

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **141,308** With **2** More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

# IRAN NEWS

The 9th Joint Committee on Border Trade (JCBT) Meeting Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Is Scheduled to Be Held In Zahedan on May 30-31, 2022

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## Iran Expects Over \$9b Exports to Iraq by Yearend

ERBIL (Dispatches) - Iran's trade relations with Iraq has improved since March, and Tehran expects to export over \$9 billion worth of goods to its neighbor by March next year, the head of Iran and Iraq's Joint Chamber of Commerce told Iranian media.

"Iran's trade situation with Iraq has improved with the removal of obstacles such as the coronavirus, although the election issue in Iraq is not yet settled, but in general, our economic and trade relations with the country have improved," Yahya al-Ishaq told Fars news agency.

Ishaq said that the accurate figures are yet to be announced, however Tehran has had relatively good growth in exports to Iraq since the start of the Persian year in March.

Iraq's main purchases from Iran are agricultural products, engineering services, construction materials, and energy, such as electricity and natural gas. Baghdad has received waivers from Washington allowing it to buy Iranian electricity and natural gas. Iran's director general of customs in April announced that Iraq was the largest importer of Iranian products since March 2021, importing \$8.9 billion worth of goods, marking a 21 percent increase in Iranian exports to Iraq.

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## Iran, Afghanistan to Set Up Joint Chamber of Commerce

TEHRAN (MNA)- The authorities of Afghanistan have expressed readiness to create a joint Chamber of Commerce between Iran and Afghanistan in Kabul.

Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce (ACCI) in a statement noted that the Afghan delegation met with the Board of Directors of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce and Investment to establish an Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce in Kabul.

The member of the Board of Directors of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industries (ACCI) Khan Jan Alokzay lauded Iran as the main trading partner with Afghanistan and called for coordination and resolving trade problems on the border between the two states.

He termed the establishment of a joint Iran-Afghanistan chamber inside Afghanistan as an important need.

Emphasizing developing trade relations, solving problems, exchanging trade delegations, and holding exhibitions, CEO of the Chamber of Afghanistan Commerce and Investment Shafiqullah Atai expressed Afghanistan's readiness to establish a joint chamber of commerce between Iran and Afghanistan.

Iranian delegation officials also emphasized the development of trade relations between the two countries.

There was a joint Chamber of Commerce of Afghanistan in Iran, but it has not been established inside Afghanistan over the years.

## Tehran, Baghdad Discuss Fighting Dust Storms



TEHRAN - The head of Iranian Department of Environment Ali Salajegheh and the Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein held a joint press conference in Baghdad on Sunday to discuss the dust storms.

The head of the Iranian Department of Environment Ali Salajegheh, who also acts as the vice president, has traveled to Iraq to consult with Iraqi officials about controlling dust storms, which have caused serious problems for the country especially this year.

According to the Iraq News Agency (INA), the two officials held a joint press conference after holding a meeting.

In the press conference, the Iraqi foreign minister said, "We talked to Iran about climate change, drought and desertification. Iraqi and Iranian delegations in Baghdad consulted on addressing the challenges of the climate phenomenon. We also discussed the water issue and its management between Iraq and Iran. Climate change is not specific to one country and it spills over across borders."

Hussein added, "There will meetings and sessions will between the two countries to discuss the issue of shared water and rivers."

Ali Salajegheh, for his part, said, "We talked to the Iraqi side about various cases. Today's meeting is a good beginning for cooperation in the case of dust storms. Iraq and Iran have experience in stabilizing sand dunes."

The Iranian environmental official further said that the Iranian Minister of Energy will travel to Iraq to discuss the issue of dust storms.

Selajegheh arrived in Iraq on Saturday evening at the head of a technical and expert delegation from the Iranian Agriculture Ministry, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Ministry of Energy as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was welcomed by the Iraqi Minister of Environment.

According to the Public Relations office of the Iranian Department of Environment, the Iranian delegation trip aims to exchange views and reach a consensus with the Iraqi authorities on collective cooperation in the region to tackle the sand storms, paying visits to dust storms' origins and review effective and immediate solutions to reduce the effects of the environmental issue.

## Östlund's Triangle of Sadness Wins Palme d'Or at Cannes

CANNES (Dispatches) - Ruben Östlund's social satire Triangle of Sadness has won the Palme d'Or at the 75th Cannes film festival, handing the Swedish director one of cinema's most prestigious prizes for the second time.

Östlund won Cannes' top honor for his film The Square in 2017. Triangle of Sadness, which features Woody Harrelson as a Marxist yacht captain and a climactic scene of rampant vomiting, pushes the satire even further. "We wanted after the screening [for people] to go out together and have something to talk about," said Östlund. "All of us agree that the unique thing with cinema is that we're watching together. So we have to save something to talk about but we should also have fun and be entertained."

The awards were selected by a nine-member jury headed by French actor Vincent Lindon and presented Saturday in a closing ceremony inside Cannes' Grand Lumière Theater.

The jury's second prize, the grand prix, was shared between Lukas Dhont's tender boyhood drama Close and director Claire Denis' romantic thriller Stars at Noon.

Earlier, the Korean star Song Kang-ho won best actor for his performance in Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's film Broker, about a Korean family seeking a home for an abandoned baby.

"I'd like to thank all those who appreciate Korean cinema," said Song, who also starred in Bong Joon-ho's Parasite, which won the Palme d'Or award in Cannes three years ago.

Best actress went to Zar Amir Ebrahimi for her performance as a journalist in Ali Abbasi's Holy Spider, a true-crime thriller about a serial killer targeting sex workers in the Iranian religious city of Mashhad. Violent and graphic, Holy Spider wasn't permitted to shoot in Iran and instead was made in Jordan. Accepting the award, Ebrahimi said the film depicts "everything that's impossible to show in Iran".

Swedish-Egyptian film-maker Tarik Saleh took best screenplay at Cannes for Boy From Heaven, a thriller set in Cairo's Al-Azhar Mosque. Saturday's closing ceremony ends a Cannes that has attempted to fully resuscitate the annual France extravaganza, which was canceled in 2020 by the pandemic and saw modest crowds last year. This year's festival also unspooled against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, which sparked red-carpet protests and a dialogue about the purpose of cinema in wartime.

The Palme d'Or, one of film's most prestigious awards, is famously impossible to handicap - though bookies still try their best. It hinges entirely on the deliberations of the jury, which take place in private. Last year, the French body horror thriller Titane took the prize, making director Julia Decourmau only the second female film-maker ever to win the Palme. This year's award for best first film, the Caméra d'Or, went to Riley Keough and Gina Gammell for War Pony, a drama about the Pine Ridge Reservation made in collaboration with native Oglala Lakota and Sicangu Lakota citizens.

## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

### Canada, a False Human Rights Defender

Canada in recent decades has tried to paint a picture of it as a true human rights defending country but it has actually turned into a haven for the economic corrupts and political oppositions of other countries and it now actually acts like its lord, the U.S., against all human rights principles and politicizes everything.

A couple of weeks ago Canadian media outlets reported that Canada would host the Islamic Republic of Iran for a friendly soccer match and this report suddenly came under spotlight and it faced some backlashes from the politicians in both countries but the Football Federation of Canada reiterated that the match would go on as schedule and it would not pay any attention to the oppositions and even it started selling 40,000 tickets for the match.

After days of opposition from some politicians in Canada and a few number of anti-revolutionary Iranians and Canadian politicians, the Football Federation of Canada suddenly on Thursday in a tweet surprised the football fans by announcing the cancellation of the match without giving any reasons behind the cancellation.

Of course, everybody knows it well that the cancellation has been because of the political pressures and once again politics played its role over the fate of a sport event and led to its cancellations. In recent years, sports fans have heard of these kinds of remarks by officials that politics should not interfere the sports events and even international sport federations have set this issue as one of their principles and have sanctioned or punished federations or athletes who politicize the sports. Iranian federations and athletes the past have faced such punishments due to the claims of politicizing the sports.

But now Canada as a country which claims defending human rights and is against politicizing the sport has involved in a dirty political game by cancelling a football match between Iran and Canada which is definitely because of the political reasons.

The Football Federation of Canada for the sake of a bunch of Iranian oppositions' claim has taken a political decision against its principle and once again Canada showed the world it cannot be a true human rights defender or supporter of non-politicized sport event.

Reacting to Canada's decision, Kazem Gharibabadi, vice-president of Iran's judiciary tweeted, "Canada's decision to call off a friendly with Iran is testimony to the fact that it "can't keep politics off the pitch." See Page 7

## Dozens of Israeli Settlers Storm Aqsa Mosque

BEIT-UL MOQADDAS (Dispatches) - About 1,800 Israeli settlers, escorted by military forces, have stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of al-Quds.

The Israeli settlers entered the compound through the Moroccan Gate on Sunday morning, according to the Arabic-language Arab48 news website.

In the meantime, Israeli troops were stationed at the main praying building of al-Aqsa Mosque, which sits on the southern side of the complex, besieging Palestinian worshippers inside the sacred site.

The settlers then performed Talmudic rituals at the site, which is venerated by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The development comes as thousands of extremist Jewish Israeli settlers are due to hold a far-right march through Muslim areas of the holy city amid Palestinian warnings it could trigger serious confrontations.

