

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 141,281 With 7 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Interior Minister Said a Military and Security Committee Is to Investigate Case of Assassinating Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei, a Members Of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force in Tehran

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Terrorists to Pay Dearly for Assassinating IRGC Member

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The spokesman of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says foreign-sponsored rogue elements and terrorists who assassinated a member of the force in the capital Tehran will soon get a taste of their own medicine for the misdeed.

"The martyrdom of General [Hassan Sayyad] Khodaei further consolidated the IRGC's resolve to defend the [country's] national security, independence, and interests and confront the enemies of the Iranian nation," Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif said on Monday.

Sharif added, "Enemies definitely will not accomplish anything through committing criminal acts against the Iranian nation and the Muslim Ummah, particularly the valiant combatants and fighters as well as security forces."

"Thugs, rouge elements, and remnants of terrorist groups affiliated with the global arrogance and Zionism will be punished for their criminal acts," he pointed out.

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President Raisi in Muscat to Bolster All-Out Ties With Oman

IRAN NEW POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Oman on Monday for a one-day visit to meet Omani sultan and senior officials to expand relations.

Raisi was accorded official reception shortly in Al-Alam Palace and was to meet with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said.

Before his departure for Muscat, President Raisi said, "My visit to Oman is very important for the development of the policy of neighborly relations with neighboring countries and the region, and in our negotiations we will pursue the development of bilateral and regional relations".

Speaking to reporters, Raisi talked about the goals of his official visit to Oman, noting that this visit is being made at the official invitation of Mr Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, and said, "There is good relations between is the Islamic Republic of Iran and the friendly, brotherly and neighboring country of Oman".

The President said that the current level of relations between Tehran and Muscat is not favorable for the two countries, adding: "The decision and will of both countries is to improve the level of relations in the fields of trade, transportation, energy, tourism and especially health tourism".

Stating that a memorandum of understanding will be signed between the two countries during the visit, Dr Raisi said, "My visit is very important in the policies of the Popular Government's for the development of neighborly relations with neighboring countries and the region".

The President stated that the two countries are currently cooperating constructively in various fields, adding, "A significant point in the region is that dialogue and cooperation between the countries of the region is security-building. The presence of foreign forces in the region does not provide security at all and can even threaten the security of the region".

Ayatollah Raisi expressed hope that this visit would be an effective step towards realizing the policies and goals of the Popular Government to strengthen and deepen constructive relations with its neighbors.

On the sidelines of the visit, Iran minister of industry, mine, and trade Reza Fatemi-Amin and Omani Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef signed a memorandum of understanding.

The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding on the comprehensive development of trade cooperation between the two states.

Meanwhile twelve cooperation documents and a memorandum of understanding were signed between Tehran and Muscat by Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and Foreign Minister of Sultanate of Oman Sayyid Badr Albusaidi.

Amirabdollahian, who is accompanying President Raisi on his trip to Oman, met the Foreign Minister of Sultanate of Oman Sayyid Badr Albusaidi .

During the meeting with the Omani Foreign Minister, twelve cooperation documents and a memorandum of understanding were signed between the two countries in the fields of energy, transportation, industrial cooperation, and trade.

The MoUs were signed by the Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Minister of Roads & Urban Development, Minister of Oil as well as the head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran.

Enhancing regional dialogue and security as well as boosting the level of political, economic, and trade relations between Tehran and Muscat are among the goals of this trip to the friendly and brotherly neighboring country of Oman.

Iran Annual Inflation Rate Drops Slightly In May to 38.7%

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The government's statistics (SCI) agency has reported a slight drop in the rate of inflation in the country in the calendar month to May 21.

SCI figures published on Sunday showed that Iran's annual consumer prices index (CPI) had dropped by 0.5% to stand at 38.7% in the second month of the calendar year 1401.

The figures showed that that annual CPI had dropped by 0.4% to 38.3% for urban households and by 0.8% to 40.8% for families living in the countryside in May.

The inflation rate for food, beverages and smoking products rose 6% to 49.4% in May while inflation in the non-food and services category rose 2.7% to 34% over the same period.

Iran's monthly inflation rate rose 0.2% to 3.5% in May, said the SCI. The figures do not represent impacts of price hikes of food products announced by the government earlier in the month.

The CPI calculated on a point-to-point basis, a measure frequently used by the Iranian statistics agency in recent years, stood at 39.3% in May, meaning that households had spent around 40% more on various goods and services compared to the month to late May 2021.

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Iran Agrees to Jointly Develop Hengam Oilfield With Oman

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Oil Minister Javad Owji says Iran agreed to form a committee with Oman to jointly develop the Hengam oilfield, which straddles their sea border.

Iran has its longest maritime border with Oman with which it has maintained the most sustained coexistence over the past five decades.

The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding in 2005 to jointly develop the Hengam oil field but the agreement did not materialize.

Owji visited Oman ahead of President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to the sultanate on Monday and agreed to revive a long-stalled project to lay an undersea pipeline to carry gas to Oman.

The project dates back to 2013 when the two countries signed a deal, valued at \$60 billion over 25 years, for Iran to supply gas to Oman through an undersea pipeline.

On Monday, Owji was quoted as saying that the two sides also agreed to jointly work on Hengam which Iran had decided to develop independently in 2012.

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Tehran Rejects Compromise In Vienna Talks

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry has unequivocally ruled out any prospect of "compromise" in Vienna talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal which is on life support since the U.S. withdrawal in 2018.

Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh's remarks on Sunday addressed an apparently intentional mistranslation of the contents of a meeting earlier this month in Tehran between Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and visiting Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Reporting on the meeting, German newspaper Handelsblatt quoted the Qatari emir as saying that "the Iranian leadership told us they were ready for a compromise."

Khatibzadeh rejected the account of the meeting as completely wrong.

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Russia Seeking Goods Transit Via Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (MNA) - Russia's Minister of Transport says his country is considering new logistics routes in Asia to transport goods.

Vitaly Savelyev has said that Western sanctions against Russia have prompted Moscow to seek new logistics corridors including through Islamic Republic of Iran.

Russia's transport minister says sanctions will force western Moscow to pursue "new logistics corridors" such as North-South International Transport Corridor - between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

He conceded that Western sanctions are forcing Russia to find alternative trade routes to ship its goods.

"The sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation today have affected virtually all of the country's logistics and we have to look for new logistics corridors," he stated.

There are three key Russian ports on the Caspian Sea that can be explored north-south corridor.

These ports do not have the level of trade capacity that Russia had with the previous volume, he said, adding that Russia is considering sending goods to Iran via Azerbaijan as an alternative to sending goods through the Caspian Sea.

Prior to Russia's operation in Ukraine on February 24, Russian maritime trade to Asia was usually carried out through the Suez Canal.

Israeli Embassies Put on Alert Following IRGC Member Assassination

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Israeli regime has reportedly put all of its embassies across the globe on alert following the assassination earlier of a member of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in Tehran.

Israel's Channel 1 said the regime had issued the warning to the diplomatic missions after two motorcyclists gunned down the IRGC member, identified as Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei, in the Iranian capital on Sunday.

The IRIB news agency said Khodaei had been targeted with three bullets to his head and two to hit his hand.

The IRGC issued a statement soon after the assassination, identifying counterrevolutionary elements as those behind the attack.

The Nour News website, which is close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reacted to the assassination in a tweet, describing the assassination of the IRGC member as a "miscalculated crossing of a red line that will change many calculations."

"The masterminds and agents of this crime will pay a heavy price," it added.

The Israeli news report recalled the Zionist regime's role in the assassination of at least seven Iranian nuclear scientists in the past, apparently suggesting that the Sunday operation had been a follow-up to the regime's atrocities targeting Iran.

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Vienna Talks Not Reaching Deadlock

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Foreign Minister and lead negotiator in Vienna talks Ali Bagheri Kani emphasized that the JCPOA talks have not reached a deadlock.

Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a meeting with members of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission on Sunday.

Iran's lead negotiator attended the Iranian parliament and answered questions raised by the lawmakers. Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Vahid Jalalzadeh elaborated on the commission's Sunday meeting with Bagheri Kani.

Iran Plans to Expand Ties With African States

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic Hossein Amirabdollahian has underscored that Iran especially the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi spares no effort to expand relationships with African nations.

The Iranian FM received South Africa's Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Candith Mashego-Dlamini on Sunday, amid her visit to capital Tehran to take part in the 10th political advisory committee between South Africa and Iran.

Amirabdollahian referred to the historical and friendly ties between the two countries, saying that the Islamic Republic has no limits concerning relation with South Africa, adding that in particular, the new administration is seeking to develop relations with countries of the African continent.

Underlining that the Iranian authorities give special importance to relationship with South Africa, the top diplomat said that the two countries enjoy very good capacities



to increase cooperation and that the 15th joint commission in Pretoria in this year is of great significance.

