

Minister of Interior of Iraq, Othman Al-Ghanmi Said Here That Tehran and Baghdad Have Signed two Security and Pilgrimage MoUs and Both States will Gradually Cancel Visa Requirements for Travelers

# IRAN NEWS

Judiciary Spokesman Said 14 Suspects Were Arrested in the Case of the 10-Storey Metropole Building Collapse That Happened In Abadan Where So Far 41 Bodies Have Been Recovered

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## Commander Warns Israel Over Making Any Mistake

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force has warned that Tehran will raze Tel Aviv and Haifa if Israel makes any mistake against Tehran. "By the order of the Supreme Leader of the [Islamic] Revolution, we will raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground for any mistake made by the enemy," Brigadier General Kiousmars Heydari said on Tuesday. Heydari noted that the Israeli-occupied territories will be liberated in less than 25 years, adding, "Today, the military and defense achievements of the army of the Islamic Republic of Iran are a thorn in the enemies' eyes." He added that "the range of drones and operational missiles of the Army's Ground Force has increased." Referring to the strategic drone base 313, Heydari said all such equipment is aimed to respond to any foolish attack by the country's enemies, adding that the light weapons of the Iranian ground forces are also being "changed, updated, and localized." Iranian politicians and military officials have repeatedly warned Israel against any adventurism against the Islamic Republic, warning of a crushing response to any act of aggression. **See Page 7**

## CBI Claims Highest Ever Foreign Currency Reserves

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) claims it currently enjoys the highest ever foreign currency reserves in cash, saying it will utilize it to stabilize the market. CBI governor Ali Salehabadi said that the bank has the largest cash currency reserve in the history of the country, "therefore we have no problem in balancing supply and demand in the foreign exchange market." His remarks came as the bank has reportedly started injecting cash dollars into the market to stop the current freefall of the Iranian rial as it has hit record lows against major currencies, while nuclear talks with the United States remain in limbo, prices are rising and popular protests continue. Iran has increased oil exports despite United States sanctions since last year and claims to have been able to repatriate the revenues. However, it is not clear why the rial is falling and the economic crisis continuing if it has large foreign currency reserves. The rial has been sliding since mid-March when year-long multilateral talks in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement known as the JCPOA came to an abrupt halt.

## IAEA Urged to Drop Political Agenda as Board Meets



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official has urged the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency to refrain from pursuing any political agenda in his work, stating that the Islamic Republic is strongly opposed to an anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors. Speaking with the IRIB TV1 television channel, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's former envoy to the IAEA, explained that the agency submits two separate reports to each meeting of the Board of Governors, one on Tehran's compliance with its nuclear-related obligations and another on its compliance with the NPT Safeguards Agreement. In its second report, the IAEA "claimed to have documents showing nuclear-related activities in some sites and called on Iran to cooperate with the agency and clarify the matter. The Islamic Republic of Iran, for its part, cooperated with the agency in good faith and on the basis of transparency," he said. Gharibabadi, who is now the Iranian Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the country's High Council for Human Rights, stated that Iran provided adequate explanations to the IAEA after tiny amounts of nuclear particles were found in one or two locations. "I think there are two main reasons why the IAEA has amplified the issue and put it high on its agenda. One reason is the constant political pressure that the United States, some Western countries, and the Zionist regime have been exerting on the agency," he said, pointing out that Israel itself is not a signatory to the NPT. Gharibabadi stressed that IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has "undeniably strong political tendencies," saying all IAEA reports have been influenced by outside political pressures and the political approaches of the director generals. He went on to say that the agency lacks an independent role. "If there were no political pressures on the IAEA, the chances for resolving the issue between Iran and the agency would be very high, as our explanations for the two sites are technically and scientifically valid," the former Iranian diplomat noted. Elsewhere in his remarks, Gharibabadi said that IAEA resolutions are legally non-binding even if adopted. "I hope that Western countries and the US would come to their senses and opt not to officially submit the resolution, because they know the move will further complicate the situation. I hope they would not take such a destructive step. I am opposed to any resolution against the Islamic Republic of Iran, whether at the IAEA Board of Governors, the Security Council, or the UN Human Rights Council," he said. Even if the IAEA passes an anti-Iran resolution, it has no legal status in the international arena, but it can still be an achievement for its masterminds in order to ramp up the psychological war against the Islamic Republic, Gharibabadi said. "Westerners have made their decision regarding this politicized action. The United States has supported it and even prepared a draft resolution, and circulated it among its allies and members of the Board of Governors. They know how destructive their action could be, and that it would seriously damage the initiatives on the table. Hence, if such a resolution cannot be stopped, its architects must bear the cost of its passage," he said.

## Tehran Reaffirms Support for Palestinian Resistance

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Expressing Tehran's unwavering support for the Palestinian resistance and struggle for freedom, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said Muslim states that have normalized ties with Israel will regret betraying the cause of Palestine. A number of religious and political leaders as well as officials of Lebanese and Palestinian groups met with the Iranian foreign minister in Tehran. Highlighting the special and strategic place of Palestine and al-Quds in Imam Khomeini's thinking and vision, Amirabdollahian said the late founder of the Islamic Republic viewed the Palestinian cause as the Muslim world's top priority. The foreign minister also underlined that Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, as per Imam Khomeini's view, attaches special importance to the issue of liberating Palestine and believes that the entire Palestinian land must be liberated from the occupation of the murderous Zionists, the Foreign Ministry's website reported. Amirabdollahian also pointed to Iran's full support for the Palestinian resistance, saying the Islamic Republic will not back down from its principled stance on the matter despite all pressures. **See Page 7**

## ViewPoint IAEA Chiefs or West's Pawns in Disguise?

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Since September 2002 when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) actually became sensitive and started probe on Iran's nuclear program, almost all chiefs of this UN body have acted as the pawns of the big powers especially the West and its lord Israeli regime, and they have entered the scene to increase pressure on the countries especially on the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to get some concessions or condemn those states. On Monday, board of governors of IAEA started their seasonal meeting to address different related issues on the nuclear programs of some countries especially the Islamic Republic of Iran and it seems the board is to issue a statement against Tehran over its nuclear program. Before the start of the meeting, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi in a press conference took a negative stand against Tehran's nuclear program. Addressing the board of the UN nuclear agency, Grossi reiterated criticism of Iran's cooperation in his recent report. France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States have been discussing a possible resolution censuring Tehran at the quarterly board meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, while China and Russia have warned this could upset negotiations over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement. The most contentious part of Grossi's report referred to the claim of discovery of uranium traces at three sites in Iran linked to nuclear work carried out before 2003. "Iran has not provided explanations that are technically credible in relation to the Agency's findings at three undeclared locations in Iran," he said. "Nor has Iran informed the Agency of the current location, or locations, of the nuclear material and/or of the equipment contaminated with nuclear material, that was moved from Turqzabad in 2018." Grossi told the board that he could not confirm Iran's adherence to its 'safeguards agreement' as a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty "unless and until" Tehran provided "technically credible explanations for the presence of uranium particles of anthropogenic origin at Turqzabad, Varamin and 'Marivan' and informs the Agency of all current locations of the nuclear material and/or of the contaminated equipment." **See Page 7**

## Iran Oil Exports Remain Above 1m bpd

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran continued to export more than one million barrels of oil per day (bpd) in the two first months of new Iranian calendar year (March 21 - May 21). The Oil Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that thanks to the boost of oil revenues, the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi did not need to borrow money from the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in the first two months of the year for the first time in recent years. The ministry reacted to some reports of opponent media outlets on decline of administration's oil export, noting that increase or decrease of oil export volume in various times depends upon the market circumstances and seasonal supply and demand conditions. The Iranian oil export ratio is determined to maintain market share with the use of trading techniques and observe the country's interests based on existing regulations and conventional method, the ministry added. Iran has succeeded in selling oil, while the country was under all-out economic war imposed by the global arrogance and the personnel of the oil industry made round-the-clock efforts to prevent halt of oil production even for one day, it said. **See Page 7**

Sokhan Gostar Institute

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# IRGC Dismisses Assassination News of Its Member

TEHRAN (MNA) - Released news on the assassination of an IRGC member in Qom is fake and fabricated, the Public Relations Office of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Taleb for IRGC has announced.

The published video clip on social media is related to the efforts of Qom Police for arresting narcotics traffickers who were trying to escape.

During the operation, a driver on the street has been shot by a smuggler and succumbed to death.

## President Calls for Prioritizing Precautionary Storage of Basic Goods

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN - In order to expedite the provision and safeguarding of basic goods, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi instructed the Ministers of Industry and Agricultural Jihad to identify obstacles to the implementation of this program and to work with the coordination of the First Vice-President to eliminate it.**

A meeting to review the use of new capacities to supply and store basic goods, chaired by President Raisi and attended by the First Vice-President, President's Chief of Staff, Ministers of Economic Affairs and Finance, Agricultural Jihad, Roads and Urban Development, Industry, Mines and Trade, Defense and Armed Forces' Logistics and the heads of the Central Bank and the Plan and Budget Organization.

In this meeting, a report was presented on the latest situation of supply and stocks of basic goods. According to this report, the amount of stocks of the country's basic goods is in a good condition, but according to the global conditions, the necessary measures to create a precautionary capacity were proposed and the details of its implementation were reviewed and approved.