Earlier, Israeli military forces had raided the predominantly Palestinian neighborhood of Jabel Mukaber in southern East al-Quds, according to Palestinian media outlets. The raid prompted a group of young Palestinians to throw lit Molotov cocktails at the Israeli troops, who, in return, fired stun grenades and live bullets to disperse the crowd.

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## Two Iranian Airlines to Have Flights to Muscat

TEHRA (IRNA) - Iran's Iran Air and Karun Air were allowed to have direct flights to Muscat as a result of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's Oman visit.

President Raisi travelled to Oman last week, with new cooperation agreements on transportation and transit on the agenda.

Iranian passengers were using some Arab airlines, including Qatar Airways, and Turkish Airlines to travel to Muscat.

## Tehran Urges Ankara for Dialog Over Its Concerns

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh says Tehran opposes the use of military action against regional countries, stressing that the only way to assuage Turkey's security concerns is through dialog, rather than another incursion into neighboring Syria.

The remarks came after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to launch a new military operation in Syria with the alleged aim of securing Turkey's southern border.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran opposes any military action and the use of force on the territory of other countries with the aim of resolving disputes between them, and considers it a violation of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of those countries," Khatibzadeh said on Saturday.

Khatibzadeh said the use of force would further complicate the situation, increase the tensions, and lead to humanitarian disasters in the region.

He further said while the Islamic Republic understands Turkey's security concerns, the only way to alleviate those concerns is through dialog and respect for bilateral agreements with neighbors as well as agreements reached



within the Astana peace process to end the Syrian crisis.

The spokesman added that the Islamic Republic is ready to help "prevent the escalation of the crisis and any conflict whose victims will be only defenseless civilians."

Speaking following a cabinet meeting on Monday, Erdogan said the aim of the military operation would be to resume Turkish efforts to create a 30-kilometer safe zone along its border with Syria.

"We will soon take new steps regarding the incomplete portions of the project we started on the 30-km deep safe zone we established along our southern border," he said.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and other senior officials have said Damascus will respond through all legitimate means available to the ongoing ground offensive by Turkish forces in the northern part of the Arab country.

## Tajikistan Ready to Further Develop Relations With Iran



TEHRAN (MNA) - In a meeting with the Iranian Foreign Minister, the Tajik Deputy Foreign Minister voiced the country's readiness to further develop relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Muzaffar Huseynzoda met and held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Saturday.

Referring to the visit of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to Tehran, Amir-Abdollahian said that the upcoming visit of Tajikistan's president to Tehran is of paramount importance for developing relations in different fields between the two countries.

He also added that the two countries share many commonalities, including cultural ones, and this provides ground for the further development of their relations.

Huseynzoda, for his part, said that Tajikistan is ready to expand relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields.

During the meeting, the latest issues of bilateral relations and the latest follow-ups and understandings reached during the Iranian President's visit to Tajikistan last year were discussed.

## Iran to Send Consular Delegation to Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (IP) - Foreign Minister, during a meeting with the officials of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, emphasized that Iran will send a consular delegation to Saudi Arabia during the Hajj.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have held four talks in Baghdad to improve relations and resolve differences. According to Iraj Masjedi, Iran's ambassador to Iraq, the fifth round of talks is scheduled to take place soon.

In a joint meeting of Hajj and Pilgrimage officials with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, issues related to sending pilgrims to the Sacred House of God to perform the 144th Hajj rituals were discussed.

Iran is sending about 40,000 people to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj.

During a meeting with Hajj and Pilgrimage officials, the Foreign Minister said: "The Consular and Iranian Affairs Deputy will give all its capacity to pilgrims and Hajj executives and will send a consular delegation to Saudi Arabia for this purpose."

Amir-Abdollahian emphasized the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at various levels to facilitate the departure of Iranian pilgrims for this year's Hajj and to participate in this great divine ritual.

The Iranian Foreign Minister also clarified that the Consular and Iranian Affairs Deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will give all its capacity to the pilgrims and the executive agents of Hajj from the beginning to the end of the departure and will send a consular delegation to Saudi Arabia for this purpose.

Amir-Abdollahian expressed the hope that this year's Hajj would be glorious and peaceful with the help of Saudi officials.

## Iran Urged to Finalize Ziarat Policy to Promote Religious Tourism

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Pakistan's Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor has urged the Iranian government to finalize the draft of 'Ziarat Policy' to promote the religious tourism.

There were a number of people who pay homage at the mausoleums of sacred religious figures located in Iran every year. In this regard, the government of Pakistan had forwarded a draft named 'Ziarat Policy' in a bid to enhance religious tourism between the two brotherly countries but it was still in pending.

Talking to a delegation led by Iranian Deputy Minister of Islamic Culture and Relations Dr Hussain Rozba, comprising of Vice Minister for Culture, Arab Asadi the other day, he said the ministry would like to establish offices in Iran including Pakistan House and facilitate religious pilgrims during their stay in Quetta

and Taftan under the policy.

Abdul Shakoor said Pak-Iran relations were based on common values, love and brotherhood. Both the countries were desirous to resolve bilateral issues by devising a joint strategy, he said.

Brushing the aside the impression of division on the basis of sect or faith, he made it clear that there was no room for any division between the two brotherly countries on the basis of sectarianism.

Dr Hussain Rozba said the cornerstone of the Iranian foreign policy was to maintain cordial relations with neighboring countries.

He invited the minister to attend the forthcoming conference being held in Iran to discuss the promotion of religious harmony and other common issues prevailing between the two countries.

The dignitaries of the both sides agreed on promoting bilateral relations, interfaith harmony and cooperation in Hajj arrangements.

## Kyrgyzstan Welcomes Conclusion of PTA Between Iran, EAEU

TEHRAN (MNA) - President of Republic of Kyrgyzstan welcomed the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)'s Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with the Islamic Republic of Iran, calling it as a main route of international cooperation.

Speaking in the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov said that the development of Eurasian integration is directly linked to the promotion of exports of goods, equipment and technologies to third countries and the establishment of relationships with new trading partners.

There is now a trend towards a multi-polar global economy and the transfer of economic activity centers to the Asian region, he said, adding that Eurasian countries should actively develop international trade and economic cooperation with the countries of Southeast Asian nations, countries in the West Asia, Indo-Pacific region, North Africa and Latin America.

Bishkek fully supports the creation of a new architecture of international trade including within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

He said that Kyrgyzstan is in favor of creating a free trade zone with Indonesia and expanding free trade zone with Iran and also boosting cooperation with other countries which is defined in the main directions of international cooperation.

## Gov't Declares a Day of National Mourning For Victims of Building Collapse

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran announced a day of national mourning on Sunday to honor the victims of a 10-story building collapse in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

Sadeq Khalilian, Khuzestan's governor, said the death toll from the collapse of Metropol commercial building in the city of Abadan has now reached 29, making it one of the deadliest disasters in Iran in recent years.

Khalilian also said that 38 people have been reported missing based on preliminary statistics. The exact number of people trapped under the rubble is still unknown as the search operation

has been going slowly and carefully for the fear of adjacent buildings falling down.

"After retrofitting the building, we were supposed to remove debris in four spots," Khuzestan's governor said. "At present, these four spots are being worked on and we have reached sensitive areas from four directions. Given the dangers of the fall of Metropol, we hope that we will be able to remove the debris and remove the bodies trapped under the rubble as soon as possible."

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Friday offered condolences over the loss of lives in the "unfortunate incident," calling for the rescue operation to be accelerated and the casualty toll minimized.

Condoling with the families of the victims, the Leader also urged the concerned authorities to prosecute those responsible and hand them "exemplary" punishment.

## Ties With Greece Must Not Be Disturbed by Third Party

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has said that Iran's ties with Greece should not be disturbed through miscalculations pushed by a third party.

Khatibzadeh made the comment on his twitter page on Saturday. "Long-running relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Greece and its incredible people have always been based on mutual respect. These relations should not be disturbed through deeply short-sighted miscalculations, such as piracy, by order of a third party," he tweeted. On Friday, Iran impounded two Greek oil tankers in Persian Gulf waters over maritime violations.

That happened several days after Greece detained an Iranian-flagged ship off its coast and began unloading its oil cargo.

## Iran Facilitates Traveling For Foreign Students

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Student Affairs Organization (SFO) is trying to facilitate exit and entry for foreign students in collaboration with the passport police, the head of the organization said.

Speaking in a meeting with elite Afghan students on Sunday, Hashem Dadashpour said that Iran is a part of a broader cultural region which is the source of cultural commonalities with neighbor countries, especially the Persian-speaking countries.

He highlighted Afghanistan among Persian-speaking countries, noting that a considerable number of Afghan students study in state and non-state Iranian universities.

The official said that this is an indication of Iran's attaching importance to foreign students from neighboring countries.

SFO has made efforts to facilitate exit/entry and residence issues of foreign students in collaboration with Immigration & Passport Police Office of Iran.

## Minister Hails Production Records in ESCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - Minister of Labor, Cooperation and Social Welfare has hailed production records in Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) and said that creating hope through reflecting the achievements is necessary for the current society.



Addressing the gathering of managers of public relations of Isfahan province dubbed Conference of Hope Creating Crusaders, Mr. Hojjatoleslam Abdolmaleki emphasized creation of hope in the society through the achievements of different units in the country like Esfahan Steel Company which has been able to set good records in a short period of time.

