

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev Is Set to Pay a Visit To Iran Today at the Invitation of His Iranian Counterpart Seyed Ebrahim Raisi

IRAN NEWS

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the COVID Pandemic In Iran Reached 141,352 With 2 More Iranian Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

VOL. XXVIII, No. 7517 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

TUESDAY JUNE 14, 2022 - KHORDAD 24, 1401

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FDI in Iran Rises By 6% in 2021

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Iran grew by six percent last year after three consecutive years of decline following the reinstatement of sanctions by the United States, says a report by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

According to World Investment Report 2022, FDI flows to Iran reached \$1.425 billion in 2021, compared to \$1.342 billion in 2020.

The figure stood at 1.508, 2.373, 5.019, and 3.372 billion dollars in 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016, respectively.

The UNCTAD's report also showed that global flows of foreign direct investment recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2021, reaching nearly \$1.6 trillion.

According to the report, the world's top recipients of foreign direct investment last year were the United States, China, and Hong Kong, respectively.

The report supports policymakers by monitoring global and regional investment trends and national and international investment policy developments.

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Iranian Crew on Venezuelan Plane Were Trainers

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's aviation chief has ruled out any link between one of the country's top airlines and a Venezuelan plane impounded in Argentina as he insists the Iranian crew on the plane were instructors working as part of an aviation deal between Iran and Venezuela.

Mohammad Mohammadi Bakhsh said that the aircraft seized in Argentina a day earlier is not Iranian and has not been on Mahan Air's register.

Mohammadi Bakhsh said, however, that Iran has cooperation agreements with Venezuela to dispatch aviation instructors and trainers to the country.

The comments came after reports said seven Iranian crew members were on the Boeing 747 plane impounded in Buenos Aires on Saturday.

"Iran has signed a memorandum of understanding with Venezuela in recent years which is focused on training pilots and flight crews and (Iranian) individuals are there in line with this agreement," he was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency.

Iran's Mahan Air, which is under American sanctions since 2011, also denied any link to the plane and its crew, including reports suggesting that the airline had leased the plane to a Venezuelan company.

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Tehran Defends Its Response to IAEA Resolution



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran says its response to a resolution passed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) against Tehran's nuclear energy program was "decisive and appropriate."

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Monday, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Saeed Khatibzadeh said the resolution has created obstacles on the path of implementing the Iran nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

On Wednesday, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution proposed by the United States and the three European parties to the 2015 Iran deal - Britain, France, and Germany - which accused Iran of not cooperating with the UN nuclear watchdog.

The trigger for the resolution was a report issued by the IAEA after its Director General Rafael Grossi made a controversial visit to Israel and met the regime's authorities late last month.

"We could not leave the IAEA's political and non-technical action unanswered," Khatibzadeh said, referring to Iran's further reduction of its nuclear obligations under the 2015 Iran deal as a response to the resolution. "Our response was decisive and appropriate."

On Thursday, Iran announced it had begun injecting uranium gas into advanced centrifuges and disconnected some of the UN nuclear agency's cameras monitoring its sites outside the Safeguards Agreement.

The Iranian spokesman went on to say that "the abrupt change in the IAEA chief's tone, his manner of negotiations, and his discourse when he addressed the European Parliament clearly shows that he was acting on the orders of an outside player."

Khatibzadeh also touched on the Vienna talks to revive the Iran deal, saying an agreement is within reach if the United States abandons delusions and fulfills its commitments.

He went on to criticize a recent trip by Grossi to the Israeli-occupied territories, stating that the move seriously harmed the credibility of the UN nuclear watchdog.

He said despite the fact that the IAEA is required to remain impartial, the nuclear body's director general traveled to Israel, which has not accepted any nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

"It is unfortunate that the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency has granted the unlawful regime of Israel permission to make a mockery of the international organization through its agents, and erode its credibility," he noted.

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Gov't Determined to Support Development of Exports

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi says his administration supports the development of exports, especially by the private sector, and strategies for involving the private sector and its requirements should be examined and implemented.

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture was held with the President taking part, in which the most critical economic issues, strategies, and obstacles to the effective involvement of the private sector in the country's economy were reviewed.

Addressing the meeting, Raisi emphasized the involvement of the private sector in the country's economy and said, "Strategies for involving the private sector and its requirements should be examined and implemented."

The President stated that the basis of the government's economic decisions is the correctness of policies and decisions, adding, "Political reasons and group considerations should not influence these decisions or prevent decisions from being made."

Stating that the government supports the development of exports, especially by the private sector, Raisi said, "The participation of the private sector in the completion of semi-finished projects is the plan of the Popular Administration, and I assure the private sector that it will enjoy the government's support."

The President stated, "The growth of the country's economy depends on the investment of large state-owned companies, non-governmental public institutions and headquarters, private sector investors and foreign investment, but private sector investment in this area can have the most important role and the most impact."

In this meeting, the board members of the Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture of the country, announced their readiness to cooperate with the government in various dimensions and areas and support the government's important policies and programs in the field of economic reform. The members of the Board of Directors of the Iran Chamber also stressed the need for cooperation between the chamber in shaping the future of the country's economy and stated that they are ready to participate in the completion of semi-finished projects and create at least one million jobs.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

A Strong Anti-Imperialism Bloc

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Venezuela in recent years have strengthened their relations and they have formed a real and strong bloc to fight anti-imperialism and West's unilateralism, and this friendship and bloc is getting stronger and stronger as both countries are determined to expand this relation in other fields than only the political one.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Wednesday evening arrived in Tehran for a visit to bolster the ties between the two countries by visiting high-ranking Iranian officials. On Friday and upon his arrival in Tehran, Maduro in an interview Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said Venezuela and Iran have a common goal of fighting colonialism and imperialism across the globe. Venezuela and Iran are on the frontline of shaping a world free of imperialism and dominant powers, Maduro said. The era of the United States' military dominance in the world is over, the Venezuelan president stated.

He said what the Islamic Republic of Iran has been saying for years that the U.S. power and hegemony is gradually fading and Maduro is another politician who claims of the imminent collapse of the imperialism. Venezuela and Iran should share knowledge in all fields to create a new world, Maduro said, stressing that humanity is transitioning and a new geopolitical system would be established in the world.

Venezuela and Iran, two countries united by a common vision regarding international issues and victims of coercive measures by the United States and its allies, have had diplomatic ties for more than 60 years. But mutual relations became strategic with the arrival of the late commander Hugo Chavez to power in Venezuela in 1999.

It is a century of the decline of hegemonic power and Iran and Venezuela are on the forefront of this process, Maduro said. The comprehensive map of cooperation is the spearhead towards achievement of a new world, the president stated.

The Venezuelan president hailed Iran's courageous move to send fuel tankers to his energy-hungry nation, saying Tehran's delivery of oil to Caracas was a great help to the Venezuelan people.

Of course since the late Chavez era, the tie between Tehran and Caracas has been growing stronger and Maduro has followed the path of Chavez and he and his government have faced many challenges and troubles created by the West.

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Tehran Not to Bow Down To Excessive Demands

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says the country uses its own tools in the face of the other side's excessive demands during negotiations on restoring the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in the Austrian capital.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made the remarks after attending a hearing session of the Iranian Parliament's Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy to answer questions about the latest developments surrounding the diplomatic row over Iran's nuclear program.

Amirabdollahian said that during the talks, Tehran "has offered its initiatives and ideas on a logical basis whenever it was treated in a logical way by the other side."

"Every time that the opposite side put forth excessive demands during the [Vienna talks], we used the country's own tools and power, so that they would understand that the interests and welfare of the Iranian nation were important to us and that we will continue our efforts to this end," Iran's top diplomat added.

Iran's foreign minister expressed hope that the measures meant to get all the negotiating parties to return to the JCPOA, would be taken in such a way that Iran's power and demands as well as people's expectations are taken into consideration. "While emphasizing the need to completely protect the rights of the country in international arena, our people expect us to do so while respecting all the red lines," Amirabdollahian said.

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Raisi Felicitates Philippines on National Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi sent a message to the president and the people of the Philippines on the National Day of the country.

In this congratulatory message to Philippine President, the Iranian President said that Iran and the Philippines have witnessed a growing trend of bilateral relations over the past years and expressed hope that these friendly relations will be further developed and deepened in the interests of the people of the two countries.

The Philippines celebrates its independence on June 12 every year.

Iran Seeks to Strengthen Economy Through Interaction

TEHRAN (MNA) – Economy Minister Ehsan Khanduzi attended the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) meeting in Egypt during which he said that the most important priority for the Iranian government is to strengthen the economy.

In a brief address in English language at 2022 Annual Meetings of Islamic Development Bank Group in Sharm El Sheikh, EHSan Khanduzi called for the calculation of the food vulnerability index of the 57 Islamic member countries of the bank every year to calculate how far the Islamic countries are from the other countries.

The Iranian economy minister also called on the bank to allocate financial aid to the member states that are in need.

Later in a statement in Arabic language, Khanduzi added that the Iranian government's program is to pay attention to neighborliness policy, especially



interaction with Islamic countries, as well as efforts to strengthen Iran's economy.

He also said that given the importance of food security and the reliance of Islamic countries on grain and foodstuff imports, as well as the effects and consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war, he suggested the IDB to prioritize self-sufficiency in food products as its main focus.

Khanduzi also asked the bank to put the financing of technological and medical projects on its agenda and hailed the success of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of health technology and producing Covid-19 vaccines.