Accordingly, arrangements to facilitate and accelerate the supply of basic goods, using the capacity of institutions and foundations, strengthening the capacity of the private sector to supply and distribute basic goods, increasing electronic and intelligent infrastructure for better distribution of basic goods, strengthening ports and transit capacities in this regard were discussed.

In this meeting, the President emphasized on giving priority to accelerating the supply and precautionary storage of basic goods, and instructed the Ministers of Industry, Mines and Trade and Agricultural Jihad to identify obstacles to the implementation of this program and eliminate it with the coordination of the First Vice-President.

Raisi added, "The country's resources in other countries should not remain idle and resources should be imported quickly and continuously into the country in the form of required goods or facilities".



Meanwhile on Monday and referring to the recommendations of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in a speech on June 4, the President said that the government considers itself the first addressee of his orders and recommendations, saying, "Protecting the identity of the Revolution was one of the main recommendations of the Supreme Leader at Imam Khomeini's (RA) mausoleum, and the government seriously pursue the implementation of his orders".

Speaking in the cabinet meeting, Raisi thanked the Supreme Leader for his attention in thanking the members of the government for paying special attention to those affected by the building collapse in Abadan and stressed the need to seriously follow the 7 recommendations of the Supreme Leader in his speech on June 4.

"Protecting the identity of the Revolution was one of the main recommendations of the Supreme Leader at Imam Khomeini's (RA) mausoleum, and the government seriously pursues the implementation of his orders," he said.

Raisi mentioned the fulfilment of responsibilities at the right time as one of the requirements for fulfilling the orders of the Leader and added, "Anything that is done at the right time will achieve the desired result and delay in performing the duty is harmful and detrimental".

In this regard, the President referred to the announcement of the law of 'Surge in Production of Knowledge-Based' in recent days and stressed the need for full implementation of this law and said, "The exact implementation of this law will create a real surge in production, especially knowledge-based products in the country".

## Energy Minister In Tajikistan

DUSHANBE (IP) - The Minister of Energy arrived in the Tajik capital of Dushanbe to attend the second water summit titled 'International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development'.

Ali Akbar Mehrabian arrived in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, to attend the second high-level summit on water, titled "International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018 to 2028.

The summit aims to accelerate efforts to resolve the water crisis at the national, regional, and international levels.

The meeting started on Monday, June 6, and will continue until Wednesday, June 9.

The Tajik government is co-organizing the summit with the cooperation of the United Nations and other parties.

The summit's purpose is to reaffirm that water is still one of the most pressing issues in the world.

The meeting will help strengthen the cooperation of countries and UN agencies to address the issue of water and related issues.

## Iran Produces 2% of World Scientific Achievements

TABRIZ (IP) - Minister of Science, Research and Technology said that Iran's population is one percent of the world's population, but produced science in Iran is 2 percent of the world, which is a significant fact.

Fortunately, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ranked 15th in the world in science and is ranked first among the countries in the region."

The Minister of Science, Research, and Technology of Iran stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran published more than 76,000 international scientific documents in 2021, and Iran is one of the top countries in the world in terms of scientific quality.

Mohammad Ali Zolfigol" also said that one of the ways to create jobs today is to establish knowledge-based companies and production.

The Iranian Minister of Science, Research, and Technology added that production based on innovation and new knowledge is unrivaled and wins the competition in the market.

The Minister of Science, Research and Technology of Iran said that educated and elite experts are working in knowledge-based companies, increasing the quality of our products in the competitive field.

## Over 250,000 Tons of Basic Goods Cleared From Chabahar

TEHRAN (MNA) - More than 250,000 tons of basic commodities were cleared from Chabahar port, in the southeast of Iran during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), the director of cereals and commercial services of Chabahar Free Zone Organization announced.

Barat Khajeh said that the clearance of basic commodities, including wheat, rice and corn, from the port indicates 70 percent rise in terms of weight, and 118 percent growth in terms of value in the said two-month period as compared to the same time span of the past year.

As previously announced by a provincial official, 1,981,156 tons of basic commodities were transported from Chabahar port to the designated destinations throughout the country in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20).

Mehroolah Damough, the head of goods transportation office of Road Maintenance and Transportation Department of Sistan-Baluchestan province, where the strategic port lies, said that the mentioned commodities were transported by 79,990 trucks.

Chabahar is an important port and a low-cost route for Central Asian countries, which with its strategic unloading and loading equipment has the potential to become a key transit corridor for international transit and transportation, the official further underlined.

As announced by the deputy head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), 30.9 million tons of basic goods worth \$19.6 billion were cleared from the customs in the past Iranian calendar year.

Foroud Asgari, the deputy head of IRICA for customs affairs, said that the imported goods were in 25 commodity groups.

### Iran Voices Readiness To Further Boosting Ties With Singapore



TEHRAN (MNA)- Islamic Republic of Iran voiced its readiness to further expansion and development of relations with Singapore.

In a meeting with Singapore's Minister for Social and Family Development Masagos Zulkifli on Monday evening, Iranian Ambassador to Singapore Behnam Bolourian expressed readiness of his country for evermore development of relations with Singapore on issues of mutual interests.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the possibility of bilateral cooperation within the framework of Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group which is running under the strict supervision of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), fulfilling joint cooperation projects and also exchanging experiences in the field of empowering women in social and economic fields.

Singapore's minister, for his turn, recalled the rich history and brilliant civilization of Iran which dates back to thousand years ago and praised eye-catching capability of women in social and economic affairs in Iran.

## Tehran, Damascus Call for Bolstering Health Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Health and Medical Education Bahram Einollahi and Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous in a meeting on Monday called for enhancing cooperation in the fields of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and scientific research.

According to the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), Einollahi met and held talks with Arnous on Monday. During the meeting, the two sides discussed boosting cooperation in the areas of the pharmaceutical industry, medical equipment, and products, scientific research, health tourism, exchange of students and professors at universities as well as research centers, holding joint conferences plus opening new chapters in mutual ties, especially in confronting sanctions and economic blockade.

Describing the progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the pharmaceutical industry, equipment, and medical products, Einollahi said that the Islamic Republic of Iran calls for bilateral cooperation in the health and scientific sectors as well as sharing experiences to create positive and practical results for the benefit of the two nations.

Arnous, for his part, said that the Syrian government supports any measures to improve the health conditions of the two states, including establishing joint pharmaceutical companies to meet the needs of the two countries and removing obstacles.

## Iran, Regional States Emphasize Importance of Reviving Its Environment

TEHRAN (IP) - Ambassadors from neighboring countries in Tehran stressed the need to revive the environment at a gathering entitled 'Environment, Regional Diplomacy, Climate Change Management, Water, Combating of Sand and Dust Storm'.

In the Iranian calendar, June 6 to 12 has been named Environment Week, and on the first day of the week, ambassadors from Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, and Uzbekistan attended the Environment Organization here in Tehran to discuss some issues.

Dr. Ali Salajegheh, Vice-President and Head of the Department of Environment, said at the gathering: "What is being proposed today as climate change is the result of human intervention in nature."

He added: "The earth can no longer tolerate these changes and conditions, and green areas have been weakened. Water resources and rainfall have

diminished, affecting humans."

The head of the Environment Organization said: "The environment is not a national concern but a global one, and it cannot be treated unreasonably." Mojtaba Zoljoudi, Deputy Minister of Marine Environment and Wetlands, also said: "42% of wetlands in the world have been destroyed, and drought and dust are the results of these changes."

He added: "The Caspian Sea is divided between five countries, but the related conventions have not pursued well. The sea has been shrunk in level and has also caused damage to countries."

Hassan Akbari, Deputy Minister of Natural Environment and Biodiversity, also said: "We are ready to help better understand biological resources and call on the international community to exclude the environment from sanctions."

## MP Voices Support for Trust-Building Regional Initiatives

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - An Iranian lawmaker expressed Tehran's readiness to push ahead with regional initiatives aimed at building trust and strengthening relations among the countries of the region in order to deal with common challenges.

The vice-chairman of the Iranian Parliament's national security and foreign policy commission took part in the Council of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, held in Armenia's capital Yerevan on Monday.

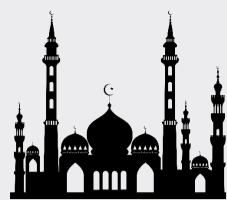
Addressing the meeting, Abbas Moqtadaee outlined Iran's views about regional developments and ways to ensure security and stability in the region.

Highlighting the role of parliaments in facilitating and broadening relations among the countries, particularly through providing coordination between national laws and collective interests, the Iranian MP stressed the need for closer cooperation and joint action considering the rapid pace of global developments.

He also pointed to the common challenges faced by regional countries, such as international terrorism, illicit drug trade, organized crimes, and the threats posed by the situation in Afghanistan, expressing Iran's support for regional initiatives aimed at building trust and strengthening relations among regional states.

In the Monday's meeting, delegations from the member countries discussed the procedure for the implementation of the decisions made in the previous session in September 2021, the improvement of the legal provision of the peacekeeping activities of the CSTO member states, the electoral processes of the member states, and a number of other issues.

The next Council of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the 15th plenary meetings will be held in Russia in autumn.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:39
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:48

60. When it is said to them, "Adore ye ((Allah)) Most Gracious!", they say, "And what is ((Allah)) Most Gracious? Shall we adore that which thou commandest us?" And it increases their flight (from the Truth).

61. Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light;

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (60 - 61)

## Tehran, Doha Form Joint Trade Council

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Iran and Qatar on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding to form a joint trade council which held its first session in Doha on the same day.**

According to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the document was signed by Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Thani, Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and his Iranian Counterpart Gholam-Hossein Shafeie in Doha.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Thani hailed the formation of the council that makes up of elites of different economic sectors of the two countries.

He said that the council will help discover investment opportunities in both countries and develop mutual cooperation. The Qatari official also stressed the importance of the positive role that the private sector can play in developing trade between the two sides.

Shafeie, on his part, announced Iran's willingness to boost trade ties with Qatar and said that there are numerous grounds for cooperation in this regard.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Thani was also present at a meeting attended by businessmen, as well as representatives of a number of Iranian and Qatari companies. Alireza Peyman-Pak, Deputy Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, who also heads the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, was also attending the meeting.

Sheikh Al-Thani said that trade ties between the two countries have been growing, as they increased by 34% in 2021 compared to a year earlier.

He said that many Iranian companies are currently cooperating with Qatari firms in different fields such as maintenance, services as well as gas and energy.

He added that the two countries can further expand their cooperation through the participation of their private sectors in fields such as agriculture, industry and food security, among others.



The Qatari official also spoke about his country's laws and measures to facilitate foreign investment there, and invited Iranian companies to get familiar with the investment opportunities in Qatar.

Alireza Peyman-Pak also announced Iran's willingness to develop ties with Qatar in trade and industrial fields.

He added that Iran also welcomes joint ventures with Qatar and intends to remove obstacles that businessmen of the two countries are facing.

Meanwhile Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Al-Thani in a meeting on Monday signed the memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU of the 8th Meeting of the Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Qatar was signed between Mehrabian and al-Thani in Doha, Qatar.

Stressing Iran's approach to the development of international relations, Mehrabian said that the current meetings manifest a new chapter in the development of cooperation between Iran and Qatar.

Referring to the deep-rooted relations between Iran and Qatar, he added that holding such meetings is not only constructive, but also it is strengthening bilateral ties between the two states.

This Memorandum of Understanding focuses on the areas of transit, transportation, industry and trade, energy, customs, free zones, tourism, cultural heritage, agriculture, and sports.

## Shiraz to Host First Int'l Exhibition on Domestic Knowledge-Based Products

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The First International Iranian Production, Knowledge-Based and Technology of the Region with the goal to materialize the slogan of the year will be held in Shiraz, Fars Province, on June 21-25.



Managing Director of Fars International Exhibition Company Mr. Ali Farhadi in a presser announced the news that Shiraz will host the first international exhibition on Iranian production, knowledge-based and Technology of the region which is aimed at materializing the slogan of the year, policies of the Second Step of the Revolution and jihad for explaining of the achievements of the national production and the knowledge-based.

Farhadi said that Fars International Permanent Fairground in Shiraz will host the event on June 21-25.

He said that the latest achievements of small and big industries with focus on knowledge-based will be put on display in this event, adding that the event will be a great opportunity for exchange of information and sharing the experiences over the capabilities of the participants.

He reiterated that the event will host the massive presence of the media and industries from the fields of oil, gas, petrochemical, food industries, apparel, metal and non-metal industries, medical equipment, electricity and communications, IT, auto and home appliances, noting that the event is in line with developing knowledge-based economy, job creation and reinforcing entrepreneurship in the domestic and international scenes.

Farhadi went on to say that the exhibition will be a scene for displaying the capacities of the country and presenting the top achievements in the fields of production and industry.

## 3 MoUs Signed to Boost Tourism

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Parent Company of Iran Tourism Development has signed several memoranda of understanding aimed at facilitating foreigners' visits to the country's tourism and pilgrimage sites.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft, the company signed an MoU with Pakistan's Alamdar Holding Company to develop religious tourism between the two countries.

The document aims to increase the number of Pakistani pilgrims visiting Iran's holy cities of Qom and Mashhad.

The Parent Company of Iran Tourism Development also signed an MoU with the Organization for Development of Iran-Iraq Ties.

The document was signed in line with a plan to facilitate the arrival of one million foreign pilgrims in the city of Mashhad where the holy shrine of the Eighth Shia Imam, Imam Reza (AS), is located.

In line with the same plan, the Parent Company of Iran Tourism Development also signed an MoU with Iran Sky Group, which is an international holding company.

## Flights Between Iran, Turkey Rise to 110 a Week

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The spokesman for Islamic Republic's Civil Aviation Organization has announced that flights between Iran and Turkey have risen to 110 a week while they previously were 100.

It happened after the demands of two sides' civil aviation organizations in order to provide further facilities for the passengers, Mir-Akbar Razavi said.

Referring to a meeting between senior official at Iran's Civil Aviation Organization Hassan Khoshkhoo and Director General of Turkey's Civil Aviation Kemal Yuksek, Razavi said the two held talks on development of transportation cooperation.

Also, implementation of previous agreements was stressed, Razavi noted.

Iran has a long border with Turkey.

## Iran Reports Record Peak Usage of Electricity at 60 GW

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Energy Ministry says power consumption in the country rose to a record of 60 gigawatts (GW) at peak hour on Monday June 6.

Iranian Electricity Sector Spokesman Mostafa Rajabi said on Monday that the figure is 5 GW higher than consumption recorded on the same day in 2021.

"That is a big figure ... however, blackouts were avoided and demand was met through better management at our operating power plants," Rajabi told the state TV although he admitted that several places in the country had experienced brief power cuts over technical issues that occurred in the grid.

The new peak in electricity consumption in Iran comes amid rising temperatures that has caused a surge in cooling demand across the country.

Head of the Iranian Energy Ministry's grid management department Arash Kordi said on Sunday

that demand for electricity is expected to hit an all-time record of 67 GW over the summer months.

Iran has introduced electricity bill credits for a first time to encourage low use by households. Under the scheme, customers who use electricity at a lower scale compared to similar months in previous years will receive credits of 5,000 rials (\$0.16) per kilowatt hours (kWh) on their future electricity bills.

Government offices in some provinces have also been ordered to open earlier in the mornings and close at midday to help reduce power use on warm days.

Iran has experienced imbalances in supply and demand for electricity over the past three years mainly because of a surge in energy-intensive cryptocurrency mining and a heavier use of natural gas at manufacturing and household sectors that has caused power plants to operate at lower capacity.

## Iran Following Up Banking, Energy Cooperation With Iraq

BAGHDAD (IRNA) - Iran's ambassador to Baghdad Mohamad Kazem Al-e Sadeq in a meeting with Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq Mustafa Ghalib on Monday followed up on banking and energy cooperation with Iraq.

Al-e Sadeq met and held talks with Ghalib on Monday. The two sides discussed banking cooperation between the two states.

The issue of paying Iran's arrears for electricity and gas exports, the problems of Iranian companies exporting technical and engineering services, their demands, as well as the status of Branches of Iranian Banks in Iraq were taken into consideration.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Iran-Iraq joint chamber of commerce, Yahya Al-e Eshaq, in an interview with IRNA said that Iran and Iraq have always had good ties with each other in this field, and such cooperation is being done by the private and governmental sectors.

He added that the governmental sector exchanges are mostly in the field of energy, and Iran's governmental sector should receive \$1 billion from Iraq, and according to the agreements, this energy debt to Iran will be paid by Iraq.

Al-e Eshaq added that Iran's private sector claims

\$9 billion dollars from Iraq, and paying this amount is also underway.

Iraqi Minister of Electricity Adel Karim on April 5,

2022, underlined that Iraq has not struck a deal with the littoral states of the Persian Gulf; thus, Baghdad requires gas import from Iran in coming years.

## Quality of ESCO Products Main Factor of Strength of Building

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - Manager of Inclusive Quality of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) Mr. Mohammad Sadri met with deputy head of Isfahan Province Construction Engineering Organization Mr. Ali Asghar Mirqaderi and exchanged views.

In the meeting, Mr. Sadri pointed to the effective factors in the strength and safety of the building and added that three parameters are more important than other ones. He noted that good quality and standard materials, suitable design and architecture as well as proper utilization of articles are three important factors in the strength of the building and in case these parameters are observed, then we will have a safe building.

He added that ESCO with having an experienced team of experts in different fields controls all processes from design to production of the product in accordance with the latest international standards and this approach has caused its products to be the first choice of consumers either in the domestic or international markets and currently the products of the company are exported to more than 20 countries.

Sadri then pointed to some products being produced in different sizes in the company which are used in the construction like rebar and reinforcement and

reiterated that production of H30 as a strategic product had been put on the agenda since years ago and therefore the company produced bean blank for its production.

The produced H-beam blank of the company which is produced based on the rolling method has many advantages comparing to arrow sheet and it is very strong.

Then Mr. Mirqaderi, for his part, National Standard Institute has defined several stages for construction like ways of production, different testing for quality control of materials.

He added that there are good interactions between ESCO and Organization and the representatives of the organizations have several times visited the process of production lines and observing the standards in the ESCO.



## Briton Jailed, German Freed in Iraq Antiquities Case

BAGHDAD (AFP) - An Iraqi court sentenced a British retiree to 15 years' prison for trying to smuggle antiquities out of the country, but acquitted his German co-accused.

