

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran increased to **141,370** With **Four** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

# IRAN NEWS

Judiciary Spokesman Masoud Setayesh Stresses That Any Measure That Disrupts the Economic System in the Field of Foreign Currency and Gold Will Be Dealt With Decisively

**2 DOMESTIC**

U.S. Seeks Decent Exit From Islamic Countries



> SEE PAGE 2

**3 DOMESTIC**

Tehran, Minsk Eager to Broaden Economic Ties



> SEE PAGE 3

**4 INTERNATIONAL**

Russians Advance, Zelenskiy Expects Escalation



> SEE PAGE 4

**8 SPORTS**

Leclerc Insists Ferrari Can Beat Red Bull And Verstappen



> SEE PAGE 8

## Iran Deplores UNSC's Silence on Israeli Strikes in Syria

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has reiterated the Islamic Republic's unstinting support for the Syrian people and government, criticizing the UN Security Council's silence in the face of repeated Israeli airstrikes and violations of the Arab country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks at a UN Security Council meeting on humanitarian developments in Syria, stating that the Islamic Republic of Iran "strongly condemns Israel's prolonged occupation of Syrian Golan, as well as its numerous breaches of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the most recent attacks that targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure, in particular terrorist attacks against Damascus International Airport."

"These Israeli malign and terrorist acts violate international law, international humanitarian law, Syria's sovereignty, and jeopardize regional stability and security," he said.

The senior Iranian diplomat stressed that Tehran recognizes Syria's legitimate right to defend itself in accordance with the international law and UN Charter. **See Page 7**

## Ill-Wishers of Islam, Iran Wage Soft War to Crush Hopes



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said that the ill-wishers of Iran and Islam bank on waging a soft war to "shake people's faith" and "dash people's hopes" for the future of the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks on June 12, addressing the organizers of the National Congress of Nomads' Martyrs in Shahr-e Kord, the capital city of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. The state media published his speech on Tuesday.

"Today, the ill-wishers of Iran and Islam rely on soft war. Therefore all Iranians, including nomads, need to produce cultural products, namely books and movies" to counter such plots, he said.

The Leader noted that shaking people's religious faith or instilling hopelessness into them are among the most important prerequisites for waging a soft war against the Iranian nation.

"Today, whatever is done against the religion, traditions, and religious sanctities and rituals is driven by a political motive pushed by the enemy, whereas the agent of that deed may or may not be aware of this fact," he added.

"Inculcating the sense of futurelessness and impasse, as well as the feeling that the officials do not know how to run the country is among the actions of ill-wishers," the Leader cautioned.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader recounted how the late founder of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khomeini called the nomads "the resources of the country," saying that the enemies have tried in vain over the past two or three centuries to provoke the nomads to betray the country by starting civil wars and disintegrating the country.

He then praised the Iranian nomads for being among the most loyal communities in the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei further hailed the nomads' loyalty and their sacrifices during the 1979 revolution and the 8-year Iran-Iraq war, saying that "the most important factor contributing to the people's – especially nomads' – unity, progress, and sacrifices was religion."

"While some, who are indifferent to religion, are making efforts to downplay the religious motives of the martyrs and war veterans, we should not reduce their motives to anything less than their devotion to God and religion," he stated.

## Tehran, Kabul Reach Agreement on Helmand River

TEHRAN (MNA) - Afghanistan and Iran reached an agreement over the Helmand water treaty, an official of the Ministry of Energy and Water said on Tuesday.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) said that in the current year, the water of the Helmand River will be shared with Iran based on the Helmand Water treaty signed in 1973 between the two countries.

A senior official of the ministry, Barakutullah Aryoubi, said that both sides agreed to install mutual stations and facilities on the two sides of the Helmand River.

"The two sides called for the implementation of the treaty as the problem was within the area covered by the treaty," he said, TOLO News reported.

Aryoubi also said that the MoEW is planning to resume construction of Kamal Kham Dam to control the water of the Helmand River.

"The MoEW is seriously intending to construct the Kamal Khan Dam to address the problems of the people," he said. **See Page 7**

## Iranian Envoy Slams Islamophobia in West

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi has expressed alarm about the growing trend of Islamophobia across the world.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly meeting Monday on the occasion of International Day for Countering Hate Speech, he said the spread of hatred, discrimination and violence has caused great suffering to Muslim communities in various countries. "The growing trend of Islamophobia has been fueled by the lack of resolve on the part of certain governments to confront hate speech and acts of hate against Muslims, anti-Muslim media outlets, as well as civic groups promoting a hostile and abusive environment against Muslims in the West," the envoy said.

"It is unfortunate to witness that the politicization and restriction of the Hijab, the burning of the Holy Qur'an, and the desecration of Islamic symbols and holy sites are being pursued in certain countries," he added.

Takht-Ravanchi stressed that such Islamophobic tendencies have created an environment conducive to violence and violent extremism which poses serious threats to the social cohesion as well as security and well-being of all societies. **See Page 7**

## Iran Reportedly Prepares Enrichment Escalation At Fordow Plant

TEHRAN (MNA) - The IAEA said in a new report that preparations for enrichment began on Sunday, citing Iran is escalating its uranium enrichment further by preparing to use advanced IR-6 centrifuges at the Fordow facility.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a new report on the activities of Iran's nuclear program on Tuesday morning.

"Iran is escalating its uranium enrichment further by preparing to use advanced IR-6 centrifuges at its underground Fordow site that can more easily switch between enrichment levels," a United Nations nuclear watchdog report seen by Reuters on Monday showed.

Reuters quoted the IAEA as saying that Iran informed the IAEA on Monday that passivation of the cascade, a process that precedes enrichment and also involves feeding UF6 into the machines, had begun on Sunday.

A new IAEA report claimed that Iran has also not told the agency clearly what purity the cascade will enrich to after passivation. Iran had previously informed the IAEA that the two IR-6 cascades could be used to enrich to 5% or 20% purity. **See Page 7**

## Maduro Looks to Birth of New Era of Humanity With Iran Deal

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has hailed a 20-year partnership agreement signed with Iran and Venezuela, saying it heralds the birth of a new era and transition to humanity from hegemonism.

"Where will we be in the next 20 years? Can you imagine it?" he said in an exclusive interview with Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network.

"We will be in a different kind of world. A new era is being born quickly, and what is taking place is indeed the transition of humanity towards a new era and new sense."

Maduro said a new humanity has already been born and novel trends are shaping global developments, asserting that no one is the sole "policeman" or "judge" in the novel world.

He cited "the birth of a new humanity" as the reason behind his latest international tour which mainly pursued strategic goals.

"It was strategic indeed. Relations are strategic when it comes to the new world and the new humanity that we are building together," Maduro said, noting he and his entourage were amicably received by leaders and state officials in Turkey, Algeria, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, and Azerbaijan.

The Venezuelan president further noted that a "new world without hegemonic empires has been born," explaining that "no one is the sole policeman and judge of such a world... We want a world where we are all equal and respect each other, irrespective of the size of our countries."

"We are indeed part of a multi-polar and multi-centric world, but we are on the front lines," he said.

"A new consensus has been forged concerning the need for a world of peace and understanding, where international law comes first, and peace and respect for human dignity are above all matters," the Venezuelan president said.

He recounted how all the leaders he recently met shared the common notion that a new world is emerging.

"I exchanged viewpoints about the need for the birth of a new world with them... There are ideas, words, policies, and actions that express the stances of everyone in one way or another," he said.

"I believe in the concept of dialog and the importance of diversity in the world. A dialog between cultures, civilizations, ideologies, and leaders of political systems," the Venezuelan leader added.

He underscored that imperialism has failed to unite humanity under one banner. **See Page 7**

## Cyberattack Causes Missile Attack Sirens To Sound in Israel

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - A suspected cyberattack has caused missile attack sirens to sound in two cities in Israel, the regime's media reports say.

They said missile attack warning sirens were activated in al-Quds and Eilat on Saturday evening, and rang for almost an hour. Israeli military authorities scrambled to reassure that the sirens were a false alarm, which it attributed to a "malfunction".

On Monday, however, the Israeli Army Radio said the regime's cyber directorate (INCD) suspects that a cyberattack was "behind a system malfunction."

According to the INCD, the attack was directed against the municipality's siren systems and by accessing the alert system, the hackers were able to activate the sirens.

The INCD did not specify who was suspected of having carried out the hack, but the Israeli Army Radio quoted a former official as accusing Iran of the cyberattack. The number of alleged cyberattacks against the occupying regime has been mounting over the past months. **See Page 7**

Sokhan Gostar Institute

# IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department  
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com  
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

# Tehran Condemns Terrorist Attack in Ethiopia

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed condolences on Tuesday to the Ethiopian people and government over the terrorist attack in Oromia region, western Ethiopia.

At least 260 have been killed and hundreds of others were injured during the armed rebellion group's terrorist attack on the Oromia region.

Khatibzadeh strongly condemned such an attack, which is believed to be one of the bloodiest in Ethiopia, and expressed sympathy with the victims' families.

## U.S. Seeks Decent Exit From Islamic Countries

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN – The commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) says that the Zionist regime of Israeli is on the verge of collapse while the United States is weighing up a decent exit from the region.**

Major General Hossein Salami made the comments in a ceremony held to commemorate the anniversary of the nomadic martyrs dubbed as "National Congress of 11,000 Martyrs of the Nomadic Community" on Tuesday.

Maj. Gen. Salami pointed out, "If you follow the news, you will see that the Zionist regime has collapsed politically and the United States is seeking a decent escape from the Islamic world."

He also said that Iran's history is full of confrontations with different enemies while noting that the side who always had to retreat was the enemy.

