

Iran on Monday Launched Its First Renewable Electricity Transactions, A Move That Officials Say Will Help To Boost the Country's Clean Energy Sector and Reduce Its Reliance on Fossil Fuels

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Police Chief Ahmad Reza Radan Says that a Large Data Analysis Center Is Set to Be Launched by 2035 For International Purposes Which Will Help Iran's Police to Be One of the Best in Region

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Police Vow Definite Revenge For Martyred Border Guards

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's deputy police chief has expressed the force's determination to avenge the killing of five border guards in a terrorist attack in southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province neighboring Pakistan.

Speaking at the border guards' funeral ceremony in Sistan and Baluchestan's provincial capital, Zahedan, Brigadier General Qasem Rezaei warned the deceived people who are following in the enemies' footsteps that they "will definitely get a decisive and firm response wherever it is necessary."

On Saturday, five border guards were martyred in clashes with armed terrorists and anti-Islamic Revolution groups in Saravan County.

"Today, police forces are more resolved and you will hear the news of the revenge in the near future," Rezaei added.

The deputy police chief also emphasized that such incidents will not create divisions between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan as the trio enjoy long-standing relations.

"Pakistan has given a message, saying that it will deal decisively with the perpetrators of the terrorist attack, and that it is the last message," he said. **See Page 7**

De-Dollarization Main Focus of Upcoming ACU Meeting



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - De-dollarization will be the main focus of the upcoming Asian Clearing Union (ACU) meeting, according to the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

"The main topics of this meeting are the strengthening of barter, and bilateral and multilateral monetary agreements," Mohammadreza Farzin said on Sunday.

He explained that the 51st meeting of the ACU will be held in Tehran on May 23-25.

"The governors of the central banks of nine member states of this union have been invited. Of course, we have also invited some observer members," he added.

Farzin reiterated that the main goal of the meeting is to strengthen barter transactions among member states, enable them to trade using their national and local currencies, and to follow up on bilateral and multilateral monetary agreements.

Iran has announced its decision to move away from the U.S. dollar and has acted on the decision in cooperation with other independent countries.

Earlier this month, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi ordered the CBI to lay the ground for conducting foreign trade transactions using Iran's national currency rial.

Addressing an open session of the parliament on May 9, Farzin asserted that the forthcoming ACU meeting will accelerate the global trend of de-dollarization.

Asian Clearing Union (ACU) summit will be held on May 23-25 in Iran's Central Bank to focus on de-dollarization, according to Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for international affairs Mohsen Karimi.

Karimi in his Monday remarks said that there is a great fortune for De-dollarization in the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) summit, the secretariat of the Union is in the Central Bank of Iran, and since last year at the 50th meeting of this union, it was approved that the Islamic Republic of Iran will host the 51st meeting of this union.

Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) added that the new countries have also applied for membership in this Union, as saying that, members will decide regarding the acceptance of these countries' membership at the new Summit in Tehran.

Nine main members of the Asian Exchange Union will attend the summit, and Russia, Belarus, Afghanistan and Islamic Development Bank officials will attend 51th Asian Clearing Union (ACU) summit.

Asian Clearing Union (ACU) is a payment arrangement whereby the participants settle payments for intra-regional transactions among the participating central banks on a net multilateral basis.

The main objectives of the clearing union are to facilitate payments among member countries for eligible transactions, thereby economizing on the use of foreign exchange reserves and transfer costs, as well as promoting trade and banking relations among the participating countries.

Tehran Strongly Slams G7 Summit Final Statement

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani strongly condemned parts of the final statement of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, including baseless and fabricated allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As repeatedly stated before, Iran's nuclear program has only peaceful purposes, and nuclear weapons have no place in the Iranian defense doctrine, Kanaani stressed.

He strongly rejected the selective statement and the illusory claims made by the members of this group that possess nuclear weapons.

While the hegemonic policies of some of the G7 members have created insecurity and instability in the world, and especially the region, they accuse Iran of destabilization.

This is while, Iran has contributed the most to the promotion of stability in the region, including the fight against terrorism, he stressed.

They have based their accusation on an erroneous interpretation of the resolutions of the UN Security Council, of which they themselves are the main violators, Kanaani said.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has never provided drones to Russia in the Ukraine crisis and continues to insist on a peaceful solution in this regard, he stated.

Ahmadian Replaces Shamkhani As New Secretary of SNSC

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Ali Akbar Ahmadian has been appointed as the new secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

In a decree on Monday, President Ebrahim Raisi appointed Ahmadian as the new SNSC secretary, replacing Ali Shamkhani who had been appointed to the post by former president Hassan Rouhani in 2013.

In his decree, president Raisi also thanked Shamkhani for his services.

Ahmadian previously served as the head of the Strategic Center of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

He has a Ph.D. in strategic management from the Supreme National Defense University and is known as one of the most respected figures in the country in matters of national security, according to Nour News, which is affiliated to the SNSC.

He is also a member of Iran's Expediency Council via a decree by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Some media outlets have claimed that Shamkhani is to be named as Iran's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia but so far officials have not confirmed the reports yet.

Iran, Iraq Confer on Organized Health Preparations for Arbaeen 2023

TEHRAN (IP) - The Minister of Health, Treatment and Medical Education of Iran, met with the head of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Organization and talked about the methodical arrangements and organized health preparations for the huge Arbaeen procession.

Bahram Einollahi said: "The establishment of mobile health care units and the creation of cold insulation tunnels in a bid to prevent Arbaeen pilgrims from heat stroke is a necessary measure, the implementation of which in this year's global Arbaeen ceremony can contribute to the comfort and well-being of pilgrims."

He further added: "Iran is ready to exchange professors and students in medical sciences with Iraq and can share its experiences and achievements in the field of medical technologies with Iraqi specialists."

Referring to the establishment of "Subtain" University at the expense of the Iraqi government and Iran's scientific and educational support for this university, Einollahi added: "These sorts of cooperation will be accelerated and expanded with the help of popular forces, especially the Iraqi Popular Mobilization." **See Page 7**

Hezbollah Warns Israel of Committing Any Folly

TEHRAN (PressTV)- A high-ranking official with Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement says the group will rain down its precision missiles on the occupied territories if the Israeli regime commits a "foolish act" against Lebanon.

"If the Zionist enemy commits a foolish act and transgresses the rules of the game, we (Hezbollah) will shower the entity with our precision missiles," Sayed Hashem Safieddine, head of the Executive Council of Hezbollah, said on Sunday.

Safieddine made the remarks as he oversaw large-scale military exercises held by Hezbollah resistance fighters in southern Lebanon ahead of the 23rd anniversary of the country's liberation from the Israeli occupation.

The drills, which were held at a resistance camp near the village of Mleeta in southern Lebanon, included several exercises simulating Hezbollah attacks on Israeli outposts in any future battle.

Local, regional and international reporters were invited to cover the drill.

During the military exercise, Hezbollah displayed its combat capabilities, while its fighters paraded on all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles. **See Page 7**

Iran Calls for Global Reaction to Israeli Minister's Provocative al-Aqsa Tour

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has condemned the desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound by an extremist Israeli minister, calling on the international community to respond to the provocative move.

On Sunday, Israel's far-right security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who was escorted by occupation troops, stormed al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third-holiest site, in al-Quds' Old City.

"Such audacious and provocative moves are another aspect of the widespread and continuous crimes of the apartheid Zionist regime against the Palestinian nation, as well as the religious and Islamic sanctities of this land," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said on Monday.

"They require an effective, swift and deterrent reaction from the Muslim world and the international community," he added.

Kanaani made clear that Holy al-Quds is Palestine's unified and eternal capital and it will remain so, and the Israeli regime's successive attacks against this city and its Islamic sanctuaries will not change its reality and historical status quo.

During his incursion into the al-Aqsa Mosque complex on Sunday morning, Ben-Gvir claimed that the Israeli regime was "in charge here," drawing a wave of condemnations.

Israeli media said the minister had not coordinated his visit with the Jordanian Waqf, the body that oversees the site.

Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said "Ben-Gvir's incursion at an early hour, like thieves, into the al-Aqsa Mosque courtyards will not change the reality and will not impose Israeli sovereignty over it." **See Page 7**

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Iranian, Venezuelan FMs Discuss Expansion of Trade Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Venezuelan counterpart Yván Gil Pinto in a telephone conversation on Sunday reviewed ways for the expansion of bilateral trade relations.

During the phone conversation, the Iranian and Venezuelan foreign ministers discussed the latest developments in growing bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

The two sides also expressed hope that Iran and Venezuela would take serious and constructive steps through their coordinated efforts to further deepen bilateral relations.

They also exchanged views on the expansion of trade relations.

VP Urges Use of National Currency in Trade With Vietnam

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Mokhber has stressed the importance of using national currencies in trade with Vietnam, saying the move will facilitate economic exchanges.

Mokhber made the remarks in a meeting held in Tehran on Monday with the visiting Vietnamese Minister of Public Security General To Lam.

Expansion of trade ties between Tehran and Hanoi will lead to deepening political cooperation, the first vice president announced.

Further, he referred to the facilitation of issuing visas, the launch of direct flights, and the activation of private sectors as ways to develop bilateral ties.

For his part, the Vietnamese minister pointed to the 50th anniversary of the establishment of cooperation between Tehran and Hanoi and said his country is after expanding relations with Iran.

Then, he appreciated the Islamic Republic for supporting Vietnam to be a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

In the end, he hoped that his visit to Iran would bring positive outcomes.

Vietnam says eager to get Iran invaluable experiences in fighting drug trafficking



Earlier Vietnam's Minister of Public Security General To Lam had expressed his country's eagerness to gain Iran's anti-narcotics experiences, which as he described are invaluable.

Vietnam is serious about fostering cooperation with Iran, the visiting general said in a meeting held in Tehran on Sunday with Iran's Police Chief Brigadier General Ahmad-Reza Radan.

For his part, General Radan said the Islamic Republic attaches great respect to Vietnam as the Vietnamese people are a symbol of resistance against arrogance.

Referring to the geographical situation of Vietnam located in the Golden Triangle area, Radan said Tehran and Hanoi can share their anti-narcotics experiences.

In the past four decades, about 4,000 Iranian security forces have lost their lives and 12,000 others have been wounded in armed clashes with drug traffickers, according to reports.

President Picks Sahrai For Education Ministry

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - In a letter to Majlis Speaker, President Ebrahim Raisi introduced Dr Rezamorad Sahrai as the proposed Minister of Education.