The maximum penalty for the offence is death by hanging but the court decided on a lesser sentence for James Fitton, 66, "because of the advanced age of the accused," the judge said.

Fitton's lawyer said that he would appeal.

The court found "insufficient evidence" to convict co-accused Volker Waldmann, 60, who was visiting Iraq with Fitton on an organised tour when they were arrested in March at Baghdad airport.



## Mexico President to Skip Biden's Americas Summit

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Mexico President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador announced he would skip the regional Summit of the Americas in the United States due to Washington's failure to invite countries it views as undemocratic.

The White House confirmed that President Joe Biden would not be inviting Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua to this week's summit in Los Angeles.

"I'm not going to the summit because they are not inviting all the countries of America and I think it is necessary to change the policy that has been imposed on us for centuries: exclusion," said Lopez Obrador in his daily press conference.



## India Rushes to Quell Outrage After Insulting Remarks on Islam



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India's government sought to calm anger at home and abroad after two officials of the ruling BJP party made remarks about the Prophet Mohammed, with 38 people arrested for rioting in a northern city and a protest planned later in Mumbai.

The arrests in the city of Kanpur were part of an effort to quell sporadic religious tension that arose after two officials from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party made remarks that have generated widespread anger among Muslims in India and overseas.

Some of India's top officials were engaged in managing the diplomatic fallout as nations including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran demanded an apology from the government for allowing the derogatory remarks, an Indian foreign ministry official said.

Over the weekend, Indian diplomats stationed in the Gulf and neighboring Islamic nations were summoned by officials in those countries to protest against the comments by BJP officials. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in a statement, said: "These insults come in the context of the increasing intensity in hatred of and insults to Islam in India and the systematic harassment of Muslims."

The influential 57-member body cited the latest decision to ban the hijab at educational institutions in several Indian states and the destruction of Muslim property to highlight what it said was the Indian government's bias.

Pakistan's Armed Forces in a tweet "strongly condemn blasphemous remarks" by Indian officials.

"The outrageous act is deeply hurtful and clearly indicates extreme level of hate against Muslims and other religions in India," it said.

India's foreign ministry said in a statement the offensive tweets and comments did not, in any way, reflect the views of the government.

"Strong action has already been taken against these individuals by relevant bodies...It is regrettable that OIC Secretariat has yet again chosen to make motivated, misleading and mischievous comments," said Arindam Bagchi, a government spokesperson.

The BJP suspended a spokesperson and expelled another official on Sunday for hurting religious sentiments of a minority community.

Muslims make up around 13% of India's 1.35 billion people. Protests were planned against the anti-Muslim remarks in the financial capital Mumbai on Monday.

The U.S. State Department in its annual report to the Congress on international religious freedom released in June, alleged that attacks on members of minority communities, including killings, assaults, and intimidation, took place in India throughout 2021.

## Battle for Ukraine's Sievierodonetsk Rages Through City's Streets

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian and Russian troops fought street by street for control of the industrial city of Sievierodonetsk in the pivotal battle of the Kremlin offensive in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region.

Which side had the upper hand remained unclear. Russian forces had the numerical advantage and the situation was "difficult", but Ukraine had "every chance"

to fight back, its President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said after a regional official suggested Kyiv had lost ground.

Ukraine's defence ministry said Russia was throwing troops and equipment into its drive to capture Sievierodonetsk, the largest remaining Ukrainian-held city in Luhansk province.

It has become the main target of the Russian offensive in the Donbas - made up of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces - as the Kremlin's invasion grinds on in a war of attrition that has seen cities laid waste by artillery bombardments.

Ukrainian defenders had over the weekend pushed back the Russians as they seemed close to victory in Sievierodonetsk.

"Our defenders managed to undertake a counter-attack ... But now the situation has worsened a little for us again," Luhansk governor Serhiy Gaidai told state television. Sievierodonetsk Mayor Oleksandr Stryuk said street fighting was raging and neither side was preparing to withdraw.

"The situation is difficult in the east," Zelenskiy told a media briefing in the capital Kyiv. "We are in control of the situation, there are more (Russians), they are more powerful, but we have every chance to fight."

"If there is a (Russian) breakthrough in Donbas, it will be very difficult," he added. Both sides say they have inflicted huge casualties on each other. Russia says it is on a mission to "liberate" the Donbas - which has been partly held by separatist proxies of Moscow since 2014 - after Ukrainian forces pushed its troops back from the capital Kyiv and Ukraine's second biggest city Kharkiv in the war's early stages.

Zelenskiy sought to rally his troops on Sunday with a visit to two cities close to the front lines.



### S. Korea, U.S. Launch Eight Missiles in Response to North Korea Missile Tests

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea and the United States said they fired eight surface-to-surface missiles early on Monday off South Korea's east coast, responding to a barrage of short-range ballistic missiles launched by North Korea.

The action is a demonstration of "the capability and readiness to carry out precision strikes" against the source of North Korea's missile launches or the command and support centers, South Korea's Yonhap news agency cited the South Korean military as saying.

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, who took office last month, has vowed to take a tougher line against the North and agreed with U.S. President Joe Biden at a May summit in Seoul to upgrade joint military drills and their combined deterrence posture.

North Korea has conducted a flurry of missile launches this year and Yoon said its missile and nuclear weapons programs have reached a level at which they pose a threat to regional and world peace.

The South "will continue to build fundamental and practical security capabilities and deter the North's nuclear and missile threats," Yoon said at an event for South Korea's Memorial Day.

The militaries of South Korea and the United States fired eight surface-to-surface missiles over about 10 minutes starting at 4:45 a.m. on Monday (1945 GMT Sunday) in response to the eight missiles fired by the North on Sunday, Yonhap reported.

An official from South Korea's Defense Ministry confirmed eight Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) had been fired.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the exercise included one U.S. Army missile and seven from South Korea.

"The ROK-U.S. Alliance remains committed to peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the Indo-Pacific," it said in a statement, using the initials of South Korea's official name.

## Climate Action Must Not Be Delayed by Global Crises

PARIS (Dispatches) - Negotiators from almost 200 countries met in Germany for climate talks tasked with reigniting momentum on tackling global warming, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine overshadows the threat from rising emissions.

The conference will set the stage for a fresh round of major United Nations talks later this year in Egypt.

It will also be a chance to test the resolve of nations facing a catalogue of crises, including escalating climate impacts, geopolitical tensions, bloodshed in Ukraine and the threat of a devastating global food crisis.

Issuing a call for international unity to hold firm, outgoing UN climate change Chief Patricia Espinosa told delegates it was "not acceptable to say that we are in challenging times".

"We must understand that climate change is moving exponentially. We can no longer afford to make just incremental progress," she said at the opening of the June 6 to 16 meeting.

"We must move these negotiations along more quickly. The world expects it."

Governments have already accepted that climate change is a grave threat to humanity and the planet, and have advocated immediate action to cut fossil fuel emissions and prepare for the accelerating impacts of warming.

The summary to this year's landmark climate report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that any further delay in action "will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all".

But as things are going, the world is unlikely to be able to meet the Paris climate deal's commitment to

limit warming "well below" 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

"There is this disconnect between the scientific evidence of global crisis in the making, of potentially rushing towards unmanageable climate impact, versus the lack of action," Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, told AFP.

"This is a deep worry." The world has warmed nearly 1.2C so far — enough to usher in a crescendo of deadly heatwaves, floods and storm surges made worse by rising seas.

While the conference in the German city of Bonn is largely aimed at preparing for the UN COP27 meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh in November, there are a number of key issues up for debate.

That includes a push for countries to speed up their timetable for updating their carbon-cutting plans, to more quickly align actions on reducing emissions with the agreed goals for limiting global warming.

A particular focus will also be funding from rich polluters to help vulnerable developing nations least responsible for global heating.

A promise of US\$100 billion a year from 2020 to help them adapt to a warming world has still not been met.

Meanwhile, there are growing calls for "loss and damage" funding for countries already struck by devastating climate impacts, with a specific dialogue on the subject slated for this week.

The Alliance of Small Island States has warned that the Bonn conference must not be "just another talk shop", calling for a "clear view" on when and how this financing will be put in place.



## Kazakh Leader Scores Victory With Constitutional Referendum

NUR-SULTAN (Dispatches) - Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will be hoping the approval in a referendum of constitutional amendments he championed will help him move out of his predecessor's shadow and cement his role as a long-awaited reformer.

Vote results on Monday showed convincing support in the previous day's vote for the amendments that Tokayev has promoted as a foundation for a more democratic social contract in the oil-rich Central Asian country allied with Russia.

The Central Election Commission said that 77.18% of votes were in favor of the amendments, which decentralise decision-making and strip former leader Nursultan Nazarbayev of his "national leader" status. Turnout was 68.06%.

Long prized for political stability by Western investors who have poured hundreds of billions of dollars into its energy and mining industries, Kazakhstan went through a deadly bout of unrest in January, including an attempted coup by top security officials.

Tokayev did not comment on the referendum result on Monday.

Analysts said the referendum was in part a response to January's unrest which started as a protest against a fuel price increase and grew into a broad display of public discontent. Many Kazakhs have for several years been calling for change to a political system that concentrates power and wealth in the presidency and his associates, analysts say.

