

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **141,310** With **2** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

French Foreign Ministry Has Called on Authorities of the Islamic Republic to Release the Two Seized Greek Tankers for Violating International Law in the Waters of the Persian Gulf

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Bangladesh Suggests Direct Shipment of Goods To Iran Through Sea Route

DHAKA (Dispatches) - The Bangladesh mission in Iran has suggested that Bangladesh initiate direct shipment of goods to the south-western Asian country through the sea route, aiming to increase bilateral trade volume.

It has also recommended exporting Bangladeshi products, especially apparel and leather goods, to Iran using its free zones, said officials.

The mission has emphasized the need for forming a Bangladesh-Iran Joint Commission of Commerce, comprising chambers of commerce of both the countries.

It mentions that different Iranian chambers of commerce have already expressed interests in forming the joint commission.

The embassy has recently sent a report to the commerce ministry to take necessary steps in this connection, an official confirmed to The Financial Express last week.

The mission has advocated organising 6th joint economic commission meeting to make effective the preferential trade agreement (PTA) between Bangladesh and Iran that was signed in 2006 with a view to getting further trade benefits from Iran. **See Page 7**

Oil Revenues Up Over 60% y/y in Two Months

TEHRAN (PresSTV) - An Iranian official says the country's oil revenues have increased by more than 60% in the two months to late May compared to the similar period last year.

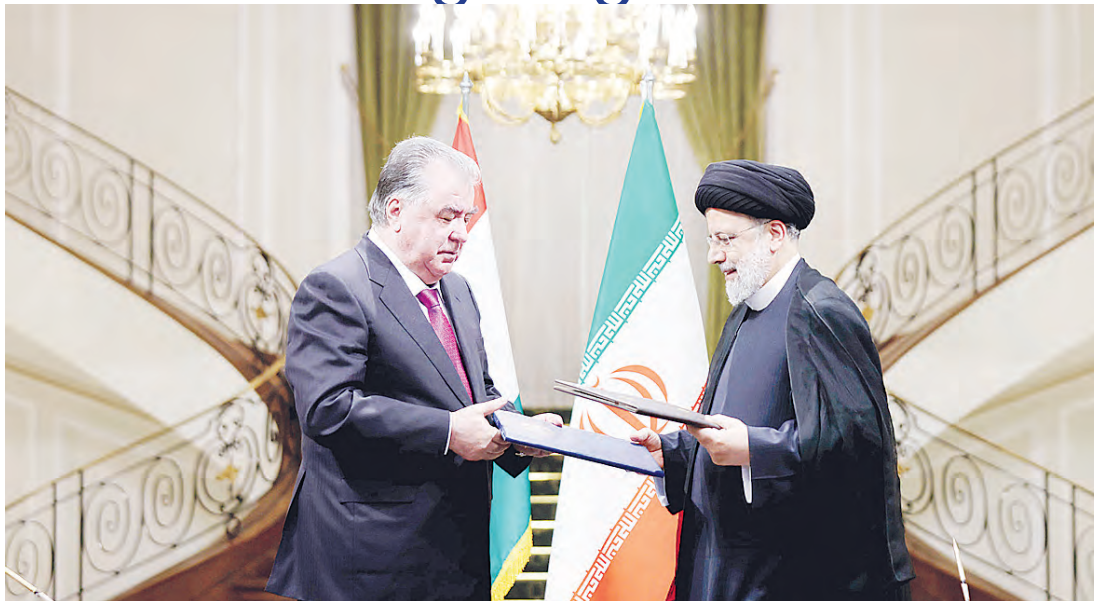
Ali Forouzandeh, who serves as spokesman of the Iranian Oil Ministry, said on Sunday that oil revenues had experienced a "dazzling jump" in the first two months of the current calendar year.

Forouzandeh cited as an example a surge in Iran's sales of petrochemicals in international markets in recent months and said that exports proceeds reported in a foreign exchange system run by the government had exceeded \$2.45 billion, up from \$1.5 billion reported for the two months to late May 2021.

The comments come amid reports suggesting that Iran's supply of crude oil and other petroleum products to China have declined significantly following a war in Ukraine that caused sanctions on Russia and pushed Moscow to offer shipments at heavy discounts to Chinese buyers.

Iranian authorities have rejected the reports and insist that Iran has continued to supply private Chinese refiners with huge volumes of crude. **See Page 7**

Tehran, Dushanbe Bolster Ties With Signing 17 MoUs



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Tajikistan signed 17 cooperation documents in various fields including politics, economy, trade and tourism.

Senior officials of Iran and Tajikistan signed 17 cooperation documents in the fields of politics, economy, trade, transportation, investment, new technologies, environment, sports, energy, judiciary, education and research, and tourism in the presence of President Ebrahim Raisi and President Emomali Rahmon.

These documents were signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Industry, Mines and Trade, Petroleum, Roads and Urban Development, Energy, Economic Affairs and Finance, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Justice, Sports and Youth Affairs, and Cooperation, Labour and Social Welfare, and Heads of the Exchange and Securities Organization and the Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture of Iran and their Tajik counterparts.

Referring to the increase in trade relations between Iran and Tajikistan, President Raisi said that Tehran and Dushanbe are determined to strengthen relations in all fields.

Speaking at the joint press conference with his Tajik counterpart, Rahmon, President Raisi said that Iran and Tajikistan have very good relations due to neighborhood, cultural and religious relations, common language and civilization.

Referring to his recent visit to Dushanbe at the invitation of his Tajik counterpart to attend the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Raisi said, "The trip was a turning point in relations between the two countries. Today we see a fourfold increase in trade relations between Iran and Tajikistan. Good measures have been also taken in other fields, especially in the implementation of the agreements signed between the two countries in Dushanbe."

He also added that big steps will be taken to strengthen relations between the two countries with the signing of the new memorandum between Iran and Tajikistan. "We are determined to continue the political, economic, cultural relations, as well as relations in various fields between the two countries."

Stating that good bilateral relations can be turned into good regional relations, Raisi said that Iran and Tajikistan have a common view about the presence of foreigners in the region. "We believe that the presence of the foreigners in the region will not provide the security of the region and the regional issues must be solved through dialogue, negotiation and joint meetings."

The two countries also have a common view about the developments in Afghanistan, the Iranian President said, adding that an inclusive government must be formed in Afghanistan, and all parties in Afghanistan must be involved in forming a government. The security of Afghanistan is also very important for Iran and Tajikistan. **See Page 7**

Iran Jobless Rate Down Slightly to 9.2%

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) show that the country's unemployment rate dropped slightly in the year to March 20.

SCI figures published showed that jobless rate in the country had dropped by 0.4% year on year to stand at 9.2% at the end of the last calendar year.

SCI calculations showed that Iran's economically active population of above 15-year-olds had increased by 180,000 people to reach 23.447 million over the year to late March. The agency said the figure represented 40.9% of the entire population of above-15-year-olds in Iran over the period. Jobless rate was 23% among the youth between 15 and 24 years old, flat against figures reported in the year to March 2021, said the SCI.

It added that the Iranian services sector was responsible for 49.8% of the jobs in the country over the year to late March, followed by the manufacturing and agriculture sectors with jobs share of 33.8% and 16.3%, respectively.

The SCI had reported Iran's lowest jobless rate in 25 years in the last quarter of 2021 although it insisted that the 8.9% figure was not necessarily a result of more jobs creation in the country. The government agency has announced in various reports over the past months that the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in Iran has caused a reduction in the country's active population and has led to lower jobless rates.

Taliban Delegation To Visit Iran for Talks

TEHRAN (MNA) - A delegation of senior Taliban officials, headed by Taliban's Refugee Minister Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, is scheduled to travel to Iran in the very near future to discuss the latest situation of Afghan refugees.

Iranian Deputy Ambassador to Kabul Seyyed Hassan Mortazavi met and held talks with Taliban's Refugee Minister Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani in the Afghan capital of Kabul to discuss bilateral ties and the upcoming visit of the Taliban delegation to Iran.

During the meeting, Mortazavi stated Iran has hosted a large number of new Afghan immigrants due to the latest situation in Afghanistan and this issue requires coordination with the Afghan governing body.

After the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, some administrative problems have been created for the working process of Afghan refugees in Iran, he said, adding that the two sides decided to cooperate with each other jointly towards resolving problems facing Afghan refugees in Iran. **See Page 7**

Spill From Transfer of Seized Iran Oil Alarms Greek Environmentalists

ATHENS (Dispatches) - Local sources in Greece are reporting a growing spill from the country's transfer of oil from an Iranian tanker seized recently off the Greek coast.

They have published images of the pollution in the Greek port of Karistos, blaming it for "non-standard" transfer without observing environmental principles.

The spill has already drawn protests from local environmentalists, the report said.

"Even if only one-thousandth of a shipment leaks during the transfer process at sea, the environmental damage will be incalculable," the Greek Environmental Protection Association Karistos said in a statement.

"We have a legitimate interest in requesting that the tanker be removed immediately from the Gulf of Karistos and relocated to a safe transfer area," it said.

The statement said the Karistos environment should not pay "another heavy price for the government's political choices, and the Russian tanker should leave the port".

