

**The Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force General Amir Ali Hajzadeh Says That the IRGC Will Unveil a Hypersonic Missile in the Near Future, Noting That the Missiles Have Been Tested Successfully**

# IRAN NEWS

**Government Spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi Says the Bill of The Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) Has Been Approved in A Cabinet Meeting Chaired by President Ebrahim Raisi**

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## Baghdad Urged to End Presence of Anti-Iran Elements

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Urging Iraq to guarantee the security of common borders, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran called for an end to the presence of anti-Iran elements in Iraq under the Tehran-Baghdad security agreement.

General Ali-Akbar Ahmadian made the remarks in the meeting with Qasim al-Aarji, Iraq's national security adviser who travelled to Tehran on Monday to discuss bilateral issues and the most important regional and international developments. Referring to the long common religious and civilizational roots between Iran and Iraq, General Ahmadian considered it a guarantee of deep and extensive relations between the two countries.

The recent security agreement signed between Tehran and Baghdad is a very appropriate and strategic measure, Ahmadian said emphasising the strict implementation of its provisions. "We expect the Iraqi government to guarantee the security of the country's common borders with Iran as soon as possible," he said, calling for an end to the presence of anti-Iran elements in this country within the framework of the said agreement. **See Page 7**

## Iran, Oman to Benefit From Closer Bilateral Cooperation



TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that Iran and Oman will benefit from closer bilateral cooperation, lauding the Raisi administration's policy of improving ties with regional nations. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said in Tehran. "We believe that the expansion of bilateral relations in all fields benefits both sides," the Leader said. "Increasing Iran-Oman cooperation is significant because the two countries share the very important Strait of Hormuz waterway."

Referring to negotiations between Iranians and Omanis, Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the talks should be followed up seriously until they yield tangible results.

The Leader also urged all regional countries to take into account the policy pursued by the Zionist regime and its supporters to sow discord and erode peace in the region.

Ayatollah Khamenei also touched on Sultan Haitham's comments on Egypt's willingness to resume relations with the Islamic Republic, saying, "We welcome this position and have no problem in this regard."

Concerning the Omani Sultan's satisfaction with the resumption of Iran-Saudi Arabia ties, the Leader said, "These issues are the outcome of the Raisi administration's good policy to develop and strengthen relations with neighbors and regional states."

Ayatollah Khamenei expressed hope that the Islamic Ummah will regain its grandeur through the expansion of ties between governments, as the convergence of Muslim countries' capacities and facilities would benefit all Muslim nations and governments.

Sultan Haitham, for his part, emphasized that Muscat's policy is to expand relations with its neighbors, especially the Islamic Republic.

The two sides exchanged views on various fields of cooperation during the talks in Tehran, he said, hoping that with the continuation of the negotiations, bilateral relations will expand further and yield practical results.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, the Omani Sultan traveled to Iran on Sunday upon an invitation by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

## Zelensky Pushes for 50-Year Sanctions on Iran

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky submitted a draft resolution to the parliament proposing sanctions on Iran for a period of 50 years, over baseless allegations concerning Iran's arms supply to Russia.

Introduced on Sunday, the bill includes a complete ban on trade with Iran, investments, and transferring technologies. It forbids Iranian transit across Ukrainian territory as well as the use of its airspace and prevents the withdrawal of Iranian assets from the East European country.

The bill also prohibits the National Bank of Ukraine from registering an international payment system operated by Iran, obliging the cabinet, the Foreign Intelligence Service, and the Security Service to implement the anti-Iran restrictive measures.

The Ukrainian parliament is expected to back the sanctions bill, which has already been approved by the National Security and Defense Council.

The legislature has not scheduled the vote yet, according to its website.

Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, said the draft resolution is a response to Iran's alleged arms supply to Russia. In a video address last week, Zelensky claimed that Iranians were being dragged to "the dark side of history" over Tehran's alleged supply of drones to Moscow.

In response, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the Ukrainian president had put up "political show" full of "worthless allegations" in a bid to attract more Western arms.

"The repetition of false claims by the Ukrainian president against the Islamic Republic is in line with the propaganda and media war of the anti-Iranian axis against Iran's government and people with the aim of securing as much arms and financial aid as possible from Western countries," he said in a statement on Saturday.

Ukraine and Western countries have repeatedly accused Iran of providing Russia with military drones for use in the war, a charge categorically rejected by Tehran.

The anti-Iran claims first emerged last July, with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan alleging that Washington had received "information" indicating that the Islamic Republic was preparing to provide Russia with "up to several hundred drones, including weapons-capable UAVs on an expedited timeline" for use in the Ukraine military operation.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in November dismissed media controversy over Iran's alleged support for Russia in the war, adding, however, that Tehran had provided Moscow with a limited number of drones months before the operation in Ukraine.

## 1.2m Foreign Patients Treated in Iranian Hospitals

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Health Minister Bahram Einollahi says the country has made remarkable progress in the health sector since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, adding that more than 1.2 million foreign patients were treated in Iranian hospitals last year.

"Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the best countries in the field of health, not only in the region but also in the world," Einollahi said in a meeting of the chief representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad.

Pointing to a study of 7,000 foreign students in the field of health in Iran, Einollahi said, "Last year, we treated more than 1,200,000 foreign patients in the country's hospitals, most of them from Afghanistan, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Turkey, India, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Lebanon and Tajikistan."

The Iranian minister touched upon the development of health tourism in the country. "The fields of gynecology and obstetrics, eye surgery, orthopedics, cosmetic surgery, cardiovascular diseases, urology, unnecessary medical treatments, general surgery, cancers and trauma are the most common diseases that encourage health tourists to visit Iran." **See Page 7**

## Iraq Says Iran Blames Reduced Gas Exports on "Technical Matter"

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iran's foreign minister told his Iraqi counterpart that a reduction in gas exports to Iraq was a technical matter and Tehran had not decided on any cuts, an Iraqi foreign ministry statement said, as the two countries try to resolve Baghdad's huge unpaid bills.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein asked Iranian's Hossein Amirabdollahian during a phone call about Iran's reduction of exports in the past week, which Hussein said "led to a decrease in electricity production and has repercussions on daily life," the statement said.

An Iraqi delegation led by the electricity minister will travel to Iran next week to discuss the issue, Iraqi state media reported on Tuesday, noting gas imports had decreased by 20 million cubic meters at the time.

Iraq usually imports between 50 million to 70 million cubic meters of gas, according to Iraq's electricity ministry spokesperson Ahmed Moussa.

Iraq imports electricity and gas from Iran that in total makes up between a third and 40% of its power supply, especially crucial in the sweltering summer months when temperatures can top 50 degrees Celsius (122°F) and power consumption peaks. **See Page 7**

## Turkey Completes Nearly 100 km of Concrete Wall Along Iran Border

ANKARA (Dispatches) - In a bid to curb illegal migration and enhance border security, the construction of a modular concrete wall along the Van-Iran border line has reached a significant milestone, with 96 kilometers already completed, Turkey announced.

The project, which began in the Doğubayazıt district of Ağrı and stretches to Van's Çaldıran district and Hakkari's Yüksekova district, aims to cover a total distance of 560 kilometers.

The ongoing construction of the modular wall and smart towers along the Iranian border, spanning from Çaldıran to Doğubayazıt and Yüksekova, has been accompanied by increased security measures.

These initiatives are designed to prevent illegal crossings and tighten control along the 295-kilometer border line between Van and Iran.

While the 295-kilometer section of the wall was completed in 2021, the recent completion of the 96-kilometer portion within the boundaries of Çaldıran and Özalp districts marks a significant step forward. **See Page 7**

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## Raisi Congratulates Erdogan on Re-Election Victory

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi congratulated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his re-election victory, calling it a testament to the enduring trust that the Turkish people have placed in their leader.

In his message on Sunday, President Raisi expressed confidence that relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey will further strengthen during Erdogan's new term in office.

The president noted that the relationship between the two neighboring countries were based on strong historical, cultural, religious bonds as well as good neighborliness, mutual respect, and shared interests. The close cooperation between Iran and Turkey, Raisi said in his message, will provide even "more favorable conditions" for promoting peace, stability, and development in the region.