Abdolmaleki noted that his ministry socially has the highest responsibilities and for this reason the ministry is public. He also called for synergy among public relations of the ministries and called it an important issue, adding that Morvardi System is a ground for reflecting services and achievements of Labor, Cooperation and Social Welfare Ministry in different fields like welfare, labor, insurance and banks and said it is one of the tasks of the public relations to reflect them.

He urged the public relations to observe ethics in publishing accurate news and report adding that of reports should be the yardstick of the public relations.

He then pointed to the Supreme Leader's remarks regarding the jihad of explanation and said over 70m people are the addresses of the ministry and the public relations should advance the works in synergy with each other.

## Goharzamin Pelletizing Sets a New Record for Production

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The pelletizing unit of Goharzamin Iron Ore Company set a new record for production after removing existing limits in the early design of panels of processing fans.

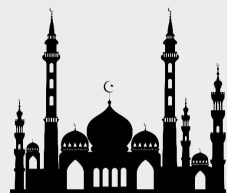


According to the public relations of Goharzamin Iron Ore Company, head of pelletizing unit of the company Eng. Meghdad Kordestani pointed to the amount of production in this unit and said fortunately by removing limits in the early design of panels of processing fans, the production rose by 35% and produced 454,631 tons of pellet in the month of Ordibehesht which set a new record, adding that this decision will earn the company 63,000b rials per year.

He added that with exploitation of the pelletizing unit of the company, the production faced some limits and problems due to the rising heat in the production system because of the problems in the early design of panels of processing fans and after study on the problems for six months, this problem was resolved and it led to the rise in production and the pelletizing unit set a record for production in the past Iranian month of Ordibehesht.

He hailed the personnel of the staff for this new record in production of pellet.





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:01
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:33
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:07
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:50

48. And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His mercy, and We send down pure water from the sky,-  
49. That with it We may give life to a dead land, and slake the thirst of things We have created,- cattle and men in great numbers.

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (48 - 49)

# Iranian Companies to Enter German Market

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization says Iranian businesspeople have held talks with 75 Germany companies to expand economic ties between the two countries. The organization said the negotiations resulted in the signing of a number of agreements.**

Mir Hadi Seyyedi, an advisor to Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, said the agency has started cooperation with a UN affiliated body known as International Trade Center, ITC.

The cooperation, according to Seyyedi, is aimed at supporting Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) so that they can make inroads in the European market.

Seyyedi added that the CEOs of 20 manufacturing companies traveled to Germany from April 24 to May 14, 2022 as part of the Trade Promotion Organization's export capacity building program.

He said during their stay in Germany, the CEOs used the professional services of Carl Duisberg Center, a German company, to enter the country's market.

Seyyedi underlined that last autumn, the Trade Promotion Organization called on companies working in the fields of herbal drugs, fruits and vegetables, car spare parts,



petrochemical products, IT, and tourism to enroll in the capacity building program.

He said 100 firms enrolled but finally 35 companies were selected for the training program. Seyyedi noted that the project is not over yet and Carl Duisberg committed to support 20 Iranian companies in the marketing program for more than a year.

He said the same program is going to be implemented for knowledge-based companies and that a similar project will be put in place to enter Italy's market.

Seyyedi reiterated that the goal behind this visit and talks was to help Iranian companies and to improve their capabilities in the foreign market. He noted that there are some Iranian companies which have close cooperation with European companies and this cooperation has been in a way that their production has been done under the brand of the European companies and distributed in the world.

## Executive Process of Investment in Neishabour Project Kicks Off

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** In line with implementing the investment contract in the wastewater project of town of Neishabour and through holding a tender, Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) picked the advisor of this project from among the reputable and grade one companies.

According to the Head of Development and Plans of the company Mr. Eshaghian, Padid Ab-e-Sepahan Consulting Engineering was picked as the consultant of this project after passing all formalities based on the regulations and the agreement was signed last month.

According to the agreement, the consultant company is in charge of all engineering services, mapping, design, preparing documents for tender and choosing the contractor.

According to Es'haghian, a team of experts from Padid Ab-e Sepahan is to visit Khorasan Steel Complex Company soon and it will inspect the location for construction of this wastewater treatment and it will present its programs.

This big project is comprised of three parts of network for collecting wastewater of the town which will be around 280 kilometers, construction of wastewater treatment unit with capacity of 40,000 cubic meters per day in south of Neishabour and finally the pipeline for transfer from the wastewater treatment unit to Khorasan Steel Complex.

This project will be carried out with investment around 12,000b rials and it will be the biggest public project of the company and it will save waste of 40,000 cubic meters of water in Neishabor.



## Over 2m Tons of Commodities Traded on IME Last Week



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,090,590 tons of commodities with a total trading value of almost \$523m on its physical market.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1,814,000 tons of commodities valued at more than \$287m.

On this floor, the IME's customers purchased 1,323,955 tons of cement, 201,000 tons of iron ore, 194,559 tons of steel, 54,500 tons of sponge iron, 10,250 tons of aluminum, 7,700 tons of copper, 500 tons of coke, 60 tons of lead, 25,290 tons of zinc, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 30 tons of precious metals concentrate and 21 kg of gold bars.

It's worth noting that the IME's automobile trading floor sold 36 Cara Sedan automobiles.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 258,863 tons of commodities worth more than \$228m.

The exchange's customers purchased on this floor 91,225 tons of polymeric products, 57,568 tons of bitumen, 35,000 tons of lube cut, 29,300 tons of vacuum bottom, 36,790 tons of chemicals, 1,570 tons of sulfur, 4,807 tons of base oil and 180 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 17,457 tons of commodities traded on it.

# Symposium Held on Knowledge-Based and Value-Added Collaborations Between Copper Industry and University



The symposium on the development of knowledge-based and value-creating collaborations between the copper industry and the University of Khorramshahr began in June 1401 in Sarcheshmeh. According to the public relations of Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex in Rafsanjan, the opening ceremony of the symposium on the development of knowledge-based and value-added cooperation between the copper industry and the university was attended by Dr. Mohammad Saeed Seif, Director General of Industry and Community Relations Office of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, Dr. Ali Rostami, Engineer Hossein Ahmadi, Member of the Board of Directors of Sarcheshmeh Copper Company and Manager of Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex, Rafsanjan, Mehdi Tabibzadeh, Chairman of Kerman Chamber of Commerce, Hojjatoleslam and Muslims Asghar Askari, Friday Imam of Rafsanjan This company, Mihrab Ahmadian, Deputy of Human Resources of Copper Company, Saad Abdi, Director of Planning and Supervision of Copper Company, Hossein Mahmoudi Meymand, Manager of Shahrabak Copper Complex, Mohammad Mahmoudi Momenabadi, Director of Research and Development of Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex in Rafsanjan and a group of Kerman officials And the city of Rafsanjan was held on the morning of the third Tuesday of June at the Azadi Cinema in Sarcheshmeh.

the accompaniment and cases to solve problems.

### Application of knowledge-based sciences in copper industry

The CEO of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company also said at the ceremony: "We have started the issue of using knowledge-based sciences in the copper company seriously." Rostami, noting that we have gone through three revolutions of steam, electricity and computers, continued: We have entered the industrial revolution and the intelligentsia revolution. In this regard, the copper company has set up special intelligent working groups in three copper complexes in Sarcheshmeh, Shahr-e Babak and Songun with a specific plan, and these plans are underway. Referring to the development plans of the copper company, he said: 400,000 tons will increase in copper complexes in Sarcheshmeh, Shahr Babak and Songun. The CEO of the copper company added: In order to reach 400,000 tons of cathode copper in Sarcheshmeh copper complex in Rafsanjan, we must increase the concentrate capacity to 600,000 tons Rostami stated: In Shahr-e Babak, we will increase the capacity of 120,000 tons of copper to 200,000 tons, and we will operate three development projects this year, including copper mine in Hezar, Daralo and copper flotation. We will achieve \$ 12 billion in exports. The CEO of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company continued: 70 petrochemical companies in Iran have exports equivalent to \$ 9.5 billion. While only in the copper industry can more than this amount of exports be achieved.

### Using knowledge and industry to take advantage of God-given resources

The Friday Imam of Rafsanjan also said at the opening ceremony of the symposium of the copper industry and the university: June 23, 1983 coincides with the production of the first copper anode in the Sarcheshmeh copper complex in Rafsanjan, which shows the ability of local experts. Hojjatoleslam Askari added: The knowledge industry became more established The use of vast God-given resources became better, easier, and more diverse; "When science

comes to the aid of industry, extraction and productivity become more widespread," he said. Also, in many cases, human resources and the power of scientists have not been used. But that must change, because science and knowledge, along with industry, can solve problems together.



### Appreciation of the former CEO of the Copper Company

Mohammad Hadi Ardabili, former CEO of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company, whose first copper anode was produced during his tenure, was honored at the opening ceremony of the symposium on the development of knowledge-based and value-added cooperation between the copper industry and the university. Conquest of Khorramshahr We produced the first copper ingots in Sarcheshmeh, and this showed the victory of the copper craftsmen and the violation of the American belief that we can not produce without them. The former CEO of the copper company stated: The victory of the Islamic Revolution was active and managed by the Americans. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, when the United States was expelled from Iran, they wrote in English on the walls of the city of Sarcheshmeh Copper, "We will come back and launch this industry." But we, with the knowledge of local engineers, were able to figure out the first explosion of the copper mine in Sarcheshmeh after the victory of the revolution, and then we set up a concentrator and a smelter. Ardabili continued: Using the knowledge base, we were able to record the technical specifications of the system

in Sarcheshmeh copper equipment and machinery, which was completely dependent on the United States. The former CEO of the copper company said: We localized the needs of the copper industry inside and got rid of dependence on foreigners.