Two IRGC Aerospace Staff Martyred

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has announced two members of its Aerospace Unit have been martyred in separate incidents.

Mohammad Abdous, a member of the IRGC Aerospace Unit, was martyred while he was on a mission in the northern Semnan Province, according Fars news agency on Monday.

Fars News Agency did not provide details on the death of the IRGC member. Abdous was 33 years old.

The news of his martyrdom came a day after Ali Kamani, one of the members of the Aerospace Unit in the central Iranian city of Khomein, was martyred in a car accident.

The IRGC, in a statement, praised Kamani for years of "tireless and sincere efforts to protect the Revolution and Islamic values and serve the Islamic establishment and homeland."

Visas to Be Probably Lifted For Russian Businessmen

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian foreign ministry's deputy for economic diplomacy has described relations with Russia as strategic calling for a focus on energy, trade and transit sectors to build on a surge in ties which he says saw a jump over the past months.

"Russia has published a list of its demanded needs and Iran has the capacity to export many of those items, and this can lead to a considerable growth in Iran's exports, and is a suitable method for payment of Iran's debt to Russia," Mahdi Safari said.

The official also talked about a number of measures the government is taking to ease economic relations with Russia.

Safari said visas will be possibly lifted for Russian businessmen with the aim of increasing investments.

He added that the creation of a ruble-based banking mechanism with Russia's allies as well as an agreement for creation of a customs green route is also on the agenda.

Labor Minister Reportedly to Be Removed

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian news outlet claims that Hojjat Abdolmaleki, Minister of Labor, Cooperation and Social Welfare of Iran, is going to be the first cabinet member of President Ebrahim Raisi's administration to leave office.

Serat News described Abdolmaleki as a controversial minister, saying Raisi has concluded that Abdolmaleki should resign from his post voluntarily instead of being removed through impeachment.

According to Serat, the minister has been notified of the decision and has bid farewell to his close colleagues in the Ministry of Labor.

The report also said some of Abdolmaleki's friends who caused these troubles for him are now making strenuous efforts to find high posts in wealthy holdings through lobbying before his removal becomes effective.

Soon after assuming his post, Abdolmaleki sacked many staff of the Labor Ministry, prompting the MPs to question him. But he survived the motion.

Tehran, Baghdad Take Long Stride to Expand Cultural, Artistic, Religious Ties



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Culture ministers of Iran and Iraq in a bilateral meeting here emphasized need to broaden and deepen comprehensive interactions in cultural, artistic and religious field.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili in his meeting with the visiting Iraqi Culture Minister Hassan Nadhim at Tehran Vahdat Opera Hall referred to the cultural and civilizational commonalities of the two nations and exchanged views on improvement of bilateral cultural and artistic interactions.

Esmaili told his Iraqi counterpart that it has been arranged that a joint communique will be signed on bilateral cultural, artistic and religious cooperation with the friendly and brother Iraqi government.

Referring to the previous talks with the Iraqi culture minister, the minister of culture and Islamic guidance said that the MOU that is going to be signed aimed at facilitating to a greater extent for the Iranian pilgrims of Imam Hossein (AS) in Arbaciaen rituals.

He also referred to an agreement on bilateral cinematographic cooperation, as well as various theatrical and artistic programs in the two countries' culture weeks.

The Iraqi culture minister, too, referred to his visits of Qom and Mashhad during the past days, arguing that the negotiations with Iranian officials were very promising and Iran and Iraq can thus have lots of shared cultural and artistic productions.

Hassan Nadhim also referred to the upcoming signing of joint communique for joint cultural, artistic and religious works, including holding an Iran Film Week in Baghdad in near future.

Iran, Venezuela Agree to Expand ICT Relations

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Iranian ICT minister and his Venezuelan counterpart agreed to form a joint working group to prepare an agreement in the near future on expanding relations in the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

According to a report published on the official website of the Iranian ICT ministry, the Iranian ICT minister Eisa Zarepour along with other Iranian authorities from the ministry held a meeting with a Venezuelan delegation comprised of the vice president and the Venezuelan ICT minister in Tehran on Sunday evening.

In the meeting, Zarepour stressed that the two countries have had unparalleled strategic relations over the past 20 years, adding, "As the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasized during the recent visit of the Venezuelan high-ranking delegation to our country, we seek to expand relations with Venezuela and I am pleased to announce that by signing a 20-year strategic agreement, we can expand bilateral cooperation between the two countries."

Zarepour further emphasized that a joint working group consisting of both countries' ministers' deputies can be formed to study the fields for cooperation and prepare a 20-year agreement in the ICT field.

The Venezuelan ICT minister and Vice President, for their parts, stressed that it is very important for Caracas to expand strategic relations with Iran in all areas and said, "It comes as a surprise to us that Iran despite being under the toughest sanctions over the past 43 years (since the Islamic Revolution in 1979) has been able to achieve very favorable progress and achievements in the fields of science and technology in particular."

Also in the meeting, the ICT minister deputies of the two countries explained the areas for future cooperation and expressed hope that with the drafting and signing of a bilateral cooperation agreement in the near future, the two sides will see the development of relations in the ICT field.

Venezuelan First Lady Meets Iran's VP for Women Affairs

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Venezuela First Lady Cilia Adela Flores de Maduro here on Sunday met and conferred with Vice President for Woman and Family Affairs Ensiyeh Khazali.

The meeting at Tehran's Saadabad Palaces Complex was held in the presence of the Iranian vice president and deputies of the Venezuelan foreign minister.

The two sides exchanged views on the shared concerns of the two countries' women and some laws related to safeguarding women's rights in the two countries.



It was also agreed in the meeting that in the next meeting the Venezuelan culture minister and minister of women's affairs will be present to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Cilia Adela Flores de Maduro's former positions in Venezuela include parliament member and Venezuela prosecutor general.

Venezuela President Nicolas

Maduro and his high ranking accompanying delegation, including the Venezuelan first lady, arrived in Tehran on Friday, June 10.

Austria Plans to Execute Joint Projects in Tabriz

TABRIZ (IRNA) - Austrian Ambassador to Iran Wolf Dietrich Heim has said that his country intends to cooperate with the Islamic Republic to carry out joint cultural projects in Tabriz, East Azarbaijan Province.

The Austrian ambassador made the remarks in a meeting with the mayor and members of the Islamic City Council of Tabriz Sunday night, noting that his country and Iran have had good cooperation in applied sciences, technical, engineering, and medical fields.

Austria and Iran have not only common history and background but also a common future, he said.

Austria has been active in Iran for more than 60 years in cultural and music arenas, he noted, adding that Österreichisches Kulturforum Teheran (ÖKFT) has kicked off cultural activities in different provinces in recent years and that it plans to implement joint cultural projects in Tabriz as well.

The ambassador went on to say that his trip to Tabriz and holding meetings with city officials helped him and representatives of Austrian firms to get acquainted with economic capacities and other opportunities in the city.

Hundreds of years of relationship between the two countries especially signing cooperation agreements has helped both nations to expand mutual ties in the last 150 years, he said, adding that the establishment of the first Austrian consulate in Tabriz enhanced mutual ties.

For his part, Tabriz's Mayor Ya'ghoub Houshyar expressed hope that as a result of



more interaction with Austria, foreign investors will invest in large construction projects in the city.

According to the mayor, Tabriz is the third big city in Iran with about two million population, which is also considered the cultural and spiritual capital of the Islamic country, where several renowned poets and cultural figures lived in.

As to scientific and academic centers in Tabriz, Houshyar noted that around 100 thousand students are studying at different universities and other higher education centers in the city.

Tabriz is also important due to its industrial progress, he said, adding that heavy industries, steel factories, car-manufacturing companies, sweets, and chocolate factories, and other firms are active in the city.

Chairman of the Islamic City Council of Tabriz Rasoul Bargi pointed to cultural and political commonalities, which pave the way for the connection between Austrian cities and Tabriz, saying that both countries enjoy various affinities.

The people of Austria and Iran have experienced two kinds of governance - monarchy and republic - as well as wars, so both nations seek peace and friendship, Bargi argued.

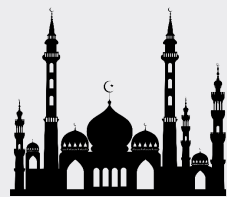
Europeans see Austrian people as a generous and nature-loving nation, he said, noting that Iranians in particular those who live in Tabriz like to meet Austrian tourists in the city.

American Human Rights Harmed Tens of Millions

TEHRAN (IP) - Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission says the United States has harmed tens of millions of people with American human rights.

At the third meeting of the 'American Human Rights Review and Disclosure Week and Commemoration of June 28 1981 Martyrs' campaign, which was held on Monday, Vahid Jalalzadeh referred to the U.S. 'War on Terror' law and said the US law harmed nearly 85 million people around the world and millions were displaced in Afghanistan.

Referring to human rights violations by the U.S., he said the U.S. population makes up 5% of the world's population, but 25 percent of the world's prisoners are in U.S. prisons. Violence and oppression against Latinos, women, blacks, etc., are perpetrated daily in the U.S., but the United States presents itself as the protector and founder of human rights.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:04
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:42
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:01
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:48

70. Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful,
71. And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah with an (acceptable) conversion:-

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (70 - 71)

Exports to Oman Soar 126% in 2 Months

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The value of Iranian exports to Oman increased by 126 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21) as compared to the same two months last year, IRIB reported.