"Tokayev understands this and that is why, to a certain degree, he tries to position himself using this referendum as a man who is trying to change something," political analyst Dosym Satpayev said before the vote.

Tokayev has called for higher taxes on the lucrative extractive industries and high-income individuals, saying social justice would be the cornerstone of a new social contract. Tokayev proposed the reforms after putting down the coup attempt, ending the unrest and removing his former patron, Nazarbayev, and his relatives from important positions in the public sector.

The vote indicates that many Kazakhs support the sidelining of Nazarbayev, who ran the country for three decades before giving up the presidency in 2019 and picking Tokayev as a successor.



**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Parsian**

**Zaferanieh (\$2500)**  
250sq.m, 4bdrs  
S/p, Sauna  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
Fully Furn

**Jordan Villa (\$5000)**  
1000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
S, J, balcony  
parquet floor  
Fully Furn

**Fereshteh (\$1800)**  
180sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/pool, S, J  
balcony, F.F

**Niavaran (\$2000)**  
220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/pool  
S, J, pkg, & F.F

**Velenjak Bldg (\$10000)**  
5storey, 20bdrs  
S/p, S, J, pkgs  
Brand new, F.F

**Shahrak-e-gharb (\$2000)**  
220sq.m, 2bdrs, balcony  
pkg, & Fully Furn

**Cell: +989121907875**  
**Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com**  
**Tel : 88510081**  
**Fax : 88506474**

**Vanak (Commercial office)**  
300sq.m, 200sq.m, 6bdrs  
(\$30 per sq.m)



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## Germany Faces €5b a Year Hit From Russian Gas Sanctions

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Russia's sanctions against Gazprom Germania and its subsidiaries could cost German taxpayers and gas users an extra €5 billion a year to pay for replacement gas, the Welt am Sonntag weekly reported, citing industry representatives.

In May, Russia decided to stop supplying Gazprom Germania, which had been the German subsidiary of Gazprom, after Berlin put the company under trustee management due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Since then, the Bundesnetzagentur energy regulator, acting as trustee, has had to buy replacement gas on the market to fulfil supply contracts with German municipal utilities and regional suppliers.

The economy ministry estimates an extra 10 million cubic meters per day are required, said a ministry spokesperson, confirming a number cited by the newspaper.



## Panicked Traders Step Up Forward Indian Rice Purchases

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India's surprise ban on wheat exports has prompted rice traders to increase purchases and place unusual orders for longer-dated deliveries, fearing the world's top rice exporter may restrict those shipments as well, four exporters told Reuters.

In the last two weeks, traders have signed contracts to export 1 million tons of rice for shipments from June through September and are opening letters of credit (LCs) quickly after signing deals to ensure the contracted quantity will be sent even if India restricts exports, the people said.

Those forward purchases come on top of roughly 9.6 million tonnes of rice already shipped out of India this year — in line with record 2021 shipments — and may reduce the amount of grain available for other buyers during the coming months as loading schedules fill.

"International traders pre-booked for the next three to four months and everybody opened LCs to ensure business continuity," said Himanshu Agarwal, executive director at Satyam Balajee, India's biggest rice exporter.

Normally traders sign deals for the current and next month.

Aggressive purchases from India could also reduce demand for rice from Vietnam and Thailand, the world's second and third-biggest exporters respectively, which are struggling to compete on price.

India last month banned wheat exports in a surprise move, days after saying it was targeting record shipments this year. It also put a cap on sugar exports.

India is not a top global wheat exporter, but it is the world's second-biggest sugar exporter behind Brazil.

Those export curbs led to speculation that India could also cap rice shipments, though government officials said India does not plan to because it has sufficient rice stocks and local prices are lower than state-set support prices.

India's wheat ban trapped a large quantity of the grain at ports because New Delhi only allowed contracts backed by LCs to depart.

"Normally people open LCs while they nominate a vessel. This time they opened LCs for all rice contracts that were pending, so in case there is a ban on exports, at least the contracted quantity is shipped out," Agarwal said.

India accounts for more than 40 per cent of global rice trade.

Overseas buyers are looking for Indian rice because it is far cheaper than rivals, said B.V. Krishna Rao, president of the All India Rice Exporters Association.

Indian 5 per cent broken white rice is offered between \$330 to \$340 per ton on a free-on-board (FOB) basis, significantly lower than Thailand's \$455 to \$460 a ton and Vietnam's \$420 to \$425, dealers said.

Thailand and Vietnam are not able to compete with India and they are trying to explore ways to support prices, Thailand's government has said.

If India restricts exports, global prices could jump sharply, said a New-Delhi-based dealer with a global trading house.

"Indian rice is more than 30 per cent cheaper than other destinations. Poor buyers in Asia and Africa would be forced to pay very high prices if India restricts exports. That's why there is a rush to buy Indian rice," the dealer said.

Bangladesh, China, Benin, Cameroon, Nepal, Senegal and Togo are key buyers of India's non-basmati rice, while Iran and Saudi Arabia are key buyers of premium basmati rice.

## Saudi Arabia Hikes July Crude Prices Surprisingly High for Asia Buyers

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, raised July crude oil prices for Asian buyers to higher-than-expected levels amid concerns about tight supply and expectations of strong demand in summer.

The official selling price (OSP) for July-loading Arab Light to Asia was hiked by \$2.1 a barrel from June to \$6.5 a barrel over Oman/Dubai quotes, just off an all-time-high recorded in May.

That was much higher than most market forecasts for an increase around \$1.5. Only one respondent of six in a Reuters poll had predicted a jump of \$2.

"The price jump is unexpected, especially the Arab Light. We are puzzled by the decision," said an Asian oil trader.

The hike by state oil producer Saudi Aramco came despite an agreement by OPEC+ states to boost output by 648,000 barrels per day (bpd) in July and a similar amount in August in an effort to offset Russian supply losses. That compares with an initial plan to add 432,000 bpd a month over three months until September.

But the increases have been divided across member countries including Russia and states such as Angola and Nigeria which struggle to meet their targets, leading to fears that the actual boost to supply may fall short of official plans.

Countries in the northern hemisphere, such as the United States, typically kick off their driving seasons in July sending demand for gasoline surging. China, the world's No.1 oil importer, is also re-opening some cities such as Shanghai after lengthy COVID-19 lockdowns.

"Demand is also very strong in this cycle and Saudi can afford to hike OSPs," said another Asian oil trader.

Some demand for Saudi oil could be countered by persistent flows of Russian oil to China and India, which have refused to condemn Moscow for the invasion of Ukraine and have been ramping up purchases of Russian cargoes at bargain prices.

Moscow says it is carrying out a "special military operation" to disarm Ukraine and protect it from fascists. Ukraine and Western countries dismiss Russia's claims as a pretext to invade.

Saudi Aramco on Sunday night also raised its OSP for European and Mediterranean buyers, but kept U.S. differentials unchanged.



## ECB to End Stimulus in Prelude to Rate Hikes

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank (ECB) is set to draw a line under its massive bond-buying stimulus program at a meeting in Amsterdam on Thursday, as inflation in the eurozone soars to all-time highs.

The decision, already extensively flagged in advance by senior policymakers, is then expected to pave the way for the ECB to raise its interest rates for the first time in over a decade in the weeks that follow.

Eurozone consumer prices rose by 8.1 per cent year-on-year in May, a record since the single currency was launched and well above the ECB's own target of two per cent.

The surge, driven by the war in Ukraine and the consequent rise in energy prices, has boosted calls for the ECB to move more quickly to end its expansionary monetary policy.

The ECB is lagging behind the central banks in Britain and the United States, which have moved aggressively to try to stamp out inflation.

But the ECB first plans to discontinue asset purchases under its crisis-era stimulus program before proceeding to actual rate hikes.

The so-called asset purchase program, or APP, is the last in a series of debt-purchasing measures worth a total of around €5 trillion deployed by the ECB since 2014.

ECB chief Christine Lagarde suggested recently that the APP would "end very early in the third quarter".

For ING's head of macro, Carsten Brzeski, the comments by Lagarde, a former French finance minister, were "remarkable" in that she has taken the unusual step of mapping out a timetable for ECB policy into the second half of the year.

Lagarde said that rates were set to "lift off" at the ECB's meeting in July — the first upward move in borrowing costs in over a decade — and the euro's guardian would then close the era of negative interest rates by the end of September.

Of the ECB's three main interest rates, the so-called deposit rate — which is normally the interest commercial banks would receive for parking their cash with the ECB overnight — has been negative since 2014.

A negative rate effectively means that commercial banks have to pay the ECB to park their cash, a move introduced by the then president Mario Draghi to keep cash circulating in the eurozone financial system at a time of looming deflation.

For Brzeski, the ECB "has clearly passed the stage of discussing whether and even when policy rates should be increased" and the "only discussion" for the coming weeks was how big the first step would be.

A number of governing council members have openly discussed the possibility of a 50-basis-point, or half-point, hike to lift ECB interest rates out of negative territory in one go.



## Turkey, Russia Agree on Ukrainian Grain Exports From Odessa

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Russian government plans to allow ships carrying grain supplies to leave the port of Odessa in Ukraine, according to a report, easing a blockade that has triggered fears of widespread shortages and hunger.