Raisi, in a letter to the Speaker of the Majlis, introduced Dr Sahrai as the proposed Minister of Education for a vote of confidence in the Parliament.

Dr Sahrai is a graduate of Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training Institute, he has a PhD in General Linguistics with the first rank in the entrance exam and a first rank student of the doctoral course of Allameh Tabataba'i University.



Iran, Russia's Tver Region Explore Avenues of Economic Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a meeting between Minister of Economic Development of Russia's Tver Region Ivan Igorevich, and Bahman Eshghi, Secretary General of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), the two sides emphasized the development of business relations by using production and export capacities.

Igorevich, who is also the deputy chairman of the Government of the Tver Region, visited Tehran on top of a trade delegation to pursue the expansion of economic ties with the Islamic Republic, the TCCIMA portal reported.

During the meeting, the two sides emphasized the development of trade relations and called for efforts to open trade channels in order to use their existing capacities for the exchange of products and services.

The Tver side reminded that the businessmen and economic operators of Iran will be able to access other Russian markets through the Tver region.

Iran, Indonesia Annual Trade Exchange Hits \$1b

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The value of Iran and Indonesia's total trade exchange in the Persian calendar year of 1401 (March 21, 2022-March 20, 2023) hits about one billion dollars, said the spokesperson for the Trade Promotion Commission of the House of Industry, Mine and Trade, Rouhollah Latifi.

Latifi made the remarks on Monday on the occasion of the Iranian President's visit to Indonesia, adding that in the Persian calendar year 1401, 1,818,558 metric tons of goods worth \$965,152,626 were exchanged between Iran and Indonesia.

He added that during the mentioned time, some 1,725,340 metric tons of goods worth \$846,539,655 were exported from Iran to Indonesia and 93,219 tons of goods worth \$118,622,971 were imported to Iran from Indonesia.

Regarding Iran's exports to Indonesia, he said that more than 95% of Iran's exports to Indonesia in the Persian calendar year of 1401 were steel and iron products, and the remaining 5% included dates, raisins, spices, saffron, marble, petrochemical and refinery products, chemicals, etc.

Taliban Calls for Good Ties With Tehran

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Taliban defense ministry says Iran and Afghanistan concluded the talks between their military delegations with an emphasis on the international and border obligations of both sides in line with the interests of the two countries.

According to the ministry, they also called for coordination to address future challenges.

The talks were headed by the deputy chief of armed forces of Iran and Afghanistan.

In the statement, the ministry noted that Afghanistan seeks good relations with Iran and is committed to further cooperation across different sectors.

The Iranian military delegation arrived in Afghanistan on Saturday for two-day talks.

It came days after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned the issue of Iran's water share from Helmand River was a "serious" issue and warned the Taliban of consequences if the rulers of Afghanistan refuse to release Iran's share of the water.

President Urges All Executive Bodies to Follow Supreme Leader's Orders

TEHRAN - Speaking at the meeting of the cabinet, President Ebrahim Raisi referred to the statements of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the meeting of ambassadors and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with him yesterday about the need to strengthen the relations and interactions of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Muslim, neighboring and aligned countries, and emphasized that not only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but all executive bodies should follow this matter seriously.

The President called actions to improve the level of relations and expand interactions with Muslim, neighboring and aligned countries as the duty of all institutions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to follow up on these actions and added, "Relations with the target countries in less than the past 2 years, although has

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



significantly increased, but according to the existing capacities, it can be improved more than the current level".

In another part of his speech, Raisi described the naval operations of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Navy in circumnavigating the globe as honorable and

proud and stated, "This action of the army is a sign of the authority and power of the Navy and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and deserves appreciation".

The President further pointed out the long time spent in some institutions for issuing licenses and answering inquiries and stated, "Wasting the time of economic actors, producers and people in this way is not in the best interest of the country's economy in any way and the action time of each institution in the issuance of licenses or answers to inquiries should be limited and determined".

Only Iran Stood by Yemen in Hard Times

TEHRAN (IFP) - Yemen's Ambassador to Iran has lauded Tehran's unflinching support for the Arab country over the years of war. Ibrahim Mohammad al-Deilami has said it was only Iran that stood by the Yemeni people in tough times.

Al-Deilami made the remarks in an interview with Iran's Mehr news agency on Sunday. He talked about roles played by various countries in the war on Yemen. "Most countries are accomplice in the Saudi-American aggression against our country, except for one country, which is the Islamic Republic of Iran," Deilami said.

"Iran stood by the Yemeni people and staunchly supported them and presented the cause of Yemen with all sincerity in international forums, and the Yemenis saw nothing but help from the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

Stressing that the Islamic Republic has since day one called for ending the aggression, lifting the blockade, sending humanitarian aid to Yemen and not interfering in its internal affairs, the Ambassador said, "Iran stood and stands by the Yemeni people in different forms and at all levels. These are the firm and honest positions of Iran from the first day to this moment."

Deilami categorically dismissed claims that Yemen's popular Ansarullah resistance movement was following Iran and receiving weapons and military equipment from the Islamic Republic.

"In the face of this aggression, not only Ansarullah, but all Yemeni people from all sects, regions, tribes, parties

and political forces participated. The aggressor forces led by Saudi Arabia and its supporters tried to undermine the people's resistance and make it seem that everything in Yemen is under Iran's control," he continued.

"But the reality has proven this statement false and the Islamic Republic has repeatedly stated through the Foreign Ministry that this issue is a media game by the enemy," the envoy added.

Underlining that the relationship between Iran and Yemen is not only based on diplomacy but also historical and religious ties, Deilami said, "Both countries are at the center of resistance and opposition to the Zionist-American project."

The Ambassador fielded the question whether it is Saudi Arabia to decide the end of war or the other parties involved.

"Saudi Arabia is trying to insinuate through its media and soft power that the issue is in the hands of the Americans, and of course this is true and the Americans are complicit in this aggression and brutality, but if Riyadh is honest, it can get rid of all this pressure," Deilami underscored.

"At the same time, this does not absolve Riyadh from taking responsibility for the war, rebuilding Yemen, and ending the military presence of all forces allied with it, be it the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, the United States or Britain," he added.

Deilami said Riyadh does not accept the responsibility of the war in Yemen in order to avoid the consequences of the aggression.

Power Output Up by 7 GW Compared With Mid-2021

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Energy Ministry says power generation capacity in the country has risen by 7 gigawatts (GW) since mid-2022 when Iran's current administrative government took office.

In a statement released on Sunday, the Ministry said that Iran had launched nearly 5.2 GW of new thermal power plants, including combined cycle systems which are more efficient than the normal gas fired power plants, since August 2021. It added that power generation at existing power plants, including thermal and renewables, had increased by 1.4 GW over the same period through a series of efficiency projects carried out by domestic firms.

The statement said small electricity stations launched in various areas across Iran since mid-2021 had added another 0.268 GW to the country's power production capacity.

One GW of electricity is enough to respond to power demand in a city of more than a million people. Latest government estimates show Iran's total power generation capacity has exceeded 90 GW of which more than 60 GW is fully operational.

State electricity company Tavanir said earlier this week that it expects demand for electricity to reach as much as 73 GW in peak consumption hours this summer, up more than 10% compared to figures reported last year.

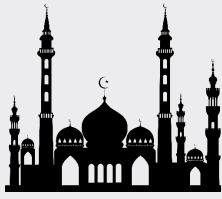
Swiss Ambassador Summoned Over Mission's Unusual Conduct

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Ministry has summoned the Swiss Ambassador to Tehran Nadine Olivieri Lozano over her country's interference in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic.

The Ministry said in a statement issued on Sunday that Ambassador Lozano had been summoned on the grounds that Switzerland had made "unconventional and unprofessional" use of its embassy in Tehran in republishing a picture with a fake flag.

In a Twitter post on Friday, the Swiss Embassy condemned the recent execution of three men in Iran who had been convicted of launching a deadly terrorist attack against security forces in Isfahan during the foreign-backed riots of 2022. The mission had also called on the Islamic Republic to stop the executions.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry conveyed to the Swiss diplomat the Islamic Republic's protest over the unconventional conduct that was not in accordance with the cordial relations between Iran and Switzerland. The ambassador said she will convey Iran's protest to Switzerland.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:01
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:28
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:12
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:53

37. (Nor) those who are niggardly or enjoy niggardliness on others, or hide the bounties which Allah hath bestowed on them; for We have prepared, for those who resist Faith, a punishment that steepens them in contempt;-
38. Not those who spend of their substance, to be seen of men, but have no faith in Allah and the Last Day:
If any take the Evil One for their intimate, what a dreadful intimate he is!

Surah 4. Women (37 - 38)

Investment of Afghans In Iran on the Rise

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce says the trade between Iran and Afghanistan is currently declining but he reiterates investment of Afghans in Iran is on the rise.

Speaking to ILNA, Hossein Salimi said that the water tension between the two countries is not a serious issue and this problem has existed since the era of Former Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani, adding that now Taliban claim that the level of water in Hirmand River has decreased and they are unable to direct water towards Iran.

He added that recent differences between Iran and Afghanistan has not much affected their trade exchanges, adding that the trend of trade between the two countries has been downward since last year because transfer of money between the two countries faced problems and some of the forex shops which were in charge of forex transfer between the two countries have been closed and currently there is no legal forex shop in Iran for working with Afghanistan and this condition has also happened in Afghanistan.

He added that the biggest branch for transfer of money to Iran was Harat which was in control of Afghans but this branch was closed down by the Taliban government but this forex shop has resumed its activities in recent years but he does not know when transfer of money between Iran and Afghanistan will be normalized in this branch.

Salimi reiterated that one of the reasons for the decline in trade exchange of Afghanistan is that the U.S. Administration has stopped helping Afghanistan as



Washington has stopped its annual \$4baid to Afghanistan and Afghans with those money used to trade with Iran.

He then pointed to the decline in trade volume of both countries and said that two years ago the trade volume was \$2.3b but it fell to \$1.2b last year and if the current trend continues, the trade volume is unlikely to surpass the past year's figure and even it may decline while value of Afghan national currency has not reduced too much in comparison to Iran's.

Salimi then said that the volume of investment by Afghans in Iran is very considerable, adding that Afghans are interested in investing in Iran, for example, out of 40 foreign investment projects at least 10 belongs to Afghans but the value of investment is low and around \$500,000 to \$20m.

He added that last year Iran attracted \$2b of foreign investment that Afghanistan accounted for almost 20% of the figure.

