

Health Ministry Announced on Wednesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **141,564** With **32** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Minister of Information and Communications Technology Says Iranian Private Companies Are Headed to Russia for Negotiation To Export Iranian Communications And IT Products to the Country

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2 DOMESTIC

NATO Knows No Boundaries, Had to Be Stopped

> SEE PAGE 2



3 DOMESTIC

Tehran, Tashkent Seek Expanding Scientific and Technological Ties

> SEE PAGE 3



4 INTERNATIONAL

Sunak Tops Tory MPs' Latest Vote as Race Narrows to Three

> SEE PAGE 4



8 SPORTS

Nadal's Season Will Continue To Be Unpredictable

> SEE PAGE 8



Iran Sees Ground For Nuclear Agreement In Near Future

TEHRAN (IFP) - A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry says there is ground for a nuclear agreement in the near future if the United States makes up its mind firmly.

Nasser Kanaani said on Wednesday that a deal would be conceivable in the short term "if America looked at the matter through the prism of America's national interests, not the Zionist regime's."

He also said Iran demanded "serious and verifiable guarantees" that any deal would not be scrapped by a future US president.

Kanaani said Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian had held a phone conversation with European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Josep Borrell to facilitate new talks.

He said negotiations with the United States were being carried out via the EU.

He also referred to the trilateral summit of the Iranian, Turkish, and Russian presidents in the Iranian capital and said Tehran had turned into "the capital of diplomacy and the alliance against terrorism and the fight against unilateralism and militarism."

See Page 7

Presence of Americans in Syria "Not Legitimate" Under Any Pretext



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN, Jul. 20 (MNA) – Stating that any action that leads to the violation of Syrian sovereignty should be avoided, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said that the presence of the Americans in Syria is wrong under any pretext and they should leave the region.

Speaking in a joint press conference with Russian and Turkish counterparts after the Astana Troika summit held in Tehran on Tuesday, President Raisi thanked the presidents of Russia and Turkey for attending the seventh meeting of the Astana negotiations in order to pursue the rule of peace in Syria, saying, "In this summit, the sovereignty of the established government of Syria on the territorial integrity of this country was emphasized."

"The presence of the Americans in the east of the Euphrates, under any pretext, is not legitimate, and they should leave this area, and all parts of Syria should be established under the rule of a legitimate government," the Iranian President added. "In the meeting, we emphasized the decisive fight against terrorism and the cooperation of all countries in this field."

Raisi stated that today's terrorist movements have endangered the security of the region, and added, "Everyone has tried to fight terrorism and therefore it is necessary to address the concerns that exist in Syria, especially in areas like Idlib, about the presence of terrorists, with the serious determination of all countries."

Referring to Martyr General Haj Qasem Soleimani as a symbol of standing and resistance and fighting against terrorism, he said, "The Islamic Republic's vigorous fight against terrorist movements has been a successful experience and the serious and relentless fight against terrorism will definitely be successful."

The President stated that the continuation of humanitarian aid to the oppressed people of Syria was emphasized in this meeting, and clarified, "All the members were of the same opinion that efforts should be made to solve the economic and livelihood problems of the Syrian people."

Raisi noted, "In this meeting, the need to avoid any action that would lead to violation of Syrian sovereignty was emphasized. The members agreed that any action should be aimed at strengthening the rule of the legal government of this country."

The President said, "The presidents present at the summit while condemning the attacks of the Zionist Regime on the oppressed people of Syria, stressed the cessation of these attacks and stated that attacking the people and armed forces in Syria is a violation of the sovereignty of this country and against international laws."

Stating that the cooperation of Iran, Russia and Turkey with the government in Syria is always necessary to establish peace and implement agreements to ensure the security of Syria, Raisi clarified, "We believe that the framework of the Astana Process has been successful and these negotiations have had good results and this process should continue for the advancement of security and progress."

See Page 7

Iran Rises Concern Over Turkey Possible Armed Attack on Syria

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said that Iran is concerned about the possible military attack of Turkey on Syrian soil.

Amirabdollahian made the remarks in a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad on Wednesday.

Saying that Iran is continuously talking and consulting with Turkey and Syria, he added that last night, an attempt was made to resolve the concerns of the Turkish authorities regarding the security of the common border between the two countries.

Referring to the 7th Astana Troika summit held last night in Tehran, Amirabdollahian said that considering the sensitive situation in which Syria is now and the possibility of a new conflict in the border areas of Syria, the summit tried to help Syria to be away from war and militarism.

The summit also tried to resolve the Syrian political issues, according to the Iranian foreign minister.

"We hope that these recommendations, which were emphasized by the heads of countries participating in the Astana summit, will be taken into consideration by the officials of the friendly country of Turkey and that Turkey and Syria will pass this stage well," Amirabdollahian stated.

See Page 7



Iranophobia Does Not Work Any Longer

Last week, the Middle East saw the presence of U.S. President Joe Biden in the region amid media and political hype which was aimed at creating Iranophobia and stepping up pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran to accept the U.S. and its allies' excessive demands but in practice it was proved that Iranophobia does not work any longer and all U.S. efforts have been ineffective.

Reacting to the remarks and statements in the Israel and Jeddah of Saudi Arabia, countries took different stances which show that the U.S. and Zionist efforts to spread Iranophobia for justifying their presence in the region have been ineffective.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman said the United States is trying to foment tension and crisis in the West Asia region by resorting to its policy of Iranophobia.

Nasser Kan'ani made the remarks in reaction to the latest remarks by Biden, who accused Iran of destabilizing activities in the West Asia region during an address to a summit of regional Arab states in the Saudi city of Jeddah on Saturday.

"Around the world, we're seeing efforts to undermine the rules-based order: with China's increasingly coercive actions in the Indo-Pacific and beyond; with Russia's brutal and unprovoked war against its neighboring Ukraine; and with Iran's destabilizing activities," Biden claimed.

Responding to Biden's remarks, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman described the U.S. president's remarks as baseless and unacceptable, saying, "Such groundless allegations are in line with Washington's policy to incite sedition and create tension in the region."

Kan'ani said the United States is the sole country that has used nuclear weapons and in addition, its track records are marked with continued interference in the internal affairs of regional countries, occupation and military aggression as well as massive weapons sales and promoting militarism in West Asia.

"Once more, the United States is trying to create tension and crisis in the region by resorting to its failed policy of Iranophobia," he said.

He said Iran's strategic policy is to avail itself of peaceful nuclear technology within framework of international rules and regulations while, at the same time, continue negotiations for the removal of sanctions imposed on the country.

See Page 7

Israel's Crimes Against Children Clear Manifestation of War Crimes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations calls on the world body to demand accountability on the part of the Israeli regime for its "heinous" crimes against children.

The Israeli regime continues to commit "the most systematic and flagrant violation" of children's rights in the Middle East, Majid Takht Ravanchi said during an address to a UN Security Council session on children and armed conflict on Tuesday. In 2021, the UN documented 2,934 grave violations against 1,208 Palestinian children in occupied Palestine and the Gaza Strip.

"According to the UN report, in 2021, the Israeli regime killed 86 and imprisoned 637 Palestinian children, 85 of whom suffered ill-treatment and violation of due process by the Israeli regime while incarcerated, with 75 percent reporting physical violence," said the ambassador. "Moreover, the United Nations verified 22 attacks on schools," he added.

Takht Ravanchi considered the atrocities to be "clear manifestations of war crimes and crimes against humanity." "The perpetrators of such heinous crimes must therefore be brought to justice," the envoy concluded.

Putting an end to ongoing conflicts, preventing their re-emergence, and guaranteeing the conflicting parties' full and effective compliance with international humanitarian law were all necessary to protect children in armed conflicts, the ambassador concluded.

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Oman Navy Commander Meets Iran Chief of Staff

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman Rear Admiral Saif Bin Nasser Al Rahbi met with Iran's Chief of Staff for the Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri here in Tehran.

In the meeting on Wednesday, Bagheri said that Iran and Oman have had favorable military ties for a long time which is expanding in various dimensions.

The two countries' regional policies are coordinated and aligned, the commander noted, adding that the Strait of Hormuz and Oman Sea were common operation areas where the two nations have close cooperation.

General Bagheri praised Oman for hosting Iranian vessels, saying that the two countries' ships navigate along each other's coasts.