## Muscat, Tehran Issue Statement at End of Sultan's Visit to Tehran

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

**TEHRAN - Heads of state of Oman and Iran have issued a final statement of cooperation at the end of the two-day visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said to Tehran.**

The Omani and Iranian sides expressed satisfaction with the sublime level of bilateral ties between the two countries, pointing to the constant improvement of the relationship particularly following President Ebrahim Raisi's last year visit to Muscat at an official invitation of Sultan Al Said.

The two states also emphasized that they are keen on expanding ties in the future, calling for the formation of working groups and joint committees to follow up on the development of relations.

During the Sultan's stay in Iran, the two parties underlined the need for expansion of the culture of dialogue in the region in a bid to resolve problems and consolidate relations among neighboring states in order to guarantee peace, stability, progress, and demands of the regional nations.

President Raisi expressed gratitude to the Sultan of Oman for his efforts in adopting constructive and wise policies at regional and international levels in order to deepen bilateral ties and strengthen peace and stability in the region.

Sultan Haitham appreciated the Raisi administration for its good neighborliness policy in dealing with regional nations, adding that close cooperation among littoral states of the Persian Gulf region would consolidate regional stability and peace.

Earlier Raisi said Iran and Oman have a common stance on the improvement of security, peace and welfare of the nations in the region.

Raisi was addressing a meeting between senior delegations of Iran and Oman in Tehran in the presence of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said.

The Iranian president said the common approach of strengthening regional



convergence pursued by the two countries will contribute to enhanced relations.

He said Tehran and Muscat have progressed in improving ties from trade to the investment level.

The Iranian president said the two countries enjoy capacities to enhance cooperation in the fields of industry, trade, communications, defense and security affairs, road and rail routes, maritime transportation and transit, financial and monetary exchanges and energy.

Sultan Haitham, for his part, pointed to the considerable improvement of Tehran-Muscat ties and said both sides have managed to double mutual trade exchanges since the Iranian president's visit to Muscat last May.

He said the two countries should make more efforts to reach an appropriate level of cooperation given their capacities.

During President Raisi's key trip to Muscat, Iranian and Omani officials signed 12 cooperation documents and memorandums of understanding for the expansion of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Sultan Haitham's visit to Tehran marks a significant milestone in relations between the two regional allies, opening new avenues for closer diplomatic cooperation and increased dialogue.

Oman has long been an interlocutor in interactions between the West and Iran. The country has mediated the release of several foreign citizens and dual nationals. The country has also played a mediating role between Tehran and the West in the build-up to a nuclear deal Iran and world powers reached in 2015.

## Iranians Smoke 60b Cigarettes Per Year

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Secretary-General of the Iranian Anti-Tobacco Association has said that there has been an increase in tobacco consumption among people over 18 years of age in the country, saying Iranians consume some 60 billion cigarettes per year.

Speaking at the "Smoking Free University" conference in Tehran on Sunday, Mohammad Reza Masjedi said more than 600 trillion rials (\$1.2 billion) are spent annually on the treatment of tobacco-related diseases in Iran.

"About 60,000 deaths in the country are estimated to be caused by the consumption and exposure to tobacco," he stated.

"The prevalence of smoking in the year 1400 (2021-2022) was 25.88% in men and 4.44 in women, which points to an increasing trend in the last five years in people above 18 years of age," he added.

Masjedi also said that Iranians spend more than 300 trillion rials annually on buying cigarettes and tobacco, which he said causes the annual economic damage of more than 1.1 quadrillion rials to the country's production and development sectors due to the premature deaths among consumers and because of pollution, absence from work, disability and fire incidents caused by smoking.

## Talks With Regional States to Remove Mobile Phone Network Interferences

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran is holding talk with the officials of six countries of the region to remove the interferences in mobile telephone networks.

The director general of International Specialized Organizations of the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) on Sunday announced the organization of an expert-level meeting among the Persian Gulf littoral states with the participation of representatives from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in order to remove interferences in mobile phone networks.

Removing the interferences in mobile telephone networks and increasing the quality of services seem necessary given the development of communications technologies of mobile phones (4- and 5G), Alireza Darvishi emphasized.

At the initiative taken by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland with the participation of representatives at the Persian Gulf littoral states, he added.

Darvishi said that removing the interferences in 4- and 5-generation of mobile phone network was put atop the agenda of the meeting.

## 13th Int'l Stone Exhibition Kicks Off in Tehran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The 13th edition of Iran's International Stone Exhibition was inaugurated Monday at the venue of Shahr-e Aftab International Exhibition in Tehran with the participation of companies from Iran and six other countries.

Some 110 Iranian companies along with companies from China, Russia, India, Italy, Turkey and Greece are showcasing their latest products and achievements in this edition of the exhibition in an area as large as 12,000 square meters.

The inaugural ceremony of the exhibition was attended by Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade for Mineral and Processing Affairs Reza Mohtashampour, Chairman of Industries and Mines Commission at the Parliament Mostafa Taheri and Head of Iran House of Mine Mohammad Reza Bahraman as well as members of Iran Decorative Stone Association.

The exhibition will run until Friday.

According to Chairman of Iran Stone Association Bahram Shakouri, between 10 million and 11 million tons of decorative stones are annually extracted in the country.

He said that Iran has the capability of exporting \$5 billion worth of decorative stone overseas.

The country is home to more than 6,000 mining and mineral processing units of decorative stones, which have generated employment opportunities for about 600,000 people in the country, he stated.

Iran earns between \$300 and \$350 million annually from the export of quality decorated stone, Shakhouri added.

## Afghan Border Secure After Taliban Attack

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian interior minister has said tensions eased on the eastern border with Afghanistan and the area is now secure after a deadly attack by Taliban forces on Saturday.

Ahmad Vahidi made the remarks on Monday, two days after two Iranian border guards were killed as heavily-armed Taliban forces opened fire at a border post in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province in violation of international law.

"We do not have any problem at the moment. The border point is in peace and open to traffic," he said.

"There was a shooting by Afghan border guards, and naturally, we delivered a due response," he added.

The interior minister also noted that the brief clashes ended and that negotiations were held with the Taliban in this regard.

During a visit to Sistan and Baluchestan on Sunday, Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari warned that the Islamic Republic will change its approach if Afghanistan fails to respect international regulations and the principles of good neighborliness.

He further said that the border areas with Afghanistan are under complete control of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces.

If neighbors respect international border regulations, we will observe the principles of good neighborliness in return, Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari said.

## Iran to Increase Its Trade Attachés to Other Nations to 30

TEHRAN (MNA) - An official with the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said that the TPOI plans to increase the number of its trade attaché to other countries to 30 in the next few months.

Mohammad Rajabnejad, chairman of the Trade Attachés and Trade Centers Department at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said that the TPOI has planned to increase the number of its trade attaché to other countries to 30.

Iran's Trade attachés will be deployed to the UAE next week. Also, two Trade attachés are about to be sent to Brazil and Uzbekistan, he also said.

Rajabnejad added, "We are trying to have Iranian trade attaché in Indonesia, Iraqi Kurdistan Region, China's Shanghai, Nigeria and Eastern European countries including Poland and Serbia in the coming months. Also, we are planning to send a trade attaché to Saudi Arabia."

"Since the 13th government under President Ebrahim Raisi assumed Presidential office, the number of trade attaché has increased dramatically from 2 to more than 17," the TPOI official said, adding, "We are trying to increase the number of trade attaché to 30 by the end of 1402 (ending on March 21, 2024)."

He further said that Iran's trade centers in other countries have increased to more than 40 centers, with opening two more trade centers on the agenda in the near future.

## FM to Facilitate Departure of Iranian Pilgrims for Hajj

TEHRAN (IP) - Foreign Minister emphasized the efforts of the ministry to facilitate the departure of Iranian pilgrims for Hajj as a symbol of Islamic solidarity and unity.

In the joint meeting of the officials of the Hajj and Pilgrimage organization and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, the issues related to the pilgrims of Baitullah Al-Haram in 1402 (2023) were discussed and opinions were exchanged.

In the meeting, which was held in the presence of Hossein Amirabdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Seyyed Abdul Fattah Nawab, the leader's representative in matters of Hajj and Pilgrimage, Seyed Abbas Hosseini, the head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, and the senior managers of the organization, the participants discussed the status of registration and sending pilgrims to Baitullah Al-Haram and they expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made.

Amirabdollahian said in the meeting: "The Deputy Consular and Iranian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has put all its facilities to facilitate the affairs of Hajj and the pilgrims of the Two Holy Mosques."