According to Iran's Commercial Attaché in Muscat Mehrdad Fallah, the Islamic Republic exported \$203 million worth of non-oil commodities to Oman in the mentioned two months.

The total trade exchanges between the two countries in the first two months of this year also grew by 143 percent compared to the same period last year, Fallah said.

During the mentioned period, Oman was ranked seventh among Iran's top export destinations after China, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, India, and Afghanistan. The country was also the fifth among Iran's neighboring trade partners and the second top destination market among the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

The top commodity items exported to Oman in the said two months include oil, bitumen, iron and steel ingots, urea, iron or steel rods, semi-finished iron or steel products, clinker, fish products, canned food, and white cement.



The share of Oman's market from Iran's total exports is 2.4 percent, according to the official.

Referring to the characteristics of the Oman market and the friendly and strategic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman and the great export opportunities to this country, Fallah stressed the need to use these opportunities to increase exports to Oman and also access third markets through this country.

Iran and Oman signed seven memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to expand cooperation in various areas, including commerce, plant quarantine, agriculture, sports, environment, labor, and standards in Late May.

The MOUs were signed by Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin and Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak on the sidelines of President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Muscat.

IDRO Emphasizes Precise Implementation of Ministry's Developmental Policies



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) in the meeting of council of deputies emphasized precise and good implementation of the developmental policies of the ministry and role of IDRO as an upgraded developmental organization in compliance with the daily requirements and conditions.

In the meeting, Ali Nabavi also called for maximum exchanging views of all bodies of the organization in the process of reviewing and upgrading the strategy which is under preparation in this developmental organization.

Meanwhile in the meeting, Deputy Head of IDRO on planning and a member of board of directors of IDRO MR. Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki explained some part of demands regarding reviewing the strategy of IDRO.

Hassan Sheikhnia, Deputy Head of IDRO on financial and economic, for his part, emphasized precise implementation of legal regulations stipulated in the Article 1 of this year's budget regarding precise and timely holding of general assemblies of the performance of the subsidiary companies of IDRO in the last Iranian calendar year.

In the meeting, some other issues like efficient energy consumption in the hot months were discussed. At the end of the meeting, Mohammad Ali Jamshidian officially began his job as the advisor of the IDRO which has been appointed by the ministry.

Exhibition of Items for People in Isolation



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - An exhibition of items for people in isolation designed by students of University of Tehran will be opened on 19 June 2022 at 5.00 pm at the Tehran Gallery of the University of Tehran. Young Iranian creators produced items that support human wellbeing with regard to isolation and reduced social contacts, answering current social challenges using modern technologies. The Embassy of Poland in Tehran financed the prototypes. The works have been inspired by lectures and discussions with researchers from Poland during Polish Design Summer School 2021.

During the opening the key note speech will be delivered by Dr Joanna Jurga, a Polish industrial designer and university lecturer. Dr Jurga will lead industrial design workshop for students of the University of Tehran on 19-20 June.

The exhibition and the workshop are a part of an academic-cultural cooperation on industrial design between the Embassy and the University which began in 2020.

TPO Supports Broadening of Trade Ties With Pakistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) said here that his organization supports provision of ideal conditions for broadening Iran-Pakistan trade cooperation.

Ali-Reza Pakpeyman who was speaking at the opening session of Iran-Pakistan Trade Promotion Workshop said that the economic ties with Pakistan are of great significance for Iran.

He said that the trade balance with Pakistan is currently 6.1 billion dollars, which is very trivial, and added that keeping in mind Pakistan's 70-billion-dollar market necessities intensive planning to increase that volume, and especially Iran's share of it.

Pakpeyman said that last year Pakistan exported goods worth 22 billion dollars and imported 48 billion dollars of goods from Iran, Iran's share was merely 6.1 billion, which is quite unacceptable.

The TPO chief referred to the establishment of a number of Joint Iran-Pakistan Border Markets in collaboration between the Pakistani government and the Governorate of Sistan and Balouchestan Province, arguing that the Iranian and Pakistani economies are complementary of each other and increasing the bilateral trade volume is therefore of great importance.

High Leap of Chadormalu Co. Towards Developing Knowledge-Based Products

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Managing Director of CPG Pars International Mining and Industrial Company and the executive arm of Chadormalu Group in an interview highlighted the knowledge-based ideas projects and technological programs of the company.

Eng. Hosseini said that design and manufacture of water desalination membranes in the form of developmental projects of this company has been put on the agenda of Chadormalu Group. He went on to say that considering this point that the year has been named by the Supreme Leader Year of Production, Knowledge-Based and Job Creation, Chadormalu Company has put on its agenda the Supreme Leader's recommendations and it has taken action to produce reverse osmosis membrane in order to get rid of dependence on foreign countries and flight of forex from the country as well as creating a center for research and development by this company and Iranian research and knowledge lovers for upgrading their products. He added that so the company started the project for production of reverse osmosis industrial filters through technology transfer and purchase of machineries with investment of some 60m euros.



Hosseini noted that simultaneous with mass production, development of the product or future products will be carried out through setting up a research and development office and cooperation with owners of the primary technology or other owners of technology and research centers in the country. He said that the project will start mid-year and it will take 24 months to be completed and some 50,000 water desalination membranes will be produced annually.

He then pointed to the role of water and developmental industry, adding that the amount of water consumption in Iran is 90% in the agro sector, 7% in household and drinking and some 3% in the industry sector, adding that with expansion of industry the amount of water consumption in this sector will definitely increase.

Hosseini then highlighted the water shortage crisis and said this is a global problem but it is an important issue for Iran because of decline in rainfall. He noted that currently water desalination membranes are produced by the U.S. and European countries and with completion of this project, Iran can be exporter especially due to the needs of the countries in the region and it can earn the country forex.

POGC Highlights Actions Regarding Environmental Issues in Its Projects

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Safety, Health and Environment Manager of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) highlighted actions of the company regarding observance of environmental indexes in the company's developmental projects and operation for gas production.

Concurrent with Environment Week, Mr. Alireza Nojoomi explained environmental actions of the HSE management of the company in the developmental projects and operation for gas production from South Pars gas platforms. Pointing to removing environmental pollutants in the gas platforms, Nojoomi said that this action was taken in line with exploiting the gas platforms with the least environmental effects and for reducing the amount of waste and delivered gas to the flare.

He also pointed to the engineering operation, installation and exploitation from the tail gas treatment units (TGTU) of refineries of 8, 10, 11 and 12 of South Pars. He added that with implementation of this project in the refining sector, quality of transferred gas to the flare and environmental effects of combustion outcomes from the sulfuric pollutants has improved.

Nojoomi reiterated that with this project emission of some 224,000 tons of sulfur compounds into the air will be reduced.

He then pointed to some other actions of the company regarding the environmental issues like reforming the project of industrial wastewater treatment in the South Pars refineries.

Production Must Be Based on Technology

TEHRAN (IP) - Production must be based on technology, said the deputy minister of the ministry of science and research for technology and innovation.

The conference "Cooperation Capacities of Knowledge-Based Companies and Institutions and Iran-Khodro Industrial Group" was held today in Tehran.

Speaking at the conference in Tehran, Ali Khair al-Din said: "In Iran, we have 49 science and technology parks, 12 science and technology campuses, 246 technology development centers, 10,800 technology units and 90,000 employees in technology units, which is a sign of progress."

Khair al-Din emphasized: "We have established and launched technology and innovation campuses in cooperation with the private sector."

CBI Vows to Restore Calm to Forex Market

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) governor Ali Salehabadi says the top lender will intervene in the country's foreign exchange market to control prices that have risen to record highs in recent days.

Speaking to reporters, Salehabadi said the CBI will introduce a series of unprecedented measures in the upcoming days to control foreign currency prices in the Iranian market.

He said the CBI will lift a ban on supply of foreign currency to individuals and businesses while allowing the trade of hard currency earned by exporters on the high street.

"This will lead to an increase in the size of trade and we will be able to fully cover the demand in the market," said Salehabadi, according to remarks published by the official IRNA news agency.

The comments came after senior CBI officials held an emergency meeting with

forex trade businesses in the CBI headquarters in Tehran.

The meeting came after foreign currency prices rose to an all-time high on Sunday with American dollar reaching above the 330,000-mark against the Iranian rial.

Authorities admitted prices had risen mainly because of recent negative development around Iran's nuclear program and fears that international talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal may collapse.

Reports earlier this month had suggested that the top decision-making body in the Iranian government had granted new mandates to the CBI to intervene in the exchange market at times it deems is necessary.

Currency traders said on Sunday that prices will drop in the upcoming days with the introduction of the new CBI policies, including the removal of restrictions on the purchase of foreign currencies by individuals and businesses.

Sonia Gandhi Hospitalized With Covid

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Sonia Gandhi, president of India's main opposition Congress party, has been admitted to hospital with "Covid-related issues," a party spokesman said Sunday.

Gandhi was admitted to the Ganga Ram Hospital in the capital New Delhi, Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala said in a tweet.

"She is stable and will be kept at the hospital for observation," he said, giving no other details.

The 75-year-old had tested positive for Covid-19 on June 2.