The Russian leadership has agreed with Kyiv and Ankara on a scheme to release grain shipments from Odessa, which has been subject to a blockade, the pro-government Izvestia reported, citing government circles.

"In the territorial waters of the neighboring country, Turkish military forces will take over the demining and they will also escort the ships as far as neutral waters," Monday's report said.

Russian warships would then escort the vessels carrying grain to the Bosphorus.

The step comes as food prices soar after Moscow's war on Ukraine led to massive turbulence on world markets. Ukraine is one of the world's largest grain exporters, and the collapse in its deliveries following Russia's invasion has hit African countries hard.

Russian President Vladimir Putin recently received President of the African Union and Senegal Macky Sall to discuss the issue.

While Putin denied Russia was responsible for the high prices, he said he was willing to facilitate grain deliveries.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is expected in Ankara on Wednesday for talks on the issue. After the talks, the scheme to release grain from Odessa is expected to be officially approved, the newspaper said.

## Pakistan Not Facing Financial Emergency

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Following the government's measures to rectify the ongoing economic turmoil, Pakistan Finance Minister Miftah Ismail Monday clarified there were no plans to impose a financial emergency in the country.

In a tweet, Ismail said the country was not facing a financial emergency as the price of petrol had been increased twice — and hiked up to Rs209.86, while there has also been a massive increase in other petroleum products.

The finance minister, without specifying a date, added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would, at some point, announce austerity measures to save governmental expenditure.

In a bid to bring economic stability and revive the stalled multi-billion dollars International Monetary Fund (IMF) program, the government had increased the price of petrol by a whopping Rs60 per litre.

Moreover, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) last week raised the basic power tariff by Rs7.9078/kWh for the next fiscal year 2022-23 — increasing the burden of inflation on the people.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) had also last Friday approved an increase in gas prices — a hike of 45% was approved for the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) while 44% for the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC).

The finance minister had also assured last month that the government would reach a staff-level agreement with the international money lender by June, without specifying the exact date.

Separately, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said the government and the central bank were taking all necessary measures to ensure macroeconomic stability in the country.

The recent difficult decisions taken by the government — including the reduction of subsidies on petroleum products — are expected to pave the way to reaching an agreement with the IMF and release of the tranche and financial assistance from other multilateral agencies and friendly countries.

"We are confident that these measures will relieve the temporary stress being faced due to elevated global commodity prices and geopolitical tensions, and eliminate uncertainty in the economy," the central bank said.

No consideration on freezing foreign currency accounts: Ismail

In another tweet, the finance minister also said there was "absolutely no plan" to freeze foreign currency accounts, Roshan Digital Accounts, or take over people's private lockers.

## Turkish Lira Slips Again; Rates to Stay Put



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's lira slid to beyond 16.55 against the dollar on Monday, bringing its losses to more than 20% this year, due to concerns about a surge in inflation to a 24-year high and the finance minister's promise that rate would remain steady.

The lira weakened as far as 16.57 to the U.S. currency. Recent losses have brought it back towards the record lows hit on Dec. 20 in a currency crisis triggered by a series of unorthodox interest rate cuts in late 2021.

The lira shed 44% last year and has been the worst performer in emerging markets for several years running due largely to economic and monetary policy concerns under President Tayyip Erdogan's government.

Milliyet newspaper on Monday cited Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati as telling deputies from Erdogan's ruling AK Party at a weekend meeting that a near-term rate hike or cut was not being considered.

He forecast that annual inflation would be around 48-49% at year end, falling to 19.9% by end-2023. Earlier this year he had promised single-digit inflation by an election set for June of next year.

A forex-protected lira deposit scheme, launched after the lira hit its record low in December, would continue and its cost to the budget as of Friday stood at 21.1 billion lira (\$1.29 billion), he was also quoted as saying.

The lira slide, war in Ukraine and surging energy prices pushed Turkish annual consumer price inflation to 73.5% in May, the highest level since 1998. Inflation began to jump last autumn after a 500 basis-point rate easing cycle.

## 19th Int'l Kitchen, Bath, Sauna, Pool Industries Expo Opens

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The 19th Kitchen, Bath, Sauna and Pool Industries and Equipment International Exhibition kicked off in the presence of Industry, Mine, and Trade vice-minister on Tuesday.

The event is aimed at increasing efficiency of production, joining exports markets and creating competitiveness among domestic producers.

The exhibition showcases different household, industrial and kitchen equipment such

as cupboards, sinks, air conditioners, ventilators, kitchen hoods, lighting systems, kitchen tables and chairs, food processing equipment, food preparation equipment, food service equipment (self-service line and catering), maintenance equipment (fixed and portable refrigeration), industrial dishwashers, restaurant and coffee shop equipment and supplies, bathroom equipment, bathtubs, underwear, washbasins, partitions and shower cabins, sauna and pool equipment, sauna and pool facilities and steam room.



## Ukraine Rebases Businesses From War Front to Shield Vital Producers

KYIV (Dispatches) - Oleg Averyanov's factory produced fire trucks and employed 600 people until it was forced to halt operations and close its doors as a Russian invasion force poured over the border into his region in north-eastern Ukraine on February 24.

Months later, the 44-year-old is gearing up to restart some of the plant's operations 700km away in the western city of Lviv, where he has moved some staff and 20 rail cars of equipment and production lines that weighed hundreds of tons.

"No one believed this could happen. But the war began, and we decided to diversify the risks, move part of the production line to western Ukraine," he told Reuters by phone.

Averyanov is part of a wave of businesspeople taking up a government programme to relocate businesses westwards from war-ravaged areas to protect manufacturers and shield them from further damage to an economy facing its greatest ever crisis.

The economy is projected to contract 35-45 per cent this year as the war severs export routes for Ukrainian grains and metals, jacks up inflation and unemployment, and devastates heavy industry in the south and east where fighting has been fiercest.

Now it is transforming the geography of industry too.

More than 600 enterprises have already relocated to Ukraine's western regions, and 390 of them had already resumed work by early June, according to Economy Ministry data.

Some 150 of those companies have moved to the Lviv region that borders Poland and has been relatively unscathed by the war, the regional administration said.

"The large-scale relocation of business to safe areas will help Ukraine maintain production, jobs and meet the demand of the army and civilian population for a number of goods and services that are necessary to defeat the enemy," Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko wrote on Facebook on March 29.

Averyanov plans to retain some of his business's operations at his original plant in Chernihiv region that was overrun by Russian troops in the first phase of the war before Moscow withdrew its forces there.

"The war will finish and we'll have two factories — one in western Ukraine and one in Chernihiv region," Averyanov said.

His company, Ukraine's only producer of fire engines and fire equipment that are vital to the war effort, hopes to start operating in Lviv region by the end of June.

He plans to recruit and train about 100 local residents or internally displaced people this summer. Though grateful for the support, he now wants the government to provide enterprises like his with procurement orders and criticized the preference shown to imported goods.

"We have retained our manufacturing capabilities... and our team of employees. But if the state does not think about how to provide orders to enterprises like ours that are moving to western Ukraine, then we will not survive," Averyanov said. His message was echoed by Central Bank Governor Kyrilo Shevchenko who has urged the government to scrap tax breaks for imports and to impose additional taxes on non-vital imported goods.



"The incentives created for imports in the form of the abolition of import duties and value-added tax deprive Ukrainian producers of an advantage," he wrote in a column on the ZN.UA news website.

Ukraine has lost 200 large factories during the war, said Andriy Yermak, head of the presidential office.

In the east, the war has brought operations to a standstill at the Azovstal and Illich metallurgical plants in the city of Mariupol, the chemical Coke and Chemical Plant in Avdiivka and the Azot chemical plant in Sievierodonetsk.

"The government is doing a good job helping to evacuate businesses, it would be much worse without it," said Mykhailo Kolisnyk, a professor at the Kyiv School of Economics.

But with their share of gross domestic product at no more than 1-2 per cent, the number of relocated enterprises is not enough to noticeably improve the economy, he said.

A few large agricultural and metallurgical enterprises make up a sizeable chunk of Ukrainian gross domestic product but their production facilities cannot be relocated, he said.

"There is a number of such conglomerate enterprises in the east, and most of them have stopped making their contribution to GDP," Kolisnyk said.

"Russia, the invaders, are deliberately destroying these enterprises and taking away their products."

## Iran, Nigeria Pursuing Development of Trade Exchanges

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian and Nigerian officials have discussed the exchange of trade delegations, participation in exhibitions, and facilitation of trade interactions, an Iranian official said.

Director General of African Bureau of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran Mohammad-Sadegh Ghannadzadeh made the remarks in the Sixth Iran-Nigeria Joint Commission on Tuesday, noting that Nigeria as the top economy in Africa is one of the most precious economic partners in the eyes of Iran.

Pointing to the facts that both countries enjoy economic, political and cultural commonalities and are both member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Ghannadzadeh added that both nations are also members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), possessing rich oil and gas reservoirs, and having more than 15 percent of shares of the Islamic Development Bank, but their bilateral economic and trade exchange is not satisfactory.

The Iranian official went on to say that statistics indicate that the volume of trade exchanges between Nigeria and Iran stood at about 125 million dollars last year, which seems to be a tiny figure in comparison with each country's foreign trade of around 100 billion dollars per annum.

