

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic In Iran Increased to 141,315 With 5 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Ambassador of South Africa to Tehran Said That the Upcoming Visit of Iranian President to South Africa, in October or November, Is an Opportunity to Strengthen and Stabilize the Two Countries' Ties

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Iran Blames Pause in Vienna Talks on U.S.' Indecision

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Vienna talks on the revival of the JCPOA have ground to a halt because the U.S. has failed to respond to the initiatives put forward by Iran and Europe, the spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference on Tuesday, Saeed Khatibzadeh said the Vienna negotiations for saving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and lifting the sanctions on Iran have been halted because the initiatives proposed by Iran and Europe have remained unanswered by the US.

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Tehran Terms IAEA's Latest Report "Unfair"



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's permanent representative to the Vienna-based International Organizations says a latest report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the country's stockpile of enriched uranium is one-sided and fails to reflect Iran's extensive cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog.

Mohammad Reza Ghaebi made the comment on Monday after the IAEA claimed that it estimated Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium had grown to more than 18 times the limit laid down in the 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers.

The limit in the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was set at 300 kg (660 pounds) of a specific compound, the equivalent of 202.8 kg of uranium.

The report by Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the UN nuclear agency, also claimed that Iran was continuing its enrichment of uranium to levels higher than the 3.67 percent limit in the landmark accord.

"The IAEA Director-General's report does not reflect Iran's extensive cooperation with the IAEA," Ghaebi said. "The report concludes exactly what the Director-General presented to the European Parliament before the third round of technical talks, even before the end of the steps set out in the joint statement."

Iran's permanent representative to the Vienna-based International Organizations said the report, by putting aside the detailed, reasoned and technical arguments put forward by the Iranian side and unfairly calling them invalid, continues to rely on the agency's predetermined assumptions and presents its one-sided conclusion accordingly.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers this approach unconstructive and destructive to the close relations and ongoing cooperation between Iran and the IAEA," Ghaebi noted. "And believes that the IAEA should realize the ruinous consequences of publishing such one-sided reports, which could provide the necessary excuse for opponents of Iran-IAEA relations as well as the sworn critics of the revival of the JCPOA."

In a separate report also issued on Monday, the IAEA claimed it still had questions which were "not clarified" regarding previous undeclared nuclear material at three Iranian sites.

The report said Iran has offered the explanation of an "act of sabotage by a third party to contaminate" the sites, but added no proof had been provided to corroborate this.

Pointing to the IAEA's second report, Ghaebi said the entire peaceful nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic have been carried out within the framework of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and in accordance with the legal compensatory measures in the law adopted by the Iranian Parliament following the suspension of Iran's nuclear obligations due to non-fulfillment of obligations by other parties.

"Therefore, the Agency will not gain access to the memory information of its deployed cameras and other information in this regard until an agreement is reached for the revival of the JCPOA," Ghaebi underlined.

The senior diplomat said the Islamic Republic has repeatedly warned the IAEA's officials of the need to refrain from disclosing detailed information on the country's nuclear activities based on the importance of the principle of confidentiality with regard to the IAEA regulations, but the issue has not received serious attention from the Agency.

The Monday reports come as talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna to revive the landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers remain deadlocked after stalling in March.


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Heavy Fighting as Russian Troops Enter Outskirts of Sievierodonetsk

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8 SPORT

Celtics Beat Heat to Reach NBA Finals

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ViewPoint
 By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Zionists Not Allowed

In recent days Muslim world has seen some good and wise actions from some Muslim countries in defying normalization of ties with the Zionist regime and it is the sign hope that Muslims are awakening to stand against atrocities of the Zionists in different way, and forbidding normalization or trade with Israel is one way of fighting.

Last week and in a brave and wise move, Iraq's lawmakers approved a bill which forbids any normalization of ties with the Zionist regime. It's now illegal in Iraq to normalize relations with Israel according to a law the Iraqi parliament unanimously passed on Thursday.

The law was approved with 275 lawmakers voting in favor of it in the 329-seat assembly. A parliament statement said the legislation is "a true reflection of the will of the people."

Influential Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose party won the largest number of seats in Iraq's parliamentary elections last year, called for Iraqis to take to the streets to celebrate the "great achievement." Hundreds later gathered in central Baghdad, chanting anti-Israel slogans.

Its passage cemented the Arab countries invariable, and age old, policy of refusing to recognize the occupying regime. The legislation applies to all Iraqis, governmental and independent institutions, as well as foreign nationals working in Iraq.

In a statement, the Parliament said the legislation is a true reflection of the will of the people.

In recent years, the Zionist regime has tried to normalize its ties with Arab and Muslim countries especially in the West Asia and the Persian Gulf. Back in 2020, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain entered the United States brokered "peace deals" with the Israeli regime. Some other regional states, namely Sudan and Morocco, followed suit.

Other regional countries have also been fraternizing with Israel, including Saudi Arabia, which received a visit from the regime's former Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in November 2020. See Page 7

Iran Will Own Shares in 3 Latin American Refineries

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A report published in the Iranian media says the country's Oil Ministry will own shares in three refineries in Latin America region as part of efforts to diversify and increase Iranian crude oil exports despite American sanctions targeting the industry.

A Monday report by Iran's semi-official Fars news agency said that Oil Minister Javad Owji had signed major energy deals with authorities in Venezuela and Nicaragua during his recent visits to the two countries.

The report said agreements signed with Venezuelan energy authorities stipulate that Iran will supply its heavy crude grades to two refineries in Venezuela in addition to providing equipment and technical services to the refineries in return for owning shares in the facilities.

A report by Reuters news agency last week showed that Iranian state-run oil companies had started preparations to revamp Venezuela's largest oil refinery, the 955,000-barrel-per-day (bpd) Paraguana Refining Center.

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IN HIS EXALTED NAME

South Kaveh Combined Cycle Power Plant
 Hormozgan Province

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION

South Kaveh Steel Company (PJS) intends to award construction of South Kaveh Combined Cycle Power Plant (the "Power Station") with nominal capacity of 500 MW (±10%) on Built, Operate and Transfer (BOT) schemes, consisting of Class F combined cycle Block(s), all ancillaries and auxiliary equipment, common systems and the necessary interfaces, located in Hormozgan Province, Persian Gulf Mining and Metal Industries Special Economic Zone, to a qualified and competent investor through an international tender.

South Kaveh Steel Co. (PJS) (the "Off-Taker") will prepare a short list of bidders possessing the necessary qualifications via this invitation to prequalification after the required process and evaluation, then will evaluate and select an eligible Investor (successful bidder) possessing the required financing and technical capabilities and will award the engineering, procurement, construction and total financing of the Project (BOT basis) to said investor (the Company).

Development and Construction periods: 3+33 Months

Authorization period: 15 years.

Off-Taker consultant: MESSINAN Engineering Company

Interested applicants are hereby invited to send their letter of interest and then obtain (buy) prequalification documents, within seven (7) calendar days after the second posting of this invitation notice up to twenty-one (21) calendar days after the second posting of this invitation notice, in the following ways:

A) A representative of the applicant, carrying a valid proxy letter, may refer in person to

South Kaveh Steel Co. (PJS),

Postal Code: 1467883741

No. 1, Corner of 7th Alley, The Intersection between the North Falmak St. and North Zarafshan St., Phase 4, Shahrak-e-Gharb, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Tel.: +98-21-88569750, Ext. 2163 (Mr. Abbasian), Fax: +98-21- 88570749

B) Visiting the South Kaveh Steel Co. (PJS) website at www.skSCO.ir and submitting the payment receipt to pertinent Email as monagheseh-02@skSCO.ir

Iran Top Negotiator in Norway for Talks

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani left Tehran for Oslo on Tuesday.

"En route to Oslo following recent regional & intl. negotiations," Bagheri Kani wrote in his Twitter account on Tuesday.

"Serious & constructive talks on bilateral, regional & intl. issues top agenda," he added.

"In addition to advancing natl. interests, incl. the lifting of illegal sanctions, we emphasize the development of Iran-Norway relations," he noted.

Iran Made Good Progress Despite Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the Islamic Republic of Iran has made good progress in various fields during past years despite the sanctions that were imposed on the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a Monday meeting with the visiting President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon in Tehran.

"Despite the sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran has made good advances in various fields. If it were not for the sanctions, those advances could not be achieved, because sanctions caused [Iranians] to rely on their domestic capacities and [labor] force," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the world powers use sanctions as a weapon against other countries, noting, "What renders this weapon useless is [paying] attention to internal forces and capacities [of a country]."

The Leader told the Tajik president that there are many potential grounds for further expansion of cooperation between the two countries to levels far above the present level.

"The relations between the two countries must undergo a major development in view of the Iranian government's policy to strengthen relations with neighbors," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said regional issues, especially the situation in Afghanistan, offer a major ground for cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan.

"Iran and Tajikistan share concerns about Afghanistan. Both countries are worried about spread of terrorism and growth of Takfiri groups in this country," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei added, "We believe those who are now in power in



Afghanistan must be able to form a comprehensive and inclusive government to take advantage of all groups."