The two holiest mosques in Islam are the Al-Haram Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, both of which are in the Hejazi region of Saudi Arabia.

Amirabdollahian added: "The consular section of the Foreign Ministry is present and active in Jeddah, Mecca, and Medina."

He also expressed his hope that with the help of the Saudi Arabian authorities, this year's Hajj will be held in peace and grandeur.

In the meeting, the Leader's representative in matters of Hajj and Pilgrimage expressed his expectations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, referring to the existing relations between Tehran and Riyadh and the need to pay special attention to the affairs of pilgrims during the days of Hajj.

## More Than 168,000 Births Registered in a Month

TEHRAN (MNA) - During the first month of the current Iranian calendar year which started March 21, a total of 168,142 births were registered in the country, compared with 71,299 deaths.

The provinces of Tehran with 21,518 births, Khorasan Razavi with 16,777 births, and Sistan-Baluchestan with 14,426 births had the highest number of births in the first month of this year among 31 provinces of the country, according to the Civil Registration Organization. Meanwhile, Tehran province with 11,353 deaths, Khorasan Razavi province with 5,501 deaths, and Isfahan province with 4,549 deaths respectively had the highest death rate in the country.

President Ebrahim Raisi has urged all responsible bodies and organizations to adopt national policies in line with the goal of population growth. All the institutions and organizations of the country are obliged to prepare their plans and programs within the framework of the population growth policy and follow up on their implementation seriously, he said, IRIB reported.

## Construction of Makran Petrochemical Refinery Made 37% Progress

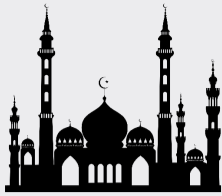
TEHRAN (IRNA) - The executive director of the Makran Petrochemical Refinery project says the construction of the project has made 37% progress.

Hanif Majidi said the purchase of technical knowledge and equipment for the project has been completed.

He expressed hopes that the first phase of the project will be operational by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1405 (March 20, 2027).

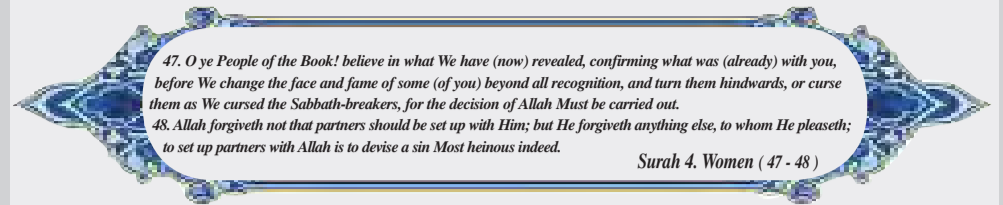
"This petrochemical refinery will produce 14 types of products when it becomes operational, and its annual production capacity is more than 14 million tons of products, which can be exported since it is located on sea shores," Majidi explained.

He further said that the 300,000-barrel petrochemical refinery will include 10 to 15 factories when it becomes operational, adding that efforts are being made to make it self-sufficient in providing its water and electricity.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:01
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:33
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:06
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:50



## Tehran, Muscat Sign 4 Documents to Boost Economic Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Iran and Oman on Sunday signed four documents to improve cooperation in various sectors amid an official visit to Tehran by Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said.**

Tehran and Muscat will boost collaboration in the economic, energy and investment fields as well as free zones.

The documents were inked by Iranian ministers of oil, economic affairs and finance as well as the secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones and Omani minister of energy, finance and trade.

At a press conference with his Omani counterpart, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said, in addition to the four documents, leaders of Iran and Oman seek to finalize a comprehensive strategic cooperation agreement in the near future.

Trade exchanges between Iran and Oman have more than doubled since President Raisi paid a visit to Muscat last May, when 12 cooperation documents were signed, Amirabdollahian said.

He expressed hope that the new cooperation agreements will further boost the growing trade between the two countries.

He said Iran and Oman agree on the need to improve shipping cooperation and activate the capacity of the two countries' ports.

On Sunday Iran and Oman signed an agreement on their joint study on shared Hengam oil field in the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf.

The agreement is aimed at preparing a Master Development Plan (MDP) for the joint oil field, and different scenarios for further development and bilateral cooperation on exploitation of the field.

The agreement was signed following memorandums of understanding (MoUs) inked during last year's Oman visit of Iran's Oil Minister accompanying Iranian President Raisi.

Iran had earlier signed several MoUs with neighboring states on integrated development of joint fields, but none of them made progress and led to an agreement. This is the first agreement on cooperation between Iran and a neighboring country in a shared field. This agreement, however, has yet to include the field development,



as the development contract is pending and will be signed after the MDP preparation.

Meanwhile Iranian minister of economic affairs and finance announced the signing of an agreement with Oman for setting up a joint investment committee aimed at bolstering bilateral trade.

Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi said a cooperation agreement was inked for launching a joint investment committee between Iran and Oman in the wake of an ongoing visit to Iran by a high-ranking Omani delegation led by Oman's Sultan.

Under the agreement, the two sides agreed to follow up on the implementation of the deals signed between the senior officials of the two countries, he stated.

Also, a cooperation agreement was agreed between the two sides in the field of supporting bilateral investment which would be inked after it is approved by the Omani parliament, Khandouzi continued.

In response to a question on the prospect of economic relations between the two countries in the future, the economy minister said, "Given the volume of bilateral trade between Iran and Oman that increased significantly following last year's visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Muscat, all indications are that the two sides would witness considerable trade boom in the coming year."

He expressed hope that bilateral joint investment will open a new phase of economic cooperation between the two countries.

## Iran, Syria Agree to Launch Joint Insurance Company

**TEHRAN (MNA) - To help underpin bilateral trade and economic ties, a cooperation agreement was signed between insurance companies from Iran and Syria.**

Iran's Alborz Insurance Company and the Syrian Oqaila Insurance Company, signed a document to launch a joint insurance company.

The MoU was signed by Mousa Rezaei, the CEO of Alborz Insurance and Eng. Samer Al-Ash, General Manager of Oqaila Company.

According to Mousa Rezaei the agreement calls for Iranian investment in the Arab county by covering Iranian businesses operating there, Alborz Insurance website quoted him as saying.

"This signals the beginning of Iranian insurers playing a role in supporting businesses operating outside the country...We are willing to send our experts in the three main fields of reinsurance, Takaful and commercial insurance to Syria in near future," Rezaei said, according to Financial Tribune.

The MoU aims to enhance strategic cooperation in the field of providing insurance services to the insured of the two companies in Syria and Iran, in addition to reinsurance services for the accepted risks of both parties, and coverage of various risks for projects and investments in both countries, SANA reported.

Al-Ash affirmed that Alborz Insurance Company is a leading insurance company in the Iranian insurance market, noting that Oqaila Company is working to make a significant change in the mechanism of providing services to its insurers at all levels and enhance the absorptive capacity of reinsurance agreements against all risks.

## Iran, Iraq Discuss Boosting Transportation Cooperation

**TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's deputy transport minister Shahriyar Afandizadeh in a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart conferred on expanding transport cooperation.**

During the meeting held in Baghdad, the two Iranian and Iraqi deputy transport ministers discussed the ways to expand cooperation between the two countries in the transportation sector, as well as facilitate the transportation of pilgrims.

Taleb Abdullah Bayesh, Undersecretary of Iraq Ministry of Transportation for Technical Affairs, told Iraqi media that they've also discussed increasing cooperation in the field of land and air transportation and the importance of increasing the number of flights.

The Iraqi Minister of Transportation has already committed to making all the necessary efforts to improve the services provided to Iranian pilgrims, he added.

The Iraqi Ministry plays an active role in facilitating the movement of pilgrims who enter through border crossings, according to him.

## Winners of 8th National Energy Management Awards Announced



**TEHRAN - The winners of the 8th National Energy Management Awards were announced with awarding them statues.**

According to IDRO News, Behran Oil Company won the two-star silver statues in the 751 to 800 points category and Kangan Petro Refinery Company, Kermanshah Province Gas Company, South Pars Gas Complex (fourth refinery) won single-star silver statue in the 700 to 750 points category.

According to this report, Ilam Gas Refinery, Jam Petrochemical, Noori Petrochemical, Pars Oil, Kurdistan Province Gas and Razavi Province Gas companies all won the three-star bronze statues of the event.

