news and pointed to the significance of supporting the projects and new ideas in the agro, natural resources and environment sector especially focusing on the educated people in this sector as the real owners of the knowledge. He stated that agro sector is hungry for knowledge and knowhow, and knowledge should be paid special attention as an institution in the process of producing agro products.

He then referred to the efforts of the organization in compilation and notification of the contract for transfer of knowhow of technology in the agro and natural resources sector, and reiterated that the contract has been prepared in line with the task and mission of the organization for promoting the technology and knowhow in agro and natural resources sector.

Taghipoor went on to say that this contract can be a positive move for institutionalizing knowledge and knowhow as an institution for strengthening and supporting the production.

Then Head of Herbal Medicine Innovation Hall of Islamic Azad University of Isfahan Province Mr. Kamran Safavi, for his part, in his presentation, highlighted major innovations and activities of the university in this regard.

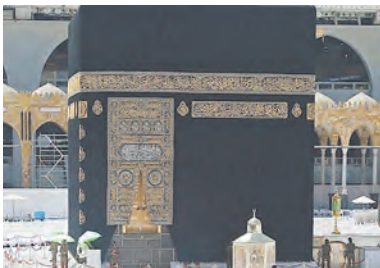


## Grand Mosque in Mecca Drops Social Distancing

MECCA (AFP) - The Grand Mosque in the Muslim holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia operated at full capacity Sunday, with worshippers praying shoulder-to-shoulder for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Workers removed floor markings that guide people to social distance in and around the Grand Mosque, which is built around the Kaaba, the black cubic structure towards which Muslims around the world pray.

"This is in line with the decision to ease precautionary measures and to allow pilgrims and visitors to the Grand Mosque at full capacity," reported the official Saudi Press Agency.



## Syrian Gov't, Opposition Agree On Drafting New Constitution

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The United Nations Special Envoy for Syria said on Sunday the government and opposition co-chairs of the Syrian Constitutional Committee had agreed to start the process of drafting a new constitution.

The committee, comprising 45 representatives of Syria's government, opposition and civil society, has a mandate to draw up a new basic law leading to U.N.-supervised elections.

Special Envoy Geir Pedersen said its Syrian co-chairs, who he met together for the first time ahead of week-long talks, had agreed to "prepare and start drafting constitutional reform."



## Erdogan Says Talks Under Way With U.S. to Buy F-16s



ISTANBUL (AFP) - President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday said Turkey was in talks with the United States to buy F-16 fighters after it was kicked off the F-35 program for purchasing a Russian missile defence system.

Washington excluded Ankara from NATO's F-35 stealth fighter jet program in 2019 after Turkey purchased Russian S-400 defense air systems in defiance of warnings from its Western allies.

The acquisition has imperiled Turkish-U.S. relations and blocked Turkey's plans to purchase about 100 of the F-35 fighters. Turkey is now seeking compensation for its ouster from the U.S.-led program, including for a \$1.4 billion payment it had made before its removal.

Turkey's purchase of F-16 jets from America is "of course linked to the F-35s issue", Erdogan told reporters at an Istanbul airport before embarking on an Africa tour.

He said the U.S. had offered Turkey in return to sell F-16s to upgrade its air force fleet.

"We have said we'll take whatever step is needed to meet our country's defence needs," Erdogan said, adding that Turkey was working to modernize its warplane fleet.

Any such sale by the Americans however would need to be approved by Congress -- where anti-Turkey sentiments are on the rise.

Last month, Erdogan said Turkey still planned to buy a second batch of S-400 missile defense systems from Russia.

The U.S. warned Turkey of further risks to bilateral ties if it bought more weapons from Russia. Erdogan on Sunday said Washington needed to compensate Turkey for its \$1.4 billion payment.

"We raised this issue in our talks. We attach importance to dialogue for a solution to this problem," he said.

"We are working to further develop our fleet from the modernization of the F-16s in our possession to new additional F-16 purchases," the Turkish leader said.

## British MP's Murderer Was Identified

LONDON (Dispatches) - The attacker who fatally stabbed British lawmaker David Amess was referred to an official counter-terrorist scheme for those thought to be at risk of radicalization, according to media reports.

Police said late Saturday that detectives had until Friday, October 22, to question the suspect after he was detained under the Terrorism Act, which allowed them to extend his detention.

Veteran Conservative MP David Amess, 69, was talking with voters at a church in the small town of Leigh-on-Sea east of London when he was stabbed to death on Friday.

Police have said they are investigating "a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism". The investigation is being led by Scotland Yard's Counter Terrorism Command.

## China Slams U.S., Canada for Sending Warships Through Taiwan Strait

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The Chinese military on Sunday condemned the United States and Canada for each sending a warship through the Taiwan Strait last week, saying they were threatening peace and stability in the region.

China claims democratically-ruled Taiwan as its own territory, and has mounted repeated air force missions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) over the past year, provoking anger in Taipei.

China sent around 150 aircraft into the zone over a four-day period beginning on Oct. 1 in a further heightening of tension between Beijing and Taipei that has sparked concern internationally.

The U.S. military said the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Dewey sailed through the narrow waterway that separates Taiwan from its giant neighbour China along with the Canadian frigate HMCS Winnipeg on Thursday and Friday.

"Dewey's and Winnipeg's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the commitment of the United States and our allies and partners to a free and open Indo-Pacific," it added.

### Austrians Turn on Ex-Chancellor's Party After Corruption Claims

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Austrians have turned on the conservative Austrian People's Party (OVP), the senior partner in their coalition government, after party leader Sebastian Kurz quit as chancellor over corruption allegations, according to a poll published on Sunday.

Support for the conservative OVP has crashed from 34% to 26% in the wake of the affair, according to the survey published by newspaper Kurier on Sunday.

The outcome puts the party, which installed former foreign minister Alexander Schallenberg as the new chancellor, only marginally ahead of the opposition Social Democrats (SPO)'s approval rating of 24%, the paper said.

Kurz, 35, quit as chancellor under pressure from his junior coalition party, the Greens, after prosecutors placed him under investigation on suspicion of various degrees of bribery, corruption and breach of trust. He denies any wrongdoing.