The Leader then touched on a recent trip to Tajikistan by Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri and the inauguration of a manufacturing plant for Iranian drones in Tajikistan.

Ayatollah Khamenei said such cooperation between the two countries is of utmost importance, adding, "Today, drones are an important factor in [bolstering] security of countries."

The Leader also lauded the efforts made by the president of Tajikistan to promote Persian language.

He noted that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's first foreign trip to Tajikistan proves how determined the Iranian government is about the expansion of relations with Tajikistan.

"[Bilateral] relations have been promoted during the last year, but they are still far from the optimal point," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The president of Tajikistan, for his part, said Iran and his country have common security concerns, especially about Afghanistan and spread of terrorism.

He added, "We want peace and tranquility in Afghanistan and a government representing all ethnic groups, and hope that such concerns could be overcome through further enhancement of security cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan."

Raisi Calls for Expanding Iran-Croatia Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi in a message to his Croatian counterpart called for expanding the relationship between Iran and Croatia in various fields.

Raisi, in a congratulatory message, felicitated the National Day of Croatia to the country's president Zoran Milanović.

In his message, Raisi praised the fact that Iran and Croatia are celebrating the 30th year of bilateral cooperation amid the U.S. sanctions imposed against the Iranian nation and the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

He also expressed hope that with the efforts of the officials of the two countries, the relations and cooperation between the two countries will be developed and deepened in all political, economic and cultural fields.

IRGC Releases Video Showing Seizure of Two Greek Tankers

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has released a video of the recent seizure of two Greek oil tankers in the Persian Gulf over maritime violations.

The video shows IRGC's heliborne Special Forces boarding the Greek ships ahead of their seizure over violations in the waters of the Persian Gulf.

The IRGC announced in a statement on Friday that it had seized the two Greek oil tankers, days after an Iranian oil tanker was captured by Greece in its territorial waters and its oil cargo was transferred to the US.

The Greek Foreign Ministry said later on Friday that Iranian navy helicopters had landed gunmen on the two tankers earlier in the day.

One of them, the Delta Poseidon, was sailing in international waters at the time, the ministry said, adding that the second tanker was near the Iranian coast when seized.

The ministry also said nine Greeks were among the crews of both vessels, but did not give a number of other sailors on board.

Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said on Saturday that the crews of the two Greek oil tankers are not detained but are aboard the vessels and in good health.

UK Backs Offender Greek Tankers in Persian Gulf

LONDON (IRNA) - The UK condemned seizing of two offending Greek tankers by Iran in the Persian Gulf, despite the country's own long history of maritime violation.

"We strongly condemn the seizing of two Greek vessels on the 27 May in the [Persian] Gulf by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)," a spokesperson for the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) said in a Monday statement without mentioning Greece's illegal seizing of an Iranian tanker and its oil cargo.

The spokesperson said that Iran's actions posed a significant threat to the safety and security of shipping and violated the fundamental principles of freedom of navigation.

The unnamed spokesperson also called on Iran "to immediately free the crew and the two vessels."

The claims are made as Iran's IRGC has announced that the Greek-flagged tankers were seized on Friday because they have violated rules in the Persian Gulf.

Over 33m Tons of Goods Loaded, Unloaded in Ports in 2 Months

TEHRAN (MNA) - As announced by Transport and Urban Development Ministry, 33,060,309 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the ports of Iran during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21).

The ministry's data show that 16,117,273 tons oil products and 16,943,036 tons of non-oil commodities, as well as 382,270 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of container goods were loaded and unloaded in the ports during the two-month period.

Based on the data previously released by Transport and Urban Development Ministry, loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 17 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

Iranian, Syrian Officials Discuss Ways To Fight Sandstorms



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Vice-President Ali Salajegheh has called for the implementation of agreements between Iran and Syria to fight dust storms hitting the two countries and elsewhere in the region.

Salajegheh, who also heads Iran's Department of Environment, held talks on Monday with Syrian Minister of Local Administration and Environment Hussein Makhoul in the capital Damascus.

The two officials explored ways on how to fight sandstorms that have in recent weeks intensified in both countries and left a number of people dead in Syria.

Salajegheh told reporters that assessment jointly conducted by Tehran and Damascus shows that Deir al-Zour, situated in eastern Syria, is one of the main centers of sandstorms that have also swept Iran and other regional countries.

He said that the two sides have exchanged views on how to mitigate the impact of this phenomenon and alleviate the suffering of their people.

The Syrian minister, for his part, said that efforts are underway to accelerate measures initiated in 2006 in the environment sector.

Makhoul said that Syria has already taken significant steps in protecting the environment, including the reviving of meadows.

The Syrian official explained that the war in his country over the past decade also caused harm to the environment, as terrorists have cut trees and burned forests, among other things.

He blamed Turkey's cutting off the flow of the Euphrates too.

Prior to his trip to Syria, the Iranian official also visited Iraq where he met with Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi for talks on how to tackle sandstorms.

Iraq is one of the countries hardest-hit by sandstorms, with its sky repeatedly turning orange over the past few weeks, sending thousands to hospital.

VP Calls for Further Enhancement of Ties With Tajikistan

TEHRAN (IRNA)- First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber said that Tehran-Dushanbe ties have to be promoted up to an acceptable level.

Speaking during a meeting in Tehran with visiting Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, the Iranian vice president said that all the agreements and documents signed by the two presidents will be pursued and implemented to reach a final result. He said that Iran is ready to take more strong steps to export technical and engineering services to Tajikistan and help scientific and academic exchanges between the two countries.

The Tajik president said in the meantime that a new chapter of cooperation between the two countries has begun. The two officials underlined the need for establishment of peace and security in the region, in Afghanistan in particular, and the urgency to protect peace in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Presidents of Iran and Tajikistan, during a meeting of high delegations of the two countries in the Iranian capital earlier in the day, stressed the need for further negotiations and implementation of already signed agreements between Tehran and Dushanbe.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that the visit to Tehran by President Emomali Rahmon will definitely be a turning point in expansion of relations between the two nations.

Noting that Iran sees no limits for further enhancement of relations with Tajikistan, President Raisi said that the two countries have huge potentials for expanding the level of cooperation in different trade, energy, tourism, medical, pharmaceutical, investment, water and natural resources, as well as technical and engineering areas.

He noted that expansion of cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan would pave the way for further enhanced regional and international cooperation.

Tajikistan's president, for his part, said that after President Raisi's September visit to Dushanbe and the promotion of Iran's membership status in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the two countries have taken significant steps for enhancement of bilateral relations.

President Rahmon noted that the volume of trade and economic interactions between Iran and Tajikistan has increased to several times bigger than the former levels.

He said that the roadmap for bilateral relations in 2030 has depicted a promising future for increasing relations between the two friendly countries.

Iran Unveils Domestic Drug for COPD

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran initiated the third phase of the 'comprehensive program of food health and originality', unveiling new achievements of the Food and Drug Administration.

The ceremony inaugurated on Monday with the presence of the Minister of Health Bahram Einollahi, and was accompanied by the unveiling of medicine for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The 'comprehensive program of food health and originality' was inaugurated in 2014.

Training, implementation of methods for the analysis of chemical and organic toxins, methods of instrumental analysis of antibiotics in food, and

detection of food fraud using spectroscopic methods in private sector laboratories.

Spiriva or tiotropium bromide was the medicine unveiled at the ceremony, a DPI drug to prevent the obstruction of pulmonary channels in those who suffer from asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The drug was earlier imported to Iran, but from now on is being produced domestically.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, refers to a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems. It includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Ayatollah Arafī Meets Pope Francis in Vatican

TEHRAN (IP) - Head of the Iranian Islamic seminaries, Ayatollah Alireza Arafī, held meetings with the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, and high-ranking prelates at the Vatican.

Ayatollah Alireza Arafī, director of Iran's seminaries, and Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome and the head of the Catholic Church, stressed the importance of interaction and synergy among religions in a meeting in the Vatican.

Arafī and Pope Francis also condemned the atrocities against the world's oppressed people.

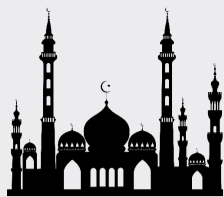
Ayatollah Arafī's visit to the Holy See coincided with the commemorations of the 33rd anniversary of the demise of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran and the Vatican established full diplomatic ties in 1954, and the bond has remained uninterrupted ever since. Not many reflect on the fact that the Vatican and Iran both represent spiritual traditions that have much more in common than might initially come to mind.

On Sunday evening, Arafī paid a visit to the Imam Mahdi Islamic Center, where he met with members of Rome's Shia community. Here, the cleric attended a commemoration of the late leader of Iran's 1979 revolution.

The commemoration held at the Imam Mahdi Islamic Center was also attended by Iran's diplomats and Rome's Palestinian community representatives.

There was much anticipation at the center for Ayatollah Arafī's visit.



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)

South Africa Calls for Boosting Trade With Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - South African Ambassador to Iran Vika Mazwi Khumalo has said that there are proper grounds for economic cooperation between the two sides and that the joint committee of the two countries plays a great role in this regard.

