

Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Reached 141,363 With 2 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Director of the Foreign Ministry's Department for Public Diplomacy Said That 51 Stolen Artifacts From Iran Have Been Identified and Efforts Are Underway to Return Them to the Country

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Iran Notified IAEA of Natanz Construction Work

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has notified the UN nuclear agency of its plan to relocate the activities of the TESA complex in Karaj to the city of Natanz, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said.

In an interview with Nour News, which is affiliated with the country's top security body, Behrouz Kamalvandi said the move was taken to intensify security measures around Iran's nuclear facilities.

Referring to last year's sabotage at the TESA complex, the AEOI spokesman said the transfer of some of the activities to an area near the Natanz nuclear site aims to prevent the recurrence of such attacks.

The complex in Karaj, on the outskirts of Tehran, saw a sabotage attack in June last year, which authorities blamed on Israel. The attack damaged surveillance cameras at the site.

In response to reports in Western media about construction activities near the Natanz nuclear site, Kamalvandi said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been informed about it, even though Iran has no obligation to provide such information to the agency.

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Raisi Highlights Plans of Popular Gov't On Anniversary of Election Victory



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi says that the election last year was the reiteration of the people to implement the original ideals of the Revolution in the field of justice and the fight against poverty, corruption and discrimination.

In a ceremony that was held on Saturday on the anniversary of the 2021 presidential election, the President met with a group of people from Pishva, Qarchak and Varamin who had gathered at the Jahan Pahlavan Takhti Stadium in this city, saying, "Pishva and Varamin appeared with insight and vigilance not only at the beginning of the Islamic movement, but also in the continuation of the struggles leading to the Islamic Revolution in 1979, during the Holy Defense, the 2009 incidents".

The President called the numerous martyrs of these regions a sign of the people's loyalty to the revolution and the Islamic system and added, "The epic presence of the people of Qarchak, Pishva and Varamin in defending Islamic values was not limited to the past".

Raisi stated, "Therefore, I decided to come to the people today, on the first anniversary of the election of the Popular Administration, instead of attending symbolic meetings, and to pursue the completion of semi-finished projects".

Referring to his visit to a number of semi-finished projects in different parts of Varamin city, the President stated, "Thanks to the Islamic Revolution, many measures have been done for this region, but there is still a lot of unfinished work left".

The President added, "I have instructed my colleagues in the government and the Ministry of the Interior to study the strategies and conditions for the establishment of two provinces in the east and west of the province".

Raisi continued his speech by referring to the presence of people at the ballot box despite the difficult conditions caused by coronavirus in the presidential elections in June 2021, and said, "Apart from the difficult conditions of coronavirus, the enemy was trying to dissuade people from going to the polls, but the enemy failed due to the insight and vigilance of the people".

The President added, "Today, thanks to God, the situation has changed and the number of COVID-19 death cases has dropped to single digits from about 700 deaths per day, and in some days it has become zero, which has been achieved thanks to God, the efforts of the health care staff".

Raisi referred to the financial and budgetary problems of the Popular Administration at the beginning of its tenure and said, "Many people asked us how you want to solve the problem of the budget deficit of 480 trillion tomans. While the government was struggling to pay its employees in the first month of its operation, thanks to God and the awareness of the people, we were able to get through this difficult phase without borrowing from the central bank or printing money that could cause new problems".

"In the first months of the government, we also had concerns about the supply of basic goods," he said.

In another part of his speech, Raisi pointed out that the people's vote on June 2021 was for the administration of justice, stating, "What the people demanded was to fight poverty, corruption and discrimination".

"The construction of 4 million housing units during the four years is a promise of the government, the need of the country and the clarification of the law, and we must act on it, if this does not happen, the backlogs in the field of housing will be piled up," he said.

Stating that good steps have been taken in the fields of education, housing and health in the period since the beginning of the office of the Popular Administration, Raisi said, "During this period, 5 million needy families were covered by health insurance without any payment and this process will continue".

The President stated that one of the main plans and goals of the Popular Administration is to reform the corrupt structures and added, "I was dealing with corruption in the judiciary and I came here to fight the corrupt bases".

Raisi continued his speech by referring to some statements about provincial trips, adding, "Those who criticize provincial trips and the presence of the servants among the people, do not have the experience of being among the people and meeting them. I suggest them to attend public gatherings and enjoy being among the people".

The President noted, "I emphasize that all officials of the Popular Administration should be with the people, among the people and know that it is the presence and support of the people that will solve the problems in various fields".

In another part of his speech, the President said that what we are pursuing in the economic field is that the people, the market and economic actors see peace and economic growth.

Raisi stated, "The work has started with the presence of the people, and economic growth and progress and deterrent authority will be achieved with the participation and presence of the people".

The President stated, "Work has begun to eliminate all threats and gain strength and authority in the world to defend power, independence and the Islamic Republic".

Saying that we have a long way to go, the President noted, "Despite all the sanctions and threats, I see a very bright future and I am sure that the enemy will not be able to defeat us".

The President said, "The enemies and ill-wishers of the Islamic Republic of Iran have tried to make the government busy about unimportant matters in recent months, but I urged all government officials to be careful not to get caught up in unimportant matters".

He said, "We like a school that can communicate our belief in society by following the late Imam and the Supreme Leader. I urge everyone not to be busy with unimportant matters and to know that success means serving the people, and serving the people means serving God, and this is the only way to solve the problems of the country".

ViewPoint End Does Not Justify the Means

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

We Muslims believe that end does not justify the means and it means we are not ready to attain our goals by resorting to any action against our principles as Muslim, and regarding the nuclear talks and the revival of the JCPOA this principle will be observed by our negotiating team.

In recent weeks Iran's negotiating team has been under pressure and criticism of the Western countries and even some pro-Western politicians or analysts inside the country as they have tried to blame the negotiating team for prolongation of the JCPOA talks or even the failure of the talks while the main culprit of this prolongation, namely the U.S., has been ignored.

On Thursday and reacting to such baseless claims, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani said the Islamic Republic will not allow the Israeli regime to promulgate anti-Tehran ideologies and accord legitimacy to its Iranophobia campaign.

Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a meeting of the Academic Association of Islamic Iran at the University of Tehran in the capital on Thursday, during which the senior diplomat expounded on the strategic features of the country's foreign policy apparatus in the current Iranian administration.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister for political affairs also echoed the same comments in a thread of posts on his Twitter page.

"The enemies of the Iranian nation should know that the Iran, which was able to defeat the 'U.S.' maximum pressure campaign' and force the White House leaders to admit this disgraceful failure, will not allow the Zionists to promote Iranophobia through a 'maximum blackmail game' and legitimize their anti-Iran sentiments," Bagheri Kani said.

The senior diplomat also stressed that among the strategic features of the foreign policy apparatus in the current Iranian administration is to avoid "spending its foreign policy treasures" for the success of diplomacy.

This is exactly one of the major principles of a Muslim and an Islamic Republic of Iran's politicians which has been sometimes ignored by some pro-Western statesmen. Bagheri Kani actually stated that end does not justify the means and the negotiating team will not accept the excessive demands of the West just for the sake of striking a deal and to show a false victory, something which has been done in 2015 talks.

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Iran Annual GDP Growth Stands at 4.4%

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.4 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced.

According to the CBI, the figure was 3.9 percent excluding oil.

The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has previously put the country's GDP growth at 4.3 percent including oil, and at 3.5 percent excluding oil in the previous year.

As reported by the center, based on the fixed prices in the Iranian year 1390 (ended on March 19, 2012), the country's GDP stood at 7.569 quadrillion rials (about \$27.725 billion) including the oil sector, and at 6.511 quadrillion rials (about \$23.849 billion) excluding the oil sector in the past year, while the figures were 7.254 quadrillion rials (about \$26.571 billion) and 6.289 quadrillion rials (about \$23.036 billion), respectively, in 1399.

The SCI said that the agriculture sector experienced a negative growth of 3.7 percent, while the industries and mines sector grew six percent, and the services sector's growth stood at 4.5 percent in the previous year.

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Tehran, Moscow Agree to Jointly Make Autos, Railroad

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Russia have agreed on various economic projects, most importantly including joint production of car in Iran and cooperation in construction of Rasht-Astara railway.

The agreements have been made on Friday during the visit to Russia by Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization Alireza Peymanpak.

Peymanpak separately met with Minister of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation Irek Faizullin, Minister in charge of Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission Andrey Slepnev, and former transport minister and CEO of Avtovaz Maxim Sokolov.

They agreed to manufacture an Iranian-Russian car in Iran's soil.

The Iranian official also had a meeting with Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk.

During the meeting, Overchuk said that the Russian President Vladimir Putin was in agreement with Russia's participation in constructing Rasht-Astara railroad, as the activation of the corridor was welcomed by Moscow.

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Iran Not to Leave Result-Oriented Talks

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said that Iran wouldn't distance itself from result-oriented talks.