He went on to say that Afghan businessmen because of problem with Taliban government prefer to transfer their capitals to Iran or Turkey but if they are helped, they prefer Iran. He said that five million Afghans are working in Iran and some part of this working population send their money to Afghanistan for their families and they usually change their rial into dollar and send to their country.

ICC to Host First Int'l Congress on Cooperative

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperative (ICC) says the chamber will hold the first international congress on cooperative in September.

Bahman Abdollahi said that fir the first time Iran with the support of President will hold the international congress on cooperative which will be held concurrent with the meeting of board of directors of International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).

He added that since the first days of the 13th government, holding of this congress had been targeted with two approaches of introducing capacities and capabilities of the cooperative sector as well as explaining document of developing cooperative sector.

He noted that the event will be held at Cooperative Week in September with full support and cooperation of all related ministries and bodies.

Abdollahi added that the congress is a national and international event and it is very important and holding it style and full support of bodies is considered a national honor.



IDRO Shines at Festival of PR Stars

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Manager of public relations of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) won the plaque of star of creativity in the 10th festival of public relations stars.

According to reports, the jury of the 10th festival of public relations stars named manager of the public relations of IDRO Mr. Hassan Amidi as the star of creativity of the festival and awarded him with the plaque of star of creativity after evaluating the performances of public relations in terms of innovation and creativity in the related profession and observing professional standards.

The 10th festival of public relations stars was held concurrent with the fourth day of public relations week which was aimed at boosting expressive skills and practical techniques in the public relation which was held on Saturday at the Shahid Ghandi Conference Hall.

HOSCO a Winner at Festival of Public Relations

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Hormozgan Steel Complex (HOSCO) achieved another success as its public relations office was among the top award winners in the 10th Festival of Public Relations Stars.

According to the public relations of HOSCO, Hormozgan Steel Company won the statue of public relations star in the both main categories of the event.

According to the reports, in the last day of the event on Saturday, HOSCO with scoring enough points in the evaluation of the jury of the event was awarded with the top statue of the festival for creativity.

The public relations of HOSCO by scoring enough points won the national star public relations star award.

Meanwhile in the event manager of the public relations of HOSCO Mr. Shahram Boqrat received the award.

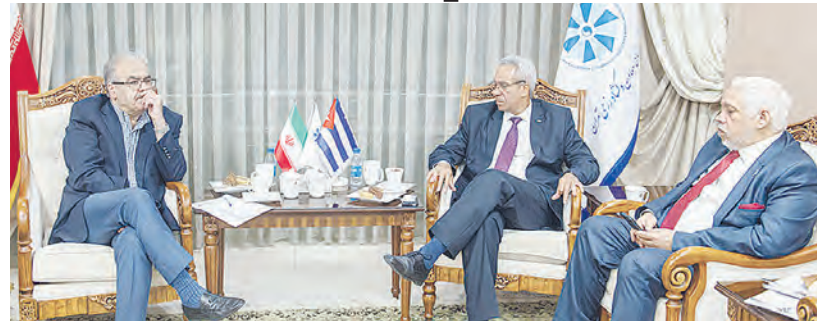
This event was held concurrent with the fourth day of Public Relations Week.

Tehran Offers Iran-Cuba-Venezuela Economic Cooperation Model

TEHRAN (MNA) - Secretary General of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), in a meeting with Antonio Luis Carricarte Corona, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Cuba (CC), and the country's Ambassador to Tehran Alberto Gonzalez Casals, has offered a trilateral economic cooperation model for expanding ties with Cuba and Venezuela.

At the meeting Bahman Eshghi referred to the economic relations formed between Iran and Venezuela in recent years, and called for the creation of a trilateral market between Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba in order to form the foundation for the exchange and transfer of goods and financial transfers among the three sides.

Eshghi stated that the forward and continuous process of economic relations between the two countries of Iran and Cuba can be developed with the exchange of goods with third countries.



SPOL, Farzad B Field Development Will Boost Oil, Gas Output



TEHRAN (Shana) - The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) managing director on Saturday said development of South Pars Oil Layer (SPOL) and Farzad B field will help increase oil and gas production.

Mohsen Khojastehmehr, who spoke on the last day of the 27th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition in Tehran, added the development projects will increase the country's daily oil and gas production capacities by 25,000 barrels and 28 million cubic meters (mcm) respectively, reported IRIB News Agency.

The executive operations of Farzad B field and SPOL started, stated the CEO of NIOC, continuing that Petropars Company and Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company (IOEC) are in charge of developing Farzad B joint gas field.

According to Khojastehmehr, two billion dollars have been estimated for implementing the Farzad B development project.

The first jacket of the gas field will be installed by mid-March 2024 and the gas extraction operations will start within the next three years, he predicted.

Shifting to SPOL, the NIOC chief explained that a consortium comprising Iranian and foreign companies started the operations worth \$500 million.

Seven wells will be repaired and 10 new wells will be drilled, he concluded.

UNICEF Urged to Identify Areas of Interest for Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has urged the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to identify areas of interest for more

Niloofar Assadi, the ICCIMA caretaker of international affairs department, has urged the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to identify areas of interest for more enhanced cooperation with Iran Chamber of Commerce.

Assadi made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran with UNICEF Deputy Representative to Iran Monika Nielsen where they discussed bilateral cooperation.

She hailed the services provided by UNICEF to the refugees and children and voiced the readiness of Iran Chamber of Commerce to cooperate with UNICEF in aiding the target groups.

Assadi noted that the two sides need to identify the areas of interest so as to be able to have a more effective cooperation.

Also speaking in the meantime, Nielsen referred to the contribution of Iran Chamber of Commerce to UNICEF health plans, adding that the UN body is keen on having more cooperation with Iran Chamber of Commerce in the field of education.

Having cooperation on the area of children and collecting funds for carrying out joint plans is another demand of the UNICEF office in Tehran, Nielsen said.



26 Khazar Vessels Ready to Transport Russia-Bound Cargoes

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line Group (IRISL) says signing agreement for purchase of ships for convergence in the North-South Corridor in Russia is in line with the Astara-Rash railway agreement.

Mohammad Reza Modarres Khiabani said that shipping lines in the Caspian Sea in the recent months have been

equipped and currently this fleet has 26 general cargo vessels with capacity for transporting 3600 TEUs and 104,000 DWT.

He pointed to the Astara-Rasht Railway agreement between the presidents of Iran and Russia and said that IRISL in line with this agreement has signed agreement for purchase and building ships with the convergence club of the North-South Corridor.

He went on to say that IRISL with having 139 ships



in different types can carry 5m DWT, adding that vessels of this fleet beside possessing 294,000 TEU container and 1394 wagons ply in Asia Oceania, CIS cities and other Asian, African and Pacific countries.

Modarres Khiabani further said that in this line, shipping line in the Caspian (Khazar) Sea has been equipped in recent months and currently this fleet has 26 general cargo vessels in Caspian Sea with the capacity for transporting 3600 TEU and 104,000 DWT.

He also emphasized transporting cargo in the North-South Corridor will be 40% shorter in terms of distance and 30% cheaper in costs.

He then highlighted other advantages of using the North-South Corridor facilities for transporting cargoes to Moscoe. He pointed to the 723m rouble investment of IRISL in Russia's Solyanka Port which strengthens the North-South Corridor.

Gunmen Kill Six in Ecuador Tourist Town

QUITO (Dispatches) - Gunmen in Ecuador opened fire in a restaurant in a beach town popular with tourists, killing at least six people and wounding six more, prosecutors said.

The attack happened Saturday night in a busy nightlife area of the town of Montanita on the Pacific coast, the prosecutors' office said on Twitter.

It gave no information on the age or identity of the people who were shot.

Located between Colombia and Peru, the world's top producers of cocaine, Ecuador is weathering the biggest surge in crime in its recent history.



It's Time to Reform Security Council

HIROSHIMA (Dispatches) - U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that it was time to reform both the Security Council and Bretton Woods to align with the "realities of today's world".

Speaking at a press conference in Hiroshima, Japan, where the Group of Seven summit meeting had been held, Guterres said both institutions reflected the power relations of 1945 and needed to be updated.

"The global financial architecture became outdated, dysfunctional and unfair," he said. "In the face of the economic shocks from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it has failed to fulfil its core function as a global safety net."



Zelenskiy Says Bakhmut Destruction Has Echoes of Hiroshima



HIROSHIMA (Dispatches) - Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskiy drew a parallel between the destruction of Bakhmut and the horror of Hiroshima, evoking the symbolism of mass destruction as he wrapped up a surprise appearance at the Group of Seven (G7) summit in Japan.

The Ukrainian president's arrival in Hiroshima on Saturday afternoon on a French government plane marked a dramatic turn as U.S. President Joe Biden and other leaders strengthened their call for Moscow to end its invasion, announcing new sanctions and increased military assistance.

In one of its most strongly worded messages on China, the G7 communique took aim at Beijing over "economic coercion" and said the group would pare back exposure to the world's second-largest economy in everything from chips to minerals to supply chains.

In describing twin threats of Russian aggression and Chinese bullying, the leaders called on non-aligned countries such as India, whose Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Zelenskiy on the sidelines of the summit, to give full support to Ukraine.

"I'll tell you openly: Photographs of ruined Hiroshima absolutely remind me of Bakhmut and other similar settlements," Zelenskiy told reporters after laying flowers at the cenotaph to victims of the world's first atomic bombing of a city.

"Nothing left alive, all the buildings ruined."

Russian President Vladimir Putin meanwhile hailed what he said was a victory for his forces in Bakhmut, describing it as a "liberation" in a statement on the Kremlin's website.

On the final day of the three-day summit, Biden announced a \$375 million package of military aid for Ukraine, including artillery and armoured vehicles.

"Together with the entire G7 we have Ukraine's back and I promise we're not going anywhere," Biden told Zelenskiy.

Biden's support for Ukraine was echoed by all the leaders of the G7, which alongside the United States and summit host Japan includes Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada.

Biden earlier confirmed that Washington supports allied training of Ukrainian pilots on F-16 warplanes, although that did not include commitments for delivery of the jets themselves.

The offer of such training should make clear to Russia that it should not expect to succeed in its invasion by prolonging conflict, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said training would start this summer and Ukraine would get the air force it needed for the future.

G7 leaders were at pains to underline some of the key messages intended by the carefully choreographed meeting.

It was "significant" that the G7 nations showed solidarity in their intention to uphold international law and order during a summit attended by Zelenskiy as a guest, said Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida.