Kurz remains leader of his party and is now also its top lawmaker in parliament, triggering opposition claims he is still exercising power behind the scenes.

Some 71% of the people questioned in the Kurier survey thought Kurz's resignation as chancellor was justified, with only 22% saying it was unwarranted.

Anti-corruption prosecutors say they suspect conservative officials then in the Finance Ministry of using state funds to pay for manipulated polling and coverage favourable to Kurz to appear in a newspaper starting in 2016, when he was seeking to become party leader.

A poll by Unique Research for Profil magazine published on Saturday also showed how the Kurz affair has damaged the OVP.

The conservatives polled only 25% with Schallenberg as candidate, 10% down on earlier polls and the same level as the Social Democrats.

Two thirds of respondents told the Unique Research poll they thought there was substance to the allegations against Kurz, while 23% said they thought there was nothing to the affair.



## Venezuela Suspends Talks After Maduro Ally Extradited to U.S.

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A fugitive businessman accused of acting as a money launderer for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's regime was extradited Saturday to the United States from Cape Verde, U.S. justice officials said.

The Justice Department said in a statement that Alex Saab was due to appear in court in Florida on Monday and expressed "admiration" to authorities in Cape Verde for their help in the case.

Venezuela reacted furiously, suspending talks with the US-backed opposition on ending the country's political and economic crisis. Saab, a Colombian national, and his business partner Alvaro Pulido are charged in the United States with running a network that exploited food aid destined for Venezuela, an oil-rich nation mired in an acute economic crisis.

They are alleged to have moved \$350 million out of Venezuela into accounts they controlled in the United States and other countries. They risk up to 20 years in prison.

Saab, who also has Venezuelan nationality and a Venezuelan diplomatic passport, was indicted in July 2019 in Miami for money laundering, and was arrested during a plane stopover in Cape Verde off the coast of West Africa in June 2020.

Venezuela's opposition has described Saab as a frontman doing shady dealings for the populist socialist regime of Maduro. Colombian President

Ivan Duque praised Saab's extradition.

"The extradition of Alex Saab is a triumph in the fight against the drug trafficking, asset laundering and corruption that the dictatorship of Nicolas Maduro has fostered," Duque tweeted. Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido, who is recognized as the country's acting president by the United States and more than 50 other countries, also welcomed the move.

"We Venezuelans, who have seen justice kidnapped for years, respect and celebrate the system of justice in democratic countries like Cape Verde," he tweeted.

In a development not officially linked to the Saab extradition, shortly after news broke of the extradition six former oil executives under house arrest for corruption in Venezuela were taken to an undisclosed prison.

They had worked for Citgo, a US-based subsidiary of the state oil company PDVSA. Five of the six hold U.S. nationality and the other is a permanent resident of the United States.

"American detainees in Venezuela are now being used as political pawns," said U.S. Democratic Party heavyweight Bill Richardson, who led an unsuccessful mission to Venezuela to seek the executives' release last year.

Richardson has managed international negotiations for a number of high-profile American detainees.



## Hungary Decides on Challenger to Face Orban Next Year



BUDAPEST (AFP) - A conservative provincial mayor and a leftist MEP faced off in Hungary Sunday after a month-long opposition primary, with the winner set to challenge Prime Minister Viktor Orban in next year's election.

The opposition agreed for the first time to choose just one contender to oppose Orban -- as well as single candidates in each constituency to go up against his nationalist Fidesz party -- in the vote due next April.

After a first round of primaries that saw more than 600,000 people take part, Klara Dobrev of the leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) party and economist Peter Marki-Zay were the final candidates battling it out.

Marki-Zay, 49, came third in the first round but persuaded the runner-up - liberal Budapest mayor Gergely Karacsony, who had been the pre-election favourite -- to withdraw and endorse him in the run-off.

A father of seven and a practicing Catholic, Marki-Zay argued during the campaign that only he can appeal to both leftist voters and conservatives tired of the divisive Orban.

Marki-Zay, an economist and engineer who lived in the US and Canada for five years, grabbed national attention in 2018 when he won the mayoralty in the small city of Hodmezovasarhely.

Although the southern city had been a Fidesz stronghold for decades, Marki-Zay rallied cross-party support in what he called the blueprint for opposition success nationwide.

Despite having no party machinery or significant funding to rely on, the 49-year-old was also boosted during the primary race by support from younger voters open to his anti-elite and anti-corruption messages.

Dobrev, a vice president of the European Parliament since 2019 and vying to become Hungary's first woman prime minister, emphasized her greater experience and accused her rival of "unsuitability" for the top job.

Polls indicated the mother-of-three's weakness is her husband, former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsany, who admitted lying in 2006 during a leaked private speech and has been relentlessly attacked by Orban ever since.





**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Velenjak Apt (\$2200)**  
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S/p, Sauna  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
Fully Furn

**Farmanieh Villa (\$5000)**  
1000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
S, J, & pkg  
marble floor  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

**(\$2400)**  
Nice view  
Gheitarieh  
220sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/pool, S, J  
gym, & F.F