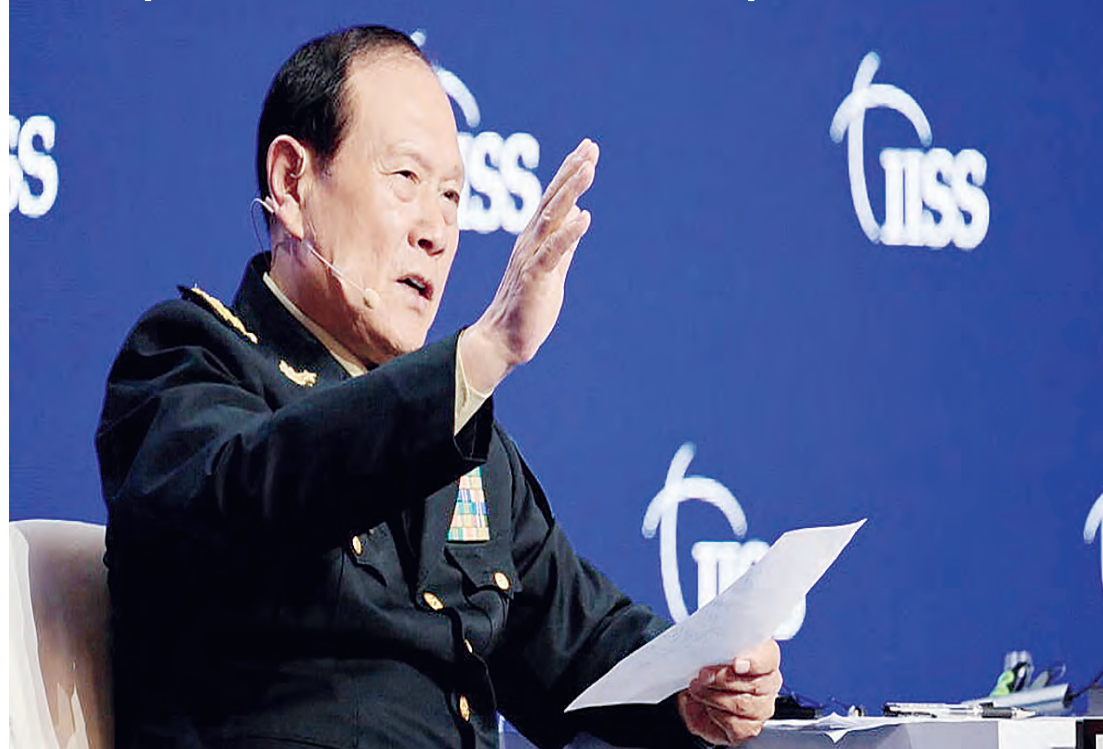
Turkey's Security Concerns Are Legitimate

HELSINKI (Dispatches) - Security concerns raised by Turkey in its opposition to Finnish and Swedish Nato membership applications are legitimate, the Western military alliance's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in Finland.

Stoltenberg, visiting Finland's President Sauli Niinisto, said it was important to note that no other Nato ally had suffered more terrorist attacks than Turkey, and that therefore its concerns needed to be taken seriously.



China to Fight to the Very End to Stop Taiwanese Independence



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China will "fight to the very end" to stop Taiwanese independence, the country's defense minister vowed, stoking already soaring tensions with the United States over the island.

The superpowers are locked in a growing war of words over the self-ruled, democratic island, which Beijing views as part of its territory awaiting reunification.

Frequent Chinese aerial incursions near Taiwan have raised the diplomatic temperature, and on Saturday, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin accused Beijing of "destabilizing" military activity in a speech to the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit.

Defense Minister Wei Fenghe hit back in a fiery address at the same event, saying Beijing had "no choice" but to fight if attempts are made to separate Taiwan from China.

"We will fight at all cost, and we will fight to the very end," he said.

"No one should ever underestimate the resolve and ability of the Chinese armed forces to safeguard its territorial integrity."

"Those who pursue Taiwanese independence in an attempt to split China will definitely come to no good end," he added.

Wei urged Washington to "stop smearing and containing China... stop interfering in China's internal affairs and stop harming China's interests".

But he also struck a more conciliatory tone at points, calling for a "stable" China-US relationship, which he said was "vital for global peace".

During his address, Austin stressed the importance of "fully open lines of communication with China's defence leaders" in avoiding miscalculations.

The pair held their first face-to-face talks on the sidelines of the summit in Singapore on Friday, during which they clashed over Taiwan.

Tensions over Taiwan have escalated in particular due to increasing Chinese military aircraft incursions into the island's air defense identification zone (ADIZ).

President Joe Biden, during a visit to Japan last month, appeared to break decades of US policy when, in response to a question, he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it was attacked by China. The White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene had not changed.

The dispute is just the latest between Washington and Beijing, who have clashed over everything from the South China Sea to human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. China's expansive claims to the sea, through which trillions of dollars in shipping trade passes annually, have stoked tensions with rival claimants, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

China, whose historical claims were rejected in a landmark 2016 Hague ruling, has been accused of flying its planes and sailing its boats close to the coastlines of rival claimants, and of intercepting patrol planes in international airspace in a dangerous fashion.

Russia Claims It Destroyed Depot Containing Western Weapons in Ukraine

KYIV (Dispatches) - Russian forces fired cruise missiles to destroy a large depot containing U.S. and European weapons in western Ukraine's Ternopil region, Interfax reported, as street fighting raged in the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk.

The governor of the Ternopil region said a rocket attack on the city of Chortkiv fired from the Black Sea had partly destroyed a military facility, injuring 22 people. A local official said there were no weapons stored there.

Moscow has repeatedly slammed the United States and other nations for supplying Ukraine with weapons. President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month that Russia would strike new targets if the West supplied longer-range missiles to Ukraine for use in high-precision mobile rocket systems.

Ukrainian leaders have renewed pleas to Western countries in recent days to speed up deliveries of heavy weapons as Russian forces pound the east of the country with artillery.

Sievierodonetsk has become epicentre of the battle for control over the industrialised Donbas region in the east,

made up of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces. Parts of the city have been pulverised in some of the bloodiest fighting since Moscow began its invasion on Feb. 24.

Luhansk Governor Serhiy Gaidai said on Sunday that Ukrainian and Russian forces were still fighting street by street in Sievierodonetsk. He said that while Russian forces have taken most of the city, Ukrainian troops remain in control of an industrial area and chemical plant where hundreds of civilians are sheltering.

After being forced to scale back its initial campaign goals Moscow has turned to expanding control in the Donbas, where pro-Russian separatists have held a swath of territory since 2014.

Ukraine has said some 800 people were hiding in bomb shelters under the Azot plant, including employees and city residents.

"No one can say whether and how many victims there have been in the last 24 hours in Sievierodonetsk, where intense fighting continues," Gaidai said on the Telegram messaging app on Sunday.



India Steps Up Arrests to Stop Unrest Over Anti-Islam Remarks

SRINAGAR (Dispatches) - Authorities in India's Uttar Pradesh state have demolished the homes of several people accused of involvement in riots last week triggered by derogatory remarks made by ruling party figures about Islam's Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), officials said on Sunday.

In Indian Kashmir, police arrested a youth for posting a video threatening to behead the ruling party's former spokeswoman who had made some of the remarks, officials said. The video, circulated on YouTube, has been withdrawn by authorities.

Muslims have taken to the streets across India in recent weeks to protest against the anti-Islamic comments by two members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Clashes have broken out between Muslims and Hindus and in some cases between protesters and police in several areas. Police in Uttar Pradesh arrested more than 300 people in connection with the unrest.

Some in India's minority Muslim community see the comments as the latest instance of pressure and humiliation under BJP rule on issues ranging from freedom of worship to the wearing of hijab head scarves.

The BJP has suspended its spokeswoman Nupur Sharma and expelled another leader, Naveen Kumar Jindal, for the comments, which have also caused a diplomatic row with several Muslim countries. Police have filed cases against the two and the government has said the comments do not reflect its views.

Muslim groups have demanded their arrest, while some hardline Hindu groups label them as brave and nationalist politicians.

Over the weekend the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh state, Yogi Adityanath, ordered officials to demolish any illegal establishments and homes of people accused of involvement in riots there last week, the BJP's state spokesperson said.

The house of an alleged mastermind of the riots, whose daughter is a female Muslim rights activist, was demolished amid a heavy police presence on Sunday. Properties of two more people accused of throwing stones after Friday prayers were also demolished in the state.

South Korea Trucker Strike Continues

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korean steelmaker POSCO said will halt some of its plants in the country due to a lack of space to store finished products, which have not been shipped due to a strike by truckers who are demanding higher pay as fuel prices surge.

POSCO follows automaker Hyundai Motor in cutting production lines as the strike by thousands of truckers disrupted cargo transport at the country's industrial hubs and major ports.

"Some production at our Pohang steel plants is set for suspension, and we are not yet certain how long this suspension will last," a POSCO spokesperson said, adding that the halt will take effect from Monday.

The decision came as the government and the Cargo Truckers Solidarity union were holding a fourth round of meetings to find a compromise and end the strike, which began on June 7.

South Korea is a major supplier of semiconductors, smartphones, autos, batteries and electronics goods. The strike has deepened uncertainty over global supply chains already disrupted by China's strict COVID-19 curbs and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As ports worldwide struggle with supply bottlenecks,

a slowdown in chip production, petrochemicals and autos threatens South Korea's mainstay exports, and consumer inflation in Asia's fourth-biggest economy is at a 14-year high.

The truckers are demanding an extension to subsidies, set to expire this year, that guarantee minimum wages as fuel prices rise.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport said it responded to the union by explaining "that ship owners, the party of interest, demand the current Safe Trucking Freight Rates System be abolished".