Addressing the event, the CEO of Industrial Management Institute (IMI) pointed to the long history and experience of IMI in design and implementation of ranking system and holding national awards and said that the goals behind holding the National Energy Management Awards is to manage resources and energy consumption as well as increasing the profitability through increasing productivity of energy resources.

Touching upon some of important usages of the fourth industrial revolution technology in the energy management, Abolfazl Kiani Bakhtiari said that industrial internet of objects is the base of building an energy management system and connects all smart objects involved in the production and because of this technology, data of sensors, meters and planners of production form an integrated picture.

He then reiterated that design of the integrated management system and energy planning is an important step in the country in line with improving energy productivity.

## HOSCO to Support Knowledge-Based Companies



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) during his visit of IRISA Company said investment in the knowledge-based companies is a must.**

According to the public relations of HOSCO, the CEO of company Mr. Ataollah Maroufkhani visited International Systems Engineering and Automation Company (IRISA) in the presence of the CEO of IRISA Mr. Akbar Golboo, Mr. Tabesh, a member of board of directors of HOSCO and some of senior managers of HOSCO and during the visit Mr. Maroufkhani called IRISA the arm of technology of HOSCO. He added that investment in the knowledge-based companies like IRISA as an active knowledge-based company in the field of IT and industrial automation is a must and the necessity for this investment is to create required infrastructures for developing technology in the steel industry.

He reiterated that IRISA has required capacity for helping developing technology in the steel industry.

Meanwhile Maroufkhani hailed the performance of IRISA Company in the projects of Hormozgan Steel Company and said that HOSCO is ready to support developmental projects in IRISA and to pave the development path of IRISA in HOSCO.

It is worth noting that HOSCO along with Mobarakeh Steel Company are the main share-holders of IRISA Company.

## CEO of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO):

### Volume of Copper Reserves of Sungun Is Unmatched in West Asia and North Africa



**Sungun Copper Mine in East Azarbaijan Province is unparalleled in terms of copper reserves in West Asia and North Africa**

According to Copper Press, Dr. Ali Rostami, CEO of the National Copper Industries Company of Iran (NICICO), stated this in the meeting of managers and capital market activists, which was held in East Azarbaijan Province to study NICICO's capacities in the province. Discovery of copper as a deposit and divine gift continues, he said, adding: Due to the efforts of his colleagues in the field of exploration and development, 2 billion tons of copper were added to the copper reserves of this company, and this amount made the country reach from the 7th to the 5th rank in the world in terms of copper reserves. He added: Last year, the Supreme Leader twice emphasized the neglect of the mining sector, and this doubles our responsibility in this area. Dr. Rostami continued by referring to the planning for multiple production and the realization of the vision of one million tons of cathodes in 1406 and said: In the first step, we succeeded in producing 300 thousand tons of cathodes for the first time in the history of the copper company in 1401. This was despite the fact that in 1400, cathode copper production was 285,000 tons; therefore, we plan to produce one million tons of cathodes by the year 1406, from the current 18th rank to the 5th rank in the world. He added: Currently, with 7% exploration, we have reached the 5th rank in the world, and explorative drilling 100,000 meters is

on the agenda as we have united to achieve this goal, and this means an increase of 5,000 billion in investment in East Azarbaijan Province. The CEO of NICICO said that the company has set target for implementing 100,000 meters of exploratory drilling in East Azarbaijan Province and termed expansion of exploration activities one of the important actions that can be in line with the Supreme Leader's order for compensating the lag in the mining sector. Dr. Rostami emphasized that the development of discoveries is one of the orders of the leadership and said: We did not have a reference laboratory in the northwest of the country, but the first reference laboratory was established in cooperation with Tabriz University has been opened and will be fully operational with an investment of 300 billion tomans. He pointed out that the current capacity of Sungun copper complex was designed to produce 280 thousand tons of copper concentrate, but our colleagues succeeded in increasing the productivity of the factories in 2011 with a growth of 9%. comparing to the plan, to produce 333 thousand tons of copper concentrate, which was an important achievement last year. The CEO of the copper company announced the employment of 30 thousand people in Sungun copper and estimated the increase of this number to 50 thousand in the very near future. Dr. Rostami stated in the meeting of managers and capital market activists: So far, 2 billion dollars have been financed from the capital market and soon we will offer the first public company in the capital market and its subscription will start in the coming days. He also expanded the use of He considered the electric car to be one of the reasons for the increase in copper consumption and predicted a 4-fold demand for copper in the world market. The CEO of the copper company announced two concentration plants in Sungun copper with a capacity of 900 thousand tons of concentrate from the 8 concentration projects of the National Copper Industries of Iran. And he said: The copper industry can be the leader among the existing industries in the country because we still have 60 years of copper reserves in the country and considering that there is no substitute for copper in the world, it makes this industry very valuable. Emphasizing that Cathode has the ability to increase added value, he said: One of the valuable stocks of the capital market is Femli (Symbol of NIICO in the Stock Market) which is recommended to all Iranian people as shareholders of this company.

## Indian Police Detain Protesting Wrestlers, Clear Site

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Indian police dragged away and detained two Olympic wrestlers and dozens of others as they tried to march to parliament demanding the arrest of the sport's federation chief over allegations of sexual harassment and intimidation.

In an escalation of the month-old standoff, police also cleared the site in central New Delhi where the wrestlers have been camped out while calling for the arrest of Brij Bhushan Singh, an AFP journalist at the scene said.

The wrestlers attempted to march to India's new parliament on Sunday just as it was being inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but they were halted by some of the hundreds of police on duty for the event.



## Nicaragua Accuses Catholic Church of Money Laundering, Freezes Accounts

MANAGUA (Dispatches) - Nicaraguan police said they are investigating several dioceses of the Catholic Church for money laundering, a day after local media reported that the bank accounts of parishes in the Central American country had been frozen.

The police, loyal to the government of President Daniel Ortega which has clashed fiercely with Nicaragua's bishops, said that since May 19 they found "hundreds of thousands of dollars" in Church facilities in various parts of the country.

Investigations "confirmed the unlawful removal of resources from bank accounts that had been ordered by law to be frozen," the police said in a statement.



## Erdogan Wins Turkish Election, Extending Rule to Third Decade



ANKARA (Dispatches) - President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won Turkey's presidential election, defeating opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu in Sunday's runoff vote and stretching his rule into a third decade.

With 99.43% of the votes counted, preliminary official results announced by Turkey's Supreme Election Council (YSK) on Sunday showed Erdogan winning with 52.14% of the votes. Kilicdaroglu received 47.86%.

Speaking to thousands of his supporters outside the presidential complex in Ankara, Erdogan said that now was the time to "put aside all the debates and conflicts regarding the election period and unite around our national goals and dreams."

"We are not the only winners, the winner is Turkey. The winner is all parts of our society, our democracy is the winner," Erdogan said.

Erdogan said among the government's main priorities would be fighting inflation and healing the wounds from a catastrophic earthquake on February 6 which claimed more than 50,000 lives in Turkey and neighboring Syria.

Speaking at his party headquarters in the capital Ankara, Kilicdaroglu said he would continue to fight until there is "real democracy" in Turkey.

"This was the most unfair election period in our history... We did not bow down to the climate of fear," he said. "In this election, the will of the people to change an authoritarian government became clear despite all the pressures."

Kilicdaroglu said what "truly makes me sad is the hard days ahead for our country."

Foreign leaders including those of Russia, Qatar, Libya, Algeria, Hungary, Iran and the Palestinian Authority were among the first to congratulate Erdogan.

In remarks published on the Kremlin's website, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the election provided "clear evidence of the Turkish people's support" for Erdogan's efforts "to strengthen state sovereignty and pursue an independent foreign policy."

US President Joe Biden also congratulated Erdogan, tweeting that he looked forward to working together "as NATO allies" on "bilateral issues and shared global challenges."

Erdogan's supporters gathered in Istanbul's Taksim Square, chanting his name and "God is great."

Hundreds gathered outside the Istanbul headquarters of the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party after preliminary results showed Erdogan in the lead. Some came with children while others waved flags, honked car horns and set off flares and fireworks.

Speaking outside party headquarters amid the celebrations, Erdogan supporter Denel Anart said: "I hope he lives forever."

"He is my father, grandfather, uncle. He is my everything," Anart said.