**Kamranieh Apt (\$2800)**  
280sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

**Jordan (\$1700)**  
150sq.m, 2bdrs, F.F

**(\$10000)**  
Zaferanieh bldg  
5storey, 20bdrs  
S/pool, S, J, pkg  
yard, storages  
Brand new

**Shahrak-e-gharb (\$1800)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs, balcony  
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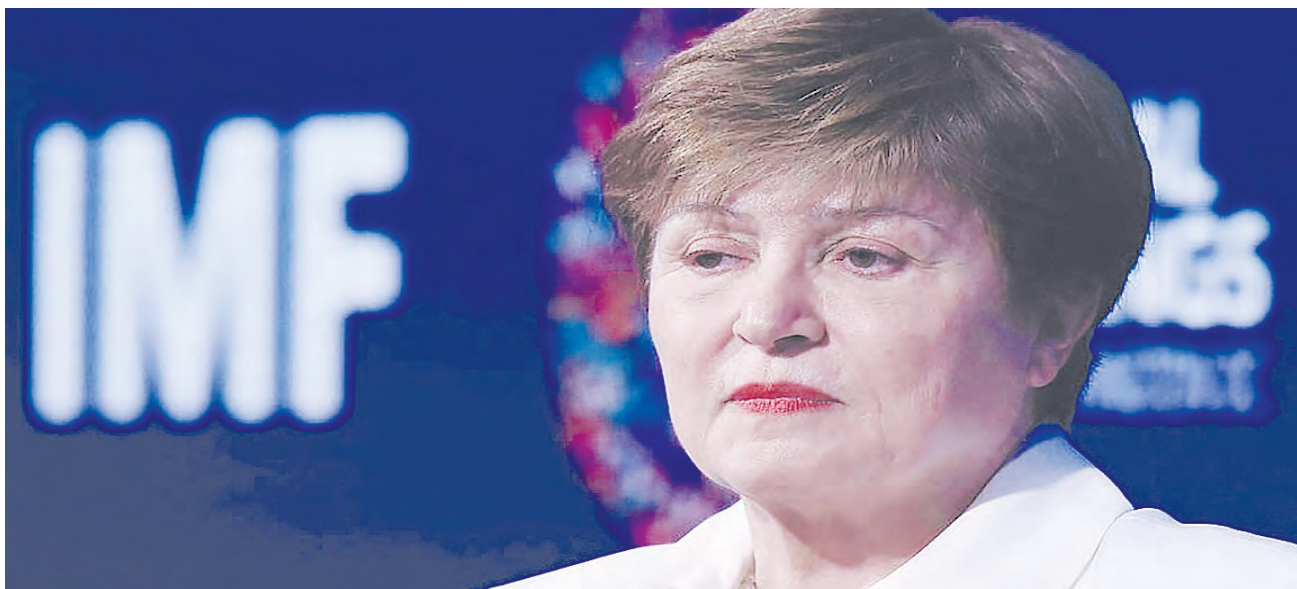


# Oil Price Above \$80 Is a Positive Indicator

LONDON (Dispatches) - Iraq's oil ministry spokesman said that an oil price above \$80 is "a positive indicator" but needs long term stability.

The oil ministry cited Asim Jihad on its Telegram channel as also saying that Iraq aims to achieve the highest financial revenues by committing to the OPEC+ agreement.

He added that the challenges of the global oil market are still present due to not fully containing the coronavirus and its variants.



## No Fear of Inflation "Runaway Train"

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Global finance officials are worried about rising inflation pressures but there it is little fear that it will become a "runaway train," IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said Sunday.

With supply chain bottlenecks growing in the face of surging demand, policymakers have focused attention on rising prices and whether they will linger or fade away in coming months.

"We are in a more somewhat more uncertain space now," Georgieva said at the G30 central banking conference.

However, in advanced economies "policymakers have the tools" to deal with inflation, she said, so "there is no significant concern that this would be a runaway train."

Even so, finance ministers and central bankers gathered last week in Washington for the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank were more concerned than previously that the prices increases could be more than transitory, she said.

And major emerging markets like Russia and Mexico already have raised interest rates showing that "in these places their policymakers are sufficiently concerned already to take action."

In the world's largest economy, U.S. Federal Reserve officials have signaled they will begin to pull back on stimulus by tapering its bond purchases in the last few weeks of the year, but the benchmark interest rate is expected to remain at zero with no increase until late 2022 at the earliest.

The Bank of England so far has left its stimulus unchanged, but there were signs of dissent at its most recent policy meeting, when two of its rate-setting panel voted to stop the bond-buying stimulus as soon as possible to help quell inflation.

BOE governor Andrew Bailey said central bankers face a "very difficult balancing act" because they cannot address the underlying supply shocks with monetary policy, but have to respond to what is happening in the economy.

Failure to act to contain inflation risks undermining central banks' inflation-fighting credibility, he said.

"We have ... to preserve the huge progress we've made in terms of the credibility of monetary policy regimes. I mean that is absolutely critically important," Bailey said at the conference.

## Alitalia Successor ITA Airways Launches With New Look

ROME (AP) -- Italy's new national airline, ITA Airways, flew its inaugural flights Friday and unveiled its brand and logo, recycling the red, white and green of its Alitalia origins as it tries to chart a new future while competing with low-cost airlines.

ITA, or Italy Air Transport, officially launched after bankrupt flag carrier Alitalia landed its final flights Thursday night, ending a 74-year business history that a series of financial crises had marred in recent years.

Protests and strikes accompanied the runup to Alitalia's formal demise because the much smaller ITA Airways is only hiring around a quarter of Alitalia's more than 10,000 employees. Negotiations with unions are ongoing.

ITA paid 90 million euros (over \$104 million) for the rights to the Alitalia brand and website, but the new airline is called ITA Airways and it has its own website and a new frequent flier program, called "Volare" ("Fly").

"Discontinuity doesn't mean denying the past, but evolving to keep up with the times," ITA President Alfredo Altavilla said in a statement. During a conference launching the airline, Altavilla insisted that the greatly reduced size of ITA -- its slimmer fleet, workforce and destinations -- make it a viable carrier that can compete with low-cost airlines while offering better service, connections and value.

"ITA Airways is being born right-sized, in the optimal dimensions both in terms of the size of its fleet and its destinations," he said. "We don't carry with us the negative inheritance of being too big that conflict with the economic reality."

He bristled when asked about reported predictions by low-cost carriers of ITA Airways' failure.

"They might be very, absolutely right that this is gonna be difficult for us, but I am really curious to see one day their PnL (profits and loss) and their balance sheet without all the subsidies that they are getting from the local institutions and the small airports here in Italy," Altavilla said.

"I want a level playing field," he added.

The first ITA flight was the 6:20 a.m. from Milan's Linate airport to the Italian city of Bari, on the Adriatic Sea. In all, ITA is flying to 44 destinations and aims to increase that number to 74 in four years.



Among its routes, the company plans to operate flights to New York from Milan and Rome, and to Tokyo, Boston and Miami from Rome.