"Iran won't distance itself from result-oriented talks," Amirabdollahian said in a tweet on Friday. "Abiding by Majlis law, we continue talks & call on US to be realistic & abandon sanctions lunacy; & on IAEA to focus on technical duties instead of adopting politicized approach," he added. He wrapped up his tweet, saying: "We NEVER hesitate to neutralize sanctions."

Tehran Firm on Promoting Regional Cooperation

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says the Islamic Republic is strongly in favor of promoting friendly ties and dialogue between neighboring countries for the benefit of the entire region.

Amirabdollahian said in a phone conversation with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi on Friday that it is regional nations that should be able to decide on the fate of the region as opposed to foreigners.

"Officials of regional [countries] should not allow foreign powers to affect regional cooperation and stability," he said.

He also appreciated Oman's positive role in regional developments and hailed the country's efforts to establish regional peace and stability.

Iran and Oman attach special significance to the expansion of mutual relations, Amirabdollahian said, urging the two countries to implement the agreements signed during a visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Muscat in May.

Iran and Oman, during President Raisi's trip to the Persian Gulf sultanate, signed 12 cooperation documents and memorandums of understanding for the expansion of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

The documents were signed in various fields including energy, politics, transportation, diplomacy, economy, tourism, sports, and environment.

The top Iranian diplomat also welcomed a planned visit by an Omani government delegation to Tehran and said the two sides are determined to improve bilateral cooperation. The Omani foreign minister, for his part, underlined the importance of implementing



the agreements signed during Raisi's visit to Muscat.

He said his country believes the new Iranian administration pursues a constructive strategy based on the expansion of ties with regional states.

The Omani government has established a working group tasked with the pursuit of bilateral agreements, Albusaidi said.

Since taking office in August, President Raisi has underscored the need for more trade and economic cooperation with Arab countries in the Persian Gulf. His administration has reached major agreements with Qatar while trade delegates have been dispatched to the United Arab Emirates and Oman in recent months to explore increased economic ties with those states.

Figures by the Iranian customs office show trade between Iran and Oman reached \$1.336 billion over the Persian calendar year ending late March, a record high and an increase of 53% against the previous year.

Foreign Presence Makes Region Insecure

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Gharai Ashtiani said that the presence of foreign forces in the region makes it insecure.

General Ashtiani made the remarks while inspecting maritime projects being implemented by the defense ministry, including construction of destroyers and surface and undersurface watercrafts.

Brigadier General Ashtiani said that developing Iran's power in all ground, aerial and maritime dimensions was of priority in the country's defense program.

Iran's defense ministry would equip maritime fleet of the armed forces in accordance with their needs and the threats in the region, he added.

"Our message to the world is the message of peace," he noted, adding that regional security and stability can be ensured by the states in the region and extra-regional presence is the reason behind insecurity.

U.S. Sends Mixed Messages of Talks, Sanctions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi said that Iran is right not to trust to the United States, since Washington calls to negotiate and adds to the list of sanctions at the same time.

Speaking in a meeting themed Jihad and progress on Friday, President Raisi said that the Americans have publicly announced that their 'maximum pressure policy' has abjectly failed and now they want to unsuccessfully restrict Iran via sanctions.

Raisi said that it was surprising to him that the

Americans call to negotiation in the one hand and add to the list of sanctions against Iran on the other hand.

What type of action is this, he asked, adding that the world should recognize Iran's right not to trust the US as it has broken its promise.

Iran and the P4+1, namely China, France, Germany, Russia and the UK, have been talking for over a year for a possible return of the US to the 2015 nuclear deal which was put at risk of death by US withdrawal in 2018.

Martyr Soleimani's Daughter Hits Back at Pompeo

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The daughter of Iran's legendary anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, dismisses 'the new lies' of ex-US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who engineered his father's assassination, highlighting America's hypocrisy in dealing with terrorism.

In a tweet, Zeinab Soleimani, reacted to Pompeo's interview with Al Arabiya, during which the Iran hawk claimed what is seen as an attempt to justify the commander's assassination while he was on an official visit to Iraq in early 2020.

Pompeo claimed General Soleimani was involved in a "plot to kill another 500 Americans" before he was murdered in a drone strike ordered by former US President Donald Trump.

He is widely believed to have persuaded Trump to order the assassination. The Trump administration never offered any evidence to support the claims that General Soleimani was "plotting" against American interests in Iraq.

In response, Zainab called attention, in the first place, to the irony of Pompeo "whining about" Iran on a TV channel run by Saudi Arabia, "whose nationals were behind the 9/11 terror attacks on US soil."

She also pointed to leaked confessions of Jake Sullivan, who told his then-State Department boss Hillary Clinton in a 2012 email that, "AQ [Al Qaeda] is on our side in Syria."

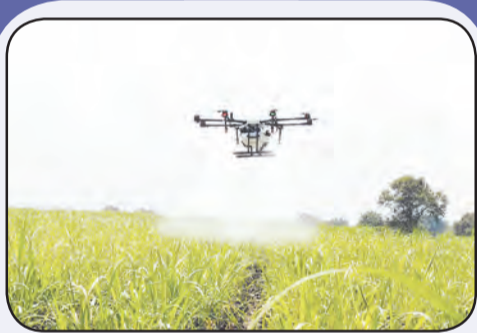
While the U.S. propped up terrorists in Syria, General Soleimani "crushed the terrorists," Zeinab said, referring to his father's role, as the chief commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, in leading the successful regional fight against Takfiri terrorism.

Zeinab also said his father was assassinated a time when he was visiting Iraq to discuss "regional de-escalation," as stated by Iraq's then Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi, despite Pompeo's claims.

"Live in fear liar," she told Pompeo, making an apparent reference to Iran's pledge of harsh revenge.

Iran has requested the international police organization to arrest Trump and 47 other American officials identified as playing a role in the assassination of Soleimani.

Iran Develops Agro-Drones for Crop Dusting



TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has reached self-sufficiency in the production of agricultural drones. An Iranian knowledge-based company has developed the machine at a sci-tech park in the capital, Tehran.

The agro-drones are capable of crop-dusting quickly, at a low cost and with high accuracy, helping protect human's health when it comes to spraying the fields with pesticides.

"The agro-drone is an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) which can be used for crop-dusting and planting at a low cost," says a top official involved in the project.

"These drones are capable of carrying 10-and 21-liter containers of pesticides, liquid manure and different types of agricultural pesticides," the official added.

"These drones enjoy high speed and power, so much so that they can evenly spray pesticides on the ground, using 10 liters of liquid for each hectare of land," he added.

"Also, work can be done ten times faster than traditional methods," the official explained.

"For example, in the traditional method, up to a maximum of 5 hectares of land can be sprayed with pesticides a day, but with these drones, the figure could increase up to 50 hectares per day," he said.

"These drones greatly help economize on water and pesticides, so much so that the water consumption rate drops by 98% and that of pesticides by 30%," said the official.

"These drones move automatically with the help of a satellite system and spread pesticides evenly across the ground, so that no spot is sprayed multiple times, nor is any spot left without being sprayed," added the official.

Over 600 Companies Participating in Iran Agrofood Int'l Exhibition

TEHRAN (MNA) - The 29th International Exhibition of Food, Food Technology and Agriculture (Iran Agrofood 2022) is running at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from Friday until Monday.

The opening ceremony of the international event was participated by Hooman Razdar, the managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) on Friday. Commodity groups of this exhibition include: food products, processing and related industries, equipment and

technology of food industry, packaging equipment, machinery and related industries, agricultural machinery and related industries including irrigation machinery and equipment.

The exhibit is participated by 665 Iranian and foreign exhibitors from Germany, Italy, Brazil, Belarus, Russia, Netherlands, India, Spain, Austria, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Belgium, Turkey, Tunisia, Denmark, Switzerland, Oman, and France.

In addition, the pavilion of knowledge-based companies and startups by the Innovation and Prosperity Fund of the President Office is one of the features of this edition of Iran Agrofood Exhibition.

Quitting NPT Not on Majlis Agenda for Now

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian lawmaker says a withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has not been on the agenda of the Parliament so far, but stresses that the country will never surrender to a one-sided agreement on its nuclear program under pressure.

"For the time being, a withdrawal from the NPT has not been discussed at the Parliament and this issue should be decided as the general policies of the [Iranian] establishment," said Hassan Hemmati, who sits on the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, on Saturday.

He was reacting to some media speculation in Iran that the country has the option of quitting the NPT, following the adoption of a resolution, drafted by the US and its European allies, against the Iranian nuclear program at a meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The legislator said the resolution, which was approved under pressure from the US and Israel, was "expectable."

In nuclear talks with Iran, he added, the Europeans have practically no power and merely follow in the footsteps of the U.S., which has a final say on all the policies pursued by the Western side vis-à-vis Tehran.

Hemmati said no agreement will be reached on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal as long as the conditions set by Iran in the negotiations are not met.

Iran will never accept a one-sided agreement that the other side pushes to impose with bullying, the lawmaker said.

Turkey Blocks Iranian Passenger Plane From Refueling Before Takeoff

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian passenger plane on route from Istanbul to Tehran has been reportedly forced to make an emergency landing in the northwestern city of Tabriz, after Turkey prevented the flight from refueling on its soil.