The tanker, carrying Iranian oil, was seized in Greek waters under the pretext of violating sanctions and its cargo was ordered by the U.S. to be moved to another vessel. **See Page 7**

Defunct India-Iran Joint Venture Firm Acting as a Barrier

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The Irano Hind Shipping Company, a joint venture (JV) between Iran's state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISIL) and the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), is acting as a roadblock in the privatization of SCI.

The IRISIL and SCI hold a 51 per cent and 49 per cent stake in the Irano Hind Shipping Company respectively. The JV had ordered the M T Desh Shobha crude oil tanker from South Korea's Hyundai Samho Heavy Industries Co Ltd in 2010. Irano Hind had paid \$27 million in advance to the shipbuilder for the same.

However, the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) named IRISIL and Irano Hind as sanctioned entities by the time the ship was ready for delivery at the Samho yard of Hyundai Samho in 2012.

The sanctions were imposed due to Iran's controversial nuclear programme and the South Korean shipbuilder subsequently refused to hand over the new ship to the JV firm.

Irano Hind and Hyundai Samho subsequently renegotiated the price of the ship to \$54 million from the initial agreement of \$84 million. SCI took the delivery of the tanker by paying off the balance of \$27 million.

In 2013, the Union Cabinet decided to dissolve Irano Hind in the wake of the US sanctions against Tehran. However, this winding up process hasn't been completed yet.

The crude oil tanker is included in the SCI books and the state-run shipping company has to pay some \$29 million to the loss-making JV for the same.

Now, the private firm that will acquire SCI through the privatization process has to work through this dilemma. Either it will have to liquidate this liability or risk getting sanctioned by making the aforementioned payment to Irano Hind.

The central government too has a couple of options to work around currently. It can transfer the \$29 million worth liability to the Shipping Corporation of India Land and Assets Ltd (SCILAL). The SCILAL is formed to look after the SCI's non-core assets after the demerger scheme prior to the privatization. **See Page 7**

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ICT Minister in Geneva to Attend WSIS

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Information and Communications Technology Isa Zarepour has left Tehran for Geneva to take part in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The latest edition of the Summit, with the theme "Information Technology for Prosperity, Inclusion, and Resilience" will be held virtually from May 15 to June 3. Also, the World Summit on the Information Society will be held from May 30 to June 3 in person. Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology is scheduled to deliver a speech on May 31.

Tehran Enjoys Great Capacities to Boost Cooperation With ECO, BSEC

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC NEWS

TEHRAN - Tehran is one of the most active centers for economic diplomacy, said an Iranian diplomat, adding that Iran enjoys great capacities for boosting cooperation with ECO and BSEC despite sanctions.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari made the remarks at the Tehran International Conference dubbed "Iran & 30-year old BSEC: Prospects for Cooperation" held on Monday at the Institute for Political and International Studies.

The conference is a clear expression of Iran's commitment to the realization of multilateral economic diplomacy, he said.

Referring to the position of the Persian Gulf and the Black Sea in connecting West and East Asian regions and Europe, Safari said that the cooperation between Iran and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization plays a role in global connections.

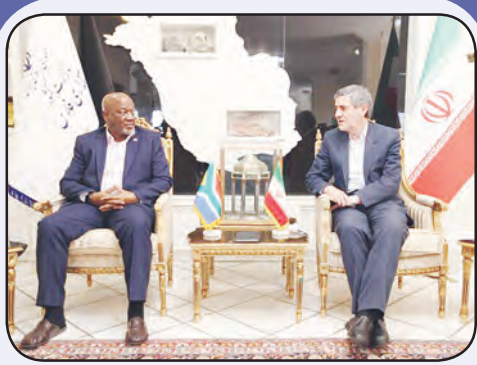


Iran enjoys great capacity in terms of access to the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, China, and Central Asia, he also said, adding that despite sanctions, Iran has great potential for cooperation with ECO and BSEC.

Iranian diplomatic and economic apparatuses are determined to take steps to enhance cooperation between Iran and neighboring countries, Safari stressed, describing Tehran as one of the most active and potential centers for economic diplomacy.

At the conference, Secretary-General of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Lazar Comanescu, ambassadors of member countries, UN Representative in Tehran, Secretary-General of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and representatives of Iranian private sector and Black Sea countries, along with senior managers and experts from ministries exchanged their views on ways of expanding bilateral economic cooperation.

S. Africa, Fars Province to Bolster Cooperation in Tourism



TEHRAN (MNA)- The officials of South Africa and Iran's Fars Province have called for enhancing mutual ties in varied fields, particularly in the tourism sector.

The Governor-General of Iran's Fars Province Mohammad Hadi Imanieh held a meeting with the South African Ambassador to Iran Vika Mazwi Khumalo.

He described Nelson Mandela as one of the most enduring international figures and a symbol of resistance.

Referring to the common grounds of the two countries' cooperation document, he said that there is more serious ground for cooperation between the two countries than before.

He called for enhancing cooperation in the fields of mines, research, history, tourism, electronics, energy as well as technology.

South African envoy, for his part, pointed to the appropriate capacity of Fars province, agreeing to form a joint committee between South Africa and Fars province.

Both sides also exchanged views on seizing investment opportunities in Fars for foreign nationals and visa issuance for South African tourists in Shiraz.

President Calls for Implementation of Pacts

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a telephone conversation, the Iranian President and the Iraqi Prime Minister stressed the importance of regional cooperation, calling the implementation of pacts the key to the progress and development of the cooperation.

Speaking in a telephone call that was initiated by the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi on Sunday evening, President Ebrahim Raisi expressed satisfaction with the progress of the Iraqi people's move and the interaction of political groups and currents to form a new government, saying, "The passing of the law to forbid the normalization of relations with the Zionist Regime in the Iraqi parliament was a right move."

Referring to the problems caused by dust storms and the influx of fine dust into the cities of Iran and Iraq, the President said, "Climate change is not specific to a particular country and crosses borders. Today, tackling dust has become a common regional demand, and all countries in the region are expected to live up to their responsibilities in this regard".

Emphasizing that the development of transportation lines between the two countries will lead to economic growth and stability in the region, Raisi stressed the need to speed up the implementation of railway lines.

Raisi also called for facilitating the presence of Iranian pilgrims, referring to the approaching season of the Arbaeen procession.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, for his part, thanked Raisi's praise of the Iraqi parliament for the decision to ban the normalization of relations with the Zionist Regime and said, "Palestine is not just an issue for Muslims, but for all justice-seeking people in the world, and the Iraqi government and parliament have also taken a series of decisions and actions in support of the Palestinian people."

Stating that he will seriously pursue the removal of obstacles to accelerate the implementation of the Basra-Shalamcheh railway, the Iraqi Prime Minister referred to his meeting with the head of the Iranian Department of Environment today and added, "Dealing with the dust problem should be followed in the form of a memorandum."

Regarding the Arbaeen procession, Al-Kadhimi stated, "I have urged the Iraqi officials to prepare and present to me a detailed plan for holding this ceremony as well as possible, as well as a hospitable framework for Iranian pilgrims."

FM Invites Moscow, Kyiv to End War

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in a phone talk with his Finnish counterpart Pekka Olavi Haavisto on Sunday voiced Iran's anti-war stand, and invited both Moscow and Kyiv to end the war.

Referring to the recent visit of the Finnish foreign minister to Tehran and the agreements concluded during that visit, the Iranian Foreign Minister announced Iran's readiness for evermore expansion of cooperation with Finland.

The top Iranian diplomat criticized the US inaction vis-a-vis Vienna talks and stressed that Iran is quite serious about reaching a good, strong,

and sustainable agreement.

He also voiced Iran's support for the continuation of the ceasefire in Yemen and the need for a full end to the inhumane siege of that country, as well as resolving the Yemen crisis through Yemeni-Yemeni talks.

The foreign minister of Finland, for his part, commemorated the 90th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties and described Iran-Finland relations as important for both countries.

Pekka Olavi Haavisto also expressed hope that the Vienna negotiations will soon lead to a satisfactory agreement for all sides.

IRGC Commander Vows Revenge for Member

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Chief Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Hossein Salami said on Monday that the IRGC will avenge the assassination of its members.

Salami made the remarks while paying Martyr Hassan Sayyad Khodaei's family a visit on Monday. Khodaei was assassinated last Sunday in Tehran in front of his house.

Salami said that those martyrs assassinated by Zionists have a higher status because they have been killed by the worst people on earth.

The top commander vowed the IRGC will take revenge on the foes for the assassination, as it was people's demand.

Khodaei's martyrdom earned him global fame, Salami said, adding that he was universally cherished, while he was an unknown IRGC member before his martyrdom.

The foes chased him door to door from the heart of the White House and Tel Aviv for years until they martyred him in a corner in Tehran, the commander noted.

Iran Exports \$8.5b Non-Oil Products in Current Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that \$8.5 billion worth of non-oil goods was exported from the country in the first two months of the current year.

Alireza Moghaddasi made the remarks in a meeting of the Council of Dialogue between public and private sectors in West Azarbaijan province on Sunday and stated that \$8.5 billion worth of non-oil goods were exported from the country from March 21 to May 22, showing a 37 percent hike as compared to the same period of last year.

He pointed to the high capabilities and potential of West Azarbaijan province in the export of products and added that \$112 million worth of non-oil products were exported from this province in the first two months of the current year.