NATO Knows No Boundaries, Had to Be Stopped

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei describes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as "dangerous," saying that the US-led military alliance knows no boundaries and had to be stopped in Ukraine or it would have eventually started war using Crimea as a pretext.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who arrived in Tehran earlier on Tuesday to take part in a three-way summit with Iranian and Turkish presidents Ebrahim Raisi and Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the Syria peace process.

"War is a harsh and difficult reality, and the Islamic Republic will in no way be happy if it entangles ordinary people," the Leader said.

"In the case of Ukraine, however, if you had not taken the initiative, the opposite side would have caused [the outbreak] of war with its own initiative," the Leader added, addressing the Russian president.

Ayatollah Khamenei stated that Western countries resolutely oppose a strong and independent Russia, adding that if NATO had not been stopped in Ukraine, it would have started the same war using Crimea as a pretext.

The Leader said the US and West have become weaker than before, adding that despite great efforts and spending, "their policies in regional countries, including Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine, are being less effective."

The Leader said Iran and Russia must maintain their vigilance in the face of the West's deceptive policies.

Ayatollah Khamenei also emphasized that economic cooperation between Tehran and Moscow is a necessity and will serve the two sides' interests, particularly in the wake of the West's sanctions against them. "Long-term cooperation between Iran and Russia will be deeply beneficial to both countries."

The Leader said it was paramount that the oil and gas agreements currently in the works between the two energy-rich countries are "followed through to the end and become operational."

The Leader also stressed the importance of launching Rasht-Astara railway in an effort to complete the North-South Transport Corridor and benefit both countries.



Ayatollah Khamenei voiced support for the policy of replacing the US dollar with national currencies in bilateral trade ties, saying, "The dollar should be gradually removed from global transactions."

For his part, the Russian president addressed the situation in Ukraine, saying, "No one is in favor of war," adding, "The loss of ordinary people's lives is a great tragedy."

"However, the West's behavior has left us with no other option than to react," the Russian head of state said.

Putin considered his country's rifts with Ukraine to be rooted especially in the provocative measures that have been taken by the West, including the United States, over the past recent years, including the coup in Ukraine, which brought a Western-backed government to power there.

He also cited NATO's expansion toward Russia's borders in spite of its earlier promises to avoid such a move to be another source of difference between Moscow and Kiev.

"Some European countries said they were opposed to Ukraine's membership in NATO, but [eventually] acceded to it under America's pressure," Putin said, adding that this indicated the countries' "lack of sovereignty and independence."

The Russian statesman considered the US's assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in early 2020 to be another instance of Washington's "iniquity."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Putin said the West's sanctions against Russia were to its own detriment, causing such problems as rising oil prices and food crises.

He pointed to the United States' use of dollar towards deployment of sanctions against and plundering of other countries.

The approach would eventually backfire against Washington itself since it undermines the global trust in the currency, and prompt countries to use alternative currencies. "Russia and Iran [for instance] are devising new methods of using their respective national currencies in their relations," he added.

Putin considered his country and Iran's position concerning Syria, including their opposition to a military attack against the northern parts, to be completely concordant. "The Eastern Euphrates region should come under the control of Syrian military forces," he added.

Iran and Russia are fighting a joint fight against terrorism in Syria, the Russian president also noted, adding that in the military sphere too the countries would try to increase their cooperation and also try to increase their cooperation and trilateral military drills with China.

First VP Tasked to Pursue Implementation of Rasht-Astara Transit Corridor

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Expressing his satisfaction with the fruitfulness of the new approach of the country's diplomatic apparatus and the unprecedented improvement of the level of the country's trade relations with its neighbors, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi called on all executive bodies to adhere to the requirements of this approach.

Speaking in the session of the cabinet, President Raisi referred to the talks between the leaders of the Guarantor States of the Astana Process and the meeting with the presidents of Russia and Turkey, and said, "Thank God, the move to strengthen the neighbourhood policy in the diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran that has been initiated by the Popular Administration is paying off. In the bilateral meetings, both Mr Putin and Mr Erdogan insisted on the implementation of the agreements made with our country, which requires diligent follow-up by the relevant institutions".

Referring to the request of the President of Russia to Iran to complete the Rasht-Astara railway line, the President assigned the First Vice-President to follow up the implementation process of this important transit corridor in cooperation with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

While congratulating the remarkable successes of Iranian students in the international Olympiads, to the medal-winning students, teachers and people involved in the country's education system, Raisi emphasized the necessity of continuing the government's support for gifted students in order to repeat the successes, and called on the Minister of Education to provide an environment to improve students' interest and education in humanities.

In another part of his speech, Raisi praised those involved in organizing a 10-kilometer party ceremony on the day of Eid al-Ghadir, and stated, "This valuable action, which is a magnificent manifestation of bringing Ghadir to the context of society and family, is a very good example for occasions and other valuable religious concepts. It will protect the society from many destructive anti-religious attacks".

The president also emphasized the need for a timely response to skepticisms and false allegations and added, "You have a duty not to be passive when dealing with those who instill doubts in the society, and answer the doubts by providing solid and detailed explanations".

After listening to a report from the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, about the latest status of the guaranteed purchase of wheat and the payment of wheat farmers' demands, Raisi appreciated the valuable efforts of farmers in providing this strategic commodity for the country, and instructed the relevant authorities not to allow any interruption in the payment of wheat farmers' demands.

New Round of Iran-Saudi Talks to Be Held Soon

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani says a new round of fence-mending talks between the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia will be held in the near future.

In an interview with Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam news channel, Kanaani said, "Fortunately, due to the common understanding between Tehran and Riyadh, both sides have reached a consensus to hold (a new round of) bilateral talks."

He also praised Iraq for its constructive role as a mediator and a host for five rounds of talks aimed at restoring diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The spokesperson also said Iran would welcome and reciprocate any practical steps by the Saudi government to improve relations, hoping the negotiations would lead to tangible results.

Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties with Iran in January 2016 after Iranian protesters, enraged by the Saudi execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, stormed its embassy in Tehran.

Iran has also been complaining that the kingdom is pursuing what it calls a confrontational foreign policy towards the Islamic Republic.

Tehran Summit Shows Iran Could Trade With World

TEHRAN (MNA) - The spokesman of Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Abolfazl Amoui stated that the message that Astana meeting in Tehran sends Iran is able to trade without having relations with U.S. and Europe.

Pointing to Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Tehran to attend the Summit of the Leaders of the Guarantor States of Astana Process, the spokesman of the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Abolfazl Amoui said, "This trip is very important and significant".

The Turkish and Russian president's trip to Iran highlights the point that Iran, Russia and Türkiye can have good cooperation and dialogue.

The lawmaker also said that the cooperation among the three countries has played a role in restoring security to Syria, while that cooperation could be used in other areas.

He further said that in the current environment, Putin has stepped up the cooperation with Iran and we are witnessing new aspects of the cooperation between the two countries in the economic fields. One of the main topics of the conversation is about strengthening the North-South Transportation Corridor and the North-South Corridor, on which this trip will have a positive impact.

Regarding the nuclear negotiations, Amoui added that the negotiations are another case and everything is going well. "Russia and China, which are parties to the talks, support Iran's rational stance in the negotiations."

Danish Gov't Urged to Return Iranian Child to His Family

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Secretary of High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi slammed the separation of an Iranian child from his family by the Danish government, urging Copenhagen to return the boy to his family.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Gharibabadi described the Danish government's measure to give the Iranian boy Dariush Heydari to a Danish family as "unfair".

He said that deporting Dariush's parents on a charge of child abduction and separating the boy with Autism spectrum disorder from his family was a gross violation of Denmark's commitments under human rights, children's rights in particular.

The human rights official praised Iran's Foreign Ministry for its efforts to reunite Dariush with his family and criticized the Danish government's non-cooperation under the pretext of deferring any decision to the court.

He asked Denmark's government why they avoid implementing their commitment to reunite the family now that Dariush's parents are in Iran.

Making these parents entangled in the courts of Denmark (although with a visa granted) is neither correct nor consistent with Denmark's human rights commitments.

Gen. Bagheri Holds Meeting With Turkish Defense Minister

TEHRAN (MNA) - Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major-General Mohammad Bagheri held a meeting with visiting Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar in Tehran to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, who is in Tehran accompanying the president of his country to attend the 7th edition of Astana talks, was received for a meeting by Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major-General Mohammad Bagheri on Tuesday afternoon.

