

Chinese Ambassador to Iran Says Beijing Is Willing to Cooperate With Tehran to Deepen the China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Reached by the Two Countries' Governments

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Minister of Energy Ali Akbar Mehrabian Announced That He Will Pay a Visit to Afghanistan to Talk With Afghan Officials Over Iran's Share of Water From the Helmand River (Hirmand)


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Iran Puts Forth Ideas to Conclude Nuclear Talks

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's chief nuclear negotiator has confirmed that the European Union's foreign policy chief has put forward a new draft text to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, saying the Islamic Republic has also proposed its own ideas to conclude the negotiations.

Ali Bagheri Kani's confirmation came after the EU's Josep Borrell wrote in an essay in the Financial Times, "I have now put on the table a text that addresses, in precise detail, the sanctions lifting as well as the nuclear steps needed to restore the JCPOA," referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or the Iran nuclear agreement.

Bagheri said on Twitter, "Had serious and constructive exchanges with other sides in the course of the past week on Vienna negotiations. The Coordinator has shared his ideas to conclude the negotiations. We, too, have our own ideas, both in substance and form, to conclude the negotiations which would be shared."

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President Emphasizes Pursuit of Water Share From Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IP) - Emphasizing the serious pursuit of the issue of Iran's water share from Afghanistan, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi ordered that other available solutions for providing drinking and agricultural water to the people of Sistan and Baluchistan province should be prioritized by the relevant ministries.

Speaking in the meeting of the Council of Ministers on Wednesday morning, Ebrahim Raisi assigned the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Energy to follow up on Iran's water share from the Hirmand River and said: "The government will not hesitate to pursue the rights of the nation in any way."

Raisi also tasked the relevant ministries to seriously pursue other ways of providing drinking and agricultural water for the people of Sistan and Baluchistan province, including by digging deep wells and assigning special rigs, and to implement the necessary measures as soon as possible.

Referring to his yesterday's meeting with Friday prayer leaders from across the country, the President announced efficiency as the most important indicator in the appointment of national, provincial, and local officials and said: "The managers of this government must be efficient, revolutionary and transformational, and if they are not, the goals that have been set will not be achieved."

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Justice Meaningless Without Helping the Deprived Class



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Addressing the Friday prayer leaders of Iran, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said that justice has no meaning without helping and taking care of the oppressed and deprived class; if you can provide help to the deprived classes in your community, it is one of the best things you can do.

In a meeting with Friday prayer leaders across the country on Wednesday morning, Ayatollah Khamenei called the Friday prayers a very important link and an exceptional duty in the chain of the soft power of the Islamic system and emphasized: "The Friday prayer leader is the spokesperson of the Islamic Revolution and one of his basic duties is to reproduce epistemological concepts and revolutionary foundations, to answer doubts in the language of the day and to explain them in a reasoned way, and to treat everyone in a paternal way."

At the beginning of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei, by honoring the days belonging to the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), expressed the importance of Friday prayer and pointed to its exceptional place among religious duties, saying: "The link between paying attention to God and the presence and gathering of people", "the remembrance of God in a collective form and the descent of its blessings on the public, continuing without halt in the Friday prayer every week, an important base for raising various issues of the society, including intellectual issues, social services, public cooperation and preparations and military mobilization and mixing spirituality with politics are among the most important features of Friday prayer, which has turned it into a huge capacity and an extraordinary opportunity."

The Leader noted: "Friday prayer with such features is an important link in the detailed and long chain of soft power of the Islamic system."

He then raised the question, "Have we been able to place the Friday prayer in its lofty and worthy position in the Islamic Republic?"

He also said: "It seems that we have had shortcomings that we must strive to eliminate, and in the meantime, some issues are the responsibility of the Friday prayers leaders themselves, and some are the responsibility of the general management of the Friday prayers leaders."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution mentioned two issues regarding the Friday prayer leaders: One is the character and way of life of the Friday prayer leaders and the second one is the content of the Friday prayer sermons.

About the character and method of the Friday prayer leader, Ayatollah Khamenei said: "Just as the Friday prayer leader enjoins piety in their Friday prayer sermons, they should also do their best in embracing piety and practicing it, because if it is otherwise, will give the opposite result."

The Leader considered "fatherly behavior towards everyone" as one of the requirements of Friday prayer leader's behavior and character, adding: "There are different classes and tastes in Friday prayer, a Friday prayer leader's behavior should be the same as a father's behavior with his children, and he should seat everyone at the table of spirituality and religion."

He emphasized: "We are in favor of justice and we have raised its flag, but the realization of justice without helping the deprived and oppressed class has no meaning."

The Leader of the Revolution called the great work of the Islamic Republic of Iran invalidating the central point of the identity of the western civilization, i.e. "separation of religion from politics," and added: "The Islamic Republic of Iran not only preserved itself with the slogan of religion, but also it challenged the long-term effort of the Westerners to depict that religion and politics are incompatible with the progress of Iran, so the mafia of Western powers, headed by the Israeli regime and its capitalists, showcased by the U.S., are angry about this brilliant truth, and are constantly planning to attack the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Referring to the successes and achievements gained by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Leader stressed that the great work of the Revolution is invalidating the separation of the religion and politics principle as Western civilization's central identity point.

Iran ready to Help Int'l Community To Cope With Energy Crisis

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian voiced Iran's preparedness to help the international community to cope with the current energy crisis and counter threats related to food insecurity.

Stating that Iran is involved in creating the foundations of free trade and will soon finalize the Free Trade Area (FTA) Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, Amirabdollahian said that Iran is ready to help the international community to cope with the current energy crisis and counter threats related to food insecurity.

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ViewPoint "Wage War And Rule"

In the past British colonialist rulers and governments used to employ this strategy of "divide and rule" but in recent centuries, the imperialist U.S. has resorted to the idea of "wage war and rule" and for this reason the U.S. governments usually tend to cause wars and disputes in every region in order to rule and sell their arms which is one of the main source of revenues of this country and its big arms producing companies which are main supporters of the two dominating political parties of the country, namely, the Democrat and Republican.

In the recent decades Middle East and African countries have been the main destinations for the inflows of American arms under different pretexts or breakout of wars, and now it seems war in Ukraine is another destination for American arms sales and the war between Ukraine and Russia seems is not to end soon because of this policy.

In 2021, sales of U.S. military equipment to foreign governments fell 21% to \$138 billion as the Biden administration shifts away from some of the more aggressive arms sales practices under former President Donald Trump. But now it seems Biden Administration also wants to return to his predecessors' policies of selling weapons in order to steer his country out of current turbulent economic situation.

On Monday, the United States gave a green light to the potential sale of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of munitions to Japan and Singapore. The \$900 million package of arms and equipment approved by the U.S. State Department includes advanced missiles for Japan and munitions for Singapore.

The package for Japan would include 150 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) to be installed on the country's F-35 fighter jets, worth more than \$290 million.

Singapore will receive \$630 million to supply its fleet of F-15 S-G fighter jets with air-to-air missiles.

Washington has been supplying arms to its allies in the East Asia region mainly under the pretext of countering the influence of its arch-foe China.

Military experts note that Japan's armed forces and the U.S. military have plotted several times to assist Washington in deploying intermediate-range ballistic missiles on the Asian country's southwestern islands in an attempt to achieve "integrated deterrence" against China.

China has vastly upgraded its military infrastructure in recent years, amid rising tensions with the West over Chinese Taipei, the South China Sea, and military supremacy in the Indo-Pacific.

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UNSC Inaction Emboldened Israel To Continue Its Crimes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations says the UN Security Council's inaction in the face of Israel's incessant crimes against Palestinians and regional nations has emboldened the regime to continue its aggressive behavior.

Speaking before the UN Security Council on Tuesday, Zahra Ershadi urged the Security Council to force the Israeli regime to immediately cease its systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council's inaction has emboldened the Israeli regime to continue its crimes against the oppressed Palestinian people as well as its aggressions and malicious activities against the regional countries. The lack of accountability for such serious violations contributes to this impunity," Ershadi said.

"The Security Council must uphold its Charter obligation to maintain international peace and security. The Council is expected to implement its own resolutions and compel the Israeli regime to immediately cease its systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law," she said.

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MP Warns Albania Gov't for Cooperating With MKO

TEHRAN (IP) - The representative of Arak in Iran's Parliament said that the Albanian government's cooperation with Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) is against the international laws.

: Speaking in the open session of Majlis honoring the memory of Operation Mersad, Mohammad-Hassan Asafari said: "The Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) is a terrorist organization, and giving facilities to them is against the international laws."

According to Iran Press Parliament correspondent, the representative of the people of Arak, Kamijan and Khandab in the Parliament said: "We warn the Albanian government to stop this behaviour since the MKO is a terrorist organization."

Deal on JCPOA Revival Still Possible If West Acts Wisely

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi has once again blamed the West for the stalemate in talks on the revival of 2015 deal, saying, however, that Iran and the P4+1 group of countries can still reach a final agreement if the opposite side acts wisely.

"The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is logical and rational and it is obvious that if the opposite side also acts logically and rationally, the negotiations can yield result," Raisi said.

He added that a firm determination on the part of the opposite side is the key to success in the diplomatic process on a revitalization of the multilateral accord, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The Islamic Republic of Iran never left the negotiating table. It was the Westerners who created a crisis in the midst of the talks by adopting a resolution at the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," Raisi pointed out.

The IAEA's Board of Governors adopted the resolution on June 8, accusing Iran of not cooperating with the agency. The resolution was approved with 30 votes in favor, two against, and three abstentions.