According to Hamshahronline news outlet, flight 4808 of Meraj Airlines made an emergency landing for refueling at Shahid Madani Airport in Tabriz on Saturday.

Passengers said the plane was supposed to leave Istanbul at 09:00 a.m. local time, but it received permission for flight with an eight-hour delay.

The source also says, in a similar incident on Friday, Turkish airport authorities delayed an Iranian flight from Istanbul to the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad for nine hours.

Iran Tourism Industry Is Growing



TEHRAN (IP) - The spokesman for the Iranian government said employment in Iran's tourism industry had increased by 5.1 percent last year and that foreign tourists had spent \$ 2.5 billion in Iran.

"The latest report from international organizations shows that Iran's tourism industry, which has been down by 45% in 2020, grew by 40% in 2021," Ali Bahadori Jahromi, the government spokesman, tweeted.

Employment in the industry has also increased by 5.1 percent, and foreign tourists have spent \$ 2.5 billion in Iran.

The World Travel and Tourism Council has announced a 21.7% growth in the world tourism industry in 2021.

In 2020, due to Corona restrictions, the industry shrank more than 50 percent, and 4900 billion dollars reduced the value of the sector, but in 2021, with the ease of Corona restrictions, \$ 1000 billion has been gained through tourism in the world economies.

The share of tourism in the economy of Iran in 2020 was more than 3%, which in 2021 has exceeded 4%. With the boom in tourism, the employment rate in the industry in Iran has also increased.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:05
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:48

1. A sura which We have sent down and which We have ordained in it have We sent down Clear Signs, in order that ye may receive admonition.
2. The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, - flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.
Surah 24. Light (1-2)

Iran's Rupee Deposit In UCO Bank Not Enough To Settle Accounts

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The Managing Director of UCO Bank of India says that Iran's deposit in the bank in Indian national currency rupee is not enough for settling financial obligation and this is because of the decline in purchase of Iran's crude oil by Indians as well as decline in the trade exchange between the two states.

In the meeting of Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce with economic and banking activists of the two countries, the MD of UCO Bank Mr. Soma Sankara Prasad said that the bank has played a key role in improving the trade between the two countries and UCO Bank is the only Indian bank which has office in Tehran. He added that the bank has completed a 10-year process for implementing mechanism for payment in national currencies of the two countries and it has tried as a bank to accelerate the trade exchanges between the two states.

On delay for settling the financial obligations, he said that such a similar meeting had been held in the recent past where Indian exporters raised the same complaint, adding that the delay is rooted in decline in India's oil purchase from Iran, and until 2019 when India used to buy Iran's oil there was no problem in settling commercial exchange payments because there was enough money in the account but after 2019, the oil purchase was limited and Iran's rupee deposit in its account was declined.

Prasad emphasized that both countries should find ways for increasing Iran's rupee deposit in the bank for swift financial transactions, adding that statesmen of Iran and India should talk for finding new ways for increasing their bilateral trade exchanges.



He reiterated that UCO Bank only plays the role for accelerating financial exchanges between the two states, and governments and private sectors of the two countries are in charge of increasing the trade exchanges.

Meanwhile Head of Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce Mr. Ebrahim Jamili, for his part, pointed to the recent change in Indian government's approach and expressing interest for improving cooperation to the pre-sanctions era level and said that although he did not know how much India was serious in its recent approach, he called this approach promising.

He emphasized that resolving banking problems will lead to the rise in the trade exchanges, adding that although UCO Bank has been Iran's trade partner from long time and it has had good cooperation even in the sanctions era but the chamber has some complaints about the bank's performance.

Jamili went on to say that trade is a two-way road and demands of both sides should be considered, adding that both sides need more trust for cooperation, noting that business partners of Iran has trusted UCO Bank and deposit their money in the bank and they expect the bank to accelerate cooperation for the transfer of money and financial cooperation. Jamili reiterated that both Iranian and Iranian traders do not get their money in due time while Iran and India have signed the MoU for using mechanism of using national currencies.

He added that the chamber received some complaints from both Iranian and Indian traders over the failure of UCO Bank in fulfilling its commitment in timely payments.

ESCO to Produce 400k Tons of Products With High Value Added This Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) Eng. Iraj Rokhsati as the main speaker of the First Steel Price Advanced High Value Added Steels Conference, which was held on Tuesday at Olympic Hotel of Tehran, pointed to the production condition of these products and said producing products with high value added is one of the main strategies of ESCO and in this line the company seeks producing 400,000 tons of industrial products with high value added this year.

Rokhsati went on to say that with implementing the developmental projects related to the 2025 Outlook Plan, over 60% of company's products, alloy and quality steel products will be with higher value added.

He then pointed to the existing full steel production chain from mineral materials to the final product in this gigantic industrial group, noting that steel production based on the blast furnace-converter method similar to 70% of the steel production units in the world is one of the main advantages of this company for producing its products with high value added.

He went on to say that ESCO with having many national and international certificates for production exported some 1.1m tons of its products last year.

Rokhsati then termed design and production of national rail in ESCO as one of the most important steps of the national steel industries for production of industrial products in the country.

He reiterated that ESCO's tendency for producing industrial products does not mean that it will ignore country's needs to the constructional products and whenever it is needed, the company will produce constructional products to meet the demands of the domestic market as the company played a key role for controlling the prices in the early days of the current year.

Thermal Power Plants Break New Output Record



TEHRAN (MNA) - Electricity generation by Iran's thermal power plants has currently reached 51,800 megawatts (MW) which is a new record in the history of the country's electricity industry, Head of Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC) Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi announced.

According to Rajabi Mashhadi, the output of the country's hydropower plants is also at an acceptable level proportional to the current water shortage situation and the electricity demand, IRNA reported.

So far, no systematic blackouts have been imposed across the country in the domestic sectors, Rajabi Mashhadi said.

Increasing the country's power generation capacity and preventing blackouts during the peak consumption periods have been among the Energy Ministry's top priorities since the current government administration took office in August 2021.

To this end, the ministry had put it on the agenda to increase the capacity of thermal power plants by 5,300 MW by the current Iranian calendar year's summer time peak consumption period (starting on June 22), of which more than 3,000 MW has been achieved so far.

Back in August 2021, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian announced that his ministry was planning to boost the country's power generation capacity by 35,000 MW over the next four years.

The mentioned figure would be achieved through the construction of the thermal power plants with 15,000 MW of capacity, and renewable power plants with the capacity of 10,000 MW by the public and private sectors, as well as the construction of new power plants with 10,000 megawatts capacity by large industries.

Over the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease in rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

Bangladesh Ready for Import of Cotton, Minerals From N. Khorasan

BOJNURD (IRNA) - Bangladesh's ambassador to Tehran has emphasized that North Khorasan Province enjoys a good capacity to provide his country with raw materials, cotton, and mineral products.

A.F.M. Gousal Azam Sarker made the remarks in a meeting with board members of the North Khorasan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture in Bojnurd on Saturday, adding that there is a good opportunity to become familiar with the economic products of the province and invest in the region.

Iran and Bangladesh have been enjoying numerous cultural and historical commonalities for several years and the two countries' viewpoints have come closer in the current century, so there is a proper opportunity to expand trade exchanges, he noted.

The envoy went on to say that he has got much information on the capacities of the province, mentioning that North Khorasan enjoys good capacity in producing minerals, urea fertilizer, and aluminum.

As to the good coordination between Bangladesh's chamber of commerce and North Khorasan, he argued that the South Asian country possesses an eye-catching capacity to invest in the province.

Bangladesh is the second big producer of clothes and the cotton produced in North Khorasan Province is the raw material for the industry that can be



exported to the country, he said.

Moreover, steel and iron industries in North Khorasan can be exported to Bangladesh, the envoy added.

The South Asian country has significantly invested in medicine, he said, adding that North Khorasan has herbal plants, which can be

exported to Bangladesh. The exchange of investments between private sectors of both countries can pave the ground for pursuing joint ventures, he argued.

For his part, Chairman of the North Khorasan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Saeed Purabadi said that the province intends to facilitate investment through the issuance of visas for Bangladeshi investors and merchants to pave the way for export of mineral and agricultural products.

Cement, alumina, and urea fertilizer, along with fruits, are among the products of the province, which can be exported, he said, adding that North Khorasan is one of the best places for planting medicinal herbs.

Bangladesh's ambassador has started his three-day visit to North Khorasan on Saturday in a bid to hold talks with provincial officials and become familiar with the economic capacities of the northwestern province.

From among the 863 thousand people living in North Khorasan Province, 44 percent of the population is residing in rural areas.

Iran Calls for Signing Eurasia Free Trade Agreement Before 2022-End

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) emphasized in Expert Level Iran-Russia Economic Cooperation Conference that the Eurasia free trade agreement needs to be signed before the end of the year 2022.

Ali-Reza Pakpeyman who was speaking at the conference, a side event of the 25th Saint Petersburg International Forum, on Friday evening referred to the Iran-Russia current trade volume that is around 700 billion dollars, out of which only 4 billion dollars, that is a very trivial amount is the two countries' imports and exports.