In the meeting, the two sides emphasized military, training and security cooperation between the two countries' armed forces.

The fields of defense cooperation, interacting and exchanging views on the most important issues in the region, including fighting terrorism were the main issues in the meeting discussed by the highest military officials of the two countries.

Attempts to reduce tension in Syria and examine how to establish lasting security in the region were other topics discussed in the meeting.

The last time the two top military officials met in Tehran was in 2017.

Iran Export To Qatar Falls 17% In Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) - The value of Iran's export to Qatar dropped 17 percent in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), from the first quarter of the previous year, the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

On June 6, Iran and Qatar inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the end of the two countries' eighth Joint Economic Committee meeting in Doha to outline avenues for future cooperation.

The MOU was signed by Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed Bin Hamad Bin Qassim Al-Thani who co-chaired the committee meeting.

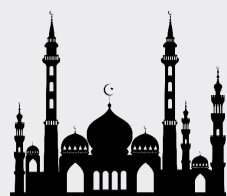
This memorandum determines the framework of cooperation in various fields including transit, transportation, industry and trade, energy, customs and free zones, tourism, culture, agriculture, sports, etc.

Speaking at the eighth meeting of the Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee, Mehrabian emphasized the Iranian government's approach to developing international relations and said: "Considering our good relations in the past, this meeting should be a new chapter in the development of cooperation between the two countries."

"We hope to see a significant increase in interactions with the agreements reached in this meeting," he added.

"One of the most important goals of the meeting is to support the Iranian and Qatari private sectors, and we are happy to see that a large conference with the participation of Iranian businessmen is being held in Doha at the same time as the meeting of the joint committee," Mehrabian said

According to the official, eight MOUs on food, medical industry, knowledge-based companies, etc. were also signed between businessmen of the two countries on the sidelines of the mentioned meeting.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:37
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:24
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:05

36. (Lit is such a Light) in houses, which Allah hath permitted to be raised to honour; for the celebration, in them, of His name: In them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again),-

Surah 24, Light (36)

Tehran, Tashkent Seek Expanding Scientific and Technological Ties

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - During his visit to Uzbekistan, Vice President for Science and Technology Sorana Sattari held a meeting with Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Jamshid Kuchkarov for talks on the expansion of scientific and technological relations between the two countries.

The two sides emphasized the significance of enhancing bilateral ties and promoting the level of scientific, cultural and economic cooperation between Iranian knowledge-based and creative firms and their Uzbek counterparts.

Sattari said that there was a good opportunity for the enhancement of economic ties and cooperation between Iranian and Uzbek scientists and elite, adding, "One of the priorities of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, regarding the expansion of ties between the two countries, is to broaden university exchanges."

"Such exchanges lead, in a way, to the expansion of cultural communications. Currently there are 7,000 knowledge-based and creative companies active in Iran in technological areas, which can speed up the enhancement of scientific ties and tech cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan. Of course, this depends on tackling some existing challenges such as the issue of visa. The main problem facing relations between Iranian and Uzbek knowledge-based firms is the visa issue, which we hope will be resolved," Sattari said.

"Iranian knowledge-based and creative firms have based their activities on innovation. Many of Iran's problems as well as economic and social challenges have been overcome thanks to the same innovative measures. Tomorrow, around 80 knowledge-based and creative companies will take part in a joint meeting with the corresponding Uzbek firms so that they can increase their presence in this country besides presenting their capabilities and products," the senior official said.

Sattari added, "Our companies have presented a variety of products in the fields of information and communication technology, medical and laboratory equipment, nanotech, ecotechnology, stem cells, and advanced technologies, which can help fulfill the needs of Uzbekistan."

Bilateral cooperation between technological firms can take place within the framework of mutual investments so that the firms can introduce their products and engage in tech exchanges," he added.

Sattari went on to say, "Under a host of sanctions, Iran has succeeded, over the past years, in developing indigenous technologies and capabilities in different fields, and we stand ready to share them with the other side's companies."

"The high quality of Iranian products and, of course, the more reasonable prices compared to foreign models are among the advantages of Iranian technologies.



Iranian tech firms have developed technologies in the maritime field and in terms of access to deep seas, which can facilitate transfers between the two states.

Besides allowing the monitoring of underground water resources, these technologies contribute to the discovery of different mines at a depth of 25 kilometers below the surface. Consequently, the discovery of water deep under the ground provide the opportunity to get access to water resources at different depths," he said.

In turn, the Uzbek deputy premier described as positive the expansion of bilateral ties and stepped-up activation of relations in recent years.

"Within the framework of this meeting, we want to discuss the promotion of bilateral relations. Mutual economic and commercial cooperation is also in focus," he said.

The two sides, he said, also seek to expand cooperation in petrochemical, textile and technological products, adding, "We have plans for the expansion of trade between the two countries, which will be followed up on. I hope that the joint working group will pursue joint cooperation between the two countries and the negotiations will bear fruit on the back of team work. In line with the tasks of this working group, we can deal with cooperation in the spheres of technology and economy."

Kuchkarov pointed to the trip to Iran and visits paid to Iranian technological sector, saying he is certain that Sattari's trip to Uzbekistan will help the enhancement of the activities of start-ups and knowledge-based firms active in tech-related fields.

He highlighted Iran's achievements in the fields of nanotechnology, ecotechnology, and stem cells, as well as cooperation between knowledge-based firms, expressing hope that joint cooperation in such fields will be expanded.

The Uzbek official added that there were many areas for bilateral cooperation in the field of joint production of agricultural items via the transfer of the management of agricultural land and exchange of experience and technology in the area of agricultural research.

Heading a delegation of 40 knowledge-based and creative companies, Sattari travelled to Uzbekistan to pave the way for the development of technological and scientific exchanges between the two states.

Technological firms, which operate in technological fields such as agriculture, animal husbandry and health will take part in expert meetings with 150 corresponding Uzbek companies and will work to increase their share of Uzbekistan's market.

Meanwhile, an exhibition is being held in Uzbekistan putting on display 100 products from 80 Iranian creative and knowledge-based companies. Managers of Uzbek tech firms and businesspeople will visit the exhibition, in what could be an opportunity for Iranian knowledge-based and creative products to make their way into this country's market and the broader Eurasia region.

Turkey, Iran Discuss Cooperation on Sports



TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Turkey, in a meeting with Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth in Tehran, discussed cooperation and invited his Iranian counterpart to participate in the solidarity games.

The strengthening of sports tourism in the two countries, the establishment of joint sports camps, and the presence of different teams in the two countries in Iran and Turkey are among the other agreements made between Mehmet M. Kasapoglu and Hamid Sajjadi.

Turkish Youth and Sports Minister Mehmet M. Kasapoglu was in Tehran while accompanying the Turkish President's visit to Iran.

The 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games will be the 5th edition of the event scheduled to be held from 9 to 18 August 2022 at Konya, Turkey, under the aegis of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF).

Ragadid Complex to Host Parallel Exhibition

IRAN NEWS ART DESK

TEHRAN - The collective exhibition on painting, sculpture and layout under the title of "Parallel" with curatorship of Behdad Najafi Asadollahi will be inaugurated on Sunday, July 24, at Ragadid Complex of Enghelab Club of Tehran.

According to reports, the exhibition will put on display works of some masters and artists of visual arts like Behdad Najafi Asadollahi which will be open to the public on Sunday.

The curator of the exhibition Mr. Najafi Asadollahi says one of the turning points in the career of every artist is to achieve a personal style in the form, content or both of them in a way whose work is considered as his signature. He added that in this exhibition it has been tried to put on display works of artists and masters with their unique personal styles parallel to each other.

Then art manager of this event Saeedh Arian said that contemporary artists try to present personal definition from originality through creating art works and the meaning of originality of work has caused that every artist pursues personal concept and space which is similar to no one.

This event which is held by Contemporary Khanesh Art Institute in collaboration with Faradid Honar Farda Cultural Institute will open on Sunday and will run until August 10 at Ragadid Complex from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Iran, Russia Key in Ensuring Global Energy Security

TEHRAN (Shana) - The CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) stressed the role of Iran and Russia in the stability of energy supply in the world.