Scholz said that while the immediate priority was supporting Ukraine's defence, security guarantees for Ukraine needed to be established once the war was over.

Sudan Ceasefire Deal Raises Hopes for Relief in Khartoum

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Air strikes and clashes between Sudan's warring factions could be heard in the capital Khartoum, residents said, after a Saudi and U.S.-brokered deal for a week-long ceasefire raised hopes of a pause in the five-week conflict.

The deal, signed by the army and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) after talks in the Saudi city of Jeddah, is due to come into effect on Monday evening with an internationally-supported monitoring mechanism. It also allows for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Repeated ceasefire announcements since the conflict started on April 15 have failed to stop the fighting, but the Jeddah deal marks the first time the sides have signed a truce agreement after negotiations.

Analysts say it is unclear whether army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan or RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, are able to enforce a ceasefire on the ground. Both have previously indicated they are seeking victory in the war, and neither of them travelled to Jeddah.

The army and RSF reaffirmed their commitment to the ceasefire in statements on Sunday, even as fighting continued. Witnesses reported sporadic clashes in central and southern Khartoum on Sunday morning, followed by air strikes and anti-aircraft fire later in the day in eastern Khartoum and Omdurman, one of three cities that make up the greater capital.

Pro-Gov't Rally in Moldovan Capital Draws Tens of Thousands

CHISINAU (Dispatches) - Tens of thousands of Moldovans rallied in the capital Chisinau to support their pro-Western government's drive towards Europe amid what officials have said are Russian efforts to destabilize their country.

Moldova has been badly hit by the impact of Moscow's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine, which Chisinau has repeatedly condemned, and applied to join the European Union.

President Maia Sandu has accused Russia of seeking to sabotage its European integration by fuelling anti-government protests and propaganda. Moscow denies meddling in Moldova's affairs.

"Moldova does not want to be blackmailed by the Kremlin," Sandu said at the rally, which was organised by her government and packed a central square. Police said more than 75,000 demonstrators were present.

"We don't want to be on the outskirts of Europe anymore," she said, pledging that Moldova would become an EU member by 2030.

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, on a visit to Chisinau, also addressed the rally, saying Europe would welcome Moldova "with open arms and open hearts".

"This is about the both of us: You will bring a piece of Moldova to Europe, and you will make Europe stronger," she said.

Demonstrators called on Moldova's political leaders to amend the constitution to specifically mention the country's European orientation. "I believe in a European Moldova and want for my country a future with advanced economic and socio-political development," said 18-year-old attendee Alexandrina Miron.

"Right now we are a little behind, but we will slowly catch up and stand on par with Europe."

The leader of the pro-Russian opposition Shor party, exiled businessman Ilan Shor, told his supporters at rival protests in several cities via video link that he would seek a referendum on Moldova's foreign policy.

Greek Ruling New Democracy Takes Lead in Vote-Exit Poll

ATHENS (Dispatches) - Greece's ruling conservative New Democracy party was leading in a general election, but looked set to fall short of an absolute majority to form a government, an exit poll showed.

If the poll is confirmed by results, Greece's deeply divided political parties would have nine days to find partners for a governing coalition, or a new election would be called in roughly a month's time.

The poll by six major polling agencies said New Democracy had between 36%-40% of the vote, followed by the leftist Syriza with 25-29%. It was based on an 80% reading of the survey carried out at polling stations across the country.

Elections in Greece are held every four years for the 300-seat parliament.

Pollsters say a party would need more than 45% to win outright, a feat not seen since the landslide wins of the late Socialist Andreas Papandreu in the 1980s and early 1990s.

[1/18] Supporters of New Democracy conservative party react at the party's main election kiosk after the

announcement of the first exit polls, in Athens, Greece, May 21, 2023. REUTERS/Alkis Konstantinidis

A cost of living crisis dominated the campaign, with parties trying to woo voters with pledges to increase the minimum wage and create jobs. A price surge has had a profound impact on Greeks, whose living standards had been eroded by a decade-long debt crisis.

Greece almost crashed out of the euro at the peak of its debt crisis in 2015. Mitsotakis, elected in 2019, has portrayed himself as a safe pair of hands in his campaign to win the votes of just under 10 million Greeks.

"Today the country's government responsibility has been passed on to you, the people, but I'm certain that tomorrow an even better day will dawn for our country," Mitsotakis told journalists earlier after casting his vote.

His administration, however, took the brunt of public outrage over a Feb. 28 rail crash killing 57 people, and a wiretapping scandal targeting politicians.



South Korea, Germany To Sign Information Pact To Boost Defense Cooperation

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea and Germany will soon sign an agreement aimed at protecting military secrets to boost defense cooperation, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said as he met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Seoul.

The military information agreement will help "smoothly operate the defence industry supply chain", amid global economic and political instability, Yoon told a briefing.

South Korea, which recently pursued a similar information-sharing pact with Canada, has moved to expand its defense industry amid rising demand driven by the war in Ukraine and other global tensions, but has so far refused to provide weapons to Kyiv.

Yoon said respect for freedom as a universal value was "very vital" in the face of authoritarianism challenging democracy, unstable global supply chains and the war.

"From now, I expect South Korea and Germany will further expand reciprocal and future-oriented cooperation and strengthen the solidarity for peace and prosperity of Europe and Asia," Yoon said in opening remarks at the meeting with Scholz.

The two leaders also discussed deepening cooperation in production of semiconductors, among other areas.

Scholz, who is visiting South Korea after attending the Group of Seven (G7) summit in Hiroshima, Japan, called North Korea's missile tests a sign of a "still dangerous situation" on the Korean peninsula.

"This is a threat to peace and security in this region," he said at a military base after a visit to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the Koreas.

Germany's history as a divided nation had been overcome, he said, but division persists on the Korean peninsula.

Both Scholz and Yoon left Japan on Sunday after joining the G7 summit. South Korea was invited as an observer.

G7 leaders signalled they would not back down from supporting Ukraine, and outlined a shared approach towards China, looking to "de-risk, not decouple" economic engagement with a country regarded as the factory of the world.

Study Pinpoints Pesticides Associated With Parkinson's Disease

LONDON (Dispatches) - Scientists say they've identified 10 pesticides that kill neurons involved in Parkinson's disease, marking a leap forward in their understanding of the movement disorder.

Pesticide exposure has long been associated with Parkinson's, but investigators hadn't been able to pinpoint specific culprits.

A team from the University of California, Los Angeles and Harvard University paired epidemiology and toxicity screening to isolate which among the many thousands of pesticide products could be involved.

"We were able to implicate individual agents more than any other study has before," Kimberly Paul said in a UCLA news release. Paul is a lead author of the study and an assistant professor of neurology at UCLA.

The 10 pesticides her team identified included insecticides, fungicides and herbicides. They were directly toxic to dopaminergic neurons, which are involved in voluntary movement. Death of these neurons is a hallmark of Parkinson's, the study noted.

Researchers also found that exposure to combinations of pesticides used in cotton farming was more toxic than any single pesticide in that group.

The study team first looked at exposure history over decades for 288 pesticides in patients with Parkinson's disease who had participated in previous studies. These patients were from California's Central Valley.

After determining long-term exposure for each person, the team used a pesticide-wide association analysis, testing each pesticide individually for its association with Parkinson's.

They were able to identify 53 pesticides that appeared to be implicated in Parkinson's. Most of these had not been previously studied for a potential link and are still in use.

The UCLA team shared the results for lab analysis with a team led by Dr. Richard Krolewski, an instructor of neurology at Harvard.

Krolewski tested the toxicity for most of those pesticides in dopaminergic neurons derived from Parkinson's patients using pluripotent stem cells. They're a type of "blank slate" cell that can be reprogrammed into neurons that closely resemble those lost in Parkinson's disease.

Researchers found 10 pesticides directly toxic to these neurons: Four are insecticides: dicofol, endosulfan, naled, propargite. Three are herbicides: diquat, endothal, trifluralin. Three are fungicides, both basic and pentahydrate copper sulfate and folpet. These pesticides are structurally distinct and do not share a prior toxicity classification. Most are used in the United States today, according to the study.

When the team tested the toxicity of multiple pesticides commonly applied in cotton fields around the same time, they found that combinations involving trifluralin were most toxic. This is one of the most commonly used herbicides in California, the researchers noted.



Kenya's Restoration Plan: From Agreement to Action for Building Back Biodiversity

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - The state of global biodiversity is critical. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) warns that over one million species are at risk of extinction, with alarming rates of decline in biodiversity worldwide.

According to the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Living Planet Report, wildlife populations have decreased by an average of 68% since 1970. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) emphasizes the urgent need for action to halt biodiversity loss, as it poses severe threats to ecosystems, human well-being, and sustainable development.

Biodiversity conservation holds immense importance for humans, animals, plants, and the environment due to the ecosystem services it provides. UNEP stresses that biodiversity is the foundation of ecosystems, providing essential services such as clean air, water, and fertile soil.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) highlights its role in ensuring food security by sustaining agricultural productivity and genetic diversity of crops.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) emphasizes the link between biodiversity conservation and human health, with diverse ecosystems providing natural medicines and disease regulation. Additionally, biodiversity plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, supporting pollination, nutrient cycling, and soil formation, as noted by IPBES.

Various approaches to mitigate climate change while halting biodiversity loss are available, and urgent steps need to be taken. Forestry plays a crucial role in mitigating climate change. Forests act as vital carbon sinks, absorbing and storing significant amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights their significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to climate change mitigation efforts.

The Bonn Challenge, a global initiative led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and partners, aims to restore 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2030, emphasizing the crucial role of forests in achieving climate goals.

Nationally, the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) program promotes



sustainable forest management and offers financial incentives for forest conservation.

The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land in Africa by 2030, highlighting the climate benefits of reforestation and restoration.

According to the FAO, approximately 10 million hectares of forests are lost each year, contributing to deforestation and degradation.

The FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment highlights the alarming decline in forest cover, which negatively affects climate regulation, biodiversity, and livelihoods. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stresses the vital role of forests in mitigating climate change by sequestering carbon dioxide.

"The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has implemented Nature-based Solutions as an essential component of the necessary measures to tackle climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss. Nature-based Solutions have the capacity to bolster the resilience of ecosystems, aiding communities in their adaptation to climate-related hazards, including flooding, sea-level rise, and the increasingly prevalent and severe occurrences of droughts, floods, heatwaves, and wildfires," said Ms. Catherine Njeri, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Kenya's Restoration Plan: Ambitious Targets and Collaborative Efforts to Preserve Biodiversity

Kenya is taking significant steps to restore and preserve its natural heritage by setting an ambitious target to plant 15 billion trees and achieve and maintain at least 30% tree cover by 2032.