Khumalo made the remarks while addressing a meeting in Iran's southern province of Bushehr on Monday night.

He was at a meeting with provincial officials, which discussed ways of expanding cooperation between Bushehr Province and South Africa.

The ambassador explained that Iran-South African joint committee is, among other things, tasked with evaluating issues hindering the expansion of bilateral trade ties within the existing 23 memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

He added that all issues discussed during his trip to Bushehr Province are also included in those MoUs.

Khumalo referred to an upcoming visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to South Africa, and called for work to identify further common grounds for developing trade ties and possible issues affecting that cooperation.

The South African envoy announced his embassy's readiness to facilitate efforts by Iranian entities and individuals to have economic activities in South Africa.

Khorshid Gazdrazi, head of Bushehr's Chamber of Commerce also elaborated on



the province's production capacities.

Gazdrazi said that Bushehr aims to increase its target markets and therefore its needs to identify South Africa's requirements or that it can increase exports to that country.

Meanwhile earlier during his visit to Dashtestan Cement Industries Company in Bushehr, Khumalo said on Monday that his country is ready to expand bilateral trade ties with Iran.

"Although Iran has faced challenges and limitations, South Africa calls for finding appropriate opportunities to have bilateral trade ties with Iran," the south African ambassador said.

Referring to the meetings with the provincial authorities in Iran, he pointed out that they considered the capabilities of Bushehr province and the necessary capacities of cooperation in the field of trade and exchange of technical knowledge of engineering and experts.

Pointing to the importance of trade cooperation with the countries in the world, he highlighted that cooperation with Iran is significant for South Africa.

Nigerian Political-Trade Delegation to Visit Tehran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A political and trade delegation from Nigeria, headed by Nigerian Foreign Minister, is to arrive in TEhran on Monday, June 6 for talks and signing of trade agreements.

According to Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, the Nigerian delegation will arrive in Tehran on June 6 for talks with Iranian officials and trade officials.

The delegation during its presence in Tehran will have some B2B meetings with Iranian trade officials and businessmen at the Trade Promotion Organization to explore ways of economic cooperation.

The delegation is to sign some MoUs on cooperation in the presence of Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mr. Seyed Reza Fatemi-Amin.

Nigerian Foreign Minister is also to meet with Iran's First Vice-President and Majlis Speaker.

Nigeria is one of the top four African trade partners of Iran as Iran's exports to Nigeria in the first half of the past year rose by 8% and the trade volume of the two countries in the first six months of 2022 has been around \$44m.



Brazil to Boost Ties With Iran in Various Fields



TEHRAN (MNA) - Brazilian Ambassador to Iran Laudemar Gonçalves de Aguiar Neto said on Tuesday that Brazil seeks to bolster ties with Iran in petrochemicals, nanotechnology, and industry.

Brazilian Ambassador to Iran met and held talks with the CEO of Iran Tractor Manufacturing Company Mostafa Vahidzadeh on Tuesday.

Referring to Brazil's economic relations with Iran, he said that the agricultural sector has a high volume of these ties.

Pointing to the unilateral sanctions on Iran, he noted that Brazil seeks to bolster relations with Iran in petrochemicals, nanotechnology as well as industry.

Stressing that Brazil is against any sanctions and tensions, the Brazilian ambassador expressed hope that the imposed sanctions on Iran would be lifted and relations between Iran and Brazil would be developed more than before.

Vahidzadeh, for his part, called for promoting trade relations between Iran and Brazil.

Iran to Set Up IHIT Office in Armenia

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Vice Presidency of Science and Technology announced that the Iran House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT) will be established in Armenia.

The Vice-Presidency has set up IHIT offices in other countries some years ago to develop the global market for knowledge-based products of Iran.

The offices have been already launched in countries such as Russia, Turkey, China, Syria as well as Kenya.

Soon, Armenia and Iraq will host the offices to this end, the Vice-Presidency added.

Earlier, VP Sattari had expressed hope that the inauguration of the Iran House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT) would become a turning point in bilateral economic cooperation between Iran and Kenya in the East African region.

Iran to Open Major Rail Link in Southeast by Late June

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran will open a major rail link in its southeast by late June as the government moves ahead with plans to connect the strategic port of Chabahar on the Sea of Oman to its railway network.

The construction headquarters of Iran's elite military force the IRGC said in a report on Monday the rail link between the cities of Zahedan and Khash, located in the border province of Sistan and Baluchestan, will be ready by the end of the current calendar month on June 21.

The report said that the railway will be around 180 kilometers in length considering the lines built in and around its stations.

A contractor of the railway said the project had reached a record of 4,200 meters of track-laying in recent weeks. He said the IRGC will continue works to extend the railway to Chabahar where Iran is introducing major transportation projects.

The Zahedan-Chabahar rail line is Iran's largest railway project. Once finished, the 634-kilometer line will become key to cargo transportation from the Indian Ocean to Afghanistan and other landlocked countries in Central Asia region.

Iran decided to finish the railway on its own after Indian companies pulled out of projects defined to develop the infrastructure surrounding Chabahar where India is operating terminals and port facilities.

Pharmacopoeia of Iranian Traditional Medicines, Opportunity for Investment

TEHRAN (IP) - Vice-President for Science and Technology called the publication of the first pharmacopoeia of Iran's traditional medicines a unique opportunity for investment by the private sector.

Iran initiated the third phase of the 'comprehensive program of food health and originality' and unveiled new achievements of the Food and Drug Administration.

The ceremony was inaugurated on Monday with the attendance of Health Minister Bahram Einollahi and Iranian Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari and was accompanied by the unveiling of the new achievements of the Food and Drug Administration, including the pharmacopoeia of traditional Iranian medicines, the official pharmacopoeia of Iranian chemical drugs and medicine for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma.

In writing the pharmacopoeia of traditional Iranian medicines, a combined method has been used, which can be one of the main sources of medicine, its main clinical source of traditional medicine pharmacists and also the reference of many pharmaceutical researches in this field.

Speaking at the ceremony, Sattari said: "In the new round, we have a special focus on the field of food, and this field has a lot of work to do. For example, halal

food is one of the items that should be invested by the private sector. We also pay special attention to innovation in the field of food production."

He added that marine life is one of the areas that has been neglected and this is a huge capacity that needs to be activated by the private sector.

The Iranian vice-president for science and technology pointed to the participation of knowledge-based companies in the production of medicinal plants and said: "For several years we have paid special attention to medicinal plants and its cultivation level has multiplied in recent years."

In the last 8 years, traditional medicine drugs and products have not been recognized by the Ministry of Health, and the publication of the first pharmacopoeia of Iranian traditional medicines and products means that these products have been recognized; the move could pave the way for large-scale private sector investment in this field, Sattari concluded.

More Than 25m Tons of Steel Products Produced in a Year

TEHRAN(MNA) - As announced by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, 25,205,100 tons of steel products was produced in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), falling five percent from the output in year 1399.

Also as announced by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), the country exported 3,406 million tons of steel products in the past year, while the figure was 2,832 million tons in year 1399.

Iran has maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during January-March 2022, according to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 6.9 million tons during the mentioned three months, registering a 4.4 percent decline year on year, the report said.

Iran's monthly crude steel output stood at 2.3 million tons in March, falling 6.1 percent compared to the figure for March 2021. The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

Kazakh Trade Delegation to Visit Tehran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A trade delegation from Kazakhstan is to visit Tehran in late June in collaboration between Iran's Trade Promotion Organization

(TPO) and Kazakhstan Export Promotion Center. According to reports, caretaker of the Central Asian, Caucasus and Russia Office at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization Mr. Rahmatollah Khormali announced coordination for the presence of a trade delegation in Tehran.

Khormali noted that General Director of QazTrade Company of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan Export Trade Center) Mr. Azamat Askaruly last week had a meeting in Tehran with the TPO officials.

During the meeting both sides exchanged views on broadening cooperation and boosting trade exchanges and coordinated for visit of the Kazakh delegation to some Iranian companies.

He added that it was decided that due to the upcoming visit of Kazakhstan President to Tehran in the late June, a Kazakh trade delegation to Tehran.

Askaruly was in Tehran to visit the 23 international health exhibition.



Water Consumption Saving at EORC With Construction of Retrieval Unit

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The project for retrieval of hypersaline water at Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) has been handed over to Shafab Engineering Company with the budget of 548b rials as well as 8m euros and based on the EPC format since May 27.

According to reports, since the water crisis is the main concern of the statesmen in line with the sustainable development, Esfahan Refinery with taking into consideration all environmental and technical aspects has planned for utilization of resources like the industrial wastewater and it has had some effective solutions and measures for managing compensation of some shortages as well as reducing air pollution.

The RO unit of Esfahan Refinery works with capacity of 450 cubic meters per hour and reject of some 25 cubic meters per hour. Since the company is busy with implementing big projects and it has on its agenda the construction of new units of RO in the southern part, it is predicted the amount of the water reject in the next two years to increase to almost 400 cubic meters per day.

So the company decided to construct the retrieval unit for hypersaline water with using the high efficiency RO in the northern refinery site and it is expected the project to be completed in 24 months.