Mohsen Khojasteh-Nehr said on Tuesday, after the signing ceremony of the strategic cooperation memorandum between the National Iranian Oil Company and Russia's Gazprom, emphasized that investments for the development of oil and gas fields will be made with the priority of joint fields, adding: "Based on the oil and gas production plans, it is predicted that in the horizon of the calendar year of 1408, with the investment of \$160 billion, the daily oil production capacity will reach 5.7 million barrels and the gas production capacity will reach 1.5 billion cubic meters per day."

He considered the realization of the country's economic growth as the approach of the 13th administration, and added: "Today, economic growth in the 13th administration is focused on investment in oil and gas fields, especially joint fields."

The Deputy Oil Minister considered cooperation with big and well-known companies as one of the directions of the National Iranian Oil Company, and continued: "For this purpose, we have defined a part of the investment portfolio of the National Iranian Oil Company with a valuable and important share for Gazprom."

Khojasteh-Mehr said: "With active energy diplomacy and intensive negotiations with Russia and well-known companies, we will sign new memorandums and contracts. Likewise, two new contracts were signed with two important companies last year."

He mentioned the continuation of negotiations since last year, and added: "In the last two months, an important meeting was held with Alexey Miller, CEO of Gazprom, and we reached an important understanding in this meeting."

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Russia's Gazprom signed a memorandum of understanding worth roughly 40 billion dollars.

The document was signed during an online ceremony on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 by NIOC CEO Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr and Vitaly Markelov, Deputy Chairman of the Gazprom Management Committee.

The development of Kish and North Pars gas fields, pressure enhancement of South Pars field, development of 6 oil fields, gas and product swap, completion of LNG projects, construction of gas export pipelines and other scientific and technological cooperation are among the most important highlights of the memorandum.

Iran Best Route for China and Russia to Transit Products



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's deputy minister of roads and urban development, Shahriar Afandizadeh, referring to the point that Iran can be regarded as a safe corridor for China to transport goods to Europe, said that Iran's rail network will be connected in the next few years and Iran is the best route for China and Russia for exporting products to different destinations.

Afandizadeh made the remarks on Tuesday in the meeting of Chinese Ambassador to Iran, Chang Hua, and the accompanying delegation.

Iran's deputy minister of roads and urban development in the meeting said that Iran can play a constructive role in a win-win situation with other countries both in the north-south and east-west corridors.

He added: Tehran knows that a large amount of goods are exported to European countries through China and imported into this country, so Iran can be a safe axis with suitable capacities for transiting goods for China.

Deputy minister of roads and urban development in the meeting added that according to Iran-China 25-year Cooperation Program, Iran's potential for transit can be used, and in the field of transportation, the development of rail networks and the development of ports and combined transportation are considered.

Referring to the high capacities of Iranian ports such as Astara, Amirabad and Anzali for investment, Afandizadeh said: Iran is seriously looking for the development of the west-east axis, and China can also participate in the promotion and development of rail systems in northern ports.

This Iranian official in another part of his remarks, termed the Chabahar port project as one of the most influential projects and said: Iran is looking to create a rail system through Chabahar to Zahedan and from Zahedan to Sarakhs, and if Chabahar and Sarakhs railway would be completed in the future, the North-South Corridor from the eastern side of Iran will definitely be shorter and it can connect the Chinese government to the free countries of the south and the Persian Gulf.

Afandizadeh said: Iran's ports have the capacity to create logistics centers and become regional hubs, and now there is an opportunity for the two countries to develop transport and transit ties.

PGS Refinery Shines in Exports and Earning Forex

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Persian Gulf Star Oil Company has had brilliant performance in recent days as it has managed to trade 6 cargoes of light naphtha and 3 cargoes of naphtha with a total value of \$190 million in the Iran Energy Exchange.

According to Persian Gulf Star Oil Company, the refinery was able to trade 6 cargoes of light naphtha and 3 cargoes of full range naphtha with a total value of \$190 million in the Iran Energy Exchange in the last 14 days.

This important action has been taken in a period when the international market is witnessing one of its most turbulent times, and Persian Gulf Star Refinery has even succeeded in selling naphtha to the country's domestic petrochemical plants.

In the past 10 days, this company has also shown that in addition to exports, it has a special view on supplying feedstock to petrochemical plants of the country in order to create added value, by selling 40,000 metric tons of naphtha to petrochemical companies in the domestic floor of the Iran Energy Exchange.



Thai Opposition Grills PM in Parliament

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha fended off accusations of corruption and economic mismanagement in a televised session of parliament, as a censure debate got under way seeking to dent his credibility with an election due within 11 months.

Prayuth, 68, a retired army chief who first came to power in a coup eight years ago, has prevailed in three no confidence motions since a 2019 election saw him stay on as prime minister in what is now a crowded 17-party coalition.

Analysts say his parliamentary majority of 253 seats versus the opposition's 208 should ensure his survival, despite polls showing a decline in popularity.



East Timor Hopes To Join ASEAN

BOGOR (Dispatches) - East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta said on Tuesday during a visit to Indonesia that he hoped to boost trade ties between the countries and seal a decades-long bid by his nation to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) next year.

Ramos-Horta met his counterpart Joko Widodo on his first state visit to neighbouring Indonesia since he was elected in April for a second stint as president.

He previously served as president of East Timor, which is also known as Timor Leste, between 2007 and 2012.



Sunak Tops Tory MPs' Latest Vote As Race Narrows to Three



LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's former finance minister Rishi Sunak again topped the latest vote by Conservative MPs to choose a new prime minister, as another candidate was eliminated to leave three contenders in the race.

Sunak garnered 118 votes, followed by former defense minister Penny Mordaunt on 92 and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss on 86, with longshot candidate Kemi Badenoch trailing on 59 and therefore eliminated from the contest.

The vote means that Britain will get either its first British Asian prime minister or the third female leader in the country's history.

Sunak, whose resignation helped to topple outgoing leader Boris Johnson, fell two votes short of the number needed to guarantee a place among the final two, who will battle it out over the summer months before party members choose the winner.

He is all but guaranteed to make the final cut in Wednesday's last round of voting by MPs.

But the race to join him further tightened, with Truss making up five votes on Mordaunt -- the one-time bookmaker's favorite.

Truss is now only six behind, and will hope that the right wing of the party swings behind her following the departure of Badenoch, a favourite of the grassroots members.

A YouGov poll published before the vote showed that Badenoch would beat the remaining candidates with the all-important members, and that Sunak would lose to them by wide margins.

Mordaunt had headed the same poll previously. She now trails Truss after a damaging few days in which her former boss, one-time UK Brexit pointman David Frost, slammed her work ethic and questions were raised over her stance on trans rights.

In a statement after Tuesday's vote, Mordaunt said: "We are so nearly across the finish line. I am raring to go and excited to put my case to members across the country and win."

The BBC announced on Tuesday that it will host a live televised debate with the final two candidates on Monday, with all remaining candidates agreeing to take part if they get through.

Sky News on Monday scrapped a planned debate between the remaining contenders after Sunak and Truss pulled out.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on July 7 he was quitting as Conservative leader after a government rebellion in protest at his scandal-hit administration.

His government having survived a confidence vote on Monday, Johnson is now almost certain to stay on as prime minister until his successor is announced on September 5.

Under Britain's parliamentary system, the leader of the biggest party is prime minister and can be changed mid-term without having to call a general election.

China Seeks to Stop UN Rights Chief From Releasing Xinjiang Report

GENEVA (Dispatches) - China is asking the United Nations human rights chief to bury a highly-anticipated report on human rights violations in Xinjiang, according to a Chinese letter seen by Reuters and confirmed by diplomats from three countries who received it.

United Nations High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet has faced severe criticism from civil society for being too soft on China during a May visit and has since said she will refrain from seeking a second term for personal reasons.

But before she leaves at the end of August, she has pledged to publish a report into the western Chinese region of Xinjiang. Rights groups accuse Beijing of abuses against Xinjiang's Uyghur inhabitants, including the mass use of forced labor in internment camps. China has vigorously denied the allegations.

The letter authored by China expressed "grave concern" about the Xinjiang report and aims to halt its release, said four sources - the three diplomats and a rights expert who all spoke on condition of anonymity. They said China began circulating it among diplomatic missions in Geneva from late June and asked countries to sign it to show their support.