Ship Carrying Smuggled Fuel Seized

TEHRAN (IFP) - The top judiciary office in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan says a vessel carrying over 106,000 liters of diesel has been seized near the southern Island of Qeshm, for smuggling fuel.

"Smugglers sought to transfer the shipment to one of the Persian Gulf countries, and the vessel was identified and detained in an integrated operation by marine guards," Director General of Hormozgan's Judiciary Mojtaba Ghahremani said.

Ghahremani added that nine crew members of the ship are also in detention for investigation and other legal processes.

He also noted that the fuel seized from the ship has been transferred to the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company to return to the distribution cycle of the country.

Due to the relatively low prices of fuel compared to the neighboring countries, Iran frequently seizes smuggled fuel in its southern waters.

Iran Calls for United Int'l Response to Israeli Apartheid

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh vehemently denounces the Israeli regime and illegal settlers' desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque's compound in the holy occupied city of al-Quds.

Speaking on Sunday, Khatibzadeh condemned the "racist Zionists" violation of the compound and their attacks on Palestinian worshippers there.

The official praised the Palestinian people and "al-Quds' defenders" steadfastness and resistance, warning the Zionist regime against "new adventurism and provocative measures."

Earlier on Sunday, tens of thousands of Israeli settlers staged their annual "March of the Flags" by rallying through the heart of the main Palestinian thoroughfare in East al-Quds' Old City, waving Israeli flags and chanting provocative slogans.

The Israelis, who were enjoying maximum protection on the part of the regime's troops, forced their way into the al-Aqsa Mosque's compound, performing religious rituals there, despite a standing agreement that prohibits non-Muslim prayers on the site.

The event commemorates the Israeli regime's 1967 occupation of East al-Quds, which Palestinians want as the capital of their future state. The parade is associated with violence against Palestinians and

the "display of incitement, Jewish dominance, and racism," according to Israeli NGO Ir Amim.

Khatibzadeh noted that the cause of liberation of al-Quds from Israeli occupation and aggression remained the Muslim world's "first priority."

"All of the world's freedom-seeking people, especially the Muslim people and countries, are duty-bound to act in a united manner towards all-out defense of the al-Aqsa Mosque and confrontation against the Zionist apartheid regime," he asserted.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, at least 145 Palestinians were injured during the day's clashes with Israeli forces and illegal settlers throughout the occupied West Bank, including East al-Quds, where the Israeli extremists were staging the controversial march. At least 18 of those wounded had been targeted by live Israeli fire, the body added.

Khatibzadeh expressed hope that the regional Resistance Axis would not fall short in defending the al-Aqsa Mosque and confronting "the bogus Israeli regime's terrorist measures."

He called on international authorities and organizations to act upon their legal duty by preventing the "Zionist occupiers' attacks on the defenseless Palestinian people."

Iran-Pakistan Trade Cooperation Capacity at Least \$5b

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - Head of Sistan and Baluchestan Province Industry, Mine and Trade said on Monday that the capacity of trade between Iran and Pakistan is at least \$5b.

Addressing the 9th joint border trade committee of Sistan and Baluchestan Province in Iran and Balochistan Province in Pakistan, Iraj Hassanpour said that the history of Iran and Pakistan is very rich and these two countries enjoy various commonalities.

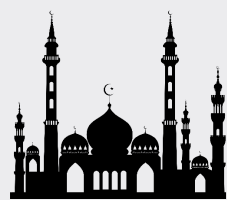
Iran and Pakistan have had positive political and economic relations based on good neighborliness, and Baluchistan State in Pakistan has always had growing cultural, religious and economic cooperation with Sistan and Baluchestan Province, said Hassanpour.

He expressed dissatisfaction over Iran-Pakistan economic cooperation and called for removing barriers in this regard.

Hassanpour also said that Iran and Pakistan are complementary in the field of trade, which can remove many problems by developing cooperation in transportation, barter trade, and reduction of tariffs and establishing border markets.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Hassanpour lauded port capacities between Iran and Pakistan, saying that development of Gwader and Chabahar ports and reinforcing their role in East-West and North-South corridors can benefit the two countries.

Developing Sistan and Baluchestan railway is of great importance due to its location in the East-West Corridor and also the province's position in the strategic railway corridor (Iran-Turkey-Pakistan) is one of the advantages that can pave the way for establishing cooperation with neighboring states, he stated.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:34
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:06
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:49

50. And We have distributed the (water) amongst them, in order that they may celebrate (our) praises, but most men are averse (to aught) but (rank) ingratitude.

51. Had it been Our Will, We could have sent a warner to every centre of population.

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (50 - 51)

Tehran, Damascus Can Broaden Trade Ties In All-Fields

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafei says the economic relation between Iran and Syria should not be limited only to exchange of goods and they can expand it to other fields.

Shafei said that the Islamic Republic of Iran's private sector is prepared to cooperate with Syrians in reconstruction projects and investments, an Iranian official said.

On Monday and on the sidelines of Iran-Syria Trade Forum and in meeting with Head of Syrian Chamber of Commerce Muhammad Abu al-Hoda al-Lahham, Mr. Shafei noted that the Iranian private sector is eager to work with Syrians in reconstructing infrastructure, improving industrial and mineral sectors, providing technical and engineering services, and investing in dam building, water, sewage, electricity and energy projects in the war-stricken Arab country.

The chamber of commerce has tried to expand the good relationship to economic sectors as well, the official said, noting that the necessity to exchange data, create information bank, get acquainted with regulations and trade opportunities has led to holding a seminar to expand economic cooperation.

As to the level of bilateral economic ties in recent years, he mentioned that there is a long road ahead to upgrade current trade exchanges to a preferred level, which can take place as a result of governments' support in creating infrastructure and implementing free trade agreements.

Development of mutual ties will help increase trade exchanges, Shafe'i said, arguing that the Islamic Republic is expected to organize precise programs in different spheres to pave the ground for participation of Iranian private sector in reconstruction of Syria.

The collaborations can help boost expansion of relationships in other sectors such as industry and agriculture, he noted, adding that the two countries plan to increase



exchanges to one billion dollars per annum.

The chambers of commerce are leading executive forces in both countries, which play a key role in development of trade ties, the Iranian official said.

Given the fact that Iran has succeeded in upgrading its agricultural sector and there are fertile lands in Syria, Iranian investment in this sector should be on the agenda, he said.

Meanwhile during the forum, Syrian Ambassador to Tehran Shafiq Dayoub said that the trade volume between Iran and Syria has been doubled in one year but it has not reached the satisfactory level but the embassy's efforts in the past year have been directed to the reinforcement of bilateral trade.

He then pointed to the historic relations between Tehran and Damascus, reiterated the tie between the two countries is unique and is on the right track.

He expressed hope such a forum would help broadening economic ties between the two states, reiterating that Syrian Foreign Ministry as well as Iran's Embassy in Damascus will take all steps for broadening trade cooperation between the two countries.

Meanwhile head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi said that preferential tariff is an accelerator for broadening economic relations between the two states, adding that the trade exchange between the two countries has increased by 60% and Iran's exports have been doubled.

He said that if the hurdles are removed by officials of the two countries, the trade volume of one billion dollars will not be far-fetched.

He reiterated that they can boost cooperation in agro and tourism sectors, adding that Iran has a trade center in Damascus and both countries can cooperate in production through synergy.

Kashefi reiterated that "Region is Ours" and Iran can take advantage of it.

HOSCO Sets New Quality Records

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) Dr. Ataollah Maroufkhani announced new quality records in production of slab in the most advanced slab producing plant of the country.

Maroufkhani emphasized pursuing the recommendations of the Supreme Leader on improving the quality of Iranian products, and termed improving quality of the produced slab in the company as the main strategies of HOSCO.

He then said registration of two consecutive records for quality slab productions in last March with 37.99% and with 45.99% in April indicates the determination of HOSCO on improving the quality of products.

He also pointed to the improvement of the quality of casting melts and said that in this field, the number of melts based on the demands of customers last year was 87.99% which showed considerable rise.

Maroufkhani then pointed to complementary inspecting liquid penetrate which was carried out for the first time in the country, adding that the average healthy slab production last year was 68.99%.

He then reiterated that the recent achievements have been gained due to defining projects for improvement and define of annual strategic measures as well as upgrading standard and mother methods for producing slab.

He admitted that there is a tough competition in the international markets for offering the produced slabs and for this reason improving quality of slab is very important and observing this point in HOSCO has always been important and for this reason the company seeks a strategic mission for producing the high quality slab with competitive prices.



Official Calls for Broadening Trade Ties Between Tehran, New Delhi



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Director-General of the Indian Subcontinent Office at Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Seyed Reza Seyed Aghazadeh in meeting with commercial attache of Indian Embassy Mr. Gautam Wahi and a 25-man delegation of India's PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) emphasized broadening of trade ties between Iran and New Delhi.

According to reports, in the meeting Seyed Aghazadeh expressed hope on continuation of such meetings in line with broadening trade relations and increasing the trade volume and called for expansion of bilateral relations.

He also called for all support of the TPO for broadening trade between the two countries.

Then Mr. Wahi, for his part, pointed to the historic relations between Tehran and New Delhi and called for improvement of trade relation considering their close and historic ties.