It came as Iran and the five remaining parties to the JCPOA -- Britain, France,



Germany, Russia and China -- had held several rounds of negotiations in the Austrian capital of Vienna since April last year to restore the agreement, which was abandoned by former U.S. President Donald Trump in May 2018.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that reaching an agreement [on the JCPOA revival] hinges on the full resolution of safeguard issues and the provision of necessary guarantees, including continued adherence of the parties to the agreement and fulfillment of the economic interests of the Iranian nation," the Iranian chief executive pointed out.

Elsewhere in his Tuesday address, Raisi elaborated on his administration's achievements in the diplomatic arena over the past year, saying promotion of the neighborly policy is a main principle in Iran's diplomacy.

The Iranian president added that the country has taken steps to bolster relations with its neighbors and increased the value of trade exchanges with them.

Intelligence Ministry Targeted Israel Several Times in Recent Months

TEHRAN (IFP) - Intelligence ministry says it has had several successful proactive operations against Israel in recent months, besides foiling the occupying regime's plots.

Iranian Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib, in a meeting with Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Wednesday, hailed Iranian intelligence operatives for thwarting conspiracies by Israel and anti-Iran groups.

Khatib also said the enemies have failed to provoke riots and terror in Iran, explaining "One of the reasons is the popular approach of the intelligence ministry and the government to interact with the people in order to ensure stable security in the country."

During the meeting, Qalibaf praised Iranian security and intelligence forces for their achievements despite the hardships the country is going through.

He said the U.S. and Israel have never stopped targeting Iran's security and stability since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

The remarks came days after Iran's security forces dismantled an espionage network linked to Israel's spy agency, Mossad, before destroying a sensitive facility in the central Iranian province of Isfahan.

Earlier in July, Iran arrested a network of Mossad agents with a large cache of weapons and ammunition at the western borders.

EU Continues Efforts Aimed at Success of Nuclear Negotiations

TEHRAN (IRNA) - In a phone talk with his UAE counterpart, Iranian foreign minister while focusing on nuclear negotiations with the world powers said that the EU is continuing its efforts aimed at success of the talks, and Iran, too, is seriously pursuing efforts aimed at reaching a good and sustainable result.

Hossein Amirabdollahian in his Tuesday phone talk with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan assured him about the seriousness of both Tehran and the EU in the negotiations to remove the sanctions, and meanwhile exchanged views with him on expansion of bilateral ties, as well as issues of mutual interest in regional and international developments.

The top Iranian diplomat said that the high ranking officials of both countries favor elevating the bilateral ties and that is an important factor in expansion of comprehensive relations between the two neighboring countries.

Amirabdollahian, meanwhile, said that the occupier regime of the Holy Quds is the main cause for the regional instability and insecurity, adding that it was the Zionist regime that made efforts to turn the recent Jeddah Conference into a regional crisis, but thanks to the participating regional countries issues related to regional cooperation and security were focused on and emphasized.

The UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, for his part, referred to the shared interests of the two countries in expansion of bilateral ties, adding that upgrading the level of the political representative offices of the two countries in the framework of expanding ties is of great importance, and expansion of bilateral ties between the neighboring and brother nations is favored by both countries' leaders.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan said the UAE officials have no doubt that not only the warmth of the two countries' relations can be restored, but also new horizons can be opened in our relations, especially keeping in mind the numerous challenges in the region, including the environmental difficulties.

Iran 4-Month Gas Export Income at \$4b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Oil Minister Javad Owji said the country's gas export income amounted to \$4 billion dollars in the first 4 months of the current calendar year, which began on March 21, which is equals to the figure for all of last year.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday morning on the sidelines of the government cabinet meeting, he said: "In the first four months of this year, the collection of claims was upward compared to the 4 months of last year, and there was a 55% growth in the repatriation of oil export money and sale of crude oil, gas condensate and natural gas."

He added: "Today, we had a resolution in the cabinet on the issue of contracts for the development of oil and gas fields, and for those fields whose recovery rate was below 20%, the administration allowed domestic and foreign investment to bring the figure to 33 to 34%."

The oil minister said: "Azadegan oil field, the largest joint oil field with Iraq, has used more than 7 billion dollars of the power and capacity of domestic financial resources in which 6 banks and 6 large economic holdings participate and become shareholders in the development of this field."

Owji stated: "We started the development of Azadegan field and now we are extracting 190,000 barrels of oil from this field daily, and with the planning of the Ministry of Petroleum to use the capacities of different financial sectors of the country, within the next few years we will reach 570,000 barrels/day of oil output."

U.S. Rationalism Will Make Agreement Possible

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said that Iran is committed to its obligations, and the U.S. should observe rationalism to reach a good, strong and sustainable agreement.

Amirabdollahian made the remarks in a phone talk with his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The two sides exchanged views on strengthening bilateral ties, as well as consulting on some regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the recent Jeddah Conference.

Amirabdollahian welcomed the activation of expert bilateral committees, arguing that it is a good sign of the positive trend of bilateral cooperation.

The Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that increased visits and meeting of the two countries' officials will surely pave the path for faster expansion of bilateral ties.

Inviting his Kuwaiti counterpart to visit Tehran at his earliest convenient opportunity, Iran's top diplomat said that Kuwait side by side Iran's other neighboring countries, has a positive viewpoint about strengthening regional relations, and Iran, too, warmly shakes its friends and neighbors' hands.

Amirabdollahian condemned those few countries' efforts that tried to turn the atmosphere of Jeddah Conference into anti-Iranian, expressing satisfaction that the regional countries' wisdom and efforts fortunately made that plot futile.

He said that the regional countries proved that the Palestine issue is still a top priority for the Islamic

world, and no country in this region ignores the criminal acts of the Zionist regime.

Reviewing the process of the nuclear negotiations during the past three months, the top Iranian diplomat expressed hope that the Americans will act rationally so that the negotiations will lead into a satisfactory final result for all sides.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to all its obligations, and expect the Americans, to act rationally so that achieving a good, strong and sustainable agreement will become possible.

Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Sabah, too, appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran's initiative of boosting ties with regional and neighboring countries, arguing that Kuwait has always favored expansion of friendly ties with Iran.

He said that the political leadership of Kuwait favors deepening and broadening cooperation with Iran and the appointment of the new Kuwaiti ambassador to Iran is aimed at achieving the same objective.

The top Kuwaiti diplomat referred to a recent visit of Iranian vice president and Environment Protection Organization chief of Kuwait, as well as a bilateral meeting aimed at boosting both countries' efforts to combat sand storms in joint efforts.

On Jeddah Security and Development Conference, too, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said that despite some speculations about the anti-Iranian atmosphere of that meeting, the emphasis of the regional leaders was on preservation of good, and strong relations with Iran in the long term.

Success in Final Round of Nuclear Talks Depends on U.S. Flexibility

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign minister in a phone talk with his Omani counterpart said that in final round of the nuclear talks two factors, namely rationalism, and flexibility of the American side can ensure the success of the negotiations.

Hossein Amirabdollahian and Oman Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr al Busaidi exchanged viewpoints on Iran's talks with the world powers to remove sanctions, and they discussed bilateral ties, and issues of mutual interest in regional and international fields.

The Iranian foreign minister asked Mr. Busaidi to convey President Ebrahim Raisi's best regards to Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, and appreciated Sultanate of Oman's positive viewpoints for expansion of bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

Amirabdollahian focusing on the latest status of Vienna nuclear talks, referred to Iran's initiatives aimed at keeping the diplomacy window open, emphasizing that the final round of talks before the agreement is in need of U.S. rationalism and flexibility, as the Islamic Republic of Iran is firmly determined for reaching a good, strong and

sustainable agreement for all sides.

The top Iranian diplomat said that the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to ensuring the security of providing energy and food stuff for the world nations, and comprehends the current difficulties with which the world is now faced in providing sufficient energy, and therefore has had numerous initiatives for the purpose.

Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, for his part, said in the phone talk that his evaluation of the various involved sides in the Vienna negotiations, and that of his concerned government, is that these talks must reach a good agreement.

Mr. Busadi said that the Omani officials believe all involved sides in those talks favor reaching a good agreement, and a golden opportunity is now provided for reaching such an agreement.

The top Omani diplomat said that Muscat has also always supported Iran's right to achieve its legitimate rights in Vienna negotiations.

Iran-Uzbek Presidents Meeting To Be Turning Point in Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) - There is a very clear perspective on Tehran-Tashkent ties, Iranian envoy said that the upcoming meeting of the presidents of Iran and Uzbekistan in the city of "Samarkand" will be a turning point in the bilateral relations.

Iran's envoy to Tashkent Hamid Nayerabadi said that during the past two years, the relations between two friendly and brotherly countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Uzbekistan, have been growing in all fields.

During this period, good meetings have been held at different levels between the high-ranking officials of the two countries, Nayerabadi said.

Even during the outbreak of Covid-19, the officials and experts of the two countries kept their contact by holding telephone conversations and video conferences, he further noted.

Referring to the official meeting of the Iranian and Uzbek foreign ministers in Tashkent after ten years, the envoy said that this meeting led to the promotion of the relations between the two countries in many areas.

Diversification is one of the characteristics of the growing relations between the two countries, he also said, explaining that today, Iran and Uzbekistan enjoy good political, commercial, transportation, parliamentary, scientific, cultural, artistic, and tourism cooperation.

Tehran Welcomes Continuation of Truce in Yemen

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran Foreign Minister's Senior Advisor for Special Political Affairs expressed pleasure at the continuation of the truce in Yemen.

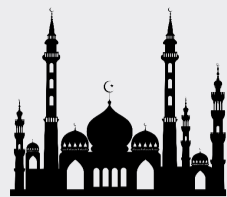
Ali Asghar Khaji has held talks on the phone with the Yemeni National Salvation Government's top negotiator Mohammad Abdul Salam as part of the Islamic Republic's continued consultations over Yemen.