"The assessment (on Xinjiang), if published, will intensify politicization and bloc confrontation in the area of human rights, undermine the credibility of the OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), and harm the cooperation between OHCHR and member states," the letter said, referring to Bachelet's office.

"We strongly urge Madame High Commissioner not to publish such an assessment."

Liu Yuyin, a spokesperson for China's diplomatic mission in Geneva, did not say whether the letter had been sent or respond to questions about its contents.

Liu said that nearly 100 countries had recently expressed their support to China on Xinjiang-related issues "and their

objection to interference in China's internal affairs under the pretext of human rights".

This support was voiced through public statements at the last U.N. Human Rights Council session, which ended on July 8, and through the "joint letter", Liu added, using a term denoting China and the other signatories.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson told Reuters that Bachelet would have witnessed a "real Xinjiang with a safe and stable society" when she visited the region during her May trip to China.

The spokesperson said attempts by some countries to "smear China's image" using the Xinjiang issue would not succeed.

It was not clear whether Bachelet had received the letter, and an OHCHR spokesperson declined to comment on the matter.



Deadly Sudanese Tribal Clashes Prompt Khartoum Street Protests

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Sudanese security forces fired tear gas as thousands of Hausa protesters marched in central Khartoum, days after tribal clashes killed dozens in southern Sudan's Blue Nile state.

The health ministry said late yesterday that at least 79 people had been killed and more than 200 wounded in clashes between members of the Hausa and Funj tribes that began last week, stemming from land disputes.

"These aren't just protests, what we want is to get to the presidential palace and ask that the injustice towards the Hausa stops," said Haroun, a 22-year-old marcher.

Others held signs and chanted slogans calling for an end to oppression of the Hausa people.

Police, central reserve forces, the army and plainclothes officers were deployed on Khartoum's Airport Road to block the protests.

Earlier this week, curfews were imposed in two Blue Nile cities, as well as the eastern city of Kassala, following protests there that resulted in the burning of government buildings.

The tensions have spread to other cities, as many people were seen moving from Blue Nile into neighboring Sennar state to escape the fighting.

Funj-Hausa tensions boiled over following accusations from the Funj, who have long inhabited Blue Nile state, that the Hausa were trying to lay claim to parts of their land.

There has also been sporadic violence in eastern coastal regions and western Darfur despite a nationwide peace deal signed by some rebel groups in Juba in 2020.

Fire Engulfs Homes Near London as Temperatures Hit Record 40C

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain recorded its highest ever temperature of 40C (104F) as a heatwave gripping Europe intensified, forcing train tracks to buckle and fuelling a spate of fires across London.

The Met Office said the provisional record, which still needs to be confirmed, was recorded at London's Heathrow Airport, surpassing the previous high of 38.7C recorded in 2019.

Stephen Belcher at the Met Office said he had not expected to see such temperatures in Britain in his career.

"Research conducted here at the Met Office has demonstrated that it's virtually impossible for the UK to experience 40C in an undisrupted climate but climate change driven by greenhouse gases has made these extreme temperatures possible," he said.

With the mercury still rising, train routes from London up the east and west coast of the country were cancelled, electricity companies reported mass outages and normally busy city centers appeared quiet. Network Rail tweeted a number of pictures showing large bends and kinks in rail tracks.

To the east of the capital a large fire engulfed homes in the village of Wennington, with flames tearing across neighboring tinder-dry fields and approaching a historic church. Elsewhere large grass areas around

the capital were on fire, blowing smoke over major roads and nearby areas.

London Fire Brigade declared a major incident and urged people to stop having barbecues.

Britain, which can struggle to maintain key transport services in extreme heat or snow, had been put on a state of national emergency over the unprecedented temperatures.

Transport minister Grant Shapps said there had been a considerable amount of travel disruption.

"Infrastructure, much of which was built from the Victorian times, just wasn't built to withstand this type of temperature," he said.

Climate scientists said the once-unthinkable temperature in London was likely to become more common in coming years.

Sony Kapoor, a climate and macro-economic professor at European University Institute, said he had long thought that people underestimated the physical impacts of climate change in contemporary times. "But even I never thought we would see 40 degree Celsius in London in 2022," he said.

The arrival of a searing heatwave that first sparked wildfires across Europe before arriving in Britain has turned the spotlight on to "net zero" pledges made by the candidates running to replace Boris Johnson as prime minister.



Turkey Hopes U.S. Won't Fall for Lawmaker "Game" on F-16 Sales

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey hopes Washington will not fall for a "game" by some U.S. lawmakers against the potential sale of F-16 jets, Turkey's defence minister said, after the House of Representatives approved a bill creating a new hurdle to any Turkish purchase.

Turkey has sought to buy 40 Lockheed Martin-made F-16 fighter jets and modernization kits from the United States. President Joe Biden has said he supports the sale, and his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan has said he believes it will go through after talks with Biden.

Last week, the House approved legislation that would bar the sale to Ankara unless the administration certifies that doing so is essential to U.S. national security, while also including a description of concrete steps taken to ensure they are not used for repeated unauthorized overflights of Greece.

Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said on Tuesday talks on the sale were ongoing and Turkey is closely monitoring the process, adding U.S. officials were aware of the importance of NATO member Turkey as an ally in counter-terrorism and migration.

"While that is the situation, how can you explain this? A lawmaker, a group is coming out and stirring things up through certain manipulations and disinformation," Akar said. "We expect the United States not to fall for this game".

NATO members Turkey and Greece have been at odds over a host of issues for decades, such as conflicting maritime jurisdiction claims in the Mediterranean and ethnically-split Cyprus. They have accused each other of violating international laws.

Ankara recently halted bilateral talks with Athens due to recent disputes over air space violations and the Aegean islands, and Erdogan cut dialogue with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis for lobbying against the F-16 sale to Turkey during a visit to Washington this year.

Akar dismissed any conditions to the possible sale of the jets. "There shouldn't be a conditional issue like 'I'll give you this, but you won't do this'," he said. "Our wish is for common sense to prevail..."

Many U.S. lawmakers soured on Ankara after its acquisition of Russian S-400 defense systems, triggering U.S. sanctions as well as Turkey's removal from the F-35 fighter jet program.



High Blood Thickness Ups Death Risk



LONDON (Dispatches) - The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review.

Patients hospitalized with COVID-19 whose blood flows less freely than normal are at higher risk of death from complications, a U.S. study showed. The findings indicate that measurement of blood viscosity, or blood thickness, should be a regular part of these patients' medical work-up, the researchers said.

High blood viscosity impairs flow to small vessels and increases the risk of blood clots, the researchers noted in the study published on Monday in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. Data on 5,621 COVID-19 patients treated at six New York City-area hospitals between February 2020 and November 2021 showed that patients with high viscosity had death rates 38% to 60% higher than those with low blood viscosity. The inflammation associated with COVID-19 likely contributes to high viscosity, which in turn can lead to damage to blood vessel linings and clogging of arteries, according to the researchers.

"This study demonstrates the importance of checking for blood viscosity in COVID-19 patients early in hospital admission, which is easily obtained through routine lab work," Dr. Robert Rosenson of the Mount Sinai Health System said in a statement. His team called for further studies to see whether measures to reduce blood viscosity, such as treatment with blood thinning drugs, would be helpful.

People who get a flu shot at the same time as a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine booster are only slightly more likely to report side effects than people who get the booster by itself, U.S. researchers found. Earlier studies found that giving flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time did not make either one less effective and may be more convenient. As reported on Friday in the journal JAMA Network Open, researchers tracked 981,099 American teens and adults who got vaccine boosters with or without flu shots in September or October 2021. In the following week, reports by study participants of a "systemic" reaction such as fatigue, headache or body aches were 8% higher for those who simultaneously received the flu shot and the Pfizer-BioNTech booster and 11% higher for those who got the flu shot and a Moderna booster, compared to the risk in people who received only an mRNA vaccine booster. Based on the results, "clinicians can confidently inform patients that concurrent administration of the COVID-19 booster and seasonal influenza vaccine is both safe and associated with only a slight increase in adverse events compared with the COVID-19 booster alone," a separate team of researchers wrote in an accompanying editorial.