Amirabdollahian also expressed gratitude to South Africa for its stances on West Asia, especially their support for Palestinians' resistance.

For her part, the South African official showed appreciation for the meeting, expressing hope that both sides can hold good and constructive negotiations in the meeting of political advisory committee in order to draw a roadmap for future reciprocal visits by high-ranking officials of both countries and expansion of collaborations.

Navy Planning To Manufacture Heavy Cruisers



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani announced on Monday that making heavy cruiser is on agenda.

To do so, the Navy pays special attention to capabilities of the elite and the knowledge-based companies as the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has underlined the importance of the issue, the commander said at a meeting held in Tehran this morning on reviewing naval forces' missions.

During his televised speech to the nation on the occasion of Nowruz and the advent of new Iranian year, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has named the new year as "Production: knowledge-Based and Job-Creating."

As the Navy commander noted, the 1979 Islamic Revolution has left various threats behind and gained valuable experiences from them; and today, the naval forces have access to any points in the international waters.

Elaborating on the Navy measures in the Makran coastal region in southeast of the country in sea of Oman, the commander said the naval forces have made development in that region.

Makran is a coastal region which starts from Iranian strategic port of Chabahar and reaches Jask in southern Iranian province of Hormuzgan near the Strait of Hormuz.

The commander stated that the presence of the Iranian flotilla in the free waters on security missions shows power and strength of the Navy of the Islamic Republic.

He had earlier commented that provision of Iran's economic security in the seas is the most important mission of the naval forces, and that Iran is the sole regional country which carries out such a big mission independently in the sanction conditions.

President Vows Revenge for Assassination of IRGC Member

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi has blamed the world's hegemonic powers for the assassination of a member of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), vowing "definite revenge" over the Sunday terrorist attack in the Iranian capital.

Raisi said hegemonic powers "have a hand in this crime," given their failure in the face of Iranian resistance soldiers, adding that the terrorist attack fully exposed the enemies' frustration.

He made the remarks on Monday before setting off for Muscat at the formal invitation of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said. He called on Iranian judicial authorities to seriously follow up on the assassination, underlining that revenge is certain on those who perpetrated the criminal act.

The attack on Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei happened in Tehran at around 4 p.m. local time (1130 GMT) on Sunday when two motorcyclists shot him five times while he was in his car.

The IRIB news agency reported that three bullets hit him in the head and two bullets hit his hand.

The two motorcyclists fled the scene. In a statement, the IRGC said the assassination was carried out by "counterrevolutionary elements."

It also said necessary measures have been taken to identify and arrest the assailant or assailants.

FM Stresses Need for Broader Iran-Bulgaria Economic Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian here on Sunday in a meeting with deputy Bulgarian foreign minister stressed the need for broadened Iran-Bulgaria economic cooperation.

In his meeting with Velislava Petrova, who is in Iran to participate in the 3rd round of Iran-Bulgaria Diplomatic Consultations, Amirabdollahian expressed satisfaction over the increased bilateral economic balance last year, but all the same said that they are below the good level of the two countries' political ties.

The top Iranian diplomat also referred to the potentials for the two countries' cooperation in energy field, transit, and food and goods transportation, stressing that increased economic ties is in need of conducting broader efforts on both ends.



Amirabdollahian also referred to the important regional developments and especially the Ukraine crisis, expressing hope that the war in Ukraine will end soon.

On Iran's nuclear talks with world powers to terminate the unjust sanctions, he said that Iran is determined to reach a good and sustainable agreement.

The Bulgarian deputy foreign minister, too, referred to the constructive talks she has had with her Iranian counterpart, arguing that agreements on broadening cooperation in economic, cultural and sports fields have been reached.

Velislava Petrova said that the diplomatic talks to reach a nuclear agreement are favorable for involved sides, as well as other countries.

Tehran, Nur-Sultan Discuss Expansion of Banking Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Central Bank of Iran governor and deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan met on Monday in Tehran to explore ways to expand banking cooperation between the two countries.

Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan Bakhyt Sultanov met today with Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Ali Salehabadi in CBI headquarters in Tehran.

During the meeting, Salehabadi said that expansion of economic cooperation and growth of banking ties between Iran and Kazakhstan are correlative, as the two would strengthen each other.

Sultanov said that his trip was at the order of Kazakhstan's president, who is going to visit Iran in June, to explore grounds for expanding business and banking ties with Tehran.

The Kazakh minister expressed content over the agreements signed in recent months and that the trade between Iran and Kazakhstan has grown 50 percent to 200 million dollars over the last quarter.

He also said that the two countries have agreed to establish joint commerce chamber soon and launch direct flight lines between various Iranian and Kazakh cities.

Tehran Ready to Cooperate With Sofia in Energy Field

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a meeting with the Bulgarian official, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy said that Iran is ready to cooperate with Bulgaria in the energy field.

During the meeting held with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria Velislava Petrova on Sunday, Mahdi Safari expressed satisfaction with the increase in trade between the two countries last year, calling transit and transportation one of the important advantages of relations between the two countries, which can lead to expanding bilateral and regional trade cooperation.

Petrova, for her part, also described Iran-Bulgaria trade relations as growing.

Given the concerns of Europe in the two areas of energy and food security, Petrova announced her country's readiness to expand bilateral cooperation with Iran in these two areas.

She also described the holding of a joint meeting of businessmen of the two countries and the holding of a new round of Iran-Bulgaria's joint economic commission as an important step to increase trade exchanges between the two countries.

Gov't Eases Visa Conditions for Tourists

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The deputy head of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, said on Sunday that Iran has eased conditions for travelers to the country.

He said that based on a decision by the National Task Force for the Combat Against the Coronavirus, the visitors to Iran have to present either a card of their double vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.

The official said that before making this decision, the travelers to Iran had to present both the vaccination card and the negative COVID-19 test while now each one of these two is enough.

The pandemic mostly came under control in Iran following widespread COVID vaccinations across the country with President Ebrahim Raisi coming into office in August 2021.

Now it is more than a week that the country has single digit daily death toll.



IRGC, Intelligence Ministry Arrest Network of Thugs

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's security forces have arrested a network of thugs affiliated with Israel's spy services, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says.

In a statement, the IRGC said the busted network was involved in such criminal acts as theft, vandalism targeting public and private property, kidnapping, and obtaining fake confessions.

The statement added that the members of the network were arrested by the IRGC members and the Intelligence Ministry, without giving further details.

Last month, the Intelligence Ministry arrested three agents working for the Israeli Mossad spy agency in the country's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

The ministry said in a statement at the time that the spies were involved in disseminating classified information and documents but gave no details about their nationalities.

Iran, Qatar Follow up 2022 World Cup, Bilateral Issues

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani in a phone conversation followed up the latest developments regarding the Vienna Talks, World Cup 2022, and the recent regional developments.

The two sides discussed the agreement made by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani during Qatari Emir recent visit to Tehran.

They also reviewed the latest issues related to the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, developing bilateral ties between Tehran and Doha, and Vienna Talks on lifting sanctions.

Amirabdollahian and Al Thani underlined holding consultation to follow up bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest at regional and international levels.

Iran Calls for Joint Naval Drills With Neighbors, SCO Members

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - A high-ranking Iranian general emphasized the need for more frequent joint naval exercises with neighboring countries and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states.

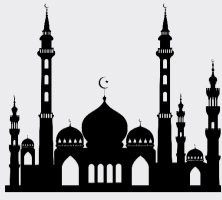
Speaking at a conference on the Iranian Navy's missions, held in Tehran on Monday, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, the top military adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, hailed the Navy as a strategic force.

Calling on the naval forces to stage joint war games in the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman, the general said the Defense Ministry and the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces should devise plans to promote naval diplomacy with the Caspian Sea neighbors.

It is also necessary to hold joint exercises with the SCO members and the Sultanate of Oman and to enhance relations with them, he added.

"We must recognize the strategy of future threats to the country and get prepared to counter future threats, which are possibly the sea-based and air-based hybrid wars," General Safavi stated.

He also called on the Navy to pay special attention to the employment of submarines, drones and satellites.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:01
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:29
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:11
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:52

40. And the (Unbelievers) must indeed have passed by the town on which was rained a shower of evil: did they not then see it (with their own eyes)? But they fear not the Resurrection.

41. When they see thee, they treat thee no otherwise than in mockery:

"Is this the one whom Allah has sent as an apostle?"

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (40 - 41)

Iran Can Turn Into a Hub For Kazakhstan Exports

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade Seyed Reza Fatemi Amin announced the export of home appliances, medical equipment, and medicine to Kazakhstan while it was reiterated that Iran can turn into a hub for Kazakhstan exports.

Fatemi Amin met with Minister of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bakhyt Sultanov on Sunday night.