He described the enemies as dull, incapable and desperate to pursue their goals, adding, "The desperate arrogant powers seek to find a way out."

Meanwhile, the IRGC chief said the enemies could not believe that the Islamic Revolution is going to celebrate its 44th anniversary despite all their malicious attempts and plots.



"The enemy did not think the Iranian nation would come out victorious for 44 years in a continuous and global struggle."

He went on to point out that "the [Iranian] people who have given hundreds of thousands of martyrs to preserve the Establishment and their revolution will never give up the ideals and goals of the revolution and will not be separated from their Imam."

"The country is gaining more strength and in the near future Iran will be one of the world's top big powers," the IRGC chief further underscored.

## Over 5m Iranians covered By Insurance for Free

TEHRAN (IP) – Majlis Speaker says over five million Iranians have been covered by insurance for free since the beginning of this Iranian year.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, in the open session of the parliament on Tuesday, attended by Bahram Einollahi, Minister of Health, said: "According to the predictions made, the first three deciles of the society were fully covered by insurance, and since the beginning of this Iranian year (starting on March 21), 5.397 million people were insured on-line and without paying any money."

"The foreign currency that is needed for the imported raw materials of medicine must remain stable so that we do not have problems in supplying medicine inside the country," he added.

## Medicine Has Never Been Subject to Market Regulation

TEHRAN (IP) - The head of Iran's parliamentary health commission says there is no specific regulation regarding medicine and the medicine has never been subject to market regulation."

The Iranian government has approved major price hikes for four essential food items as part of a plan to liberalize prices by removing subsidies given to importers and suppliers and redirecting them to the households.

Hossein Ali Shahriari, the head of the parliamentary health commission, said in an open session of the parliament on Tuesday, in the process of reviewing the performance of public insurance coverage and supporting special and incurable patients: "The Leader of the Islamic Revolution thanked the medical staff and medical teams for their efforts during the more than two years that has passed since the start of the coronavirus pandemic."

Shahriari noted that in relation to medicine, no specific regulation has been foreseen and it has never been following market regulation.

He added: "Medicine pricing is done in a committee under the supervision of the Food and Drug Administration, but insurance organizations are not present in these meetings, which has created problems for the people."

## Iran, Tajikistan Call for Boosting Security Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A senior official at the Iranian Interior Ministry Majid Mirahmadi in a meeting with Tajikistan Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda on Monday said that a joint security task force between Tehran and Dushanbe would promote the security of the two states.

Mirahmadi, who traveled to Dushanbe to attend the first meeting of the joint security working group between Iran and Tajikistan, met and held talks with Tajikistan's Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda on Monday.

Pointing to the joint security task force that promotes the security of the two states and neutralizes the threats posed by the foes of the two nations, Mirahmadi stressed Iran's strong will to implement the agreements and mandates of the leaders of the two countries to strengthen relations in all fields.

Rahimzoda, for his part, stressed efforts to implement the agreements between the two states.

## Tehran, Baku Emphasize Deepening Cultural, Artistic Relations

TEHRAN (MNA) – Culture ministers of Iran and Republic of Azerbaijan stressed the need to develop cultural and artistic relations as well as enhancing bilateral cooperation on relevant issues.

Speaking in his meeting with the Minister of Culture of Republic of Azerbaijan Anar Karimov at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Monday evening, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili pointed to the common historical, civilizational and cultural relations between the two countries and stated, "Given the long-standing and amicable relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, relations between the two countries are beyond friendship and neighborliness."

Referring to the joint historical, cultural and civilizational



commonalities between the two countries, it is hoped that a new chapter would be opened in expanding cultural relations, he underlined.

"We are trying to expand relations between the two countries in the fields of culture, cinema, holding book fairs and especially film festivals," Esmaeili underlined.

Iranian culture minister expressed hope that this visit could pave the way for

taking giant strides between the two countries.

Anar Karimov arrived in Tehran on Monday morning and was welcomed by cultural officials of the country.

Upon his arrival in Tehran, Azeri culture minister visited the Mausoleum of Imam Khomeini (RA) in south of Tehran to pay tribute to the founder of the Islamic Revolution.

## Iran, Kazakhstan Sign Cultural MoU

TEHRAN (IRNA) - In the presence of the Iranian Minister of Culture Mohammad Mahdi Esmaeili and Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi here on Monday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cultural exchanges between the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Kazakhstan Culture and Sports Ministry was signed.

In the presence of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Kazakh counterpart Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, nine documents of cooperation and a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed on Sunday between Iran and Kazakhstan.

At the ceremony, a memorandum of understanding on "cultural exchanges between the Ministry of Culture of Iran and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan" was signed by Esmaeili and Tileuberdi.

The Kazakh president, heading a high-ranking delegation, visits Iran at the official invitation from his Iranian counterpart following his presence at the 25th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in Russia.



## Finland Has Long-Term View of Ties With Iran



RASHT (IRNA) - Finland's Ambassador to Tehran Kari Kahiluoto said that having advanced, sustainable tie with Iran in the long-term is a goal of foreign policy for his country.

Kahiluoto said on Tuesday during a trip to Rasht city, northern Iran, said that the North-South International Corridor which connects East Europe to the Indian Ocean through Iran will cut the distance between Finland and Iran.

He said that Finland was ready to cooperate with Iran's Gilan Province on waste sorting and water management, as it is an advanced country in the field with zero waste being disposed of in nature.

Director-General of Gilan Province Environment Administration Reza Zamani welcomed the proposal, praising Finland's status as an environment-friendly country.

Zamani proposed a sisterhood agreement between Anzali Lagoon in Gilan Province and a wetland in Finland and asked for technological cooperation on forest management to preserve Hyrcanian forests.

## Qalibaf Calls for Bolstering Iran-Croatia Parliamentary Friendship Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf in a meeting with the chairman of the Croatia-Iran parliamentary friendship group at the Croatian parliament Zlatko Hasanbegovic on Monday urged broadening of Iran-Croatia parliamentary friendship ties.

Qalibaf met and held talks with Hasanbegovic here on Monday. Expressing hope that the current trip will be effective in expanding political, economic, and cultural relations, Qalibaf congratulated on the 30th anniversary of the formal communication between Iran and Croatia, adding that Iran calls for strengthening the parliamentary relations with Croatia.

He stressed the need to create a lasting path for communication between Iran and Croatia, saying that sustainable communications are determined by governments and parliaments, and it is necessary to promote the relations of parliamentary friendship groups.

Referring to the Vienna talk's process, which the US is preventing from reaching its conclusion by contradicting their words and actions, he noted that in a situation where oppressive and illegal sanctions are imposed on Iran, it is important that which countries stand together in difficult circumstances.

Stressing the need to facilitate relations between businessmen in Iran and Croatia, Qalibaf highlighted that establishing Iran-Croatia parliamentary friendship ties can multiply the economic relations between the two countries within a year.

Pointing to the bolstering quality of relations between Iran and Croatia in various fields, Hasanbegovic, for his part, reiterated that there is a friendly and deep-rooted relationship between the two states and Croatia looks forward to increasing relations with Iran.



## World Refugee Day a Chance to Raise Awareness on Refugees' Plight

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi called World Refugee Day an opportunity to enhance capacities aimed at meeting the needs of the people who have been displaced from their home countries.

In his message issued on World Refugee Day on Monday, Vahidi said that the international occasion is an opportunity to take into consideration demands and needs of the people who have been displaced because of war and taken refuge in other countries to seek security.

The Iranian interior minister referred to the Islamic Republic's efforts to generously host refugees from the neighboring countries over the past 40 decades, including those from Afghanistan.

He said that the U.S. military presence in certain countries has been the main reason behind instability and therefore displacement of people in the region. Vahidi added, over the past year alone, a large number of the Afghan people were displaced and sought refuge in other countries as a result of the more-than-two-decade military presence of the US and its occupation of Afghanistan, which deteriorated security there.

He said that Iran has been a prime destination for the Afghan refugees as the two countries share a vast border area.

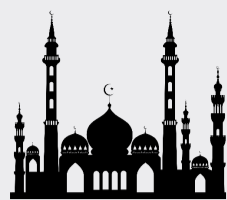
The official noted that Iran has relentlessly offered health, medical, and educational services to those refugees, despite all the problems and restrictions the country is facing because of sanctions imposed by the U.S.

Vahidi said that Afghan children residing in Iran are receiving free education following an order by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in 2015.

He added that the Afghan refugees have received free-of-charge Covid vaccines and are also receiving subsidies offered by the Iranian government for basic supplies such as bread, water and electricity.

The Iranian minister noted that his country has continued to render all these services while international organizations, which claim to be defending refugees' rights, have taken a double-standard approach in allocating funds to the countries hosting the refugees. He said that these organizations have offered the least amount of support to Iran which hosts more than four million refugees from other nations.

Vahidi said that Iran has always asked governments around the world to help promote security in the countries from where people flee so that the world's refugee crisis is tackled.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:49

7. And the fifth (oath) (should be) that they solemnly invoke the curse of Allah on themselves if they tell a lie.  
8. But it would avert the punishment from the wife, if she bears witness four times (with an oath) By Allah, that (her husband) is telling a lie;

Surah 24. Light (7-8)

## Tehran, Minsk Eager to Broaden Economic Ties

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – A trade delegation from Belarus who was in Tehran to attend The 29th International Exhibition of Food, Food Technology and Agriculture (Iran Agrofood 2022) on Monday and in the last day of the exhibition attended a forum hosted by Tehran Chamber of Commerce were the participants called for broadening economic relations between Iran and Belarus.**

According to reports, the forum was held to provide the ground for direct talks and acquaintance of business activists of the two countries with their potentials and capacities.