Others struck a more religious note. "Muslims should rejoice. The whole world will know Muslims more," said Sehat Pak, 33. "The Islamic world should rejoice."

But Mehmet Karli, adviser to Kilicdaroglu, called Erdogan's election win a "pyrrhic victory" accusing the president of fueling tensions during the election.

"It does appear that President Erdogan has won these elections. But it would be a mistake to call this a victory. Perhaps a pyrrhic victory is a better term to describe this situation," Karli said.

Erdogan's victory over Kilicdaroglu, a 74-year-old bureaucrat and leader of the left-leaning CHP, leaves Turkey a deeply divided nation.

## Zelensky Thanks Air Defense After Most Powerful Attack on Kyiv

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky praised his country's air defense forces, after the capital Kyiv saw the largest drone attack since the beginning of the Russian invasion.

The overnight attack killed two people and wounded three others.

The latest drone attack came as Russia has intensified aerial strikes on the capital this month, and warned the West against escalating the conflict after the United States agreed to greenlight F-16 deliveries.

Ukraine said the latest attack in Kyiv was the largest of the invasion, with around forty out of more than fifty drones targeting the capital.

"Most of the destruction was averted, and most of the lives that could have been taken by these Shaheds (drones) were saved," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his daily evening address.

"I am grateful to each and every person who made it possible!... Thank you warriors!" he said.

This was the 14th drone attack on the Ukrainian capital by Russia this month.



## Saudi Arabia, U.S. Say Sudan Factions Posturing for Escalation

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia and the United States called for the extension of a ceasefire deal that has brought some let-up in a six-week war between military factions, but said both sides had impeded aid efforts and were posturing for further escalation.

Clashes could be heard overnight and on Sunday in the capital Khartoum, residents said, while human rights monitors reported deadly fighting in El Fashir, one of the principal cities in the western region of Darfur.

The conflict between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that erupted on April 15 has left the capital reeling from heavy battles, lawlessness and a collapse in services, driving nearly 1.4 million people from their homes and threatening to destabilise the region.

A week-long ceasefire brokered in Saudi Arabia and U.S.-led talks in Jeddah are due to run until Monday evening.

Both countries are remotely monitoring the truce and called on the army and the RSF to renew the "imperfectly observed" ceasefire to allow for humanitarian work.

"There were violations by both parties that significantly impeded delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of essential services," Saudi Arabia and the U.S. said in a joint statement.

The statement cited breaches of the truce, including air strikes and commandeering of medical supplies by the army, and the occupation of civilian buildings and looting by the RSF.

"Both parties have told facilitators their goal is de-escalation to facilitate humanitarian assistance and essential repairs, yet both parties are posturing for further escalation," it said.

The RSF has said it is ready to discuss the possibility of renewal and that it would continue to monitor the truce "to test the seriousness and commitment of the other party to proceed with the renewal of the agreement or not".

"People are in shock. There's a lot of damage, the windows were broken, the roof was damaged," said Sergei Movchan, a 50-year-old resident whose house was damaged by debris.

Kyiv had been relatively spared since the beginning of the year, but in May its residents have had to live with almost nightly air raid sirens and thundering explosions.

The air raid alert lasted more than five hours overnight Saturday as the attack was carried out in several waves.

"Russians are intimidating us. But I think it's the agony of their regime," Movchan said.

Authorities reported that two were killed and three others wounded as debris of the downed drones fell in several districts.

Kyiv's mayor, Vitali Klitschko described the assault as "massive" with drones "arriving from several directions at once".

The Kyiv military administration first said that "more than 40 Russian drones were destroyed by air defence" systems in the "most important drone attack against the capital since the start of the invasion" in February 2022.

## Right-Wing Populist Javier Milei Gains Support in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - He believes selling human organs should be legal, climate change is a "socialist lie," sex education is a ploy to destroy the family and that the Central Bank should be abolished. He also could be Argentina's next president.

Javier Milei, an admirer of former U.S. President Donald Trump, is the latest example of how right-wing populists are making inroads in Latin America, appealing to a citizenry angry with politics as usual and eager for outsiders to shake up the system.

A libertarian economist and self-described "anarcho capitalist," Milei made a name for himself by shouting against the "political caste" on television. His presidential candidacy looked like a sideshow until recently. Polls show his popularity rising, and his proposals dominate discussions ahead of October elections.

"Today no one can say that Milei isn't someone who could get to the presidency," said Luis Tonelli, a political scientist at University of Buenos Aires.

Milei jumped from talking head to politician in 2021 when he won a seat in Argentina's lower house of Congress. Since then, he's had little legislative activity, but 2.7 million people have signed up for his monthly raffle to give away his salary.

On a recent Sunday, fans lined up at the Buenos Aires Book Fair to see him talk about his latest book, "The End of Inflation," on addressing Argentina's most pressing economic issue: inflation running at an annual rate of more than 100%. The book calls for cutting spending, abolishing the Central Bank and moving to the dollar.

Many of his fans never made it inside. They're mostly young men who treat the 52-year-old politician like a rock star and affectionately refer to him as "the wig" because of his signature unkempt hair.

"The caste is afraid," Milei said, and his followers chanted along.

Afraid or not, the country's political leaders now see him as real competition in an election that until recently seemed like a contest between two electoral coalitions that have dominated for years.

Analysts have drawn parallels between Milei and Trump, because they both espouse socially conservative views and vow to return the country to an unspecified period of greatness.

Federico Finchelstein, an Argentine historian at New School for Social Research in New York, said Milei is "a Trump who fancies himself an academic."



## Modi Opponents Boycott Opening of New Indian Parliament

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's major opposition parties boycotted the inauguration of a new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a rare show of unity against his Hindu nationalist ruling party, which has ruled for nine years and is seeking a third term in next year's elections.

Modi inaugurated the new Parliament in the capital of New Delhi by offering prayers as Hindu priests chanted religious hymns. Opposition parties criticized the event saying Modi had sidelined President Droupadi Murmu, who has only ceremonial powers but is the head of state and highest constitutional authority.

Shortly after the inauguration, a visibly beaming Modi entered Parliament amid a rousing applause by his party lawmakers who chanted "Modi, Modi." He delivered an almost 40-minute speech in which he hailed India's parliamentary democracy and said the country had left behind its colonial past, referring to the old Parliament building that was built by the British when they ruled India.

"India is the mother of democracy," Modi said, as lawmakers thumped their desks. "Several years of foreign rule stole our pride from us. Today, India has left behind that colonial mindset."

The opposition Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "Parliament is the voice of the people. The Prime Minister is considering the inauguration of the Parliament House as a coronation."

At least 19 opposition parties skipped the event, which coincided with the birth anniversary of a Hindu nationalist ideologue.

Opposition parties said in a statement Wednesday that Modi's decision to inaugurate the building was "a grave insult" to India's democracy, because the government had "disqualified, suspended and muted" opposition lawmakers while passing "controversial legislation" with little debate.

"When the soul of democracy has been sucked out from the parliament, we find no value in a new building," the parties said.

India's powerful Home Minister Amit Shah said the opposition had politicized the event. Other leaders from Modi's party said the boycott was an insult to the prime minister.

The new triangular-shaped building — built at an estimated cost of \$120 million — is part of a \$2.8 billion revamp of British-era offices and residences in central New Delhi that will also include blocks of buildings to house government ministries and departments, and Modi's new private residence. The entire project, called the "Central Vista," is spread over 3.2 kilometers (1.9 miles).



## We Abuse Plastic, It's So Cheap



NAIROBI (Dispatches) - Humanity uses and abuses hundreds of millions of tonnes of plastic a year because "it's so cheap", despite the huge cost of the pollution it creates, the head of the UN Environment Programme told AFP.

Inger Andersen, an economist by training, told AFP she that a binding, "ambitious" global treaty would help fix the problem, ahead of the second round of UN-led negotiations that diplomats from 175 nations aim to conclude next year.

The interview has been edited for concision and clarity.

**Q:** What are the main obstacles to an ambitious treaty?

**A:** Today, virgin raw polymer is cheaper than recycled polymer. So here's the question: What will allow us move from that linear 'we take it, we make it, we waste it' reality to a circular approach? Right now, it's so inexpensive you can just throw plastic away. But the cost to the environment and human health is huge, and it is not taxed anywhere.