This bold initiative reflects the nation's commitment to combating climate change, fostering environmental integrity, and securing a sustainable future for future generations.

Sri Lankan Tea Industry Celebrates Major Gains by the Smallholder Sector despite Economic Challenges

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - On the International Tea Day, the local tea industry is celebrating impressive achievements by the smallholder sector despite facing an array of unprecedented challenges posed by the economic challenges and the currency collapse.

"It goes without saying that the local tea industry has faced many demanding issues, but on this year's International Tea Day, we want to celebrate the resilience of our smallholder tea growers, who have overcome pandemic adversity to be back on track to reach high profitability levels," says Niraj de Mel, the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tea Board.

"The smallholder sector has already achieved so much in terms of sustainability in the past couple of decades that is worth celebrating. This is a new chapter in the story of Ceylon Tea," he added.

In Sri Lanka, smallholder growers contribute a substantial 75 percent to the overall tea production, making the sector critical to the industry's success, and to the millions of families who depend on it for their livelihoods. Though smallholder tea growers have faced tremendous obstacles in the past decade, the sector is emerging with renewed vigour to reach production goals, particularly in the areas aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year's International Tea Day is set to focus on the smallholder tea growers specifically to support the sector through adversity. The Sri Lanka Tea Board has implemented a number of notable initiatives to safeguard smallholder tea producers in challenging times, many of which have already shown considerable gains, according to Chairman de Mel.

"One very important measure the Tea Board has been involved in is ensuring fair prices for smallholder growers that are on par with the big players, so they don't miss out on opportunities and are protected," he said. "While we are aiming to strengthen the smallholder business model, we've been quite impressed by what they have done in terms of SDGs that have improved livelihoods and reduced costs."

Local tea plantations have taken leading measures in adopting SDGs that focus on enhancing workers' livelihoods and preserving the environment. For an industry once plagued by hardship, the approach has been transformative, with significant gains achieved in terms of social welfare, conservation, and even energy security.

In the verdant estates of the Elpitiya Plantations, the scenic routes going uphill to the tea factories are lined with solar panels. The plantation had installed the panels as part of a sustainability initiative, which is now generating phenomenal results that have helped the estates seamlessly navigate the energy crisis. The Elpitiya Plantation Group is now generating 141 percent renewable energy against consumption.

"We are proud to say that our total energy generation now exceeds our energy consumption," said Ms. Thilini Edirisinghe, Deputy General Manager of Human Resources of Elpitiya Plantation. "A majority—and 85 percent—of our energy consumption is now from renewable sources. We can say our tea is green-energy produced."



Numerous other tea plantations have also prioritised green energy generation, driven by both a push towards sustainability and as a practical solution to rising energy costs. The Mathugama Estates, nestled in the hills of Kalutara, now has four hydropower plants. Notably enough, the first-ever zero-liquid discharge plant in the country was built on a tea estate.

The Talawakelle Plantations, which is generating 138 percent energy against consumption, is planning to expand further as part of a broader drive towards environmental sustainability. The estate is currently heavily involved in a reforestation programme to improve the biodiversity of its commercial land.

"We started the reforestation program last year, and we have already planted 2,000 endemic plants on two hectares of land," elaborated Mr. Krishna Ranagala, Manager of Sustainability and Quality Systems Development of Talawakelle Plantation. "In total, we have planted over 500,000 plants as part of our forestry management programme. Continuing to improve the ecological biodiversity of our estates is a key SDG initiative for us."

The plantation industry is placing urgent emphasis on worker welfare, with nearly every estate actively engaging in a range of social programmes that provide assistance to field workers and their families. These social welfare initiatives proved to be a lifeline during the pandemic, particularly when many workers had limited access to daily meals due to quarantine restrictions. In an inspiring move, the Horana Plantations encouraged their workers to cultivate gardens, setting aside hectares of plantation land for employees to grow vegetables that served as a vital source of sustenance throughout the difficult times of the pandemic.

The Elpitiya Plantation initiated program to look after the social wellbeing of the plantation workers. "We also built a retirement home for our elderly employees, which is the first time any company in the country has built a retirement home for its own employees," said Ms. Thilini Edirisinghe, Deputy General Manager of Human Resources of Elpitiya Plantation.

An increasing number of estate companies are actively engaged in promoting upward mobility for their workers. One notable example is the Kahawatta Plantation, which has launched a programme to build infrastructure for employees, including a school for the children of workers. Moreover, the company has spearheaded various initiatives aimed at empowering its workers to earn additional income, fostering a culture of financial stability and growth.

"We have leased out land for employees to cultivate their own food crops," said Mr. Alex Samuel, Deputy General Manager of HR and Administration at Kahawatta Plantation. "We occasionally donate blocks of our rubber land for contract tapping, so that workers have opportunities to earn additional income."

"We first implemented this policy in our Malwatte Valley Plantation in 1998, and since then, we have shared 178 million rupees with our workforce through this programme," said Mr. Jaliya Wijekoon, General Manager of Estate Marketing and Special Projects of Malwatte Valley Plantation.

Plantation companies are undertaking unique, forward-thinking initiatives that are revolutionising the traditional dynamics of the estate sector and setting new standards for worker well-being, some of which are even getting noted by international development professionals. A youth empowerment program at the Hayleys Plantations, which offers an array of educational programmes to young workers and children of employees, was recently selected as a case study separately by the United Nations Global Compact initiative and the INSEAD School of Business in France.

Even small-scale initiatives undertaken by plantation companies have yielded excellent results in uplifting worker welfare. The Kelani Valley Plantation implemented a policy to reduce worker injuries, a goal originally set to be achieved by 2030. However, the estate has already witnessed a significant decrease in the number of injuries among its field workers.

Once called the "world's finest tea," the Sri Lankan plantation industry is on a radical journey to reclaim its title with revitalised focus on worker welfare and environmental sustainability. The concerted efforts of plantation companies, government bodies, and trade associations are creating a more equitable and prosperous future for the industry and its workforce. As the demand for premium tea continues to grow globally, Sri Lanka is poised to take its place as a leading producer of high-quality, socially responsible tea.

"What we want to highlight this year is that Ceylon Tea is not just a product that tastes great, but also a brand that values its workforce and prioritises environmental protection," Chairman de Mel said. "When we celebrate the rich heritage of Ceylon Tea, we also want to highlight these great achievements that have had a major positive impact on the estate community and the country as a whole."

U.S. Bank Deposits and Credit Slip in Latest Week

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Deposits at all U.S. commercial banks slipped last week and overall credit provided by banks edged lower as well, Federal Reserve data released on Saturday showed.

Deposits in the week ending May 10 totaled \$17.10 trillion on a nonseasonally adjusted basis, down from \$17.16 trillion a week earlier, the Fed's weekly snapshot of the banking system's assets and liabilities showed. Deposits, which had dropped substantially after the collapse in March of Silicon Valley Bank, were down at large banks and little changed at smaller ones.

Meanwhile, credit provided by banks dropped to \$17.32 trillion from \$17.37 trillion a week earlier, led by a decline in securities holdings. Loans and leases saw modest declines.



Post-Pandemic World Economy Still Feeling COVID-19's Sting

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Prospects for a robust global economic recovery remain dim as the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic carry on, according to the UN's latest World Economic Situation and Prospects report, released last week.

Risks of a prolonged period of low growth stand, amid stubborn inflation, rising interest rates, and heightened uncertainties, in addition to the ever-worsening impact of climate change, the report found.

The current global economic outlook also presents an immediate challenge to delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), said Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

"The global community must urgently address the growing shortages of funding faced by many developing countries, strengthening their capacities to make critical investments in sustainable development and helping them transform their economies to achieve inclusive and sustained long-term growth," he said.

According to the report, the world economy is now projected to grow by 2.3 per cent in 2023 and 2.5 per cent in 2024, a slight uptick in the global growth forecast for 2023, according to the report, which is produced by DESA.

In the United States, resilient household spending has prompted upward revision of the growth forecast to 1.1 per cent in 2023.

Driven by lower gas prices and robust consumer spending, the European Union's economy is now projected to grow by 0.9 per cent. As a result of COVID-19 related restrictions being lifted, China's growth in 2023 is now forecast to be 5.3 per cent.

Despite this uptick, the growth rate is still well below the average growth rate in the two decades before the pandemic, of 3.1 per cent.

For many developing countries, growth prospects have deteriorated amid tightening credit conditions and rising costs of external financing. In Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is projected to increase only marginally this year, reinforcing a longer-term trend of stagnating economic performance.

The least developed countries are forecast to grow by 4.1 per cent in 2023 and 5.2 per cent in 2024, far below the seven per cent growth target set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global trade remains under pressure due to geopolitical tensions, weakening global demand and tighter monetary and fiscal policies. The volume of global trade in goods and services is forecast to grow by 2.3 per cent in 2023, well below the pre-pandemic trend.

Inflation remained stubbornly high in many countries even as international food and energy prices fell substantially in the past year. Average global inflation is projected at 5.2 per cent in 2023, down from a two decade high of 7.5 per cent in 2022.

While upward price pressures are expected to slowly ease, inflation in many countries will remain well above central banks' targets. Amid local supply disruptions, high import costs and market imperfections, domestic food inflation is still elevated in most developing countries, disproportionately affecting the poor, especially women and children.

Fitch Sticks to Thailand's BBB+ Rating

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Political and fiscal uncertainty looks set to remain a near-term drag on Thailand's credit profile after the recent general election, even as the country continues to benefit from robust external finances, a strong macroeconomic policy framework and economic recovery as tourists return, says Fitch Ratings.

Thailand held a general election on 14 May 2023, but the official results are still pending. The preliminary figures suggest that the opposition Move Forward Party (MFP) won the most seats in the lower house of parliament, followed by the Pheu Thai Party (PTP), the previous largest opposition group. However, it is unclear whether MFP can form a coalition government with PTP and other smaller parties, as they need at least 376 votes from a joint sitting of parliament to choose the next prime minister.

The coalition building process could take several months, as potential partners have diverse policy priorities. This could delay the formation of a new government and disrupt the implementation of the budget for the fiscal year ending September 2024 (FY24). The FY24 budget needs separate approval from the lower house and the Senate, which was appointed by the previous military-led government before the 2019 election. The king also needs to endorse the budget.