In the telephone conversation, the two sides discussed the latest developments concerning the peace process in Yemen.

The Yemeni top negotiator underlined the willingness of the officials of Yemen's National Salvation Government to maintain peace in the country.

Abdul Salam, however, said the extension of the truce in Yemen is contingent upon the other side's fulfilment of its obligations regarding removal of the blockade on Yemen, cessation of hostilities and paying the salaries of employees.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister for special political affairs also expressed pleasure at the continuation of the truce in Yemen. Khaji voiced hope that the resistance of the Yemeni people will finally result in the removal of the oppressive siege and the establishment of a fair and lasting peace.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:32
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:32
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:10

46. We have indeed sent down signs that make things manifest: and Allah guides whom He wills to a way that is straight.
47. They say, "We believe in Allah and in the apostle, and we obey": but even after that, some of them turn away: they are not (really) Believers.

Surah 24. Light (46 - 47)

Iran Export to China Up 31% in H1 of 2022

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's export to China has increased by 31 percent in the first half of the current year and the volume of mutual trade stood at over eight billion dollars in the same period.

The most recent statistics published by the General Administration of the Customs of the People's Republic of China indicate that trade exchanges between China and Iran increased by 23 percent in comparison with the figures in the same period last year, reaching 8.263 billion dollars.

The value of exchanges between the two countries was declared more than 6.722 billion dollars from January to June.

China's imports from Iran in the first six months of the current year increased significantly, reaching 4.081 billion dollars, showing a 31 percent hike, while China imported commodities worth 3.116 billion dollars from Iran in the same period last year.



China's export to Iran witnessed a 16 percent increase from January to June, reaching 4.182 billion dollars, while its export of goods to Iran has been estimated at 3.606 billion dollars in the same period last year.

According to the report by the General Administration of Customs, China's total global trade stood at 3079 billion dollars, showing a 10.3 percent increase in comparison to the same period last year.

According to the report, China's total international trade has been over 3 trillion dollars so far this year, a 10.3% growth compared to the first half 2021.

During this period, China exported 1.732 trillion dollars of goods and imported 1.347 trillion dollars worth of goods.

New CEO of Chadormalu Co. Appointed

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In a ceremony new CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industry Company was introduced and began his job officially in this gigantic mining company.

In the ceremony Eng. Ali Taherzadeh started his job as the new CEO of the company to replace Eng. Taghizadeh.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr. Taherzadeh hailed the efforts of the company and its managers and staff and said that the company is indebted its achievements to the endeavors of its managers and committed staff who have completed chain production in the company through moving towards sustainable development in years, adding that this is a strong point of Chadormalu Company.

He added that without any doubt with synergy among all pillars of the company, they will work hard to expand this chain because it is a task over the shoulders of all them to move on track of economic development and elevation of the Islamic Republic of Iran establishment.



Iran to Overhaul, Maintain Russian Aircraft



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian Civil Aviation Organization spokesman Mir Akbar Razavi announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Iran and Russia, on the basis of which the number of passenger flights between the two countries increased to 35 per week.

Razavi said that Russia's Deputy Minister of Transport met and held talks with the head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, Mohammad Mohammadi-Bakhsh.

Iranian and Russian officials at the meeting stressed the need to intensify bilateral cooperation in air transport, he said.

During the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on increasing the frequency of flights between the two countries, on the basis of which the number of passenger flights between the two countries increased to 35 per week, Razavi stressed.

According to the signed document, the airlines of the two countries are allowed to operate cargo flights without capacity restrictions under the above agreement.

It was also decided to sign an agreement on cooperation with Russia within the framework of providing the possibility of exporting parts and equipment manufactured in Iran to Russia, as well as providing repair and maintenance services and technical support for Russian aircraft by Iranian repair centers, Razavi added.

Under the MoU, airlines of the two countries are allowed to operate cargo flights without capacity restrictions within the framework of the above agreement.

Venezuela Provides Iran With 1m Hectares of Farmland

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Venezuela has allowed Iran to use one million hectares of its farmland for cultivation, an Iranian official said.

Speaking to Tasnim, the Iranian deputy interior minister for economic affairs highlighted the added value that the products and services provided by domestic knowledge-based companies would create in other countries, as in South American nations.

According to Mohsen Kousheshtabar, Venezuela has provided Iran with one million hectares of farmland for cultivation while the world is grappling with the shortage of strategic reserves.

He said such a major plan for extra-territorial cultivation reveals that Iran has become so great and strong and has reached such a high level in scientific exchanges that other countries are reaching out to the Islamic Republic. "It definitely signifies the technical knowledge of these (Iranian) knowledge-based companies that has transpired at the international level," he said.

In June, President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro paid a visit to Tehran and signed a 20-year partnership agreement on cooperation with Iran in various fields.

The agreement includes partnership in the fields of science, technology, agriculture, oil and gas, petrochemicals, tourism and culture.

Tehran, Moscow Working on Joint Interbank Payment System

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran and Russia are working on the creation of a joint interbank payment system, similar to SWIFT, said Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Affairs Mehdi Safari.

"Naturally, two countries that want to de-dollarize their transactions must have a special system similar to SWIFT. The Iranian and Russian sides each proposed one version of such a system. Now, we have practically reached a very good agreement, on the basis of which we could carry out currency transactions between the two countries," Safari told Sputnik.

The diplomat also said that the Russian Mir payment system will soon be launched in Iran, noting that there are agreements on the matter.

Previously, the Kremlin noted that cooperation between Russia and Iran is growing, as the net trade between the two nations grew 31 percent just over the past few months. At the same time, Moscow added that Russia and the Islamic Republic of Iran will gradually abandon the practice of using US dollars to measure bilateral trade.

Access to Broadband in Iran Exceeds 128%

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Quarterly figures by Iran's telecoms regulator (CRA) show access to broadband internet in the country increased in the quarter to June to cover 128% of the population, up one percentage point from the previous quarter.

The figures published on Tuesday by the official IRNA news agency showed that the total number of broadband subscriptions in Iran had reached 108.87 million in the three months to late June, including nearly 97.84 million mobile broadband subscriptions and more than 11 million fixed lines.

The figures showed that the number of registered SIM cards in Iran had reached nearly 208 million with the first mobile operator the MCI responsible for more than 106 million of the subscriptions.

MCI's active SIM cards were around 75.5 million while the second operator MTN Irancell had more than 60.7 million active subscribers and the third operator Rightel had nearly 5.3 million users in June, showed the figures.

The figures were slightly down from the data published by the CRA in the quarter to late March as demand for internet in Iran has dropped following an easing of coronavirus restrictions in the country.

The June quarter figures showed that the number of cell towers rolled out by the three operators in towns, villages and roads across Iran exceeded 8,500.

They showed that fourth generation (4G) internet coverage had expanded to nearly 36,000 BTS sites in Iran while 3G internet was available on nearly 40,000 sites and nearly 45,000 BTS sites were offering 2G internet.

Demands High From China, India for Northern Iranian Ports

TEHRAN (IFP) - Demands are increasing from Chinese and Indian merchants to transport goods via northern Iranian ports which indicate the North-South transit corridor is up and coming, an Iranian official says.

Hossein Younesi, Director General of Guilan Ports and Maritime, told ILNA that Iranian officials have discussed ways to increase the capacity to meet the high demand with various Indian and Chinese trade officials as well as the Chinese Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua, who recently visited the Bandar Anzali port city in northern Iran.

The northern Iranian ports are instrumental in increasing trade connectivity between major cities by linking Iran's northern and southern neighbors through a multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route.

Younesi said Iran and Russia have been removing obstacles to transit 10 million tons of goods along the North-South corridor, based on an agreement in June.

He also said plans are underway to establish regular lines for freights to facilitate trade between Iranian and foreign merchants.

Boosting Water, Energy Diplomacy One of Foreign Policy Priorities

TEHRAN (IP) - Energy Minister terms strengthening water and energy diplomacy as one of the administration's foreign policy priorities.

On the sidelines of the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Ali-Akbar Mehrabian stated that in almost all the bilateral meetings with neighboring countries, the issue of water and electricity diplomacy is on the agenda.

"During Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Tehran, detailed discussions were held between the delegations and we expressed our concerns about Turkey's dam constructions; the two presidents agreed to form a committee to investigate this issue," the Iranian minister said.

He also expressed concern about Iran's rights on Hirmand water.

Iran pursuing supply of its water right from Hirmand River through legal channels "In the matter of energy, we have had good agreements with our neighbors for almost a year, especially in connecting the grid with different methods," Mehrabian highlighted.

He pointed out that the purpose of these agreements is energy swap.

Aluminum Ingot Production Rises 31% in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) - Production of aluminum ingot in Iran rose 31 percent in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

The IMIDRO's data put the production of aluminum ingot at 171,691 tons in the three-month period of this year, while the figure was 131,376 tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Among the country's four major producers, South Aluminum Corporation (SALCO) had the best performance in the first three months of the present year, producing 74,100 tons of aluminum ingots, followed by Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) producing 47,319 tons, Almahdi Aluminum Company producing 40,724 tons, and Iran Alumina Company producing 9,548 tons of the product.

According to the data previously released by IMIDRO, production of aluminum ingot in Iran rose 20 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to its preceding year.

The IMIDRO's data put the annual production of aluminum ingot at 538,633 tons in 1400, while the figure was 446,836 tons in 1399, and 278,318 tons in 1398.

Among the country's four major producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance in the previous year producing 177,058 tons of aluminum ingots, although the figure was 185,000 tons in its preceding year.

Iran Reduces Insurance Cession Rates

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's insurance regulator, Central Insurance of Iran (CII), plans to lower the country's non-life and life cession rate to 9% and 17% respectively, valid until March 2023.