Meanwhile head of Indian delegation Mr. Vijay Mehta, for his part, expressed interest for broadening economic relations between Iran and New Delhi and said his visit to Tehran was aimed at meeting officials of Iran's TPO, expansion of trade relation in the fields of medicine, IT, industry, textile and auto.

He added that PHDCCI is one of the biggest chambers of commerce of India and said it has a very close cooperation with Iran's Chamber of Commerce and called for enhancing trade relations between the two countries in all fields like agro, medical, industry, mine and joint venture.

In the meeting it was decided some agreements to be signed between the related bodies of Iran and India for facilitating the presence of Iranian and Indian companies in the exhibitions being held in both states.

Iran Opposes Any Sanctions on Aviation Industry

TEHRAN (MNA) - The head of the Iranian Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) said that Iran opposes any imposition of sanctions on the aviation industry.

Mohammad Mohammadi-Bakhsh made the remarks in the inaugural ceremony of the Tutorial Workshop on cooperation between military-civil aviation sectors at the initiative taken by ICAO and stated that the Iranian aviation industry has been put under tough and oppressive sanctions since the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 which violate ICAO Charter and all international aviation laws and regulations.

In this regard, Iran expects special support from ICAO as a governing body in the field of the aviation industry and announces its readiness to strengthen bilateral cooperation and interaction with ICAO, he added.

Emphasizing that cooperating with ICAO will lead to the comprehensive development, Mohammadi-Bakhsh stated that the motto of the Iranian Civil Aviation Organization is to implement safety in all aviation activities and focusing on the implementation of safety rules and regulations in the aviation industry which has been stipulated at ICAO Charter but oppressive sanctions in the civil aviation sector are completely against these regulations.

After 43 years since the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian aviation industry has stood on its foot in both military and civil sectors and is operating successfully.

Establishing more interaction and cooperation as well as getting more acquaintance between the Iranian Civil Aviation Organization and International Civil Aviation Organization is the main aim behind the launching the said tutorial workshop, he said, adding that the more safety increases in the aviation industry, the more objective of the aviation industry will be materialized.

Iran Needs to Develop Air, Sea Transport With Africa

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy said that Iran's air and sea transportation to the African continent needs to be developed.

Mehdi Safari, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy made the comments in a meeting of Foreign Economic Relations Coordinating Headquarters entitled "Strategies of Developing Trade Ties with African Continent" with a special emphasis on the significance of African Continent in Iran's trade promotion on Sunday and stated that the country's air and sea transportation to the African countries needs to be developed.

In the current situation, exporting technical and engineering services, constructing dams and power plants, developing extraterrestrial cultivation and boosting trade and economic relations with African countries are "essential", Safari highlighted.

He expressed hope that joint economic commission between Iran and African countries would be held in a very near future in line with acceleration of trade and economic activities.

Necessity of launching a shipping line and direct airlines between Iran and African countries and removing obstacles ahead of implementation of extraterrestrial cultivation were the other issues that were discussed in the meeting, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister added.

Qatar Seeks Shore-Up in Marine Cooperation With Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of Qatar's Port Management Company met with his Iranian counterpart and welcomed the expansion of marine cooperation between the two countries.

Leading a top marine delegation to Tehran, Abdulla Mohamed AL Khanji told the Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Ali-Akbar Safaei the investment in Dayyer and Bushehr ports, southern Iran, along with increasing the depth of the ports' berths and widening their channel for better access, could help increase the volume of trade between the two countries.

He said that the Qatari government sought to facilitate the traffic of larger vessels between the ports of the two countries to increase the trade volume and reduce the costs and final price of the goods shipped.

Qatar intended to shore up bilateral trade ties by providing the necessary facilities to the Iranian and Qatari marine private sectors.

The Director-General of Iran's PMO said for his part that all options were on the table to expand trade and economic ties between Tehran and Doha.

Safaei highlighted the capacities of Dayyer and Bushehr ports for investment and said Iran's suggestion for Qatar was to establish a support center in Bushehr Port to better control the supply of the goods exported from there to Qatar.

Manufacturing of Washing Machines Rises 20% in a Year

TEHRAN (MNA) -Manufacturing of washing machines in Iran increased 20 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), from its previous year, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data show that 1.456 million washing machines were manufactured in 1400, while the figure was 1,213,600 in 1399.

Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran rose 7.56 percent during the previous year from its preceding year.

According to the industry ministry's data, over 6,273,600 sets of large home appliances, including TV sets, refrigerators and freezers, washing machines, and air coolers were manufactured in 1400, while the figure was 5,832,400 in 1399.

Among the mentioned products, just air cooler experienced a production drop, and production of the other items increased.

Nepal Suspends Search For Missing Plane

KATHEMANDU (Dispatches) - A small passenger plane with 22 people on board went missing in cloudy weather in Nepal on Sunday and authorities suspended a search in difficult terrain as night fell.

"The search operation has been suspended for today because of the darkness," police spokesperson Bishnu Kumar K.C told Reuters. "We could not make any progress. The search will resume early tomorrow."

Officials said bad weather and mountainous terrain had hampered their efforts to locate the plane, a De Havilland Canada DHC-6-300 Twin Otter operated by privately owned Tara Air. The plane took off in the morning for a 20-minute flight but lost contact with the control tower five minutes before it was due to land, government officials said.



Egypt Sentences Ex-Presidential Candidate to 15 Years

CAIRO (Dispatches) - An Egyptian emergency court sentenced former presidential candidate Abdelmoneim Aboul Fotouh to 15 years in prison for "spreading false news" and "incitement against state institutions", judiciary sources said.

Aboul Fotouh has been in detention since 2018 and his trial began last November, though Egyptian law sets a legal cap of two years for pretrial detention.

The verdict cannot be appealed.

He was sentenced alongside 24 others, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood group, from which the former candidate had defected years before.



Ukrainian Defenders Hold Out In Donbas City Under Heavy Fire



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian forces endured heavy artillery barrages on Sunday as they held off Russian attempts to capture Sievierodonetsk, the largest city Kyiv still controls in the Luhansk region of the Donbas, Ukrainian officials said.

The shelling was so intense it was not possible to assess casualties and damage, Luhansk governor Serhiy Gaidai said. Dozens of buildings have been destroyed in the past few days.

"The situation has extremely escalated," Gaidai said.

The Ukrainian government meanwhile urged the West to provide it with more longer-range weapons in order to turn the tide in the war, now in its fourth month.

The battle for Sievierodonetsk, which lies on the eastern bank of the Siverskyi Donets River, is in the spotlight as Russia ekes out slow but solid gains in the Donbas, comprising of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

Having failed to take the capital Kyiv in the early phase of the war, Russia is seeking to consolidate its grip on the Donbas, large parts of which are already controlled by Moscow-backed separatists.

It has concentrated huge firepower on a small area - a contrast to earlier phases of the conflict when its forces were often spread thinly - bludgeoning towns and cities with artillery and air strikes.

Governor Gaidai said on Sunday that Russian forces had dug in at the Myr hotel on Sievierodonetsk's northern edge.

"They cannot advance further into the city and are taking casualties, but we are not able right now to push them out of the hotel," he said on Telegram.

Analysts at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington said the Russians had still not managed to encircle the city and the Ukrainian defenders have inflicted "fearful casualties" on them.

The Ukrainians were taking serious losses themselves, civilians as well as combatants, they said in a briefing paper. Russia's focus on Sievierodonetsk had drawn resources from other battlefronts and as result they had made little progress elsewhere, the analysts said.

A Reuters journalist in the area said a ceramics factory was almost completely destroyed on the outskirts of the Donetsk town of Bakhmut, which straddles the last main road into Sievierodonetsk and is just 10 km (6 miles) from the frontline.

The journalist heard what appeared to be outgoing artillery fire and Russian aircraft dropping a bomb close to the town. The city itself was not badly damaged and while the town was relatively empty, some residents were walking with pets and children.

Several transporters with Ukrainian soldiers could be seen in the area.

Colombians Head to Polls in Divisive Presidential Election

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Colombians went to the polls to choose a new president from among a former rebel promising generous social programs, a center-right candidate warning against a leftist economic mode, and an eccentric business magnate.

Gustavo Petro, a leftist former mayor of Bogota and member of the M-19 guerrilla group and current senator, is consistently leading opinion polls with around 40% support, 10 points below what he would need to secure the presidency without a June second round.

The 62-year-old has attracted backing on promises to redistribute pensions, offer free public university and battle deep inequality.

His main opponent is Federico 'Fico' Gutierrez, the center-right former mayor of Medellin, who has around 25% support.

Gutierrez has emphasized his own plans for a basic income for 5 million households and economic growth of 5% per year in response to accusations he is an ideological successor to unpopular President Ivan Duque.

Gutierrez, 47, has said Petro is a threat to democracy and warned that the leftist's economic plans, including a ban on new oil and gas projects, will ruin Colombia's economy.

Polling third in the six-way race is construction magnate and former mayor of Bucaramanga Rodolfo Hernandez, with about 20% support.

Hernandez, who is running independently, is known for whimsical social media videos, including of him riding an electric scooter, and anti-corruption promises. The 77-year-old is himself facing an ongoing investigation into whether he intervened in a tender to benefit a company his son lobbied for. He has denied wrongdoing.

Casting her ballot for Petro in Bogota's Chapinero neighborhood was Ana Maria Sierra, who said free university education and the environment were among her priorities.