### Creating a value-creating model with the copper industry symposium and the university

Director of Research and Development of Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex in Rafsanjan also stated: The National Iranian Copper Industries Company is proud to hold this symposium on the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr and the production of the first copper anode in Sarcheshmeh. Mahmoudi Momenabadi added: Copper Company and Copper Complex is the source of Rafsanjan and in order to benefit from the experiences and in order to recreate the patterns of industry and university and create a constructive interaction with the university, holding this symposium was on the agenda. He noted: "I hope this symposium and scientific and professional gathering can be in the direction of creating wealth and value for society."

### Appreciation for holding the copper industry symposium and the university

The head of the Kerman Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture also said at the opening ceremony of the symposium: "Despite all the potentials that exist in Kerman province, but this province has not achieved a good ranking in the country in terms of development indicators." We should try to use knowledge-based methods in the field of existing potentials such as mining so that we can be more successful. Tabibzadeh continued by stating that the use of knowledge-based should be purposeful: I also plan to hold this symposium in the first months of the year, and I ask that this symposium be held at the end of this year or the first of next year, and that its achievements be presented.

Public relations of Sarcheshmeh copper complex in Rafsanjan

### The necessity of accompanying the faculty members of universities with industries

The Director General of the Office of Industry and Society Relations of the Ministry of Science said at the opening ceremony of the symposium: "Currently, there is no coherent relationship between industries and scientific centers in Iran and this problem must be solved." However, the low quality of skills training in universities is a problem that needs to be addressed. It's been a year since we started to see how efficient college graduates have become. "On the other hand, we have approved the opportunity for university faculty members to study so that a university faculty member with a salary can be in the industry for six months to a year. Check



## Mexico Confirms Its First Monkeypox Case

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Health officials in Mexico confirmed Saturday the country's first known case of monkeypox, in a 50-year-old U.S. resident being treated in Mexico City.

The man, a permanent resident of New York City, "was probably infected in the Netherlands," Hugo Lopez-Gatell, an undersecretary of health, said on Twitter.

"Fortunately, he is stable and in preventive isolation," Lopez-Gatell said. "We hope he will recover without complications."



## Samoa Signs China Agreement Amid South Pacific Push

APIA (Dispatches) - Samoa signed a bilateral agreement with China on Saturday, promising "greater collaboration" as Beijing's foreign minister continues a tour of the South Pacific that has sparked concern among Western allies.

The deal's details are unclear, coming midway through a Chinese delegation's eight-nation trip — but an earlier leaked draft agreement sent to several Pacific countries outlined plans to expand security and economic engagement.

The mission has prompted Western leaders to urge regional counterparts to spurn any Chinese attempt to extend its security reach across the region.



## Russian Gains in Ukraine's East Indicate a Shift In Momentum in War



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russian forces stepped up their assault on the Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk after claiming to have captured the nearby rail hub of Lyman, pressing their offensive in the eastern Donbas.

Russian gains in recent days indicate a shift in momentum in the war, now in its fourth month. The invading forces appear close to seizing all of the Luhansk region of Donbas, a main Kremlin war goal, despite Ukrainian resistance.

Russia's defense ministry said on Saturday its troops and allied separatist forces were now in full control of Lyman, site of a railway junction and lying west of the Siverskyi Donets River in the Donetsk region that neighbors Luhansk.

However Hanna Malyar, Ukraine's deputy defence minister, said the battle for Lyman continued, the ZN.ua website reported.

Sieverodonetsk, some 60 km (40 miles) from Lyman on the eastern side of the river and the largest Donbas city still held by Ukraine, was now under heavy assault from the Russians.

"Sieverodonetsk is under constant enemy fire," Ukrainian police said in a social media post on Saturday.

Russian artillery was also shelling the Lysychansk-Bakhmut road, which Russia must take to close a pincer movement and encircle Ukrainian forces.

"There was significant destruction in Lysychansk," the police said.

The governor of Luhansk, which along with Donetsk makes up the Donbas, said on Friday Russian troops had already entered Sievierodonetsk. Ukrainian troops may have to retreat from the city to avoid capture, governor Serhiy Gaidai said. It was not clear if they had begun to pull out on Saturday.

The Russian forces have been making slow but steady advances in the Donbas - large parts of which were already controlled by Moscow-backed separatists before the war - after failing to capture the capital Kyiv soon after their Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

Their tactics involve mass artillery bombardments and air strikes that have laid waste to towns and cities.

The Ukrainian military said on Saturday its troops had repelled eight assaults in Donetsk and Luhansk in the previous 24 hours.

"If Russia did succeed in taking over these areas, it would highly likely be seen by the Kremlin as a substantive political achievement and be portrayed to the Russian people as justifying the invasion," the British defense ministry said in its daily intelligence report.

Some 90% of buildings in Sievierodonetsk were damaged, Governor Gaidai said, with 14 high-rise buildings destroyed in the latest shelling. Several dozen medical staff were staying on in Sievierodonetsk but they faced difficulty just getting to hospitals because of the shelling, he said.

Reuters could not independently verify the information.

## UN Rights Envoy Defends Controversial China Visit

Beijing (Dispatches) - The UN rights envoy on Saturday said her contentious visit to China was "not an investigation", and insisted she had unsupervised access during meetings in Xinjiang, where Beijing is accused of widespread human rights abuses.

Michelle Bachelet's long-planned trip this week has taken her to the far-western region, where Beijing is accused of the detention of over a million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, forced sterilization of women and coerced labor.

The United States has labelled China's actions in Xinjiang a "genocide" and "crimes against humanity", allegations vehemently denied by Beijing which says its security crackdown was a necessary response to extremism.

Bachelet has come under fire from rights groups and Uyghurs overseas, who say she has stumbled into a six-day Communist Party propaganda tour, including a meeting with President Xi Jinping in which state media suggested she supported China's vision of human rights.

Her office later clarified that her remarks did not contain a direct endorsement of China's rights record.

Speaking at the end of her trip while still inside China, Bachelet framed her visit as a chance for her to speak with "candor" to Chinese authorities as well as civil society groups and academics.

"This visit was not an investigation," she told reporters, later insisting she had "unsupervised" access to sources the UN had arranged to meet in Xinjiang.

It is the first trip to China by the UN's top rights envoy in 17 years and comes after painstaking negotiations over the conditions of her visit, which the UN says is neither a fact-finding mission nor a probe.

Bachelet this week visited the Xinjiang cities of Urumqi and Kashgar, according to her office, but no photos or further details of her itinerary have dribbled out.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said earlier this week that Bachelet's activities were "arranged according to her will and on the basis of thorough consultations of the two sides."



## Cash-Strapped Sri Lanka Gets Russian Oil to Ease Shortages

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Cash-strapped Sri Lanka took delivery of Russian oil -- which could soon be subject to a European embargo -- to restart operations at the country's only refinery, the energy minister said.

The island nation is suffering its worst economic meltdown since independence, with shortages of fuel and other essentials making life miserable for its 22 million people.

The state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) refinery was shuttered in March following Sri Lanka's foreign exchange crunch, which left the government unable to finance imports, including crude.

The Russian crude delivery had been waiting offshore of the capital Colombo's port for over a month as the country was unable to raise \$75 million to pay for it, energy minister Kanchana Wijesekera said.

Colombo is also in talks with Moscow to arrange direct supplies of crude, coal, diesel and petrol despite U.S.-led sanctions on Russian banks and a diplomatic outcry over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"I have made an official request to the Russian ambassador for direct supplies of Russian oil," Wijesekera told reporters in Colombo.

"Crude alone will not fulfil our requirement, we need other refined (petroleum) products as well."

Around 90,000 tons of Siberian light crude will be sent to Sri Lanka's refinery after the shipment was acquired on credit from Dubai-based intermediary Coral Energy.

Wijesekera said Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) was already in arrears of \$735 million to suppliers and no one came forward to even bid for its oil tenders.

He added that the Siberian grade was not an ideal match for the refinery, which is optimized for Iranian light crude, but no other supplier was willing to extend credit.

Sri Lanka will nonetheless call for fresh supply tenders in two weeks before the stock of Siberian light runs out, Wijesekera said.

## Latin American Leftist Bloc Condemns Exclusions From U.S.-Hosted Summit

HAVANA (Dispatches) - A bloc of leftist countries meeting in Havana condemned the exclusion of certain nations from next month's Summit of the Americas, after the United States said it only wanted leaders of governments that respect democracy to attend.

The United States will host the Summit of the Americas from June 6 to 10 in Los Angeles, and has said it will not invite the governments of Venezuela or Nicaragua. The summit coordinator said it was up to the White House whether it would invite Cuba but said Cuban civil society activists had been asked to attend.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel said this week that he would not attend under "any circumstances" even if invited. Late on Friday, one activist in Cuba alleged state security had told her she would not be allowed to attend either.

The 10 countries known as the ALBA bloc - including Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua - issued a statement from Havana saying they "reject the exclusions and discriminatory treatment at the so-called Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles."

In addition, they described the exclusion as "arbitrary, ideological and politically motivated" and said "this unilateral decision constituted a serious historical setback in hemispheric relations."