European destinations from Rome and Milan's Linate Airport will also include Paris, London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Geneva and Frankfurt, Germany. Routes to South America and Los Angeles are planned.

ITA planes will be royal blue with Alitalia's trademark "tricolore" on the tail, reflecting the red, white and green of the Italian flag. The Italian national sports team colors are blue, and company officials said Friday that the color scheme chosen for the new aircraft aims to make ITA "azzurri," -- the team nickname -- too.

## Uzbekistan's Economy Bouncing Back Strongly

TASHKENT (Dispatches) - As one of the only two major economies in the world to avoid recession last year, the Uzbek economy is bouncing back from last year's coronacrisis crisis strongly. The World Bank has upped its GDP forecast to 6.2% this year from 4.1% previously, and to 5.8% in 2022.

The country was hurt like everyone else as so much of the global economy shut down for months during the worst of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. With a young population and a diversifying economy, Uzbekistan has been flourishing in recent years since Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev started to open up to the rest of the world and lift restrictions on private business imposed by his predecessor Islam Karimov, who died in 2016. Most of the main macroeconomic indicators are doing well. After slowing to 1.7% last year, Uzbekistan's GDP rose to 6.2% in the first half of this year. Economic growth was fuelled by increased household incomes and domestic investment, anti-crisis measures and tax breaks, the World Bank says.

Inflation, a problem for all countries this year, has also been taken in hand and fell from 14.7% in June last year to 11% in June this year. The indicator remained double-digit due to the outstripping growth in food prices, the World Bank said in its report.

In a country with a large and very young population unemployment is a major concern for the government, but its decisive action and government subsidies have kept it in check. The unemployment rate fell from 13.2% in the first half of 2020 and 10.5% at the end of 2020 to 10.2% in the first half of 2021. However, unemployment remains at elevated levels and has not yet reached the level of the period before the start of the pandemic (about 9%).

## Talks Between Pakistan, IMF for \$1b Loan Tranche Inconclusive

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The fresh rounds of talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund for the release of USD 1 billion loan tranche and a good economic certificate to the nation has remained inconclusive, a media report said on Sunday.

The talks held from October 4 to 15 failed to reach a staff level agreement because of differences over the macroeconomic framework and uncertainty over the future of Pakistan's economy, The Express Tribune reported.

The talks failed despite Pakistan having implemented a prior condition of increasing electricity and petroleum products prices.

However, both sides have shown resolve to remain engaged. In his attempts to conclude talks on a positive note, Pakistan Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin met with IMF managing director Christalina Georgieva and US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Donald Lu.

However, it seemed both these meetings also remained unproductive, the report said.

The IMF team remains engaged with our Pakistani counterparts on moving forward our work agenda and we are looking forward to our continued discussions with the Pakistani authorities on the set of policies and reforms that could form the basis for the completion of the 6th review under the EFF [Extended Fund Facility], Teresa Dabn Sanchez, the outgoing resident representative of the IMF was quoted as saying to The Express Tribune.

It was for the second time that Pakistan and the IMF could not find basis for the completion of the 6th review, as its first attempt made in June also remained futile. Pakistan and the IMF have so far failed to agree on the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) -- which becomes the base for the bailout program.

The report, citing sources, said that both sides have not yet exchanged the final macroeconomic positions -- a job that should have been completed on October 8.

Pakistan and the IMF could not agree on the quantum of additional taxes and the roadmap for fiscal stability of the power sector, the sources added.

There were also issues about increase in gas prices and the measures needed to contain the current account deficit to a manageable level.

Pakistan had shared some statistics with the IMF on power and gas tariffs and tax collection and they are validating the numbers we shared with them and will get back to us, said Tarin while addressing a news conference in Washington at the conclusion of his visit. Usually, the numbers are agreed upon, at least in principle, before the start of the policy-level talks.

## Turkey-Germany Can Make Joint Investments in Africa, Middle East

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Already enjoying strong economic relations, Turkey and Germany can make joint investments in third countries by benefitting from Turkey's proximity to lucrative markets and Germany's know-how, a trade official said.

The issue came to the forefront after German Chancellor Angela Merkel's farewell visit to Turkey on Saturday. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan welcomed the outgoing German chancellor in Istanbul where the two leaders -- who share a close working relationship spanning nearly two decades -- discussed bilateral ties and regional issues.

Ankara and Berlin are major trading partners, with Germany heading the list as a top Turkish import source and export destination for decades. The two countries also share deep cultural ties due to the presence of some 5 million people with origins from Turkey in Germany, while Turkey is among the top tourism destination of Germans along with housing tens of thousands of German expatriates.

The European country ranked first in Turkey's exports last year, with exports to Germany amounting to \$15.9 billion. Germany also took first place in Turkey's 8-month exports this year. In the January-August period, \$12.4 billion worth of goods were exported to the country. Germany ranks second after China in Turkey's imports.

The products that Turkey exports the most to Germany include automotive, machinery, knitted clothing, non-knitted clothing and electrical devices. Machinery, automotive, electrical devices, plastics and pharmaceuticals are prominent among the imported products.

Germany has a direct investment of \$19.4 billion in Turkey as of end-2020 data, which corresponds to 14% of international direct investments in Turkey. More than 7,600 German companies currently operate in the country.

Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) Turkey-Germany Business Council Chairperson Steven Young, on the bilateral business relations, told Anadolu Agency (AA) that Germany is Turkey's largest commercial partner and one of the largest foreign investors in the country with its investment volume.

Stating that the trade volume of the two countries reached \$37.7 billion at the end of last year, Young said: "We have experienced a slight decrease due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but according to this year's data, our bilateral trade will reach the highest level in its history by exceeding \$40 billion."

## Sri Lanka Seeks \$500m Loan From India for Fuel Purchase



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka has sought a \$500m credit line from India to pay for its crude oil purchases amid a severe foreign exchange crisis in the island nation.

The move came few days after energy minister Udaya Gammanpila warned that the current availability of fuel in the country can be guaranteed only till next January.

The state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) owes nearly \$3.3b to the two main government banks -- Bank of Ceylon and People's Bank. The state oil distributors imports crude from the Middle East and refined products from other areas, including Singapore.