In the forum, Ambassador of Belarus to Tehran Mr. Dmitry Koltsov announced readiness of his country for broadening economic relations with Iran and termed the forum a turning point for creating constructive and strong relation between Tehran and Minsk and called for regular holding of economic gatherings between the two states and called it a step forward for knowing economic enterprises and capacities for joint co-operations.

He went on to say that membership of both states in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is a historic opportunity for a huge amount of economic and commercial tie between the two states, noting that Belarus needs broadening tie with Iran to take advantage of Iran's transit capacity and access to the free waters in the Persian Gulf region. Koltsov then said that Iran is one of Belarus's major trade partners in the region and expressed hope that Belarus can enjoy Iran's support in meeting its economic demands like transit of goods.

### Boosting Iran-Armenia Economic Cooperation to Enhance Political Ties



TEHRAN (MNA) - Continuous cooperation between Iran and Armenia in the fields of trade and economy will lead to bolstering of political relations of both sides, the Iranian official said.

Head of Chabahar Trade Zone Nasrollah Ebrahimi made the remarks in a meeting with Arsen Avagian, the new Ambassador of Armenia to Iran, adding that over 30-years-long diplomatic ties between the two countries have been based on fraternal relations.

Chabahar has welcomed investors from all across the world, he said, noting that neighboring states, undoubtedly, are on top priority to this end.

Terming Chabahar as a center of international communication, he said that the Trade Zone is not subject to economic sanctions.

Arsen Avakian, for his part, elaborated on his country's main objectives pertaining to the current visit and said that evaluating Chabahar's capacity and infrastructure for investment is the main goal of the trip to Iran.

"The second goal is to develop relations between India, Iran and Armenia," he further noted.



The Belarussian diplomat added that the cooperation of both states in the machine manufacturing industries and food stuff can be a beginning for broadening economic relations and reiterated that the two countries can expand their exports to the third markets through joint production in this field.

Meanwhile in this event, the secretary general of Tehran Chamber of Commerce Mr. Bahman Eshqi said that economic climate of Iran and Belarus has faced hardships due to the unfair and unilateral sanctions, adding that despite sanctions, economies of Iran and Belarus can connect enough for long term economic cooperation in the post-sanctions era.

He went on to say that one of opportunities ahead of economies of the two countries is transit exchanges and transfer and transportation of goods and stated that since Belarus borders are under the sanctions and have lost their past efficiency, Belarus can take advantage of Iran's water borders for having access to the waters in the Persian Gulf region and it can use it for boosting economic tie with Iran as well as exchange of goods with the countries in the region.

Eshqi reiterated that Iran and Belarus have many allies in the region that through convergence with these countries, both sides can reduce the damages of sanctions and strengthen their economies.

Then members of the Belarussian delegations which were mostly representatives food industries held some B2B meetings with Iranian business counterparts and exchanged views for the future cooperation.

## Iran-Kazakhstan Trade Targeted To Reach \$3b by Next 3 Years

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran and Kazakhstan aim to reach the bilateral trade of \$3 billion by the next three years, an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Rahmatollah Khormali, the director-general of the TPO's office of Central Asia, Caucasus, and Russia, made the remarks referring to the recent trip of the president of Kazakhstan to Iran in which nine cooperation MOUs were signed by the two sides.

"According to the goal set by the officials of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee in late February, the value of trade between the two countries will increase to \$3 billion in the next three years, and the export of technical and engineering services is seen in this goal. There is also scope for cooperation in the field of oil", the official further stated.

Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on Sunday, and nine MOUs were signed in the presence of the two presidents to expand cooperation in different areas between the two countries.

Two MOUs were inked by Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Trade and Integration on boosting trade between the two countries, and on analytical studies and exchange of experiences between the two sides.

One MOU was signed by the two countries' ministries of agriculture on agricultural cooperation.

Iran's Ministry of Agriculture also signed another MOU with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Industry and Infrastructural Development on trade and transit of agricultural products.

An MOU was inked by National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and KazMunayGas, which is the state-owned oil and gas company of Kazakhstan.

Another MOU was inked by Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) and Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), which is the country's national railway company.

## Iranian Knowledge-Based Companies in AI, Largest in Region

TEHRAN (IP) - Vice President for Science and Technology called Iranian knowledge-based companies active in the artificial intelligence (AI) are the largest ones in the West Asian region.

Iranian knowledge-based companies have been able to have significant success in developing products, some of which were previously imported.

According to the Iranian Vice President for Science and Technology, Sorena Sattari, in the past eight years, the number of Iranian knowledge-based companies and start-ups has increased from 50 to nearly 7,000.

Sattari said: "Iranian knowledge-based companies active in the field of artificial intelligence, which are the largest in the region, can help the country in calculations with more accuracy."

Meanwhile eight knowledge-based products were unveiled in Mashhad Information and Communication Technology Park, Khorasan Razavi province, northeastern Iran.

The exhibition of knowledge-based products was held in Mashhad Information and Communication Technology Park, and more than 20 technology products from different companies in agriculture, telecommunications, health, and cyber security were displayed.

According to Sattari, the number of Iranian knowledge-based companies and start-ups in the past eight years has increased from 50 to nearly 7,000.

Some of these knowledge-based products, including "Fiber Optic Micro Duct Connector," "Blockchain Platform Cloud Service," "Instant Home Test Kit," and "WordPress Cloud Platform," were exhibited on Monday in Mashhad Information and Communication Technology Park.

## Iran's First Biorefinery Enjoys 85% Progress

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) says



construction of the first biorefinery for production of bioethanol which is of the biggest of this kind of refinery in the region is underway in Kermanshah and it has progressed 85% and it is approaching its final stages of construction and completion.

Ali Nabavi said that despite problems resulted by the sanctions, IDRO with using capability of the domestic engineers and manufacturers has advanced this national project to its final stages. He added that with the current trend in the operation of this project it is expected the construction, installation, testing and launch of this important refinery to finish by the yearend and it joins the network as schedule.

According to Nabavi, the value of this rial-forex investment for completing and launching this Zagros Green Fuel Unit equals 12,000b rials that it will lead to occupation of 200 people. He went on to say that with the launch of this biorefinery and annual production of 66m liters of fuel alcohol of grain, over \$65m will be saved.

Head of the IDRO reiterated that with the launch of this project, some 66,000 tons of remained dried distiller grain with solubles from the fuel alcohol will be produced annually as the sub-product of production that today it is imported as a valuable livestock feed.

Bioethanol fuel as a clean fuel replaces the chemical gasoline additives in line with protecting the environment and it will lead to considerable reduction in pollution.

## SCOCOEX Event in Iran Deferred to October

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The first edition of the international conference and exhibition of economic cooperation opportunities available to member states, supervisors and dialogue partners of the SCO and Iran's neighbors, known as "Iran SCOCOEX", was initially slated for early July.

The organizers have announced that the event is going to be held on October 19-22, 2022.

The exhibition will be held at the International Conference Center of Iran here in the capital with 26 SCO member states in attendance, under the auspices of Iran's Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Industry, and the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran.

The event provides an opportunity for economic cooperation among Iran and the SCO members in various fields such as industry, mining sector, trade, agriculture, artificial intelligence, knowledge-based activities, ICT, as well as oil, gas, petrochemical and energy services.

The proposed themes of Iran SCOCOEX will be "prosperous future for the development of cooperation among SCO states", "joint cooperation and investment in the development of oil and energy projects", "challenges and strategies for developing joint economic cooperation", as well as "technological and industrial cooperation in various fields such as food industry, medicine, automobile, steel, knowledge-based companies, artificial intelligence, and IT".

## Iran Stock Exchange, Central Bank of Yemen Sign MoC

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iran Stock Exchange and the Central Bank of Yemen signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) to boost economic relations.

Despite the invasion of Yemen by the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and several other countries from March 2015, which has led to the killings of thousands and displaced millions of Yemenis so far, Iran has always had a supportive voice for Yemen and has called for peace in this country.

In this regard, Iran has extended economic relations with Yemen as the country has faced severe consequences due to the sanctions by the US and its allies in the region.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia's warmongering in Yemen has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis, injured tens of thousands, and displaced millions.

The military aggression has also destroyed more than 85 percent of Yemen's infrastructure, leaving the country severely short of food and medicine.

## Annual Transit of Goods Via Iranian Railways Hits Record High

TEHRAN (MNA)- Transit of goods through Iran's railway network stood at 1.913 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), to register a new record high, the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) announced.

"It is a big step to create a corridor through Iran", Miad Salehi underlined.

As stated last week by the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), after seven years of reduction in the transit of goods from the country, the growth path of transit resumed in the past Iranian calendar year, and with the passage of 12.65 million tons of goods through Iran, a growth of 68 percent was achieved.

Ruhollah Latifi said that the 68-percent growth in transit last year and the 39-percent rise in the first two months of this year promise to reach 15 million tons of goods passing through Iran in the current year, which has been unprecedented in the entire history of the country.

The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

Iran is one of the countries that has a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

## Belgium Hit by Protests Over Cost of Living Spike

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - A day of strikes in Belgium over the cost of living forced Brussels Airport to cancel all departing flights today and halted many bus services across the country.

Unions said they expected tens of thousands of people to attend a protest in Brussels. Train services were running, partly to allow protesters to converge on the capital. Brussels Airport said it could not allow passenger flights to depart because the industrial action extended to security personnel. Local public transport was running minimal services.

Inflation hit 9 per cent in June in Belgium, mirroring sharp price rises elsewhere largely because Russia's invasion of Ukraine has hit grain supply and caused the cost of energy to spike.