Fitch Ratings expects political and fiscal uncertainty to remain a near-term drag on Thailand's credit profile, even as the country continues to benefit from robust external finances, a strong macroeconomic policy framework and economic recovery as tourists return. When Fitch affirmed Thailand's rating at 'BBB+' with a Stable Outlook in November 2022, it stated that a broad, fragmented coalition government could emerge, complicating effective policymaking, but that it was unlikely to lead to major shifts in the country's key economic development policies.



Fitch forecasts general government debt/GDP and interest/revenue to remain broadly in line with the median for 'BBB' category sovereigns over 2023-2024. Thailand's public finance metrics significantly deteriorated during the Covid-19 pandemic, eroding its headroom at the current rating level, but Fitch assumes that the next coalition government will remain committed to some of the outgoing administration's key economic policies.

There could be some disruption to spending under the FY24 budget if coalition negotiations drag on, as occurred with the FY20 budget after the 2019 elections. Delays to the FY24 budget would be negative for Thailand's economic prospects, but Fitch still expects growth to accelerate in 2023 and remain robust in 2024, with the tourism sector's recovery and private consumption serving as the main drivers.

Indonesia's Economic Growth Far Above Global Average

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia has recorded better economic growth, far above the global average, and has been able to maintain it amid global uncertainty, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva has said.

She made the statement during a meeting with Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan, on Saturday, according to a press release issued by the Press Bureau of the Presidential Secretariat.

Considering Indonesia's achievement, Georgieva said that the IMF expects the nation to assist other developing countries, especially in poverty alleviation programs.

Indonesia has an important role in addressing several issues in the midst of the current challenging global situation since the country is considered capable of establishing relationships and communication with all parties, she added.

Indonesia is able to approach all countries and all parties. Hence, in the midst of challenging global situations nowadays, more roles like those carried out by Indonesia are needed, Georgieva said.

Furthermore, she expressed her appreciation for Indonesia's successful holding of the G20 presidency in November 2022 as well as the 42nd ASEAN Summit in May 2023.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian President said that he welcomed the launch of the IMF Global Policy Agenda and the establishment of a financial risk early warning system, which he described as important.



Widodo also stated at the meeting that Indonesia's economy is expected to grow 5.1 per cent in 2023 and 5.0 per cent in 2024.

Several Indonesian ministers, namely Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, and Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi also joined the meeting.

Indonesia recorded economic growth of 5.03 per cent year-on-year (yoy) in the first quarter of 2023, according to data provided by Statistics Indonesia (BPS).

The implementation of national- and international-scale events in Indonesia had a significant impact on economic growth during the period, the BPS noted.

Tanzania Wraps Up \$40b LNG Project Talks; Key Deals Soon



LONDON (Bloomberg) -- Tanzania has wrapped up negotiations with an international energy consortium for a long-delayed \$40 billion liquefied natural gas export project, paving the way for final agreements to be signed in the coming weeks.

The consortium, led by Equinor, Shell and Exxon Mobil, wants to develop an onshore LNG plant south of Tanzania, close to huge offshore gas fields, but project talks had stalled for more than a year before resuming in 2021, when President Samia Suluhu Hassan took office.

Shell Vice President and Tanzania Chair, Jared Kuehl, said that "important negotiations with the government of Tanzania have concluded." In a statement posted on LinkedIn, Kuehl added that the main deals — the so-called Host Government Agreement (HGA), and a Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) — may be signed "over the coming weeks."

Charles Sangweni, chief Tanzanian government negotiator in the LNG talks, said the proposed HGA will have to be approved by Tanzania's Cabinet and Parliament before coming into effect, and the total project investment could rise to \$42 billion.

"It is my wish that the HGA could be signed within a month or two," Sangweni said in an interview.

The deals reached after 18 months of talks, include a marine lease, land lease and security agreement, while the Tanzanian army will be in charge of the project's security, Sangweni said.

The other consortium partners are Indonesia's MedcoEnergi and Pavilion Energy, along with Tanzanian national oil company TPDC.

The LNG project could make Tanzania an important gas market player, given that the West is seeking to cut reliance on Russian energy following Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. The urgency has given fresh impetus to Hassan's push to move forward with the project.

Italy Avoids Moody's Junk Downgrade for Now in Boost for Meloni

ROME (Bloomberg) -- Italy won't lose its investment-grade status at Moody's Investors Service for now after the company chose not to issue a new assessment on one of Europe's most indebted countries.

In a boost to Premier Giorgia Meloni's government, a possible announcement scheduled for Friday didn't materialize, as already happened in September last year.

Moody's currently assesses Italy at Baa1, just one notch above junk, with a negative outlook. A spokesperson said there's no plan to publish a report on Friday.

While the country remains in perilous territory, it's good news for Meloni's right-wing coalition, avoiding a jolt to the fractious alliance that includes former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and Matteo Salvini's League.

Aside from keeping national pride intact, it also averts any financial-market tension for the euro zone's third-biggest economy. Decisions to brand a country as junk can be consequential, as Greece found to its cost in 2010 when a cut by Standard & Poor's heralded a new phase in Europe's sovereign debt crisis.

Moody's has a markedly more downbeat view on Italy than its main rivals. Both S&P and Fitch Ratings, the two other major rating agencies, recently reaffirmed investment-grade assessments on the country that are one notch higher.

The lack of an announcement buys time for Meloni after her coalition's initial half year in office kept Italy's risk premium stable, with yield spreads on the country's bonds well below last year's 250 basis point highs.

India to Withdraw 2,000-Rupee Notes From Circulation

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India will start withdrawing its highest value currency notes from circulation, the central bank said, in a move that economists said could boost bank deposits at a time of high credit growth.

The withdrawal of 2,000-rupee (\$24.5) notes - which the finance ministry's top official, TV Somanathan, said would not cause disruption "either in normal life or in the economy" - also comes ahead of elections in four large states at the end of the year and a national ballot in spring 2024.

Most of India's political parties are believed to hoard cash in high denomination bills to fund election campaign expenses to get around tough spending limits imposed by the Election Commission.

Announcing the withdrawal, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said evidence showed the denomination was not being commonly used for transactions.

The notes will remain legal tender, it added, but people will be asked to deposit and exchange them for smaller denominations by Sept. 30.

"The stock of banknotes in other denominations continues to be adequate to meet the currency requirement of the public," the RBI added in a statement.

The 2,000 rupee note was introduced in 2016 after the Narendra Modi-led government abruptly withdrew 500 and 1000 rupee denominations in an effort to remove forgeries from circulation.

There is little evidence that plan succeeded, but the move did create a systemic shortage of cash by taking away 86% of the economy's currency in circulation by value overnight.

The government began issuing new 500 rupee notes days later, and added the 2,000 to replenish currency in circulation at a faster pace.

However, since then, the central bank has focused on printing notes of 500 rupees and below and has printed no new 2,000-rupee notes in the last four years. Pronab Sen, economist and former chief statistician of India, called the withdrawal of the higher-value note "a sensible form of demonetisation."

Karthik Srinivasan, Senior Vice President Financial Sector Ratings at ICRA, said banks' deposit accretion rates "could improve marginally in the near term".

"This will ease the pressure on deposit rate hikes and could also result in moderation in short-term interest rates," he added.

Indian banks have been reporting double-digit credit growth in recent months, notwithstanding 250 basis points of RBI rate since last May. Banks are raising deposits at a faster pace to meet the growing demand and tightening liquidity.

Iranian, Danish FMs Agree on Strengthening Consular Services

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian and Danish foreign ministers in a telephone conversation on Sunday agreed on reinforcing consular services between the two countries.

During the phone conversation, Hossein Amirabdollahian and Lars Lokke Rasmussen discussed bilateral relations and the ways to expand them.

Airabdollahian deemed age-old Iran-Denmark relations as a great asset for the two countries. Rasmussen, for his part, once again voiced his strong opposition to the sacrilege of the Holy Quran in Denmark and other European countries.



Blood Transfusions and the Search for the "Young Blood" Effect

LONDON (Dispatches) - Blood transfusions have been a part of medical practice for centuries, helping to save countless lives. From combating diseases like cancer to supporting those with severe blood loss, blood transfusions are a mainstay of health care. Now, researchers are exploring the potential of "young blood" to slow down or reverse the aging process.

"Young blood" research uses blood or plasma from younger individuals to slow down or reverse the aging process and treat age-related diseases.

Although promising in animal studies, the field does not yet translate into effective and safe human therapies.

Further clinical trials and cross-disciplinary collaboration are essential in advancing this area of research and developing viable treatment options.

How did the "young blood" hypothesis begin?

The concept of the "young blood" effect can be traced back to early experiments with parabiosis. Parabiosis is a surgical technique that connects the circulatory systems of two living animals, often of different ages. These early experiments sparked the idea that young blood might possess unique properties capable of revitalizing older organisms.

In the 1950s, researchers connected the circulatory systems of young and old mice and observed that the older mice showed improvements in muscle strength, tissue repair, and overall vitality. These results led scientists to hypothesize that specific factors in the blood of younger animals could positively impact the health and well-being of older ones.

Over the years, the "young blood" hypothesis has gained traction, with a growing number of studies confirming the potential benefits of young blood on aging organisms.

One notable study conducted by researchers at Stanford University in 2014 demonstrated that injecting older mice with plasma — the liquid portion of blood — from younger mice led to improved memory, learning abilities, and even the growth of new brain cells.

Scientists believe that the "young blood" effect may be attributed to specific proteins, growth factors, and other molecules that are more abundant in younger individuals. Some of these factors are thought to decrease with age, which could contribute to the age-related decline in the body's ability to repair and regenerate itself.

A protein called GDF11 (growth differentiation factor 11) is a crucial player in the hypothesis. GDF11 levels tend to decrease with age, and research has shown that restoring GDF11 levels in older mice can improve muscle and brain function. While GDF11 is just one example, it highlights the potential for young blood to hold the secret to rejuvenation and combating the aging process.

Rejuvenation through blood transfusions — fact or fiction?

The idea of using blood transfusions as a means to rejuvenate the body is both fascinating and controversial. While animal studies have shown promising results, it's crucial to recognize that translating these findings into viable human therapies isn't as simple as it may seem.

Indeed, when a United States company called Ambrosia began offering expensive plasma infusions of young blood, it faced criticism from the Food and Drug Administration for potential safety risks and its lack of proven benefits.