Speaking on the sidelines Fatemi Amin said: "Kazakhstan is a big country in Central Asia with a population of 19 million and has good infrastructure in terms of industry and mining."

"In this meeting, a number of issues were discussed and one of the topics that was welcomed by the Kazakh side was the import of minerals such as steel and metal sheets from Kazakhstan."

"One of the companions of the Kazakh team will stay in Iran for more days to visit Iranian industries."

According to Fatemi Amin, the exact roadmap between Iran and Kazakhstan will be drawn on 19 June during the visit of the Kazakh president to Iran.

Meanwhile in the meeting, Fatemi Amin called for broadening economic ties between Iran and Kazakhstan and said that both countries need to prepare a roadmap for their economic cooperation.

He said Kazakhstan is rich in minerals and like Iran has big mining companies and Iran can meet its importing demands purchasing 2m tons of sheets from Kazakhstan. He reiterated that Iran has progressed significantly in producing home appliances, medical equipment and pharmaceutical industries and it can be a ground for joint cooperation between the two countries.

Meanwhile Sultanov, for his part, emphasized synergy between Iran and Kazakhstan



and emphasized reinforcing the trans-Caspian corridor with logistic facilities of Iran, adding that Iran due to its capacities and capabilities can turn into a hub for Kazakhstan's exports in the region. He added that this point was discussed during Kazakh Prime Minister's visit to Turkey because this is an important issue.

He went on to say that Kazakhstan seeks revive the traditional trade between Iran and Kazakhstan in the new condition, adding that this trade has been in the fields of metals, iron products, fertilizers and agriculture.

Sultanov also reiterated the necessity for finding new fields for cooperation between the two countries and said that Kazakhstan is willing to take advantage of Iran's experience in oil extraction, oil and gas, industrial production and industrial mines.

He also stated that free zones of the two countries have good capacities for improving the trade between both states.

Soltanov then pointed to provide required facilities for business between the two countries and said the private sectors of both countries have required capacities for enhancing the bilateral trade.

He then reiterated that the launch of direct flight between the two countries as well as easing visa issues are of the major concerns of the business activists of the two countries.

Sultanov, leading a trade delegation, arrived in Tehran on Sunday for a two-day visit.

IME Sells 7.9m Tons of Commodities Within a Month

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last month witnessed trade of 7,939,000 tons of commodities worth \$2.6b, showing 9% and 11% of growth in volume and value of trades respectively, as compared to the preceding month.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, on its oil and petrochemical trading floor the exchange traded within that month 1,215,000 tons of commodities worth more than \$974m.

Commodities purchased were 225,600 tons of vacuum bottom, 270,276 tons of bitumen, 340,445 tons of polymeric products, 154,000 tons of lube cut, 176,309 tons of chemicals, 33,155 tons of sulfur, 15,713 tons of base oil, 330 tons of argon and 310 tons of insulation.

Metals and minerals was the next trading floor on which the IME saw trades of more than 6,680,000 tons of various types of commodities in both its domestic and export rings with a trading value of more than \$1.5b.

On this floor the IME traded 4,352,000 tons of cement, 1,179,000 tons of steel, 764,000 tons of iron ore, 257,500 tons of sponge iron, 39,725 tons of aluminum, 72,124 tons of zinc, 33,155 tons of copper, 700 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 500 tons of coke, 905 tons of lead, 24 tons of precious metals concentrate and 23 kg of gold bars.

Moreover, on its agricultural trading floor the IME saw trade of 5 tons of saffron.

It's worth noting that the IME's automobile trading floor sold 117 Cara Sedan automobiles, for the first time.

Last was the IME's side market on which the exchange traded 43,644 tons of commodities.



Iran, Oman Trade at 53% Growth Last Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that Iran's volume of trade exchanged with the Sultanate of Oman registered a 53 percent hike last year (ended March 20, 2022).

Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi made the remarks on Monday and said that 4,190,000 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$1,335,500,000, were exchanged between the two countries of Iran and Oman in 1400, showing a 27 and 53 percent hike in weight and value respectively.

Turning to non-oil trade exchange between the two countries of Iran and Oman at the threshold of the visit of Iranian President Raisi to Oman, he put the share of products exported from Iran to the Sultanate of Oman in this period at 2,283,000 tons, valued at \$716 million.

Iran's export of products to Oman in this period registered a 14 and 63 percent hike in weight and value respectively, Latifi highlighted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Latifi pointed to the volume of products imported from Oman into Iran and emphasized that Iran imported 1,907,000 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$619.5 million, showing a 49 and 43 percent increase in weight and value respectively.

He pointed to bitumen, urea, ferrous products, fresh fruits and vegetables, construction materials, dried nuts, foodstuff, confections, chocolates and home appliances as the main products exported from Iran to Oman last year.

Uzbekistan Interested in Using Iran Transit Routes, Chabahar Port

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy foreign minister of Uzbekistan in a meeting with Iran deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy expressed Tashkent's interest for using Iran's transit routes, as well as special capacities of Chabahar Port.

Furqat Sidikov who is in Iran to attend the Tehran 2022 ECO Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference in his meeting with Mehdi Safari reached agreement that expert groups will be established to make possible cooperation in those fields.

The latest status of mutual cooperation in economic, trade, and transportation fields were discussed in the two deputy foreign ministers' meeting.

The Uzbek side in the meeting announced his country's willingness to use Iran's transit routes, and especially the existing capacities in Iran's southeastern



Chabahar Port and it was agreed that expert groups will be established to facilitate the mutual cooperation.

Sidikov referred to the upcoming state visit of President Ebrahim Raisi of Uzbekistan to attend the Shanghai Summit Meeting, during which he will have a meeting with his Uzbek counterpart, arguing that that will be a historical event in two countries' relations.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister, too, said in the meeting that the growing trend of bilateral interaction in the course of the past couple of years is very promising, announcing Iran's readiness for comprehensive cooperation with Uzbekistan, and asking for both sides' greater efforts aimed at boosting bilateral trade.

It was also agreed that the required facilities for organizing special exhibitions of both countries' will be provided.

Dezful Is the City of God

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The 4th of Khordad (May 25) is the day when the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran called the day of resistance and stability of the people of Dezful against the invasion of the tyrannical Ba'athist enemy "Resistance and Stability - Dezful Day" and then it was registered in the official calendar. (On June 25, 1987, a resistance plaque was awarded to Dezful by the Government of the Islamic Republic.)

This brace city had put behind tough days during the 8 years of Iraq war as the city was hit 176 times by long-range missiles and 9 meters by the enemy. During eight years, 2,500 artillery shells, 331 rockets, wounded and destroyed, however, in obedience to the Imam, the people remained in the city and persevered, and the natural face of the city and the continuous flow of life were not disturbed. During 2700 days of resistance, 2600 martyrs, 4000 veterans, 500 free people were sacrificed to the Holy Islamic Revolution.

During the imposed war, 19,000 houses, schools, medical centers, and educational institutions were destroyed. Surprisingly, people rebuilt at short intervals. Some places were rebuilt up to four or five times, and people quickly rebuilt to preserve the natural and normal appearance of the city and to show the flow of life.

In no city of the country - small towns - during the imposed war did it happen that it had an army. The core of Valiasr 7th Division was formed by Dezful fighters.

And the truth is that Dezful - "Fortress" was endurance and the bridge of victory of the fronts and Dezful is the "Fortress".

Dezful was called by the warriors of the city of the visa of the world of knowledge and the passport of the border of love and purity and the city of intuition, martyrdom and patience.

More than this, Dezful should be known. This city is better known in heaven than on earth. Dezful is the city of mysticism, the city of faith and the city of the Quran.

Dezful is the anthem of strength, resistance, shock and martyrdom in the age of famine of emotions. Dezful is the city of God.



ECO Deputy FMs Meet in Tehran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy foreign ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) met on Monday and they are to meet also on Tuesday in Tehran to exchange viewpoints on major international developments of the day.

The ECO diplomats participated in collective and bilateral meetings to survey ways to further improve regional cooperation maximally.

Important issues such as free trade among ECO member countries, strengthening transit and transportation cooperation inside the ECO region, and pursuing the effective implementation of the reached agreements in Ashgabat are among the issues in the agenda of the important Tehran 2022 ECO Secretariat Office Meeting.

The participants will also exchange viewpoints on ways for financial support for macroscale regional projects in that meeting.

Gov't Imposes Ban on Imports of Apple Phones

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has imposed a ban on imports of Apple phones into the country, shows a report published in the local media, amid plans by the government to control the use of hard currency resources at a time the country faces U.S. sanctions.

The Sunday report by Tasnim news agency said that phone importers had been blocked from registering new orders for Apple phones when day referred to an online system run by the Iranian ministry of trade (MIMT) earlier in the day.