French Journalist Killed in Ukraine

PARIS (Dispatches) - A French journalist was killed Monday during a Russian bombardment that struck a vehicle evacuating civilians from eastern Ukraine, French and Ukrainian officials said.

"Frederic Leclerc-Imhoff was in Ukraine to show the reality of war," French President Emmanuel Macron wrote on Twitter.

"Onboard a humanitarian bus with civilians forced to flee to escape Russian bombings, he was mortally wounded." Leclerc-Imhoff was working for the BFM television news channel, which said he was 32 years old and on his second Ukraine reporting trip since the war began on February 24.



Around 100 Dead In Clashes in Chad

N'DJAMENA (Dispatches) - Around 100 people have died in clashes between gold miners in northern Chad, Defense Minister General Daoud Yaya Brahim said.

Violence broke out on May 23 at Kouri Bougoudi near the Libyan border, sparked by a "mundane dispute between two people which degenerated," he said, adding that the toll was "around 100 dead and at least 40 wounded."

The clashes occurred in the Tibesti Mountains, a rugged and lawless region in the central Sahara some 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) from the capital N'Djamena. The discovery of gold there 10 years ago sparked a rush of miners from across Chad and neighboring countries, and tensions often run high.



Heavy Fighting as Russian Troops Enter Outskirts of Sievierodonetsk



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russian troops have entered the outskirts of the Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk, according to the regional governor, who described fierce fighting on Monday over the ruins of a city that has become the focus of Moscow's offensive.

The European Union has sought to make Moscow pay a heavy price for invading Ukraine, but leaders arriving for a summit acknowledged they were unlikely to pass a new round of sanctions yet, having failed to agree to ban imports of Russian oil.

Russia has concentrated its firepower on the last major population center still held by Ukrainian forces in the eastern Luhansk province, in a push to achieve one of President Vladimir Putin's stated objectives after three months of war.

Incessant shelling has left Ukrainian forces defending ruins in Sievierodonetsk, but their refusal to withdraw has slowed the wider Russian offensive across the Donbas region. Luhansk region governor Serhiy Gaidai said Russian troops had advanced into the city's southeastern and northeastern fringes. The Russians "use the same tactics over and over again. They shell for several hours - for three, four, five hours - in a row and then attack", Gaidai said.

"Those who attack die. Then shelling and attack follow again, and so on until they break through somewhere."

With temperatures rising, he said there was a "terrible smell of death" on the outskirts of the city.

But he said Ukrainian forces had driven the Russians out of the village of Toshkivka to the south, potentially frustrating Moscow's push to encircle the area.

Gaidai later said a French journalist had been killed by shrapnel that pierced his vehicle, and that evacuations from the area had been halted.

In a televised speech, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy described capturing Sievierodonetsk as "a fundamental task for the occupiers". "Some 90% of buildings are damaged. More than two-thirds of the city's housing stock has been completely destroyed," he said.

Ukraine's defense ministry said Moscow was also trying to regroup to attack the strategically important town of Sloviansk, further west.

The EU's latest sanctions package has been blocked by landlocked Hungary's refusal to agree to a ban on imports of Russian oil, which it receives through the huge Soviet-era "Friendship" pipeline.

According to a draft text reviewed by Reuters - which could still be changed - the leaders would agree in principle to ban Russian oil, first by sea and at some point later through pipelines, but with dates and details left out.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen acknowledged that agreement had not been reached, but added: "I'm confident that thereafter there will be a possibility." Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas said a deal at the next summit, set for June 23-24, was "the realistic approach by now".

Colombian "Trump" Threatens Leftist's Presidential Ambitions

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - The surprise electoral surge of a man dubbed Colombia's Donald Trump could scupper the left's hopes of a historic takeover of the presidency in a race now between two anti-establishment candidates, analysts say.

Maverick millionaire Rodolfo Hernandez, 77, finished second in presidential elections Sunday with 28 percent of votes cast.

He denied the frontrunner, leftist Gustavo Petro, an outright first-round victory and eliminated right-wing establishment candidate Federico "Fico" Gutierrez, whom most opinion polls had placed in clear second place.

While former-guerrilla Petro, 62, came out on top as projected with more than 40 percent of the vote, the outcome has raised the final hurdle to him becoming Colombia's first leftist president.

"This makes it harder for Petro, most likely, because that significant segment of the population that is... voting based on disgust toward the entire political class, now they have two candidates to choose from," said Elizabeth Dickinson, Colombia analyst with the International Crisis Group.

"It divides the... anti-establishment, populist-leaning vote and really sets a ceiling in some ways on how far Petro is likely to rise in the second round."

A challenge for Petro is that many Colombians are historically distrustful of the political left, associated with guerrilla groups that sowed decades of terror through bombs, kidnappings and mass civilian displacement.

And support from Petro's biggest fans -- the poor, the marginalized and young people -- may not be enough to stave off the challenge from Hernandez, the self-proclaimed "King of TikTok" running on an anti-corruption platform.

Hernandez, former mayor of the small northern city of Bucaramanga, is not on the political left, nor the right.

He ran under the banner of the Anti-Corruption League, a young and marginal party with two seats on the 168-member Chamber of Representatives, Colombia's lower house of parliament.



Lula Regains Double-Digit Lead Over Bolsonaro

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has reclaimed a double-digit advantage over incumbent Jair Bolsonaro ahead of Brazil's October election after another center-right candidate quit the race, according to a new poll on Monday.

The opinion survey, run by Instituto FSB with sponsorship from investment bank BTG, found that 46% of voters support Lula, up from 41% in April. Support for Bolsonaro was unchanged from a month ago at 32% in the survey.

In an expected second-round run-off between the two men, Lula would gain 54% of the votes and Bolsonaro 35%, a 19 percentage point advantage that Lula had in March.

FSB director Marcelo Tokarski said Bolsonaro had gained ground in April after former Justice Minister Sergio Moro dropped out, but Lula saw a bump after Joao Doria, the former governor of Sao Paulo state, threw in the towel last week.

Frustrations about surging food and fuel prices have also taken their toll on Bolsonaro's support in the race.

"The surge in inflation, but mainly the expectation among most voters that prices will continue to rise in the next three months, has been a hurdle for Bolsonaro's re-election plans," Tokarski said.

The poll showed that the Brazilian election is more polarized than ever, with centrist alternatives to Lula and Bolsonaro garnering just 13% of voter support, down from 17% in April and 24% in March.

The rejection rates for both Lula and Bolsonaro remain virtually unchanged, with 43% of voters saying they would never vote for the leftist Workers Party leader and 59% saying they would never vote for the far-right incumbent.

The FSB research institute interviewed 2,000 voters by telephone between May 27 and 29 in the poll commissioned by BTG Pactual bank. It has a 2 percentage-point margin of error.



Pacific Nations Reject China Security Pact

SUVA (Dispatches) - Ten Pacific island nations rebuffed China's push for a wide-ranging regional security pact today, amid worries the proposal was designed to pull them into Beijing's orbit.

Talks in Fiji between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and leaders from the small island nations failed to reach an agreement, in a high-profile diplomatic setback for Beijing.

China is offering to radically ramp up its activities in the South Pacific, directly challenging the influence of the United States and its allies in the strategically vital region.

The proposed pact would see Beijing train Pacific island police, become involved in cybersecurity, expand political ties, conduct sensitive marine mapping and gain greater access to natural resources on land and in the water.

As an enticement, Beijing is offering millions of dollars in financial assistance, the prospect of a potentially lucrative China-Pacific islands free trade agreement and access to China's vast market of 1.4 billion people.

Behind the scenes, Pacific leaders have voiced deep misgivings about the offer.

In a recent letter to fellow leaders, David Panuelo, the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, warned the offer was "disingenuous" and would "ensure Chinese influence in government" and "economic control" of key industries. A more soft-spoken public rebuke came after the talks, when leaders said they could

not agree to Beijing's proposed "Common Development Vision" due to a lack of regional consensus.

"As always, we put consensus first," co-host and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said after the meeting, indicating that broad accord would be needed before inking any "new regional agreements".

Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia were said to be among those concerned about the proposals, along with Taiwan-recognising Palau, which was not invited. "We would rather deal with our own security issues with China", Papua New Guinea Foreign Minister Soroi Eoe told AFP, indicating concern about any region-wide pact.

Chinese officials — working frantically to secure support during Wang's 10-day diplomatic blitz of the region — admitted their entreaties had fallen short.

"There has been general support from the 10 countries," Chinese ambassador to Fiji Qian Bo told reporters in Suva.

"But of course, there are some concerns on some specific issues and we have agreed that these two documents will be discussed afterwards until we have reached an agreement." Speaking from Suva, Wang made the face-saving announcement that the 10 countries had agreed to memorandums of understanding on China's "Belt and Road" infrastructure initiative.



U.S. Not to Send Ukraine Rocket Systems That Can Reach Russia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States will not send Ukraine rocket systems that can reach into Russia, President Joe Biden said today, as Ukraine pushes for longer-range weapons system to help in its fight.