Shortly beforehand, in a broadcast speech, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro described the

upcoming summit as "erratic." He applauded other nations such as Mexico, which is not a member of ALBA, that had "stood up to raise the voice of the truth of an entire continent."

The White House and U.S. State Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, along with the leaders of Bolivia and several other countries, have threatened to boycott the summit if certain countries are excluded.

This week, Reuters confirmed that 13 of the 14 countries of the Caribbean community, which does not include Cuba, were planning to attend the Los Angeles meeting.

The United States has not made public which Cuban civil society activists had been invited to attend the Summit of the Americas.

Saily Gonzalez, a Cuban entrepreneur and one-time member of a dissident group that called for protests in Cuba last November, posted an image of her invitation, dated May 20, on social media late on Friday.

In a subsequent post, she alleged that Cuban state security had contacted her family and notified her that she would not be permitted to pick up her visa at the U.S. embassy for the trip because of her involvement in a legal case related to the November call for protests.



## Investigators Question Delayed Police Response In Texas School Shooting

UVALDE (Dispatches) -

Investigators in Texas were seeking to determine how critical mistakes were made in the response to the deadly Uvalde shooting, including why nearly 20 police officers remained outside a grade school classroom as children placed panicked 911 calls for help.

Why the officers waited in the hallway nearly an hour before entering and fatally shooting the gunman is at the heart of an ongoing probe by the Texas Department of Public Safety into the massacre of 19 children and two teachers in the deadliest U.S. school shooting in nearly a decade.

Investigators are also still searching for a motive for the attack. Salvador Ramos, a high school dropout, had no criminal record and no history of mental illness.

At least two children placed 911 calls from a pair of adjoining fourth-grade classrooms after 18-year-old Ramos entered on Tuesday with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, Colonel Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said earlier this week.

"He's in room 112," a girl whispered on the phone at 12:03 p.m., more than 45 minutes before a U.S. Border Patrol-led tactical team stormed in at 12:51 p.m. and ended the siege at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, a town of 16,000 people west of San Antonio.

The same girl had implored the 911 operator to "please send the police now" at 12:43 p.m. and again four minutes later.

The on-site commander, the chief of the school district's police department, believed at the time that Ramos was barricaded inside and that children were no longer at immediate risk, giving officers time to prepare, McCraw said.

"From the benefit of hindsight where I'm sitting now, of course, it was not the right decision," McCraw said. "It was the wrong decision, period."

Standard law enforcement protocols call for police to confront an active school shooter without delay, rather than wait for backup or more firepower, a point McCraw acknowledged.

McCraw described other moments when Ramos might have been thwarted. A school officer, responding to calls about an armed man who crashed a car at the funeral home across the street, drove past Ramos as he crouched beside a vehicle on school property. Police have said Ramos fired at two people standing outside before scaling a fence onto school grounds.





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## World Bank Green Lights \$500M for Turkey's COVID-19 Efforts

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The World Bank said that its board had approved \$500 million in additional financing to back Turkey's response to the health impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The funds, which will have a maturity of 10 1/2 years with a five-year grace period, will be used to ensure access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in Turkey and form part of an expanded health response to the pandemic, the bank said. An additional \$250 million will be provided as co-financing from the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), the bank said, adding that the project aims to help meet the cost vaccine purchases.



## China's Industrial Profits Slump In April as COVID Curbs Squeeze Firms

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Profits at China's industrial firms fell at their fastest pace in two years in April as high raw material prices and supply chain chaos caused by COVID-19 curbs squeezed margins and disrupted factory activity.

Profits shrank 8.5% from a year earlier, swinging from a 12.2% gain in March, according to Reuters' calculations based on National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data released on Friday. The slump is the biggest since March 2020.

"In April, frequent COVID-19 outbreaks were widespread in some regions, creating big shocks to the production and operations of industrial firms and leading to a drop in their profits," Zhu Hong, senior NBS statistician, said in a statement.

Zhu confirmed the 8.5% decline in April in the statement. While high bulk commodity prices drove up the profit growth of some upstream industries - with the mining sector soaring 142% - manufacturing firms saw their profits dive 22.4%.

The COVID-hit eastern and northeastern regions suffered profit declines in the first four months of 16.7% and 8.1%, respectively, Zhu said. The autos factory sector dragged down manufacturing profits by 6.7 percentage points in April.

Industries have been hit hard by stringent and widespread anti-virus measures that have shut factories and clogged highways and ports.

Industrial output from the commercial hub of Shanghai, located at the heart of manufacturing in the Yangtze River Delta, nosedived 61.5% in April, amid a full lockdown and much steeper than the 2.9% drop nationally.

"At present, virus containment in the Yangtze River Delta improved and work resumption is forging ahead steadily," Zhu said, expecting the COVID impact on industrial firms to be eased gradually.

Industrial firms' profits grew 3.5% year-on-year to 2.66 trillion yuan (\$395.01 billion) for the January-April period, slowing from an 8.5% increase in the first three months, the statistics bureau said.

The world's second-largest economy saw very weak activity last month as exports lost momentum and the property sector wobbled.

On Wednesday, Premier Li Keqiang acknowledged the weak growth and said economic difficulties in some aspects were worse than in 2020 when the economy was first hit by the COVID-19 outbreak.

"We should strive to ensure reasonable economic growth in the second quarter, lower the unemployment rate as soon as possible, and keep economic operations within a reasonable range," Li was quoted as saying at the meeting.

China recently cut its benchmark lending rates for corporate and household loans for a second straight month and lowered a key mortgage reference rate for the first time in nearly two years.

While policymakers have pledged more support for the faltering economy, many analysts have downgraded their full-year growth forecasts, noting the government has shown no sign of relaxing its "zero-COVID" policy.

Liabilities at industrial firms jumped 10.4% from a year earlier at end-April, slightly slower than 10.5% growth as of end-March. The industrial profit data covers large firms with annual revenues of over 20 million yuan from their main operations.

## BoK to Focus on Fight Against Inflation

SEOUL (Dispatches) - The Bank of Korea (BoK) says it will place greater emphasis on tackling inflation after raising its key interest rate and forecasting much faster price growth this year, as Rhee Chang-yong helmed his first meeting as governor.

The South Korean central bank increased its seven-day repurchase rate by a quarter percentage point to 1.75% yesterday for its fifth hike since last summer.

All 18 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg had expected the move.

The BoK now sees inflation at 4.5% this year, a sharp upward revision from its previous 3.1% forecast made in February. At the same time it cut its growth view to 2.7% from 3%, an indication of the headwinds for the economy that the central bank must be careful not to add to.

The latest decision showed that Rhee was keen for the BoK to push ahead with policy normalization, remaining in the vanguard of central banks raising rates, and that he saw enough resilience in the economy to do so.

Most major central banks were now tightening policy as they grew alarmed by inflationary pressure fuelled by pandemic-era stimulus, supply chain disruptions and Russia's war on Ukraine.

"The jump in inflation forecasts signals the BoK is set to keep raising interest rates in the coming months," said Cho Yong-gu, a fixed-income strategist at Shinyoung Securities.

South Korean bonds edged down after the central bank boosted its inflation forecast.

In a statement after the decision, the central bank underlined its commitment to focus more attention on inflation as it warned of higher price growth to come.

"Looking ahead, it is forecast that consumer price inflation will remain high in the 5% range for some time, and run at the mid-4% level for the year overall," the BoK said.

Consumer prices in South Korea grew at the fastest pace since 2008 last month and the governor had said that inflation was a bigger concern for the bank than other headwinds to economic growth.

The decision followed April's move by the bank to raise the rate by 25 basis points even without a governor in place.

The rate hike is the first since president Yoon Suk Yeol took office earlier this month.

While Yoon has vowed to deliver faster economic growth, he has also highlighted inflation as a serious risk to the economy.



## India Q1 GDP Growth Likely Slowed

BENGALURU (Dispatches) - India's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic likely stumbled again in the first quarter of this year primarily due to Omicron-related restrictions and higher inflation, a Reuters poll showed.

Growth in Asia's third-largest economy was pencilled in at 4.0% for the January-March quarter from the same period a year ago in a May 23-26 Reuters poll of 46 economists, down from 5.4% in Q4 2021. If realised, that would be the slowest in a year, and a third consecutive quarter of weaker growth.

Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist at Barclays, pointed to the surge in COVID-19 infections caused by the Omicron variant of the coronavirus and the resulting restrictions on activity imposed by various state governments.

"While the movement restrictions were short-lived, other headwinds from global supply shortages and higher input costs also impeded the pace of expansion," he said.

Forecasts for the data, due at 1200 GMT on May 31, ranged widely, from 2.8% to 5.5%.

Economists also noted part of the weakness in the upcoming release would be due to a higher base one year ago. The government does not officially release quarter-on-quarter GDP data.

January-March was the final quarter of 2021/22 fiscal year. The economy grew at 20.3%, 8.5% and 5.4% in the first three quarters of the financial year, respectively, which could be revised.

A separate Reuters survey last month estimated average growth for 2021/22 at 8.7%, lower than the official second advance estimate of 8.9% released on February 28.

The Reserve Bank of India, which had long been focusing on growth over its inflation mandate, only recently changed course and hiked its repo rate off record lows in an unscheduled May meeting, with more hikes to follow in a bid to control price pressures.