The Pfizer mRNA COVID-19 vaccine can be safely given to children even after a suspected allergic reaction to the first dose or a suspected allergy to vaccine ingredients polyethylene glycol (PEG) or polysorbate, according to immunologists. Other allergists previously reported that second doses can be given to adults with suspected reactions to the first dose. Study results involving a small number of children were published on Wednesday in The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice. At a specialized vaccine clinic, nine children were evaluated after having an allergic reaction to the first dose of the vaccine, including three who experienced potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis. All nine children - including one who was premedicated - eventually received the second dose "with minimal or no symptoms," the researchers said. Another three children with histories of potential PEG/polysorbate reactions opted to receive the vaccine at the clinic and tolerated both doses without allergic symptoms.

"Any child who experiences potential anaphylaxis following vaccination should absolutely be evaluated," study leader Dr. Joel Brooks of Children's National Hospital in Washington said in a news release.

"Shocking" Report Lists Devastation to Australia Wildlife



SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australia's unique wildlife is being devastated by bushfires, drought, habitat loss and global warming, a government report said Tuesday, warning that more species were headed for extinction.

The five-yearly State of the Environment report prompted calls for dramatic action to reverse the "poor and deteriorating" state of flora and fauna depicted by scientists on land and at sea.

The damage is being hastened by a climate that has warmed Australia's average land temperature by 1.4 degrees Celsius since the early 20th century, the report said.

"Our inability to adequately manage pressures will continue to result in species extinctions," scientists warned in the report.

Australia's environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, said it was a "shocking document".

"It tells a story of crisis and decline in Australia's environment," she said.

Plibersek, a member of the centre-left Labor Party that came to power in May elections, said her predecessor under the previous conservative government received the report in December 2021 but never released it.

"I won't be putting my head in the sand," she said.

Australia's 2019-2020 "Black Summer" bushfires burned more than eight million hectares of native vegetation and killed or displaced 1-3 billion animals, the report found.

Marine heatwaves caused mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef in 2016, 2017 and 2020, it said. Since then, a government report in March found the reef had again suffered mass bleaching.

Millions of hectares of primary forest had been cleared since 1990, the report said.

More than seven million hectares of habitat for threatened species were cleared between 2000 and 2017 without being assessed under Australia's environmental conservation laws, it found.

In five years, more than 200 plant and animal species of national significance had been added to the list of threatened species under Australia's environmental laws.

"Australia has lost more mammal species than any other continent," the report said, with the number of new species listed as being under greater threat up by eight percent in five years.

Australia's cities are also growing at a rapid clip, scientists found, raising urban heat, pollution and waste while stretching water and energy resources.

"Sydney has lost more than 70 percent of native vegetation cover through development," the report said.

Sydney Harbour's stormwater drains also created hotspots of pollution with concentrations 20 times higher than when the harbour was pristine.

"The findings of this report are heartbreaking, and the leadership failures that have led to loss at this scale devastating," said WWF-Australia acting chief executive Rachel Lowry.

"If we ignore the warnings of this report then iconic species like koalas across eastern Australia, or our largest gliding mammal, the greater glider, will disappear forever on our watch."

WWF-Australia said the report should be a "turning point" that led to greater investment and stronger laws to protect Australia's wildlife and wilderness.

Lowry urged the new government to act quickly, condemning existing environmental legislation for "failing miserably" to protect threatened species.

"When we allow losses at this scale, we don't just lose a piece of Australia's identity, we lose the opportunity to ensure a healthy, thriving economy alongside some of the world's most precious natural assets," she said.

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China to Post Record Decline in LNG Imports as Economy Slows

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China is set to post a record drop in liquefied natural gas imports this year, which will return Japan to the top spot as the world's biggest buyer of the seaborne fuel, according to Wood Mackenzie Ltd.

The research firm expects cargoes to fall 14% to 69 million tons in 2022, only the second decline since China began imports in 2006. The reasons for LNG's fall from favor are many and varied: a subdued economy, rising

international prices, government support for clean coal, a warmer-than-usual winter, and growth in the use of renewable energy. Higher domestic gas production and more supply from pipelines have also reduced shipments.

But it's the economic slowdown and virus-related curbs on activity that are probably most telling, says Capital Economics, which forecasts a similar drop in annual imports of LNG, even as it expects volumes to pick up somewhat in later months of the year.



Turkish Inflation Seen Dipping to 70% by Yearend

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's highest inflation rate in decades is expected to ease somewhat to around 70% by year-end, and the central bank is seen holding its policy rate steady for at least another year, a Reuters poll showed on Tuesday.

Inflation in Turkey has soared in the wake of a December currency crisis that was caused by a series of unorthodox interest rate cuts, and which ended up stripping 44% off the lira's value against the dollar last year.

Annual price rises neared 80% last month, a 24-year-high, due to the monetary easing, currency depreciation and the spike in global commodity prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Annual inflation is expected to climb further to 84.7% at the end of the third quarter, based on the median estimate, before starting to descend due to so-called base effects from the previous year, the Reuters poll showed.

President Tayyip Erdogan has said the inflation burden on households will ease around the end of first quarter of 2023.

But the median estimate in the poll showed it slipping only to 50.8% in that period. By the end of the second quarter - when presidential and parliamentary elections are due - inflation is seen at 42.3%.

Inflation was seen dipping to 34.4% by the end of 2023, and to 20.0% a year later, according to the poll.

Despite the soaring costs of living, the central bank is seen holding its policy rate at the current 14% until the end of next year at least, the poll showed. That would be in line with the government's programme that prioritizes low rates to boost credits and exports.

Some economists in the poll saw the central bank changing direction and hiking its policy rate despite pressure from Erdogan for monetary stimulus.

Tera Yatirim's Chief Economist Enver Erkan said the bank would continue pursuing loose policy at a time when central banks around the world are getting tighter in their fight against inflation.

"We do not expect any action from the Central Bank for a while, and we foresee a policy expansion in line with the growth-oriented targets of the economy management for at least one more quarter," Erkan said.

Erdogan's economic program stresses exports and credit to fuel growth, despite widespread criticism of the policy from economists and opposition lawmakers. Opinion polls show the economic strain is hurting his support. Turkey's economy meanwhile bounced back from the COVID-19 pandemic to grow 11% last year, its highest rate in a decade. But it has already slowed and should continue to do so, economists say.

The median estimate of 36 economists for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2022 was 3.3%, compared to 3.0% in the previous poll. The medians for 2023 and 2024 were 3.2% and 3.0% respectively.

The economic program aims to ease Turkey's chronic current account deficits with rising exports, but surging energy import prices have more than offset that.

Economists have revised up their estimate for the current account deficit this year to a median 5.5% of GDP in this month's poll, compared to 4.4% in an April poll. They see it at 3.5% in 2023, from 2.8% previously.

UK Jobless Rate Holds at 3.8% as Jobs Boom Continues

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's unemployment rate held at 3.8% in the three months to May and the number of people in work rose by the most since the middle of 2021, suggesting the cost-of-living squeeze has not yet hit demand for staff, official figures showed.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected the jobless rate to rise to 3.9% from 3.8% in the previous reading.

Tuesday's data showed an increase of 296,000 in the number of people in employment, the biggest increase since the three months to August last year.

The Reuters poll had pointed to an increase of 170,000.

While the number of people in work remains below its level just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people in full-time employment hit a record high in contrast to the number of self-employed people, which remains lower.

The signs of continued strong hiring may bolster the confidence of the Bank of England about raising interest rates further next month.

But there was no clear sign in the data that might ring alarm bells at the central bank and prompt it to raise rates by more than its usual quarter percentage-point increases.

Growth in regular pay picked up slightly in the three months to May to 4.3% but represented the biggest fall in records



Russian Gas Embargo Could Hit Central Europe Hard

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A Russian natural gas embargo would cause deep recessions in Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Italy unless countries can cooperate more to share alternative supplies, the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday.

IMF researchers said in a blog posting that some countries could face shortages of as much as 40% of their normal gas consumption in the event of a total cut-off of Russian gas.

Hungary would suffer the most economically from such an embargo, with a reduction of more than 6% in gross domestic product, while Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Italy could see GDP shrink by 5% if alternate gas supplies, including liquefied natural gas, is impeded from flowing freely to where it is needed.