All necessary efforts to promote bilateral economic relationship have been put on agenda, including activation of joint commissions, so the Sixth Iran-Nigeria Joint Commission is held today after eight years of pause, he noted.

Remarkable accords and documents have been signed by both nations, which are going to be pursued by the joint commission, he said.

The official went on to say that new joint projects should become operational with the help of the governments and private sectors of both countries.

He further said that three topics are scheduled to be discussed in the sixth joint commission, including industry, mines, trade, banking, investment, agriculture transportation and energy fields as parts of economic sector; education, youths, environment and communications as parts of social affairs; and exchange of criminals, justice, defense, and visa waiver program as parts of political collaborations.

For his part, Nigerian Ambassador to Tehran Yakubu Santuraki Suleiman expressed satisfaction that both sides are determined to develop bilateral ties, saying that he is optimistic that the joint commission meeting will help expand mutual economic relationship.

Nigerians are resolute to follow up development of cultural and economic ties, the ambassador said, adding that both countries are ready to remove obstacles to reach positive outcomes.

## Iranian Military Products Can Help Iraq to Ensure Security

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Gharaei Ashtiani says Iran's military achievements could effectively help neighboring Iraq to beef up security.

During a meeting with Iraqi Interior Minister Othman al-Ghanimi in Baghdad on Tuesday, Ashtiani paid tribute to top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and deputy commander of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who were assassinated in a U.S. drone strike near Baghdad International Airport in January 2020.

"Not only did the Islamic Republic of Iran provide Iraqi armed forces with military facilities and equipment at the time of Daesh invasion of Iraq [in 2014], but Iranian advisors were also present alongside Iraqi fighters on the battlefield," Iran's defense chief noted.

Ashtiani went on to refer to social, religious and historical commonalities between Iran and Iraq, saying they have played a decisive role in further enhancement of bilateral relations.

He said Iran supports the unity and integrity of Iraq, helps to strengthen its stability and security, and strives to participate in the development and prosperity of the Arab country.

Ashtiani said Iran and Iraq are both located in the sensitive West Asia region.

"Western states and the global arrogance use terrorism in order to justify their presence in the region. They also utilize the menace to sow discord among Muslim countries and weaken and erode their capacities," he said.

"We believe that the countries in West Asia must ensure the security of the region. It is downright impossible to achieve stability and peace as long as trans-regional forces are present in the region," he added.

Ashtiani also said Iran has valuable experience in the fight against terrorism, noting that the country's military products can effectively help Iraq further guarantee security.

Iraq's Interior Minister Ghanimi said Iran has always stood by Iraq on various occasions.

"We have never overlooked the assistance of the country and the efforts made by Iranian combatants in the fight against terrorism," he said.

"Cooperation between Iran and Iraq can certainly contribute to the development of different sectors of Iraq, especially security and economy," the Iraqi interior minister said.

## Tehran Reaffirms Support...

FROM PAGE 1

He underscored that Iran will not relinquish the rights of the Iranian people in the negotiations, nor will it ignore the rights of the Muslim people of Palestine with regard to the Palestinian issue. "We will continue to support the resistance and the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom."

The foreign minister further slammed the move by some regional countries to establish and normalize ties with the Zionist regime as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause, saying those countries will regret their move.

He went on to say that the ultimate solution to the Palestinian issue is the return of refugees to Palestine and holding a referendum with the participation of the true inhabitants of that land.

In the meeting, leaders and representatives of political factions as well as Palestinian and Lebanese resistance groups gave reports on the latest political developments in Palestine and Lebanon.

They also outlined their viewpoints about Imam Khomeini's role and the Islamic Revolution's impact on the rise and victory of the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. They also appreciated Iran's support for the resistance in Palestine and Lebanon.

Between 600,000 and 750,000 Israelis occupy over 250 illegal settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state, with East al-Quds as its capital. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law as they are built on occupied Palestinian land.

## Iran Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

The scale of crude oil supply and demand is being determined on the basis of policies of exporting and importing countries, the level of economic growth, and some seasonal variables; moreover, the increase of oil sale along with the hike of crude price in international markets helped the administration compensate budget deficit, it mentioned.

The oil industry in Iran has played a key role in pursuing energy diplomacy aside from what will happen at the end of nuclear talks in Vienna, Austria, the ministry emphasized.

## IAEA Chiefs or...

FROM PAGE 1

Of course it is not the first time Grossi reveals his double standard approach regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's dossier. Since 2002, all IAEA director Generals have acted in favor of the West like a lever for politicking Iran's dossier.



Grossi's predecessors, Mohamed ElBaradei from Egypt and Yukiya Amano from Japan, have all acted politically rather than technically in order to please the West and big powers in order to make Tehran or other countries give in to the West's pressure under the guise of the IAEA.

And now it is Grossi's turn to please his lords like his predecessors who admitted their mistakes and political stands after they stepped down from their posts. But Grossi should know this point that now it is 2022 and not 2002 that IAEA chiefs were able to politicize the dossiers in order to get concessions because now Iran is in a strong position with a revolutionary administration which will not give any concessions and will stick to the principles of defending the nation's right for peaceful nuclear program

Reacting to Grossi's West-pleasing claims, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said the country would give a "proportionate" response to any measure taken on its peaceful nuclear program during the ongoing meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s Board of Governors.

Asked about the possible adoption of an anti-Iran resolution during the Board of Governors' meeting, Saeed Khatibzadeh, who was speaking in a televised interview on Monday, said, "We shall not pass any judgment in advance, but we will give our answers in proportion to any measure that is taken" by the Agency.

He added that Grossi has unfortunately issued a "hasty" report on Iran that he had already presented to the European Parliament.

Even the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said Tehran has given accurate answers to questions posed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but the Agency bases its reports on the information provided to it by the enemies of Iran.

In an interview with Al Jazeera network, Mohammad Eslami said the director general of the IAEA, Grossi, lacks serious will to describe Iran's answers to the Agency's queries as convincing.

"The International Atomic Energy Agency relies on the intelligence reports [provided by] our enemies, topped by Israel," Iran's nuclear chief said.

Eslami made the remarks after the IAEA chief, in his introductory statement to the Board of Governors' meeting on Monday, once again repeated his anti-Iran rhetoric, alleging that since February 23, 2021, the Agency's "activities have been seriously affected by Iran's decision to stop the implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, including the Additional Protocol."

Now it is time for the board of governors of IAEA and its director general to take technical decisions rather than taking political one because the West will not benefit politicization of the dossier because Iran is determined to defend its right based on its obligation under the NPT Safeguard and it will not accept any politicization of the dossier and such claims and bullies of Grossi are in vain and they will not be able to make Tehran surrender because one of the principles of the Islamic Revolution is to fight for its right and the West's pawns and IAEA men in disguise will be unable to fool Iranians.

So the board of governors of IAEA is recommended not to take hasty and stupid decision or resolution against Iran.

## Commander Warns Israel...

FROM PAGE 1

The latest warning comes as a member of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) was assassinated last month in a shooting blamed on Israel.

Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei was assassinated by two motorcyclists who shot him five times before fleeing the scene on May 22. He was dismounting his car to enter his home in an eastern neighborhood of the Iranian capital when three bullets hit him in the head and two bullets in the hand.

The New York Times on May 25 cited an intelligence official as saying that Israel has informed American officials that it was behind the assassination.

On Monday, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz said in an editorial that the assassinations of Iranian figures that have been attributed to Israel are "pointless", likening them to "a neighborhood bully."

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## Lee on Path To Golf Greatness

**SYDNEY (Dispatches)** - Minjee Lee was hailed in Australia as "on the path to greatness" after her composed victory at the US Women's Open, which her proud golfing brother Min Woo admitted brought tears to his eyes.

The 26-year-old from Perth raced to a four-stroke win in North Carolina to capture her second major following her breakthrough at last year's Evian Championship in France. But it was the manner in which the world number four achieved the feat under huge pressure that won plaudits in her homeland, holding her nerve to finish with a 72-hole event record 13-under-par 271.

## Nadal Up to Fourth In ATP Rankings

**PARIS (Dispatches)** - French Open winner Rafael Nadal and beaten finalist Casper Ruud climbed one and two places to fourth and sixth respectively in the ATP rankings released Monday.

Nadal routed Norway's Ruud 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 on Sunday for his 14th French Open crown and record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title.

Serbia's Novak Djokovic, beaten by Nadal in the Roland Garros quarter-finals, remains top of the rankings ahead of Daniil Medvedev, with Alexander Zverev in third.

## Curry Stars as Warriors Down Celtics to Level Series

**SAN FRANCISCO (Dispatches)** - Stephen Curry scored 29 points as the Golden State Warriors roared back into NBA Finals contention with a series-levelling 107-88 game two victory over the Boston Celtics.

Curry spearheaded a deadly display of Golden State shooting in San Francisco while a superb Warriors defensive effort shut down Boston's key offensive weapons.

The Warriors, who squandered a 12-point fourth-quarter lead in game one, were in no mood to allow lightning to strike twice as they cut loose to build a double-digit advantage in the third quarter to tie the best-of-seven series at 1-1.

Curry led the scoring for Golden State, with Jordan Poole (17 points), Andrew Wiggins (11), Kevon Looney (12) and Klay Thompson (11) also making double figures.