Referring to the high level political relations of the two countries, Pakpeyman said that Iran-Russia trade volume, too, needs to expand rapidly to match, and the prerequisite for that is taking some important steps urgently.

He said that free trade should be viewed in the chain of provision, reiterating that currently the Iran and Russian merchants are not familiar enough with each other, which leads to the low business interactions between them, although in the course of the past few months a number of business delegations of the two countries have visited the other country.

The TPO chief said that during the course of the past three months the largest business delegations in the Iranian history have been dispatched to Russia, and this has led to satisfactory economic results.

He also said that the potentials in two countries' provinces, too, is very high, which is why we are establishing links between complementary provinces of the two countries, to benefit from each other.

Pakpeyman said that President Ebrahim Raisi, too, has stressed the need for implementation of the Eurasia Cooperation Agreement, saying that the TPO, too, believes the best time to sign the Eurasia Free Trade Agreement is before the end of the current year, 2022.

1st Kazakhstan-Turkey Transit Train Arrives in Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) - Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey rail transit train, carrying a containerized sulfur cargo of Kazakhstan, has arrived in Iran from Incheh Borun Border on Friday morning and will soon arrive in Tehran.

The first Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey transit train, carrying Kazakhstan's export sulfur transit cargo, arrived in the country on Friday morning from the Inche Borun Border rail border.

The train is scheduled to arrive at Tehran Railway Station on Tuesday, June 21 concurrent with the visit of Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Iran.

During the presence of the President of Kazakhstan in Tehran, the new railway corridor from Kazakhstan to Turkey through Iran will be inaugurated symbolically.

Earlier, Kazakhstan's goods were transported to Baku Port via Aktau Port and then to Turkey by Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway but following the increase in shipping transport fares, Iran's rail route has replaced the former sea-rail corridor from Kazakhstan to Turkey.

Saudi Crown Prince To Visit Turkey

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will visit Turkey next week, a Turkish official said today, as Ankara and Riyadh heal a bitter rift following the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul.

It is Prince Mohammed's first visit to Turkey since the brutal killing of Saudi insider-turned-critic Khashoggi inside the kingdom's consulate, which shocked the world and dealt a heavy blow to ties between the regional rivals.

The kingdom's de facto ruler is expected to visit the capital Ankara but details of the visit will be announced "over the weekend", a senior Turkish official told AFP.



N. Korea Sends Aid to 800 Families Suffering From Intestinal Epidemic

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and other senior officials prepared aid to send to 800 families suffering from an unidentified intestinal epidemic, state media reported, as the country also battles its first COVID-19 outbreak.

North Korea revealed this week it was facing an "acute enteric epidemic" on top of a weeks-long outbreak of COVID. It did not elaborate what the disease was, but enteric refers to the gastrointestinal tract. "The officials ... prepared medicines, foodstuff and daily necessities needed for the treatment of the epidemic and stable life to render aid to the people in Haeju City and Kangryong County (of South Hwanghae Province)," the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said.



EU Backs Ukraine's Membership Bid to Live the European Dream

Commission Opinions on EU Membership application



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union gave its blessing for Ukraine and its neighbor Moldova to become candidates to join, in the most dramatic geopolitical shift to result from Russia's invasion.

"Ukrainians are ready to die for the European perspective," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told a news conference, wearing Ukrainian colours - a yellow blazer over a blue blouse.

"We want them to live with us the European dream."

It was only the start of a process that could take many years, but it puts Kyiv on course to realise a goal that would have been far beyond its reach just months ago.

Ukraine applied to join the EU just four days after Russian troops poured across its border in February. Four days later, so did Moldova and Georgia - smaller ex-Soviet states also contending with separatist regions occupied by Russian troops. "It's the first step on the EU membership path that'll certainly bring our victory closer," tweeted President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, thanking von der Leyen and EU members for the decision.

When President Vladimir Putin ordered his "special military operation" to disarm and "denazify" Ukraine, one of his main objectives was to halt the expansion of Western institutions which he called a threat to Russia.

But the war, which has killed thousands of people, destroyed whole cities and set millions to flight, has had the opposite effect. Finland and Sweden have applied to join the NATO military alliance, and the EU has now opened its arms to the east.

Leaders of EU countries are expected to endorse the decision at a summit next week. The leaders of the three biggest - Germany, France and Italy - had signalled their solidarity on Thursday by visiting Kyiv, along with the president of Romania.

"Ukraine belongs to the European family," Germany's Olaf Scholz said after meeting Zelenskiy.

Moldova's President Maia Sandu hailed a "strong signal of support for Moldova and our citizens" and said her government was "committed to working hard" to enact the necessary reforms.

Joining the EU requires years of administrative reform - there are 35 "chapters of the acquis" setting out standards to meet in areas from judicial policy and financial services to food safety. Nor is membership guaranteed - talks have been stalled for years with Turkey, a candidate since 1999.

But the ambition to extend the EU deep into the heart of the former Soviet Union amounts to a shift on par with the decision in the 1990s to welcome the ex-Communist countries of Eastern Europe.

"Precisely because of the bravery of the Ukrainians, Europe can create a new history of freedom, and finally remove the grey zone in Eastern Europe between the EU and Russia," Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address.

If admitted, Ukraine would be the EU's largest country by area and its fifth most populous. All three hopefuls are far poorer than any existing EU members, with per capita output around half that of the poorest, Bulgaria.

All three have recent histories of volatile politics, domestic unrest, entrenched organised crime, and unresolved conflicts with Russian-backed separatists proclaiming sovereignty over territory protected by Moscow's troops.

But in Zelenskiy, 44, and Sandu, 50, Ukraine and Moldova both now have young pro-Western leaders with solid, recent electoral mandates, representing a generation that came of age outside the Soviet Union.

While recommending candidate status for Ukraine and Moldova, the Commission held off for more volatile Georgia, which it said must meet more conditions. Von der Leyen said Georgia had a strong application but had to come together politically.

WTO Strikes Global Trade Deals After Roller Coaster Talks

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The World Trade Organization agreed the first change to global trading rules in years as well as a deal to boost the supply of COVID-19 vaccines in a series of pledges that were heavy on compromise.

The deals were forged in the early hours of the sixth day of a conference of more than 100 trade ministers that was seen as a test of the ability of nations to strike multilateral trade deals amid geopolitical tensions heightened by the Ukraine war.

Delegates, who had expected a four-day conference, cheered after they passed seven agreements and declarations just before dawn on Friday. Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala told them: "The package of agreements you have reached will make a difference to the lives of people around the world. The outcomes demonstrate that the WTO is in fact capable of responding to emergencies of our time."

Earlier she had appealed to WTO members to consider the "delicate balance" required after nearly round-the-clock talks that have at times been charged with anger and accusations.

The package, which the WTO chief called "unprecedented", included the two highest profile deals under consideration - on fisheries and on a partial waiver of intellectual property (IP) rights for COVID-19 vaccines.

The accord to curb fishing subsidies is only the second multilateral agreement setting new global trading rules struck in the WTO's 27-year history and is far more ambitious than the first, which was designed to cut red tape.

At one stage, a series of demands from India, which sees itself as the champion of poor farmers and fishermen as well as developing countries, appeared set to paralyse talks but accommodations were found, trade sources said.

The WTO's rules dictate that all decisions are taken by consensus, with any single member able to exercise a veto. "It was not an easy process. There were a lot of bumps, just like I predicted. It was like a roller coaster, but in the end we got there," an exhausted but elated Okonjo-Iweala told a final news conference.

The deal to ban subsidies for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing or fishing of an over-fished stock has the potential to reverse collapsing fish stocks. Though pared back significantly, it still drew approval.

China is still honing its ability to operate the carriers, and integrate them into battle groups, something the United States has been doing for decades.

Only the United States, with 11 aircraft carriers, has more of the vessels.

The Fujian's launch demonstrates the military's increasing capability at a time of rising tension with the United States over Chinese-claimed Taiwan and Beijing's claims to the South China Sea.

The coastal province of Fujian is just across the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan and home to the Eastern Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army.

Taiwan is a thriving democracy but China considers the island its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under its control.



China Launches Third Aircraft Carrier

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China launched its third aircraft carrier on Friday, the Fujian, named after the province opposite self-ruled Taiwan, sending a statement of intent to rivals as it modernises its military.

President Xi Jinping has made overhauling the world's largest armed forces a central part of his agenda, seeking to project power well beyond China's shores, though the government says it has no hostile intent.

Champagne, colourful ribbons, water cannons and smoke were deployed to celebrate the carrier's launch and official naming at a ceremony at the Jiangnan shipyard in Shanghai, state media reported.

Dozens of navy personnel lined up in front of the ship and sang the national anthem at the ceremony, which was attended by senior officials including Xu Qiliang, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission.

The aircraft carrier features a full-length flight deck with a catapult launch system, according to state media.

The Fujian will join the Shandong, commissioned in late 2019, and the Liaoning, which China bought second-hand from Ukraine in 1998 and refitted domestically.