"One must be more empathetic with the needs of others," the 27-year-old waitress said.



Sri Lanka Police Tear-Gas Students in Fresh Clashes

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Police fired tear gas to disperse thousands of students trying to storm the Sri Lankan president's home as the government offered an olive branch to demonstrators demanding his resignation.

Anti-riot squads used water cannon followed by tear gas, as protesters pulled down yellow iron barricades across a road leading to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's official residence in Colombo.

Nearby, thousands of men and women demonstrated for the 51st straight day outside Rajapaksa's seafront office on Sunday, demanding that he step down over the country's worst economic crisis since independence.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe went on national television on Sunday evening offering young protesters a greater say in how the country is administered.

"The youth are calling for a change in the existing system," Wickremesinghe said, laying out plans for 15 committees that would work with parliament to decide national policies.

"I propose to appoint four youth representatives to each of the 15 committees," he said, adding that they could be drawn from the current protesters.

Wickremesinghe is not from Rajapaksa's party, but was given the job after the president's elder brother Mahinda resigned as prime minister on May 9 after weeks of protests, when no other legislator agreed to step in.

Wickremesinghe is the sole parliamentary representative of the United National Party, a once-powerful political force that was nearly wiped out in Sri Lanka's last elections.

Rajapaksa's party, which has a majority in the legislature, has offered to provide him with the necessary support to run a government.

Sunday's student action came a day after a similar clash when protesters tried to storm Rajapaksa's heavily guarded colonial-era official residence, where he has bunkered down since thousands surrounded his private home on March 31.

Nigeria's PDP Picks Atiku Abubakar to Run for President

ABUJA (Dispatches) - The main opposition party in Nigeria has picked former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as its candidate for the 2023 presidential elections.

Vote counting started late on Saturday and Abubakar garnered 371 votes, defeating his nearest rival Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, governor of oil-producing Rivers state, who received 237 votes.

Abubakar, a Muslim and stalwart of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has made numerous bids to capture the presidency of Africa's most populous country.

The 75-year-old lost to incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari in 2019 during the last election, which he claimed was rigged.

But Buhari will not be on the ballot next year when the second of his two four-year terms comes to an end.

The PDP, which ruled Nigeria after military rule ended in 1999, was removed from power by Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) party in 2015.

In his acceptance speech, Abubakar reiterated his campaign promise to end insecurity in the country

and revive its fragile economy, among other pledges, and promised to work with his opponents.

"I therefore pledge that I will restore unity. I also committed that I was going to deal decisively with the security situation in this country," said Abubakar.

Abubakar has stood in six primaries, and next year's vote will be his third presidential bid.

From 1999 to 2007, he was vice president to Olusegun Obasanjo, the first Nigerian leader after the end of decades of military rule.

Abubakar's main opponent will be from the ruling APC party, which will choose its candidate at a special convention to be held June 6-8.

The APC postponed its presidential primary from Sunday after the electoral commission extended the deadline for political parties to choose their candidates.

Twenty-five candidates from the APC have registered to take part in the primaries. Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and former Lagos state governor and party heavyweight Bola Tinubu are seen as the ruling party's frontrunners.



Erdogan Not to Let Terrorism-Supporting Countries Enter NATO

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said talks with Finland and Sweden about their joining NATO were not at the "expected level" and Ankara cannot say yes to "terrorism-supporting" countries, state broadcaster TRT Haber reported on Sunday.

Turkey has objected to Sweden and Finland joining the Western defence alliance, holding up a deal that would allow for a historic enlargement following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Erdogan's latest comments indicated his opposition continued.

"For as long as Tayyip Erdogan is the head of the Republic of Turkey, we definitely cannot say 'yes' to countries which support terrorism entering NATO," he was cited as telling reporters on his return from a trip to Azerbaijan on Saturday.

Two sources previously told Reuters that Wednesday's talks with Finnish and Swedish delegations made little headway and it was unclear when further discussions would take place. All 30 NATO members must approve plans to enlarge NATO.

Turkey challenged the bids from Sweden and Finland on the grounds that the countries harbour people linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group and others it deems terrorists, and because they halted arms exports to Ankara in 2019.

"They are not honest or sincere. We cannot repeat the mistake made in the past regarding countries that embrace and feed such terrorists in NATO, which is a security organization," he said.

Sweden and Finland have said they condemn terrorism and welcomed the possibility of coordinating with Ankara.

"Diplomatic efforts are ongoing. We decline to comment further at this moment," Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde said in an emailed comment to Reuters following Erdogan's latest statement.

Erdogan also said Turkey wanted to see an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine as soon as possible, but that the situation was becoming more negative each day.

"I will have phone calls with both Russia and Ukraine. We will continue to encourage the parties to operate channels of dialogue and diplomacy," he said.



Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Kamranieh (\$2800)
220sq.m
3bdrs, pkg
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Elahieh bldg (\$12000)
4storey bldg
10bdrs, yard
enough pkgs
renovated
Semi Furn

Velenjak (\$1400)
130sq.m, 2bdrs
S/p, S, J, gym
balcony, & F.F

Sa'adat abad (\$1600)
2bdrs, 150sq.m, & yard

Tajrish Villa
1300sq.m, 5bdrs
S/p, S, J, yard
pkg lots, & F.F

Elahieh Apts
(\$1800) 2bdrs, 140sq.m, S/p, F.F
(\$2200) 3bdrs, 220sq.m, S/p, F.F

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Gazprom Continues Shipping Gas to Europe Via Ukraine

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian gas producer Gazprom said its supply of gas to Europe through Ukraine via the Sudzha entry point stood at 44.1 million cubic meters (mcm), up from 43.96 mcm on Saturday.

An application to supply gas via another major entry point, Sokhranovka, was rejected by Ukraine, Gazprom said.



Turkey Climbs in WEF's Tourism Development Index

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey has moved up four places in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Travel and Tourism Development Index to rank 45th among 117 countries in 2021.

Turkey's score also increased 1.3 percent in 2021 from 2019 to 4.2. Overall scores range from 1 to 7, where 1 is the worst and 7 is the best.

The country's tourism industry expects to welcome more international holidaymakers this year as most nations eased travel restrictions, which were introduced amid the coronavirus pandemic, and the COVID situation has improved in Turkey.

Foreign tourist arrivals in Turkey already soared 173 percent to 7.5 million people in January-April from a year ago.

In April alone, nearly 2.6 million foreign tourists visited the country, marking a staggering 226 percent increase compared with the same month last year.

Earlier this month, Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy reiterated that Turkey aims to host 42 million foreign tourists and raise \$35 billion in tourism revenues this year, up from \$24.5 billion in revenues and 30 million tourist arrivals in 2021.

The picture looked very different two years later, as COVID-19 lockdowns hit the travel and tourism (T&T) sector hard. In 2020 alone, it faced losses of \$4.5 trillion and 62 million jobs, impacting the living standards and well-being of communities across the globe, the WEF said.

"The war in Ukraine has added to instability and economic disruption for the sector. Against this backdrop, the WEF's inaugural Travel and Tourism (T&T) Development Index reflects the growing role of sustainability and resilience in T&T growth, as well as the sector's role in economic and social development more broadly."

The T&T sector is a major driver of economic development, global connectivity and the livelihood of some of the populations and businesses most vulnerable to, and hardest hit by, the pandemic, it said, adding that therefore, supporting T&T development and recovery, which in turn will help the global recovery, build resilience and support all of those who depend on the sector for work, will be critical.

"The T&T sector has faced difficult operating conditions but shifting demand dynamics have created opportunities and a need for adaptation: In the shorter term, challenges such as reduced capacity, geopolitical tensions and labor shortages are slowing recovery."

Japan topped the WEF's list, followed by the U.S. and Spain. France and Germany ranked fourth and fifth. Meanwhile, Japan announced on May 26 that it will reopen to tourists from 98 countries and regions starting June 10, ending a two-year pandemic closure, but travelers will only be allowed in with tour groups.

Foreign tourist arrivals in Japan fell more than 90 percent in 2020 from a record 31.9 million the year before, almost wiping out the pre-pandemic inbound tourism market of more than 4 trillion yen (\$31 billion).

Business Lobby Sees 2% Hit on Italy's GDP If Russia Stops Gas

MILAN (Dispatches) - Italy's business lobby Confindustria forecasts an almost 2% hit on the country's gross domestic product (GDP) on average per year in 2022 and 2023 in case of a stop of natural gas imports from Russia in June, it said in a research note.

"A halt of gas imports from Russia could have a very strong effect on the already weakened Italian economy," Confindustria said, adding the negative consequences would come from a major shortage of gas volumes for industry and services and an additional increase in energy costs.

Last year Russia was Italy's biggest supplier of natural gas, providing 29 billion cubic metres or 40% of total gas imported by the country.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Italian government has been seeking alternative energy suppliers and its ministers have travelled to Africa and the Middle East to secure new contracts.

As part of this effort, Italy's energy group Eni (ENI.MI) and Algeria's Sonatrach on Thursday signed a deal to accelerate the development of gas fields in Algeria and of green hydrogen.

This move is expected to boost the North African country's gas exports to Italy by some 3 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year.