The report said that MIMT officials had confirmed that imports of Apple phones would remain banned until a further notice. "The Apple mobile phone brand has been included in the Goods Category No. 27 since overnight and registering orders would not be possible for the time being," said the report while referring to an MIMT list which identifies products whose imports into Iran are banned.

The report comes several weeks after lawmakers in the Iranian parliament put forward a motion to ban imports of mobile phones with a price tag of over \$600 to restrict spending of foreign exchange resources for unnecessary purposes. In a recent letter to President Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's trade minister Reza Fatemi Amin said that around \$1 billion had been spent over the calendar year to late March on imports of Apple phones into Iran.

That comes as total imports of mobile phones with prices above \$600 had amounted to \$1.4 billion over the similar period. Advocates of banning imports of Apple phones into Iran say that hard-won foreign exchange resources should not be spent on luxurious products. They also believe that the ban would give Iran an opportunity to retaliate against the American sanctions.

KSC Ends Month of Ordibehesht With Setting Another Record



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) ended the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht with setting its fourth consecutive record as the production units of the company set the second consecutive record for production in the pellet-producing unit.

According to reports, due to endeavors of personnel of Khorasan Steel Complex Company another record for production was set and the company produced 206,294 tons of pellets in month of Ordibehesht to improve its record which had been set in the first month of the year Farvardin.

Head of exploitation of the company announced this achievement and said personnel of the company showed another resolved stride on course of improving production in the biggest pole of the industry in eastern country.

He said that personnel of pellet-producing unit set another record in monthly production in Ordibehesht. Mr. Fazilati added that the company produced 206,294 tons of pellet, adding that the previous record was 20-1,654 tons which had been set in the preceding year and the new record shows 4640 rise in the monthly production.

He added that this record was set on the eve of the national productivity day which can be sign of importance of improving productivity.

Tunisia's Ennahda Rejects Committee to Draft New Constitution

TUNIS (Dispatches) - Tunisia's main opposition party, the Islamist Ennahda, rejected on Sunday President Kais Saied's decision to name members of an advisory committee to draft a new constitution for a "new republic", it said in a statement.

It added that this measure was "a complete deviation from constitutional legitimacy".

On Friday, Saied named a law professor to head the advisory committee that will draft a new constitution. The committee headed by law professor Sadok Belaid consists of deans of Law and Political Sciences. It must submit its report on June 20 to the president, the official gazette said.



New Zealand PM to Visit U.S. to Boost Exports

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern will visit the United States this week in a bid to boost exports and lure more tourists as the Pacific nation looks to fully reopen its border after more than two years of restrictions.

Ardern's visit comes as U.S. President Joe Biden is on a five-day trip to South Korea and Japan. Her public agenda does not include a meeting with Biden, who is expected to return to Washington today.

"New Zealand's relationship with the United States is one of our most enduring and significant. This mission will feature political and security engagement as well as tourism and trade promotion," Ardern said in a statement on Monday.



Pounded by Russian Offensive, Ukraine Rules Out concessions



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine ruled out a ceasefire or any territorial concessions to Moscow as Russia stepped up its attack in the country's east and south, pounding the Donbas and Mykolaiv regions with air strikes and artillery fire.

Kyiv's stance has become increasingly uncompromising in recent weeks as Russia experienced military setbacks while Ukrainian officials grew worried they might be pressured to sacrifice land for a peace deal.

"The war must end with the complete restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty," Ukraine's presidential chief of staff Andriy Yermak said in a Twitter post on Sunday.

Polish President Andrzej Duda offered Warsaw's backing, telling lawmakers in Kyiv on Sunday that the international community had to demand Russia's complete withdrawal and that sacrificing any of it would be a "huge blow" to the entire West.

"Worrying voices have appeared, saying that Ukraine should give in to (President Vladimir) Putin's demands," Duda said, the first foreign leader to address Ukrainian parliament in person since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion.

"Only Ukraine has the right to decide about its future," he said.

Speaking to the same parliamentary session, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed a plea for stronger economic sanctions against Moscow.

"Half-measures should not be used when aggression should be stopped," he said.

Shortly after both finished speaking, an air raid siren was heard in the capital, a reminder that the war raged on even if its front lines are now hundreds of kilometres away.

Russia is waging a major offensive in Luhansk, one of two provinces in Donbas, after ending weeks of resistance by the last Ukrainian fighters in the strategic southeastern port of Mariupol.

The heaviest fighting focused around the twin cities of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, interior ministry adviser Vadym Denysenko told Ukrainian television on Sunday.

The cities form the eastern part of a Ukrainian-held pocket that Russia has been trying to overrun since mid-April after failing to capture Kyiv and shifting its focus to the east and south of the country.

Russia's defence ministry said on Sunday its forces pummeled Ukrainian command centres, troops and ammunition depots in Donbas and the Mykolaiv region in the south with air strikes and artillery.

Reuters was unable to independently verify those battlefield reports.

Russian-backed separatists already controlled parts of Luhansk and neighbouring Donetsk before the invasion, but Moscow wants to seize the remaining Ukrainian-held territory in the region.

WHO Expects More Monkeypox Cases Globally

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The World Health Organization (WHO) says it expects to identify more cases of monkeypox as it expands surveillance in countries where the disease is not typically found.

As of Saturday, 92 confirmed cases and 28 suspected cases of monkeypox were reported from 12 member states that are not endemic for the virus, the UN agency said, adding it will provide further guidance and recommendations in the coming days for countries on how to mitigate the spread of monkeypox.

"Available information suggests that human-to-human transmission is occurring among people in close physical contact with cases who are symptomatic," the agency said.

Monkeypox is an infectious disease that is usually mild and is endemic in parts of West and Central Africa. Although it belongs to the same virus family as smallpox, its symptoms are milder.

People usually recover within two to four weeks without needing to be hospitalised, but the disease is occasionally deadly.

It is spread by close contact so it can be relatively easily contained through such measures as self-isolation and hygiene.

"What seems to be happening now is that it has got into the population as a sexual form, as a genital form, and is being spread as are sexually transmitted infections, which has amplified its transmission around the world," said WHO official David Heymann, an infectious disease specialist.

Heymann said an international committee of experts met via video conference to look at what needed to be studied about the outbreak and communicated to the public, including whether there is any asymptomatic spread, the people who are at most risk, and the various routes of transmission.

He said the meeting was convened "because of the urgency of the situation". The committee is not the group that would suggest declaring a public health emergency of international concern, WHO's highest form of alert, which applies to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Germany Keen to Pursue Gas Projects With Senegal

DAKAR (Dispatches) - Germany wants to intensively pursue gas and renewable energy projects with Senegal, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Sunday during his first trip to Africa, against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine and its impact on energy and food prices.

Scholz kicked off the three-day tour in Senegal, which has billions of cubic meters of gas reserves and is expected to become a major gas producer in the region.

Germany is seeking to reduce its heavy reliance on Russia for gas following the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine. It has initiated talks with the Senegalese authorities about gas extraction and liquefied natural gas, Scholz said.

"It is a matter worth pursuing intensively," he said at a news conference with Senegalese President Macky Sall, adding that progress in the talks was in the two countries common interest.

Scholz said Germany was also interested in Senegalese renewable energy projects. He did not provide further details. On Friday, a German government official said Germany could help explore a gas field in Senegal.

Sall said Senegal was ready to work towards supplying the European market with LNG. He forecast Senegal's LNG output reaching 2.5 million tons next year and 10 million tons by 2030.

In terms of gas exploration, project financing and other questions, "all that is open, and we are keen to work with Germany in this context," Sall said.

Germany has invited both Senegal, which currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the African Union, and South Africa to attend the G7 summit it is hosting in June as guest countries. Both countries abstained from voting on a United Nations resolution against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a special military operation to demilitarize a neighbor it says threatened its security.

Ukraine and its allies say the war is an unprovoked act of aggression.

Speaking as African Union chairman, Sall said many African countries did not want to take sides on the war, while condemning the invasion.

Hundreds Evacuated Amid Renewed Flooding in South Africa's Coastal Province

JOHANNESBURG (Dispatches) - Hundreds of people have been evacuated to safety after heavy rains once again hammered South Africa's coastal province of KwaZulu-Natal, flooding roads and houses and damaging properties, a government official said on Sunday.

The province is still restoring damaged infrastructure and making plans to re-home people displaced after flooding last month, which was among the worst to have affected KwaZulu-Natal province in its recorded history. April's floods killed 448, with 88 still missing, left more than 6,800 homeless and damaged more than 25 billion rand (\$1.58 billion) of infrastructure.

The province had received early warnings from the South Africa Weather Service, alerting it to further disruptive rainfall on Saturday in a number of towns, including Durban, the worst hit by the previous floods.

"So far the greatest impact is expected along the coastal and north-eastern parts of KwaZulu-Natal," Siphon Hlomuka, member of the executive council for Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs told journalists.