## Southern China Hit by Severe Rains, Floods

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Vast tracts of southern China were pounded by severe storms, triggering flooding in cities and mudslides in rural areas, as the first bout of summer rains reached the peak of their power.

Streets turned to swollen rivers as cars and single-storey houses were swept away in at least two counties in Guizhou province in southwestern China yesterday, according to videos circulating on Chinese social media. The rainfall in some areas has been the heaviest in 60 years. In neighboring autonomous region Guangxi, five villagers were killed when a house built of wood gave way after being lashed by torrential rains, state media said yesterday. Mudslides and road collapses were also reported.



## Russians Advance, Zelenskiy Expects Escalation



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russian forces captured territory along a frontline river in eastern Ukraine, and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy predicted Moscow would escalate attacks ahead of a summit of European leaders expected to welcome Kyiv's bid to join the EU.

Moscow's separatist proxies claimed to have captured Toshkivka, a town on the mostly Ukrainian-held western bank of the Siverskyi Donets river, south of Sievierodonetsk, which has become the main battlefield city in recent weeks.

Ukraine acknowledged that Moscow had success in Toshkivka and said the Russians were trying to gain a foothold there to make a breakthrough into the wider, Ukrainian-held pocket of the eastern Donbas region. It also confirmed a Russian claim to have captured Metyolkine on Sievierodonetsk's eastern outskirts.

"Obviously, this week we should expect from Russia an intensification of its hostile activities," Zelenskiy said in a Sunday nightly video address. "We are preparing. We are ready."

Moscow, for its part, threatened to take unspecified action to retaliate against EU member Lithuania for banning transport of basic goods to Kaliningrad, a Russian outpost on the Baltic Sea surrounded by EU territory. The Lithuanian ban, which took effect on Saturday, blocks shipments of coal, metals, construction materials and advanced technology to the outpost.

Russia's foreign ministry summoned Lithuania's top diplomat and demanded Vilnius reverse the "openly hostile" move immediately, or else Russia "reserves the right to take actions to protect its national interests." Lithuania said it was required to enforce the ban under sanctions imposed by the EU.

Explosions could be heard in Odesa, Ukraine's biggest Black Sea port, after air raid sirens blared, city authorities said, giving no immediate details of what had been hit.

The Russian-installed leader of Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, said Kyiv had struck Black Sea drilling platforms owned by a Crimean oil company.

EU leaders at a summit later this week are expected to give their blessing to Ukraine becoming an official candidate to join, a decision that will be marked as a triumph in Kyiv.

Though it would take years for Ukraine to enter the EU, for the bloc to reach deep into the heart of the former Soviet Union would bring about one of Europe's biggest economic and social transformations since the Cold War. Ukraine applied to join just four days after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his troops across the border in February. Putin says the "special military operation" is aimed at disarming a neighbor Russia views as a threat and protecting Russian speakers there. Kyiv believes Moscow's true aim is to restore control over Ukraine and erase its national identity.

In the strongest step yet proposed by Kyiv to enforce a cultural break with Moscow, the Ukrainian parliament passed bills on Sunday that would ban the publication of books or the public broadcast of music by citizens of post-Soviet Russia.

The measures, which require Zelenskiy's signature to become law, "are designed to help Ukrainian authors share quality content with the widest possible audiences, which after the Russian invasion do not accept any Russian creative product on a physical level", Culture Minister Oleksandr Tkachenko said.

Russian forces were defeated in an assault on the capital Kyiv in March, but have since launched a new one to capture more territory in the east and solidify their hold on the south.

The war has entered a brutal attritional phase in recent weeks, with Russian forces concentrating their overwhelming artillery firepower on a Ukrainian-controlled pocket of the Donbas, which Moscow claims on behalf of separatists.

## Spain's Conservative People's Party Secures Majority in Andalusia

MADRID (Dispatches) - Spain's conservative People's Party (PP) has secured an absolute majority in regional elections in Andalusia, blocking out the far-right Vox party.

The PP is headed by Juan Moreno who has kept his presidency of Andalusia's regional government by securing 58 seats in its parliament, three more than the 55 needed for an absolute majority.

That was up from just 26 seats won in 2018 when Moreno came to power via a coalition that ended more than 30 years of Socialist rule. The commanding victory will ensure that Moreno does not have to rely on Vox, which said it would support Moreno if it is given a share of the government.

Moreno led a right-centre coalition government for the previous four years after right-wing parties ended the Socialists' 36-year hold on Andalusia.

He was credited for running a successful campaign on a moderate platform, which included the defence of gender equality laws that Vox wants to strike down. "We have made history," Moreno told a large crowd in Seville. "[But] I want to start this new stage with humility. Because we in the PP Andalusia have lost many elections and are well trained in accepting results. With this dominant win, we want to remain serene and humble because that is our form of politics."

The Socialists of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez were unable to rebound and slipped from 33 seats in 2018 to 30. More than 6 million people had the right to vote in the election, which the PP hopes will be a signal of what is to come in national elections that will have to be held before the end of 2023. Sánchez will be under even more pressure after his government has struggled to deal with the impact of rampant inflation that is threatening to dampen economic recovery from the pandemic.

It was the first election since Alberto Núñez Feijóo stepped in as the PP's leader in April after his predecessor was removed following an ugly public spat with another party heavyweight, the outspoken and combative Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the regional leader of Madrid. Feijóo's political style of projecting a calm, yet serious persona focused on good governance meshes well with Moreno.



## Colombia Elects First Black Woman VP

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Francia Marquez, a single mother and former housekeeper, will be Colombia's first Black woman vice president after a historic vote on Sunday saw the Andean country pick its first leftist president, Gustavo Petro.

Marquez and Petro won 50.4% of the vote in Sunday's election.

In front of a background emblazoned with the phrase "change is unstoppable," Marquez thanked supporters from across Colombia for assisting her and Petro's campaign in a speech broadcast from Bogota.

"After 214 years we have achieved a government of the people, a popular government, a government of people with calloused hands ... the government of the nobodies of Colombia," she said.

Colombia's new vice president-elect hails from the municipality of Suarez, a rural area of Colombia's Cauca province. Around 80% of Cauca's population lives in some form of poverty.

Marquez is a celebrated environmental activist whose opposition to gold mining in her home municipality of Suarez saw her receive the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2018 - as well as death threats from illegal armed groups.

As well as serving as Petro's vice president, Marquez is slated to lead a new equality ministry to build on her core ideas of improving women's rights and helping the poor access health and education.

Marquez actually came second to Petro in their coalition's March primary election with 783,000 votes, when she tallied more ballots than the winner of the Colombia's centrist primary.

Her political rise during the campaign follows broad demands for change and increasing concern about socio-environmental topics, Daniela Cuellar of FTI Consulting told Reuters. "The political popularity of Francia Marquez was part of a trend in Colombia where the population is looking for a change and where socio-environmental issues are becoming more and more relevant," she said.

## India Calls Off Hundreds of Trains as More Protests Loom

KOLKATA (Dispatches) - Authorities in India cancelled more than 500 trains services on Monday because of calls for protests by young men angry with a military recruitment plan that they say will rob them of the opportunity of a career in the armed forces.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government last week unveiled the plan called Agnipath, or "path of fire", aimed at bringing more people into the military on short, four-year contracts to lower the average age of India's 1.38 million-strong armed forces.

Analysts say the scheme will also help cut burgeoning pension costs.

But the protesters say it will deprive them of the opportunity of a permanent job in the military, and with it a guaranteed pension, other allowances and social status. Top defense officials said on Sunday the plan was aimed at modernizing the forces and would not be withdrawn despite protests by many thousands of young men who have attacked and torched trains and clashed with police since last week.

One person has been killed and police have arrested more than 300 protesters.

The railway ministry said in statement more than 500 trains had been called off on Monday in view of calls for protest strikes.

In the eastern city of Kolkata, a protester held a placard with the message "Boycott Agnipath" and demanded the plan be scrapped.

"I want the defense ministry to stop this experiment. I need a secure job and they have no right to offer temporary arrangements," the young man told a television news channel.

Under the scheme, 46,000 cadets will be recruited this year on four-year terms and 25% of them will be kept on after the four years. Hiring starts this month.

In a bid to end the protests, the government has adjusted parts of the plan to offer more soldiers federal and state government jobs after their service.

One policy analyst said a key part of the plan was aimed at reducing government expenditure on pensions.

"The Agnipath scheme will reduce the life-time cost of manpower by several crore (tens of millions) rupees per head," itin Pai, director of the Takshashila Institution centre for research on public policy, wrote in the Mint newspaper.



## Hopes Fade for Swift NATO Accession for Finland, Sweden

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Finland and Sweden are to discuss their stalled NATO bids with Turkey in Brussels today, but hopes are fading they will be able to resolve their dispute before an alliance summit next week, experts say.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was to meet with representatives from the three countries to try to make progress on the Nordic nations' membership applications, which have been blocked by Ankara.

"I think it is possible but it would be very difficult," Paul Levin, director of the Institute for Turkey Studies at Stockholm University, told AFP, adding it would require both parties to compromise.

NATO and the two Nordic countries had expected the application process to be quick. But Ankara's objections caught them all off-guard, at a time when NATO is keen to display a unified front against Russia.

Ankara has accused Finland and Sweden of providing a safe haven for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), listed as a "terrorist" group by Turkey and its Western allies.

Ankara has also demanded they lift their weapons freezes on Turkey. Any NATO membership deal must be unanimously approved by all 30 members of the alliance, and fears are now mounting that Turkey could delay the Nordic countries' bids indefinitely.

Kurdish quondary Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin recently expressed fears that unless the issues are resolved "before Madrid, there is a risk that the situation will freeze".