"We are currently engaged with the Indian High Commission here to obtain the facility (\$500m credit line) under the India-Sri Lanka economic partnership arrangement," CPC Chairman Sumith Wijesinghe was quoted as saying by local news website.

He said the facility would be utilized for purchasing petrol and diesel requirements.

The energy secretaries of both India and Lanka are expected to sign an agreement for the loan soon, the report quoted Finance Secretary S R Attygalle as saying.

The government has put on hold the expected retail price hike of fuel despite the last week's increase in cooking gas and other essentials.

The price hike in the global oil prices has forced Lanka to spend more on oil imports this year. The country's oil bill has jumped 41.5 per cent to \$2b in the first seven months of this year, compared to last year.

Lanka is facing a severe foreign exchange crisis after the pandemic hit the nation's earnings from tourism and remittances, Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa had said last month.

The country's Its GDP contracted by a record 3.6 per cent in 2020 and its foreign exchange reserves plunged by over a half in one year through July to just \$2.8b. This has led to a 9 per cent depreciation of the Sri Lankan rupee against the dollar over the past one year, making imports more expensive.



## Majlis Speaker Calls for Enhanced Parliamentary Ties With Russia

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Monday stressed the need for enhancement of parliamentary relations with Russia.

Qalibaf made the remarks in a phone conversation with Vyacheslav Volodin to congratulate him on his reelection as the chairman of the Russian State Duma.

He said that the Iranian Parliament welcomes holding sessions of a joint economic commission and a joint supreme parliamentary commission which he said would help maintain and continue economic and trade cooperation.



## Russians Return to Earth After Filming First Movie in Space

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A Russian actress and a film director returned to Earth Sunday after spending 12 days on the International Space Station (ISS) shooting scenes for the first movie in orbit.

Yulia Peresild, 37, and Klim Shipenko, 38, landed as scheduled on Kazakhstan’s steppe at 0436 GMT, according to footage broadcast live by Russia’s Roscosmos space agency.

Shipenko appeared distressed but smiling as he exited the capsule, waving his hand to cameras before being carried off by medical workers for an examination.

Peresild, who plays the film’s starring role and was selected from some 3,000 applicants, was extracted from the capsule to applause and a bouquet of flowers.

The actress said she is “sad” to have left the ISS.

“It seemed that 12 days was a lot, but when it was all over, I didn’t want to leave,” she told Russian television.

“This is a one-time experience.”

The team was ferried back to terra firma by cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky, who had been on the space station for the past six months.

The filmmakers had blasted off from the Russia-leased Baikonur Cosmodrome in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan earlier this month, travelling to the ISS with veteran cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov to film scenes for “The Challenge”.

If the project stays on track, the Russian crew will beat a Hollywood project announced last year by “Mission Impossible” star Tom Cruise together with NASA and Elon Musk’s SpaceX.

The Russian movie’s plot, which has been mostly kept under wraps along with its budget, centers around a surgeon who is dispatched to the ISS to save a cosmonaut.

Shkaplerov, 49, along with the two Russian cosmonauts who were already aboard the ISS are said to have cameo roles in the film.

The mission was not without small hitches.

As the film crew docked at the ISS earlier this month, Shkaplerov had to switch to manual control. And when Russian flight controllers on Friday conducted a test on the Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft the ship’s thruster fired unexpectedly and destabilized the ISS for 30 minutes, a NASA spokesman told the Russian news agency TASS.

The team’s landing, which was documented by a film crew, will also feature in the movie, Konstantin Ernst, the head of the Kremlin-friendly Channel One TV network and a co-producer of “The Challenge”, told AFP.

The mission will add to a long list of firsts for Russia’s space industry.

The Soviets launched the first satellite Sputnik, and sent into orbit the first animal, a dog named Laika, the first man, Yuri Gagarin and the first woman, Valentina Tereshkova.



But compared with the Soviet era, modern Russia has struggled to innovate, and its space industry is fighting to secure state funding with the Kremlin prioritizing military spending.

Its space agency is still reliant on Soviet-designed technology and has faced a number of setbacks, including corruption scandals and botched launches.

Russia is also falling behind in the global space race, facing tough competition from the United States and China, with Beijing showing growing ambitions in the industry.

Russia’s Roscosmos was also dealt a blow after SpaceX last year successfully delivered astronauts to the ISS, ending Moscow’s monopoly for journeys to the orbital station.

In a bid to spruce up its image and diversify its revenue, Russia’s space programme revealed this year that it will be reviving its tourism plan to ferry fee-paying adventurers to the ISS.

After a decade-long pause, Russia will send two Japanese tourists -- including billionaire Yusaku Maezawa -- to the ISS in December, capping a year that has been a milestone for amateur space travel.

## China Surprises U.S. With Hypersonic Missile Test



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile in August, showing a capability that caught U.S. intelligence by surprise, the Financial Times reported, citing five unnamed sources.

The report late on Saturday said the Chinese military launched a rocket carrying a hypersonic glide vehicle that flew through low-orbit space, circling the globe before cruising towards its target, which it missed by about two dozen miles.

“The test showed that China had made astounding progress on hypersonic weapons and was far more advanced than U.S. officials realized,” the report said, citing people briefed on the intelligence.

China’s ministry of defense did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment from Reuters on Sunday.

The United States and Russia are also developing hypersonic missiles, and last month North Korea said it had test-fired a newly-developed hypersonic missile.

At a 2019 parade, China showcased advancing weaponry including its hypersonic missile, known as the DF-17.

Ballistic missiles fly into outer space before returning on steep trajectories at higher speeds. Hypersonic weapons are difficult to defend against because they fly towards targets at lower altitudes but can achieve more than five times the speed of sound - or about 6,200 km per hour (3,850 mph).

## Lausanne Tackles Toxic Soil After Shock Discovery

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Lausanne, the capital of Olympic sport overlooking Lake Geneva, is reeling after discovering that much of its soil is polluted with toxic compounds belched out by an old incinerator.