Under the more optimistic scenario of a fully integrated market, the economic damage is reduced, with Hungary seeing a GDP reduction of more than 3%, Slovakia and Italy suffering a GDP reduction of more than 2% and the Czech Republic's GDP shrinking less than 2%.

Germany's GDP would shrink by the high 2% range under the more dire scenario and just over 1% under the more optimistic scenario, due to access to alternative energy sources and the ability to lower consumption.

But German economic activity could be reduced by 2.7% in 2023, with higher wholesale gas prices pushing German inflation up by another 2 percentage points in 2022 and 2023. The IMF researchers said European infrastructure and global supply have coped so far, with a 60% drop in Russian gas deliveries since June 2021. Total gas consumption in the first quarter, during which Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, triggering Western economic sanctions, was down 9% from a year earlier, and alternative supplies are being tapped, especially LNG from global markets.

Fitch Revises Pakistan's Outlook to Negative, Affirms at 'B-'

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Ratings agency Fitch on Tuesday revised its outlook on Pakistan to negative from stable, citing a deterioration in the country's external liquidity position and financing conditions as well as the risks from renewed political volatility.

Fitch, however, affirmed Pakistan's Long-Term Foreign-Currency (LTFC) Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at "B-".

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) board was likely to approve a resumption in bailout payments, it said, but added there were considerable risks to the program's implementation and to Pakistan's access to external finances after June 2023.

Pakistan faces economic turmoil, with fast depleting foreign reserves, a declining currency and widening fiscal and current account deficits.

The economic meltdown has been compounded by political instability and a delay in the resumption of the IMF bailout since the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took over from ousted premier Imran Khan in April.

The Pakistani rupee fell heavily against the U.S. dollar, losing nearly 6 rupees early on Tuesday to 122 per dollar in interbank trading.

Similarly, the Pakistan Stock Exchange Ltd KSE100 Index fell 978 points or -2.36% to close at 40,389.07 level on Tuesday, its website showed.

The rupee is especially under pressure from the falling reserves and delay in foreign inflows from the IMF and other sources, Fahad Rauf, head of research at Ismail Iqbal Securities, told Reuters.

Reserves have fallen to as low as \$9.8 billion, hardly enough to pay for 45 days of imports.

"If Pakistan is able to maintain fiscal and monetary discipline, the health of the economy would improve and an outlook upgrade would follow," Rauf said.

Fitch said the political volatility could undermine the fiscal and external adjustment, especially in the environment of slowing economic growth and high inflation, which stood at 21.3% in June.

Pakistan's central bank has already pushed policy interest rates to 15%. It forecasts gross domestic product growth in the 2022-23 financial year at between 3% and 4%, less than the government's budget estimate of 5%.

The IMF reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan last week to pave the way for disbursement of \$1.17 billion. If this is approved by the board, the scope of the original \$6 billion bailout agreed in 2019 will rise to \$7 billion.

Japan Q3, FY22 Growth Seen Weaker

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's economy is likely to grow at a slower pace than previously thought throughout the rest of the fiscal year, a Reuters poll showed, as growing risks of a global economic slowdown and supply woes torment Japanese exporters.

Manufacturers in the world's third-largest economy are susceptible to the gloomier growth outlook in major trading partners such as the United States and China that are stoking recession and stagflation fears worldwide.

Analysts, however, still projected Japan's growth to stay positive throughout the fiscal year until next March, the poll showed, thanks to an expected recovery of consumption, which accounts for over half of the country's gross domestic product.

The economy was projected to expand an annualized 3.1% this quarter, the median forecast of 36 economists in the July 4-15 poll showed, lower than 3.5% estimated in a June survey.

Economists in the poll downgraded growth estimates for the October-December and January-March quarters slightly as well, while cutting those for last quarter even sharper, to 3.2% from June's 4.1%.

"The biggest factor behind the overall downgrade is the growing sense of a slowdown in the U.S. economy," said Harumi Taguchi, principal economist at S&P Global (NYSE:SPGI) Market Intelligence.

China's zero-coronavirus policy could also prolong supply bottlenecks for Japanese exporters, she said.

Japan's export-oriented manufacturers have been hit hard by a relentless rise in commodity prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and COVID-19 lockdown measures in Chinese plants this year.

Analysts in the poll expected Japan's industrial production to have contracted 3.8% in April-June from a year earlier, which will be followed by a meagre 2.2% recovery of output in July-September. Domestically, the economy was likely to continue benefiting from a recovery in household spending on pent-up demand for services such as travel following the lifting of coronavirus curbs in March.

"Rising prices don't seem to be pushing down private consumption now, though the impact could be more substantial if they linger," said Takumi Tsunoda, senior economist at Shinkin Central Bank Research Institute.

A recent rise in coronavirus cases has added uncertainties to the outlook for consumption, he said.

The median estimate of economists in the poll showed Japan's annual core consumer inflation likely reaching 2.4% in October-December and then aligning with the Bank of Japan's 2.0% target early next year.

Singapore Growth to Moderate Further Next Year



SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore's economic growth is expected to moderate further next year, tracking a slowdown in its major trading partners, while global inflation is expected to ease in 2023, the head of the city-state's central bank said on Tuesday.

"We are seeing a surge in inflation globally because a robust demand recovery post-COVID has run into supply-side frictions and, more recently, war-related disruptions," said Ravi Menon, the managing director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).

"Rising inflation has no doubt dented business and consumer confidence, but not yet to a degree that would lead to a severe downturn this year," Menon told a news conference after the MAS published its annual report.

Last week, Singapore tightened its monetary policy in an off-cycle move that came just after Canada's surprise 100 basis point interest rate hike and before an out-of-cycle rate hike in the Philippines.

"Taming inflation is like trying to slow down a speeding car on a gentle slope. It takes a combination of forcefulness and calibration," Menon said.

"Inflation is expected to ease in 2023 as major central banks withdraw policy accommodation and supply challenges are addressed," the MAS said in its annual report.

Globally, policy makers are ramping up their battle against mounting inflation, driven by supply constraints caused by the Ukraine war and the pandemic.

Referring to Singapore, Menon said: "The extent of the growth moderation will depend in part on how the scenarios for the global economy will pan out. As of now, we expect neither a recession nor a stagflation in Singapore next year," he added.

The Southeast Asian financial hub, seen as a bellwether for global growth, has eased most of its pandemic-related local and travel restrictions since early April.

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Japan's Olympic Skating Champion Retires Aged 27

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's two-time Olympic figure skating champion Yuzuru Hanyu retired from competition aged 27, after struggling with injuries at this year's Beijing Games. The "Ice Prince" was dethroned as Olympic champion in February by US star Nathan Chen, finishing a disappointing fourth place in Beijing. Wearing a dark suit and bowing deeply as he took to the stage, the skating sensation told a packed press conference in Tokyo that he was finished as a competitive athlete.

Osaka to Make Return At San Jose Next Month

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Naomi Osaka committed next month's tournament in San Jose, Calif., her first appearance since a first-round loss at the French Open on May 23. The four-time Grand Slam winner accepted a wild-card entry into the Mubadala Silicon Valley Classic on Monday. Osaka, 24, withdrew from Wimbledon due to a nagging injury to her left Achilles. The San Jose tourney begins on Aug. 1. Osaka joins a field that includes Wimbledon champ Elena Rybakina, World No. 5 Ons Jabeur and American teenager Coco Gauff.

Nadal's Season Will Continue To Be Unpredictable

MADRID (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal the 'King of Clay' and the grand master of many other surfaces said about his ongoing performances and injuries, "I don't want to go out there and not be competitive". The Spaniard's participation at this past Wimbledon was extraordinary, but coming out a winner in matches is becoming a harder compromise.

The proof recently was the turbulent 5-setter that Nadal battled with Taylor Fritz in the Wimbledon quarterfinal. "I have been suffering with pain in the abdominal...there is a tear in the muscle," Rafa had told the media sadly, including the ATP tour.

But the four hour and 20 minute match had not only broken Rafa mentally, but physically. He came out with the win against the 13th ranking Fritz, but recuperating is another issue. There will be further tests to determine a possible treatment and recovery for Nadal.

Dr. Carlos Guancher, a hip and sports medicine specialist at Southern Cal Orthopedic Institute told the Insider media that depending on the extent of damage it could take from 6 weeks to 6 months recovery time. But the Spaniard knows that he really doesn't like to retire in the middle of a match and admits "...it's not easy...I did a couple of times in my tennis career..."