Germany on Monday dampened hopes of a deal being reached that quickly. "I think this is about expectations management and to place this in its historical context," said a high-ranking German government source, while stressing a solution was still in sight.

"It would not be a catastrophe if we need a few more weeks," the source said. "What is crucial is that in our view there are no insurmountable difficulties" between Sweden, Finland and Turkey.

Ankara's anger has primarily been directed at Sweden. "Sweden does view the PKK as a terrorist organisation and has done so since 1984", Levin said, adding that it was "arguably the first country apart from Turkey" to do so.



# Europe May Shift Back to Coal as Russia Turns Down Gas Flows

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - Europe's biggest Russian gas buyers raced to find alternative fuel supplies on Monday and considered burning more coal to cope with reduced gas flows from Russia that threaten an energy crisis in winter if stores are not refilled.

The crisis and surge in gas prices add to challenges policymakers face as they tackle inflation and a worsening economic outlook.

Italy's Eni said it was told by Russia's Gazprom that it would receive only part of its request for gas supplies on Monday, pushing the country closer to declaring a state of alert that will trigger gas saving measures.

Germany, which has also experienced lower Russian flows, announced on Sunday its latest plan to boost gas storage levels and said it could restart coal-fired power plants that it had aimed to phase out.

"That is painful, but it is a sheer necessity in this situation to reduce gas consumption," said Economy Minister Robert Habeck, a member of the Green party that has pushed for a faster exit from coal, which produces more greenhouse gases.

"But if we don't do it, then we run the risk that the storage facilities will not be full enough at the end of the year towards the winter season. And then we are blackmailable on a political level," he said.

Russia on Monday repeated its earlier criticism that Europe had only itself to blame after the West imposed sanctions in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, a gas transit route to Europe, as well as a major wheat exporter.

The Dutch front-month gas contract, the European benchmark, was trading around 124 euros (\$130) on Monday, down from this year's peak of 335 euros but still up more than 300% on its level a year ago, before prices started rocketing higher.

The chief executive of Germany's largest power producer RWE, Markus Krebber, said power prices could take three to five years to fall back to lower levels.

Russian gas flows to Germany through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, the main route supplying Europe's biggest economy, were still running at about 40% of capacity on Monday, even though they had edged up from the start of last week.

Ukraine, another transit route for Russian gas, said its pipelines could help to fill any gap in supply via Nord Stream 1. Moscow has previously said it could not pump more through the pipelines that Ukraine has not already shut off.

Eni and German utility Uniper were among European companies that said they were receiving less than contracted Russian gas volumes, although Europe's gas inventories are still filling - albeit more slowly.

They were about 54% full on Monday against a European Union target of 80% by October and 90% by November.

Germany's economy ministry said bringing

back coal-fired power plants could add up to 10 gigawatts of capacity in case gas supply hit critical levels. A law related to the move goes to the upper house of parliament on July 8.

Alongside a shift back to coal, the latest German measures include an auction system starting in coming weeks to encourage industry to consume less gas and financial help for Germany's gas market operator, via state lender KfW fill gas storage facilities faster.

German utility RWE said on Monday it could prolong the operation of three 300 megawatt (MW) brown coal power plants if required during the gas supply crisis.

Austria's government agreed with utility Verbund on Sunday to convert a gas-fired power plant to use coal should restricted gas supplies lead to an energy emergency.

Energy group OMV said Austria was set to receive half the usual amount of gas for a second consecutive day.

Russia's state-controlled Gazprom cut capacity last week along Nord Stream 1, a major pipeline supplying Germany and others, citing the delayed return of equipment being serviced by Germany's Siemens Energy in Canada.



## Goodbye Expo, Hello "Expo City" - Dubai To Reopen World Fair Site

DUBAI (AFP) - Dubai's vast Expo 2020 site is to reopen as Expo City Dubai, a "city of the future" with housing, businesses and leisure facilities, officials said on Monday.

The development on Dubai's outskirts, purpose-built at \$7 billion for the six-month Expo that finished in March, will host offices for Dubai port operator DP World and German conglomerate Siemens.

"Today, we announce the transformation of the exhibition site into Expo City Dubai, a new city that represents the most beautiful ambitions of Dubai," the emirate's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum said in a statement.

"Expo City Dubai will be an environmentally friendly city, one friendly to families, to the economy, and to future generations."

Eighty percent of the original infrastructure and buildings will remain, including the falcon-themed UAE pavilion and Al-Wasl Dome, the Expo centrepiece lit up by colourful projections.

As well as DP World and Siemens, it will house "start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises", the announcement said without giving further details. No figures were given on how much housing or office space is available.

Sheikh Mohammed's office said the new area, which opens on October 1 and was previously billed as "District 2020", will be "driven by sustainability, innovation, education and entertainment". Single-use plastic will be banned.

Organizers said that Expo's 192 country pavilions drew 24 million visits, despite the coronavirus pandemic that delayed the event by a year.

Expo joined a list of attention-grabbing projects in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates' commercial centre which is home to the world's tallest building, the 830-metre (2,723 feet) Burj Khalifa.

"We have gas, it is ready to be delivered, but the Europeans must give back the equipment, which should be repaired under their obligations," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

German and Italian officials have said Russia was using this as an excuse to reduce supplies.

Italy, whose technical committee for gas is expected to meet on Tuesday, has said it could declare a heightened state of alert on gas this week if Russia continues to curb supplies.

The move would trigger measures to reduce consumption, including rationing gas for selected industrial users, ramping up the production at coal power plants and asking for more gas imports from other suppliers under existing contracts.

The European Union eventually aims to shift to renewable energy to cut carbon emissions but, for now, it faces surging prices and a return to more polluting fuels.

"If there is a path to rapidly reducing Russian gas dependence without inducing further inflation and a severe energy price induced recession ... we can't see it," Timera Energy analysts wrote.



**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate

Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865

**IRAN NEWS**  
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS  
**ADVERTISING**

TEL: 44253448-50  
FAX: 44253234  
ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM

## Bitcoin Bounce Back to \$20,000

LONDON (Dispatches) - The cryptocurrency industry was on edge on Monday as bitcoin held just above \$20,000 and investors feared that problems at major crypto players could unleash a wider market shakeout.

Bitcoin, the world's biggest cryptocurrency, dropped on Saturday to as low as \$17,592.78, falling below the key \$20,000 level for the first time since December 2020.

It picked up slightly during London trading hours on Monday, at around \$20,510. But it has still lost 55% of its value this year and 35% this month alone in the cryptocurrency sector's latest meltdown.

Bitcoin's fall follows problems at several major crypto firms. Further declines, market players said, could have a knock-on effect as other crypto investors are forced to sell their holdings to meet margin calls and cover losses.



## Bankrupt Sri Lanka Opens IMF Talks, Begins Shutdown

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka closed schools and halted all non-essential government services on Monday, beginning a two-week shutdown to conserve fast-depleting fuel reserves as the International Monetary Fund opened talks with Colombo on a possible bailout. The country of 22 million people is in the grip of its worst economic crisis after running out of dollars to finance even the most essential imports, including fuel.

On Monday schools were shut and state offices worked with skeleton staff as part of government plans to reduce commuting and save precious petrol and diesel. Hospitals and the main seaport in Colombo were still operating.

Hundreds of thousands of motorists remained in miles-long queues for petrol and diesel even though the energy ministry announced they will not have fresh stocks of fuel for at least three more days.

The country defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt in April and went cap-in-hand to the IMF.

The first in-person talks with the IMF on Sri Lanka's bailout request commenced in Colombo on Monday and will continue for 10 days, the lender and the government said in brief statements.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was also due to meet visiting Australian Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil to "deepen cooperation and assist Sri Lanka as the country faces very difficult economic times," Canberra said in a statement.

It said O'Neil will also discuss strengthening engagement on transnational crime, including people-smuggling following a surge in would-be illegal immigrants by boat in the past month.

Sri Lanka is facing record-high inflation and lengthy power blackouts, all of which have contributed to months of protests -- sometimes violent -- calling on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to step down.

Police arrested 21 student activists who blocked all gates to the presidential secretariat building after declaring Monday, Rajapaksa's 73rd birthday, a "day of mourning".

The shutdown order came last week as the United Nations launched its emergency response to feed thousands of pregnant women who were facing food shortages.

Four out of five people in Sri Lanka have started skipping meals as they cannot afford to eat, the UN has said, warning of a looming "dire humanitarian crisis" with millions in need of aid.

## Foreign Arrivals in Turkey Jump 308.48% in May

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The number of foreigners visiting Turkey increased by 308.48% in May compared to the same month of the previous year, according to data released by the Culture and Tourism Ministry on Monday.

The ministry revealed that some 3,824,555 people visited the country in the month.

The top five provinces whose border gates were used the most frequently by foreign visitors coming to Turkey in May were Istanbul, Antalya on the Mediterranean coast, northwestern Edirne, southwestern Muğla and northern Artvin, respectively.

Meanwhile, in the January-May period of 2022, the number of foreigners visiting Turkey also increased by 207.1% year-over-year. The number of foreigners visiting Turkey in the said period reached 11.3 million.

In the first five months of the year, Germany ranked first in sending the most tourists to Turkey with an increase of 367.24%, Bulgaria ranked second with an increase of 334.88% and Russia ranked third with an increase of 49.40% compared to the same period of the previous year.

Germany once again ranked first in the number of tourists coming to Turkey in May with an increase of 420.62% compared to the same month of the previous year.

The United Kingdom came in second with an increase of 4657.99% and Russia came in third with an increase of 1777.79% Bulgaria and Iran followed Russia.