Most economists warned sticky inflation and high interest rates could dent consumer spending, which would eventually dampen India's primarily consumption driven economy.

"The RBI will continue to highlight that overall recovery has been decent but there are risks from elevated commodity prices and softer global growth going ahead," said Dhiraj Nim, economist at ANZ.

"The impact of higher interest rates due to high inflation is expected to be net negative for growth."



## Sri Lanka PM Stresses Urgency for Economic Reform Plan

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's prime minister said that he will quickly prepare an economic reform program and seek approval from the International Monetary Fund because global inflation and the financial impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on other countries could limit their ability to help the island nation.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said that officials have reached agreement on basic reforms concepts with the IMF and that he plans to have the economic reform program ready within two weeks. After it is finalised, an IMF delegation will visit Sri Lanka to evaluate the program.

I have placed my special attention on this because of the present global situation, the war in Ukraine and global inflation. From what we can see a number of countries may have to face economic problems like ours, Wickremesinghe said.

He added: At the moment the United States and the Europe are spending a lot on the war and there is a possibility of the aid given to us being reduced."

Sri Lanka is nearly bankrupt with an acute foreign currency crisis that resulted in a foreign debt default. The country announced last month that it is suspending nearly \$7 billion foreign debt repayment due for this year out of about \$25 billion due through 2026. Sri Lanka's total foreign debt stands at \$51 billion.

The IMF said in a statement Thursday said that a team remotely concluded initial discussions about Sri Lanka's reform plan on Tuesday. The team made good progress in assessing the economic situation and in identifying policy priorities to be taken going forward, the statement said.

## Taiwan Lowers 2022 GDP Growth Forecast

TAIPEI (Dispatches) - Taiwan's economy is likely to grow at a slower pace this year that initially forecast, the statistics office said on Friday, downgrading its outlook due to global inflation and COVID-19 dampening consumer demand at home and abroad.

The downward revision came even as the statistics office raised its export growth forecast for this year, with continued strong demand for the island's technology products buoyed by 5G, electric vehicles and high end computing.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise 3.91% this year, the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics said, down from 4.42% growth forecast in February.

That will be a slower pace than the 6.45% logged for 2021, which was the fastest rate in over a decade since it expanded 10.25% in 2010.

The directorate said Taiwan's surge in COVID-19 infections and inflation driven by the war in Ukraine were affecting consumers, even as demand for semiconductors, the main plank of Taiwan's economy, remained strong.

It said consumption at home will be "greatly" impacted by the spike in cases, leading to a 0.5-0.7% downward revision to growth this year.

It now sees exports rising 14.62% this year, from 9.69% predicted earlier. Taiwan's exports are a bellwether of demand for global tech giants such as Apple Inc (AAPL.O), as the island is a major producer of semiconductors, a global shortage of which has rattled firms like auto makers and boosted Taiwanese corporate profits.

In the first quarter, GDP expanded by a revised 3.14% from a year earlier, slightly up from a preliminary reading of 3.06%, the agency added.

Another risk is the slowdown in the economy of China, Taiwan's top trading partner, where strict measures to control COVID outbreaks have led to the prolonged lockdown of economic hub Shanghai and movement curbs in numerous cities including Beijing. The statistics office said lockdowns in China and their impact on global supply chain bottlenecks are among uncertainties for Taiwan's economic growth this year.

Taiwan's export orders fell for the first time in more than two years in April, taking a larger-than-expected hit from China's strict anti-virus measures and broader global supply chain disruptions.

The office also revised up its inflation outlook for this year to 2.67% from a previous forecast of 1.93%. Taiwan's central bank is still moving in the direction of monetary policy tightening, its Governor Yang Chin-long said earlier this month. In a surprise move in March, the central bank raised its benchmark interest rate and by a much bigger margin than some expected.

## Turkish Inflation Rate May Hit 200%



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Consumer price inflation in Turkey may accelerate to more than 200 percent, local research organization ENAGgroup said in a report this week.

Turkey's official economic data, which showed the consumer price inflation rate rising to 70 percent in April, is inaccurate, said ENAGgroup, which is made up of Turkish academics, economists and financial analysts based in Turkey and abroad. It also said the government reported that the economy grew last year, but it in fact contracted.

Inflation in Turkey has surged to a two-decade high after the lira slumped against the dollar in 2021. Turkish and foreign investors sold the currency in droves after the central bank, acting on the orders of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, cut interest rates to 14 percent from 19 percent between September and December. It has held rates steady since.

The Turkish Statistical Institute is giving false signals about the economy, while the central bank's loss of foreign exchange reserves and credibility was weakening the lira and sending inflation higher, ENAGgroup said.

The organization calculated annual inflation at 157 percent for April in a report that coincided with the publication of official data at the start of May.

ENAGgroup said inflation-linked deposit accounts introduced by the government in December aimed at arresting losses for the lira were "fake financial products" that have done nothing to affect inflation, the exchange rate or the balance of payments positively.



## TPO to Hold Iran-Pakistan Trade Workshop in Mid-June

TEHRAN (MNA) - Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran is going to hold a training workshop for Iranian businessmen who are interested in trading with Pakistan, the TPO portal reported. Marketing strategies and methods, cultural awareness, and the trade-related laws and regulations of Pakistan are among the subjects covered in this workshop which is due to be held on June 12.

The TPO has held several business training workshops with different countries, however, the training workshop with Pakistan is the first such event that is attended by TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak, ambassadors of the two countries, economic and trade advisors of the two countries, and officials of Pakistani and Iranian chambers of commerce.



# Global Firms Warn of Sluggish China Demand Due to Lengthy COVID Curbs

LONDON (Dispatches) - Two months into harsh COVID-19 lockdowns that have choked global supply chains, China's economy is staggering back to its feet, but businesses from retailers to chipmakers are warning of slow sales as consumers in the country slam the brakes on spending.

Car sales in the world's largest auto market have slowed dramatically, gamers are buying fewer consoles, and people are unwilling to replace their existing smartphones, laptops and TVs, as prolonged COVID curbs crimp spending power and put more people out of jobs.

"The current China lockdowns ... has implications to both supply and demand," said Colette Kress, chief financial officer at U.S. chipmaker Nvidia (NVDA.O), which forecast on Thursday a \$400 million hit to gaming sales from China's stringent coronavirus restrictions.

"You have very large cities that are in full lockdown, focusing really on other important things for the citizens there. So it's impacting our demand."

At least 14 analysts have cut their price targets on Nvidia following its latest earnings report, with the median price target now standing at \$300, according to Refinitiv data.

In line with China's zero-COVID approach, Beijing, with its 22 million population, has clamped down on workplace attendance. Shanghai, the country's commercial hub, and numerous other giant cities are also shackled by partial lockdowns or other curbs.

Retail sales in April shrank 11.1% year-on-year, after falling 3.5% in March. UBS and J.P. Morgan lowered their full-year GDP growth forecasts for China to 3% and 3.7% respectively earlier this week.

Premier Li Keqiang said on Wednesday that China would strive to achieve reasonable economic growth in the second quarter and stem rising unemployment. The cabinet also announced broader tax credit rebates and postponed social security payments and loan repayments to support the world's second-largest economy.

E-commerce group JD.com Inc (9618.HK), said last week the COVID-19 situation was far different than what China had previously experienced, when outbreaks were limited to smaller areas and had boosted online shopping.

"In April, the order cancellation rate was significantly higher than last year due to logistical disruptions. There was an improvement in May, but it was still higher than a year earlier," JD.com CEO Xu Lei said.

"Consumers are facing loss in income and confidence, and overall consumption is sluggish." Alibaba Group Holding's, cited pandemic-related risks and uncertainties for not issuing a forecast for its new fiscal year on Thursday.

Since mid-March, domestic businesses have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 resurgence in China, the e-commerce giant said in its earnings statement.

Auto sales in China have faltered after years of blistering growth, and global automakers especially have taken a hard knock.

Sales of Tesla in China - where the company has struggled to get production back



to pre-pandemic levels - was nearly wiped out last month.

And while retail car sales for the first three weeks of May rose 34% from the same period in April, they were 16% lower than a year earlier, the China Passenger Car Association said on Wednesday and called for more government support.

The industry body said a drop in income related to COVID-19 was depressing sales, even in parts of China that are not locked down.

Lenovo, the world's largest PC maker, reported on Thursday its slowest quarterly revenue growth in seven quarters as demand for its personal computers waned after two years of pandemic-driven demand.

China's PC shipments, including desktop, notebook and workstation shipments, fell 1% in the January-March period, ending the growth streak of the last seven quarters, market data firm Canalys said on Thursday.

Tencent, China's most valuable company, posted its worst quarterly performance since it went public in 2004, blaming cuts in advertising spending by consumer, e-commerce and travel businesses.

Apple supplier Foxconn warned that smartphone demand was slipping in China, and the country, just recently a mecca for luxury goods makers such as LVMH, has seen luxury sales falter.

"Even when China comes out of isolation, the bounce back will not be as quick and as immediate as we have seen in Europe and the United States," Johann Rupert, Chairman of Swiss firm Richemont said last week.

## In Bogota, Trash of the Rich Becomes Lifeline for the Poor



BOGOTA (Dispatches) - They appear at nightfall, dragging heavy carts from dustbin to dustbin in the affluent northern suburbs of the Colombian capital Bogota.