Although human trials are in their infancy, there have been some interesting findings. One example is the "Plasma for Alzheimer Symptom Amelioration" (PLASMA) trial, conducted in collaboration with plasma startup Alkahest. This 2019 study used plasma from donors aged 18 to 30 to treat Alzheimer's disease (AD) symptoms in 18 individuals aged 50 to 90.

The study participants received young plasma or saline infusions once a week for 4 weeks, followed by a 6-week break and then 4 weeks of the alternate treatment. The study found no significant differences in adverse events, indicating short-term plasma therapy was safe and well-tolerated.

Some tests suggested significant improvements after plasma treatment. However, the study design had some shortcomings. For example, half of the participants knew



which treatment they were receiving, potentially leading to placebo effects.

Furthermore, the study's findings focused on comparing the before and after changes within each group of patients rather than comparing the plasma treatment group to the placebo group. Therefore the results don't prove that plasma is more effective than a placebo.

So while a few clinical trials suggest the potential benefits of young blood, in reality, there's limited evidence to support its effectiveness as an anti-aging solution confidently.

What's on the horizon for "young blood" research?

As research into the potential benefits of "young blood" continues, several critical areas of investigation are likely to shape the future of this field:

Identifying key components and developing targeted therapies

Scientists must identify and isolate the specific factors responsible for rejuvenating effects. By understanding which proteins, cells, or other substances contribute to these benefits, researchers can focus on developing targeted therapies that harness the power of these components without the ethical and logistical challenges associated with blood and plasma transfusions.

Therapies could involve synthetic compounds, gene therapy, or other innovative methods that promote rejuvenation safely and effectively.

This area of research could also benefit from a broader understanding of the aging process and how different factors contribute. By investigating complementary approaches such as lifestyle modifications, dietary interventions, and other anti-aging strategies, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of how to promote healthy aging.

As new therapies and approaches emerge in the field of "young blood" research, scientists need to conduct comprehensive clinical trials to evaluate their safety and efficacy.

By rigorously evaluating the effects of these treatments on diverse populations, researchers can build a solid foundation of evidence to support their use in humans. In addition, this process helps identify potential risks and benefits, paving the way for safe and effective anti-aging solutions.

The future success of this research also depends on fostering collaboration between various scientific disciplines, including molecular biology, genetics, and gerontology. By working together and sharing insights, researchers can accelerate the pace of discovery and expedite groundbreaking results.

"Young blood" research represents an exciting frontier in the quest for anti-aging therapies. By identifying key components, developing targeted treatments, and expanding clinical trials, researchers draw closer to realizing the dream of reversing the aging process.

While the journey is fraught with challenges and ethical considerations, collaboration and cross-disciplinary research will help transform the understanding of aging and age-related diseases.

Police Vow Definite...

FROM PAGE 1

Also the Iranian border police commander warned neighboring countries to observe the principle of good neighborliness and not allow destabilizing activities on their soil.

"Our patience has limits," Brigadier General Ahmad-Ali Goudarzi said.

Over the past years, Sistan and Baluchestan has witnessed several terror attacks targeting both civilians and security forces. Saravan has been the focal point in clashes between Iranian forces and terrorist groups as well as drug traffickers.

On Sunday, spokesman of Baluchistan Government in Pakistan, Farah Azem Shah, condemned the terrorist attack in Saravan.

Azeem Shah said, "The time has come for the governments and nations of Iran and Pakistan to send a strong message to these elements," stressing that the purpose of such acts of terror was to harm the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran.

Iran, Iraq...

FROM PAGE 1

Falih Al-Fayyadh, head of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Organization, also said in the meeting: "Two types of service are needed in the Arbaeen procession; service in the field of maintaining security and service in the field of ensuring the health of pilgrims."

He added: "Providing health services to the large population of pilgrims in mobile units is a difficult task and requires planning months ahead."

Hezbollah Warns Israel...

FROM PAGE 1

The resistance fighters successfully captured a mock enemy military vehicle, demonstrating their tactical prowess. They also showed valiant military skills using both light and heavy weapons, while simulating an attack on an Israeli settlement to capture the regime's soldiers.

Several drones were also deployed and explosive-laden drones targeted potential Israeli targets in the drill venue.

"If the enemy ever thinks of expanding its aggressive actions and changing the equations that we have established with our blood and through struggle, blows fairly impossible to reciprocate will rain down on it," Safieddine said.

Hezbollah fought off two Israeli wars against Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, forcing a humiliating retreat upon the Tel Aviv regime's military in both cases.

The resistance movement has vowed to resolutely defend Lebanon in case of any other Israeli-imposed warfare.

Iran Calls for Global Reaction...

FROM PAGE 1

The Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement said on its Telegram channel that Israel would "bear responsibility for the barbaric incursions of its ministers and herds of settlers."

Saudi Arabia also strongly condemned Ben-Gvir's al-Aqsa visit as "a flagrant violation of all international norms and covenants" as well as a provocation to the sentiments of Muslims worldwide.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it "holds the Israeli occupation forces fully responsible for the repercussions of the continuation of these violations."

The Islamic authority of Waqf (Endowment) that oversees Muslim holy sites in Israeli-occupied al-Quds also denounced the incursion as a "blatant storming and desecration of the blessed Al-Aqsa mosque," saying the Israeli minister's "provocative" actions are a "dangerous and unacceptable escalation."

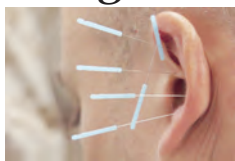
The Grand Mufti of al-Quds Sheikh Muhammad Hussein told the Arab News daily that the incursions by Israeli ministers and lawmakers would not change the al-Aqsa's existing legal, religious and historical status as an Islamic mosque for Muslims alone.

Back in January, Ben Gvir paid a similar provocative visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, sparking furious condemnations from the Arab world.

Only Muslims are allowed to pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque compound under a status quo arrangement originally reached more than a century ago. Non-Muslim visitors are allowed visits at certain times and only to certain areas.

Study Suggests Ear Acupuncture Can Help Men Lose Weight

LONDON (Dispatches) - A study being presented at the European Congress on Obesity in Ireland this week suggests that ear acupuncture using metal beads can help reduce weight, body mass index and body fat when combined with diet and exercise.



The study, led by Takahiro Fujimoto, of Clinic F in Tokyo, was published Tuesday in the scientific journal BMJ Open Gastroenterology.

The paper documents how food cravings can be controlled using the simpler method of acupuncture stimulation with beads rather than the traditional use of intradermal needles, which requires expert acupuncturists.

"Since these tiny metal beads are attached to six points on the outer ear that stimulate nerves and organs which regulate appetite, satiety and hunger, this type of acupuncture does not require complex knowledge or skill," Fujimoto said.

"In Japan, this method to aid weight loss has been used for over 30 years."

Acupuncture in traditional Chinese medicine is based on the understanding that your health depends on the flow of qi (energy) in your body. A blocked or disrupted flow can have a negative effect on physical and mental health.

Auricular, or ear, acupuncture therapy is based on the theory that the outer ear represents all parts of the body.

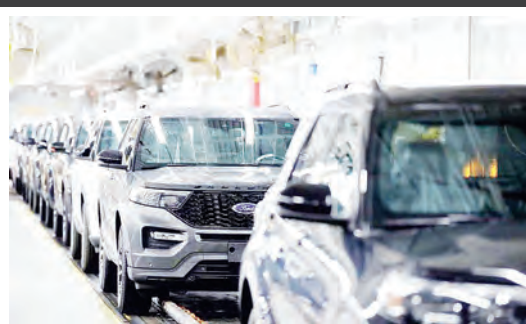
Thin needles or beads are placed on certain points, usually along meridian lines, to restore the flow by resolving any blockages or disruption and may help with a variety of health conditions, the authors said. This treatment has been used by others to treat addictions like drug use and smoking.

Ford Recalls 422,000 SUVs Over Another Failing Rearview Camera Issue

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - For the second time this year, Ford and Lincoln SUV owners have to deal with another rear-view camera recall. The issue involves the 360-degree camera on the 2020-2023 Ford Explorer, the 2020-2023 Lincoln Aviator and the 2020-2022 Lincoln Corsair — impacting 422,000 vehicles in total and replacing the recall about the same problem in January.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) stated the 360-degree camera's video output could fail, preventing an image from displaying. The Image Processing Module, or B (IPMB) software, is the source of the issue, but the reason behind the fault has yet to be found. According to Reuters, Ford said last year there were 17 minor crashes, over 2,100 warranty reports and no injuries over the malfunctioning backup feed.

For impacted vehicle owners, the NHTSA recall report states:



"The remedy is under development. Owner notification letters are expected to be mailed June 26, 2023. Owners may contact Ford customer service at 1-866-436-7332. Ford's number for this recall is 23S23. This recall expands and replaces NHTSA recall number 23V-022. Vehicles previously repaired under 23V-022 will need to have the new remedy performed."

It sounds like the fix isn't a simple one either. While all it would take is a software update to resolve the issue, the patch itself has to work, and this has already been an ongoing problem for Ford since 2020 when over 600,000 Ford and Lincoln vehicles were recalled. The following year, NHTSA investigated the Detroit automaker over the recall, arguing that Ford didn't act fast enough. Hopefully, the third time will be the charm for this rear-view camera software.

SpaceX Successfully Launches 22 Second-Generation Starlink Satellites

NEW YORK (UPI) - SpaceX successfully launched a Falcon 9 rocket carrying nearly two dozen satellites for its Starlink Internet mission into space.

The rocket topped with 22 second-generation mini Starlink satellites launched at 2:31 a.m. EST from Space Launch Complex 40 at Florida's Cape Canaveral Space Force Station.

The launch comes after the mission suffered two previous delays, according to Spaceflight Now, with its first launch scheduled in April and it second for Thursday.

It was also scheduled for liftoff at 1:31 a.m. but was pushed to the third of four possible launch opportunities on Friday, seemingly due to weather conditions.

At about 8 minutes, 30 seconds into the flight, the first-stage booster returned to Earth, and landed upon SpaceX's Shortfall of Gravitas drone ship in the Atlantic Ocean. The mission was its fifth total. It has previously launched CRS-26, OneWeb Launch 16, Intelsat IS-40e and one Starlink mission.

Conners Grinds to PGA Lead At PGA Championship

ROCHESTER (Dispatches) - Corey Conners ground out a birdie and eight pars to seize the lead in soggy conditions during yesterday's third round of the PGA Championship as heavy rain drenched Oak Hill.