Despite the increases in foreign arrivals in May, the local tourism sector has now turned to search for alternatives to the Russian and CIS markets -- which generally make up the majority of Turkey's tourism arrivals but have contracted due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

The industry will therefore focus on the domestic market for the upcoming Qurban Bayram holiday period, also known as Eid al-Adha. Speaking to Turkish economics daily Dünya, Korhan Alşan, CEO of Nirvana Hotels, affiliated with Kilit Group, said that Antalya's tourism performance is increasing day by day and the increase in the number of flights is effective in this.

"Regions and facilities working for the CIS market, on the other hand, had a very difficult time in May. Facilities working



## Russian Rouble Hits Near 7-Year High vs Dollar

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Russian rouble surged on Monday to a near seven-year high against the dollar on Moscow Exchange, supported by capital controls and the promise of upcoming month-end tax payments, as the government presented its new budget.

The rouble soared 1.2% to 55.75 against the dollar on Monday, earlier touching 55.44, its strongest mark since early July 2015. It had gained 0.6% to 58.49 against the euro, edging closer to its strongest level in nearly five years of 57.10 hit in May.

The rouble, which has become the world's best-performing currency this year, is steered by Russia's high proceeds from commodity exports and a sharp drop in imports along with a ban on households withdrawing their foreign currency savings.

Top policymakers used Russia's annual economic forum in St. Petersburg last week to highlight the rouble's recent strength. There are concerns this could weigh on the economy as it tips into recession amid harsh sanctions over what Moscow calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine.

First Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Belousov said the rouble was overvalued and industry would be more comfortable if it fell to between 70 to 80 against the U.S. dollar.

The active discussion about a "fair" rouble shows there are concerns about the current level's impact on the budget and imports, said Dmitry Polevoy, head of investment at Locko-Invest. Polevoy said it also showed the effectiveness and merits of Russia's budget rule, suspended since 2020, which caps Russia's budget spending, linking it to its non-oil and gas revenues, while channelling extra oil and gas revenues into its rainy-day fund.

## U.S. Banking Stress Indicator Could Worsen After Fed Hike

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - An indicator of credit risk in the U.S. banking system may be showing signs of stress, as the Federal Reserve's aggressive rate hike path ratchets up expectations of economic pain.

The so-called FRA-OIS spread, which measures the gap between the U.S. three-month forward rate agreement and the overnight index swap rate, increased to 29.50 basis points on Thursday, its widest since May 23, according to data from Refinitiv. The measure was at -11.66 bps earlier in the week.

Widely viewed as a proxy for banking sector risk, a higher spread reflects rising interbank lending risk.

"The recent spike in the spread between forward rate agreement and overnight index swap rate is concerning," said Jordan Jackson, a global market strategist at J.P. Morgan Asset Management. "As the Fed turns more hawkish, there is a rise in recession concerns and that is increasing the underlying credit risk."

The Fed raised rates by 75 basis points on Wednesday, its biggest increase since 1994, and expectations of more drastic tightening ahead have shaken markets and increased worries over a potential recession.

The central bank this month also began allowing bonds to mature off its more than \$8 trillion balance sheet without replacing them, a process called quantitative tightening that Jackson said can potentially sap liquidity in the financial system.

That echoes concerns of some other investors, who have worried that market conditions could worsen as the world's largest holder of U.S. government debt reduces its presence in the market.

"Now that quantitative tightening has officially started, we have seen reserve drainage pretty persistent over the last several months," Jackson said, adding that he expects the FRA-OIS spread to widen even further.

Wall Street is also seeing a greater risk of default by major banks.

Spreads on credit default swaps (CDS) of JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, Wells Fargo and Bank of America were approaching fresh two-year highs on Thursday.

## ConocoPhillips Joins Qatar's Mega Gas Expansion

DOHA (Dispatches) - ConocoPhillips on Monday became the first U.S. energy giant to sign up to help Qatar's massive natural gas expansion that has drawn global bidders anxious to assure new supplies.

ConocoPhillips' chunk of the North Field East project is half the size of France's TotalEnergies, which has a 6.25 percent share, but the same as Italy's ENI, announced on Sunday, Energy Minister Saad Sherida al-Kaabi told a press conference at which the accord was signed.

No figure for the value of the deal was given but TotalEnergies previously said it had paid \$2 billion for its joint venture.

The expansion of the North Field, which has the world's biggest known natural gas reserves, is estimated to cost more than \$28 billion, and will see production increase from the current 77 million tons a year to 110 million tons by 2027.

The project has taken on growing international importance because of the fallout from the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Europe's energy supplies.

The joint venture between ConocoPhillips and the state-owned Qatar Energy will last 27 years, but Kaabi said he expected gas from the North Field to last more than 50 years.

The reserves extend into Iranian territory and make up about 10 percent of the world's known reserves, according to Qatar Energy.

ConocoPhillips chairman Ryan Lance hailed the deal, saying it would be the "best in the world." "The LNG here in Qatar is needed to power world economic prosperity and to help protect against climate change," he added.

Qatar is expected to announce more partners in the coming days, with ExxonMobil of the United States, Britain's Shell and Chinese state energy firms among the names mentioned by



industry sources as likely contenders. China is already one of the biggest customers for Qatari liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Foreign companies are expected to hold about 25 percent of the project in all.

Kaabi said there was "zero diplomatic element" in the decision on the companies taking part. He said the price paid, technical "competency" and ability to give access to new markets were the key elements determining the selection.

Qatar's gas is among the cheapest to produce and has fuelled the Persian Gulf state's economic miracle of the past four decades. It is expected to announce details of another expansion, the North Field South, in coming months.

## China Keeps Lending Benchmarks Unchanged



SHANGHAI (Dispatches) - China stood pat on its benchmark lending rates for corporate and household loans, as expected, with global central banks' rate increases making it tough for Beijing to stimulate a weak domestic economy by lowering rates.

Markets widely believe that Chinese policymakers are wary of risks that the yuan will depreciate and capital outflows will be triggered if they embark on further monetary easing to underpin a Covid-19-hit economy at a time when other major economies are tightening their rates policies.

The one-year loan prime rate (LPR) was kept at 3.70 per cent, and the five-year LPR was unchanged at 4.45 per cent.

"Perhaps there is some reluctance in loosening monetary policy to support economic activity, which could reflect some caution in moving in the opposite direction to other central banks, particularly the Federal Reserve," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management.

"It seems a matter of time, however, before there are larger liquidity injections and measures to boost credit." Central banks across Europe raised interest rates last week, some by a level that shocked markets, in the wake of the Fed's 75 basis point hike to combat high inflation.

"While the PBOC has little to fear from a weaker currency -- the renminbi remains extremely strong -- the last thing it wants is to have to defend against a sharp, potentially destabilising sell-off," economists at Capital Economics said in a note earlier.

"That could plausibly happen if it lowered rates now when almost every other major central bank has turned much more hawkish." Divergent Sino-US policies have wiped out China's yield advantage in April, triggering a record monthly tumble in the yuan. And a deeper inversion of US and Chinese government-bond yields could revive such depreciation pressure on the Chinese currency.

About 90 per cent of traders and analysts in a Reuters survey last week expected China to keep both rates unchanged.

## Corona Has Subsided But Should Not Be Neglected

TEHRAN (IP) – Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi at the end of the meeting of the National Task Force for Combating Corona, said that the rise in the number of corona contracting in some neighboring countries has raised the sensitivity of members of the Task Force present at the meeting, and new decisions and policies have been approved.

The minister said that the meeting also discussed the medical issues of the pilgrims sent to Saudi Arabia and the Arbaeen pilgrims, and it was decided to make the necessary predictions. Vahidi, meanwhile, said that necessary coordination had been made with Saudi hospitals and that no specific problems had been reported regarding the health of Iranian pilgrims.



## Le Pen Says Huge Gains in French Parliament a Seismic Event

PARIS (AP) — Far-right leader Marine Le Pen said on Monday that her party's extraordinary surge in the country's parliamentary election is a "historic victory" and a "seismic event" in French politics.

Many voters in Sunday's poll opted for far-right or far-left candidates, denying President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance a straight majority in the National Assembly.

Le Pen's National Rally got 89 seats in the 577-member parliament, up from a previous total of eight. On the other side of the political spectrum, the leftist Nupes coalition, led by hardliner Jean-Luc Melenchon, won 131 seats to become the main opposition force.

Macron's centrist alliance Together! won the most seats — 245 — but fell 44 seats short of a straight majority in the National Assembly, France's most powerful house of parliament.

The outcome of the legislative election is highly unusual in France and the strong performance of both Le Pen's National Rally and Melenchon's coalition — composed of his own hard-left party, France Unbowed, the Socialists, Greens and Communists — will make it harder for Macron to implement the agenda he was reelected on in May, including tax cuts and raising France's retirement age from 62 to 65.

"Macron is a minority president now. (...) His retirement reform plan is buried," a beaming Le Pen declared on Monday in Hénin-Beaumont, her stronghold in northern France, where she was reelected for another five-year term in the parliament. "It's a historic victory (...) a seismic event."

She told reporters: "We are entering the parliament as a very strong group and as such we will claim every post that belongs to us." As the biggest single party in the parliament — Macron and Melenchon both lead coalitions — she said National Rally will seek to chair the parliament's powerful finance committee, one of the eight commissions that oversee the national budget.

Le Pen's far-right party now has a sufficient number of legislators to constitute a formal group at the National Assembly and request seats in other committees, including a parliamentary investigation committee and those focusing on defense and foreign policy.

In addition, the National Rally party now has enough seats — more than 58 — to trigger a censure motion against the government that can lead to a no-confidence vote.