**Q:** Less than 10 per cent of plastic is recycled today — is that a credible solution?

**A:** We can't recycle our way out of this mess. But recycling is one of the many keys that we will need to make this work. Today, we simply throw plastic away because it has no value.

When I was a little girl growing up in Denmark with very limited pocket money, my brothers and I collected plastic bottles every Saturday because we could get two kroner. It wasn't much, but it made it worthwhile. Now imagine the day that this stuff has value — we would think about and treat that garbage very differently!

**Q:** What changes in attitude or mentality do you think we need to see?

**A:** Awareness is step one. Which is not to say the burden falls entirely on consumers — at the end of the day, it's business and governments that have to take that responsibility.

But every consumer has a choice. Let's say we have a party. Do we need single-use cups and plastic bags? If that bag I use to carry home five tomatoes is a heavy polymer, it will sit in a landfill for hundreds of years, maybe a thousand. Why are supermarket bananas in a plastic bag? Nature already delivered them with their own packaging.

So there are choices we can make. Children get it, and are already holding their parents to account. But the bigger system shifts will come from agreements such as the one we are negotiating.

**Q:** Plastic pollution has not been a priority on the international agenda until quite recently. What changed?

**A:** The popular demand for solutions has become powerful, and it's coming across the board from left to right in most countries. I put it down to activism across a broad spectrum, and I am very, very grateful. I ask all those activists to keep the heat on to ensure that the treaty had ambitious and binding elements.

**Q:** Many green groups are worried that the plastics industry will have an undue influence in the talks.

**A:** For this second round of negotiations, we have 2,800 participants — 908 from government and 1,712 from non-government organisations (NGOs). There are ten industry associations represented. They have a role to play.

Take ozone, which is probably our most successful treaty. We couldn't find a solution to the manufactured gases depleting the ozone layer without having industry at the table.

Here's what I say to business: this is coming to a movie theatre near you soon. You might as well lean into it and be part of the change, because we will get a treaty and it will be ambitious. Once we make the enabling legislation, business will follow.

## In Venice, an Architectural Toolbox To Adapt to Climate Change



VENICE (Dispatches) - From dry toilets to recovered water captured by air conditioners, the Venice Architecture Biennale is full of ideas for how to tackle climate change.

The exhibition, entitled the "Laboratory of the Future", is aimed at offering "ideas, projects, ways of making, ways of thinking as a kind of gift to the audience", curator Lesley Lokko told AFP.

Here are some of the examples to inspire from the Biennale, the prestigious international show that opened this weekend and runs until November 26.

Water is a precious commodity but homes in Western countries use "about 30 per cent of potable water by flushing the toilet", lamented Eero Renell, an architect from Finland.

It doesn't have to be this way. In the middle of Finland's national pavilion, Renell installed a fully-functioning example of a toilet requiring no water or sewers, similar to those found in chalets across the forests of his country. A tank placed under the bowl collects the waste, onto which a handful of bark is thrown after use, while urine is collected in a small auxiliary tank. When full, the contents can be emptied onto a vegetable patch and used as fertiliser.

"We've learned to recycle almost everything else during the last few decades, but human waste is still seen as a waste, not as a resource," Renell said.

Aware of the taboo that still surrounds the subject, he mischievously shows a video of him sporting a pitchfork as he empties his own dry toilet — then harvesting some magnificent pumpkins grown with the help of his homemade manure. Stacks of skillfully arranged stones are piled up in the pavilion presented by the United Arab Emirates, inspired by a dry wall technique traditional to the country and now being used to present another way of recycling.

## Egypt Unveils Ancient Mummification Workshops and Tombs

SAQQARA (Dispatches) - Archaeologists in Egypt have unearthed two human and animal embalming workshops, as well as two tombs, discovered in the Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo, the government said.

The vast burial site, at the ancient Egyptian capital Memphis, is a Unesco World Heritage site and home to more than a dozen pyramids, animal graves and old Coptic Christian monasteries.

Mostafa Waziri, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, told reporters the embalming workshops, where humans and animals were mummified, "date back to the 30th dynasty" which reigned around 2,400 years ago.

Researchers "found several rooms equipped with stony beds where the deceased lay down for mummification", Egypt's tourism and antiquities ministry said.

Each bed ended in gutters to facilitate the mummification process, with a collection of clay pots nearby to hold entrails and organs, as well as a collection of instruments and ritual vessels.

Early studies of the other workshop suggest it was used for the "mummification of sacred animals".

The discovery also includes the tombs of two priests dating back to the 24th and 14th centuries BC, respectively.

The first belonged to Ne Hesut Ba, who served the fifth dynasty as the head of scribes and priest of the gods Horus and Maat.

The tomb walls are decorated with depictions of "daily life, agriculture and hunting scenes", said Mohamed Youssef, director of the Saqqara archaeological site.

The second tomb, that of a priest named Men Kheber, was carved in rock and features depictions of the deceased himself on the tomb walls, as well as in a one-metre-long alabaster statue, Youssef told reporters.

Egypt has unveiled a string of major archaeological discoveries in recent years.

Critics say the flurry of excavations has prioritised finds shown to grab media attention over hard academic research.

The discoveries have been a key component of Egypt's attempts to revive its vital tourism industry amid a severe economic crisis.

The government recently launched a strategy "aiming for a rapid increase in inbound tourism" at a rate of 25-30 per cent a year, Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa said at the site today.

Egypt aims to draw in 30 million tourists a year by 2028, up from 13 million before the Covid pandemic.

The crowning jewel of the government's strategy is the long-delayed inauguration of the Grand Egyptian Museum at the foot of the pyramids in Giza.



## Paralyzed Man Walks Again Via Thought-Controlled Implants

PARIS (dispatches) - A paralyzed man has regained the ability to walk smoothly using only his thoughts for the first time, researchers said yesterday, thanks to two implants that restored communication between brain and spinal cord.

The patient Gert-Jan, who did not want to reveal his surname, said the breakthrough had given him "a freedom that I did not have" before.

The 40-year-old Dutchman has been paralysed in his legs for more than a decade after suffering a spinal cord injury during a bicycle accident.

But using a new system he can now walk "naturally", take on difficult terrain and even climb stairs, according to a study published in the journal Nature.

The advance is the result of more than a decade of work by a team of researchers in France and Switzerland.

Last year the team showed that a spinal cord implant — which sends electrical pulses to stimulate movement in leg muscles — had allowed three paralysed patients to walk again.

But they needed to press a button to move their legs each time.

Gert-Jan, who also has the spinal implant, said this made it difficult to get into the rhythm of taking a "natural step".

The latest research combines the spinal implant with new technology called a brain-computer interface, which is implanted above the part of the brain that controls leg movement.

The interface uses algorithms based on artificial intelligence methods to decode brain recordings in real time, the researchers said.

This allows the interface, which was designed by researchers at France's Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), to work out how the patient wants to move their legs at any moment.

The data is transmitted to the spinal cord implant via a portable device that fits in a walker or small backpack, allowing patients to get around without help from others.

The two implants build what the researchers call a "digital bridge" to cross the disconnect between the spinal cord and brain that was created during Gert-Jan's accident.

"Now I can just do what I want — when I decide to make a step the stimulation will kick in as soon as I think about it," Gert-Jan said.

After undergoing invasive surgery twice to implant both devices, it has "been a long journey to get here," he told a press conference in the Swiss city of Lausanne.

But among other changes, he is now able to stand at a bar again with friends while having a beer.

"This simple pleasure represents a significant change in my life," he said in a statement.

Gregoire Courtine, a neuroscientist at Switzerland's Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne and a study co-author, said it was "radically different" from what had been accomplished before.

"Previous patients walked with a lot of effort — now one just needs to think about walking to take a step," he told a press conference in the Swiss city of Lausanne.

There was another positive sign: following six months of training, Gert-Jan recovered some sensory perception and motor skills that he had lost in the accident.

He was even able to walk with crutches when the "digital bridge" was turned off.

Guillaume Charvet, a researcher at France's CEA, told AFP this suggests "that the establishment of a link between the brain and spinal cord would promote a reorganisation of the neuronal networks" at the site of the injury.



## Do Sleeping Masks Impact Our Sleep?



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Many people wear masks to help with sleep. Recent research suggests the benefits of sleep masks on sleep quality. Moreover, they pose little to no side effects or risk to human health, making sleep masks an attractive option to promote sleep.

Sleep masks can help promote sleep by effectively blocking light.