A joint statement from a total of 31 industry associations on Sunday urged truckers to end their strike and return to work, as bottlenecks are building up across industries including cement, petrochemical, steel, auto and IT components.

"This lengthening strike by the Cargo Solidarity is nothing more than putting up a fight in an extreme way by holding national logistics as a hostage, even as the government has said it will find a way for inclusive growth through talks," associations representing employers, taxis, semiconductors, automobiles and others said in the statement.



Biden Not Yet Decided on Trip To Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - United States President Joe Biden says he has "not yet" decided if he will travel to Saudi Arabia, a week after he opened the door to a possible trip.

The comment came amid opposition to the possible trip from Democratic Party legislators and human rights groups.

Unnamed US officials told local media last week that Biden was planning a trip to Saudi Arabia, along with a trip to Europe and Israel in late June.

The visit would signal the most distinct departure to date from the Biden administration's promise to "recalibrate" ties with longtime ally Saudi Arabia for alleged human rights abuses.

Biden called Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman a "pariah" for his role in the killing of a political opponent and US resident Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey in 2018.

The Saudi government has denied any involvement of the crown prince.

Asked by a reporter in Albuquerque, New Mexico on Saturday if he would use a possible trip to the Middle East to secure a deal to improve Saudi-Israeli relations, Biden said: "We'll see."

Any potential visit to Saudi Arabia likely would be aimed at bolstering relations with the country at a time when Biden is trying to find ways to lower gasoline prices in the US.

There are concerns that high prices at the gas pump could hurt Biden's Democratic Party in the upcoming midterm elections, in which it will fight to maintain majorities in the US House of Representatives and Senate.

A White House official said on Friday that the US would not overlook conduct that took place before Biden's presidency, but that "it was also important to reorient - but not rupture - relations with Saudi Arabia", noting the country's role as a strategic partner of the US for eight decades.

Thirteen human rights groups sent a joint letter to Biden on Thursday, saying a meeting between the US president and the Saudi crown prince risks encouraging new abuses and further entrenching impunity in the kingdom.



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yard, & pkg
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Shanon (adviser)

Fereshteh Villa (\$5000)
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5bdrs, S/p, S
Jacuzzi, pkg
large balcony
marbl e floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Elahieh Apt
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
Large balcony
(\$2300) F.F

Farmanieh Apt
250sq.m, 3bdrs, S/pool
Sauna, Jacuzzi, balcony
fireplace, marble floor
(\$2500)

Niavaran bldg
5stoery, 15bdrs
S/p, S, J, & pkg
Large balcony
new (\$10000)

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Sri Lanka May Have to Buy More Russian Oil

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka may be compelled to buy more oil from Russia as the nation faces shortages amid an unprecedented economic crisis, its prime minister told the Associated Press.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, in an interview with the news agency on Saturday, said he would first look to other sources, but would be open to buying more crude from Moscow.

The country is in the midst of its worst financial crisis in seven decades and severely strapped for dollars to pay for critical imports including food, fuel and medicine.



حفل توقيع اتفاقيات الشراكة بين قطر للطاقة و توتال أنرجيز لمشروع حقل الشمال الشرقي
The Signing Ceremony of the Partnership Agreements between QatarEnergy and TotalEnergies for the North Field East Project
 Doha, Qatar
 12 يونيو 2022

TotalEnergies Gains Foothold In Qatar Gas Expansion

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar named France's TotalEnergies as its first foreign partner to develop the world's largest natural gas field and eventually help ease Europe's energy fears.

The French energy major will have a 6.25-percent share of the giant North Field East project that will help Qatar increase its liquefied natural gas (LNG) production by more than 60 percent by 2027, Qatar's Energy Minister Saad Sherida al-Kaabi told a news conference.

Kaabi said it was "a marriage more than an engagement" as the accord will last until 2054. Other foreign firms will also have joint venture stakes with state-owned Qatar Energy (QE) but none will be bigger than TotalEnergies, said Kaabi, who did not reveal names. Industry sources say ExxonMobil, Shell and ConocoPhillips are all in line to take part in the giant \$28-billion expansion, that Qatar had originally wanted to finance alone.

"We have finished the selection process and we have signed the agreements," Kaabi said, adding that names would be announced in the "near future".

With European nations scrambling to find alternatives to Russian oil and gas, LNG from North Field is expected to start coming on line in 2026.

TotalEnergies chief executive Patrick Pouyanne said the company's biggest deal with Qatar would help make up for the company's withdrawal from Russia in the wake of the Ukraine invasion.

Hard bargain

Without giving figures, Pouyanne indicated that Qatar had demanded a high price in the talks that started in 2019.

"Your team and yourself have been a very good defender of Qatar's interests in this project," he said in comments to the minister who is also the QE chief.

"Qatar Energy certainly drove a hard bargain. But for the biggest global LNG players like Shell and TotalEnergies, Qatar is too good to pass up. A stake in these LNG trains delivers scale, low-cost supply, great marketing opportunities, and a good partner," said Ben Cahill, an energy security specialist at the Center for Security and International Studies in Washington.

Qatar is already one of the world's top LNG producers, alongside the United States and Australia.

QE estimates that North Field holds about 10 percent of the world's known natural gas reserves. The reserves extend under the sea into Iranian territory, where Tehran's efforts to exploit its South Pars gas field have been hindered by international sanctions.

South Korea, Japan and China have become the main markets for Qatar's LNG but since an energy crisis hit Europe last year, the Persian Gulf state has helped Britain with extra supplies and also announced a cooperation deal with Germany.

Europe has for long rejected the long-term deals that Qatar seeks for its energy but the Ukraine conflict has changed in attitude.

Qatar's expansion "underlines its position as a leader in this industry", said Bill Faren-Price, head of macro oil and gas research at the Enverus energy consultancy. "With gas balances tight globally amid reduced Russian gas exports to Europe, LNG is a key and growing component in the energy transition and Qatar is determined to leverage its world-class North Field reserves to capture additional value through this deal.

Cash-Strapped Sri Lanka Announces Weekly Fuel Quotas

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Crisis-hit Sri Lanka announced weekly fuel quotas for motorists on Sunday, as an acute shortage worsened and longer queues formed outside the few pumping stations still operating.

Energy minister Kanchana Wijesekera said the state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation was struggling to finance oil imports, while consumption had shot up due to shortages of electricity and liquefied petroleum gas.

"We have no choice but to register consumers at filling stations and give them a guaranteed weekly quota until we are able to strengthen the financial situation," the minister said.

"I hope to have this system in place by the first week of July."

He did not say how much fuel motorists will be allowed to buy under the new system.

Sri Lanka has been struggling with its worst economic crisis in decades, with the country unable to import basic necessities such as food, fuel and medication due to a lack of foreign exchange reserves.

In mid-April, the government ordered all fuel stations not to pump more than four litres of petrol for a motorcycle, five for a three-wheeler and 19.5 litres of gasoline or diesel for cars and SUVs.

Under that system, many motorists would top up, drain fuel into cans to build a buffer stock, and then return to the queue for more. This week, queues at fuel stations had become longer, with hundreds of cars and thousands of motorcycles waiting in line, sometimes for days.

Two weeks ago, Sri Lanka received a shipment of Russian crude oil to be refined on the island, but the finished product from the Sapugaskanda refinery was less than a tenth of the country's daily requirement.

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

The Sri Lankan government has also approached Moscow's envoy in Colombo to help secure direct supplies of Russian oil, Energy Minister Wijesekera said.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt in mid-April and has since opened talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout.

The United Nations has issued an appeal for \$47 million to buy essential food for 1.7 million Sri Lankans in the next four months.



Investment Flows to Africa Reached a Record \$83b in 2021

LONDON (Dispatches) - Foreign direct investment (FDI) to African countries hit a record \$83 billion in 2021, according to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2022 published last week.

This was more than double the amount reported in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic weighed heavily on investment flows to the continent.

Despite the strong growth, investment flows to Africa accounted for only 5.2% of global FDI, up from 4.1% in 2020.

While most Africa countries saw a moderate rise in FDI in 2021, around 45% of the total was due to an intrafirm financial transaction in South Africa.

"If we exclude this transaction, the increase in FDI flows to Africa, while still positive, would be more in line with what we observed in other developing regions," said James Zhan, director of UNCTAD's investment and enterprise division.

In terms of sub-regions, Southern Africa, East Africa and West Africa saw their investment flows rise while those to Central Africa remained flat and North Africa registered a decline.

The largest holders of foreign assets in Africa remained European, led by investors in the United Kingdom (\$65 billion) and France (\$60 billion).

The strong increase was due primarily to a large corporate reconfiguration in South Africa - a share exchange between Naspers and Prosus in the third quarter of 2021.

New project announcements in the country included a \$4.6 billion clean energy project finance deal sponsored by UK-based Hive Energy and a \$1 billion greenfield project by U.S.-based Vantage Data Centers to build its first African campus.

Investment flows to Mozambique grew by 68% to \$5.1 billion. The country saw a jump in greenfield projects, including UK-based Globeq Generation's plan to build power plants for \$2 billion.

Meanwhile, investment flows to Zambia remained negative at -\$457 million, a steep fall from -\$173 million in 2020, due mostly to a \$1.5 billion copper mine divestment by Swiss-based Glencore to state-owned ZCCM Investments Holdings.

Nigeria, West Africa's largest recipient of FDI, saw its flows double to \$4.8 billion, mainly because of a resurgence in investments in the oil and gas sectors.