Ukrainian officials have been asking allies for longer-range systems including the Multiple Launch Rocket System, or MLRS, that can fire a barrage of rockets hundreds of miles away.

"We're not going to send to Ukraine rocket systems that strike into Russia," Biden told reporters after arriving back at the White House after a weekend in Delaware.

Biden did not rule out providing any specific weapons system, but instead appeared to be placing conditions on how they could be used. Biden and his team are working on a new package of military equipment and it is expected to be announced in coming days.

The MLRS was under consideration, but nothing with long-range strike capabilities outside of battlefield use, a senior administration official said.

The Ukrainian government has 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.

Biden wants to help Ukraine defend itself but has been opposed to providing weapons that Ukraine could use to attack Russia.

CNN and The Washington Post reported on Friday the Biden administration was leaning towards sending the MLRS and another system, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, known as HIMARS, as part of an upcoming military aid package.

Thousands of people have been killed in Ukraine and millions more displaced since the Russian invasion on February 24, which Moscow calls a "special military operation." Biden's administration and US allies have been increasingly willing to give Ukraine longer-range weaponry, including M777 howitzers, as Kyiv battles Russian forces with more success than intelligence officials had predicted.



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Toyota Misses April Global Production Target

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's Toyota Motor Corp on Monday said it missed its global production target for April as COVID-19 outbreaks and a parts shortage slowed its post-pandemic recovery. The world's largest automaker by sales produced 692,259 vehicles last month, a 9.1% drop from the same month last year, and falling short of an earlier plan of making about 750,000 vehicles worldwide.

The numbers raise questions over the severity of the pandemic-hit supply chains and how the disruption will affect production in the coming months.

Toyota last week downgraded its global production plan for June to around 800,000 vehicles due to the impact of COVID-19 containment measures in China and signalled the possibility of lowering its full-year output plan of 9.7 million vehicles.



World Bank to Disburse \$700m To Crisis-Hit Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - The World Bank is planning to disburse \$700 million to crisis-ridden Sri Lanka by re-purposing its existing loans, a move that will help the island nation grappling with an unprecedented economic crisis much-needed breathing space till a bailout package with the IMF is worked out, media reports said on Monday.

Sri Lanka is nearing bankruptcy and has severe shortages of essentials from food, fuel, medicines and cooking gas. For months, citizens have been forced to stay in long lines to buy the limited stocks.

The World Bank Country Manager Chiyo Kanda met Sri Lankan Foreign Minister last week and assured him that the agency will work with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the UN office to "re-purpose their already committed projects," news portal Colombo Gazette reported.

"Minister Peiris sought assistance from the World Bank until long term assistance materializes through the IMF, other international institutions and donor countries," the report said, quoting a statement from Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry.

Consequently, Kanda has assured Peiris that the global lender would disburse \$700 million to Sri Lanka in these difficult times in the coming months, the report said. Earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it remains committed to assisting Sri Lanka in line with its policies, the Colombo Gazette reported.

Technical-level discussions with Sri Lanka have commenced. They will continue in order to prepare for policy discussions once a new government has been formed, the IMF was quoted as saying by the report. "On our virtual mission during May 9-23, discussions at the technical level have just started and continued as planned so as to be fully prepared for policy discussions once a new government has been formed," the IMF said in a statement.

The IMF also said that it is following developments in Sri Lanka closely and is concerned about rising social tensions and violence. In April, the two sides convened their first round of talks at the IMF headquarters in Washington.

Sri Lanka is hoping for a Rapid Finance Instrument (RFI) facility as well as a larger Extended Fund Facility (EFF) from the international financial body to help it deal with its foreign currency shortages, which have triggered an economic crisis.

In the last meeting, the IMF assured to help the country with an amount of \$300 million to \$600 million. On April 12, Sri Lanka suspended its debt servicing for the first time in its history.

The island nation has been facing its worst economic crisis since its independence from Britain in 1948. The economic crisis has also triggered political unrest with a protest occupying the entrance to the president's office demanding his resignation has been continuing for more than 50 days.

Inflation in Germany, Spain Climbs Again in May

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany and Spain reported another jump in inflation in May as the war in Ukraine continued to push up food and energy prices, heaping pressure on the European Central Bank to speed up interest rate rises.

In Europe's top economy Germany, the annual inflation rate quickened to 7.9 percent to reach the highest level since reunification in 1990, according to preliminary data from federal statistics agency Destatis.

The last time inflation accelerated at a comparable pace was in West Germany in January 1952.

Spain's inflation rate hit 8.7 percent year-on-year in May, after slightly cooling to 8.3 percent in April, according to the INE National Statistics Institute. As in other countries, the increase was driven by soaring costs for energy and commodities despite efforts from the Spanish government to ease the burden on households.

In Germany, Destatis said energy prices rose more than 38 percent in May, while food prices were up 11 percent.

"Energy prices, in particular, have increased considerably since the war started in Ukraine and have had a considerable impact on the high inflation rate," Destatis said.

"Another factor with an upward effect on prices is interruptions in supply chains caused by the Covid-19 pandemic," it added.

Analysts surveyed by FactSet had expected a lower inflation rate of 7.7 percent for Germany.

Monday's figures suggest the 19-nation currency club has yet to reach peak inflation, with many European nations highly reliant on Russian gas and oil imports. Heavy Western sanctions against Russia have also added further upheaval to already strained global supply chains.



The latest eurozone inflation data will be released today. In April, eurozone inflation soared to an all-time high of 7.5 percent -- well beyond the European Central Bank's two-percent goal. The ECB has signalled it plans to hike interest rates in July for the first time in over a decade in a bid to tame inflation, following similar recent moves by other major central banks. ECB chief Christine Lagarde has said that the bank aims to end negative interest rates by September.

The ECB currently has a bank deposit rate of minus 0.5 percent, meaning lenders pay to park their excess cash at the central bank. "The ECB has clearly passed the stage of discussing whether and even when policy rates should be increased," said ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski.

"The only discussion seems to be on whether the ECB should start with a 25 basis point rate hike in July or 50 basis points."

Japan, South Korea Business Leaders Vow to Expand Cooperation

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese and South Korean business leaders agreed Monday to expand economic cooperation as the two sides welcomed signs of the improvement of soured bilateral ties after President Yoon Suk Yeol took office earlier this month.

They expressed hope that the two governments will promote dialogue despite wartime history-linked issues between the neighboring countries, according to a joint statement issued after an online meeting.

"In a difficult environment, cooperation and coordination by both countries will be the power to overcome the crisis," the statement said, referring to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and international sanctions on Moscow in response.

Tokyo-Seoul relations severely deteriorated under Yoon's predecessor Moon Jae In over "comfort women" who worked at Japan's military brothels against their will and Korean laborers who were mobilized to work at mines and factories, stemming from Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

The two nations have also been at odds over Japan's restrictions on semiconductor material exports to South Korea in July 2019, a move seen as retaliation for the Moon administration's handling of the history-related issues.

After adopting the joint statement, Mikio Sasaki, chief of the Japan-Korea Economic Association, said, "Economic, personnel, and cultural exchanges are particularly important during a tough time."

South Korean counterpart Kim Yoon said, "We were able to find a big hope," after agreeing on cooperation to tackle issues shared between the two neighbors, such as low birth rates and aging populations, as well as environment issues.

A total of around 280 business executives from the two countries took part in the meeting, virtually linking venues in Tokyo and Seoul.

Russia Freezes Trading in Up to 14% of U.S.-Listed Shares

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - SPB Exchange, Russia's second-largest bourse, said today it will transfer up to 14 per cent of U.S.-listed shares that its clients possess to a non-trading account after the central bank said it will restrict trading in some foreign shares.

Financial links between Russia and external markets have been damaged by sweeping sanctions that the West imposed after Moscow sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on February 24.

Citing the need to protect investors' rights and interests, the central bank said it decided from May 30 to restrict trading in foreign shares that have been blocked by international clearing houses, except for shares of foreign companies that carry out "production and economic activity mostly in Russia." SPB said the decision was caused by restrictions imposed by Euroclear and will impact shares with primary listing in the United States.

"Freely traded foreign securities will be completely separated from securities that cannot be traded until the change in Euroclear's policy towards Russian depositaries," SPB said in a statement.

This implies investors that used to trade US stocks via SPB Exchange, which specialises on foreign shares, will retain their ownership rights but will lose access to some of their holdings of US stocks, including blue chips, such as Apple or Tesla.

Tinkoff, one of Russia's leading brokerages, said it had engaged lawyers to protect interest and rights of its clients.

SPB saw a surge in trading volumes during the Covid-19 pandemic and, before February 24, was hoping for a listing on the Nasdaq Global Select Market in the first half of 2022 after its domestic initial public offering. In money terms, the separation will affect less than 14 per cent of all shares in clients' portfolio and will have no impact on the number of shares the bourse offers, which currently exceeds 1,650, SPB said.

The central bank's decision will not affect shares of companies with Russian roots, such as HeadHunter Group, Yandex N.V., Ozon Holdings Plc and Cian Plc.

"The Bank of Russia, SPB Exchange and trading participants are constantly working to develop a system solution, interacting with international counterparties," SPB said.