India Faces Wider Coal Shortages, Worsening Power-Outage Risks

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India is expected to face a wider coal shortage during the quarter ending September over expectations of higher power demand, an internal power ministry presentation seen by Reuters showed, worsening risks of widespread power outages.

The energy-hungry nation expects local coal supply to fall 42.5 million tons short of demand in the September quarter, 15% higher than previously projected, due to higher growth in power demand and lower output from some mines.

The grim forecast shows the extent of the fuel shortage in India, at a time when annual power demand is seen growing at the fastest rate in at least 38 years and global coal prices are trading at near-record levels due to a supply crunch resulting from the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

India has stepped up pressure on utilities to increase imports in recent days, warning of cuts to supply of domestically mined coal if power plants do not build up coal inventories through imports.

However, one of the slides in the presentation showed that most states had yet to award contracts to import coal and that Indian utilities would run out of coal by July if no coal was imported.

Only one state had awarded a contract to import coal as of end-April, a power ministry import status report reviewed by Reuters showed.

India expects domestic coal supply of 154.7 million tons, 42.5 million tons short of the projected requirement of 197.3 million tons in the September quarter, the presentation showed. It previously expected a shortage of 37 million tons.

The presentation was made on Friday in a virtual meeting in which the federal coal and power ministers were present, with top energy officials from the federal government and the states in attendance, according to two government officials familiar with the matter.

The federal coal and power ministries did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment. Details on the presentation have not been previously reported.

Coal inventories at power plants have declined by about 13% since April, which translates to eight days of coal requirement, the lowest level at this time of the year in at least nine years. The higher coal demand could also stifle efforts to build power plant inventories.

India now expects the demand for coal from utilities to be 784.6 million tons for the year ending March 2023, the presentation showed, 3.3% higher than projected earlier.

The projected annual coal shortage is now 49.3 million tons, nearly three times the 17.7 million tons projected earlier, the presentation showed.



Venezuela's State Bank Announces Partial Share Sale

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela's state bank said it would sell up to 10 percent of its shares as part of the government's plan to inject capital into public companies struggling due to a lack of investment.

Two weeks ago, Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro announced a plan to sell off parts of public companies.

The Bank of Venezuela is the only state firm so far to have declared a share sale, although it gave no details as to when that would be.

It said in a statement shared on social media that it would "begin the public offer of 5 percent progressively up to 10 percent of its social capital."

"It is the first step by Venezuelan public companies to offer on the stock market the possibility for citizens, and national and international private economic actors, to take part in the country's development through instruments of economic democratization."

The first share sale was supposed to take place on May 16 with the CANTV telephone company, but it never happened and no explanation was ever given.

The Bank of Venezuela is the largest in the country with 15 million customers and was nationalized under the presidency of the late Hugo Chavez (1999-2013.)

It was under the control of the Spanish Santander Group from 1994 until the transfer of its shares to the state in 2009.

With the collapse of Venezuela's vital oil industry and the punishing effects of US sanctions aimed at forcing Maduro from power, the government has been forced to relax various state controls imposed under Chavez.



EU May Clinch Summit Deal to Sanction Russian Oil Shipments

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - European Union countries are negotiating a deal on Russian oil sanctions that would embargo shipment deliveries but exempt oil delivered by pipeline to

win over Hungary and unblock a sixth package of measures against Moscow, officials said.

An agreement could be reached by ambassadors of EU member states in Brussels on Sunday, on time for their leaders to agree at a May 30-31 summit, one of the officials said.

"The idea is to split the oil embargo into pipeline and seaborne deliveries," another official said. "Pipeline would get an exemption for some time to organise a replacement." Hungary's resistance to oil sanctions — and the reluctance of a handful of other countries — has held up implementation of a sixth package of sanctions by the 27-member EU against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

The sanctions proposed by the European Commission, the EU's executive, require the unanimous support of all member states and landlocked Hungary, which is heavily reliant on Russian oil imports via a pipeline, has been blocking them.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban told other member states in a letter this week not to attempt to agree the oil embargo at the summit in the absence of unanimity.

His chief of staff, Gergely Gulyas, told Reuters yesterday that Hungary needed 3-1/2 to four years to shift away from Russian crude and make huge investments to adjust its economy.

Hungary has said it would need about €750 million (RM3.5 billion) in short-term investments to upgrade refineries and expand a pipeline bringing oil from Croatia.

It also said the longer-term conversion of its economy away from Russian oil could cost as much as €18 billion, and it is looking to the EU to provide the funds for such a transition.

Taiwan Seeking to Deepen U.S. Economic Ties



TAIPEI (Dispatches) - Taiwan said it would continue efforts to join the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), and a source has provided specific details of its plans to attend events next month to deepen U.S.-Taiwan economic collaborations.

U.S. President Joe Biden launched the IPEF on his visit to Japan on Monday with 13 nations joining initially, while Fiji on Friday signed on to the trade group.

Biden described the IPEF as "writing new rules for the 21st-century economy."

Taipei plans to arrange a meeting between Minister Without Portfolio John Deng and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, a person familiar with the matter said.

Tai and Deng met on May 20 in Thailand, and a second meeting could focus on supply chain collaborations, expedited and facilitated trade, and agreements regarding agricultural goods, the source said.

It is customary to allow the US to announcement details of such meetings, the source said, adding that Taipei is withholding comment until then.

Deng is to head a delegation to participate in the annual SelectUSA Investment Summit from June 26 to June 29, and is expected to meet with other US officials in Washington, the source said.

The National Development Council Minister Kung Min-hsin is also to head a delegation of 5G network industry representatives to participate in the summit, the source said.

After the summit concludes, Kung and the delegation are expected to attend a Taiwan-US investment event in Silicon Valley.

This event would attempt to introduce collaborative opportunities to both sides, with 5G network equipment and 5G enterprise network solutions being anticipated sectors of collaboration.

Kung is also expected to visit Microsoft's headquarters in Seattle to explore possible 5G development collaborations with the tech giant.

Monkeypox Presents Moderate Risk to Public Health

TEHRAN (MNA) - World Health Organization has announced that monkeypox presents a moderate risk to public health. As of 26 May, a cumulative total of 257 laboratory-confirmed cases and around 120 suspected cases have been reported to WHO. No deaths have been reported yet as a result of the latest outbreak. Monkeypox is a viral zoonosis (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms very similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although it is clinically less severe.



COVID-19 Leads Non-Muslims Toward Halal Products

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The demand of non-Muslim countries for halal products increased with the COVID-19 pandemic, Zafer Soylu, the head of the Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) in Turkey, said Sunday.

"The importance of safe, healthy, clean food has emerged with the pandemic. Especially in the Far East, non-Muslim consumers have started to show high demand for halal-certified products," he told Anadolu Agency (AA).

Soylu said that now the halal certification is used not only in areas related to food but in the service sector as well.

Pointing out that Turkey's halal standards are based on 16 guidelines published by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (IOC) Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) in this field, Soylu said: "These standards seem to contain only Islamic and fiqh rules, but the other aspects of the work we are talking about should not be forgotten. Hygienic, clean, healthy products, not giving false and misleading information to the consumer and even quality are within the scope of halal standards."

"SMIIC standards include hygiene, cleanliness and health aspects as well as fiqh dimensions," he said.

Soylu stated that they saw an increasing interest in halal standards by non-Muslim countries and their populations.

"There was a demand for all halal-certified products before the pandemic, this demand intensified now as the importance of such factors came to light with the pandemic."

Pointing out that halal certification mainly emerged and became widespread in non-Muslim countries, Soylu said: "People living in non-Muslim countries have resorted to halal certification in order to feel safe. Most of the applications to us are from non-Muslim countries."

Soylu further pointed out that an international system should be established for mutual recognition of halal certificates issued according to the 16 standards determined by SMIIC.

"International trade should run on the basis of these standards. The halal certificate issued in one country must be valid in other countries under normal conditions."

"For this, there must be an accreditation mechanism. It is important that halal certification bodies issue certificates according to the accreditation statuses given by the accreditation institutions recognized by the SMIIC. Documents must also be acceptable all over the world. Unfortunately, today, different countries have different



halal standards and halal certification approaches. Different accreditation and inspection systems create costs for our exporters," he explained.

Saying that many food exporters get different halal certificates for different countries, and the cost is very high, Soylu noted: "If you cannot establish a mutual recognition mechanism and provide mutual recognition of halal certificates, both the cost for the producers increase and the consumers hesitate about which product is halal and clean."

The global halal market – mostly catering to Muslims but also attracting those who prefer thoroughly inspected products – currently stands around \$7 trillion, according to previous statements.

The field includes many sectors such as cosmetics, chemical and cleaning products, agricultural products, food, energy, tourism and finance.

Turkey, which is home to a large population that identifies itself as Muslim, strives to be a pioneer in this field.

Tehran, Dushanbe...

FROM PAGE 1

"The 20-year presence of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan had nothing but the war and insecurity for the country, so the fate of Afghanistan must be decided by the people of the country," he added.

Rahmon, for his part, said that strengthening cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan is one of Tajikistan's foreign policies. Meanwhile Raisi said the Islamic Republic and Tajikistan share common views on regional issues and agree on the need for the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region as they will not ensure the establishment of security and stability there.

"Iran and Tajikistan have common views on regional issues, including the withdrawal of foreign forces," he said.