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Indian Trains Set Ablaze in Protests Against Military Hiring Changes

LUCKNOW (Dispatches) - Protesters in India threw stones at police and set fire to train coaches as demonstrations against a new military recruitment process raged for a second day, police said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government announced this week an overhaul of the recruitment process for the 1.38 million-strong armed forces, aiming to bring in more people on short, four-year contracts to lower the average age of personnel.

But many potential recruits object, saying they should be allowed to serve longer than four years. Opposition parties and some members of Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party say the system will lead to more unemployment in a country grappling with joblessness.

Police fired shots in the air yesterday to push back stone-throwing crowds in the northern state of Haryana. Protesters gathered again today, torching train coaches in at least two stations in the eastern state of Bihar and disrupted rail services, police said.

"They have blocked trains in 10 places today," Sanjay Singh, a senior police official in Bihar, told Reuters, adding that more than 100 people had been arrested in protests across the state yesterday.

Hundreds of people also gathered in the southern city of Secunderabad to throw stones at police, in a sign that the protests were spreading.

"They have also set fire to properties at Secunderabad railway station," police official A.R. Srinivas said.

The new recruitment system, called Agnipath or "path of fire" in Hindi, will bring in men and women between the ages of 17-and-a-half and 21 for a four-year tenure at non-officer ranks, with only a quarter retained for longer periods.

Soldiers have previously been recruited by the army, navy and air force separately, and typically serve for up to 17 years, for the lowest ranks.

The government also announced a one-time extension for the maximum entry age into the scheme to 23 since recruitment had been frozen for the past two years, mainly because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The government has decided that a one-time waiver shall be granted for the proposed recruitment cycle for 2022," the defense ministry said in a statement.

The armed forces aim to recruit about 46,000 people under the new system this year.



UK Clears Assange Extradition to U.S.



LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's government approved the extradition to the United States of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to face trial over the publication of secret files relating to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Home Secretary Priti Patel's interior ministry said Assange had 14 days to appeal the decision, which comes after a UK court issued a formal order clearing his removal.

Assange's supporters have held frequent rallies to protest the planned deportation. His wife, Stella, has pleaded for his release from custody after they had two children in secret while the 50-year-old campaigner was holed up for years in Ecuador's London embassy.

WikiLeaks called Patel's decision a "dark day for press freedom and for British democracy" and vowed to pursue the appeal to the High Court, accusing the United States of having "plotted his assassination".

"Julian did nothing wrong. He has committed no crime and is not a criminal. He is a journalist and a publisher, and he is being punished for doing his job," the group said in a statement.

WikiLeaks said the case was "political", as Assange published evidence that the United States "committed war crimes and covered them up".

The extradition was an attempt to "try to disappear him into the darkest recesses of their prison system for the rest of his life to deter others from holding governments to account".

A Home Office spokesperson said there were no grounds for Patel to block the order. "In this case, the UK courts have not found that it would be oppressive, unjust or an abuse of process to extradite Mr Assange," the spokesperson said.

"Nor have they found that extradition would be incompatible with his human rights, including his right to a fair trial and to freedom of expression, and that whilst in the US he will be treated appropriately, including in relation to his health."

Assange has become a cause celebre for media freedom, with his supporters accusing Washington of trying to muzzle reporting of legitimate security concerns.

He is wanted to face trial for violating the US Espionage Act by publishing military and diplomatic files in 2010, and could face up to 175 years in jail if found guilty, although the exact sentence is difficult to estimate.

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(\$1700)

Gheitarieh Apt
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(\$6000)

Vali-e-Asr bldg
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Jordan Apt (\$1900)
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balcony, & Nicely Furn

Farmanieh (\$2000)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna, J
balcony, pkg
Fully Furn

Elahieh bldg (\$6000)
4storey, 13bdrs, yard
enough pkgs, renovated

3bdrs Apt

Zaferanieh (\$2500) 220sq.m, S/p, F.F
Mirdamad (\$1600) 170sq.m, S/p, F.F

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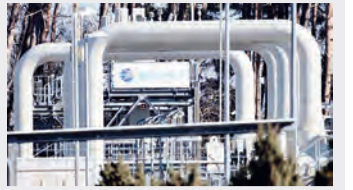
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No Solution to Nord Stream 1 Equipment Issue

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Gazprom sees no solution to an ongoing equipment issue at the Portovaya compressor station, part of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline that carries Russian gas to Germany, its CEO said. Gazprom has cut the capacity along the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to just 40% of usual levels in recent days citing the delayed return of equipment being serviced by Germany's Siemens Energy (SIEGn.DE) in Canada. CEO Alexey Miller said sanctions were preventing the company from getting the equipment back. Germany dismissed that explanation as "unfounded". He noted the company has lots of equipment for the pipeline which is due to undergo major maintenance next month and lambasted Siemens for being "silent" over the issue.



U.S. Fed Rolls Out Biggest Rate Hike Since 1994

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Federal Reserve approved its largest interest rate increase in more than a quarter of a century to stem a surge in inflation that U.S. central bank officials acknowledged may be eroding public trust in their power, and being driven by events seen increasingly out of their hands.

The widely expected move raised the target federal funds rate by three-quarters of a percentage point to a range of between 1.5% and 1.75%, still comparatively low by historic standards.

But the Fed's hawkish commitment to controlling inflation has already touched off a broad tightening of credit conditions being felt in U.S. housing and stock markets, and likely to slow demand throughout the economy - the Fed's intent.

Officials also envision steady rate increases through the rest of this year, perhaps including additional 75-basis-point hikes, with a federal funds rate at 3.4% at year's end. That would be the highest level since January 2008 and enough, Fed projections show, to slow the economy markedly in coming months and lead to a rise in unemployment.

"We don't seek to put people out of work," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference after the end of the Fed's latest two-day policy meeting, adding that the central bank was "not trying to induce a recession."

Yet the Fed chief's remarks were among his most sobering yet about the challenge he and his fellow policymakers face in lowering inflation from its current 40-year high, to a level closer to its 2% target, without a sharp slowdown in economic growth or a steep rise in unemployment.

"Our objective really is to bring inflation down to 2% while the labor market remains strong ... What's becoming more clear is that many factors that we don't control are going to play a very significant role in deciding whether that's possible or not" Powell said, citing the war in Ukraine and global supply concerns.

"There is a path for us to get there ... It is not getting easier. It is getting more challenging," he told reporters, noting that the rate hikes announced last month and in March so far had not only failed to slow inflation, but allowed it to continue accelerating to a level that recent data indicates have begun to influence public attitudes in a way that could make the Fed's job even harder.

A survey released on Friday showed consumer inflation expectations jumped sharply in June, a result Powell called "quite eye-catching," and enough to tilt policymakers towards a larger 75-basis-point hike in hopes of making faster progress on the inflation front and retaining public trust that price increases will slow.

"This is something we need to take seriously," Powell said of the change in consumer inflation expectations. "We're absolutely determined to keep them anchored."

The faster pace of rate hikes outlined by officials on Wednesday more closely aligns monetary policy with the rapid shift that took place this week in financial market views of what it will take to bring price pressures under control.

Bond yields fell after the release of Fed projections on Wednesday that showed economic growth slowing to a below-trend rate of 1.7%, and policymakers expecting to cut interest rates in 2024. Stocks on Wall Street ended the day higher.

Interest rate futures markets also reflected about an 85% probability that the Fed will raise rates by 75 basis points at its next policy meeting in July. For September's meeting, however, the greater probability - at more than 50% - was for a 50-basis-point increase.

Powell, departing from the firmer guidance he has previously given about future rate increases, made no promises on Wednesday.

Given an unexpected jump in a monthly inflation report on Friday and the jump as well in expectations, "75 basis points seemed like the right thing to do at this meeting, and that's what we did," he said.

Russia Can Increase Oil Production in July

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia plans to increase oil production next month as export flows are being redirected to avoid Western sanctions, energy officials said, predicting domestic oil output would be either flat or decline slightly this year.

"In fact, we are close to the February levels when we had it (oil production) at 10.2 million barrels per day (bpd), we plan to increase it further in July depending on companies' plans," Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak told reporters.

Production from the world's third biggest producer after the United States and Saudi Arabia dropped by about 10% to 10.05 million bpd in April from February, after some buyers postponed or refused Russian barrels due to sanctions.

Production is being restored as companies redirect flows, Novak said on Thursday.



Western sanctions against Russia over the conflict in Ukraine prompted many oil importers to shun trade with Moscow, pushing spot prices for Russian crude to record discounts against other grades.

That provided refiners in India and China an opportunity to snap up low-priced crude.

Russian oil production is expected to remain either flat or to decline by 3-5% this year, Nikolay Shulginov, Russia's energy minister, told Izvestia newspaper in a separate interview on Thursday.

He said the European Union's goal to replace Russian fossil fuels by 2027 was a political statement, as it was not immediately possible for the bloc to replace Russian gas and oil, given they account for around 40% and 30% of the bloc's needs respectively.