U.S. Surpasses China as India's Biggest Trading Partner in FY22

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The U.S. surpassed China to become India's top trading partner in 2021-22, reflecting strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

According to the data of the commerce ministry, in 2021-22, the bilateral trade between the U.S. and India stood at \$ 119.42 billion as against \$80.51 billion in 2020-21.

Exports to the U.S. increased to \$76.11 billion in 2021-22 from \$51.62 billion in previous fiscal year, while imports rose to \$ 43.31 billion as compared to about \$29 billion in 2020-21.

During 2021-22, India's two-way commerce with China aggregated at \$115.42 billion as compared to \$86.4 billion in 2020-21, the data showed.

Exports to China marginally increased to \$21.25 billion last fiscal year from \$21.18 billion in 2020-21, while imports jumped to \$94.16 billion from about \$65.21 billion in 2020-21. Trade gap rose to \$72.91 billion in 2021-22 from \$44 billion in previous fiscal year.

Trade experts believe that the trend of increasing bilateral trade with the U.S. will continue in the coming years also as New Delhi and Washington are engaged in further strengthening the economic ties.

Federation of Indian Export Organizations Vice President Khalid Khan said India is emerging as a trusted trading partner and global firms are reducing their dependence only on China for their supplies and are diversifying business into other countries like India.

"In the coming years, the bilateral trade between India and the U.S. will continue to grow. India has joined a U.S.-led initiative to set up an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and this move would help boost economic ties further," Mr. Khan said.

Rakesh Mohan Joshi, Director of the Indian Institute of Plantation Management (IIPM), Bangalore, too said that India is home to 1.39 billion people with the world's third largest consumer market and the fastest growing market economy with unparalleled demographic dividend provides enormous

opportunities for the U.S. and Indian firms for technology transfer, manufacturing, trade and investment.

"Major export items from India to the U.S. include petroleum polished diamonds, pharmaceutical products, jewellery, light oils and petroleum, frozen shrimp, made ups etc. whereas major imports from the US include petroleum, rough diamonds, liquified natural gas, gold, coal, waste and scrap, almonds etc.," Mr. Joshi said.

America is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus. In 2021-22, India had a trade surplus of \$32.8 billion with the U.S.

The data showed that China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18 and also in 2020-21. Before China, the UAE was the country's largest trading partner. In 2021-22, the UAE with \$72.9 billion, was the third largest trading partner of India. It was followed by Saudi Arabia (\$42.85 billion), Iraq (\$34.33 billion) and Singapore (\$30 billion).

Japan Q2, Full-Year Growth to Be Weaker Than Previously Estimated



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's economy will grow at a weaker rate than previously thought this quarter despite hopes for a strong rebound in consumption after showing resilience in the three months through March, a Reuters poll of economists showed.

The world's third-largest economy is at risk of being hobbled by slowing economic growth in China and a surge in global raw material prices - both issues that could hurt Japan's key manufacturing sector, the poll showed.

However, the slower expansion still indicates growth will be strong enough for the economy to recover to its pre-coronavirus pandemic levels of end-2019 this quarter, about 70% of poll respondents said.

The economy was projected to expand an annualized 4.5% this quarter, below April's estimate for 5.1% growth, according to the median forecast of 36 analysts in the May 18-27 poll.

"The speed at which the economy is recovering at home is slow," said Takumi Tsunoda, senior economist at Shinkin Central Bank Research Institute.

"Corporate profit could be severely squeezed if raw material prices continue to rise as there's limited pass-through of those costs into final prices."

A slowdown in Chinese economic growth was the most-frequently cited issue posing a risk to Japan's economy in the latter half of the year, the poll showed.

In recent weeks, China paralyzed economic activity in major cities such as Shanghai with extreme COVID-19 lockdowns, disrupting supply chains and clouding the country's economic outlook.

China's hard-handed measures against the pandemic have already led to a fall in Japan's shipments to and from Asia's top economy in April, Japanese trade data showed earlier this month.

Asked when Japan's economy would recover to pre-coronavirus levels of end-2019, 20 of 28 economists said it would happen this quarter, after shrinking less than expected in January-March.

Rockets Strike Ain Al-Asad Base Housing U.S. troops in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - The Ain al-Assad base in western Iraq, where US forces are stationed in the country, has come under fire from what appear to be 122mm missiles, local media reported on Monday.

According to preliminary eyewitness reports, at least two missiles fell on the base. At the moment, the extent of damage and the presence of victims is not specified.

Moreover, following the missile attack, the US reportedly deployed reconnaissance drones and helicopters in the area of the nearby village of Al-Baghdadi, Iraq.

The missiles that fell on the base reportedly hit the southern part of the installation, and shortly after that, the US forces sealed all the doors at the facility.



Italy Eyes Tighter Terms in Bad Loan Scheme Extension

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy is considering tightening a state guarantee scheme designed to help banks shed bad debts while weighing its extension to cushion the hit from the Ukraine war and the pandemic, according to people familiar with the matter.

Since its 2016 launch, the 'GACS' scheme has helped Italian banks offload 96 billion euros (\$103 billion) in bad debts by softening the hit from the disposals to their earnings.

As of end-2021 investors held 11.6 billion euros in GACS-backed debt, Treasury data showed in April. The scheme in its current form expires on June 14.

Four people briefed on discussions around the scheme's renewal said Rome was considering reintroducing it with terms adjusted to reduce risks for taxpayers, possibly seeking an extension longer than 12 months. One of the options being discussed is an 18-month extension.

The extension would require approval from European Union authorities, which first cleared the measure after ensuring it complied with EU state aid rules.

Rome is considering changes that would reduce the benefit for banks and increase protection for the state to lower the chances it will be left on the hook, the sources said.

Even on stricter terms, the GACS scheme could help Italian lenders, which have disposed of more than 250 billion euros in bad debts since 2015, cope with an anticipated rise in corporate defaults in the wake of the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis.

Italy, which under the scheme guarantees the repayment of the least risky tranche of bad debts repackaged as securities, is considering hiking by at least one notch to 'BBB+' the required rating the "senior" tranche, the sources said.

Rome could also consider reducing the portion of the senior tranche covered by the GACS state guarantees, currently at 100%.

The guarantees lower risks for those investing in the securities, allowing banks to offload the debts at a smaller discount.

The success of the GACS scheme in bridging the pricing gap between buyers and sellers has turned Italy into Europe's largest market for soured bank loans. Such debts now account for less than 4% of total bank lending, down from a 2015 peak of 18%.

Government support measures last year pushed bankruptcies to a record low but businesses now face capital repayments on part of 280 billion euros in state-guaranteed COVID-loans, just as they grapple with record-high



energy and raw material prices.

While striving to help its banks face new shocks, Rome is also keen to safeguard state coffers after loan recoveries in some of the previous GACS-backed deals have fallen short of expectations.

Moody's Investors Service said in April that 15 out of 28 Italian bad loan securitisation deals it had analysed had undershot initial projections on collections, with a 35% median underperformance compared with the business plans.

Italy had already tightened the scheme's terms in 2019, hiking the senior tranche's minimum rating and introducing mechanisms to prod debt collection companies to stick to business plans.

To further reduce risks, the Treasury is considering introducing a new performance indicator dubbed profitability ratio, the sources said, to avoid that debt collectors beef up revenues by selling on the loans rather than recovering them.

Were the indicator to fall below a certain threshold, recovery firms would not receive their variable fees and interest payments on the medium-risk 'mezzanine' tranches would be temporarily frozen, the sources said.

Zionists Not Allowed

FROM PAGE 1

The Iraqi law took effect amid widespread reports pointing to the northern Iraqi Kurdistan region's cooperation with the Israeli spy agency, Mossad.

In late September last year, a U.S. based think tank organized a conference in the semi-autonomous Iraqi

Kurdistan Region, sparking anger and condemnation.

Palestinians have denounced the normalizations of four Arab states with Israel as a betrayal of their cause and a stab in the back. The normalization was window dressed as "helpful to the Palestinian cause", but the events that unfolded over the past two years have proven it to be otherwise.

Despite Palestinians' anger, the UAE and Bahrain have tried to boost its political and economic ties with Israel and even Turkey has warmed its ties with the Zionists especially in trade while the Zionists are killing the Palestinians mercilessly.

Now it is reported that Yemen is resolved to pass such a law which will forbid any move for normalization of ties with Israel. According to reports, the legislature of Yemen's National Salvation Government is going to introduce a bill that will criminalize all forms of normalization of ties with Israel, in a great show of solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

Yemeni Prime Minister Abdulaziz bin Habtoor told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that the parliament will soon pass a law that makes it a crime to normalize relations with the Tel Aviv regime.

He said that the measure falls within the framework of the Yemeni nation's aspirations as Palestine is the foremost and principal issue of the Muslim world. "We stand by the side of the Palestinian nation and their struggle in the face of Israeli threats to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the occupied al-Quds city," Habtoor noted.

Meanwhile, a senior member of Yemen's popular Ansarullah resistance movement called on Sunday for a ban on products made in countries supporting Israel as a step to potentially end the regime's illegal occupation.