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne suggested Sunday evening that Macron's alliance will seek to find "good compromises" with lawmakers from diverse political forces. Macron himself hasn't commented on the election results yet.



His government will still have the ability to rule, but only by bargaining with legislators. The centrists could try to negotiate on a case-by-case basis with lawmakers from the center-left and from the conservative party — with the goal of preventing opposition lawmakers from being numerous enough to reject the proposed measures.

The government could also occasionally use a special measure provided by the French Constitution to adopt a law without a vote.

A similar situation happened in 1988 under Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, who then had to seek support from the Communists or the centrists to pass laws.

The latest parliamentary election has once again largely been defined by voter apathy — with over half the electorate staying home.

"I don't even know who was running," said Lucie Gault, a 20-year-old medical student in Paris. She had no interest in the election campaign and didn't cast a ballot on Sunday.

"I don't follow any of it and even if I did vote I wouldn't even know what I was voting for," Gault said.

Aurélie Cruvillier, a bank employee in the French capital said the outcome of Sunday's vote was confusing because "we vote for candidates that we don't like when we maybe should be voting for ideas or at least important issues."

## Airlines Seek Gov't Support For Net-Zero Pledge



DOHA (Dispatches) - World airlines on Monday called on governments to support the industry's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The plea at a meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) came three months before a crucial gathering of the United Nations' intergovernmental agency supporting aviation.

IATA, whose member airlines account for 83 percent of global air traffic, pledged in October to reach net-zero by mid-century, an enormous and costly technological challenge.

"It is critical that the industry is supported by governments with policies that are focused on the same decarbonisation goal," Willie Walsh, IATA's director general, said in a statement during the group's annual general meeting in the Gulf emirate of Qatar.

IATA's 2050 target is in accordance with goals of the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

"The decarbonisation of the global economy will require investment across countries and across decades, particularly in the transition away from fossil fuels," Walsh said.

"Stability of policy matters."

His appeal comes three months before the International Civil Aviation Organization meets at the end of September in Montreal, where it is to examine the issue of reducing emissions.

Agreement is far from certain as Russia and China are among companies targeting decarbonisation 10 years later, in 2060.

Chinese airlines voiced objections last year to the IATA target during the group's meeting in Boston.

In an effort to counter such reluctance as the effects of climate change become increasingly apparent, France, holding the rotating EU presidency, in February published the Toulouse Declaration calling on the entire world to sign up to the goals.

In addition to 42 countries, airports, airlines and other industry players adopted the declaration.

"The industry's determination to achieve net-zero by 2050 is firm. How would governments explain the failure to reach an agreement to their citizens?" said Walsh.

## Global Activity May Diverge Across Regions, Geographies Amid Economic Slowdown

LONDON (Dispatches) - Activity is expected to diverge across regions and geographies although the global economy has been slowing down, QNB has said in an economic commentary.

In early 2021, when several major economies were benefiting from a stimulus-driven recovery from the pandemic, activity indicators had a sharp positive run, QNB noted.

The global manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a survey-based indicator that measures whether several components of activity improved or deteriorated versus the previous month, peaked at a high of 56 in May 2021. Traditionally, an index reading of 50 serves as a threshold to separate contractionary (below 50) from expansionary (above 50) changes in business conditions.

But as global inflation soared amid the combination of strong demand with supply chain constraints on logistics and energy, the recovery momentum started to fade. This has been caused by the



withdrawal of policy support, monetary policy tightening, supply disruptions and idiosyncratic dynamics across regions. The result is higher inflation with a squeeze in disposable incomes globally.

While the latest print of 52.4 for the global manufacturing PMI is still comfortably within expansionary territory, there are signs of a slowdown or even reversal of economic activity.

Nevertheless, QNB noted different patterns can be observed across regions and geographies. Its analysis delves into the regional-specificities to explain the global divergence.

In the U.S., since the beginning of the pandemic, strong policy stimulus and support left the private sector in a strong position, with growth peaking in March 2021.

Activity remained firm in the U.S. but less fiscal support, high inflation and a less accommodative (hawkish) Federal Reserve started to weigh on growth in recent months.

## Iran Reportedly Prepares...

FROM PAGE 1

"The Agency has yet to receive clarification from Iran as to which mode of production it intends to implement for the aforementioned cascade, following the completion of passivation," the report said, which the IAEA confirmed.

Following the release of a recent report by Rafael Grossi, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as efforts by three European countries and the United States to draft an anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors, the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran explicitly stated that Iran would respond promptly and effectively to these actions, and the countries that are pushing for the adoption of an anti-Iranian resolution by the United Nations nuclear watchdog will be responsible for all the consequences.

## Maduro...

FROM PAGE 1

Maduro also voiced concern about the escalating military and political conflict in Ukraine. "The war in Ukraine is not simply a military confrontation. It is a global and economic war, with political and diplomatic implications. It is indeed a global war. It is a war against Moscow, and its goal is to destroy Russia," he commented.

He then slammed Western sanctions against Russia in the wake of its military operations in Ukraine, saying, "The bans have rebounded on Europe and the United States, and adversely affected the whole world. The prices of foodstuffs, fertilizers, and oil have spiked and the economic crisis has worsened. No European and US elite had forecast such a thing to happen."

"The only thing that European and American elites are concerned about is their desire for revenge, especially against Russia. This is what worries me the most," Maduro lamented.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Maduro reiterated Venezuela's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

"As a Bolivarian Revolution fighter, we really want peace for the entire region. We want peace for the Palestinian nation, for the people of Lebanon, for the people of Syria, for the people of Iraq, for the people of Iran and for all the peoples living in this region," he underlined.

"We seek peace that respects the right of people to existence. Venezuela reaffirms its firm support for the Palestinian cause. Venezuela reiterates its solidarity and support for Palestinians' historical rights concerning the liberation of occupied lands and the establishment of an independent state within the framework of international principles, as ratified repeatedly by the United Nations. We are against the threats of war, aggression, and violence," Maduro concluded.

## Iran Deplores...

FROM PAGE 1

"We call on the Security Council to abandon its double standard and condemn the repeated Israeli acts of aggression unequivocally, holding this lawless regime accountable for its aggressions and malicious activities," Takht-Ravanchi said.

The Iranian ambassador to the UN went on to say that more than eleven years of conflict, aggression, occupation, and terrorism have created numerous problems for the Syrian nation.

"The situation has been aggravated by the unilateral sanctions which have stymied the implementation of Resolution 2585, which calls for the provision of basic services and implementation of early recovery and reconstruction projects, thus impeding Syria's reconstruction efforts and hampering humanitarian aid delivery in a variety of ways, even delaying the return of refugees and displaced persons," he remarked.

According to Takht-Ravanchi, the Syrian government's ability to achieve economic and social stability and improve the living conditions of Syrians has been undermined by those illegal measures.

The Iranian ambassador to the UN also pointed to the world body's reports on Syria, noting that 14.6 million Syrians would require humanitarian aid in 2022, up 1.2 million from 2021.

He said the provision of basic services such as water, electricity, and healthcare is increasingly declining in the war-ravaged country.

He underlined the need to provide humanitarian aid to Syria amid the dire situation there, stating that political conditions should not be allowed to prevent humanitarian supplies from reaching needy people.

Takht-Ravanchi then referred to the recent tripartite meeting among the representatives of Iran, Russia, and Turkey as part of a Syria peace process hosted by Kazakhstan, saying the three countries emphasized "the need to remove impediments and increase humanitarian assistance to all Syrians across the country without discrimination, politics, or preconditions."

## Tehran, Kabul...

FROM PAGE 1

"The Kamal Khan Dam like many others, can play an important role in water management if the necessary facilities are installed for it," said Hameedullah Yalani, former head of the Afghanistan Water Supply.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock (ACAL) said that a lot of land across the country is not used for agriculture purposes due to the lack of good water management.

According to the 1973 treaty, Afghanistan is committed to sharing the water from the Helmand River with Iran at the rate of 26 cubic meters of water per second, or 850 million cubic meters annually.

## Iranian Envoy Slams...

FROM PAGE 1

Anti-Muslim sentiments have been on the rise across Europe in recent years in the wake of terrorist attacks in the continent. The attacks were carried out by the Daesh sympathizers or the terror group's members who had returned home following their defeat in Iraq and Syria.

The Iranian ambassador also said Israel is a symbol of racism and hate mongering, stressing that the illegal entity's efforts to conceal such hostile policies will be to no avail.

"The Zionist regime is well known for its racist policies and spread of hate speech and its propaganda cannot hide this very fact," Takht-Ravanchi said.

## Cyberattack Causes...

FROM PAGE 1

Last Wednesday, a hacker group identifying itself as the "Moses Staff" broke into the Israeli electricity network, vowing to plunge the regime into darkness.

The group said it had targeted the Israel electric corporation, the largest supplier of electrical power in the occupied territories, as well as Dorad energy Ltd., which serves customers throughout the territories, and technical solutions provider, Reali technologies Ltd.

Earlier this year, the group struck Israel's closed-circuit television cameras in the occupied Palestinian territories and Rafael advanced defense systems, an Israeli military technology company. Back then, it posted a message regarding the cyberattack on its website, titled "We see with your eyes."

Last November, Moses Staff said it had successfully conducted a massive cyberattack against the occupying regime, breaking into the servers of major companies, and adding that it was now in possession of comprehensive data that could be leaked.

## West Ham Sign Rennes Defender Nayef Aguerd

LONDON (Dispatches) - West Ham announced the signing of Rennes defender Nayef Aguerd on Monday in a deal worth a reported £30 million (\$37 million) once add-ons are included.