The 31-year-old Canadian, trying to join 2003 Masters winner Mike Weir as his homeland's only men's major champions, stood on six-under at the turn to lead Justin Rose and Viktor Hovland by two strokes.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

Public Relations Tel:

(+98)(21) 44253450

Editorial Board: 44253449

Public Relations Fax:

(+98)(21) 44253395

Advertising Department:

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

Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

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American McNulty Wins tight Giro Sprint

BERGAMO (Dispatches) - Brandon McNulty of the United States won stage 15 of the Giro d'Italia in Bergamo in a three-up sprint following a long breakaway.

It was a first win on a Grand Tour for the 25-year-old from Phoenix, who took advantage of his powerful build to clinch the sprint.

Team UAE rider McNulty, Irish EF rider Ben Healy and Marco Frigo of Israel Premier-Tech dropped the peloton on the last of four climbs before a tearaway run to the finish.

Murray Sinks Lakers to Put Nuggets on Brink

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Jamal Murray scored 37 points as the Denver Nuggets routed the Los Angeles Lakers 119-108 to move within one win of reaching the NBA finals for the first time in the team's history.

A dazzling first-half shooting performance from Denver point guard Murray laid the foundation for a deserved road win that leaves the Nuggets with a commanding 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals series.

After claiming back-to-back victories at home in games one and two, Denver delivered a performance of ruthless precision to dispatch LeBron James and the 17-time champion Lakers at the Crypto.com Arena.

Murray finished with 37 points, seven rebounds and six assists while Nikola Jokic added 24 points — including 15 in the fourth quarter — to steer Denver to victory.

"We stayed with it," Murray told ESPN afterwards. "We just had a hit first mentality that we've had through the playoffs. We kept them at a distance for most of the game."

"I just felt like we executed throughout the game and hit first."

Anthony Davis led the Lakers' scoring with 28 points while James and Austin Reaves added 23 points apiece.

Lakers coach Darvin Ham admitted his team had been unable to handle Murray early on.

"He got off scorching," Ham said of Murray. "He's one of those players, man, once he starts to see them go in, it's just he catches fire, and he rolls them off pretty quickly, which he did in that first half."

"Basically carried them offensively through that half," the Lakers coach added, paying tribute to top-seeded Denver's all-round potency.

"They have been at the top of the food chain for a reason and have a plethora of guys that can hurt you, as was on full display tonight," Ham said, refusing to concede defeat in the series.

"Circumstances are what they are. Difficult but not impossible."

A typically star-studded crowd with the likes of Hollywood actors Jack Nicholson and Denzel Washington sitting at courtside were unable to inspire the Lakers, who now must win game four on Monday to avoid a clean sweep.

The Nuggets took control with a dominant first quarter performance that saw Murray pick up where he had left off in game two with another devastating shooting clinic.

Murray, who scored 23 points in the fourth quarter of Denver's game two win



on Thursday, rattled in 17 points in the first on Saturday in a dream start for the Nuggets.

While Los Angeles managed to contain Jokic effectively, the Lakers had no answer for Murray, who was eight-of-10 from the field as the Nuggets surged into a double-digit lead.

Murray's early success rate was more than the entire Lakers line-up combined, with the hosts shooting only 7-of-23 in the first quarter.

The Lakers however came roaring back in the second, opening with a 10-4 run that cut the Denver lead to six points.

While Murray continued to threaten, draining a three-pointer to restore Denver's double-digit advantage at 51-41, the Lakers refused to roll over.

Reaves got the hosts to within five with a superb driving layup that made it 55-50 and shortly afterwards drew a foul from Jokic that sent him to the free throw line to tie it at 55-55.

The Nuggets however restored their advantage in the final seconds of the first half, with Kentavious Caldwell-Pope draining a corner three to make it 58-55 at the break.

An attritional third quarter saw Denver struggling to generate the offensive fluency that marked their first half display, and an out-of-sorts Jokic was subbed out after picking up his fourth foul with seven minutes remaining in the quarter.

The Lakers were unable to cash in on the absence of the two-time NBA Most Valuable Player however, and Denver led 84-82 heading into the final frame.

Jokic returned at the start of the fourth and the Nuggets asserted their dominance once more, scoring with regularity to pull away for a convincing victory.

Murray Pulls Out of French Open



PARIS (Dispatches) - Former world number one Andy Murray has withdrawn from the French Open.

The 36-year-old, who has made just one appearance at Roland Garros since reaching the semi-finals in 2017, last month said he wanted another chance to play at the clay court Grand Slam while he is still fit and healthy.

Three-times Grand Slam champion Murray won the second-tier Aix-en-Provence Challenger Tour crown earlier this month, but suffered early exits in Monte Carlo, Madrid, Rome and Bordeaux.

The Scot, who reached the final of the French Open in 2016, has opted to skip tournaments during the claycourt season in the past to focus on the grasscourt swing heading into Wimbledon.

In February, he said Wimbledon offered him the best chance of going deep at a Grand Slam.

The French Open runs from May 28 to June 11. Holder Rafa Nadal, who has won the French Open a record 14 times, also pulled out of the tournament after failing to regain full fitness from a hip injury.

Australian Nick Kyrgios and Matteo Berrettini of Italy will also miss the tournament.

Simeone Hails Atletico Recovery

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Diego Simeone said his Atletico Madrid team were almost pronounced "dead" last November but was proud of how they have bounced back strongly in 2023.

Atletico Madrid eased to a 3-0 win over Osasuna in La Liga to climb provisionally second, one point clear of rivals Real Madrid.

Yannick Carrasco, Saul Niguez and Angel Correa's goals guaranteed Atletico will return to the Champions League next season, following this season's humiliating group stage elimination.

Dumped out of Europe and fifth in La Liga at the break for the World Cup in November, Atletico came back far stronger in the second half of the season.

"(We've got to be) grateful from December until now, the fans came back on our side, in our home, and when we have that strength in our home the team grows," Simeone told reporters.

"In November we were in the clinic, and a doctor came, telling us we were almost dead."

"But we worked, we saw that the best thing to do was to focus on working, and we worked, and we grew, and the doctor told us today that we are still alive."

Atletico have lost just two of their past 19 league games, against champions Barcelona in April and a shock 1-0 defeat by relegated Elche last weekend.

That fine form helped the Rojiblancos lock down Champions League qualification for the 11th consecutive season.

"Put on the black suit for eight months, and you'll see if it's easy," said Simeone, referring to his usual match-day attire, when asked about the achievement.

Carrasco fired Atletico ahead against Copa del Rey runners-up Osasuna after Antoine Griezmann teed him up.

Simeone was forced to substitute striker Alvaro Morata who took a painful blow in the back from Osasuna defender David Garcia while challenging for the ball.

Saul doubled Atletico's lead at the Metropolitan, bursting into the box and rifling home in the 62nd minute.



Rybakina Wins Italian Open

ROME (Dispatches) - Elena Rybakina will head to the French Open with the confidence that she can be as effective on clay as she is on the other two surfaces with her booming serve and groundstrokes after the Kazakh world number six won the Italian Open.

The Moscow-born 23-year-old bagged her second title of 2023 after her Indian Wells triumph and fifth overall when Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina retired while trailing 6-4 1-0. Wimbledon champion Rybakina became the sixth woman since the introduction of the WTA 1000 format in 2009 to win a Grand Slam or Masters title on every surface after Serena Williams, Petra Kvitova, Simona Halep, Garbine Muguruza and Ash Barty.

"I think with my game, I can play good on all the surfaces," said Rybakina, who also reached the Australian Open and Miami finals this season.

"It's just maybe for clay I need to be ready more physically and have a lot of preparation which I don't always have the time for after the hardcourt season."

Rybakina reached the third round at Roland Garros last year and hoped playing in Paris would be easier this time. "The tournament is pretty long. Hopefully I can go far. I have good memories playing there," Rybakina said.

"Now I've got more matches on clay, so it's a bit easier and there's a bit more confidence, definitely." Kalinina, whose hopes of a first title were dashed due to a leg injury, said Rybakina had the qualities to succeed on clay.

"She's serving at 200 kph. She's making winners like no one on tour... anyone can win in Paris, but she has good chances," Kalinina said.

"She's an amazing player, a top player. I'm sure if she's going to (play) like this, maybe new world number one for sure."

The French Open begins on May 28.

Man City Beat Chelsea To Celebrate Premier League Title Triumph



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester City celebrated their third consecutive Premier League title as a much-changed side was still good enough to beat Chelsea 1-0 at the Etihad.

Pep Guardiola's men clinched a fifth title in six seasons on Saturday when second-placed Arsenal were beaten 1-0 at Nottingham Forest.

That gave Guardiola the luxury of resting most of his star names with one eye on the FA Cup and Champions League finals next month as City go for the treble.

The strength of City's squad was exemplified by Julian Alvarez, who has spent most of the season as Erling Haaland's understudy, scoring his 17th goal of the campaign to extend the English champions' unbeaten run in all competitions to 24 games.

But a festive afternoon for City was marred at full-time as thousands of fans spilled onto the pitch despite pleas from the club to remain in the stands.

Guardiola made nine changes in all from the side that thrashed Real Madrid 4-0 in midweek.

The youthful hosts were still too sharp for the beleaguered visitors early on and took the lead on 12 minutes.

Alvarez continued his stunning season for club and country as the Argentine World Cup winner swept home Cole Palmer's pass.

Palmer made the most of a rare Premier League start and was unlucky not to double City's lead when his goalbound effort was cleared off the line by Trevoh Chalobah.

Klopp Satisfied With Liverpool's Finish



LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - While Liverpool had to settle for a 1-1 draw with Aston Villa that all but doused their hopes for a Champions League berth, manager Jurgen Klopp said considering where his squad were a few weeks ago, he was satisfied with the result.

"It's a draw and that's okay, that's okay," Klopp told a press conference.

Liverpool looked for much of the season to be destined for the Europa League rather than the Champions League anyway, he added. But his team arrived at Anfield yesterday having won seven in a row for a late charge at the top four.

"We were too long not good enough ourselves," the German manager said, summing up the season. "And I think we made it pretty exciting. I didn't think that was possible seven weeks ago. The boys did really well in that period."

"I think people enjoyed it as well, you could see today they are not angry with us. They are looking forward to a new Premier League season and the European league season. So do I."

Jacob Ramsey gave Villa the lead in the first half and they were able to keep the hosts at bay for most of the match.

However, the Anfield crowd exploded when Brazilian Roberto Firmino came off the bench to score a dramatic equaliser in the 89th minute in his final home appearance for Liverpool after eight trophy-laden seasons.