The Iranian insurance regulator sets a legal or obligatory cession to monitor market performance, according to Article 72 of the country's Central Insurance Establishment law. A decade ago, the rate was 25% in non-life insurance and 50% in life insurance.

In the most recent financial year, the rate was 10% for non-life and 20% for life insurance policies.

But now, a notice from the regulator explains that the mandatory cession rate will be reduced.

Iran has made expanding its domestic insurance industry a key part of its fifth five-year development plan. It aims to increase the number of people covered by health insurance from 4.3 million to 4.5 million people, and to give medical insurance coverage 5.2 million government employees and their families (up from 200,000 at present).

Earlier this month, the CII appraised the risk retention capacity of insurers, giving itself the top spot. The state-owned IIC can reportedly handle \$107 million in risk. Pasargad Insurance Company is second at \$43m.

Iraq to Free Briton Jailed In Antiquities Case

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - An Iraqi court has overturned the conviction and 15-year sentence handed to a British pensioner last month for antiquities smuggling, the retiree's lawyer said.

The conviction of James Fitton has been "overturned today by the Court of Cassation and my client will soon be free", lawyer Thaer Saoud told AFP.

"We are very pleased by the decision, but we are still waiting for his release," his son-in-law, Sam Tasker, told AFP in a phone call.

Fitton had been charged under a 2002 law against "intentionally taking or trying to take out of Iraq an antiquity".



Ex-Adviser to Peru President Arrested

LIMA (Dispatches) - Bruno Pacheco, a former senior adviser to Peru's President Pedro Castillo, has handed himself in to authorities after months on the run amid a corruption investigation, the country's attorney general said.

Pacheco's arrest follows the appointment of a special police team tasked with tracking down and capturing allies of Castillo who are now subjects of criminal investigations.

Two of Castillo's allies remain in hiding, including his former transportation minister and his nephew.



Tunisia President Hails Vote Set to Bolster Rule



TUNIS (Dispatches) - President Kais Saied said Tunisia had "entered a new phase" on Tuesday with a new constitution almost certain to pass in a referendum, concentrating almost all powers in his office.

Monday's referendum came a year to the day after Saied sacked the government and suspended parliament in a dramatic blow to the only democracy to have emerged from the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

There had been little doubt the "Yes" campaign would win, and an exit poll suggested that votes cast -- just a quarter of the 9.3 million electorate -- were overwhelmingly in favor.

Most of Saied's rivals called for a boycott, and while turnout was low, it was higher than the single figures many observers had expected -- at least 27.5 percent according to the electoral board, controlled by Saied.

"Tunisia has entered a new phase," Saied declared as he addressed celebrating supporters in downtown Tunis hours after polling stations closed.

"What the Tunisian people did... is a lesson to the world, and a lesson to history on a scale that the lessons of history are measured on," he said.

The National Salvation Front, a coalition of Saied's main opponents, said the draft constitution would enshrine in a "coup d'etat" and that "75 percent of Tunisians have refused to approve a putschist project".

Saied, a 64-year-old law professor, dissolved parliament and seized control of the judiciary and the electoral commission on July 25 last year.

His opponents say the moves aimed to install an autocracy over a decade after the fall of dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, while his supporters say they were necessary after years of corruption and political turmoil.

A poll of "Yes" voters by state television suggested "reforming the country and improving the situation" along with "support for Kais Saied/his project" were their main motivations for backing the constitution.

Thirteen percent cited being "convinced by the new constitution". Rights groups and legal experts have warned that the draft gives vast, unchecked powers to the presidency, allow him to appoint a government without parliamentary approval and make him virtually impossible to remove from office.

The charter "gives the president almost all powers and dismantles any check on his rule," Said Benarbia, regional director of the International Commission of Jurists told AFP.

"None of the safeguards that could protect Tunisians from Ben Ali-type violations are there anymore," he added.

Saied has repeatedly threatened his enemies in recent months, issuing video diatribes against unnamed foes he describes as "germs", "snakes" and "traitors".

On Monday, he promised "all those who have committed crimes against the country will be held accountable for their actions".

Tunisia expert Youssef Cherif tweeted Tuesday that "most people voted for the man, or against his opponents, but not for his document."

Analyst Abdellatif Hannachi said the results meant Saied "can now do whatever he wants without taking anyone else into account."

"The question now is: what is the future of opposition parties and organisations?"

Ukraine Reports Russia's Attacks On Coastal Regions



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russia said it will cut gas supplies to Europe in a blow to countries that have backed Ukraine, while missile attacks in Black Sea coastal regions raised doubts about whether Russia will stick to a deal to let Ukraine export grain.

The first ships from Ukraine may set sail in days under a deal agreed on Friday, the United Nations said, despite a Russian missile attack on the Ukrainian port of Odesa over the weekend, and a spokesman for the military administration in the saying another missile had hit the Odesa region on Tuesday morning.

Soaring energy costs and the threat of hunger faced by millions in poorer nations show how the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two, now in its sixth month, is having an impact far beyond Ukraine.

European Union countries are set to approve on Tuesday a weakened emergency proposal to curb their gas demand as they try to wean themselves off Russian energy and prepare for a possible total cut-off.

The Ukrainian military on Tuesday reported Russian cruise missile strikes in the south and that Ukrainian forces had hit enemy targets. Serhiy Bratchuk, a spokesman from the military administration in Odesa, told a Ukrainian television channel that a missile fired from the direction of the Black Sea had struck the region, but gave no information on casualties.

East of Odesa along the Black Sea coast, port infrastructure at Mykolaiv was damaged by an attack, according to the mayor Oleksandr Senkevich. Russia's defense ministry did not immediately reply to an out-of-hours request for comment.

A major fire broke out at an oil depot in the Budyonovsky district of Russian-backed Donetsk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine after Ukrainian troops shelled the province, Russia's TASS reported, quoting a reporter at the scene. No casualties or injuries have been reported.

Pope Apologizes for Deplorable Evil of Canadian Indigenous Schools

MASKWACIS (Dispatches) - Pope Francis apologized to Canada's native people on their land for the Church's role in schools where indigenous children were abused, calling their forced cultural assimilation a "deplorable evil" and "disastrous error."

Speaking near the site of two former schools in Maskwacis, Alberta, Francis apologized for Christian support of the "colonizing mentality" of the times and called for a "serious" investigation of the schools to help survivors and descendants heal.

"With shame and unambiguously, I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed by so many Christians against the indigenous peoples," said Francis, who arrived and left in a wheelchair due to a fractured knee.

The address to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people was the first apology on Canadian soil by the pope as a part of tour to heal deep wounds that rose to the fore after the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools last year.

The 85-year-old pope had promised such a tour to indigenous delegations that visited him earlier this year at the Vatican, where he made an initial apology.

Indigenous leaders wearing eagle-feather war headdresses greeted the pope as a fellow chief and welcomed him with chanting, beating of drums, dancing and war songs.

"I am here because the first step of my penitential pilgrimage among you is that of again asking forgiveness, of telling you once more that I am deeply sorry," he said.

He was addressing the indigenous groups in the Bear Park Pow-Wow Grounds, part of the the ancestral territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux and Nakota Sioux people.

"Sorry for the ways in which, regrettably, many Christians supported the colonizing mentality of the powers that oppressed the indigenous peoples. I am sorry," he said. "In the face of this deplorable evil, the Church kneels before God and implores his forgiveness for the sins of her children."

Russia to Withdraw From Int'l Space Station After 2024

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has decided to quit the International Space Station "after 2024", the newly-appointed chief of Moscow's space agency told President Vladimir Putin.

The announcement comes as tensions rage between the Kremlin and the West over Moscow's military intervention in Ukraine and several rounds of unprecedented sanctions against Russia.

Russia and the United States have worked side by side on the ISS, which has been in orbit since 1998.

"Of course, we will fulfil all our obligations to our partners, but the decision to leave this station after 2024 has been made," Yury Borisov, who was appointed Roscosmos chief in mid-July, told Putin.

"I think that by this time we will start putting together a Russian orbital station," Borisov added, calling it the space programme's main "priority".

"Good," Putin replied in comments released by the Kremlin.

Until now space exploration was one of the few areas where cooperation between Russia and the

United States and its allies had not been wrecked by tensions over Ukraine and elsewhere.

Borisov said the space industry was in a "difficult situation". He said he would seek "to raise the bar, and first of all, to provide the Russian economy with the necessary space services", pointing to navigation, communication, and data transmission, among other things.

Sending the first man into space in 1961 and launching the first satellite four years earlier are among key accomplishments of the Soviet space program and remain a major source of national pride in Russia.

But experts say the Russian space agency remains a shadow of its former self and has in recent years suffered a series of setbacks including corruption scandals and the loss of a number of satellites and other spacecraft.

Borisov, a former deputy prime minister with a military background, has replaced Dmitry Rogozin, a firebrand nationalist politician known for his bombastic statements and eccentric behaviour.



China, Indonesia Hail Win-Win Cooperation

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The leaders of China and Indonesia pledged to scale up trade and expand cooperation in areas such as agriculture and food security, following a rare visit to COVID-wary China by a foreign head of state.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo met Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing on Tuesday. China last hosted foreign leaders during the Winter Olympics in February, with Russian President Vladimir Putin among those who visited Beijing.

The commitment by China, Indonesia's No.1 trading partner, to deepen trade relations and fully back Indonesia's chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) next year is an economic and political win for Jokowi, as the Indonesian president is widely known.

China hailed Indonesia as a model strategic partner, in contrast to its sharp words for the United States in recent months over issues from Taiwan and Ukraine to trade practices and the South China Sea.

"(China and Indonesia) have acted proactively and with a strong sense of responsibility to maintain regional peace and stability," according to the joint statement.