The risks of sleep masks are relatively low as a non-pharmacological measure to improve sleep.

Parents should check with their child's pediatrician before using a sleep mask on children. Sleep masks may benefit shift workers, insomnia sufferers, and those traveling.

For humans to sleep well, darkness is essential. The decrease in light at night plays a direct role in signaling melatonin secretion in the brain. This hormone induces sleepiness and tells our bodies it's time to go to bed.

Excessive light can disrupt this signaling pathway, and science has begun to confirm that blocking light with something as simple as a sleeping mask or eye covering at night can make a significant difference in sleep quality.

Sleep masks for the eyes are a low-cost tool that may help people sleep better. One 2020 study showed the application of sleep masks during their hospital stays subjectively improved sleep quality in critically ill patients.

Similarly, a systematic review from 2017 drew similar conclusions in that eye masks and ear plugs may have a positive effect on sleep quality for patients in intensive care units.

## Poland to Raise Minimum Wage Twice in 2024

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Poland plans to raise the minimum wage twice in 2024 to help people cope with high inflation, Family and Social Policy Minister Marlena Malag said, as the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party prepares for a parliamentary election later this year.

The cost of living has been growing significantly in recent months, with inflation in February reaching its highest in more than a quarter of a century at 18.4% year on year. In April inflation stood at 14.7%.

"The minimum wage next year will be above 4,200 zlotys (\$1,015)," Malag was quoted as saying by state-controlled news agency PAP. She said that, like in 2023, next year the minimum wage will be raised in two steps - from Jan. 1 and July 1.



## Iraq Unveils \$17b Transport Project Linking Europe and Mideast

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq presented an ambitious plan to turn itself into a regional transportation hub by developing its road and rail infrastructure, linking Europe with the Middle East.

Once completed, the \$17 billion project known as the "Route of Development" would span the length of the country, stretching 1,200 kilometres (745 miles) from the northern border with Turkey to the Gulf in the south.

Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani announced the project during a conference with transport ministry representatives from Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

"We see this project as a pillar of a sustainable non-oil economy, a link that serves Iraq's neighbours and the region, and a contribution to economic integration efforts," Sudani said.

While further discussions are required, any country that wishes "will be able to carry out part of the project", the Iraqi parliament's transport committee said, adding the project could be completed in "three to five years".

"The Route of Development will boost interdependence between the countries of the region," Turkey's ambassador to Baghdad Ali Riza Guney said, without elaborating on what role his country would play in the project.

War-ravaged and beset by rampant corruption, oil-rich Iraq suffers from dilapidated infrastructure.

Its roads, riddled with potholes and poorly maintained, are in terrible condition.

Those connecting Baghdad to the north cross areas where sporadic attacks are still carried out by remnants of the Islamic State group.

Sudani has prioritised the reconstruction of the country's road network, along with upgrading its failing electricity infrastructure.

Developing the road and rail corridor would allow Iraq to capitalise on its geographical position, with the aim of making the country a transportation hub for goods and people moving between the Gulf, Turkey and Europe.

Work has already started to increase capacity at the commercial port of Al-Faw, on the shores of the Persian Gulf, where cargo is to be unloaded before it embarks on the new road and rail links.

The project also includes the construction of around 15 train stations along the route, including in the major cities of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, and up to the Turkish border.

The Persian Gulf, largely bordered by Iran and Saudi Arabia, is a major shipping zone, especially for the transportation of hydrocarbons extracted by countries of the region.

Zyad al-Hashemi, an Iraqi consultant on international transport, cast doubt on the plan to develop the country into a transportation hub, saying it lacks "fluidity".

"Customers prefer to transport their goods directly from Asia to Europe, without going through a loading and unloading process," that would see containers moved between ships and road or rail, he said.

Transport is a key sector in the global economy and Iraq's announcement is the latest in other planned international mega-projects, including China's "Belt and Road Initiative" announced in 2013 by its President Xi Jinping.

The planned works in that project would see 130 countries across Asia, Europe and Africa connected through land and sea infrastructure providing greater access to China.

## India Will Be 3rd Largest Economy in 6 Years

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Enabling policies and grassroots initiatives of Modi-led government have led to social and economic transformation of the country since 2014, and the nation is all set to become the fourth largest economy in world within two years, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

India is being seen as a bright spot globally and the world is placing its confidence in India, Mr Vaishnaw said, urging people to continue posing their faith in the decisive leadership that will take the nation to new highs by 2047.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government came to power in 2014, India moved up from tenth rank to the fifth, Mr Vaishnaw said, adding within two years India will be fourth largest economy in world.

"Within six years, India will be the third largest economy in world," Mr Vaishnaw said highlighting the speed of progress and economic growth under the government, which is driven by determination and can-do attitude.

Mr Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, IT and Communications, was speaking at a national conclave on nine years of the Modi government.

Highlighting the government's various schemes and initiatives that have empowered



people and transformed lives, Mr Vaishnaw told the audience: "Your future is being built in today's India. By 2047, you will live in developed country...when you take decisions, India will be among the top most economies."

Mr Vaishnaw said that PM's leadership has brought a new thought process, vision and changed mindsets. Previously, the poor were seen only as a vote bank. Government schemes since 2014 have led to people's empowerment, brought transformative and qualitative changes and ensured grassroots delivery of services, he pointed out.

The minister made a presentation on the performance of the governments before 2014 with the government since and said while the previous governance efforts had become synonymous with scams, the current government works with the ethos of 'every penny for the benefit of the poor'. This, he said, has reflected in the way schemes and programs have been designed and implemented keeping the poor and the weaker sections of society in mind.

Criticizing the opposition, the minister said that Congress rule before 2014 had turned the country that had been forging ahead into 'fragile five', and consistent efforts since 2014 has once again brought it into top global league.

## Charting the Global Economy: German Growth Outlook Deteriorates

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German companies aren't seeing any evidence of a pickup taking hold in Europe's biggest economy.

Germany suffered its first recession since the start of pandemic, extinguishing hopes that Europe's top economy could escape such a fate after the war in Ukraine sent energy prices soaring.

Those troubles risk spilling over to the rest of the continent which for decades have relied on Germany to power growth. The country's companies are also pessimistic, maintaining a prediction for no growth in 2023.

Inflation in the U.S. and UK were both stronger than forecast in April, fueling bets in both regions that their central banks will keep raising interest rates. Here are some of the charts that appeared on Bloomberg this week on the latest developments in the global economy:

Germany has been Europe's economic engine for decades, pulling the region through one crisis after another. But that resilience is breaking down, and it spells danger for the whole continent.

German companies aren't seeing any evidence of a pickup taking hold in Europe's biggest economy, according to a survey conducted by the DIHK business lobby. The group maintained a prediction for zero growth in 2023, an outlook that's more pessimistic than the 0.2% expansion forecast by the European Commission. Britain's inflation rate remained much stronger than expected, with the fastest increase in services and core prices in more than three decades fueling a flurry of bets on more Bank of England interest rate rises.

### U.S.

Inflation and consumer spending accelerated last month, highlighting steady price pressures and demand that will keep Federal Reserve policy makers tilted toward raising interest rates further.

Combined with other Friday reports showing a surge in business equipment orders and a pickup in merchandise imports, the data indicate demand continues to power ahead.

On Friday, June 2, millions of Americans are due a total of \$25 billion worth of Social Security payments. And more than anything else, that may prove a decisive element in forcing an end to the partisan standoff over raising the federal debt limit.

### Asia

In 2021, a remote coal town in northeastern China was forced to undergo an unprecedented financial restructuring. Its struggles since are an ominous sign for President Xi Jinping as other heavily indebted municipalities look set to follow suit.

Singapore is confident that a rebound in travel that's boosting the services sector will help the island's economy avoid a recession this year despite a darkening global outlook.

### Emerging Markets

Brazil's central bank may have pushed up interest rates earlier and higher than others, but almost all of them — from the Federal Reserve to the Bank of England — have hiked to levels that are uncomfortably high for politicians. Calls for an end to rate hikes are mounting in capitols from Nairobi to Bogotá to New Delhi, threatening to undermine the autonomy that's so critical to central banks' fight against inflation.

Mexico's economy expanded at a slightly slower pace in the first quarter than previously estimated, while still benefiting from strong remittance flows and record exports to the US. The economy has now posted six straight quarters of growth.