Japan Runs Biggest Trade Deficit in More Than 8 Years in May

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan ran its biggest single-month trade deficit in more than eight years in May as high commodity prices and declines in the yen swelled imports, clouding the country's economic outlook.

The growing trade deficit underscores the headwinds the world's third-largest economy faces from a slide in the yen and surging costs of fuel and raw materials, on which domestic manufacturers rely for production.

Imports soared 48.9% in the year to May, Ministry of Finance data showed on Thursday, above a median market forecast for a 43.6% gain in a Reuters poll.

That outpaced a 15.8% year-on-year rise in exports in the same month, resulting in a 2.385 trillion yen (\$17.80 billion) trade deficit, the largest shortfall in a single month since January 2014.

"The weak yen is a major factor behind the rise in imports," said Harumi Taguchi, principal economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"But there'll be a lag before it benefits exports," she said, adding that U.S.- and China-bound shipments faced parts supply constraints and China's strict coronavirus lockdowns.

May's deficit, which was the second largest in a single month on record, marked the 10th straight month of year-on-year shortfalls and was bigger than the 2.023 trillion yen gap expected in a Reuters poll.

By region, exports to China, Japan's largest trading partner, shrank 0.2% in the 12 months to May on weaker shipments of machinery and transport equipment to the country.

Shipments bound for the United States, the world's largest economy, rose 13.6% in May, thanks to stronger exports of machinery and mineral fuels, though those of motor vehicles fell.

"It's hard to expect a large rise in exports even if the weak yen is bringing some benefits, so exports are unlikely to bring down the trade deficit," said Atsushi Takeda, chief economist at Itochu Economic Research Institute.

Overall imports were pushed up strongly by larger shipments of oil from the United Arab Emirates and coal and liquefied natural gas from Australia, the data showed.

Although Japan's economy is expected to grow an annualised 4.1% this quarter as the coronavirus pandemic fades, a slide in the yen is threatening to hurt consumer sentiment as higher fuel and food costs inflict pain on households.

Nearly half of Japanese companies see a weak yen as bad for their business, a private survey showed this week, suggesting the currency's declines are hurting business sentiment.

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South Korea Cuts 2022 Growth Outlook

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's economy will grow at its slowest pace in three years in 2022 as the world faces supply bottlenecks, surging inflation, and rapidly rising interest rates, the finance ministry said.

Setting out its first economic policy initiatives, the new government of President Yoon Suk-yeol said it had lowered this year's growth forecast to 2.6% from 3.1% and raised the inflation forecast from 2.2% to 4.7%, the fastest since 2008.

"Our economy and markets are being shaken as we are thrown into a complex crisis amid fears of stagflation," Yoon said in a speech on Thursday.

"We will make bold moves to remove any regulations that hampers corporate competitiveness and entrepreneur spirit and take action against unfair practices that disrupt market order in accordance with laws and principles."

To help South Korean businesses facing inflationary pressures, the government proposed to lower the maximum corporate tax rate to 22%, the average of countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The rate on about 100 of the largest companies has been 25% since 2018, when the former government increased it to pay for more social welfare.

South Korea's economy, Asia's fourth largest, last year recorded its fastest annual expansion since 2010. But as the Yoon administration came to office last month, the country was suddenly facing global supply chain disruptions and resulting difficulty in sustaining exports.

The ministry said the global economy was suffering from bottlenecks, plus the Ukraine crisis, inflation, faster monetary tightening in major countries, and COVID-19 lockdowns in China.

Yoon pledged in his election campaign to support a "private-sector-led economy." His measures would help corporate South Korea cope with higher minimum wages, rising borrowing costs, and the previous administration's limits on working hours.

Markets are predicting the Bank of Korea will keep moving aggressively after hiking interest rates by 125 basis points since mid-2021. The expected further rises will likely hit private consumption for households saddled with the world's highest debt loads.

Qatar Airways Posts Record \$1.54b Profit Despite Pandemic



DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar Airways posted a record net profit of \$1.54 billion for the 2021-2022 financial year, a result it attributed to a "successful strategy" during the coronavirus pandemic.

The state-owned airline said the profit result was "200 percent above its highest annual historical profit" and achieved on the back of \$14.4 billion in overall income.

It said that the revenue figure was "a remarkable two percent higher than the full financial year pre-Covid" in 2019-2020.

Gas-rich Qatar is among several governments that stepped in to support their national carriers through the coronavirus shutdown, which pummeled global travel and the aviation industry.

Qatar Airways, the Middle East's second biggest airline after Emirates, had reported in September last year an overall loss of \$4.1 billion in the 2020-2021 financial year.

The flag carrier said at the time that it had received \$3 billion in state aid to weather the coronavirus travel downturn and to offset the losses blamed on the cost of grounding aircraft.

Its chief executive, Akbar Al Baker, praised the "strength, resilience, and commitment" of Qatar Airways Group in the past year.

"In the most difficult period ever in the global airline industry, the airline credits its positive results to its agility and successful strategy," the airline said in a statement.

Qatar Airways said it "continued to focus on customer needs and evolving market opportunities, as well as efficiency and the commitment of its worldwide employees".

"This profit is not only a record for Qatar Airways Group, but also a record among all other airlines that have published financial results for this financial year worldwide," the airline said.

The Qatari airline said it carried 18.5 million passengers in 2021-2022, an increase of 218 percent over the previous 12-month period.

It said its cargo division remained the "leading player in the world", with growth of 25 percent in revenues and an identical figure for cargo capacity.

90% Rise in Receipt of Iran Gas Sales

TEHRAN (IP) – Iran Oil Minister says during the last quarter, compared to the same period last year, Iran's gas exports to neighboring countries have faced a 43% growth in volume.

Javad Owji said that the demand for gas dues from Iraq had amounted to \$1.6 billion which belonged to the previous years and the preceding administration which has been settled.

"Since the very beginning of the 13th People's Administration, the money for gas exports to Iraq has been received on a monthly basis," cites Shana as he told in an interview with IRIB.



ECBs Jack Up Interest Rates in Inflation Fight

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Central banks across Europe raised interest rates, some by amounts that shocked markets, and hinted at even higher borrowing costs to come to tame soaring inflation that is eroding savings and squeezing corporate profits.

Fueled initially by soaring oil prices in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, inflation has broadened out to everything from food to services with double-digit readings in parts of the continent.

Such levels have not been seen in some places since the aftermath of the oil crisis of the 1970s.

The Swiss National Bank and the National Bank of Hungary both caught markets off guard with big upward steps, just hours after their U.S. counterpart the Federal Reserve lifted rates by the most in almost three decades.

The Bank of England meanwhile lifted borrowing costs by the quarter-point markets had expected.

The moves come just a day after the European Central Bank agreed plans in an emergency meeting to contain borrowing costs in the bloc's south so it could forge ahead with rates rises in both July and September.

"We are in a new era for central banks, where lowering inflation is their only objective, even at the expense of financial stability and growth," George Lagarias, chief economist at Mazars Wealth Management said.

The day's biggest moves came in Switzerland where the SNB raised its policy rate to minus 0.25% from minus 0.75%, a step so large, not a single economist polled by Reuters had predicted it.

The first SNB hike since 2007 is unlikely to be the last, however, and the bank could be out of negative territory this year, some economists said.

"The new inflation forecast shows that further increases in the policy rate may be necessary in the foreseeable future," SNB Chairperson Thomas Jordan told a news conference.

The Swiss franc jumped almost 1.8% against the euro on the decision and was headed for the biggest daily rise since January 2015 when the SNB unhooked the franc from its euro peg.

In London, the Bank of England was more cautious but said it was ready to act "forcefully" to stamp out dangers posed by an inflation rate heading above 11%.

It was the fifth time that the BoE has raised borrowing costs since December and the British benchmark rate is now at its highest since January 2009.

Three of nine rate-setters however voted for a bigger, 50 basis point increase, suggesting that the bank will be under pressure to keep raising rates, even as economic growth slows sharply.

"Central bankers are teetering along a tightrope, with the biggest concern that



raising rates too quickly could tip economies into recession," Maik Currie, investment director for Personal Investing at Fidelity International said.

"Monetary policy tightening is a very blunt tool to manage a very precarious situation."

Despite the hike, sterling fell sharply as some in the market had bet on a bigger move given the Fed's 75 basis points hike the previous evening.

The weaker currency, however, means higher imported inflation and further pressure to raise rates.

The pound was last at \$1.2085 against the dollar, down three-quarters of a percent on the day.

In Budapest meanwhile, the Hungarian central bank unexpectedly raised its one-week deposit rate by 50 basis points to 7.25% at a weekly tender, also to tame stubbornly rising inflation now running in double-digits.

Barnabas Virag, the bank's deputy governor said the increase far was from the last and the bank would continue its rate hike cycle with "predictable and decisive" steps until it sees signs that inflation is peaking, probably in the autumn.

The hike also comes as the nation's currency has lost close to 7% of its value this year, increasing inflation further via higher import prices.

End Does Not Justify...