"They have thus set an example of major developing countries seeking strength through unity and win-win cooperation."

Indonesia is an important source of ferronickel, coal, copper and natural gas for the world's second-largest economy.

In the first half of 2022, Chinese imports from Indonesia, mostly commodities, surged 34.2% on year, the most after Russia.

China has expressed commitment to import an additional one million tons of crude palm oil from Indonesia, said the Indonesian state palace.

Jokowi met Li and Xi at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, part of a sprawling complex of villas, lakes and gardens where many foreign leaders, including the late U.S. President Richard Nixon, have been received.

As president of the G20 this year, Jokowi has sought to mend rifts within the group exposed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Job Seekers in Africa Easy Prey for Online Scammers



NAIROBI (Dispatches) - From careers in banking to roles in globe-spanning agencies, social media in Africa is awash with lucrative job offers.

But investigators with AFP Fact Check have found that many of these ads are bogus — they are scams designed to extract cash or steal personal data.

Fresh out of college in Kenya — a country with more than 1.6 million young unemployed — Job Mwangi believed he had been shortlisted for field assistant at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), a position advertised on LinkedIn.

After passing two online tests, he was asked to pay 2,000 Kenyan shillings (about RM75) in “facilitation fees” in order to secure an interview.

“Everything about the job posting seemed legit,” Mwangi told AFP Fact Check in an interview. “I was asked to pay 1,000 Kenyan shillings (US\$8.5) for medical and radiology tests... but the tests didn’t happen since I was told that they would be done at the UN offices on interview day.” A shuttle bus that was supposed to transfer Mwangi and more than 30 other job-seekers to the UN office never showed up.

“We waited for about one hour for the UN bus but it did not arrive, so we decided to take a bus on our own. “On arrival at the gate, we mentioned that we had been invited for interviews with UNEP and the security officers manning the gate laughed at us, telling us that we’d been scammed.” Mwangi filed a police report but says he has heard nothing since.

This particular hoax is far from uncommon in Africa — indeed, UN agencies regularly warn job seekers about fake ads.

“The United Nations Environment Programme does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment process (application, interview, processing, training) or other fees, or request information on applicants’ bank accounts,” UNEP says on its website.

Keyword searches on Facebook reveal dozens of pages featuring bogus vacancies cleverly crafted to lure hopefuls.

Many of the pitches have the same telltale signs: they have short deadlines, promise high salaries and often include a hyperlink to an external online platform requesting personal information.

Scammers also use logos of reputable organizations and companies to lend credibility to spoof emails. Code for Africa, a data journalism and civic technology initiative, found that in 2020 — when job losses soared during the Covid-19 pandemic — some 30 Facebook accounts, groups and pages with over 184,000 followers targeted unsuspecting job hunters in Kenya with sham ads.

Analysts say those behind these scams rely on the desperation of job seekers, who often fail to check whether the postings are genuine.

Many of these applicants send money without hesitation, hoping this will help them in the race to get the position. “Most online job scams aim to con unsuspecting people into sending money and once this money is sent the scammer disappears,” Kenyan cybersecurity expert Anthony Muiyuro told AFP Fact Check.

LinkedIn said it was investing in ways to tackle the problem.

“Our teams use automated and manual defenses to detect and address fake accounts or suspected scams. We also encourage members to report anything that doesn’t seem right so we can investigate,” the company told AFP Fact Check.

Other countries targeted in Africa include Nigeria, the continent’s most populous nation, where more than 23 million are unemployed.

Turkish Auto Industry Seeks New Markets to Curb Europe Sales Drop



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey’s automotive industry, which makes some 80% of its exports to Europe, is now in search of alternative markets as sales to the region begin to drop and are projected to decrease even more.

The semiconductor crisis and the supply problems have been continuing to negatively impact the car industry. A loss of 2.6 million units was seen in global production in the first six months of the year. Meanwhile, the loss is expected to reach 3.5 million units towards the end of the year.

The rise in raw material prices as well as the record high inflation has been worsening the impact of already existing problems in the sector’s sales.

The global auto sales estimations for 2022 were reduced to 84.3 million units from 89.3 million units. The sales in Europe are showing a particular downward trend as the European consumer is postponing demand for cars due to the rising inflation.

Turkey’s automotive sales to major markets, namely Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain dropped between 11% to 20%.

The sales estimations for the European market, which was 14 million units before, have revised to 12.2 million units.

Automotive Industry Association (OSD) head Cengiz Eroldu, who said that it is necessary to diversify export markets, said: “While there was a 13% contraction in demand in Europe in the first six months, it was 15.4% in June. In addition, inflation in Europe continues to increase. There is also the uneasiness brought about by the Russia-Ukraine war. Expectations of interest rate hikes are among the issues that will reduce demand.”

He said that there is a possibility that the demand in Europe will go down even more.

“That’s why we need to go for new market diversifications.”

Eroldu also touched upon the “Distance Countries Strategy” program announced by the Trade Ministry last week and said, “Critical free trade agreements (FTA) should be accelerated. Supportive policies should be implemented to enter new markets.”

Eroldu added that the domestic market can also be used effectively against the contraction in exports.

The Trade Ministry announced that the FTAs of Lebanon, Sudan and Qatar will enter into force after the completion of the internal approval processes. While Georgia and Malaysia agreements are about to be concluded, deals with Moldova and North Macedonia are about to start. The ministry is conducting FTA negotiations with more than 17 countries.

Commenting on the first six-month results of the auto industry, Eroldu said that the rate of locality in total vehicles is at the level of 45%.

“One of every two vehicles sold in Turkey is domestic production. This is something that is not available in many countries in Europe.”

The Turkish automotive industry had a foreign trade surplus of approximately \$9.5 billion in 2021. In the first six months of 2022, this figure stood at \$4.5 billion (TL 80.27 billion). A foreign trade surplus of around \$9 billion-10 billion is expected at the end of the year.

Turkey’s car exports neared \$4.6 billion in the January-June period as the country sold vehicles to 97 countries.

France, Turkey’s second main market in the automotive sector, topped the list of countries in the country’s car exports.

In the first half of the year, exports to France decreased by 30% to \$659 million compared to the same period last year.



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EU Wins Arbitration in Trade Dispute With Turkey

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The European Union received a largely favorable ruling in its trade dispute with Turkey on Monday in the first appeal settled by arbitration to circumvent problems at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Brussels brought the case against Ankara to the WTO in 2019, challenging Turkey's "localisation requirement". The EU said this forced foreign pharmaceutical producers to move their production to Turkey in order for Turkish consumers to qualify for reimbursement when buying their products in pharmacies. A WTO panel previously rejected Ankara's arguments and recommended it bring its measures in line with global trade rules. This prompted an appeal by Turkey in April, although the appeal had to go down an untested route.



Sri Lanka Asks China for Help With Trade, Investment and Tourism

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka has asked China to help with trade, investment and tourism to help it grow sustainably, Colombo's envoy to Beijing said on Monday as it negotiates for an emergency \$4 billion package to help it emerge from an economic meltdown. The island nation of 22 million people is suffering its worst economic crisis since independence in 1948 after running out of foreign reserves. Protesters angry about the shortages of fuel, food and medicine toppled the Rajapaksa ruling family.

Ambassador Palitha Kohona's emphasis on China as a key to Sri Lanka's economic recovery reflects Beijing's status as one of Sri Lanka's two largest foreign creditors, along with Japan. China also holds some 10% of Sri Lanka's external debt.

In an interview with Reuters at Sri Lanka's Beijing embassy, Kohona said Colombo wants China to ask its companies to buy more Sri Lankan black tea, sapphire, spices and garments and to make Chinese import rules more transparent and easier to navigate.

He said Beijing could also help by pouring further investment into vast China-backed port projects in Colombo and Hambantota. Major Chinese investment plans had not materialised because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kohona said.

In addition, Sri Lanka would like to see more Chinese tourists, whose numbers fell from 265,000 in 2018 to almost zero after the 2019 suicide attacks and the pandemic.

Kohona said new Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe has plans to visit China to discuss cooperation on matters including trade, investment and tourism.

Wickremesinghe is no stranger to China. A photo of him shaking hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping when he visited Beijing in 2016 as prime minister hangs in the hallway of the embassy where Reuters interviews Kohona.

Kohona said he expects no fundamental change in the new government's policy towards China.

He said he understands China is finding it hard to act quickly to help Sri Lanka now because as a major global creditor it is also financially exposed to many other countries in financial difficulty. "Maybe if it was only Sri Lanka, then the decision-making would've been much easier."

For several months Sri Lanka had been in talks in China for a \$4 billion aid package, consisting of a loan of \$1 billion to repay a roughly equivalent amount of Chinese debt due this year. It is also asking for a \$1.5 billion credit line to pay for Chinese imports. Kohona said these imports are mainly inputs needed by his country's lucrative garment industry such as buttons and zippers.

Sri Lanka also hopes to persuade China to activate a \$1.5 billion bilateral currency swap.

Kohona said discussions on financial aid with China are still underway but no date for the next meeting has been set. The Chinese foreign ministry said this month that Beijing is willing to work with other countries and international financial institutions to "play a positive role" to help Sri Lanka.

Beyond financial aid, Sri Lanka also hopes China can help it buy fuel, fertilizer and other urgently needed supplies.

China pledged 500 million yuan (\$74.09 million) of emergency support for Sri Lanka in April and May. "We need a lot more," Kohona said.

Singapore June Core Inflation Hits 13-Year High

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore's key consumer price gauge rose at its fastest pace in more than 13 years, official data showed, increasing pressure on the central bank to consider tightening monetary policy again later this year if inflation pressures persist.

The data showed inflation rising across a broad set of categories including services, food, retail and utilities.