"We believe that the presence of foreigners in the region has not and will not provide security in any way," he said.

The Iranian president noted that regional countries need to resolve their issues through dialog, adding that "the presence of foreigners in the region is not helpful."

The Iranian president also called for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, which would represent all political groups and ethnicities there, stating that Tehran and Dushanbe attach great significance to the security of Afghanistan.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi said the trade volume between Iran and Tajikistan has increased fourfold and that the two countries are determined to expand their political, economic, trade, and cultural relations, as well as ties in various fields of energy, tourism, mining, science, and technology.

Rahmon, for his part, added new documents were signed on Monday for bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Iran in various fields.

"We had constructive talks on enhancement of understanding between the two sides. We agreed to expand cooperation among our free trade and industrial zones. We welcome expansion of transportation through Iran's southern Bandar Abbas and Chabahar ports," he said.

The Tajik president also underscored that Dushanbe supports any efforts to maintain security in Afghanistan

Jordan's Plastic Trash Turned Into Art With a Message

AMMAN (Dispatches)- Jordan-based artist Maria Nissan is on a mission: to rid the world of single-use plastics and to raise public awareness about the environmental scourge through eye-catching art.

One of her best-known murals graces the side of a building in the capital Amman, a giant work made from more than 2,000 plastic bottles, almost 1,000 shopping bags and over 150 hookah pipe hoses.

A US citizen of Iraqi origin, Nissan said she became enchanted with Amman when she first visited three years ago, but also felt "frustration and anger" at the piles of garbage on the streets and in areas of natural beauty.

"Despite the beauty of the city, walking its streets can be a journey filled with all kinds of trash," the 35-year-old said.

"My eyes cannot turn away from the abundant shiny plastic bags, glass bottles, soda cans, candy bar wrappers," said Nissan, who occasionally sports a dress made from a sturdy blue Ikea bag. Trained in painting and drawing in the United States and Italy, Nissan decided to collect and repurpose the trash to create art -- often collages themed on women's faces, flowers and Oriental motifs.

Oil Revenues...

FROM PAGE 1

Iranian crude exports to China increased to an average of more than 1 million barrels per day in late 2021, a first for the country since 2018 when the United States pulled out of an international agreement on Iran's nuclear program and imposed sanctions on the country.

An Iranian administrative government that took office in August has claimed credit for the surge, saying it has introduced policies to get round the American sanctions and increase Iranian oil supply to international markets.

Spill From...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran condemned the seizure "an example of international piracy", the responsibility of which "lies with the Greek government and the illegal occupants". The charge d'affaires of the Greek embassy in Tehran was summoned to Iran's ministry of foreign affairs and notified of the Islamic Republic strong indignation.

The Ports and Maritime Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran also issued a statement calling on the Greek government to fulfill its international obligations in this regard.

Earlier, Reuters quoted unnamed sources as saying that the US Department of Justice had confiscated 700,000 barrels of Iranian oil cargo off the southern Greek island of Evia on board a Russian-operated ship.

On Friday, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) seized two Greek oil tankers in the Persian Gulf over violations. The IRGC Navy today seized two Greek oil tankers for violations they have carried in the azure waters of the Persian Gulf," the IRGC said in a statement.

Tehran Ready to Boost Cooperation With BSEC Organization

TEHRAN (PressTV) _ Iran's foreign minister says the country is ready to further expand its cooperation with the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), highlighting the two sides' vast capacities.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made the remarks in a Sunday meeting with secretary general of the organization, Lazăr Comănescu, in Tehran.

During the meeting, Iran's top diplomat said the forthcoming international conference of the organization to be in Tehran on Monday will be a good opportunity for the identification of the existing grounds for cooperation between Iran and the BSEC.

Amirabdollahian congratulated the BSEC on its 30th anniversary and underscored the enormous potential for cooperation between the Tehran and the organization.

Citing Iran's potential in transit and energy sectors, the minister expressed hope that the conclusion of Persian Gulf-Black Sea Corridor agreement would facilitate the positive development of trade and transit cooperation between the two sides.

Comănescu, for his part, thanked the Iranian foreign minister for arranging the meeting and voiced his support for Tehran's hosting of the BSEC conference.

He praised Iran as one of BSEC's "most active dialog partners," voicing confidence that the conference would set the scene for increased and stronger cooperation.

The international conference of Iran and BSEC, dubbed Iran & 30-year old BSEC: Prospects for Cooperation, opened in Tehran on Monday.

Cannes Festival Acts Politically by Lauding "Holy Spider"

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs said that the Cannes Film Festival has acted politically by praising the film "Holy Spider".

The Iranian organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs, in a statement, condemned the fake content of the movie "Holy Spider".

The movie has shown a distorted image of Iranian society and insulted the transcendent beliefs of the Shiites, the statement said.

With the political choice of the poor cinematic work, according to many international critics, a crucial question has been created in the professional record of

the international festival, the statement added.

Condemning the festival's moves and declaring its innocence and those cinematographers are the causes of this black-image work, the Organization stresses that France and the Cannes Film Festival must be held accountable for the hurt feelings of millions of Shia Muslims in the world and clean the anti-cultural stigma from their professional record, the statement noted.

Directed by Ali Abbasi, the film narrates a story of a serial killer of women in Mashhad.

Holy Spider is a co-production of France, Germany, Sweden, as well as Denmark and has been filmed in Jordan.

Bangladesh...

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According to the embassy report, the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) of Iran has expressed an interest in a memorandum of understanding (MoU), to be signed between Chittagong Port Authority and Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port. The proposal has already been sent to the commerce and foreign ministries.

There is a huge potential to increase Bangladeshi export earnings from the Iranian market despite sanctions against Iran imposed by the United States and different international entities. Currently, there is a demand for RMG, seasonal fruits, tea, paper and cardboard, jute goods, wet-blue and crushed leather in the Iranian market. The footwear and leather association of Iran is interested in importing leather from Bangladesh as there is no sanction on raw leather.

In this regard, the mission has already communicated the issue to the commerce ministry and Bangladesh Tanners Association.

According to the mission's letter, an Iranian company has proposed buying six ro-ro ships and hiring a cruise ship from Bangladesh.

This is to mention that the Iranian government has slapped an import ban on 2,500 'non-essential' items since 2018, in order to encourage domestic products after economic sanctions imposed by the US.

As a result, it is not possible to export a good number of Bangladesh products, including RMG and leather goods, directly to the Iranian market. But, it is possible

to export all Bangladeshi items through the nine free zones in Iran as the sanctions are not effective there, added the report.

Despite the economic embargo, Bangladeshi trade transaction is going on with the Muslim country and there is a huge opportunity lies ahead.

Iran imported Bangladeshi products worth \$40.14 million in the Iranian fiscal year 2020-21, according to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran and Iran customs administration.

In the fiscal year 2020-21, RMG products worth \$1.8 billion entered Iran through informal channels. Of the items, one third of the RMG item is Bangladeshi produced, as per the data of RMG exporters and manufacturers association of Iran.

Taliban...

FROM PAGE 1

As previously announced, a delegation from Afghanistan will depart to Iran to follow up the process of solving problems facing Afghan refugees in Iran, Iran's deputy ambassador emphasized. In recent months, a large number of Afghan citizens have migrated to Iran, most of whom have come to Iran illegally and now the Ministry of Interior has been trying to solve some problems by launching a census special of foreign nationals.

Mercedes Wants to Cut One F1 Customer Team

MONACO (Dispatches) - Mercedes Formula One boss Toto Wolff said he wants to cut from three to two the number of non-factory teams that race with its engines.

Wolff told the Financial Times in an interview published at the weekend that new spending rules meant Mercedes was no longer making "substantial amounts" from providing engines to others.

The Austrian said the business of leasing engines was not "compelling and interesting" because the governing FIA had limited how much customers could be charged in order to help smaller teams.

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No Female Drivers in Indy 500 for Second Time

INDIANAPOLIS (Dispatches) - The Indianapolis 500 was once the land of opportunity for women racers but for the second time in three years there will be no female drivers on the starting grid at the Brickyard when the green flag is dropped on Sunday.

Pioneers such as Janet Guthrie, who became the first woman to start an Indy 500 in 1977, have left their mark on motorsport but progress recently has been more slow motion than fast track when it comes to the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing".

Perez Claims Monaco Win

MONACO (Dispatches) - Sergio Perez took full advantage of his Red Bull team's superior strategic decisions to resist late pressure from Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and win Sunday's rain-delayed and crash-hit Monaco Grand Prix.

In a breathless race, completed under a two-hour timing rule, the 32-year-old Mexican came home 1.1 seconds clear of his Spanish rival with Red Bull team-mate, series leader and world champion Max Verstappen third, a further second adrift.

Local favorite Charles Leclerc finished fourth in the second Ferrari after a confused double pit-stop cost him his position as leader.

For the Monegasque driver, there was little consolation in finishing the race for the first time after starting from pole.

"I have no words," said a bitterly disappointed Leclerc on team radio.

An altogether happier Perez was basking in getting his hands on one of the jewels in the F1 calendar.

"It's a dream come true," he said.

"As a driver you dream of winning here. After your home race, there is no other more special weekend to win. It's a massive day for myself and my country."

It was Perez's first win of the season, ending the domination of Verstappen and Leclerc, and the third of his career, making him the most successful Mexican F1 driver, moving one clear of Pedro Rodriguez.