The situation, which has troubling implications for children and eating home-grown food, is unprecedented in wealthy Switzerland, which prides itself on its pristine mountains, lakes and pastures.

A domestic waste incineration plant in the Alpine nation’s fourth-biggest city -- closed since in 2005 -- is being blamed for the dioxin fall-out.

Dioxins, which belong to the so-called ‘dirty dozen’ dangerous chemicals known as persistent organic pollutants, have the potential to be highly toxic. They have been shown to affect several organs and systems.

The problem was discovered by sheer chance between January and May this year at a planned new ecological allotment in the city. For years, pollution monitoring had focused on air and water.

“As we did not look for dioxins, we never found them,” Natacha Litzistorf, the city councillor for the environment, told AFP.

The discovery triggered soil analysis measurements at 126 sites across the city. Experts also looked at the risks associated with exposure to polluted soils.

This week Lausanne announced that those studies found the dioxin levels, and the expanse of the affected area, were much worse than previously thought.

The city has issued a map showing four concentric rings, with zones containing concentrations in the soil of 20-50 nanograms (ng) per kilogram, 50-100, 100-200 and then above 200 in the middle. A peak of 640 was recorded in the city center.



The affected zone stretches 5.25 kilometers (3.2 miles) inland and measures around 3.6 kilometers across.

People are instructed to wash fruit and vegetables grown in gardens and allotments and wash their hands after touching soil.

In zones with more than 100 ng toxic equivalent per kg, root vegetables grown in the area must be washed and peeled. Courgettes, cucumbers, gherkins, squashes, marrows and melons grown in the soil should not be eaten.

In all the affected zones, people should not eat chickens raised on the soil, offer or sell eggs from such chickens, while only those in the 20-50 zone can eat their eggs -- though just one per week. Parents must also stop infants aged under four from ingesting soil, for example by touching their mouths after playing on the ground.

Warning signs have been installed around the city’s parks and playgrounds.

The concentric circles appear to lead to only one source.

“We quickly suspected the cause was linked to a former incinerator,” Litzistorf said.

The Vallon plant opened in 1958 and was initially welcomed as a way of dealing with the city’s garbage.

“At the time, it was thought much better to site waste incinerators in the city centre to protect agriculture in the countryside,” Litzistorf explained.

The dioxin pollution dates from 1958 to 1982, when the Vallon filters were upgraded to environmental norms.

Didier Burgi, who owns a vegetable garden plot, said the discovery had sparked questions among veteran home growers.

“We are not going to eat the squashes. We don’t have a lot of them, but there was specific information about them and we’re not going to tempt the devil,” he told AFP.

The major Chatelard allotment, by the new football stadium on the edge of the city, heard Thursday that it had readings under 20 ng. Plot holder Jose Torres compared his imperfect tomatoes to the flawless ones in supermarkets.

“Everything you buy is full of chemicals,” he said. “From my plot, I know what I’m eating.”

Jacqueline Felder, tilling her beans, spinach, lettuce and carrots in the afternoon sunshine, said: “I’ve been growing vegetables for 15 years. We are not worried.

“People are afraid of everything these days.

“The Earth is our mother. Respect it.”

The World Health Organization says short-term exposure to high levels of dioxins may result in skin lesions, such as chloracne and patchy darkening of the skin, and altered liver function.

Long-term exposure is linked to impairment of the immune system, the developing nervous system, the endocrine system and reproductive functions.

Litzistorf said she was not aware of anyone coming forward with physical conditions linked to dioxin pollution.

### Iran, Venezuela...

FROM PAGE 1

“In bilateral cooperation, we are now on a path where Iranian goods are accessible in several Venezuelan cities,” Amirabdollahian said.

“On the course of bilateral cooperation, we are at a stage when Iranian goods are available to the Venezuelan people. Grounds have been laid for investing in Iran, the details of which will be announced gradually,” Amir-Abdollahian added.

Elsewhere, he said “We consider the recent arrest of a Venezuelan diplomat in the “Cape Verde “ and his extradition to the United States as an act of kidnapping and improper and unconstructive action committed by the United States and an aggression on Venezuelan sovereignty.”

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister Felix Plasencia, for his part, said, “Iran-Venezuela relations are strategic and I am glad to announce that we can hold a meeting of the joint commission in Tehran before the end of this year.”

Plasencia added, “The United States has violated Venezuela’s interests. We thank the Iranian government for its commitment to condemn this act.”

“The Iranian nation has been there for 7,000 years and has a lot of experience in resistance, and we want to learn from them,” the top Latino American diplomat added.

“We want to build a future together with you based on respect for international law and cooperation and tolerance and inclusiveness,” also noted.

Gonzalez described his trip to Iran as strategic as his first foreign trip in his tenure.

Expressing his pleasure at being in Iran and meeting with Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi, he noted that they will take part at the joint commission in Tehran before the end of the year to draw the roadmap for the two countries in the future, adding that this document and roadmap will be a long-term plan.

Acknowledging his Iranian counterpart for condemning the US violation of the sovereignty and rights of the Venezuelans, Gonzalez underscored that the US has blatantly violated their sovereignty and kidnapped the representative of the Venezuelan national government for negotiations with the opposition and illegally sent it to the US and they firmly condemn this action and thank the Iranian government for its commitment to condemn this action.

The Iranian nation has been there for 7,000 years and has a lot of experience in resistance, and they want to learn from them, the top Latino American diplomat added.

He invited Iran’s private sector to invest in Venezuela.

### India’s Tea...

FROM PAGE 1

The top Iranian commander emphasized that the Armed Forces of Iran and Russia would strengthen military cooperation.

Baqeri said Iran has signed agreements with Russia on arms purchases after the termination of a decade-long UN arms embargo on Tehran, which would be discussed during the current visit. “We have cooperation with Russia’s Armed Forces and bilateral cooperation has been improved in recent years.”

The administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump suffered an embarrassing loss after it failed to renew the Iranian arms embargo through a resolution at the United Nations Security Council. Heading a high-ranking military delegation, Baqeri travelled to Moscow at the official invitation of Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation and General of the Army Sergei Shoigu.