Now that the Zionists increase its bloodshed against Palestinians, Muslim nations should stand against this brutal regime either by financing the Palestinians, or arming them or taking decisive actions like forbidding normalization of ties or trade with the Zionists because the trade with this criminal and fake regime will strengthen them financially to continue their crimes in the occupied lands.

While Iraq has passed a law to forbid normalization of ties with Israel, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid has been quoted as saying that the Tel Aviv regime is coordinating with the United States and Persian Gulf nations on a process to normalize and establish full diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia.

"We believe that it is possible to have a normalization process with Saudi Arabia. It's in our interest," Lapid told Army Radio on Monday.

It is strange that a big Muslim country like Saudi Arabia rejects friendship and close ties with Iran or even with Qatar and it goes to strengthen ties with Israel. Saudi rulers should take into consideration this point that the Zionists are unreliable and they just want to milk Muslim countries and dictate themselves and to paint an innocent picture of them, and all of their promises are void and are just for deceiving in order to calm down Muslims' anger regarding their crimes.

The Islamic Republic of Iran as the flag-bearer of fighting against the Zionist regime has welcomed Iraqi parliament move for forbidding ties with Israel and it welcomes any country which stops relations with the criminal Zionist regime because this fake regime is alive just because of the artificial respiration and unity among the Muslims and their resolved determination to stand against the Zionist will be the last nail in the coffin of the Zionists and this will happen sooner or later but it is just a matter of time and the collapse and destruction of the Zionist regime is crystal clear.

Iran Will...

FROM PAGE 1

That came after an Iranian Oil Ministry subsidiary company signed a 110 million-euro (\$116 million) contract to repair and expand Venezuela's smallest refinery, the 146,000-bpd El Palito.

Iran has expanded its energy ties with Venezuela in recent years as the two countries have been looking for ways to get round the American sanctions on their oil industries.

Iran has provided vital shipments of fuel and crude oil to Venezuela in addition to supplies of parts needed to repair and update Venezuela's refining network.

The Fars report said that Iran will also partner with Venezuela in construction works at an unfinished refinery in Nicaragua in return for owning shares in the 100,000-bpd facility

Owji had said following his visit to the Latin America region earlier this month that owning shares in refineries in the region will give Iran a major market for its crude shipments while the country will be able to increase its sales of petroleum products in the region.

Dubai Ranks First Regionally, Second Globally In Attracting FDI Projects

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) and member of the Dubai Council, revealed that Dubai consolidated its status as a global cultural hub and investment destination, ranking first in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and second in the world in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in cultural and creative industries (CCI) in 2021.

Her Highness said that Dubai's emergence as a magnet for FDI in the sector has been driven by the farsighted vision and directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

According to the Dubai FDI Monitor report, published by the Dubai Investment Development Agency (Dubai FDI), an agency of the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), Dubai attracted 233 new projects in the creative economy in 2021. Surpassing other major cities such as New York, Singapore and Berlin, Dubai improved its rankings from fifth in the previous year. The report was based on data from the Financial Times' 'FDI Markets', the world's leading data source on greenfield FDI projects.

"These results reflect the maturity and stability of the investment environment in the emirate's creative economy. Dubai has created outstanding FDI opportunities in the sector by building a robust ecosystem and an advanced business-enabling infrastructure for creative entrepreneurs.

"By fostering an environment that promotes learning, development, and innovation, Dubai has developed a vibrant global creative community. Its unique social fabric that has evolved out of the emirate's remarkable cultural diversity and its comprehensive human-centered development process has further supported the growth of Dubai's creative economy," Sheikha Latifa added.

Data from Dubai FDI Monitor indicates significant growth in foreign investment in the cultural and creative industries. The sector's estimated value of FDI capital flows exceeded AED4.9 billion in 2021. The rise in FDI inflow and rankings reflect the enhanced attractiveness of the emirate's creative economy. In terms of the number of new jobs in the creative economy, Dubai held on to its top rank regionally and fourth globally with 6,204 new jobs created from FDI.

Sheikha Latifa noted that during the past five years, between 2017 and 2021, the emirate's creative economy witnessed FDI capital inflows of AED50.9 billion across 787 projects. These projects created 32,542 new jobs during the five-year period. Dubai ranks fifth globally in terms of projects, eighth in terms of FDI capital flows into the creative economy, and fourth in terms of jobs created during the past five years, data from Financial Times Ltd 'FDI Markets' shows.

Turkey's Recurring Currency Nightmare Strikes Again

LONDON (Dispatches) - Another 9% plunge in Turkey's lira this month and debt market danger gauges at levels last seen during the 2008 global crash have prompted investor concerns that a fresh crisis might be brewing in the country.

Whether President Tayyip Erdogan's government can avoid market turmoil, just five months after the last bout, will have big implications for his re-election prospects - and for a potential return of foreign investment if he loses.

The latest lira slump - it is down 20% this year - combined with soaring global energy and food prices means inflation is now at 70% and rising, while emergency measures Ankara adopted at the height of last year's turmoil are about to be seriously tested.

Tehran Terms IAEA...

FROM PAGE 1

Russia's lead negotiator to the Vienna talks Mikhail Ulyanov reacted to the leakage of the UN agency's reports to the mass media, and said the move would lead to a lot of speculations before and during the meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors next week.

"As always, the IAEA Director General's reports on Iran were immediately leaked to mass media today. We can expect a lot of speculations in the days to come and heated debates in the IAEA Board of Governors next week," Ulyanov wrote in a tweet.

Meanwhile Iran's Foreign Ministry says that the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s latest report on the country's stockpile of enriched uranium is not fair and does not reflect the truth about the talks between Iran and the agency.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh made the remarks during a press conference on Tuesday, referring to a quarterly IAEA report that claimed Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium had grown to more than 18 times the limit agreed in the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran Blames...

FROM PAGE 1

Asked about the recent remarks from U.S. Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley who has warned that the prospects of reviving the JCPOA were "tenuous at best", Khatibzadeh said comments that the American officials may make in response to their own country's internal dynamism are by no means a criterion for showing a reaction.

"Basically, our action in the domain of the Vienna talks is absolutely clear. We'd show no reaction to the comments (from US officials) that are made for domestic consumption," the Iranian spokesman added.

What matters to Tehran are the messages being exchanged between Iran and the U.S. through the customary channels, he stated, adding that Iran has already offered its initiatives in that regard.

"Unfortunately, the United States has not still given the expected responses. If the U.S. abandons hesitation in behavior and makes and announces the political decision, there will definitely be no deadlock and the remaining percentage of the agreement could be finalized," Khatibzadeh noted.

He also said that the ministry knows the perpetrators behind Martyrs Sayyad Khodaei's assassination and they soon will receive a painful message unnoticed.

Khatibzadeh was referring to the former IRGC member Hassan Sayyad Khodaei, who was assassinated in an armed attack by two motorcyclists in Tehran on May 22. He played a significant role in the fight against the ISIS terrorist group and other terrorist outfits in the region.

He said: "We know which the third party committed this act. The response to the assassination of Martyr Sayyad Khodaei will receive a painful message from secret channels."

He also answered the question of the Iran Press Correspondent that the assassination was carried out shortly after the presence of Alena Douhan, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, in Iran, and said: "Alena Douhan's findings in Iran were completely freely and objectively. She met with many political figures and NGOs, and we had the least involvement in her choice of topics."

At the end of her 12-day visit to Iran, Douhan slammed the United States for its brutal sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran, asserting that harsh economic sanctions have had a damaging impact on human rights in the country.

Khatibzadeh said: "The UN human rights rapporteur in Iran spoke freely and observed the extent of illegal sanctions."

Cambage Denies Racial Slur

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australian basketball star Liz Cambage denied on Monday using racist language towards the Nigerian team during a warm-up game for last summer's Tokyo Olympics.

The 30-year-old stalwart of the Australian women's Olympic basketball team, the Opals, pulled out of the Games shortly beforehand, citing a struggle with her mental health fuelled by the thought of "terrifying" isolation in the Covid-19 "bubble".

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Riot Police Clash With Saint-Étienne Fans

PARIS (Dispatches) - Saint-Étienne, one of France's biggest clubs, were relegated from Ligue 1 after losing a penalty shoot-out in their play-off against Auxerre, who return to the top flight after 10 years away.

Their defeat was greeted by a pitch invasion by angry Saint-Étienne fans and the intervention of French police who used tear gas to stem the trouble.

Saint-Étienne, who finished third from bottom in Ligue 1, had already drawn the first leg of their play-off 1-1 with Ligue 2's Auxerre.

Celtics Beat Heat to Reach NBA Finals

BOSTON (Dispatches) - The Boston Celtics secured a nerve-wracking 100-96 Game 7 victory over the Miami Heat to reach the NBA Finals for the first time in 12 years. The Celtics twice opened up a double digit lead and looked to be running away with the win, but buoyed by a raucous home crowd, Miami twice surged back and even had a chance to win it late.