Informal recyclers, they rifle through the trash of the rich looking for waste plastic, glass bottles and cardboard they can sell for a handful of pesos.

It is back-breaking work for little reward, but a salvation for thousands in a country where one in eight city dwellers is unemployed, and the poverty rate approaches 40 percent.

"This life is hard, but it is my only option to survive," Jesus Maria Perez, 52, told AFP.

Men, women and even children: these waste pickers are the face of the misery that candidate after candidate for Sunday's first round of presidential elections has vowed to eradicate.

Many, Perez included, are among the estimated 1.8 million migrants to have fled neighboring Venezuela in search of a better life in Colombia -- Latin America's fourth-largest economy but one of the world's most unequal. In 2020, according to the Bogota city council, 25,000 of the capital's eight million inhabitants worked as informal rubbish recyclers.

On average, each earns between 12,000 and 18,000 pesos (\$3 to \$4.50) daily for their efforts, according to Alvaro Nocua of the "Give Me Your Hand" association set up to help this community.

For Perez, who used to be a cook in Venezuela, it is a struggle to meet his daily goal of 40,000 pesos -- about \$10 -- to cover his one meal a day, a bed for the night and parking for his wooden cart.

He has no horse or donkey to pull the heavy burden: the Bogota municipality banned the practice eight years ago to combat animal abuse.

And as few can afford a self-propelled vehicle, it is people who do the heavy lifting, pulling their carts for kilometers every day. Whole families take part in the endeavor; the parents wading through the garbage as little ones wait in the cart, playing among the rubbish.

## Gangs, Inflation and Political Crisis Bring Haiti Economy to Brink

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Dispatches) - With gas sales already subsidized by the government at a loss, the Haitian economy -- fragile from incessant crime and political instability -- appears close to collapse as the war in Ukraine sends fuel prices soaring.

The global surge in fuel costs comes at the worst possible time for Haitian authorities: Last December, they had for the first time in five years made the highly sensitive move to hike the price at the pump -- just two months before Russia invaded its neighbor.

Still well below the global average, Haitians now pay 49 US cents for a liter of gasoline and 84 cents for diesel. The state pays the difference to the oil companies, and that gap between what the government pays for fuel and what ordinary Haitians pay at the pump has become unbearably steep since the invasion of Ukraine sent world oil prices skyrocketing.

"This year, these fuel subsidies have increased by more than 200 percent: that is around 18 billion gourdes," or more than \$164 million euros, said economist Kesner Pharel.

In cash-strapped Haiti, that is a staggering amount, equaling more than twice the budget of the health ministry.

And it does nothing to reduce the misery of the 60 percent of Haitians living below the poverty line.

"This does not help socially because it is a generalized subsidy: we do not target the most disadvantaged people", said Pharel.

"In December, a mechanism was floated to support only the public transport sector, but, so far, it has not been done because of the state's lack of efficiency," he said.

And as the impoverished country imports five times more food than it exports, the increase in



maritime transport costs is aggravating inflation, which had already crossed the 25 percent mark at the start of the year.

"We are going to suffer from imported inflation because our main trading partners, the United States and the Dominican Republic, now also have high inflation: at home, we could reach 30 percent this year," warned Pharel.

The specter of the 2008 food riots hangs over Haiti while wheat prices are also soaring due to Russia's war in Ukraine, the two leading grain-producing countries.

"This is beginning to affect the entire production of wheat-based goods in Haiti, like flour or pasta, which have already seen a more than 30 percent increase since the war" began in Ukraine, said economist Etzer Emile.

Haitian households spend 60 percent of their income on food, according to the national statistics institute, and food insecurity already affected 4.5 million people here even before the outbreak of the war in Europe.

"This morning for breakfast, the children asked for bread but we couldn't buy it; we replaced it with cassava pancakes, even if they don't like it much," said Michele, who lives in Port-au-Prince with her mother, sister and three nephews.

"You can't buy as much rice as before. Besides, we don't have any and are thinking whether to buy more or not", the young woman said.

And these economic challenges come as the Haitian authorities are in deep paralysis, with no institution having the legitimacy to initiate reforms.

Appointed in early July, barely 48 hours before the assassination of the late president Jovenel Moïse, Prime Minister Ariel Henry has still not managed to bring together the political class to create a government capable of building consensus.

## Iran Expects...

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Ishaq added that they expect their exports to Iraq to reach over \$9 billion by March next year, adding that the country's imports from Iraq have also increased to around \$1.5 billion.

In 2021, Iran said they had exported \$11 billion worth of food and agricultural products to Iraq in five years. In 2019, Iraq accounted for around \$9 billion of Iran's \$12.5 billion in exports.

The devastating economic impact of the coronavirus dealt a significant blow to trade volume between Iraq and Iran in 2020. As cases of the infection began to seep into Iraq - many of which among people who had returned from Iran - Baghdad began restricting travel, shutting its five main border crossings with its eastern neighbor in mid-March 2020.

## Canada, a False...

FROM PAGE 1

Canada's game against Iran in Vancouver on June 5 was seen by Canadian football authorities as pivotal to preparations for the finals to be held in Qatar later this year.

But the fixture created controversy, with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau opposed to the game, describing it as a "bad idea".

Shortly after the Canadian decision, Iran's "Team Melli" media officer Mohammad Jamaat told state television that Tehran will "file a complaint to FIFA", the world game's governing body, against the Canadian decision.

The match cancellation comes nine days after Prime Minister Trudeau criticized Canada Soccer (Canada's football federation) for their decision to invite Iran.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson accused Canada of politicizing the game match. He told Iranian state media Press TV that his country will hold Canada responsible for any violations of its agreement with Canada Soccer.

Of course, Iranians expected the match to be cancelled or to turn into a political show by gathering of anti-revolutionary people at the stadium for creating another political farce against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Canada has turned into the tail of the U.S. and it is acting as a hostile country against Tehran and it has hosted most of Iranian opposition groups for continuing their hostile activities against Tehran. Canada has closed its embassy in Tehran to show its faithfulness to the U.S. and definitely it follows what its lord asks.

Now it is time for FIFA to show its sincerity regarding its policy of not politicizing soccer matches or events by taking a firm decision against Canada which cancelled the match due to political reasons. We hope that FIFA acts duly unlike other international bodies which act in favor of the big countries by ignoring punishments for them while Iranians are taking action for reportedly \$10m damages.

If Canada thinks that such moves can weaken Iran's national team performance in the World Cup and against its lord the U.S., it is fully wrong because Canada cannot affect determination of Iranian Cheetahs and definitely Iran will show its power against the U.S. in the World Cup group stage in Qatar like what it did in 1992 in France where Iranian national soccer team overpowered the U.S. and brought joy to the nation.

Canada is the big loser of this political decision and sooner or later it will see the backlash of this politicized decision which angered Iranians and made their determination stronger than ever to defeat any country which plays foul against them.

## Dozens of...

FROM PAGE 1

The Palestinian al-Quds TV satellite channel also said an improvised explosive device struck a checkpoint in the village of al-Jalma, which lies north of the northern occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

According to Shehab news agency, extremist Jewish settlers once again attacked the homes of local Palestinians in al-Huwara neighborhood of northern al-Quds.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society stated that 30 Palestinians were injured during clashes with Israeli settlers in Huwara neighborhood as well as Kafr Qaddum town, located 13 kilometers (8 miles) west of Nablus.

Local sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said clashes also broke out between young Palestinian men and Israeli forces at the entrance to Jamain area south of Nablus.

Israeli forces have already detained nearly 100 Palestinians ahead of the planned far-right Israeli Flag March.

Around 20 Palestinians were arrested in al-Quds between Wednesday and Thursday, and another 80 inside the Israeli-occupied territories.

"The arrests have mostly targeted Palestinians who have been arrested in previous waves of protests in al-Quds, and Palestinians who have been banned from entering the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, all of which we see as preparation for reactions to the settlers' flag march on Sunday," the al-Quds detainees' families committee spokesperson, Amjad Abu Asab, said.

"Israeli authorities usually arrest Palestinians whom they consider to be active during expected [counter] protests," Abu Asab added.

The so-called Flag March, which attracts hundreds of Jewish settlers and far-right extremists, celebrates the Israeli regime's capture of East al-Quds in the 1967 war.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials are expected to allow extremist lawmaker Itamar Ben-Gvir to visit the al-Aqsa Mosque on Sunday amid soaring tensions around the contentious Flag March.

Earlier this week, Ben-Gvir had informed the Knesset of his plan.



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## Top Teams Set to Break F1 Budget Cap

PARIS (Dispatches) - Formula One's top teams are all set to break the sport's new budget cap restrictions this year unless its ruling body revises the current 140 million dollars limit. Team chiefs representing Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull told reporters at the Monaco Grand Prix on Saturday that it was inevitable due to global inflation, notably in the cost of air freight. The International Motoring Federation (FIA) introduced a limit of \$145 million (dollars) last year and trimmed it this season as part of the sport's new era package aimed at creating closer racing.

## Hindley Snatches Giro d'Italia Overall Lead

ROME (Dispatches) - Jai Hindley snatched the Giro d'Italia lead from Richard Carapaz on the penultimate stage, won by Alessandro Covi, to all but ensure a stunning overall victory in the Italian Grand Tour. Bora-Hansgrohe's Hindley made his move with less than three kilometres remaining of the mountainous, 168km 20th stage, pulling one minute, 28 seconds away from Carapaz ahead of Sunday's final stage time trial in Verona.