The expansion of defense and military cooperation, fight against terrorism and leading regional and international developments are among issues on the agenda of talks between Iranian and Russian officials.

The top Iranian commander wrapped up a four-day official visit to Pakistan on Friday.

### Iran, China...

FROM PAGE 1

There is access to the old Silk Road and countries of the new initiative route entitled “Belt and Road Initiative” as well as hot water and South Asian region and also Mediterranean countries via Islamic Republic of Iran, he said, adding that Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to play a pivotal role in Eurasian development process.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mesri referred to the strategic relations between Iran and China as two major countries in the field of civilization in ancient continent of Asia, including a 25-year comprehensive agreement between the two countries and stated that the two countries of Islamic Republic of Iran and China as two active members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) must increase their cooperation for modern trade and economic developments in various trade, industrial, cultural and energy sectors.

The 2021 Eurasian Economic Forum Conference will be held virtually in the Chinese city of Xi’an for two days under the title “Taking Advantage of New Opportunities for Cooperation and Starting a New Movement on Development Path”.

### India’s Tea...

FROM PAGE 1

As per report, shipments to Iran were substantially down due to the sanctions, the Persian country imported 12.63 million kilograms in the first seven months of this year, as against 21 million kilograms in 2020.

Exports to China were also lower at 3.29 million kilograms from 5.74 million kilograms in the first seven months of 2020.

Offtake by the United Kingdom (U.K.) was also less during the period, the data showed at 3.12 million kilograms in the current period.

The only exceptions are the United States (U.S.) and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) where exports registered an increase this period of 2021.

Secretary-general of India Tea Association (ITA) Arijit Raha said that this is because exports to Iran, which was once a big buyer of Indian tea, was lower due to the sanctions by the U.S.

The other prime reason is non-availability of shipping containers which have become very expensive during the COVID times.

The value of tea exports in the first seven months of this year was higher at 2,735 crore rupees as against 2,635 crore rupees in the previous similar period.



## West Ham's Ogbonna Sinks Everton

LONDON (Dispatches) - West Ham manager David Moyes enjoyed a winning return to Everton as Angelo Ogbonna's header sealed a 1-0 victory at Goodison Park on Sunday.

Moyes spent 11 years in charge of the Merseyside club from 2002 to 2013 and is still regarded fondly by Everton fans.

But his relationship with Everton's current boss Rafael Benitez is less cordial after the Spaniard irritated Moyes by labelling the Toffees a small club during his time at Liverpool.

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## Salernitana Appoint Colantuono After Castori Sacking

ROME (Dispatches) - Stefano Colantuono was named as Salernitana coach for a second time on Sunday after Fabrizio Castori was sacked following a 2-1 defeat at Spezia that left the promoted side bottom of the Serie A standings.

Colantuono previously led the club between Dec. 2017 and Dec. 2018, the 58-year-old's last coaching role.

"I embrace with great enthusiasm a place where I had a great time with extraordinary fans," Colantuono said.

# Norrie, Basilashvili Set to Clash in Indian Wells Final

INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - Britain's Cameron Norrie dominated Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-4 to book a title clash with Nikoloz Basilashvili at the ATP Indian Wells Masters.

The 26-year-old Norrie overpowered Dimitrov in their semi-final to become the first British finalist since 2009. Norrie kept Dimitrov off guard with a strong serve, blasting four aces and hitting a number of precision forehands and backhands in the one hour, 27 minute match on the main stadium court in Southern California.

"I am so happy," said Norrie. "Unfortunately he didn't bring his best today. I was very solid. I went a lot to his backhand he was getting frustrated with that. I managed to serve well and in the big moments I executed when I needed to."

Several Brits have reached the final in the California desert without success, including Andy Murray, who lost to Rafael Nadal in 2009. Tim Henman lost two finals in 2002 and 2004, and Canadian-born Briton Greg Rusedski was runner-up in 1998.

Norrie was born in Johannesburg, South Africa and grew up in New Zealand before becoming the No. 1 college player in America while attending university in Texas. He has represented Great Britain since 2013.

Norrie is seeking his second career title after winning earlier this year in Los Cabos.

"I'm looking forward to the match tomorrow and really looking forward to going out and enjoying it again," he said.

He broke through in Los Cabos following a string of runner-up heartbreaks, including earlier this year in Estoril, Lyon and London.



Dimitrov was coming off a couple of upsets over top 10 seeded players. The Bulgarian battled back from a set down to beat top seed Daniil Medvedev 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in the fourth round and outlasted eighth seeded Hubert Hurkacz in the quarter-finals 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/2).

There were no players ranked in the top 25 in the world in the men's semi-finals. Norrie, at 26, was the highest ranked semi-finalists.

Norrie easily won the first set by breaking Dimitrov on three of four service games. He got the early break in the second then held to serve to wrap up his 46th win of the season.

Norrie clinched the match on the first match point when Dimitrov hit a backhand into the net.

Norrie is going up against another surprise finalist in the 29th seeded Basilashvili, who defeated American Taylor Fritz 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to post one of the biggest wins of his career.

Basilashvili, of Georgia, is gunning for his third ATP title of the season after earlier triumphs in Doha and Munich.

He clinched the win over crowd favourite Fritz on the fourth match point, hammering a forehand winner that froze the American in his tracks.

"It is an unbelievable feeling," said the 29-year-old Basilashvili, the son of a Georgian national ballet dancer. "I am super happy. I was nervous and stressed. I got very tight, but I just tried to focus on the game."

"When you focus, the stress goes away. I know I can play good tennis I just have to not get too tight."

## Tuchel Backs Unselfish Lukaku to End Goal Drought



LONDON (Dispatches) - Thomas Tuchel insists Chelsea striker Romelu Lukaku will end his worrying goal drought because he is so unselfish.

Tuchel's side moved to the top of the Premier league with a hard-fought 1-0 win at west London neighbours Brentford on Saturday.

But Belgium forward Lukaku was unable to get on the scoresheet as his run without a club goal extended to six games.

That is a concerning statistic as his strong start to his second spell at Chelsea begins to fade away.