With the Heat trailing by two points, star forward Jimmy Butler opted to take a transition three-pointer with 14 seconds still remaining on the clock, only to see his effort fall short and clang off the front of the rim.

Marcus Smart was then fouled after Al Horford had secured the rebound for the Celtics and went on to make both of his free throws to secure the win and set up a Finals meeting with the Golden State Warriors.

"We fought through a lot of adversity this year. We're a resilient group and tonight seemed to signify our season," Celtics coach Ime Udoka said, per Reuters.

"We can't ever seem to shut the door and have to grind it out. This is a typical Celtics win."

Jayson Tatum, who won the inaugural Larry Bird trophy as the Eastern Conference Finals MVP, led the Celtics with 26 points, 10 rebounds and six assists.

For Game 7, Tatum wore an armband in the colors of the Celtics' bitter rivals, the Los Angeles Lakers, bearing the No. 24 of his late "idol" Kobe Bryant.

"That was my inspiration, my favorite player," Tatum told reporters. "The shoes that I've been wearing the last couple games were dedicated to him."

"Today, before I took my nap -- I do it sometimes -- I was watching some film, some moments from him and his career. This is the biggest game of my career thus far and I wanted to wear that armband to honor him



and kind of share that moment in a way."

Tatum was backed up by a big night from Marcus Smart, who finished with 24 points, nine rebounds and five assists, and Jaylen Brown, who registered 24 points, six rebounds and six assists.

For the Heat, Butler continued his superb playoff form and led his team with 35 points and nine rebounds. Butler had twice exceeded 40 points during this series to drag Miami to a Game 7 but said he wasn't happy with his performance.

"Not good enough," Butler said. "I didn't do my job ... stats don't mean anything. The Boston Celtics came out and did what they had to do in the series."

"I learned that I have to be better and I will be better."

Bam Adebayo, who finished with 25 points, 11 rebounds and four assists, perhaps best summed up how Miami felt after the game.

Max Strus sank a three-pointer to close an 11-0 Miami run and lift the Heat within 98-96 in the dying seconds, but Smart hit two free throws to produce the final margin and the Celtics kept Miami at bay from there.

"We figured it out," Brown said. "We persevered. We got the job done."

Rune Shocks Tsitsipas to Make French Open Quarters



PARIS (Dispatches) - Teenager Holger Rune became the first Danish man to reach the French Open quarter-finals on Monday when he shocked world number four and 2021 runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Rune, just 19 and ranked 40, swept to a memorable 7-5, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 win on the back of 54 winners and will face Norway's eighth seed Casper Ruud for a place in the semi-finals.

The last Danish man to reach the last-eight in any Slam was Jan Leschly at the 1967 US Championships.

With fellow 19-year-old Carlos Alcaraz already into the quarter-finals, it is the first time two teenagers have made it this far in Paris since Hendrik Dreekman and Andrei Medvedev 28 years ago.

In a tense fourth set, Rune gave up a 5-2 lead and fought off three more break points in the 10th game before he secured victory when his Greek opponent hit long.

UEFA to Compensate 2,700 Champions League Ticket Holders

PARIS (Dispatches) - European football's governing body UEFA has undertaken to "compensate" 2,700 ticket holders who were "deprived" of the chance to see the Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid, France's Sports Minister said today.

The start of Saturday's match at the Stade de France in Paris was delayed by 36 minutes as chaos reigned at the turnstiles with Liverpool fans prevented from entering the stadium.

Some were pepper-sprayed and tear-gassed by French riot police, others attempted to scale the barriers.

Many were eventually able to access the ground after the match had started but others missed out entirely.

"We have asked UEFA, who have agreed with us, that these people be precisely identified and receive immediate compensation for their frustration they have suffered", said Amelie Oudea-Castera during a press conference.

She said there were 2,700 "non-activated" tickets corresponding to a group of people who had bought a ticket and who were "deprived" of the match".

Kasatkina, Kudermetova To Share Good Memory In French Open Quarters

PARIS (Dispatches) - Daria Kasatkina said she is looking forward to sharing another "good memory" with Veronika Kudermetova when the Russian duo face each other in the French Open quarter-finals.

Kasatkina, seeded 20th, took advantage of an error-strewn performance from Italian Camila Giorgi to win her last-16 tie 6-2, 6-2. She will face compatriot Kudermetova in the last eight on Wednesday.

Kasatkina and Kudermetova, who are both 25, played against each other from a young age and were part of the Russian squad who won last year's Billie Jean King Cup.

"(We played) many times in juniors. We played so many times," said Kasatkina.

"We were on one team winning Billie Jean King Cup last year, so we have many good memories to share together."



Marcelo Confirms Departure

MADRID (Dispatches) - After lifting a fifth Champions League trophy with Real Madrid, captain Marcelo said he is bringing his 16-year stint with the Spanish and European champions to an end.

The Brazilian defender is the most decorated player in Real's 120-year history, picking up his 25th trophy with the club as they beat Liverpool 1-0 in the Champions League final on Saturday.

He has found playing time limited in recent

seasons, however, and made only 12 appearances in the league during the 2021-22 campaign.

"It is a wonderful moment in my life, I close a cycle here, in the best club in the world," Marcelo told supporters during Real's trophy celebrations in Madrid on Sunday.

"Today is not a day of sadness, but a day of joy because we have once again won the best championship in the world. I am very proud of myself and so is my family. We have lived many magical nights together."

"I tell you one thing, the future of Madrid is very good with the young players. Hala Madrid." Marcelo added that his relationship with Real was not at an end, saying he would do "something else at the club" in the future.

The 34-year-old made over 500 appearances for the club and inherited the captain's armband from Sergio Ramos following the Spaniard's move to Paris St Germain last year.

Cilic Downs Medvedev to Set Up Rublev Clash

PARIS (Dispatches) - Croatian Marin Cilic did not put a foot wrong as he crushed Russia's world number two Daniil Medvedev 6-2 6-3 6-2 in a lopsided contest to return to the French Open quarter-finals after a gap of four years.

The 2014 U.S. Open champion, seeded 20th, dominated proceedings from the start and finished off the contest in an hour and 45 minutes to reach the last eight stage on the Parisian clay for the third time in his career.

Medvedev came into the match having won all three previous meetings against the 33-year-old Croatian but cut a sorry figure under the lights on Court Philippe Chatrier in their first contest on clay.

"It was absolutely a fantastic match from the first point to the last," Cilic said in his interview on court.

"I enjoyed the atmosphere, enjoyed the night session here, played incredible tennis, one of the best matches of my career from start to finish."

Such was the Croatian's domination that he did not face a break point and will next meet another Russian in seventh seed Andrey Rublev for a place in the semi-finals.

Cilic played aggressively, pinning Medvedev behind the baseline and advancing to the net at every opportunity as the Russian failed to find any zing behind his flat groundstrokes in the cooler night conditions.

Unable to find a solution to Cilic's pinpoint winners, Medvedev kept shaking his head and also poured out his frustration at the chair umpire over what he felt was very little time to rest during changeovers.

Medvedev's form on the night was more reminiscent of his four consecutive first-round exits at Roland Garros before he made the quarter-finals last year.

Cilic won four consecutive games from 2-2 to bag the opening set in 31 minutes and another break in the sixth game was enough for him to take the second set.

Australian Open finalist Medvedev, who won the 2021 U.S. Open, then took a lengthy toilet break but served a double fault on his first point after returning to court.



Forest Return to Premier League After Playoff Win

LONDON (Dispatches) - Nottingham Forest beat Huddersfield Town 1-0 in the Championship playoff final at Wembley Stadium on Sunday to return to the Premier League after a 23-year absence.

The decisive goal came in the 43rd minute when Huddersfield defender Levi Colwill deflected a James Garner shot into his own net.

Former European champions Forest were relegated from the top flight in 1999 and they join Bournemouth and Fulham, who won automatic promotion to the Premier League.

Steve Cooper's side were deserved winners having dominated the first half and then held on to their lead without Huddersfield truly threatening their goal.

"I'm just so proud of the players, staff, fans," said Forest defender Joe Worrall.

"We've been fantastic all season - we were really unlucky to not go up automatically. We've played with honesty and we play football the right way," he said.

The only scare came when Town's Harry Toffolo went down in the box under a challenge from Jack Colback but referee Jon Moss booked the Huddersfield wing-back for simulation. Forest, who had beaten Sheffield United to reach the playoff final, were English champions in 1978 under Brian Clough and went on to win the European Cup in 1979 and 1980.

The East Midlands side had made an awful start to the season, sacking manager Chris Hughton when they were bottom of the league after taking just one point from their opening seven games.

Former Swansea City manager Cooper took charge and transformed the campaign, leading Forest to a fourth-placed finish, two points behind third-placed Huddersfield.

Forest have struggled to find their way out of the Championship and Cooper was the 14th manager they have appointed in 10 years, since Billy Davies departed in the summer of 2011.

"Everybody connected with the football club deserves today and we are really looking forward now to a positive future," said Cooper.

"I love being at this football club, it has changed my life professionally," he added.

Huddersfield had been relegated from the Premier League in 2019 after two seasons in the top division and had finished 18th and 20th in the past two campaigns.