International project finance deals in the country jumped to \$7 billion. These included the \$2.9 billion Escravos Seaport project to construct an industrial complex.

Projects in extractive industries also helped push FDI to Ghana up to \$2.6 billion - an increase of 39% compared with 2020.

Senegal also saw a notable 21% increase in FDI, which reached \$2.2 billion. The country registered a 27% rise in announced greenfield projects.

Thailand to Go Slow With Rate Hikes as Pandemic Drag Lingers



BANGKOK (Dispatches) - A shift by Thailand's central bank to a more hawkish footing this week stunned markets and appeared to finally end policymakers' tolerance for mounting price pressures, but a range of risks are likely to keep any tightening gradual.

The Bank of Thailand kept its benchmark interest rate at a record low but a split vote on the decision was a signal to markets that the central bank may raise interest rates as soon as August.

Thailand has been among Asia's least hawkish central banks, maintaining its policy focus on supporting an economy still struggling with the pandemic -- particularly a lack of Chinese tourists -- and insisting supply-driven inflation is better dealt with through fiscal measures and price controls, not rates.

Kobsidthi Silpachai, head of capital markets research of Kasikornbank, expects the BOT to raise rates in August by 25 basis points to 0.75%, but believes such tightening would mostly be a symbolic gesture to markets more than an attempt to tackle inflation.

"A hike is purely ceremonial to avert criticism that it's stuck in neutral gear," he said. "Similar to the Fed, they don't want to be caught behind the curve."

Three of the BOT's seven committee members voted for a rate hike this week, a contrast to its August meeting at which two members voted for a cut. Kobsidthi said the board's new concern about inflation may not endure if threats to economic growth take precedence.

Thailand's headline inflation hit a near 14-year high of 7.1% in May, well above the BOT's target range of 1-3%. The BOT predicts inflation of 6.2% for the whole of 2022.

Other analysts see conviction in the central bank's acknowledgement of inflation as an issue, and have added a series of rate hikes to their projections for this year from none previously.

But they still see limits to the pace of tightening given the fragile business environment.

WTO Chief Warns of Rocky Road to Deals

GENEVA (Dispatches) - World Trade Organization chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala expressed cautious optimism on Sunday that more than 100 trade ministers meeting in Geneva would achieve one or two global deals this week, but warned the path there would be bumpy and rocky.

The director-general from Nigeria said the world had changed since the WTO's last ministerial conference nearly five years ago.

"I wish I could say for better. It has certainly become more complex," she told a news conference before the meeting, listing the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and major food and energy crises as pieces of a "polycrisis".

She urged trade ministers to go the extra mile over the coming days to achieve agreements such as to reduce fishing subsidies, boost access to COVID-19 vaccines, address food security and to set a course for reform of the WTO itself.

"Let me be clear, even landing one or two will not be an easy road. The road will be bumpy and rocky. There may be a landmine along the way," Okonjo-Iweala said, adding she was "cautiously optimistic" that the meeting would conclude with one or two deals.

She also cautioned ministers they should not expect to achieve everything on their countries' wish lists and recognize that compromises are never perfect.

Pakistan Unemployment Up 27.6%

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The number of Pakistanis seeking jobs abroad in the year 2021 has risen to 27.6 per cent as compared to the previous year, local media reported.

This comes as there has been a decline in Pakistan's employment market. To add to the woes, the COVID pandemic has given another blow to the opportunities for employment in Pakistan which is shrinking by the day.

Pakistan's Bureau of Emigration Overseas Employment (BEOE) in the year 2021,

registered 286,648 workers for overseas employment. This represents a 27.6 per cent increase over the previous year, reported Dawn.

Among the main destinations for unskilled migrant workers are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar.

A total of 54 per cent of Pakistani sought to move to Saudi Arabi, 13.4 per cent to Oman and 13.2 per cent to Qatar. Meanwhile, it has been witnessed that there is an overall increasing trend in terms of migrants registered in 2021 as compared to 2020.

Bifurcating the provincial data reveals that Punjab province had the most workers go abroad, with 1,56,877, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 76,213 individuals, as per the media portal.

Meanwhile, according to the findings of a survey conducted by the Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR), 43 per cent of respondents slammed the three-year rule by former Prime Minister Imran Khan-led government for its inability to control inflation and for the country's debilitating economy.

Earlier, Pakistan's Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah also slammed the Imran Khan-led government and said it wasted many precious years of the country. Sanaullah said PTI played havoc with the economy through most unstable and everyday changing tax policies, which plunged the country into the quagmire of inflation.

The Interior Minister said that PTI only painted a rosy picture and made false promises which proved a total failure. He said the burden of foreign loans had become unbearable only because of the ill-conceived policies of the PTI.

Meanwhile, in its recent 'Pakistan Development Update', the World Bank has highlighted the structural weaknesses of Pakistan's economy which include low investment, low exports, and a low productivity growth cycle.

Further, high domestic demand pressures and rising global commodity prices would lead to double-digit inflation in the country. Moreover, the growth momentum is not expected to pick up in Pakistan in the near future as a sharp spike in the import bill would also impact the Pakistani Rupee adversely, as per local media.

IRCS Ready to Dispatch Medicine to Sri Lanka

TEHRAN (MNA) – Pirhossein Kolivand, Head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has said that the society is ready to send medicine and physicians to Sri Lanka. Kolivand made the remarks in a meeting with the Sri Lankan Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran G.M.V. Wishwanath Aponsu, noting that the IRCS, in line with its high humanitarian goals, is able to offer aid after reviewing Sri Lanka's pharmaceutical needs.

If the Sri Lankan administration declares a need and considers a place for providing services, the IRSC can dispatch its health team, which includes volunteer medical personnel, to a deprived area of the country for some time and provide visits, medicines, and treatment services for patients. The Sri Lankan envoy Aponsu, for his part, said that Iran is a manufacturer of medicines, and medical equipment, urging the IRSC to cooperate with Sri Lanka.



Offshore Methane Gas Leak Spotted From Space

PARIS (Dispatches) - Scientists have for the first time used satellite data to detect a major offshore leak of the potent greenhouse gas methane, according to peer-reviewed research.

The findings add a crucial tool to an expanding space-based arsenal for pinpointing previously invisible methane plumes from the oil and gas industry.

Fossil fuel operations globally emitted about 120 million tons of the planet-warming gas in 2020, nearly one-third of all methane emissions from human activity, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The new study in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology Letters* identified a plume from an oil and gas production platform in the Gulf of Mexico that spewed some 40,000 tons over a 17-day period in December.

The platform, near Campeche in southern Mexico, is in one of the country's biggest oil producing fields.

"Our results demonstrate how satellites can detect methane plumes from offshore infrastructure," senior author Luis Guanter, a professor at Valencia Polytechnic University, said in a statement.

"It opens the door to systematic monitoring of industrial emissions from individual offshore platforms."

Satellite-based methods for spotting methane leaks over land have developed rapidly in the last few years, training an uncomfortable spotlight on regulators and industry.

But equivalent techniques have been lacking for leaks from offshore oil and gas operations, which account for about 30 percent of global production.

Up to now, ocean water's capacity to absorb short-wave infrared radiation has limited the amount of reflected light reaching space-based sensors.

Guanter and colleagues overcame this problem with a new method for measuring solar radiation bouncing off the water's surface, called Sun-glint observation mode.

Methane is responsible for roughly 30 percent of the global rise in temperatures to date.

While far less abundant in the atmosphere than CO₂, it is about 28 times more powerful as a greenhouse gas on a century-long timescale. Over a 20-year time frame, it is 80 times more potent.



Methane lingers in the atmosphere for only a decade, compared to hundreds or thousands of years for CO₂.

This means a sharp reduction in emissions could shave several tenths of a degree Celsius off of projected global warming by mid-century, helping keep alive the Paris Agreement goal of capping Earth's average temperature increase to 1.5C, according to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Last year saw a record jump in the atmospheric concentration of methane, US government scientists reported in April.

Methane is generated by the production, transport and use of fossil fuels, but also from the decay of organic matter in wetlands, and as a by-product of livestock digestion in agriculture.

At last year's COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, more than 100 nations agreed under the Global Methane Pledge to reduce emissions 30 percent by 2030. But several major methane emitters -- including China, Russia, Iran and India -- failed to sign.

Turkey Bets on Modern Cruise Hub To Boost Tourism



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - A state-of-the-art port in Istanbul with an underground terminal, a celebrity chef's restaurant and a shopping center, welcomes yet another 5,000-passenger cruise ship, bringing more cash to Turkey's struggling tourism industry.

Hit hard by Covid, Turkey's tourism sector could get a shot in the arm from the revenue generated at Galataport, which opened in 2021 -- a year later than planned due to the pandemic.

The port could also provide a boost to an economy that has been weighed down by double-digit inflation and a currency in free fall, though the project has drawn criticism over the destruction of historical monuments and the potential environmental impact.

Figen Ayan, chief port officer at Galataport, said "ships began to arrive one after the other" after the facility opened in October.

"Galataport has become the face of tourism," she told AFP.

The 20-story Costa Venezia vessel from Italy was taking passengers from an 11-day voyage to the Aegean Sea when it docked in Galataport, its gangway connecting directly to the futuristic underground customs terminal.

The port is home to a shopping center, a hotel, cultural venues and a restaurant owned by Turkish butcher Nusret Gokce, better known as Salt Bae, the social media star who sprinkles salt on steaks in front of celebrity customers. "Galataport Istanbul is much more than a cruise port," Ayan said.