Verstappen was philosophical with a result that moved him nine points ahead of Leclerc in the drivers' championship.

"I tried the best I could and as a team we did a really good job with the strategy," he said, congratulating Perez on his win.

George Russell came home fifth for Mercedes with a well-judged drive ahead of fellow-

Briton Lando Norris of McLaren, two-time champion Fernando Alonso of Alpine and a frustrated Lewis Hamilton, the seven-time champion unable to make passing progress in his Mercedes.

Valtteri Bottas finished ninth for Alfa Romeo and four-time champion Sebastian Vettel 10th for Aston Martin.



Vettel's fellow-German Mick Schumacher survived a spectacular crash when his Haas car split in two after hitting the barriers.

After an hour's delay due to heavy rain and a sequence of cautious decisions by Race Control, followed by two laps behind the Safety Car, the race finally began with a rolling start.

In spite of the tension, Leclerc made a smooth start and led Sainz through Ste Devote and up the hill, followed by the rest in grid order amid plumes of spray.

Leclerc led by 5.4 seconds after 16 laps with Sainz 2.3 clear of Perez who traded his wet tyres for 'inters' allowing Verstappen to take third, followed by Norris and then on lap 19, Leclerc, who re-joined third 13 seconds behind new leader Sainz and Perez.

Ferrari, on lap 21, pitted both Sainz and, unexpectedly, Leclerc in a 'double stack' stop for slicks that left the Monegasque driver in a fury, complaining it had cost him places.

In a blur of confused radio messages, Leclerc was called in and then asked to stay out as Ferrari realised that Red Bull were also pitting their men for slicks, but it was too late.

As he ranted, Red Bull pitted and emerged on slicks ahead of their respective Ferrari rivals. By lap 26, Perez led ahead of Sainz and Verstappen, with the luckless Leclerc in fourth.

Two laps later, the race was halted again when Schumacher lost control and smashed into the barriers in the Swimming Pool complex.

His Haas car was severed in two, the gearbox, rear axle and rear wing cut apart, but he emerged unhurt as the Safety Car was deployed again followed by a red flag to allow for the barriers to be repaired.

When the action re-started, behind the Safety Car on lap 31, Ferrari had switched to used hard dry tyres, and the rest to mediums, for the estimated final 32 laps to the flag as racing resumed in a 'timed' contest.

But overtaking proved difficult, if not impossible.



Rangnick No Longer Taking Up New Man Utd Role

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United announced today that Ralf Rangnick has decided against taking up a consultancy role with the English Premier League giants due to the demands of his new job as Austria manager.

The German took charge of United on a caretaker basis for the last six months of the recently concluded 2021/22 season after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was sacked in November and led the club to a sixth-placed finish in England's top-flight.

Rangnick had been expected to stay at Old Trafford for the next two years in a consultancy post, but last month he was appointed as the new manager of Austria and it appears holding the two jobs at once is no longer a viable option for the 63-year-old.

"We would like to thank Ralf Rangnick for his efforts as interim manager over the past six months," said a United statement.

"By mutual agreement, Ralf will now focus solely on his new role as manager of the Austria national team and will not therefore be taking up a consultancy role at Old Trafford.

"We would like to wish Ralf the best of luck in this next chapter of his career."

Jai Hindley Wins Giro d'Italia

VERONA (Dispatches) - Jai Hindley won the Giro d'Italia on Sunday after making his way through the final stage time-trial in Verona to claim his first Grand Tour.

Bora Hansgrohe rider Hindley put himself in an almost unassailable position when he snatched the pink jersey from Richard Carapaz on the final climb of Saturday's brutal mountain stage.

The Australian had a cushion of almost a minute and a half and rolled triumphantly into Verona's ancient Roman Arena after easily holding off his Ecuadorian rival.

Italian Matteo Sobrero took the honours on the final stage on a cool day in northeastern Italy, setting the fastest time of 22 minutes, 24.54 seconds early in the day.

"It's an amazing feeling, I still need to recognise everything," Sobrero said.

"I'm really happy with the team, we win on the first day and we win on the last day. All the work is paying off."

Hindley banished the memory of his gutting final-stage defeat in 2020, where his weakness in time-trials cost him the overall victory at the death.

Having taken the pink jersey also in that year's the 20th stage he was pipped in the climatic time-trial in Milan by Briton Tao Geoghegan Hart.

However this year he had no such problems, his stunning display on the Passo Fedaiia in the Dolomites on Saturday supplying him with enough room to relieve most of the pre-race pressure and helping him become his country's first Giro winner.

Bagnaia Wins Italian MotoGP

MUGELLO (Dispatches) - Francesco Bagnaia won the Italian MotoGP for the first time after a confident display on home turf, while Fabio Quartararo extended his lead at the top of the championship standings.

Ducati rider Bagnaia flew up from fifth in the starting grid to finish over half a second ahead of reigning champion Quartararo at Mugello.

Mbappe Already Forgotten



PARIS (Dispatches) - Real Madrid president Florentino Perez insisted that Paris St Germain forward Kylian Mbappe was not on the club's minds as they celebrated a record-extending 14th European Cup crown after victory against Liverpool in Paris on Saturday.

Mbappe was widely tipped for a move to the Spanish capital but signed a contract extension until 2025 at PSG last week in a

dramatic U-turn, a decision that irked many Real players and fans.

"Real Madrid will always continue to work on having the best players, but today Mbappe is already forgotten," Perez told reporters after a Vinicius Jr tap-in gave them a 1-0 win.

"Nothing has happened, Real Madrid have had a perfect season and that is a forgotten issue, there is only a Real Madrid party." Mbappe's choice to stay at the French champions has triggered a war of words between the parties involved after LaLiga president Javier Tebas said they would file a complaint against PSG to UEFA because the deal "attacked the economic stability" of the European game.

Ligue 1 president Vincent Labrune hit back at Tebas on Thursday, saying his denigration of the French league and its players was "unacceptable".

Man United Financial Losses Widen

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United reported a wider net loss in the third quarter as broadcast revenue slipped and player wages grew, days after the Premier League club failed to qualify for next season's lucrative European Champions League.

The English soccer club secured a spot in next season's Europa League after ending the domestic league campaign in sixth place with 58 points - their lowest tally in the Premier League era.

"It has clearly been a disappointing season for the men's first team," said Chief Executive Richard Arnold, who effectively replaced executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward earlier this year.

"Work is well underway to address this, led by our Football Director, John Murtough and our new manager, Erik ten Hag," Arnold said.

The Old Trafford club brought in Ajax Amsterdam's Ten Hag as their new coach for next season, making the Dutchman the fifth permanent manager appointed since Alex Ferguson ended his 26-year reign in 2013.

The New York-listed club reported a net loss of 27.7 million pounds (\$34.9 million) for the three months to March 31, compared with a loss of 18.1 million pounds a year earlier. Total revenue at the club, owned by the American Glazer family, however, grew 29% to 153 million pounds after matchday sales jumped 20-fold as Old Trafford welcomed back fans at full capacity following COVID-19 restrictions.

The 20-time English champions have not won the Premier League title since Ferguson's departure, while the last time they took home major silverware was when they won the Europa League under Jose Mourinho in 2017.

The club, who re-signed Portugal striker Cristiano Ronaldo last year, said salaries rose nearly 20% in the quarter to 102 million pounds. Net debt also grew 11% to about 496 million pounds by the end of March.

Ten Hag said on Monday that Ronaldo was part of his plans for the club, quashing speculation over the 37-year-old forward's future.



Djokovic Cruises Closer to Nadal Clash

PARIS (Dispatches) - World number one and defending champion Novak Djokovic reached a 16th French Open quarter-final today where old rival and 13-time winner Rafael Nadal could be waiting.

Djokovic, bidding to equal Nadal's record of 21 Grand Slam titles, eased to a 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 last-16 victory against 15th seed Diego Schwartzman of Argentina.

"I have a lot of respect for him (Schwartzman). He's a good person off the court," said Djokovic who has now beaten Schwartzman seven times in seven meetings.

Djokovic is still to drop a set at Roland Garros after cruising through the first week. He has also won 22 sets in a row, stretching back to his Italian Open title triumph in Rome earlier this month.

"I've made a good start but I have a lot of work to do," added Djokovic who will face Nadal for the 10th time at Roland Garros and 59th overall if the Spaniard defeats Felix Auger-Aliassime later today.

In an interesting twist, Auger-Aliassime has Nadal's uncle and former long-time coach Toni working with him.

Toni coached his nephew for the best part of three decades during which time Nadal won 16 of his record 21 Slam titles.

When asked if he will divulge to Auger-Aliassime the secret of how to become just the third man to defeat Nadal at Roland Garros, the 61-year-old coach was unequivocal.

"Of course not. I told Felix that my ethics do not allow me to give him advice on beating my nephew. It's as if I were telling someone how to defeat my own son," said Toni ahead of his first meeting with Rafael since their split.

Toni said he would not sit in Auger-Aliassime's player box for the match, taking his place instead in the presidential box on Court Philippe Chatrier.

In the wide open women's event, which saw nine of the top 10 seeds fall before the second week, Canadian teenager Leylah Fernandez reached the quarter-finals for the first time.