The core inflation rate — the central bank's favored price measure - rose to 4.4% in June on a year-on-year basis. A Reuters poll of economists had forecast a 4.2% increase in June.

Headline inflation rose to 6.7%, compared with economists' forecast of 6.2%.

"Our base case remains for the Monetary Authority of Singapore to tighten its FX policy settings again in October," said Brian Tan, senior regional economist at Barclays, which also raised its full-year inflation forecast following the data.

The MAS manages monetary policy through exchange rate settings, rather than interest rates, as trade flows dwarf its economy.

Tan sees a 50 basis point slope increase in October to an estimated 2.0% and noted the high risk of another upward re-centering as "core inflation is likely to surprise the central bank to the upside again."



Ukraine Hopes for First Grain Shipment

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine said it hoped a U.N.-brokered deal aimed at easing global food shortages by resuming grain exports from the Black Sea region would start being implemented this week.

Senior government officials told a news conference in Kyiv that they hoped the first grain shipment under the deal would be from the port of Chornomorsk this week, and that shipments could be made from all ports included under the deal within two weeks.

Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said there were no limits on how much grain could be exported under the agreement signed on Friday in Istanbul, which also allows for fertilizer imports and exports.

"We believe that over the next 24 hours we will be ready to work to resume exports from our ports. We are talking about the port of Chornomorsk, it will be the first, then there will be Odesa, then the port of Pivdeny," said deputy infrastructure minister Yuriy Vaskov.

Friday's agreement aims to allow safe passage in and out of Ukrainian ports, blocked by Russia's Black Sea fleet since Moscow's Feb. 24 invasion.

The deal was hailed as a diplomatic breakthrough that would help curb soaring global food prices by restoring Ukrainian grain shipments to pre-war levels of 5 million tons a month.

Kubrakov told the news conference that opening up the Black Sea ports for exports would bring Ukraine at least \$1 billion a month.

"It is very important that our farmers receive funding this year and have the opportunity to carry out the sowing campaign for the next season, because without this we will lose the entire agricultural cycle and the entire industry," he said.

"It's a question of the survival of our entire agricultural industry"

China Belt and Road Spending Dips H1

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's finance and investment spending in Belt and Road countries fell slightly in the first half of this year compared to a year earlier, with new coal projects and investments in Russia, Egypt and Sri Lanka falling to zero, new research showed.

Saudi Arabia was the biggest recipient of Chinese investments over the period, with about \$5.5 billion, according to the Shanghai-based Green Finance and Development Center (GFDC) in research published on Sunday.

Total financing and investment stood at \$28.4 billion over the period, down from \$29.6 billion a year earlier, bringing total cumulative Belt and Road spending to \$932 billion since 2013, GFDC said.

President Xi Jinping launched the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 aiming to harness China's strengths in financing and infrastructure construction to "build a broad community of shared interests" throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America.

But it has come under scrutiny for the debt burden it places on countries and other issues such as environmental degradation. Some countries have also renegotiated their investment projects with China, highlighting the debt risks.

No new coal projects received Chinese support over the period after a pledge made at the United Nations General Assembly by Xi last September to put an end to overseas coal financing.

However, a Chinese developer won a bid to build a thermal power plant in Indonesia in February, and there are still 11.2 gigawatts of capacity that have already secured financing though are yet to begin construction, according to GFDC, part of Shanghai's Fudan University.

China has continued to provide support to other fossil fuel projects in Belt and Road countries, with oil and gas amounting to around 80% of China's overseas energy investments and 66% of its construction contracts, GFDC said.

Engagements in gas projects stood at \$6.7 billion in the first half, compared with \$9.5 billion over the whole of last year, it said.

Green energy and hydropower transactions fell 22% from a year earlier. Investment rose to \$1.4 billion from \$400 million, but green energy-related construction spending fell to \$1.6 billion, less than half the level a year earlier.

Gazprom Tightens Squeeze on Gas Flow to Europe

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia tightened its gas squeeze on Europe on Monday as Gazprom said supplies through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany would drop to just 20% of capacity.

Gazprom said flows would fall to 33 million cubic metres per day - a halving of the current, already reduced level - because it needed to halt the operation of a Siemens gas turbine at a compressor station on instructions from an industry watchdog.

Germany said it saw no technical reason for the latest reduction, which comes as Russia and the West exchange economic blows in response to what Moscow calls its special military operation in Ukraine.

The Dutch front-month gas contract, the European benchmark, closed 9.95% higher on news of the latest blow to Nord Stream 1. The pipeline, which has a capacity of 55 billion cubic metres a year, is the single biggest Russian gas link to Europe.

The European Union has repeatedly accused Russia of resorting to energy blackmail, while the Kremlin says the shortfalls have been caused by maintenance issues and the effect of Western sanctions.

Politicians in Europe have said Russia could cut off gas flows this winter, which would thrust Germany into recession and lead to soaring prices for consumers already grappling with higher prices for food and energy.

Germany was forced last week to announce a \$15 billion bailout of Uniper, its biggest company importing gas from Russia.

President Vladimir Putin had foreshadowed the latest cut, warning the West this month that continued sanctions risked triggering catastrophic energy price rises for consumers around the world.

Russia had already cut flows through Nord Stream 1 to 40% of capacity in June, citing the delayed return of a turbine that was being serviced by Siemens Energy in Canada - an explanation that Germany rejected as spurious.

It then shut Nord Stream 1 altogether for 10 days of annual maintenance this month, restarting it last Thursday still at 40% of normal levels.

The servicing of that first turbine is still a matter of dispute as it makes its way back to Russia through a tangle of paperwork and conflicting statements.

Gazprom said on Monday it had received documents from Siemens Energy and Canada but "they do not remove the previously identified risks and raise additional questions".

Japan Slashes Fiscal Year GDP Growth Forecast to 2.0%



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's government slashed its economic growth forecast for this fiscal year largely due to slowing overseas demand, highlighting the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine, China's strict COVID-19 lockdowns and a weakening global economy.

The forecast, which serves as a basis for compiling the state budget and the government's fiscal policy, included much higher wholesale and consumer inflation estimates as surging energy and food costs and a weak yen push up prices.

The world's third-biggest economy is now expected to expand about 2.0% in price-adjusted real terms in the fiscal year ending in March 2023, according to the Cabinet Office's projections, presented at the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy - the government's top economic panel.

That marked a sharp downgrade from the government's previous forecast of 3.2% growth released in January. The cut largely stemmed from weaker exports, which the government expects to expand 2.5% compared to 5.5% in the previous assessment. The government projected 1.1% growth for the following fiscal year starting April 2023.

It released its projections days after the Bank of Japan downgraded expectations for growth for this fiscal year to March 2023 to 2.4% from 2.9% three months ago, and underscored the central bank's stance to maintain massive stimulus even as several other economies have started to hike rates to curb inflation.

The government forecast overseas demand to subtract real gross domestic product by 0.3 percentage point for the current fiscal year, compared to an expected 0.2 percentage point boost seen previously.

It projected overall consumer inflation, which includes volatile fresh food and energy costs, at 2.6% for this fiscal year compared to 0.9% expected in the previous assessment in January.

Iran's 4-Month Non-Oil Exports Increase 22%

TEHRAN (MNA) - The value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$17.24 billion in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), up 22 percent compared to the last year's same period, according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Based on the mentioned data, Iran exported 35.656 million tons of non-oil commodities in the mentioned four months, IRIB reported.

Meanwhile, some 11.159 million tons of goods valued at \$17.24 billion were imported into the country in the said period, indicating a 17-percent rise in terms of value compared to the last year's same time span. In total, the Islamic Republic traded about 46.815 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$34.48 billion with its trade partners in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year, up 19 percent in terms of value, the IRICA data showed.



IMF Cuts Global Growth Outlook Amid U.S., China Slowdowns

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Surging inflation and severe slowdowns in the United States and China prompted the IMF to downgrade its outlook for the global economy this year and next, while warning that the situation could get much worse.

"The outlook has darkened significantly since April," said IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas. "The world may soon be teetering on the edge of a global recession, only two years after the last one."

"The world's three largest economies, the United States, China and the euro area are stalling with important consequences for the global outlook," he said at a briefing.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund cut the 2022 global GDP estimate to 3.2 percent, four-tenths of a point lower than the April forecast, and about half the rate seen last year.

Last year's "tentative recovery" from the pandemic downturn "has been followed by increasingly gloomy developments in 2022 as risks began to materialize," the report said.

"Several shocks have hit a world economy already weakened by the pandemic," including the war in Ukraine which has driven up global prices for food and energy, prompting central banks to raise interest rates sharply, the IMF said.

Ongoing Covid-19 lockdowns and a worsening real estate crisis have hindered economic activity in China, while the Federal Reserve's aggressive interest rate hikes are slowing U.S. growth sharply. But the IMF offered a stark caveat to the forecasts, cautioning that "risks to the outlook are overwhelmingly tilted to the downside," and if they materialize could push the global economy into one of the worst slumps in the past half-century.

Key among the concerns is the fallout from the war in Ukraine including the potential for Russia to cut off natural gas supplies to Europe, as well as a further spike in prices and a food shortage due to the chokehold the war has on grain supplies that could trigger famine.

In an ominous warning, the WEO said "such shocks could, if sufficiently severe, cause a combination of recession accompanied by high and rising inflation ('stagflation')."

That would slam the brakes on growth, slowing it to 2.0 percent in 2023. The global growth rate has only been slower five times since 1970, the report said.

Gourinchas said that would be "getting really close to a global recession."

The top priority for policymakers is to rein in soaring prices, even at the cost of inflicting pain on their citizens, the fund said, since the damage caused by allowing inflation to rage out of control would be much worse.

Gourinchas, in a blog post about the report, noted that the "synchronized" moves by major central banks to deal with the inflation threat "is historically unprecedented, and its effects are expected to bite."