He said approximately 250 people had been evacuated from care centers in Tongaat and Tehuise in Durban, including retirement villages, to other facilities. Only one family was evacuated due to the collapse of an informal dwelling.

"This heavy rainfall has resulted in the flooding of roads, human settlements and damage to properties. We understand that some areas are inaccessible and have become islands at this stage," he said, adding they had yet to receive a full report on the impact of the latest heavy rains.

Rainfall persisted on Sunday in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal, the South Africa Weather service said, as the alert level remained at the highest and most severe level of 10.

Scientists believe the southeastern coast of Africa is becoming more vulnerable to violent storms and floods as human emissions of heat-trapping gases cause the Indian Ocean to warm. They expect the trend to worsen dramatically in coming decades.



Australia's Labor To Retake Power After 9 Years

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australia's Labor Party will form the country's next government on Monday, as unprecedented support for the Greens and climate-focused independents ended nearly a decade of rule by the conservative coalition.

Centre-left Labor remains four to five seats short of a majority of 76 in the 151 seat lower house with about a dozen electorates too close to call, television channels reported on Sunday. Labor may need the support of independents and smaller parties to return to power for the first time since 2013.

Labor leader Anthony Albanese said he will be sworn in as the 31st prime minister on Monday along with four senior party members, before heading to Tokyo to attend a "Quad" summit on Tuesday with U.S. President Joe Biden and the prime ministers of Japan and India.

"I do want to change the country. I want to change the way that politics operates in this country," Albanese told reporters after leaving a cafe in his Sydney suburb, where he was seen taking pictures with supporters.

Several world leaders, including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and neighbouring New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern, congratulated Albanese on his win.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's Liberal Party was toppled in several urban strongholds by independents, mostly women, who campaigned for more action on climate change, integrity and gender equality. The independents and a strong showing from the Greens also ate into Labor's vote share in many seats.

"I feel like now maybe is the time for us to do something different, and if we can get action on climate change, then that's going to be quite exciting," voter Mark Richardson in Sydney's Wentworth electorate told Reuters. Wentworth is among the traditional Liberal seats snatched by an independent this election.

Morrison, who will step down as leader of the Liberal party, was shown in TV footage at his church on Sunday morning.

You've given us a great foundation from which we could walk ... (in) what has been a very difficult walk ... over the last almost four years," a visibly emotional Morrison told fellow worshippers.



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200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, S, J
L.balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

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

Parsian

Farmanieh (\$2000) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F

Gheitarieh (\$2300) 240sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, roof garden, F.F
Kamranieh (\$1800) 160sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, roof garden, F.F

Darrous (\$2800) 250sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, F.F

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Zurich Insurance to Exit Russia

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Zurich Insurance has agreed to sell its Russian business to members of the local team, it said on Friday, as the Swiss insurer became the latest Western firm to exit Russia. It joins a list of companies that have quit the market in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with some handing these businesses over to local partners. Those quitting range from McDonald's and Dutch brewer AB Inbev to carmaker Renault and French lender Societe General. Finding a suitable exit plan has been a challenge, with some businesses saying they are maintaining their Russian businesses to keep assets out of the hands of the state.



India Considering Spending Additional \$26b to Fight Inflation

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The Indian government is considering spending an additional 2 trillion rupees (\$26 billion) in the 2022/23 fiscal year to cushion consumers from rising prices and fight multi-year high inflation, two government officials told Reuters.

The new measures will be double the 1 trillion rupees hit government revenues could take from tax cuts on petrol and diesel the finance minister announced on Saturday, both the officials said.

India's retail inflation rose to an eight-year high in April, while wholesale inflation rose to at least a 17-year high, posing a major headache for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government ahead of elections to several state assemblies this year.

"We are fully focused on bringing down inflation. The impact of Ukraine crisis was worse than anyone's imagination," one official, who did not want to be named, said.

The government estimates another 500 billion Indian rupees additional funds will be needed to subsidize fertilizers, from the current estimate of 2.15 trillion rupees, the two officials said.

The government could also deliver another round of tax cuts on petrol and diesel if crude oil continues to rise that could mean an added hit of 1 trillion-1.5 trillion rupees in the 2022/23 fiscal year started on April 1, the second official said.

Both the officials did not want to be named as they are not authorized to disclose the details.

The government did not immediately comment outside office hours.

One of the officials said the government may need to borrow additional sums from the market to fund these measures and that could mean a slippage from its deficit target of 6.4% of GDP for 2022-23.

The official did not quantify the amount of borrowing or fiscal slippage saying it depended on how much funds they eventually divert from the budget in the fiscal year.

The Indian government plans to borrow a record 14.31 trillion rupees in the current fiscal year, according to budget announcements made in February.

The other official said the additional borrowing will not impact the planned April-September borrowing of 8.45 trillion rupees and may be undertaken in January-March 2023.

Americans Feel Uneasy as Economic Concerns Grow

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - America's mood is uneasy and worried. Amid continued inflation and stock market declines, large majorities describe their mood as such, and the percentage who call the economy bad has hit highs for the Biden presidency. The number who say things in the country are going badly overall is at the highest level of President Biden's tenure, too, as pessimism about the market, the economy and prices drives views looking forward — and outweighs optimism about both jobs and coronavirus, as we head into summer.

Looking ahead, there is large — and growing — pessimism about the national economy, the stock market and inflation. In fact, outlook on the costs of things gets the most pessimism of the items tested, followed by pessimism about the national economy.

Most are also pessimistic about their plans for retirement, and on the heels of a stock market downturn, two-thirds of those who have money invested in the market are pessimistic about it.

But there is optimism about both jobs — a message the White House has stressed — and the effort against COVID-19. It's just that those are both being somewhat outweighed right now in setting the public mood.

The public has never laid all the blame for inflation at the White House's door. And while most people continue to disapprove of the president's handling of inflation and the economy, those ratings have not moved much, for better or worse, perhaps because people remain pessimistic about those issues.

Mr. Biden does get relatively higher marks for caring about people than he does for being quick to react to events (though neither finds a majority). In fact, as the administration has been critiqued for being slow to address inflation, that now echoes in the public's larger criticism directed at Mr. Biden, that he is slow to react generally. It's not just his political opponents who say this: more than a third of Democrats say it of Mr. Biden, too.



Egypt Raising Interest Rates to Curb Inflation Comes as Surprise

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Bloomberg news agency said that Egypt surprised most economic analysts by implementing the largest increase in interest rates in nearly five years in an attempt to counter the rising inflation and restore the attractiveness of its domestic bonds to foreign investors.

The Central Bank of Egypt's (CBE) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided last Thursday to raise its interest rates on depositing and lending by 200 basis points each to reach 11.25% and 12.25%, respectively. According to Bloomberg, only one economic analyst correctly predicted the decision in a survey of nine analysts, while most expected an increase of 100 basis points.

Furthermore, the agency indicated that Egypt is the latest emerging economy to take this bold step, given the world's trend towards tightening monetary policy to curb inflation caused by the war in Ukraine.

The CBE made the decision hours after South Africa also raised its interest rates by the largest margin in more than six years, as did the Central Bank of the Philippines, which decided to raise its key interest rate for the first time since 2018.

"In light of the current trends of monetary policies in the world, the CBE is trying to avoid potential pressures on the EGP," said Radwa Al-Swaify — Head of Research at Cairo-based Al-Ahly Pharos.

She added that the increase in interest rates "takes into account local consumer price trends" and reduces the size of the negative interest rate adjusted according to the country's inflation rates.

Bloomberg also indicated that Egypt is racing against time to keep pace with the record rise in grain prices — given it is a major importer of food — after prices increased as a result of the conflict in Europe.

Malaysia Sees Sustained Competitiveness Even

KUALALUMPUR (Dispatches) - Indonesia's resumption of palm oil exports will not blunt Malaysia's competitiveness in exporting the edible oil, the Malaysian commodities minister said on Sunday, pointing to the rival's loss of sales in India.

Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin urged "all

Malaysian oil palm growers - both plantation firms and smallholders alike - not to be unduly concerned with the recent development."

Indonesia is the largest producer of palm oil, with Malaysia second. Prices of all kinds of edible oils have hit record highs this year because the war in Ukraine has disrupted supply of one of them, sunflower oil.

Alarmed by a rise in domestic cooking oil prices, Jakarta on April 28 banned exports of palm oil, but said on Thursday the ban would end on May 23. Then on Friday, the Indonesian government said producers would still have to sell enough locally to maintain a domestic stock of 10 million tons.

India, traditionally getting two-thirds of its palm oil from Indonesia, has been forced to buy more from Malaysia and Thailand, while other frustrated importers have said they would decrease reliance on unpredictable Indonesian supplies.

"Indonesia's policies could well work to Malaysia's advantage ...," said Zuraida, the minister for plantation industries and commodities. Indonesia's export control policies "would enable (Malaysia) to emerge a dominant supplier to India," she said.