Signed in a club record £98 million (\$134 million) deal from Inter Milan, Lukaku looked unplayable as he scored four times in his first four games for the Champions League winners.

But since then the goals have dried up, raising questions about a player who also flopped in the Premier League with Manchester United before reviving his career at Inter.

Lukaku tucked away Timo Werner's cross against Brentford, only to see the effort chalked out for offside. Ben Chilwell provided Chelsea's winning goal.

Blues boss Tuchel is relaxed about Lukaku's recent barren run, praising the 28-year-old's selfless approach.

"I am not concerned as I felt him a bit tired, and then isolated because we were defending too deep as a block," Tuchel said.

## Beijing Flame to Be Lit In a Vacuum in Olympia

ATHENS (AFP) - The Olympic flame was once again lit in an empty stadium on Monday as it started its truncated journey to Beijing for the Winter Games in February.

Like the ceremony in March 2020 to light the flame for Tokyo, and like those Games, which were put back a year, Monday's ceremony is a victim of coronavirus restrictions.

"Due to the situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Lighting Ceremony was held in strict compliance with local health protocols," the Hellenic Olympic Committee announced in September.

The ceremony was conducted at the ruins of the Temple of Hera in Olympia, site of the ancient Greek games from eighth century BC to the fourth century AD.

Before the pandemic, the flame had been lit behind closed doors once, in 1984, when Greek organizers wanted to protest against the decision of the Los Angeles organizers to accept sponsorship of stretches of the torch relay in the United States.

This time the ceremony was held in front of an audience limited to the members of the International Olympic Committee, the Greek and Chinese Olympic committees as well as the president of Greece, Katerina Sakellariopoulou, and vaccinated members of the media.

## Maqsood Helps Oman Thrash Papua New Guinea

MUSCAT (AFP) - Skipper Zeeshan Maqsood returned bowling figures of 4-20 to set up a 10-wicket win for hosts Oman in the Twenty20 World Cup opener against debutants Papua New Guinea on Sunday.

Maqsood's four wickets, including three in one over, kept PNG to 129 for nine in the first round match at the Al Amerat ground outside Muscat.

Openers Aqib Ilyas (50 from 43 balls) and Jatinder Singh (73 from 42) then clattered the PNG bowlers around the ground without being parted to steer Oman home with 6.2 overs to spare, handing Papua New Guinea a tough lesson in their first ever World Cup outing.

# Rotich, Memuye Win Paris marathon



The 31-year-old Kenyan took nearly a minute off his personal best and broke Kenenisa Bekele's seven-year course record of 2:05:04 as he picked up pace after the 25-kilometre mark.

PARIS (Dispatches) - Kenya's Elisha Rotich won the men's race and Ethiopia's Tigist Memuye topped the women's podium at the Paris Marathon on Sunday.

Rotich set a course record as he crossed the line in two hours four minutes 21 seconds to finish ahead of Ethiopia's Hailemariam Kiros.

Kenya's Hillary Kipsambu came third after slipping two spots in the final stages of the race.

In the women's race, Memuye ran a time of two hours 26 minutes and 12 seconds after a late surge to seal the biggest win of her career.

Memuye finished about three seconds ahead of Yenenesh Dinkesa with Fantu Jimma third as Ethiopians swept the podium.

The Paris Marathon, featuring 60,000 participants from 145 countries, was initially scheduled for April this year, but was delayed by six months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The race was cancelled in 2020 because of the pandemic.

## Man Utd Needs To Fix Mentality And Tactics

LONDON (Dispatches) - Paul Pogba delivered a withering assessment of the state of Manchester United's form after a 4-2 defeat to Leicester left the Red Devils already five points adrift in the Premier League title race.

United have not won an English top-flight title since 2013, but were expected to challenge this season after splashing out to sign Cristiano Ronaldo, Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane in the transfer window. However, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men have taken just one point from a possible nine against Aston Villa, Everton and Leicester in their last three league games.

United also crashed out of the League Cup last month and are under pressure for Wednesday's Champions League clash with Atalanta after losing their opening group game to Swiss side Young Boys. "If we want to win the title, these are the games we need to win, even if they are very hard," Pogba told Sky Sports.

"We have been having these kind of games for a long time and haven't found the problem. We have conceded easy and stupid goals." United's defense was easily exposed by a Leicester side that had not won since August before Saturday.

Solskjaer started with all of Pogba, Bruno Fernandes, Sancho, Mason Greenwood and Ronaldo and hinted afterwards he may have to sacrifice some of his attacking stars to better balance the side. "We know that the fans were going to push and put pressure on us and we need to be more mature, play with more experience and arrogance - in a good way - by taking the ball and playing our football," added Pogba.

"We need to find the key for this change because we deserved to lose."



## Bayern Crush Leverkusen to Return To Top of Bundesliga

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Robert Lewandowski and Serge Gnabry both scored twice as Bayern Munich rampaged to a thumping 5-1 win at Bayer Leverkusen to return to the top of the Bundesliga on Sunday.

After suffering a shock defeat to Eintracht Frankfurt two weeks ago and losing top spot to Borussia Dortmund overnight, Bayern bounced back in style against fellow title hopefuls Leverkusen.

Level on points in first and second before the weekend, the gulf in class between the two teams became apparent as Bayern put their hosts to the sword with a brutal and brilliant first-half performance.

The 31-time German champions smashed in four goals in the space of seven minutes in the first half to humiliate a young Leverkusen side and go a point clear of Borussia Dortmund at the top of the table.

"It was clear after 45 minutes that the three points were coming to Munich," Lewandowski told broadcaster DAZN.

"We knew that we would have to play our football from the beginning today, and the result shows how well we played."

It took Bayern less than four minutes to go ahead, Lewandowski converting a Dayot Upamecano cross with a brilliant backheel to net his eighth goal of the season.

Leroy Sane hit the post shortly afterwards, as Leverkusen struggled to control a sparkling Bayern attack. On the half-hour mark, the visitors carved through their opponents on the counter-attack, with Alphonso Davies bursting into the box to set up a poacher's finish from Lewandowski.