"Tighter monetary policy will inevitably have real economic costs, but delaying it will only exacerbate the hardship," he said.

The IMF now sees consumer prices jumping 8.3 percent this year, nearly a full point higher than previously forecast, while emerging market economies face a 9.5 percent increase in consumer prices.



But, "further supply-related shocks to food and energy prices from the war in Ukraine could sharply increase headline inflation."

That would increase the pain for poor nations least able to withstand the shock, where food makes up a larger share of family budgets.

While the global economy did a bit better than expected in the first three months of the year, it appears to have "shrunk in the second quarter -- the first contraction since 2020," the IMF said.

The IMF downgraded growth forecasts for most countries, including big revisions for the United States and China, cutting more than a point off the prior forecasts.

The fund now sees U.S. growth this year of just 2.3 percent, amid slowing consumer spending and rising interest rates, and the report said a recession -- defined by two quarters of negative growth -- may already have begun.

China's economy is expected to slow dramatically in 2022, expanding just 3.3 percent -- the lowest in more than four decades other than the 2020 pandemic crisis -- due to Covid concerns and the "worsening crisis" in the property sector, the report said.

"The slowdown in China has global consequences: lockdowns added to global supply chain disruptions and the decline in domestic spending are reducing demand for goods and services from China's trade partners," the report said.

There were some exceptions to the gloomy outlook, including upgrades for Italy, Brazil and Mexico, as well as for Russia which is still expected to contract but is benefitting from rising oil prices due to Western sanctions, the WEO said.

Wage War...

FROM PAGE 1

So Americans easily sell weapons to Taiwan, South Korea and Japan by creating Chinaophobia or North Koreaophobia while the Washington continues its sales in the Middle East through Iranophobia and milking the regional states.

In 2022, the U.S. State Department disclosed military sales figures for the 2021 fiscal year, which ended on Sept. 30. Sales included \$3.5 billion worth of AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to Australia and \$3.4 billion worth of CH-53K helicopters to Israel.

Sales of U.S. military equipment in the prior fiscal year had totaled \$175 billion.

The 2021 dip came after high one-time sales of fighter jets and guided missiles in the final year of the Trump administration. Major fiscal 2020 deals included Japan's purchase of 63 F-35 fighter jets from Lockheed Martin accounting for as much as \$23 billion of that year's total.

There are two major ways foreign governments purchase arms from U.S. companies: direct commercial sales negotiated between a government and a company; and foreign military sales in which a foreign government typically contacts a Defense Department official at the U.S. embassy in its capital. Both require U.S. government approval.

The direct military sales by U.S. companies fell 17% to \$103 billion in fiscal 2021 from \$124 billion in fiscal 2020, while sales arranged through the U.S. government fell 31% to \$34.8 billion in 2021 from \$50.8 billion the prior year, the State Department said.

The war in Ukraine has marked a new era, rekindling the threat of nuclear war and unleashing global food and energy crises that have sent prices soaring worldwide. But for neighboring countries, long familiar with the threats, the war is provoking something more: a national call to arms.

The Washington post wrote: "Across eastern and northern Europe, polls show strong support for the NATO alliance and faith in the United States to honor mutual defense treaties if the Kremlin -- still facing a far more difficult fight than it bargained for in Ukraine -- threatens others in the years ahead. But countries living in Russia's shadow remain unwilling to leave their fortunes to chance. They are moving to rapidly build up domestic military might, while also witnessing a renaissance in civilian readiness that harks back to the darkest days of the Cold War."

So by creating such a Russiaphobia it is good time for American weapon manufacturers to sell their products to European countries, especially to Ukraine, and it can boost the U.S. economy. American companies of Raytheon Technologies and Lockheed Martin Corp jointly produce Javelins, while Raytheon makes Stingers and they can make most of war in Ukraine.

So one cannot expect the war in Ukraine to end soon because of the philosophy of wage war and rule unless the West, and predominantly the U.S., decides to continue in other region to save Europe from the current economic chaos in the continent.

So people in the region or in anti-West countries are right not to trust the U.S. and its allies because the U.S. cannot quit this wrong habit and nature of its warmongering and all should be vigilant because American weapon manufacturers any moment can push their governments to fall into a war in any part of the world for selling their products and filling their pockets.



Iran ready to...

FROM PAGE 1

In his speech the foreign minister expressed gratitude to the distinguished D-8 Secretary General and his colleagues in the D-8 Secretariat for preparatory work for this Council of Ministers' meeting.

He also congratulated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the D-8 Organization establishment. I hope the D-8 Organization will continue to make progress with utmost strength and speed.

Amirabdollahin further said, "Economic Diplomacy and deepening ties with neighboring and Muslim countries are two of the priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy. Furthermore, strengthening multilateral mechanisms such as the D-8 Organization is of high importance to my Government. We have always supported the collective efforts made by developing countries to fulfil the creation of an efficient international economic system as well as the achievement of economic development and growth, people's welfare and wellbeing, preservation of values and national cultures and the attainment of a proper standing in international relations."

He added, "That is why the Islamic Republic of Iran is an active member in international and regional economic groupings, including the D-8. In the realm of economic convergences, too, we are involved in creating the foundations of free trade and will soon finalize the Free Trade Area (FTA) Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union."

The minister noted, "At this critical juncture, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to place all its political, economic and cultural capacities and capabilities at the disposal of the economic growth as well as the development welfare, and progress of the shared values. I would like to remind you that despite unlawful and unilateral economic measures by the United States as well as the imposition of sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran has achieved significant achievements and great breakthroughs in different areas, relying upon its indigenous resolve and might."

He reiterated that Iran has voiced its preparedness to help the international community to cope with the current energy crisis and counter threats related to food insecurity. Our exemplary connectivity and transit position are at the service of the consumption markets. He continued, "In addition, as the possessor of huge energy sources, we stand ready to contribute to the endeavors aimed at guaranteeing the security of energy supply. President Raisi submitted his initiative dubbed "Gas for Post-Covid Global Economy Recovery" at the summit of the "Gas Exporting Countries Forum". We are prepared to engage in dialogue between the producers and consumers within the framework of this initiative."

President...

FROM PAGE 1

Raisi called the selection of efficient officials a right and said, "People are the main owners of the system and the Revolution and all the officials are responsible to serve them, and we should not fail to fulfil their rights under any circumstances."

The President sincerely thanked the people for continuing cooperation in household electricity consumption and said: "Thank God, with the good cooperation of the people and the effective management of the Ministry of Energy, we have not had a problem with power outages this year, but due to the lack of energy production infrastructure, controlling electricity consumption is still an important priority in the country."

Criticizing the neglect of some institutions in selling surplus property and stating that selling such property is a legal obligation, Raisi obliged the ministers to implement this legal duty seriously and in accordance with what is stipulated in the law.

He pointed out that the contradiction in some statistics announced by government agencies confuses public opinion and said, "The Statistics Centre is responsible for providing accurate statistics in the country. Only these statistic should be the basis of policies and decision-making in the country, and other institutions should also rely on it".

The President added: "Such undocumented statistics create problems even in internal decision-making, so any institution that wants to announce statistics must coordinate with the Statistics Centre." In another part of this meeting, a report on the readiness of the private sector and cooperatives to help the government was presented, for which the President appreciated.

Referring to this declaration of readiness, Raisi noted: "These two departments are ready to cooperate with the government with their vast capacities and facilities, and the managers of the institutions should take advantage of this willingness to cooperate in the year when the focus of its naming is production, and production should increase in both quality and quantity."

In the meeting of the cabinet, reports were presented on the proper status of basic goods reserves and the plan to increase rain fed production and fishery products. The beginning of water transfer to Lake Urmia was one of the other issues discussed in the meeting of the Council of Ministers. Related officials in the government hope that with this action, the restoration of Lake Urmia will gain tangible momentum.

UNSC Inaction...

FROM PAGE 1

The top Iranian envoy lamented that the situation in occupied Palestine "remains dire" as the Israeli regime continues to "kill innocent people, including women and children, seize and demolish Palestinian homes, and forcibly evict Palestinians from their homes."

Earlier on Tuesday, the Israeli military's bulldozers razed down the houses belonging to Palestinian prisoners Yusef Aasi and Yehya Miri, whom the regime claims killed an Israeli settler back in April.

Elsewhere in her statement, Ershadi dismissed the Israeli envoy's anti-Iran remarks as an attempt by the regime to "distract attention" from its atrocities in occupied Palestine and other countries in the region.

"The Israeli regime's representative has once more abused this forum and made false accusations against my country, all of which are categorically rejected," she said.

The regime's permanent representative to the UN Gilad Erdan had claimed earlier that the biggest threat to the Middle East is what he called the nuclearization of the Islamic Republic as well as "its terror funding and hegemonic ambitions."

Ershadi pointed out that the regime in Tel Aviv is the only possessor of weapons of mass destruction in the region, and said this makes "this regime even more dangerous for the entire region."

"This regime's nuclear arsenal, according to multiple reports, comprises 400 hundred warheads, including thermonuclear weapons. It has access to all weapons of mass destruction delivery systems," she said.

"It has refused to adhere to any weapons of mass destruction disarmament or control regimes, as well as the repeated international calls to join the NPT, accept the

Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement, and submit its nuclear programs to the IAEA inspections," the Iranian representative said.

At the end of her speech, Ershadi said it was high time for the Security Council to "condemn the Israeli regime and force it to adhere to the international regimes banning weapons of mass destruction. The time to act is now."

Iran Put...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran and other parties to the JCPOA, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany, have held several rounds of talks in the Austrian and Qatari capitals to restore the agreement after Washington unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018.