Jayson Tatum topped the Boston scorers with 28 points, but crucially 21 of those came in a hardfought first half.

Only two other Boston players -- Jaylen Brown with 17 points and Derrick White with 12 -- cracked double digits.

The Warriors defense, marshalled brilliantly by Draymond Green, suffocated Boston in the second half, with two high-scoring Celtics heroes from game one -- Al Horford and Marcus Smart -- held to just four points combined.

The series now moves to Boston with game three scheduled for Wednesday and game four on Friday.

"We said we needed to play with desperation and that's what we did," said Curry. "It's a good feeling to get back on track and now we've got to take it on the road."

"We got off to a better start defensively where we made an imprint on the game and they felt us more than they did in game one. Our third quarter was great and we got a bit more separation that made the fourth quarter easier tonight."

The Warriors put themselves in a winning position after outscoring Boston 35-14 in the third quarter to take an 87-64 lead into the fourth quarter.

Poole electrified San Francisco's packed Chase Center after launching a buzzer-beating three-pointer from near halfway at the end of the third to cap a devastating passage of play from the home team.



The Warriors kept up the pressure in the early part of the fourth quarter, extending their lead to 29 points as the Celtics scrambled to regroup before closing out a blowout win.

Boston, who erupted for 40 points in the final quarter to win game one, picked up where they left off on Sunday, jumping out to an early 13-5 lead with Brown leading the way.

A Brown three-pointer took Boston into a 22-13 lead early in the first quarter before a sustained Warriors rally led by Curry saw the hosts get back to within one point.

A Curry layup on the buzzer gave Golden State a 31-30 lead heading into the second quarter.

Again though Boston found another gear, with Tatum nailing a three-pointer to put the Celtics 33-31 ahead. The Celtics took a five-point lead at 40-35 with a White three-pointer.

The Warriors responded with a 10-0 lead to go up 45-40 and there was little to separate the two teams in the closing stages of the half. Wiggins scored from an offensive rebound to give the Warriors a slender 52-50 half-time lead.

Boston looked the more dangerous team for long periods of the first half, and made 10-of-19 from three-point range, including five from Tatum while Brown finished the half with 15 points.

But the Warriors -- who made only six from beyond the arc in the first half -- erupted after the break to seal the game.

The Celtics meanwhile coughed up 18 turnovers as the Warriors defense took charge. Celtics coach Ime Udoka was left ruing his team's failure to build on a bright start.

## Milner Signs New Contract At Liverpool

**LONDON (Dispatches)** - Veteran Liverpool midfielder James Milner has signed a new one-year contract with Liverpool, the Premier League club announced.

Since arriving on a free transfer in 2015, Milner has helped Jurgen Klopp's team win six major honours, including the Champions League and Premier League.

Liverpool were chasing an unprecedented quadruple in the 2021/22 season after winning both domestic cups but finished a point behind Premier League champions Manchester City and lost the Champions League final against Real Madrid.

Milner, whose contract was due to expire later this month, has played 289 games and scored 26 goals since arriving at Anfield from Manchester City.

He made 39 appearances last season, although only 14 were starts, and it is reported he has accepted a contract on significantly reduced personal terms.

The former England midfielder is understood to have turned down offers from the Premier League and overseas in order to stay at Anfield.

Milner, who made his Premier League debut for Leeds in 2002, has played at full-back and in midfield under Klopp.

## Raducanu Reflects On Surreal Year

**LONDON (Dispatches)** - U.S. Open Champion Emma Raducanu admits her life has been "surreal" over the past 12 months as she returns to the scene of her first WTA Tour appearance this week.

The teenager, fresh from completing her end-of-school exams, made her senior debut in the first round of last year's Nottingham Open, where she was beaten in straight sets by fellow Briton Harriet Dart.

After catching the eye during a run to the fourth round at Wimbledon, she became a global star by winning the U.S. Open in September.

"To come back 12 months later full circle knowing what happened is pretty surreal," she said on Monday.

"It is where it started over for me and I am proud of what I have achieved over the last 12 months."

"It signifies the start of a journey for me. It wasn't the most positive week results-wise but I learned a lot and it definitely set me in good stead for the rest of the season. I felt I built on that every single week."

Raducanu's rise to prominence is shown by the fact she was asked to send Britain's Queen Elizabeth II a message for the just-concluded Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The British player, who is still only 19, says there have been challenges after achieving success so early in her career.

Her failure to settle on a long-term coach, fitness issues and results come under constant scrutiny but she said she was not being "so hard on myself" as she settles into life on the tour.

"I'm trusting what I'm doing and the work I'm doing," said the second seed, who plays Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic in her opener at the grass-court tournament on Tuesday.

"I'm still 19 and I've already won a Grand Slam so I can take my time and put things in place because I know my motivation isn't any less."

"It is still as much but it isn't always going to be smooth sailing where you just clean up every week. I trust what I do."

The 11th-ranked player said: "I don't think anyone would say, 'I wish I didn't wish a Grand Slam at 18' because that is what I set out to do when I started playing tennis -- and I did that."



And after claiming her 35th successive victory in Roland Garros, she now has over 4,300 points advance on new world number two Anett Kontaveit of Estonia.

## Swiatek Extends Lead on Top of WTA Rankings

**PARIS (Dispatches)** - Poland's Iga Swiatek extended her lead at the top of the WTA rankings released on Monday after her French Open triumph in Paris over American Coco Gauff, who moves closer to the Top 10.

The 21-year-old Polish star took the world number one ranking after Australian Ashleigh Barty retired early in April.

Kontaveit climbed three spots despite her first round exit in Paris, benefiting from French Open title-holder Barbora Krejckova's early upset.

The Czech player paid for her first round loss to French teenager Diane Parry by dropping 12 players to 14th.

Gauff moves up 10 places to 13th.

American Jessica Pegula, loser in the quarter-finals to Swiatek, moves up three places into the Top 10.

French Open semi-finalists Darya Kasatkina of Russia and Italian Martina Trevisan moved up to 12th and 27th respectively.

WTA rankings as of June 6, 2022

## Murray Awed by Nadal's Incredible French Open Record

**STUTTGART (Dispatches)** - Before continuing his grass court preparations, Andy Murray on Monday did the maths on Rafael Nadal's latest feat on clay.

The 36-year-old Spaniard on Sunday routed Norway's Casper Ruud 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 in the final at Roland Garros to extend two records. It was not only his 22nd Grand Slam title but also his 14th French Open.

"Winning 14 Grand Slams at the same place is incredible," said Murray in Stuttgart.

"There's hardly any players on the Tour who will get the opportunity to play Roland Garros 14 times, much less win it."

Nadal won his first French Open title in 2005. In the 17 seasons since then, he has lost just three matches at Roland Garros and been forced out once by a wrist injury.

Murray used the sport's latest prodigy, Nadal's compatriot Carlos Alcaraz, for comparison.

"Alcaraz is 19 now, so he would have to win it every single time (until age 33) to achieve that. I just don't see that happening."

Murray, who reached the Roland Garros final in 2016, was also impressed by Iga Swiatek, who extended her singles winning streak to 35 matches as she won the women's final.

"It was just an incredible achievement for Rafa - and Iga Swiatek," said Murray.

The Scot is making his debut at the ATP event in Stuttgart after moving onto the lawns last week at the Challenger level event in Surbiton, London, where he reached the semi-finals before losing to American Denis Kudla.

The former world number one, who is ranked 68th, will take to the lawns of the Weissenhof Club on Tuesday when he faces Australian qualifier Christopher O'Connell.

"I beat him in a very close match in Dubai, it's going to be difficult," Murray said.



## Neymar Strikes From Penalty Spot To See Off Japan

**TOKYO (Dispatches)** - Neymar's penalty 13 minutes from time earned Brazil a 1-0 win over fellow World Cup qualifiers Japan at Tokyo's National Stadium as the Paris St Germain striker moved to within three goals of Pele's all-time national scoring record.

The forward coolly slotted the ball past Shuichi Gonda to hit his 74th goal in 119 internationals after being frustrated on several occasions by the Japanese goalkeeper in front of a rain-soaked crowd of 63,638 fans.

Brazil's win came off the back of their 5-1 thrashing of South Korea on Thursday as Tite's side prepare for their assault on the World Cup in Qatar in November.

The visitors threatened early, with Lucas Paqueta hitting the post inside the first two minutes when he latched on to Neymar's instinctive backheel pass inside the area.

Fred fired over from distance soon after and Raphinha forced Shuichi Gonda to save with his feet before Neymar's firmly-struck, curling effort from outside the area was palmed to safety by the goalkeeper after flying through a crowd of players.

Gonda was on hand again to keep out the visitors three minutes before the end of the half, with Paqueta slipping the ball through to Neymar, but the Paris St Germain man was denied.

Neymar continued to probe, seeing a shot blocked by Endo's head eight minutes after the restart, while Ko Itakura made a perfectly timed intervention to put himself between the Brazilian striker's volley and the Japan goal.

The pressure eventually told, however, with Neymar at the heart of the action once more.

The 30-year-old's initial effort was well saved by Gonda but as substitute Richarlison attempted to collect possession he was brought down by Endo and referee Alireza Faghani pointed to the spot.

Neymar sent Gonda the wrong way to score for the ninth time in five appearances against the Japanese and move closer to eclipsing Pele's long-standing mark.