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"In other words, in order to show we are successful in the field of diplomacy, we are not willing to compromise on the principles and foundations of the [Iranian] foreign policy and the red lines of the [Islamic] establishment," Bagheri Kani noted.



In Iran's foreign policy apparatus, Bagheri Kani explained, having close ties with other countries does not hinge on whether they are Eastern or Western nations, but on their capability to help Iran meet the country's national interests and security as well as welfare of its people.

Bagheri Kani is one of the statesmen who really is loyal to the principles of the Islamic Revolution of Iran as he fights for protecting the nation's rights against the world-mongers. So it is natural such baseless charges and claims are directed against him and his team because he is on the right track and this makes angry the West and its allies either in the world or even inside the country.

Meanwhile Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian reiterated Tehran's resolve to continue talks on the revival of the 2015 multilateral agreement, urging an end to the United States' "sanctions lunacy" and the International Atomic Energy Agency's political approaches in this regard. And he also reiterated that Iran will not accept whatever the West dictates just for the sake of striking a successful deal because for the negotiating team what is important is the country's rights and they are not ready to accept the deal and please the West at the expense of ignoring the nation's rights.

So the West is better to realize that the current team and government will not sign any deal which weakens Iran's rights and power and Bagheri Kani is the flag-bearer of this movement of fight for the right in the country and American statesmen should forget the 2015 talks because they are now facing a strong and determined team which is not ready to give an iota of concession to the West, and the IAEA as the pawn of the West will be also unable to bring down this revolutionary team which thinks of nothing but the Islamic Republic of Iran's rights.

Iran Notified IAEA...

FROM PAGE 1

A report in the New York Times on Thursday, citing unnamed Israeli and American intelligence officials, said Iran was digging a "vast tunnel network" south of the Natanz nuclear site.

The report said Biden administration officials have been following the construction of the new facility for more than a year, "but are not especially alarmed".

Kamalvandi said Iran has no safeguards obligation to inform the UN agency of its activities aimed at enhancing passive defense capabilities of its nuclear facilities and establishing underground workshops to relocate some activities to new locations, but it has still notified the agency of all its measures.

He described Iran's actions as "fully transparent" and blasted the Israel-affiliated media for creating a false atmosphere around the country's peaceful nuclear program.

He also denounced the UN nuclear agency for failing to fulfill its technical mandate and failing to condemn terrorist acts against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Tehran and the IAEA have been at loggerheads recently after the UN nuclear agency adopted an anti-Iran resolution pushed by the US and its European allies at the agency's board of governors meeting.

Tehran, Moscow...

FROM PAGE 1

The two officials also discussed monetary issues, forming joint production working groups, supplying Russian factories with industrial parts manufactured in Iran, forming common free zones in the north and south of Iran.

The Russian side said that his country was determined to follow up Iran's membership in BRICS, proposing Iran to join the EAEU as an observer state.

Meanwhile Iran's ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said Tehran regards its ties with Moscow as "a priority" under President Ebrahim Raisi's new policy of revitalizing relations with neighboring states.

"Russia is a priority country for Iran to develop relations with," Jalali said in remarks at the St. Petersburg 25th International Economic Forum (SPIEF) as quoted by the state-run TASS news agency, noting that relations between the two sides have entered a new phase.

The diplomat said Iranian-Russian relations have entered a new phase, TASS news agency reported.

"Our top priority is the development of relations with neighboring countries," the diplomat asserted at the Jan 15-18 annual event, organized by the Roscongress Foundation, a Moscow-based socially oriented non-financial development institution.

According to the report, the theme of this year's forum is 'New Opportunities in a New World' and is being held in coordination with the SME (Small & Medium-sized Enterprises) Forum, the Creative Business Forum, the Drug Security Forum, the SPIEF Junior Dialogue and SPIEF Sport Week.

Iran-Croatia Halal Trade Conference



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is hosting the first Iran-Croatia halal trade conference during June 18-20.

The event has been organized by the Islamic Chamber Research and Information Center (ICRIC) which is a subsidiary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

As reported, the opening ceremony of the conference was attended by senior officials from the two countries including ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, Chief Executive Officer of Croatia's Center for Halal Quality Certification Aldin Dugonjic, heads and members of the Croatia-Iran parliamentary friendship group and the Croatian friendship group in the Iranian parliament as well as a number of traders and businessmen active in the two countries' halal industries.

Speaking in the conference, Shafeie underlined the great capacities of Iran's halal industries, saying: "Iran is one of the top producers of halal commodities among the Islamic countries. Halal food has been one of the world's booming industries in recent years, and its market value is projected to reach about \$1 trillion by 2027."

"In 2020, Iran was the sixth largest producer of halal food among 73 Muslim and non-Muslim countries," he added.

According to the official, the undeniable role of the food industry in job creation and revenue generation has made this industry one of the most important contributors to the economic growth of many countries.

"Currently, the food sector in Iran is the third-largest production industry after the refining and petrochemical and chemical industries," Shafeie said.

Given Iran's capacities and capabilities, it is possible to export Iranian foodstuff to various countries, including Southeast Europe with proper planning and investment, he stressed. Dugonjic, for his part, emphasized the significant capacities of Iran and Balkan countries in the field of halal trade, and said: "Croatia produces about 7,000 halal products in 250 certified halal production centers and we can provide some of our products to the Iranian market."

He noted that another meeting will be held later in October which will be attended by the representatives of the two countries' private sectors to further discuss future cooperation.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the capacities and potentials of the halal industries of Iran, Croatia, and other Southeast European countries will be discussed and explored in detail during this three-day conference.

Strategies for developing cooperation and trade exchanges with Croatia and also with other Southeast European countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro are also among the subjects explored in the event.

Turkey Outlines Plan for Grain Exports Without Need to Demine Ukraine Ports

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey said a sea corridor from Ukraine for grain exports could be formed without needing to clear the mines around Ukrainian ports, while Russia said it has offered "safe passage" for shipments from the Black Sea but is not responsible for establishing the routers.

Ukrainian grain shipments have been stalled since Russia's invasion and ports blockade, stoking global prices for grains, cooking oils, fuel and fertilizer. The United Nations has appealed to the two sides, as well as to their maritime neighbor and NATO member Turkey, to agree on a corridor. It is trying to broker a deal to resume Ukraine exports and Russian food and fertilizer exports, which Moscow says are harmed by the sanctions.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on Wednesday detailed the U.N. plan to create a sea corridor for Ukrainian agricultural products, suggesting that ships could be guided around the floating sea mines.

His comments appeared to mark a shift from an earlier proposal to demine Ukraine's ports, a move that Kyiv fears would leave it far more vulnerable to Russian attack from the Black Sea.

Çavuşoğlu said it would "take some time" to de-mine Ukraine's ports but a safe sea corridor could be established in areas without mines under a U.N. proposal. Ankara was still awaiting Moscow's reaction to the plan, he said.

"Since the location of the mines is known, certain safe lines would be established at three ports," Çavuşoğlu said. He said commercial ships, using the guidance of Ukrainian vessels as detailed in the plan, "could thus come and go safely to ports without a need to clear the mines."

He added that Turkey offered to host a meeting in Istanbul to hammer out the plan's details if the sides agreed.

Meanwhile, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg

Iran Annual...

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According to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report released on June 7, Iranian economy is projected to grow by 3.7 percent in 2022, while the average global economic growth is seen at 2.9 percent in the said year.

"Output in the Islamic Republic of Iran is expected to grow by 3.7 percent in 2022, boosted by the waning of the pandemic and higher oil prices," the bank said in the report.



Vieira Set for Arsenal Move From Porto

LISBON (Dispatches) - Portuguese midfielder star Fabio Vieira is to join Premier League side Arsenal from Porto for €35 million after both clubs had agreed a deal in principle, the selling side said. The 22-year-old, who was named player of last year's Under-21 European Championships despite Portugal losing in the final to Germany, could cost the Gunners up to €40 million if he achieves certain targets. Porto's statement to the stock market added that he will sign a five year contract with Arsenal.

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U.S. Open Resumes With Hadwin Ahead

BROOKLINE (Dispatches) - Leadam Hadwin was set for a morning start as the second round of the U.S. Open began while Rory McIlroy and defending champion Jon Rahm could have to face afternoon thunderstorms. Canada's Hadwin opened at The Country Club with a four-under par 66, his lowest career round at a major, to grab a one-stroke lead over third-ranked McIlroy and four others after 18 holes.

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SPORTS

SUNDAY JUNE 19, 2022

Curry, Warriors Storm To Seventh NBA Crown

BOSTON (Dispatches) - A dazzling performance from Stephen Curry powered the Golden State Warriors to a seventh NBA Finals crown, securing a 103-90 victory over the Boston Celtics to clinch a 4-2 series triumph.

Warriors talisman Curry produced yet another masterpiece with 34 points, seven assists and seven rebounds as Golden State wrapped up their fourth title in eight years to silence Boston's raucous TD Garden.

The 34-year-old Curry was named NBA Finals Most Valuable Player after the victory -- the first time the four-time NBA champion has scooped the award.