Under the nuclear pact, Tehran rolled back its nuclear program in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

Borrell said on Tuesday that he had proposed a text to restore the landmark accord, which the United States unilaterally abandoned in 2018.

"This text represents the best possible deal that I, as facilitator of the negotiations, see as feasible. It is not a perfect agreement, but it addresses all essential elements and includes hard-won compromises by all sides," he wrote in an article for the Financial Times.

"Decisions need to be taken now," he warned, adding that he sees "no other comprehensive or effective alternative within reach".

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Mukiele Announces Move to PSG Expected

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Defender Nordi Mukiele will leave RB Leipzig after four years, he said, with a move to French powerhouse Paris St Germain widely expected to be completed soon.
Mukiele joined Leipzig in 2018 and helped them reach the 2020 Champions League semi-finals while also winning the German Cup this year, the club's first major trophy.
"I wanted to thank you for everything you have done for me," Mukiele said on social media.

Garcia to Hold Off on Quitting DP World Tour

LONDON (Dispatches) - Sergio Garcia, who plays on the rebel LIV Golf circuit, says he is going to "hold off" on quitting the European-based DP World Tour as he assesses his Ryder Cup future.
The former Masters champion said at this month's British Open he was likely to quit the tour, which would have ended his chances of playing in the team competition between the United States and Europe. But the 42-year-old, Europe's all-time record points-scorer at the event, held every two years, has decided to wait to see how things unfold.

Thiem to Play in Winston-Salem Open Tournament



LONDON (Dispatches) - Dominic Thiem's comeback from an injury in 2021 will continue in Winston-Salem in August.

Winston-Salem Open tennis tournament officials announced Monday that the 2020 U.S. Open champion has accepted a wild-card entry for the 48-player singles field.

The full lineup is expected to be released Wednesday, but Thiem joins Frances Tiafoe, Tommy Paul and Kei Nishikori among players announced early as participants in the event Aug. 20-27 at the Wake Forest Tennis Center.

Thiem, 28, rose as high as No. 3 in the world after beating Alexander Zverev in the final to win in Queens. But he suffered a knee injury early in 2021 and then an injury to his right wrist and put himself on the shelf for the season in August.

The Austrian, winner of 17 ATP Tour championships, is 5-8 in matches in 2022. He reached the semifinals in Gstaad, Switzerland, losing to Matteo Berrettini on Saturday, after having reached the quarterfinals in Bastad, Sweden, the previous week. Thiem is playing in the Generali Open in Kitzbühel, Austria, this week.

Thiem last played in Winston-Salem 10 years ago, losing in the first round of qualifying to Ernest Gulbis.

Meanwhile super coach and former Spanish player Carlos Moya wanted to reassure fans about Rafael Nadal's future. According to the coach, his countryman player will not leave tennis due to paternity. Moya explained: "In my day hardly anyone traveled with their children, but it is also true that players retired at 30-32 and then started families.

Now there are many tennis players who travel with their children in tow. I don't think paternity will induce Rafael Nadal to stop playing, on the contrary it will be an extra motivation to keep winning. Rafa loves being

with his family and he loves children, so he will miss them when he is around the world." During a long interview, Nadal reflected on the definition of talent: "People get a little confused when it comes to talent. As I see it, talent doesn't just mean playing well or hitting the ball with great violence.

Each player has his own characteristics and strengths of him. In tennis, as in all sports, the ultimate goal is to win. Whoever wins is the one who has the most talent."

Nadal stunned everyone in the first half of the season. The Spanish phenomenon, who had just returned from several months off, won the Australian Open and Roland Garros, reaffirming that he is an absolute legend of the sport. The former world number 1 stretched over Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer in the all-time Grand Slam standings, as well as removing the specter of retirement.

The 36-year-old from Manacor had to give up the Wimbledon semi-final due to a torn abdominal muscle, but that doesn't detract from his resounding 2022. The Iberian veteran has already resumed training and will return to Canada next month.

His big goal is the U.S. Open, a tournament he hasn't played since 2019. His eternal rival Djokovic will not be able to travel to the United States (not being vaccinated against the Coronavirus), unless unlikely last minute changes. Shortly before Wimbledon, the 22-time Grand Slam champion confirmed that he will become a father.



Representative of DBFA For Asia Appointed
IRAN NEWS SPORTS DESK

TEHRAN - Asian Dodgeball Federation (DBFA) appointed Mr. Saeed Babaei from the Islamic Republic of Iran as the representative of DBFA for the development of the dodgeball sport for one year. According to this appointment Mr. Babaei is tasked with coordination and meeting with sport ministers and presidents of sport federations of the Asian countries as well as with other officials and diplomats.

So the representative of DBFA for Asia has started his job for coordination with over 40 Asian member states of the federation and he works to promote this international sport.

Meanwhile the World Dodgeball Federation is based in Canada.

Rangers Sign Yilmaz From Besiktas

LONDON (Dispatches) - Rangers have signed Turkey left back Ridvan Yilmaz from Besiktas on a five-year contract, the Scottish Premiership club announced.

Besiktas said in a separate statement that Rangers had paid €4 million (RM18.2 million) for the 21-year-old.

"I'm delighted to be joining a club the size of Rangers and am really looking forward to meeting my new team mates," said Yilmaz, who has won the Turkish league with Besiktas and has Champions League experience.

"This is a club who have shown they can compete against some of the best teams in Europe and I'm excited by the challenges we have ahead of us." Yilmaz made his Turkey debut last year and has six caps.

Rangers, Scottish champions in 2020-21, finished second behind Celtic last season and lost the Europa League final to Eintracht Frankfurt.

Giovanni van Bronckhorst's side begin the 2022-23 league campaign against Livingston on July 30.

Alisson Recovering But Will Miss Salzburg Friendly

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker is closing in on a return to action following his abdominal injury but tomorrow's pre-season game against Salzburg comes too soon for the Brazilian, manager Jurgen Klopp said.

The 29-year-old has not played since Liverpool's 4-0 defeat by Manchester United in Thailand earlier this month but is back in training at their camp in Austria.

Portuguese forward Diogo Jota has already been ruled out of Liverpool's Community Shield clash with Premier League champions Manchester City on July 30 due to a muscle injury, but Klopp was more optimistic about Alisson.

"Obviously Diogo is not here, that's clear. But from the boys who are injured but are here, Ali is the closest - definitely not for Salzburg, but we will see. He is close to get back I think," Klopp said.

Kyrgios Handed Wildcard in Cincinnati



TORONTO (Dispatches) - Wimbledon runner-up Nick Kyrgios has been handed a wildcard into next month's U.S. Open tune-up event in Cincinnati, Ohio, organisers of the Western & Southern Open said.

For the 27-year-old Australian, who two weeks ago fell to Novak

Djokovic in his first Grand Slam singles final, this will mark his sixth appearance in Cincinnati and first since 2019.

The entry list for the Aug. 13-21 Western & Southern Open includes world number one Daniil Medvedev and former champions Alexander Zverev (2021) - who missed Wimbledon with injury - Grigor Dimitrov (2017), Marin Cilic (2016) and Rafa Nadal (2013).

Twice champion Novak Djokovic is also on the Cincinnati entry list but is unlikely to play due to his refusal to be vaccinated against Covid-19. Travellers seeking to enter the United States have to provide proof of vaccination.

F1 Teams Want Quick Decision On 2023 Changes



LONDON (Dispatches) - Formula One teams say they need a quick decision, preferably before the August break, on proposed 2023 technical changes that aim to end the sport's 'porpoising' problem but have divided the paddock.

The governing FIA wants to tackle vertical oscillation, a phenomenon where cars bounce at speed like a porpoise through water.

The problem is a consequence of this year's major aerodynamic changes. The plan is to raise the floor edges of cars by 25mm and perform more stringent lateral floor deflection tests. Some teams, such as Ferrari and Red Bull, who do not have a problem with porpoising argue that the proposals favor those who got this year wrong and should not be forced through on safety grounds. Either way, all need to know what rules apply for 2023 to avoid wasting precious time and resources under the cost cap, with new car development and design ramping up after August.

"It's not yet too late, but we can't afford waiting another four or six weeks," said Alfa Romeo technical director Jan Monchaux. "I would prefer those changes will be for '24 but if it comes for '23, I think now just before the (August) shutdown is kind of the latest that is acceptable." Mercedes trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin said his team wanted clarity.

"Are they going to change? If so, let's get on with it and agree it," he said. "We know as a team we need to fix our problems ourselves and we set that as an objective from day one and we're pretty confident that we can achieve that objective. So that's why I said for us, the big thing is we just want clarity on it." McLaren's James Key said "the sooner we know the final numbers, the better." Red Bull principal Christian Horner earlier pointed the finger at Mercedes, suggesting the changes were "so a certain team can run its car lower and benefit from that concept".

Most Qatar World Cup Teams to Be Based Inside 10km Radius



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Three quarters of the teams at the World Cup finals in Qatar will be based within a 10km radius of each other, FIFA said, announcing the hotels and training venues for the 32 national sides.

Unlike in previous tournaments, all teams will stay in the same hotel and use the same training base throughout the tournament - even carrying out their sessions the day before matches at their camps rather than the stadiums.

FIFA said 24 of the 32 teams are based within a short drive of each other close to the capital Doha.

"Players will have more time to train and rest during the competition, while being able to experience the excitement that will take over the country at much closer quarters, as fellow players and passionate fans from all 32 nations will be gathering in a single area," said Colin Smith, FIFA's chief operating officer - World Cup.

The tournament starts on November 21 and runs until the final on December 18 and is played at eight venues.

Teams will check in to their hotels and training camps at least five days before their first match.

FIFA said the accommodation "range from four- and five-star hotels to villas, resorts and non-hotel accommodation, including sports academy residences and school/university housing."