Her statement was headed: "Malaysia will not lose competitive edge as Indonesia resumes palm oil export".

Zuraida said her ministry did not expect a big downward adjustment to crude palm oil prices following Indonesia's latest policy announcements.

Prices would remain at elevated levels due to uncertainties in the production of major oilseeds as a result of geopolitical tensions and unfavourable weather, she added.

Zuraida's ministry is talking to the finance ministry about a proposal to temporarily cut an export tax on crude palm oil by as much as half to help fill the global shortage of edible oil and boost Malaysia's market share, she told Reuters in an interview last week.

UK May Impose Duties of Up to 29% on Chinese Aluminum Extrusions

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain may impose anti-dumping duties of up to 29% on aluminum extrusions from China to protect domestic producers, a trade agency said.

Aluminum extrusions - widely used in the transport, construction and electronics industries - are being dumped in Britain at lower prices than they are sold in China, the Trade Remedies Authority said in an interim report.

"The TRA determined that there is already damage to the UK industry, having found clear evidence of price undercutting, indicating that UK businesses are struggling to compete with the dumped imports," a statement said.

Provisional measures will be imposed as the TRA completes its investigation, requiring Chinese companies exporting to Britain to provide a bank guarantee beginning on May 28, it added.

Duties ranging from 7.3% to 29.1% were recommended, depending on the company and the level of dumping margin, the interim report said.

Three companies were named - Press Metal International Group, Shandong Nanshan and Haomei Group - plus there were categories for other co-operating and non-cooperating exporters.

Press Metal International is a Chinese unit of Malaysia's Press Metal.

The TRA was established after Britain left the European Union to investigate unfair trade practices and measures.

The aluminum extrusion investigation is the first one resulting from a British industry claiming unfair trade practices, the TRA said.

One major firm that produces aluminum extrusions in Britain is Norway's Norsk Hydro.

Oman's Economy Firmly On the Road to Recovery



MUSCAT (Dispatches) - financial indicators for the first quarter of 2022 confirms that Oman's economy is on a recovery mode. The state's general budget achieved a financial surplus of more than OMR300 million, said the officials and financial experts, adding it reflects the efforts made by the government and the measures taken by it in this direction, supported as it was by the rise in oil prices in global markets.

Dr. Nasser bin Rashid Al Maawali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, said, "The better financial performance of the Sultanate of Oman by the end of the first quarter of this year reflects the efforts and measures taken by the government to ensure the sustainability of financial and economic conditions, supported by the stability of average global oil prices," adding that "the financial surplus will be exploited and directed to stimulate growth. It will help enhance spending on priority development projects to serve the economic and social dimensions, as well as reducing the level of public indebtedness."

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, he said the economic and financial indicators of the performance are very reassuring, and with the improvement in the financial performance of the Sultanate of Oman as indicated by different sectors of the economy, it is hoped that the performance will contribute to further accelerating the economic growth and financial activities in the country.

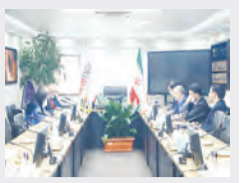
He pointed out that the financial and economic indicators for the first quarter of this year reflect the ability of the financial and economic planning system to deal positively with various global conditions and variables, whether those related to variables in energy markets or global supply and supply chain systems.

He said the continued improvement of financial performance and the surplus in the state's general budget during the first quarter of this year are positive factors that ensure the achievement of the medium-term financial balance plan for the period 2020-2024, especially in utilizing the surplus to reduce public debt levels and stimulate economic recovery and increased spending on priority development projects.

Tehran, Havana to Set Up Working Group on Mining Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Vajihollah Jafari said his organization is going to form a joint working group with Cuba to explore ways of expanding cooperation in the mining sector. As reported by the IMIDRO portal, Jafari made the remarks

after a meeting with Cuba's Minister of Energy and Mines Liván Arronte Cruz. During this meeting, Jafari referred to the capacities of Iran's mining and mineral industries in both production and export sectors, saying: "After the formation of a joint working group, studies conducted on the mining and mineral industries of the two sides will be reviewed."



Cannes Favorite Returns to Show Horror of Human Animals

CANNES (Dispatches) - One of eastern Europe's most acclaimed film-makers, Romania's Cristian Mungiu, is back at the Cannes Film Festival with a dark tale about how little it takes for people to turn on their neighbors.

His wrenching Ceausescu-era drama about illegal abortion "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" clinched the top prize at the world's top cinema showcase in 2007.

Mungiu also won best screenplay for 2012's "Beyond the Hills" and best director for "Graduation" in 2016.

His new film, "RMN", again sees him in the race for the Palme d'Or, and the 54-year-old told AFP it explores the collapse of hopes for a new era of peace following the end of the Cold War.

"I try to speak about human nature and about the state of the world today and about this feeling that we have today that things are not going in the right direction," he said.

"Things are coming to some sort of an end and everybody feels this anxiety," not least over the war raging in Ukraine, he said.

RMN is the Romanian abbreviation for an MRI which Mungiu said when scanning the brain can reveal fascinating secrets of how human beings are wired.

The film explores the anxieties of a multi-ethnic community in Transylvania, a historical crossroads of migration and competing empires which has left Romanian, Hungarian and German speakers living side-by-side to this day.

It is inspired by a story widely covered by Romanian media in 2020, when a village in Transylvania rose up against the local bakery for hiring two Sri Lankans.

In the film the foreign men are recruited to a bread factory reliant on EU grants and offering minimum-wage jobs that long went unfilled because the salary was too low for locals.

A manager tries to look after the dislocated Sri Lankans, who don't speak any of the local languages and are struggling to integrate.

A violent attack leads to confrontations with the police, the village priest and finally a town meeting in which hysterical fears about the outsiders are aired.

Mungiu said he aimed to hold up a mirror to the "instincts and cruelty which is deep inside us as human animals and to see that people who are neighbors today are capable of anything tomorrow -- raping, killing and torturing somebody else simply because somebody told me this is the enemy".

The film won warm reviews, with The Guardian saying it was "seriously



engaged with the dysfunction and unhappiness in Europe that goes unreported and unacknowledged".

US movie website IndieWire called it another "moral thriller" from Mungiu that pulls "harder and harder at the tension between complex socioeconomic forces and the simple human emotions they inspire".

Mungiu is part of Romania's New Wave of film-makers tracking the realities of the post-communist transition who have scooped up prizes at international festivals for the past two decades.

He admitted at Cannes that those acclaimed movies have been far less popular at home. "(Romanians) don't really like what we do -- they don't really understand why somebody likes it somewhere else," he said.

"But for us it's really important that we managed to create some sort of a movement which is now complex enough -- there are quite diverse film-makers expressing themselves.

"At some point I think it will be acknowledged as something good that we did also for the culture of Romania."

The Palme d'Or will be awarded on May 28.

APEC Urged to Push For Strong Policies to Avert Future Crises



BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanavisit called for enhanced efforts from Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies to respond to future crises and achieve better and more inclusive economic growth in the region.

While addressing the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting on Saturday and Sunday, Jurin said "I strongly hope that the outcome of this meeting will include a strong policy stance regarding the recovery of the regional economy after the COVID-19 pandemic, from where we should emerge stronger than ever in order to cope with future crises."

Thailand is the host of APEC 2022. Jurin highlighted Thailand's theme of "Open. Connect. Balance." and urged member economies to advance APEC's work in deepening economic integration and mobilizing the progress of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

He also reiterated the importance of resuming safe and convenient cross-border travel and promoting digital and supply chain connectivity while taking into account environmental protection and bolstering food and agricultural security to ensure the well-being of the region's people.

The meeting, with online or offline participants from APEC economies, has seen member economies detail their perspectives on the future of trade policy, especially for reviving and strengthening regional economic integration and supporting the multilateral trading system.

Participants also discussed unfolding developments, including the moderation of growth, supply chain disruptions and soaring fuel and food prices, and efforts to advance APEC's new vision, the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action.

"We need to further the promotion of digital trade and e-commerce, for example, encourage economic recovery, and strengthen connectivity in all dimensions, people, goods and services," Jurin said.

"I would like to urge all member economies to use this meeting as an opportunity to promote APEC work towards tangible outcomes," he said.

Bangladesh May Face Debt Distress From 2032

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Repayment of foreign loans taken for mega-projects may weigh down on the country from 2032, said the Bangladesh Economic Association, while suggesting the government to focus on its revenue base.

"Bangladesh may slip to the red category from its current green when the country would start debt servicing for 4-5 mega-projects altogether in 2027-28. This means the debt situation may turn tricky," said the association President Abul Barkat on Sunday, adding the situation might worsen in 2032.