"I'm so proud of our group, I thank god every day that I get to play this game with some amazing people," an emotional Curry said afterwards.

"This is what it's all about, especially after everything we've gone through in the past three years." The win completed a dramatic journey back to the pinnacle of the NBA for the Warriors, who just two seasons ago had the worst record in the league as the franchise battled injuries and the departure of key personnel.

"At the beginning of the season nobody thought we'd be here - except everybody on this court right now. It's surreal," Curry added.

"We were so far away from it. We hit rock bottom with injuries and the long road of work ahead, trying to fill in the right pieces with the right guys.

Delighted Warriors coach Steve Kerr admitted the team's fourth championship of his reign had been the most unexpected.

Curry, an ever-present throughout the highs and lows of the Warriors' journey since 2015, led a balanced offensive effort as Golden State became just the second visiting team to lift the trophy on Boston's home court after the 1985 Los Angeles Lakers.

Andrew Wiggins came up with 18 points, six rebounds, four steals and three blocks in a superb all-round display, while veterans Klay Thompson and Draymond Green chipped in with 12 points each. Jordan Poole added 15 from the bench.

FIFA Vows Invasion As 2026 World Cup Venues Revealed

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - FIFA President Gianni Infantino warned Canada, Mexico and the United States to prepare for a football "invasion" yesterday as the host cities for the 2026 World Cup were revealed.

The first ever World Cup co-hosted by three different countries will also see a record number of teams taking part, increasing by 16 from 32 to 48 as the tournament returns to North America for the first time since the 1994 finals.

The 16 venues named yesterday include 11 in the United States, three in Mexico and two in Canada.

All of the U.S. games will be held in venues that are home to NFL teams, with the likes of the \$5 billion SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles and the New York Giants' 82,000-seater MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford tipped to host the final.

A total of 60 of the 80 games in the tournament -- including all knockout games from the quarter-finals onwards -- will take place at U.S. venues.

Mexico City's iconic Azteca Stadium -- host of the 1970 and 1986 World Cup finals -- was included among three Mexican venues along with the cities of Monterrey and Guadalajara.

Vancouver and Toronto will stage the Canadian games in the tournament.

Infantino meanwhile said 2026 would eclipse the 1994 finals in the United States -- which holds the record for the highest total attendance -- in every respect.

"2026 will be much, much bigger," Infantino said. "I think this part of the world doesn't realise what will happen in 2026.

"These three countries will be turned upside down and then flipped again. The world will be invading Canada, Mexico and the United States.

"They will be invaded by a big wave of joy and happiness." Infantino said he hoped the World Cup would spur the development of football in the region further.

"In this part of the world you are leading the world in many areas. But in the number one sport in the world, football or football, you are not, yet," he said. "The objective must be that you are leading the world in the world's number one sport."



But Boston's fast start was the cue for a spectacular burst by Golden State, who tightened their defense to secure key stops and then began to find the target at the other end.

After cutting the Boston lead to six points at 22-16, the Warriors pulled away, with Green, Curry and Poole all rattling in three-pointers to put Golden State into a 27-22 lead at the end of the first quarter.

Two more Poole three-pointers in the opening moments of the second quarter helped the Warriors sprint into a 15-point lead, up 37-22 after a 21-0 run -- the largest run in NBA Finals history.

The Warriors maintained the 15-point advantage up to half-time, leading 54-39 at the break. Curry ominously looked increasingly comfortable from beyond the arc, and a step back three from 28 feet put the Warriors into a 72-50 lead -- a 22-point margin their biggest lead of the night in the third quarter.

But Boston refused to surrender, and Horford brought the Garden crowd to its feet after a layup and a free throw got the Celtics to within nine points of the Warriors at 74-65.

Green settled the Warriors nerves with an ice-cold jumper from 21 feet to help ensure the Warriors would take a double-digit advantage into the final quarter, leading 76-66.

The Celtics again chipped away at the Warriors lead, but every time they got to within single digits, Golden State managed to find a big play to extend their lead.

A key passage came midway through the fourth. A Brown three-pointer shrank the Warriors' lead to just eight points at 86-78, but Wiggins then rammed in a corner three to make it 89-78 and Green followed with a dunk to put the Warriors 13 clear.

That margin held as the Warriors celebrated their seventh title.

Medvedev Into Halle Last-Eight



HALLE (Dispatches) - World number one Daniil Medvedev defeated Ilya Ivashka for the second time in six days to reach the Halle grass court quarter-finals.

Medvedev triumphed 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 over the 42nd-ranked Ivashka having also got the better of the Belarusian in the quarter-finals at 's-Hertogenbosch last week.

Top seed Medvedev fought off three set points at 4-5 in the opening set before going on to clinch it in a tie-break.

The second set was far more straightforward with the 26-year-old Russian wrapping up victory in one hour and 36 minutes.

"He is a great player," said Medvedev. "He had a lot of bad luck with injuries at the beginning of the season. At the end of last season he was playing really great tennis.

"I've known him since I was very young, we actually played each other in Futures, Challengers, and on the ATP Tour. He beat me once in Davis Cup, which is a really important tournament.

"He knows how to play well on grass, so I'm really happy that two times in a row I managed to pass a tough test."

Medvedev next faces seventh seed Roberto Bautista Agut for a place in the semi-finals.



Man City to Launch Title Defense at West Ham

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City will begin the defense of their Premier League title at West Ham while Liverpool travel to Fulham on the opening weekend of the season.

The 2022/23 fixtures, published today, give new Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag an opening test at Old Trafford against Brighton, who hammered United 4-0 last month.

Nottingham Forest's first match in the top flight for 23 years will be at Newcastle. Pep Guardiola's City will start their bid for

a fifth title in six seasons at the London Stadium on Sunday, August 7, after all their rivals have begun their campaigns.

Frank Lampard, whose Everton side narrowly escaped relegation, comes up against his former employers Chelsea on the previous evening.

For the second season running Arsenal have the honour of kicking-off the new campaign with a short trip to Crystal Palace on Friday, August 5.

Liverpool and City renew their rivalry at Anfield in mid-October, after a midweek Champions League tie, with the return fixture scheduled for the start of April.

Reds boss Jurgen Klopp is unlikely to be impressed with their fixture allocation in conjunction with their European commitments. Their three away matches following Champions League group games are against Chelsea, Arsenal and Tottenham.

Verstappen Disappointed By FIA Intervention Over Porpoising

MONTREAL (Dispatches) - World champion Max Verstappen said a mid-season intervention on safety grounds to solve Formula One's "porpoising" problems was "a bit of a shame."

The Red Bull driver led the way as drivers and teams reaction to the idea of a potential rule-change was widely, but not entirely, rejected.

The sport's ruling body, the International Motoring Federation (FIA), yesterday announced it was intervening with a series of steps on medical grounds to prevent or eliminate "porpoising" and excessive bouncing after several drivers complained bitterly after recent races.

"I think it's a bit disappointing that again there is a rule change mid-season, I would say," said the 24-year-old Dutchman.

"It's not about affecting us more or less than other teams, but it shouldn't be that one team is complaining a lot and suddenly then they change the 'regs' around it.

"I think there are a lot of teams that actually did an amazing job to not have these kind of issues, so it is possible to drive around it."

His reference to one team suggested he was talking about rivals Mercedes who have struggled badly with their new generation "ground effect" car this year.

"If you raise your car then you won't have these issues, but you lose performance," he added, as quoted by Racer.

"But if you can't design the car properly for that -- then that's your fault. It's not the regs fault. So, for me it's a bit of a shame."

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton and his Mercedes team-mate George Russell, together with others including Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri, Valtteri Bottas of Alfa Romeo and Daniel Ricciardo of McLaren warned of potential long-term physical consequences after suffering acute back pain.



Nadal Intends to Play At Wimbledon

PALMA (Dispatches) - Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal said he intends to play at Wimbledon but his final decision rests on how his troublesome left foot feels after training in London next week.

"My intention is to play at Wimbledon," Nadal said at a press conference in Mallorca.

"The treatment and the last week of training tells me there is a chance. I will travel to London on Monday, play an exhibition at Hurlingham and do a week of training to see if it's possible."

Nadal said injections meant his left foot felt "asleep" during the French Open final on June 5 -- he still beat Casper Ruud to claim a record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title.

Nadal travelled to Barcelona last week to begin "pulsed radiofrequency stimulation", a treatment aimed at reducing nerve pain.

Nadal's spokesperson said the treatment would leave the nerves in his foot "temporarily numb". The 36-year-old then had his first session on grass on Monday at the Mallorca Country Club in Santa Ponca and has steadily increased the intensity of his training this week.

"I have noticed a difference, some slightly strange feelings to be honest," said Nadal. "With the treatment in the nerves, things happen in your foot, sometimes one part of the foot goes numb, sometimes another.

"It's normal apparently and after a few weeks the nerves reorganise themselves. "I'm happy. I've felt a bit of pain, but it's different to what I had before, which for me is progress."

Nadal has won Wimbledon twice in his career, in 2008 and 2010.