## Real Madrid Beat Liverpool to Win 14th Champions League Title

PARIS (Dispatches) - Real Madrid secured a record-extending 14th European Cup when they beat Liverpool 1-0 in a Champions League final delayed for more than half an hour after police tried to stop people trying to force their way into the Stade de France on Saturday.

Vinicius Junior scored just before the hour with Real's first attempt on goal and their goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois made several fine saves to deny Liverpool, who end the season with two domestic cups having also failed to win the Premier League.

In a battle of European heavyweights, Jurgen Klopp's side had more chances but lacked sharpness when it mattered as Carlo Ancelotti became the first coach to enjoy four European Cup triumphs having won the trophy with AC Milan and Real twice, leapfrogging Liverpool's Bob Paisley and Real's Zinedine Zidane.

"I am a record man. I had luck to come here last year and have a fantastic season. A fantastic club, a really good squad with a lot of quality and mental character," said Ancelotti of a team who came from behind against Paris St Germain, Chelsea and Manchester City to reach the final.

It was LaLiga title holders Real's fourth Champions League crown in seven years as they improved their impressive record in the competition with their eighth victory in as many finals.

Liverpool were looking for their seventh European Cup triumph but despite their best efforts they were left in awe of Courtois's sublime performance.

"In the dressing room nobody feels it was a great season at this moment," said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, whose team beat Chelsea on penalties in the FA Cup and League Cup.

"We played a good game, not a perfect game, but I don't think a perfect game would have been possible the way the opponent was set up with a deep formation.

"We had a lot of shots but not the clearest and Thibaut Courtois made two top saves." The final was to be played in St Petersburg but European soccer governing body UEFA relocated it to Paris after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a 'special operation'.

The game started after a 35-minute delay following incidents outside the stadium when fans were tear-gassed by riot police as people without tickets tried to force their way in. L1N2XK09D  
Liverpool had won the previous European Cup



final both teams had played in Paris, winning 1-0 at the Parc des Princes in 1981, which was Real's last defeat in a final.

Liverpool were the slight favorites on Saturday but Real beat the Merseyside club for the second time in a row after their 3-1 victory in 2018.

Liverpool started the game by pushing high up the pitch, looking to quickly feed their full backs, and the pressure on the Real back line became immense.

Mo Salah was picked out by Trent Alexander-Arnold in the box but Courtois stretched to deny the Egyptian.

Liverpool were back at it early in the second half but Real soaked up the pressure until they struck in the 59th minute.

It started when Luka Modric turned smartly away from Andy Robertson to create space and ended with Valverde's pinpoint driven pass across to the far post being turned in by Vinicius.

Courtois then dived to superbly tip Salah's curled attempt away to keep Real ahead.

The Belgian keeper was impeccable again to deny Salah 10 minutes from time before his delighted team mates jumped into his arms to show their gratitude at the final whistle.



Conte Happy To Stay at Spurs After Hearing Spending Plans

LONDON (Dispatches) - Antonio Conte has reaffirmed his commitment to Tottenham Hotspur after being convinced by plans to significantly bolster the squad in the close season, British media reports said today.

Conte led Spurs back to the Champions League with a fourth-placed finish in the Premier League last weekend, having taken charge of the club in November when they were eighth in the standings.

The Italian signed an 18-month contract but reports earlier this year said he was considering his future at the club if his calls to improve the squad went unheeded.

However, with Spurs this week announcing a £150 million cash injection into the club, the Telegraph newspaper said Conte met with sporting director Fabio Paratici in Turin today to plan ahead for his first full season in charge.

Conte has targeted two new wing backs, a centre back, a midfielder and a forward who can operate off the left, the paper added.

## Ukrainian, Belarusian Teams Not to Be Drawn Against Each Other

LONDON (Dispatches) - Teams from Belarus and Ukraine will be prevented from being drawn against each other in any UEFA competition going forward, the Executive Committee of European soccer's governing body said.

The move comes following Russia's invasion of Ukraine for which Belarus has been a key staging area. Teams from Russia and Ukraine were already prevented from being drawn against each other well before the conflict began earlier this year.

In March, UEFA had said Belarusian clubs and the national team will have to play all their home matches in UEFA competitions at neutral venues with no spectators allowed.

"Today's further decision is made to ensure the smooth running of UEFA competitions as the safety and security of the teams, officials and other participants may not be fully guaranteed due to the existence of a military conflict," UEFA said.

"The UEFA Executive Committee will remain on standby to convene further meetings to reassess the legal and factual situation as it evolves and adopt further decisions as necessary."

UEFA also approved special rules for the July 6-31 women's European Championship in England that allows teams to name unlimited replacements in case of serious injury or illness but only before the first match.

The rule change allows teams to replace players who test positive for COVID-19 but once a player is replaced, they cannot be re-admitted to the list.

## Ibrahimovic Intends To Continue Playing

MILAN (Dispatches) - Zlatan Ibrahimovic intends to continue playing despite the end of his contract with AC Milan and a lengthy layoff in store following knee surgery, club director Paolo Maldini said.

"From what I understand, his intention is to continue," Maldini told Gazzetta dello Sport, two days after the striker, who turns 41 in October, underwent surgery that is expected to sideline him for eight months.

## Medvedev Reaches Fourth Round of French Open



PARIS (Dispatches) - Second seed Daniil Medvedev cruised past Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia 6-2 6-4 6-2 in less than two hours to advance to the French Open fourth round.

The U.S. Open champion, who reached the quarter-finals at Roland Garros last year after four consecutive first-round exits, played near-flawless service games throughout to give his opponent, ranked 31st in the world, no real chance.

"It was magnificent today; I did not have my serve broken," Medvedev, runner-up at the Australian Open this season, said in an on-court interview. "On this surface it is quite unusual. Hopefully there are more such matches for me next week."

"Like in my French, I try to do better in my tennis all the time. The better I learn French, the better my tennis will become."

Medvedev found little resistance on his least favorite surface from the Serbian 28th seed and broke him twice in the opening set before another early break made sure of a 2-0 set lead for the Russian.

Medvedev had arrived at the French Open with only one match on clay under his belt after undergoing a procedure to treat a hernia in April but it did not show against Kecmanovic, who tried to battle back only to be broken again at 2-2 following a long rally and a sliced backhand that went long.

## Butler's Heroics Power Heat Over Celtics to Force Game 7

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jimmy Butler scored a career playoff high 47 points and the Miami Heat forced a winner-take-all showdown for an NBA Finals berth by defeating Boston 111-103.

The Heat leveled the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals at 3-3 to set up a seventh-game clash with the Celtics on Sunday at Miami.

"We know what we're capable of. We get to take it back to the crib and win game seven," Butler said.

"We knew we were going to come in here and get one. We know we're going to win this next one too."

The winner will face the Golden State Warriors in the NBA Finals that begin Thursday in San Francisco.

Butler hit 16-of-29 shots from the floor, 4-of-8 from 3-point range, and all 11 of his free throws in 46 minutes while contributing nine rebounds, eight assists, four steals and a blocked shot.

"Jimmy just brought his competitive will tonight," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "And it was a will that would not let us lose."

Such faith inspired the superb effort, Butler said.

"My team, they've got so much belief in me. My coaches got so much belief in me," Butler said. "They give me that confidence to just go out there and play basketball the right way and just hoop."

Butler battled through a sore right knee to produce his fourth 40-point game of the playoffs and thanked a message from former Miami star guard Dwyane Wade for inspiring him.

"He was telling me I could do this," Butler said. "Knee a little banged up but nobody cares. Go out there and continue to build your legacy and it meant the world to me."

The Heat seek a second trip to the NBA Finals in three seasons, having lost to the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020. Miami last captured the NBA crown in 2013.



## Ceferin Warns Europe's Old Elite

PARIS (Dispatches) - UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin hit out at criticism of Paris Saint-Germain and defended clubs who threaten football's traditional elite, pointedly telling AFP that "things change" in an interview ahead of the Champions League final.

Real Madrid and Liverpool were to meet in the final for the second time in five years in Paris on Saturday, with the Spanish club looking to put their disappointment at missing out on the signature of Kylian Mbappe by winning a record-extending 14th European Cup.

Mbappe had long been expected to sign for Real before agreeing a new three-year contract at PSG, prompting La Liga president Javier Tebas to call the French club "an insult to football".

But Ceferin, president of European football's governing body since 2016, encouraged Tebas to mind his own business.

"I absolutely don't agree" with the criticism, he said, speaking in the French capital.

"There are anyway too many insults in football, and I think that every league should worry about their own situation."

Qatar-backed PSG, whose president Nasser al-Khelaifi is chairman of the influential European Club Association and sits on the UEFA Executive Committee, have changed the landscape of football on the continent in the last decade, along with Abu-Dhabi-owned Manchester City.

The irony is that neither clubs has yet managed to win the Champions League and both sides have been knocked out of this season's competition by Real Madrid.

The Spanish club will win their fifth Champions League in nine seasons if they beat Liverpool, but the feeling is that it will only be a matter of time before PSG or Manchester City claim the prize.

Both have been accused of breaching UEFA financial fair play rules in the past, although those rules were recently relaxed.

"We have clear rules, whoever obeys the rules can play our competitions, the others will not," Ceferin said.