Around 30 cruise ships have so far anchored at Galataport and 200 more are expected by the end of the year, which amounts to 450,000 passengers.

The pandemic caused havoc in the global cruise ship industry as vessels were hit by outbreaks and vessels were banned in several countries.

"Now we can say that we have left the pandemic behind and that the cruise sector, which is an important segment of tourism, has revived and is on the move," Ayan said.

The target is 1.5 million cruise passengers and 25 million visitors annually.

"If a regular tourist spends \$62 daily, a cruise passenger spends \$400. He spends up to eight times more in one day," she said.

The project also opened up a 1.2-kilometre (three-quarter-mile) coastline that had been closed to public use for 200 years.

But critics, including some urban planners and architects, say the gentrification of the area destroyed old neighborhoods, with the shopping center replacing a historical post office building, and also posed a risk to the environment.

Norwegian Climber Sets Her Sights on 14 Peaks Record

KATHMANDU (Dispatches) - A Norwegian climber is on track to beat the time record for summiting the globe's 14 highest peaks, part of her quest to change how the mountaineering world views women athletes.

Kristin Harila has already climbed six mountains over 8,000 metres (26,250 feet) high, including Everest, in the last two months.

The 36-year-old hopes to match or surpass Nepali adventurer Nirmal Purja and his groundbreaking 2019 record of six months and six days, an achievement that smashed the previous record and was profiled in a popular Netflix documentary.

"In history and until now, it has been the strong macho men going out climbing mountains," Harila told AFP this week.

"When I talk to people that are not in this sport, they believe that men are more capable than women... If we are going to change, we need to get attention and show that women are just as capable."

Male climbers and guides far outnumber women in the top tier of the sport, with only a handful of women mountaineers getting attention and sponsorships for their expeditions.

Out of nearly a thousand climbers who visited Nepal's famed Himalayan peaks this year, only around a fifth were women, according to Nepali government data.

Harila's first notable climb was on Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro in 2015, but she made headlines last year for becoming the fastest woman to travel between the summits of Everest and Mount Lhotse in Nepal.

She accomplished that feat in 12 hours, but broke her own record this year, knocking four hours off her time.

But neither record was enough to convince major sponsors to back her current endeavour.



"There are lots of girls and women (who want) to climb, they want to have the sponsorship from the brands," she said. "It's easier for the brands to believe in what the men are presenting."

The former cross-country skier was able to find support from Bremont Watches and some other brands, but still had to sell her apartment to fund the project, she said.

Only around 40 people in history have summited all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre-plus peaks.

Norwegian mountaineer Kristin Harila arranges her equipment after an interview with AFP in Kathmandu.

None have come close to Nirmal Purja's 2019 expedition. He demolished the previous record for accomplishing the feat with supplemental oxygen, set by Poland's Jerzy Kukuczka in the 1980s at seven years, 11 months and 14 days.

Harila said the Nepali climber was an "inspiration". "But for me, it is not a competition against him, I don't care much about that," she added.

Nonetheless, she climbed her first six peaks in just 29 days, accompanied by her Nepali guides Pasdawa and Dawa Ongju Sherpa, breaking an earlier record set by Purja.

"She is a very strong and determined climber. The first phase has been record-breaking," Lakpa Sherpa of 8K Expeditions, Harila's expedition organiser, told AFP. The team is now preparing to leave for Pakistan to climb their next five mountains, including K2 and the 8,126 metre (26,660 foot) Nanga Parbat, while she raises more funds for the expedition. Maya Sherpa, the president of the Everest Summiters Association, said Harila's project was a welcome effort to bring more women into the male-dominated climbing world.

"Climbers like her are very important to set an example," Sherpa said.

S. Korea to Boost Defense Capacity to Counter North Korean Threat

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - South Korean Defence Minister Lee Jong-sup said on Sunday that his country would enhance its defence capabilities and work closely with the United States and Japan to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threat.

Lee, speaking at an Asian security meeting in Singapore, said the situation on the Korean peninsula posed a global threat and he urged North Korea to immediately end its nuclear weapon and missile programs.

The United States warned this month that North Korea is preparing to conduct a seventh nuclear test, and says it will again push for United Nations sanctions if that happens.

Tehran Defends...

FROM PAGE 1

He said that Grossi has "made a trip to a wrong place and at the wrong time" and that he has "met with wrong people and dealt a heavy blow to the agency's credibility."

"These actions have discredited the achievements of international organizations. Under the Statute of the IAEA, its chief is obligated to ensure the independence and impartiality of the organization," he added.

Khatibzadeh also condemned the imprisonment of Assadollah Assadi, an Iranian diplomat detained in Belgium on false terror-related charges, and called for

his immediate release.

The spokesman slammed Assadi's detention as a gross violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961.

"By the order of the president [Ebrahim Raisi], an international legal complaint was lodged, demanding the release of Mr. Assadi. The Belgian government has violated the convention and developed a dangerous contrivance. Mr. Assadi must be released unconditionally and his dignity restored," Khatibzadeh said.

A STRONG ANTI-IMPERIALISM BLOC

FROM PAGE 1

Maduro said Venezuela and Iran have enjoyed brotherly ties for decades, reiterating his country's resolve to seek closer cooperation with Tehran. He said Caracas and Tehran have revolutionary backgrounds and they have always supported one another in hard times.



He also stated that the two countries are working to expand cooperation in the tourism sector and establish direct flights between Caracas and Tehran.

Meanwhile on Saturday, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei once again hailed Venezuela and Mr. Maduro for resistance against excessive demands of the imperialist U.S.

Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran and Venezuela have managed to withstand heavy pressures and the hybrid warfare of the United States, stressing that resistance is the sole path to victory. Ayatollah Khamenei praised the victory of the Venezuelan government and nation in a tough struggle against the U.S. and a hybrid and all-out war it has waged against Caracas and stated, "Your resistance and that of the people of Venezuela is very valuable because it enhances the value, status and merits of a nation and a country as well as its leaders."

"Today, the U.S. views Venezuela in a different [manner] compared to the past," the Leader said.

The Leader welcomed a 20-year partnership agreement signed between Tehran and Caracas aimed at bolstering bilateral cooperation in various fields, and emphasized that the Iranian and Venezuelan governments must further strengthen their relationship.

Referring to cordial ties between Iran and Venezuela, the Leader stated, "The two countries do not have such close relations with any [other] country, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has shown that it takes risks in times of danger and offers a helping hand to its friends."

Ayatollah Khamenei also commended Maduro's anti-Zionism stance as "very genuine and brave."

The Islamic Republic of Iran has proved that it can be a reliable friend for those who are sincere and Venezuela has realized it and it has decided to boost its cooperation with Tehran and forming a strong anti-imperialism because this is Tehran which has rushed to the assistance of Venezuela in the hard times by dispatching tankers carrying fuel to Venezuela despite both states being under the U.S. unilateral sanctions.

Now Tehran and Caracas can strengthen their all-out ties by signing this 20-year agreement as it will help both states to skirt the sanctions and flourish their economies and Maduro's visit to Tehran is another warning to the U.S. and the West and they will definitely try to disrupt this strong bloc by resorting to different tricks but they should know that Tehran and Caracas have found their ways and will not let anyone to disrupt this strong bloc which can encourage other independent states to join it.

Now it is time for both countries to boost their all-out ties and Caracas can take advantage of Iran's progresses in many industries as the Venezuelan saw some small sign of this incredible visit of Iran when they received Iranian-made oil tanker and it can be a beginning for Caracas to cooperate with Iran in other economic, medical, social and agro fields and any cordial cooperation will be a backlash to the West which has been trying to isolate these independent and anti-imperialism states.

FDI...

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Iran has seen lower levels of direct foreign investment since former US president Donald Trump unilaterally left the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018 and re-imposed the anti-Iran sanctions that the deal had lifted.

Trump also targeted the Iranian economy with secondary sanctions, which include bans on third parties that wished to maintain their economic relations with Tehran.

However, investment has continued to flow into Iran despite difficulties facing foreign actors in transferring funds and settling payments because of the U.S. bans.

Iranian Crew on...

FROM PAGE 1

Mahan's spokesperson Amir Hossein Zolanvari said on Sunday that the aircraft had been sold to a Venezuelan customer a year ago.

Zolanvari described the move to impound a plane previously owned by Mahan Air as politically motivated.

The impounding comes just after Iran and Venezuela declared they will expand their economic and political ties through a 20-year cooperation agreement signed between the two countries on Saturday.

The agreement was signed during an official visit by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to Tehran.

McIlroy, Finau Share PGA Canadian Open Lead

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Tony Finau closed with a 25-foot birdie putt to share the lead with four-time major winner Rory McIlroy after the third round of the US PGA Tour's Canadian Open.

World number 18 Finau matched the low round of his PGA career with an eight-under par 62 while eighth-ranked McIlroy fired a 65 to stand on 11-under 199 after 54 holes at St George's Golf and Country Club in suburban Toronto.

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ISSN 1024-6053

P.O. Box: 15875-8551

Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Printed by:Honar Sarzmin Sabz

Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute

Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Axelsen Wins Indonesia Masters Title

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Danish badminton ace Viktor Axelsen clinched the men's singles title at the Indonesia Masters on Sunday, beating Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen in straight sets.

The world number one beat Chou 21-10, 21-12 in a 41-minute match held at the Istora sporting arena in Jakarta.