The Morocco international, 26, who spent two seasons with the French Ligue 1 club, has signed a five-year contract with David Moyes' side.

"I was really excited when I heard about West Ham United's interest," said the left-sided player.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

### Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

### Public Relations Tel:

(+98)(21) 44253450

Editorial Board: 44253449

### Public Relations Fax:

(+98)(21) 44253395

### Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234

### Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

### E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

### ISSN 1024-6053

P.O. Box: 15875-8551

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

Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz

### Distributed by:

Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute

Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

## Tottenham Sign Bissouma From Brighton

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham announced the signing of midfielder Yves Bissouma from Brighton for a reported fee of £25 million, giving manager Antonio his third signing of the transfer window.

The highly rated Mali international shone as Brighton achieved their best-ever Premier League finish of ninth last season.

Bissouma has signed a four-year deal and will join new arrivals Ivan Perisic and Fraser Forster at the London club.

# Leclerc Insists Ferrari Can Beat Red Bull And Verstappen

LONDON (Dispatches) - Charles Leclerc left the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in a defiant mood after Sunday's Canadian Grand Prix and insisted that he can overhaul Max Verstappen to win this year's world championship.

The 24-year-old Monegasque Ferrari driver is 49 points adrift of Red Bull's world champion, who on Sunday reeled off his sixth win of the season, but still believes it is not an insurmountable deficit.

Leclerc finished fifth after a storming, if frustrating, race from the back of the grid having been handed a grid penalty for taking a new power unit.

"Reliability is a concern for everyone this season," said Leclerc. "But if we can fix that, we have the performance to come back and so, from Silverstone, we will be trying to gain points back.

"Forty-nine points? Two victories and it is done!"

Verstappen admitted after Sunday's tense finish that he did not have the pace to beat Carlos Sainz, in the second Ferrari, without defending hard for the last 15 laps as the Spaniard did all he could to find a way to pass him and claim his maiden win.

That proved, according to the 24-year-old Dutchman, that this year's championship can swing between Red Bull and Ferrari with more twists to come.

"There is still a very long way to go in the championship and the gap is, of course, quite big, but we have seen and we know it can switch around quite quickly," said Verstappen, who struggled in the opening three races of the year before taking the initiative.

In the back of his mind, Verstappen may have recalled that he had a 32-point lead over seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes at a similar point in the title race last year when their battle went down to the final lap of the season.

"I mean," he added. "Race three (this year) I was 46 behind, so now we just need to



stay calm, need to focus and we need to improve because we're not the quickest.

"Last weekend, it looked good in the race. Now not so good. But we managed to win and that is a quality too and we just have to work together as a team to try and find little improvements."

To add to the complexity of the championship scrap, the upcoming British Grand Prix at Silverstone (July 3) may see a resurgent challenge from Mercedes with Hamilton leading their charge at his and team-mate George Russell's home race.

Hamilton said he was 'ecstatic' to be back on the podium in third place on Sunday when he produced a convincing drive without post-race grumbles about bouncing or 'porpoising', despite claiming his car was undriveable on Friday.

He acknowledged, however, that his car remains deeply capricious and unpredictable, suggesting that it remains likely Silverstone will witness another battle between Ferrari and Red Bull, with the Italian team keen to give vent to their frustrations.

Sainz admitted that he may have erred in not taking a softer tyre to attack Verstappen at his pit-stop before the closing laps while Leclerc said he was twice stuck behind 'DRS trains' of slower cars.

In each case, they knew they had the speed to overtake but did not have the space or opportunity - a less likely frustration for them at the sweeping high-speed British track.

"Our pace was really good," said Leclerc. "I got stuck in the traffic twice... It's like this sometimes, but I hope it will be different at the next race - reliability permitting!"



## Medvedev Fumes at Coach During Defeat to Hurkacz

BERLIN (Dispatches) - World number one Daniil Medvedev screamed at his coach during an on-court outburst Sunday before going on to lose his second straight ATP grass-court final when he was brushed aside by Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in Halle.

Medvedev had few answers as he crashed to a 6-1,6-4 defeat inside 64 minutes.

This was a second consecutive heavy defeat in a final for the Russian who also lost in straight sets to Tim van Rijthoven last Sunday at 's-Hertogenbosch.

At the start of the second set on Sunday, Medvedev shouted angrily at his French coach Gilles Cervara, who promptly left his seat in the stands and stormed out of the stadium.

After the match, Medvedev apologized to the crowd for "not making this match longer and more interesting" and admitted he was "not easy to be with on the court" this week.

Hurkacz earned the fifth title of his career, but his first on grass having also reached the semi-finals of Wimbledon last year.

"Daniil is the best player in the world so it's very tricky to play him," said Hurkacz.

"All the right shots went my way at the beginning, so I definitely gained a lot of momentum from that."

On his way to the final in Halle, the 25-year-old saw off Australian firebrand Nick Kyrgios in three sets before outclassing Medvedev.

## Mbappe Accuses French Federation Boss of Ignoring Racist Abuse

PARIS (Dispatches) - France international Kylian Mbappe accused the president of the French Football Federation (FFF) of ignoring racist abuse after his penalty miss at Euro 2020.

The Paris Saint-Germain star's decisive spot-kick against Switzerland was saved in the last-16 shootout, resulting in the world champions exiting the tournament.

The 23-year-old was vilified on social media by furious fans, and even considered quitting the national team as a result.

In an interview with a Sunday newspaper, FFF president Noel Le Graet spoke of the lack of support Mbappe had felt after the Euro elimination.

Le Graet said "he (Mbappe) considered that the federation had not defended him after his missed penalty and the criticism on social media networks".

"We saw seen each other for five minutes in my office," continued Le Graet, adding the striker "no longer wanted to play in the French team - which he obviously did not think".

On Sunday, Mbappe responded on Twitter, regretting that Le Graet had not taken into account the "racism" of which he would have been a victim.

"Yes finally I explained to him (Le Graet) above all that it was in relation to racism, and NOT to the penalty," Mbappe said.

"But he considered that there had been no racism..."

Le Graet had already come under fire last September after declaring that racism in football "does not exist or hardly exists".

A few months before the Paris prosecutor's office announced it was investigating racist messages towards certain French international players after the Euros.

On Saturday, FIFA published a report pointing to the increase in the number of insults against footballers on social media.

According to this study, 38 percent of them were racist in nature.

# Ancelotti Key to Real Madrid Move



Rudiger, speaking at his presentation ceremony at the club's training ground in Valdebebas, said he made his decision in April, after a conversation with the Italian coach.

LONDON (Dispatches) - Antonio Rudiger said on Monday Carlo Ancelotti was instrumental in his decision to join Real Madrid from Chelsea this summer.

Rudiger has moved to the Santiago Bernabeu on a free transfer after choosing not to extend his Chelsea contract. The 29-year-old defender has signed a four-year deal with the reigning Spanish and European champions.

"The first time I got in contact, not really me, my agent, was early September. The second time, I spoke with Mr Ancelotti, that was in April," Rudiger said.

"That was the most important moment, to speak with Mr Ancelotti. That was when I made my choice, that I wanted to play for this club under him.

"He said he wanted me, trusted in my abilities, that I could be very helpful to the team, and at my age, that's enough. At the end of the day, it's Mr Ancelotti. You always know at Madrid that nothing is guaranteed. You have to fight for your place. I'm ready to do that."

As well as turning down the chance to stay at Chelsea, Rudiger said there was also interest in him from Barcelona. "There was interest from Barcelona but I told my brother, it's Real or nothing," Rudiger said.

## Lukaku, Pogba Returns Great For Serie A

LONDON (Dispatches) - Alessandro Del Piero believes the imminent returns of Romelu Lukaku and Paul Pogba to Serie A will be a "great move" for Italian football.

Juventus are poised to re-sign Pogba following his departure from Manchester United, while Inter are pushing to bring Lukaku back from Chelsea following a disappointing year in the Premier League.

Both players will represent marquee additions for the two Serie A title hopefuls as they seek to knock Milan off their perch next season, while also boosting them in the hunt for glory in the Champions League.

Juventus legend Del Piero believes the deals have further significance, however, as he feels they can help to push Italian football to compete with the other top leagues in Europe following a number of years off the pace.

"Now the Premier League is the best football you can see in terms of number of teams that can perform at a high level and what happened in the Champions League, in the Europa League how they performed is the answer," he told ESPN.

"It's a different kind of sport in some moments. It seems in the Premier League you run more, you have more physicality, you are more spectacular.

"It's not exactly like this because in Italy we have this kind of thing but Italy is struggling now: the national team and also in the club teams.

"So last season showed a little bit more. Roma's win [in the Europa Conference League] is a good hope for the future in the Europa competitions.



## Guardiola Does Not Want Unhappy Players at Man City

LONDON (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola would prefer any disgruntled Manchester City players to leave the club this summer.

The City boss was asked about Bernardo Silva's future, with the midfielder once again strongly linked with a move to Barcelona after a stellar campaign. Should Frenkie de Jong leave the La Liga side in the coming weeks, Silva would likely be top of the shortlist as a replacement.

The 27-year-old won City's Player of the Month award in September, October and November, making him the first player in the club's history to win the award three times in a row.

While Guardiola believes Silva is happy at the Etihad, he does not want to keep players at City against their will.

"As of today, I think Bernardo will continue at Man City next season but as I always said, I don't like to keep players that are unhappy," Guardiola said.

"But Bernardo is important and I think he will stay." Guardiola was speaking in Spain as it was announced Barcelona and Manchester City will play a charity match at the Nou Camp on August 24 fundraising for ALS, a rare illness that former Barcelona goalkeeper and assistant coach Juan Carlos Unzué was diagnosed with two years ago.