The Bangladesh Economic Association also proposed an alternative budget of Tk20.50 lakh crore on that day for the 2022-23 fiscal year. In the proposal of the budget, the association recommended forming two separate ministries -- public transport and research, and innovation and development.

According to the association, the alternative budget is 3.4 times bigger than the government budget, as it noted 338 recommendations to phase out inequalities in income, wealth, health and education.

Abul Barkat said Bangladesh has now become a country of dangerous income inequality. The main goal of the upcoming budget should be minimising inequality and creating decent jobs.

Barkat, who was the chairman of Janata Bank, said health and education inequalities are also rising apart from burgeoning inequalities in income and wealth. Meanwhile, the pandemic has doubled the number of the poor.

"Reducing inequality should be the main goal for the next five budgets," he added. The Economic Association president said fundamental structural changes have to be carried out to income and expenditure to this end.

"Secondly, tax burden must not be imposed on the marginal, poor, lower-middle and middle-income people in the budget. There should be focus on social safety and human resource development too."

On rising commodity prices, he said inflation should be kept between 5% to 6%.



"We must create new jobs and ensure fair prices to the producers, while food inflation must not be allowed to get out of hand in any circumstance."

In the alternative budget, the association proposed a number of solutions leaning to political policymaking for several economic challenges such as boosting revenue collection, managing budget deficit, stopping money laundering and widening the social safety net.

The alternative budget incorporates a Tk18.70 lakh crore revenue collection, which amounts to 92% of the budget.

"In the proposed budget, direct tax amounts to 77% of the internal source income, while the remaining will come from indirect taxes. The budget deficit is 7%, which is much less than the current budget deficit of the government. There is no need for foreign loans or loans from local banks," Barkat said, terming revenue boosting challenges an economic problem with political solutions.

Abul Barkat said, "We have recommended the government to emphasise direct tax as indirect taxes fuel inequalities. We have also proposed to keep the marginalised out of the tax net in the next few years."

The economist also called for checking black money and money laundering to minimise the budget deficit.

"Another issue is that everything in our country is centralised in Dhaka or Dhaka-oriented, which is not conducive to development. Therefore, we proposed shifting the ministries to divisional headquarters," said the association president.

Barkat said the highest priority in their budget has been on social safety, as the allocation amounts to 21% of the budget. The second priority sector is education and technology sector, while the third is agriculture.

Members and representatives of the association and various professionals were connected virtually to the alternative budget press conference.

In the national budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year, the government set the total expenditure at around Tk6 lakh crore, which is nearly 17.5% of the gross domestic product.

Tehran Rejects...

FROM PAGE 1

He said the translated version did not exactly communicate the exchanged remarks, denouncing the mistranslation as an instance of media mischief.

"The Leader never made any reference to compromise, rather saying to the Qatari emir that 'we have always said that negotiations have to produce a result instead of wasting time. The Americans know what they should do in this regard,'" he said.

"It is completely clear from the purport of the Leader's remarks that the ball is in the US court, that should take a wise political decision towards implementing its commitments," the spokesman added.

The former U.S. administration led by Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the deal that is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018. Washington then reinstated the economic sanctions that had been eased under the accord.

Since April last year, Iran and the remaining signatories to the deal have been engaged in marathon talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna to salvage the accord and bring the US back to compliance. The latest round of talks has been stalled over Washington's dilly-dallying tactics and refusal to respond to Iran's proposals.

Terrorists to Pay...

FROM PAGE 1

Sharif emphasized that Khodaei's assassination has further strengthened the IRGC's determination to safeguard national security and sovereignty and to decisively confront the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the terrorist U.S. administration plus the bogus, criminal, and the temporary Israeli regime.

Meanwhile, the secretary of the State Security Council said the assassination of the IRGC member was definitely carried out by Israel, and those who perpetrated the crime must await a severe response from Iran.

"This act was undeniably carried out by the Zionist regime. They (Israeli officials) must now be assured that harsh revenge awaits them," Majid Mir-Ahmadi said in an exclusive interview with Iran's official news agency IRNA on Monday.

He continued, "The criminals who have committed the crime must be prepared for a stinging slap as our revenge will be such that they will regret their action."

According to IRNA, the terrorist attack that claimed the life of Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei took place in the Iranian capital at around 4 p.m. local time (1130 GMT) on Sunday, when the IRGC member was dismounting his car to enter his home in an eastern neighborhood of the Iranian capital.

He was reportedly assassinated after two motorcyclists shot him five times before fleeing the scene.

Iran Agrees to...

FROM PAGE 1

"As the first basis of my talks with Omani Oil Minister Mohammed bin Hamad al-Rumhi, it was agreed to form a joint technical committee to develop the next phases of the Hengam oil field in a seamless manner between Iran and Oman," Owji said.

"Joint exploitation, in contrast to competitive exploitation, will be mutually beneficial to both countries as this method leads to less damage to the reservoir and allows for more extraction," the minister added.

President Raisi took his "economic diplomacy" to Oman on his fifth foreign visit since taking office in August. A delegation of 50 business actors and executives are accompanying him in the visit.

The president has called for strengthening regional bonds especially in the Persian Gulf region.

Last year, Iran's trade with Oman stood at \$1.3 billion. Raisi, however, said in Tehran before leaving for Muscat that this volume of trade did not reflect their full potentials in various sectors of economy.

According to the president, the two sides are set to sign several memoranda of understanding during his visit, mainly focusing on transportation, energy and tourism.

Iran Annual...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran has reported high but controlled levels of inflation since 2019 when the country started to feel the economic impacts of American sanctions on its oil exports. The inflation rose further in 2020 amid the spread of the coronavirus in Iran.

SCI figures published in recent months have pointed to a downward trend in inflation rate in Iran. That comes as an administrative government that came to office in August says it has tamed the inflation through implementing a series of sound monetary and fiscal policies.

Israeli Embassies...

FROM PAGE 1

"Contrary to the previous occasions, where the victims used to be people active in Iran's nuclear program, this time a ranking member of the IRGC was the target of assassination," the channel said.

The channel, meanwhile, noted that what had caused the Israeli regime to worry this time around about the safety and security of its interests across the globe was Tehran's assertion that the assassination had crossed its red lines.

The Palestinian Mujahideen Movement issued a strong reaction to the assassination. It described the attack as a "cowardly terrorist operation," associating it with the Israeli spy agency of Mossad.

"The Zionist terrorist operation against the Ummah proves the criminal nature of its first enemy, namely Zionism and its allies," the group said in a statement.

"We stress that this criminal operation requires joint efforts by the resistance coalition to intensify in order to deflect this constant aggression," it added.

Woods Withdraws From PGA Championship

TULSA (Dispatches) - Tiger Woods withdrew from the PGA Championship, after carding one of his worst rounds ever at a major tournament: a nine-over 79.

Woods, in his second start after a car crash 15 months ago nearly cost him his right leg, appeared dejected and in pain as he trudged off the 18th green at Southern Hill Country Club.

Asked if he would be back for Sunday's fourth round, Woods was non-committal. He officially announced his withdrawal about five hours after his finish.

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Titmus Smashes Ledecy's World Record

ADELAIDE (Dispatches) - Ariame Titmus smashed American great Katie Ledecy's 400m freestyle world record at the Australian championships Sunday, touching in 3mins 56.40secs to reinforce her dominant status after a breakout Tokyo Olympics.

The 21-year-old upset Ledecy in the Olympic pool last year to claim gold and has now bettered her arch rival's 3:56.46 world best set at the 2016 Olympics in Rio. "Oh my God, I've just loved swimming the past six months, just going to training with no pressure and just enjoying the sport," Titmus said poolside in Adelaide.

Man City Win Premier League Title After Epic Fightback

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City won the Premier League for the fourth time in five seasons after a pulsating title race reached a dramatic conclusion as the champions staged an incredible comeback from two goals down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's side were teetering on the brink of blowing the title after falling 2-0 behind midway through the second half at the Etihad Stadium.

But Ilkay Gundogan sparked an astonishing City revival as the German midfielder reduced the deficit before Rodri grabbed the equaliser.

Gundogan turned in City's third goal in the space of five minutes in the 81st minute, triggering wild celebrations and rendering second placed Liverpool's 3-1 victory against Wolves irrelevant.

City finished with 93 points, one ahead of Liverpool as they ended their rivals hopes of winning an unprecedented quadruple.

On a breathtaking final day, Burnley were relegated as Leeds beat the drop, while Tottenham qualified for the Champions League at the expense of their north London rivals Arsenal.

It was City who hogged the spotlight on a day their fans, who spilled onto the pitch in delight, will never forget.

Guardiola's men can rightly be called a dynasty after joining Manchester United as the only clubs in the Premier League era to have won four titles in five seasons, with Alex Ferguson's teams doing it on three separate occasions.

The eighth league title in City's history is Guardiola's ninth major trophy since arriving at the club in 2016.