"I love playing here in Istora and I always dreamt of winning a tournament at Istora. It's a legendary venue, so to have done that is something that is really special to me," 28-year-old Axelsen told reporters.

Verstappen Wins Azerbaijan GP

BAKU (Dispatches) - World champion Max Verstappen led a Red Bull 1-2 in Sunday's Azerbaijan Grand Prix in a potentially key moment of the title race after pole-sitter Charles Leclerc and Ferrari endured another dose of misery with a double retirement.

Sergio Perez had jumped Leclerc to the first turn before Verstappen took control as the Ferraris of Carlos Sainz and then Leclerc retired with engine problems.

George Russell took third ahead of teammate Lewis Hamilton who needed a helping elbow to climb out of his cockpit such was the state of his back after an afternoon being jolted around his bouncing car.

Verstappen's fifth win of the season, and the 25th of his career, tightened his grip on the drivers' standings with Perez moving into second, 21 points behind, while the luckless Leclerc slipped to 34 points adrift.

"Was that a good drive or was that a good drive?" a pleased Verstappen asked over the team radio, after ending his jinx in Baku, where he had never made the podium.

It was a memorable day for Red Bull who are 80 points clear of Ferrari in the constructors' championship ahead of round nine in Montreal next week.

As for Ferrari their habit of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory through questionable strategy or unreliability is beginning to look potentially fatal for their title ambitions.

Leclerc, for the fourth time, was unable to convert pole into a win, and he had his head in his hands in frustration.

"Better days will come" if the team just sticks together, Sainz suggested.

That's what Mercedes have been saying to themselves, and the world, all season as they struggle to unlock their cars' potential.

Yet despite their troubles Russell is fourth in the title race and Mercedes third in the constructors standings.

The eighth round of the season saw track temperature pushing 50 degrees in the Land



of Fire. Cars on the grid were treated to disco-style blasts of dry ice in the pre-race build up.

Ahead of a stirring rendition of the Azerbaijani national anthem, Leclerc looked cool, leaning against a wall in shades with a kind soul holding a Ferrari red umbrella to protect him from the Sunday afternoon heat.

Also cooling down has been Leclerc's red hot early-season form after failing to convert three poles into wins.

An Italian inquisition after the botched strategy calls at Monaco last time out and the evidence from qualifying and practice here had left Leclerc optimistic that 'Saturday's man' could become 'Sunday's king'.

But Perez, sharing the front row, helped rip that plan to shreds when as he charged past on the short run to the first turn as Leclerc locked up.

After eight laps, Sainz limped out, his engine spluttering to a standstill, leaving Leclerc in an unequal struggle against the two Red Bulls.

Verstappen pounced on Perez to take the lead at the start of lap 15, as Leclerc posted the fastest lap, Perez then pitted, coming out behind Leclerc, who was struggling to keep up with Verstappen, the gap at eight seconds with a third of the race completed.

When he did start gaining, Leclerc's race went up in a cloud of smoke when his engine blew on lap 21 to leave the Red Bulls an unmissable shot at an empty Baku goal.

"Difficult to understand for now," said Leclerc. "It hurts."

Van Rijthoven Upsets Medvedev to Win First ATP Title



HERTOGENBOSCH (Dispatches) - Dutch wildcard Tim van Rijthoven capped a dream run at the Libema Open by beating top seed Daniil Medvedev 6-4 6-1 in the final in 's-Hertogenbosch.

Van Rijthoven, ranked 205th in the world, had never won a main-draw match at an ATP Tour event until this week and he knocked out third seed Taylor Fritz and second seed Felix Auger-Aliassime before victory over Medvedev in 65 minutes secured his maiden title.

The 25-year-old Van Rijthoven broke Medvedev four times and when the Russian's return on championship point hit the net, he sank to the grass turf as the home crowd cheered their first Dutch champion on home soil in 19 years.

"Congrats Tim, amazing week. First time in an ATP tournament (final) and straightaway you destroy the number two in the world in straight sets," Medvedev said after collecting the runners-up trophy.

"I don't know how it feels, so it must be a good feeling!"

Medvedev, the U.S. Open champion, became the world number one on Monday.

Schwartzel Wins LIV Opener to Pocket \$4m Jackpot

LONDON (Dispatches) - South Africa's Charl Schwartzel held off compatriot Hennie Du Plessis to claim the biggest pay cheque in golf history at the opening event of the LIV Invitational Series.

The 37-year-old led by three strokes going into the third and final round at the Centurion course north of London, and consolidated with a round of 72 to seal the \$4 million prize.

Schwartzel, whose previous highest pay cheque was the \$1.4 million he scooped for winning the 2011 Masters, ended up on seven-under with Du Plessis finishing one stroke back. Another South African, Branden Grace, finished third on five under.

All three were playing for the Stingers team who easily won the team element of the new series.

"You know, it's a relief," Schwartzel said. "I had it in my hands but I made it a bit more difficult than it should have been. The (organizers) put up an amazing show, the kind of money they put up for us is out of this world."

Schwartzel's victory ended a tumultuous launch week for the breakaway circuit which is backed to the tune of \$250 million by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF).

Organizers will point to decent-sized crowds, plenty of glitz and the presence of big names including six-time major champion Phil Mickelson, Dustin Johnson and Sergio Garcia.

Alexandrova Stuns Sabalenka In Den Bosch Final

AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - Ekaterina Alexandrov captured her 2nd career trophy against Aryna Sabalenka after a strong win in two sets 7-5 6-0.

The Russian player played a very comfortable week and it was a level similar to the one she showed in Madrid earlier this year when she reached the semifinal. Alexandrova has been showing a very high level at times this year and today was another case. She was greatly helped by an absent-minded Sabalenka who failed to be present when it mattered the most.

Berrettini Stuns Murray in Stuttgart Final



Perhaps the more pressing concern, however, was Murray requiring treatment from the physio on two occasions in the third set, with Queen's and Wimbledon on the horizon.

Berrettini was playing in his first tournament since March due to a right hand injury that

STUTTGART (Dispatches) - Andy Murray missed out on his first grass-court title since winning Wimbledon in 2016 as he was beaten by Matteo Berrettini in the final of the Stuttgart Open on Sunday.

The former world number one suffered a 4-6 7-5 3-6 defeat to the Italian in what marked just his second-ever loss in 10 grass-court finals.

Murray had picked up his first victory over a top-five player in more than five years when he stunned Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarter-finals, before defeating Australian Nick Kyrgios to reach his 70th career final and 10th on grass.

He finishes the week ranked 47th in the world having moved back inside the top 50 for the first time since May 2018 with the win over Kyrgios in the semi-finals. Victory in the final would have seen him rise to 35th in the rankings.

Murray had the chance to win his first ATP Tour title since 2019 back in January, only to suffer a straight-sets defeat to Aslan Karatsev in the final of the Sydney Tennis Classic.

Berrettini edged a tight opening set 6-4 after Murray had failed to capitalise on four break points while trailing 2-1. The Scot then rescued three break points to hold in response but was unable to make up the ground.

Kyrgios Claims He Was Racially Abused

STUTTGART (Dispatches) - Australian firebrand Nick Kyrgios claimed he was racially abused by sections of the crowd as he slipped to a bad-tempered defeat against Andy Murray in the Stuttgart semi-finals.

Kyrgios was penalized a point and then a game for unsportsmanlike conduct early in the second set, smashing a racquet before an angry exchange with a group in the crowd.

The 27-year-old, who is of Greek origin, said he had been the victim of racism. "When is this going to stop? Dealing with racist slurs from the crowd?" Kyrgios wrote on Instagram.

"I understand that my behavior isn't the best all the time, but 'you little black sheep' 'shut up and play' - little comments like this are not acceptable.

"When I retaliate to the crowd I get penalized. This is messed up."

After the tournament supervisor was called, Kyrgios merely went through the motions on court as Murray took complete command to secure a 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 victory in 93 minutes.

"You expect things to happen against him, so I'm not surprised when they do," said Murray on Kyrgios.

"It was a very frustrating set for him to lose and he broke a racquet. He also had a back and forth with the umpire and something seemed to happen in the crowd.

"But I didn't really hear anything after the first set."



Bale Warns of Crazy Demands On Players

LONDON (Dispatches) - Gareth Bale has warned "crazy" demands will have serious consequences for players as he dismissed talk that he will be joining Spanish club Getafe after leaving Real Madrid.

Bale, a free agent after his nine-year stay at the European champions came to an end, again stressed that he would resolve his future following his summer break.

The Wales captain came up against Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne when Belgium visited Cardiff for Saturday's Nations League clash.

De Bruyne criticized the competition last week, saying that four matches in a week and a half at the end of a long season was "asking for trouble", and complained that he had not had a vacation "for eight or nine years".

"It's crazy," Bale said. "We were speaking the other day at lunch and someone said De Bruyne could play 79 games next season and have a three-week break.

"It's too much and things obviously need to change. Players will tell you there are way too many games." He added: "There will be consequences in the long term. People's bodies can't deal with that sort of calendar year after year.

"Something has to change and people at the top of the game have to do something. Unfortunately, money comes into it. It's a business and they want to make more money."

Bale, 32, said last week that he had received "loads of offers" for next season, but again stressed he will take his time before deciding where to play ahead of the World Cup, which starts in November.

Reports suggested the forward could stay in Spain with Madrid-based Getafe after their president Angel Torres said Bale had been offered to them.