Rafa's great determination is legendary and he confesses on his abilities saying "...Unfortunately and fortunately I was able to manage to improve and adapt to the circumstances that my body presents to me..."

In his mantra he so much wanted to win the 5-set match against Taylor Fritz and succeeded. But the situation isn't clear as to now how long or short anyone will see Rafa compete again. When asked time and again when does he feel that he will be back, Nadal could only say "I don't know...I can't say."

The quarterfinal was a well played match of the highest level and Rafael Nadal just shakes his head saying "It was an emotional match...an important victory. I am happy for that."

Meanwhile Jannik Sinner has announced his withdrawal from Hamburg as he wants to give himself a little more time to recover from an ankle injury before returning to



action. Sinner last played at Wimbledon, where he fell in the quarterfinals to eventual champion Novak Djokovic.

Sinner had a two-set lead against Djokovic, but the Serb came from behind to win the match 5-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2. In the fourth set, Sinner slightly sprained his ankle, but was able to continue and finish the match. Now, Sinner's ankle is still not 100% and the Italian will not make his debut in Hamburg next week.

Furthermore, Sinner revealed that he plans to return to action in Umag, which starts on July 25. "After discussions with my team, we have come to the decision that I will not play in Hamburg. I slightly sprained my ankle when I fell during my quarter-final match and, as a precaution, we decided that it would be best to take a little more time before my next appointment in Umag."

I really wanted to play in Hamburg, which is a city and an event that I really like," Sinner said in a statement. Sinner was accompanied by his trainer Darren Cahill during last season on grass. After Sinner's grass season ended, the Italian announced Cahill as a new full-time member of his team.

"Darren is an honest and humble person who wants to help me and my team. Humanly, there is no better person. We work hard every day, we have fun and there is harmony in the whole group. This is the most important thing," Sinner said of Cahill.

Atletico Madrid Make Ronaldo Move

MADRID (Dispatches) - Atletico Madrid are keen to give the 37-year-old the Old Trafford exit he wants this summer, despite the United board's insistence that he's not for sale. That's the story according to AS, at least.

The report does, however, illustrate how difficult Atletico might find it to reach an agreement with the Red Devils. The Rojiblancos are already struggling to shift players during a summer in which they need to make a few euros. Prior to their interest in Ronaldo, they needed to bring in around £35million.

But Atletico have gone from being 'bystanders' to making firm contact with Ronaldo's representatives, and the Portugal megastar is not averse to the move despite his links with Real.

Or could it be that Ronaldo's representatives are using Atletico the same way they used City a year ago in the hope that, like United, Real might be suckered into buying him?

United are still squirming away trying to add to Erik ten Hag's squad ahead of the new season, which kicks off in two and a half weeks.

There is no movement on Frenkie De Jong, with the Independent reporting that Barca are still refusing to cough up the £17million they owe the Holland star in deferred wages, despite the club splurging on new players.

Lyles Puts 200m Field On Notice With Red-Hot Heat

EUGENE (Dispatches) - Reigning world champion Noah Lyles showed he is no mood to give up his 200 metres crown after setting a red-hot pace to win his heat.

The sprinting showman rounded the curve with ease before wagging his finger at the rest of the field down the straight to finish in 19.98 seconds and advance to the semi-finals.

Celebrating his 25th birthday, Olympic bronze medallist Lyles said he had jitters during the three-day wait to compete in front of the home crowd in Eugene, Oregon.

His rivalry with fellow American Erriyon Knighton is expected to produce fireworks.

Lyles denied the 18-year-old a place on the podium at the Tokyo Olympics and ran past him down the stretch to clinch the national championship last month, prompting Knighton to storm off during a post-race interview.

Knighton got off to an explosive start on Monday before easing up near the halfway mark and cruising to victory in his heat in 20.01.

"I cannot ask for more, I am at the spot where I want to be," said Knighton. "One of my best years, if not my best and I am just happy."

Alexander Ogando, who helped the Dominican Republic pick up gold in the 4x400m mixed relay on Friday, equalled Knighton's time in his heat, cruising past the U.S. Olympic silver medallist Kenny Bednarek down the straight. Two days after leading an American sweep of the 100m, Fred Kerley jogged through to the finish to win his heat but said he was "still in recovery mode".

Williams Ready to Run Both Cars With Upgrades

LONDON (Dispatches) - Nicholas Latifi will finally have the same performance upgrades on his car as Williams Formula One team mate Alex Albon at this weekend's French Grand Prix.

The team said on Tuesday they now had parts for both cars after Albon tried them out in Britain and Austria.

"Although the weather in Silverstone and the Sprint format in Austria were not ideal for testing, we have seen enough encouraging feedback to be confident that we have taken a step forward," said Dave Robson, head of vehicle performance.

Dortmund Striker Sidelined Indefinitely After Discovering Tumor



BERLIN (Dispatches) - New Borussia Dortmund signing Sebastien Haller has left their training camp after a tumor was discovered in his testicle, the Bundesliga club said.

The 28-year-old Ivory Coast international travelled back to Dortmund to undergo

medical tests after feeling unwell.

"This news today came as a shock to Sebastien Haller and to all of us," said BVB sporting director Sebastian Kehl.

"We will do everything in our power to ensure that he receives the best possible treatment." The club said Haller will be absent for an indefinite period.

Haller joined Dortmund from Dutch side Ajax Amsterdam on a four-year contract earlier this month.

China to Host Asian Games In 2023



KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) - China will host the 2022 Asian Games in autumn 2023, organizers said today, after postponing the event in Hangzhou because of Covid-19.

The Games were originally scheduled for September this year, but organisers postponed them in May as China tried to stamp out a large Covid resurgence in several parts of the country.

The event will now be held in Hangzhou from September 23 to October 8 2023, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said.

Hangzhou lies less than 200 kilometers from the country's biggest city Shanghai, which endured a months-long lockdown earlier this year as part of the ruling Communist Party's zero-tolerance approach to the virus.

The OCA said that the new dates were chosen to avoid "conflict with other major international sporting events".

The Hangzhou organizing committee vowed to "present a wonderful and marvellous sports and cultural event with Chinese characteristics", in a statement confirming the new dates.

China is the last major economy committed to stamping out domestic spread of the virus through harsh lockdowns, mass testing and strict controls on international travel.

But that has hurt the country's international sporting ambitions, with the world's most populous nation cancelling or postponing almost all events since the start of the pandemic, with the exception of this year's Winter Olympics in Beijing.

The World University Games, scheduled to begin in June in Chengdu and already delayed from last year, have also been postponed again, until 2023.

The Asian Games typically attract over 10,000 athletes from across the region.

Manchester United Down Palace 3-1



MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Manchester United's forward Anthony Martial scored his third goal of the pre-season as they eased past Crystal Palace 3-1 in a friendly.

The win in front of a heaving crowd of 76,499 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground continued new manager Erik ten Hag's bright start following a 4-1 victory over Melbourne Victory and 4-0 romp against Liverpool in Bangkok last week.

France striker Martial, who was loaned to Sevilla in the January transfer window, netted his first in the 17th minute and has now scored in all three matches on the Asian tour.

He also had a hand in both second half goals for Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho before Palace pulled one back late on when Joel Ward headed in from a corner, catching goalkeeper David de Gea napping.

With Cristiano Ronaldo excused from the tour due to a family issue, Martial has been United's main threat up front, partnering well with Sancho and Rashford.

Martial was denied in the 10th minute by a fine save from Jack Butland but the Palace goalkeeper suffered a thumb injury blocking the shot and had to come off.

Butland's replacement Remi Mathews could do nothing to stop Martial soon after when the unmarked Frenchman chested down a Diogo Dalot cross at the far post and fired in from close range.

Both teams triggered a raft of substitutions after the hour-mark, allowing Palace to eventually rally for Ward's goal.

United played the last few minutes with 10 men after 19-year-old substitute defender Will Fish, drafted late onto the tour, was given a red card for dragging down Victor Akinwale just outside the penalty area. United, who finished sixth in the Premier League last season and failed to qualify for the Champions League, wrap up their Australian tour with a friendly against Aston Villa in Perth on Saturday.