Once again, City saved the best until last as they edged Liverpool out on the final day of the season for the second time after beating them to the finish line in 2019.

It was 10 years since Sergio Aguero's famous last-second goal against QPR sealed City's first title since 1968 and this jaw-dropping success was almost as unlikely.

Guardiola had called on City's fans to be "loud, loud, loud" in their bid to retain the crown, but they were stunned into silence in the 37th minute.

Lucas Digne whipped in a cross from the left and Matty Cash got in front of Joao Cancelo to score with a bullet header.

Former Liverpool star Philippe Coutinho doubled Villa's lead with a cool finish in the 69th minute.



The shell-shocked Guardiola slumped into his seat, but City would not surrender and Ilkay Gundogan headed them back into contention in the 76th minute.

Rodri's low strike from the edge of the area two minutes later set up a nerve-jangling finale.

And in the 81st minute, Kevin de Bruyne's low cross reached Gundogan at the far post and the substitute tapped home to send City into ecstasy.

Having already won the FA Cup and League Cup, Liverpool can still enjoy a memorable season of their own if they beat Real Madrid in the Champions League final in Paris on Saturday.

Liverpool trailed City by 14 points in January, but Klopp's side pushed them to the wire, showing the fortitude that earned them the nickname "mentality monsters" from their manager.

Liverpool were rocked after just three minutes when Pedro Neto produced a close-range finish from Raul Jimenez's cross.

Sadio Mane equalized with a clinical strike from just inside the area after sprinting onto Thiago Alcantara's pass in the 24th minute.

Mohamed Salah poked Liverpool ahead with six minutes left but by then news of City's extraordinary recovery had reached Anfield, which was in subdued mood by the time Andrew Robertson scored in stoppage-time.

Tottenham's 5-0 rout of relegated Norwich secured fourth place at Carrow Road.

Just a few weeks ago, Antonio Conte had insisted it would take a "miracle" for Tottenham to finish in the top four, but the Italian has masterminded a superb run that ends his club's two-year absence from the Champions League.

Dejan Kulusevski's 16th minute tap-in from Rodrigo Bentancur's pass put Tottenham ahead before Harry Kane struck with a diving header in the 32nd minute.

Kulusevski curled a sublime shot into the far corner in the 64th minute and Golden Boot winner Son Heung-min scored in the 70th and 75th minutes.

Tottenham's victory left north London rivals Arsenal in fifth place despite their 5-1 win against Everton.



AC Milan Win First Serie A title Since 2011

ROME (Dispatches) - AC Milan won their first Serie A title in 11 years on Sunday after beating Sassuolo 3-0 to snatch the crown from local rivals Inter Milan.

Needing just a point to claim the Scudetto Milan swept their hosts aside thanks to an Olivier Giroud brace and another from Franck Kessie in the first half in front of an army of away fans at the Mapei Stadium.

Stefano Pioli's Milan finished two points ahead of Inter, who beat Sampdoria 3-0 in the San Siro.

Fans partied in Milan and poured onto the pitch in Reggio Emilia as the 'Rossoneri' returned to the top of the Italian game after years of poor teams and financial problems since their last league crown in 2011.

Pioli's side were imperious in winning their sixth match on the bounce and securing a title which for long tracts of the season looked like Inter's to lose.

They were helped by a hat-trick of assists from exciting winger Rafale Leao, who has come of age this season and is reportedly a summer target for Paris Saint-Germain.

Giroud has struck some of the most important goals of Milan's charge to the title and again showed why he is the man for the big occasion in the 17th minute.

The second half was dedicated to the Milan celebrations and despite some spirited Sassuolo play it was only a matter of time before the away side sealed the title for a 19th time.

Sunderland Promoted To Championship

LONDON (Dispatches) - Sunderland clinched promotion to the Championship with a 2-0 win against Wycombe in the League One play-off final at Wembley.

Alex Neil's side ended their club's dismal record of seven failed play-off campaigns thanks to goals from Elliot Embleton and Ross Stewart.

The Black Cats' promotion justified the decision to sack Lee Johnson in January and replace him with former Preston boss Neil.

After four years in the third tier wilderness, Sunderland are finally on the up as the sleeping giants awake from their slumber.

While a return to the Premier League will not be easy for Neil's team next term, that will be the goal for a club with vast potential who last played in the top-flight in 2017.

Over 45,000 Sunderland fans turned Wembley into a cauldron of noise after the red and white-clad hordes had taken over London landmark Trafalgar Square on the eve of the match.

Wycombe's quest for an instant return to the Championship fell at the final hurdle, meaning 40-year-old Adebayo Akinfenwa's 755th and last appearance of his career ended in disappointment.

"I'll be honest with you, the biggest pressure really was from myself. The people that own the club, that wasn't what was discussed, it was just 'How can you fix it?'," Neil said.

"I fixed the bits we needed to fix. I didn't want to manage in League One, so I had to get the club out of League One to become a Championship manager again under a lot of scrutiny. "When you've got a group of players like that, it's not a problem."

NBA Fines Mavs \$100K

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The NBA nipped the pressure on the Dallas Mavericks over their boisterous bench antics on Sunday, fining the club \$100,000 after its latest violation of "bench decorum."

The hefty penalty, for conduct during the Mavs' game-two loss to the Golden State Warriors in the Western Conference finals, comes after fines of \$25,000 and \$50,000 over the behavior of unoccupied Mavs players on the sideline during the club's series win over the Phoenix Suns.

Foden Voted Premier League Young Player of the Season



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City forward Phil Foden was named the Premier League's Young Player of the season for the second consecutive year.

Foden has been instrumental in City's bid to retain the Premier League title, scoring nine goals and producing five assists.

The 21-year-old has matched his goal and assist totals from last season and could surpass them in City's vital Premier League title decider against Aston Villa on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's side are one point clear of second placed Liverpool and will be guaranteed to win a fourth English title in five seasons if they beat Villa at the Etihad Stadium.

Liverpool would win the title if they defeat Wolves and City drop points. "I'm very proud to have won this award for a second season in a row," Foden told City's website.

"There are so many talented young players in the Premier League this season and it's a real honour to win it again.

"I have been really happy with my performances this season and it has been great to contribute to this team in what will hopefully be another successful year for us all."

In an award voted on by fans, Foden finished ahead of Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold, Chelsea's Mason Mount, West Ham's Declan Rice, Arsenal duo Aaron Ramsdale and Bukayo Saka and Crystal Palace pair Conor Gallagher and Tyrick Mitchell.

Jabeur, Thiem Crash at French Open

PARIS (Dispatches) - Arab trailblazer Ons Jabeur crashed out of the French Open at the first hurdle on Sunday as Spanish teenage sensation Carlos Alcaraz prepared to give Roland Garros a glimpse of the future of Grand Slam tennis.

Sixth seed Jabeur, seen as a potential champion, despite never having previously got past the fourth round, lost 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 to Poland's 56th-ranked Magda Linette.

Jabeur came into the event with a season-leading 17 wins on clay in 2022 and with the prestigious Madrid title under her belt.

However, she was undone Sunday by 24 unforced errors in the two hour 28-minute match. Linette had lost to Jabeur in the third round in 2021 having stunned an injury-hit top seed Ashleigh Barty in her previous match.

"I just tried to stay focused after the first set and tried to make her uncomfortable. I was happy to fight for every single point," said Linette who needed treatment on a leg injury after dropping the first set. Two-time runner-up Dominic Thiem, whose ranking has slipped to 194 after a lengthy battle with a wrist injury, was another early casualty, losing 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 to 87th-ranked Hugo Dellien of Bolivia.

Thiem, the 2020 US Open champion, has yet to win a match in six attempts since his return in March. He has now lost 10 tour-level matches in a row. His last victory came in Rome just over a year ago.



Verstappen Wins Spanish GP

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Formula One world champion Max Verstappen won the Spanish Grand Prix in a Red Bull one-two today to take over at the top from Ferrari's luckless Charles Leclerc, who retired with an engine failure while leading.

Mexican Sergio Perez finished a dutiful second, 13 seconds behind but with the consolation of a bonus point for fastest lap, after being told to let his team mate pass for a third victory in a row after Imola and Miami.

The 24-year-old Dutch driver is now six points clear of Leclerc after winning four of six races -- all those he has finished.

Britain's George Russell came third for a revived Mercedes and after going wheel-to-wheel with Verstappen early on in a thrilling display of defensive driving as they battled for second place behind Leclerc.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was fourth, after fighting back from a slow start and a spin into the gravel, but it was scant reward for a team who had brought upgrades to try and turn the tables on Red Bull.

Leclerc was leading comfortably from pole position but a sudden loss of power before the halfway mark led to his retirement in the pits.

"No, no, no! Lost power," the Ferrari driver shouted over the radio as a seemingly sure victory was plucked from his hands by the engine failure.