## APEC Trade Chiefs Agree On More Inclusive Trade

DETROIT (Dispatches) - Trade ministers from the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries agreed to promote more inclusive and sustainable trade, but failed to produce a joint statement due to Russia and China's objections to language on Ukraine.

Closing out two days of talks in Detroit, the APEC host, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, instead issued a chair's statement summarizing the discussions, with an emphasis on inclusiveness, fighting climate change and sustainability.

"We reaffirm our determination to deliver a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, inclusive and predictable trade and investment environment," the statement read.

The group reaffirmed its commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core. "We will continue to work to ensure a level playing field to foster a favorable trade and investment environment and reaffirm our commitment to keep markets open and to address supply chain disruptions," it said.

APEC leaders last November in Bangkok approved language stating that "most members" strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and the resulting human suffering and economic impact. But at the meeting in Detroit, China and Russia objected to including the language, leaving it to Tai's chair's statement, which noted there were differing views and that "APEC is not the forum to resolve security issues."

Tai told a news conference that she hoped APEC leaders at a November summit in San Francisco would be able to produce a joint statement.



## IMIDRO Plans to Save \$600m Annually in Imports

TEHRAN (MNA) - Amir Khorrami-Shad, the managing director of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation (IMIDRO), has said two plans will be launched aiming to save \$600 million annually in imports.

In the first phase, launching an alumina production unit with a capacity of 800,000 tons can save at least \$300 million annually, he said.

Launching a sponge coke production unit can also save \$300 million, he added. The production capacity of aluminum ingots in the country is currently about 800,000 tons per year, Khorrami-Shad noted.



## Cracks Emerging in Europe's United Front to Battle Climate Change

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union has been at the forefront of the fight against climate change and the protection of nature for years. But it now finds itself under pressure from within to pause new environmental efforts amid fears they will hurt the economy.

With the next European Parliament elections set for 2024, some leaders and lawmakers are concerned about antagonizing workers and voters with new binding legislation and restrictive measures and are urging the 27-nation bloc to hit the brakes.

Since Ursula von der Leyen took the helm of the powerful European Commission back in 2019, environmental policies have topped the EU agenda. EU nations have endorsed plans to become climate neutral by 2050 and adopted a wide range of measures, from reducing energy consumption to sharply cutting transport emissions and reforming the EU's trading system for greenhouse gases.

But cracks in the European united front against climate change have emerged in recent months.

The first sign was earlier this year when Germany, the bloc's economic giant, delayed a deal to ban new internal combustion engines in the EU by 2035 amid ideological divisions inside the German government.

An agreement was finally reached in March, but just weeks later, the bloc's other powerhouse, France, called for a pause on EU environmental regulation, causing controversy.

As he presented a bill on green industry earlier this month, French President Emmanuel Macron said it was time for the EU to implement existing rules before adopting new ones.

"We have already passed a lot of regulations at European level, more than our neighbors," he said. "Now we have to execute, not make new rules, because otherwise we will lose all players."

Macron has been particularly concerned by a U.S. clean energy law that benefits electric vehicles and other products made in North America, fearing it will expose European companies to unfair competition. Although Europeans and their American partners keep working to resolve the challenges posed by the U.S. law, Macron's logic basically holds that a pause on environmental constraints would help EU businesses keep producing on home soil, despite competition from countries such as China that have lower environmental standards.

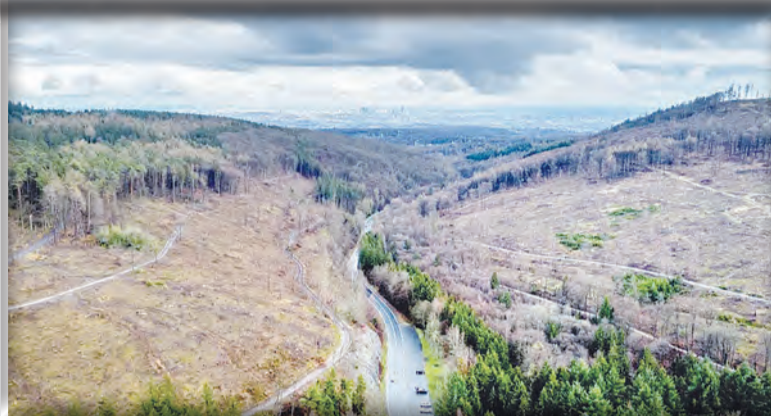
Belgian Prime minister Alexander De Croo quickly followed suit, calling this week for a moratorium on the introduction of EU legislation aimed at nature preservation, creating a rift within the governing coalition including green politicians.

The law proposed by the EU's executive arm aims, by 2030, to cover at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas with nature restoration measures, "and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050," the commission said.

De Croo said that climate legislation should not be overloaded with restoration measures or limits on agricultural nitrogen pollution, warning that businesses would no longer be able to keep up.

"That's why I'm asking that we press the pause button," he told VRT network.

"Let's not go too far with things that, strictly speaking, have nothing to do with



global warming. These other issues are important too, but measures to address them must be taken in phases."

Macron and De Croo have found allies at the European Parliament, where members of the biggest group, the Christian Democrat EPP, have asked the European Commission to withdraw the nature restoration law proposal on grounds that it will threaten agriculture and undermine food security in Europe.

The move came after two parliamentary committees, the Fisheries Committee and the Agriculture Committee, rejected the planned legislation.

EPP lawmakers claim that abandoning farmland will lead to an increase in food prices, more imports and drive farmers out of businesses.

"This is an exceptional step and shows that the Parliament is not ready to accept a proposal that only increases costs and insecurity for farmers, fishers and consumers," said Siegfried Muresan, the vice-chairman of the EPP Group responsible for budget and structural policies.

The growing opposition to the nature restoration law has caused great concern among environmental NGOs, and Frans Timmermans, the EU Commission's top climate official in charge of its Green Deal, warned he would not put forward an alternative proposal because there isn't time.

"You can't say I support the Green Deal, but not the ambition to restore nature. It's not 'à la carte menu,'" Timmermans said.

The EU commission has also proposed setting legally binding targets to reduce the use of pesticides by 50% by 2030 and a ban on all pesticide use in public parks, playgrounds and schools. To ease the transition to alternative pest control methods, farmers would be able to use EU funds to cover the cost of the new requirements for five years.

"If one piece falls, the other pieces fall. I don't see how we can maintain the Green Deal without the nature pillar, because without the nature pillar, the climate pillar is also not viable," Timmermans told EU lawmakers. "So we need to get these two together."

### Baghdad Urged to...

FROM PAGE 1

"The will of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to comprehensively expand and deepen relations with neighboring countries, especially the friendly and brotherly country of Iraq," he further said, stressing the implementation of other bilateral agreements, especially the economic ones.

Qasim al-Aarji, for his part, said that the government and the national security institution of Iraq are determined and ready to cooperate and interact with the Islamic Republic of Iran by maintaining close and continuous communication in all areas.

"We consider Iraq's security as Iran's security and Iran's security as Iraq's security," he also noted, pointing out the privileged relations between the two countries.

Continuous consultation between high-ranking officials to speed up the implementation of bilateral agreements, especially in the economic and security aspects will lead to stability and progress of the two countries, top Iraqi security official said.

### Iran Sovereign Wealth...

FROM PAGE 1

It comes after reports published in local media suggested that the NDFI had only \$10 billion in resources in an account held in the Central Bank of Iran.

The NDFI operates independently of Iranian government's budget. Its main mission is to use Iran's oil and gas export revenues for infrastructure and productive projects that could benefit future generations in Iran.

That comes as US sanctions on Iran's oil exports have caused a decline in earnings of the NDFI since 2018 when the sanctions were imposed.

### 1.2m Foreign Patients...

FROM PAGE 1

Einollahi said health tourists acknowledge that Iranian doctors are highly skilled and competent.

"Low cost and high quality of treatment with the use of modern technologies, new treatment methods, cultural and historical commonalities, easy access and tourist attractions are the factors among tourists in choosing Iran to receive medical services."

Pointing to the necessity of creating a "safe corridor" for the transfer of foreign patients to Iran, Einollahi said 233 Iranian medical centers have received international accreditation certificates for medical tourism, a figure that is expandable.

The Islamic Republic, Einollahi said, won the first scientific rank in West Asian in 2022. "Iran's global rank in terms of medical science is 15th, and our 40 universities have the quality of internationalization in medical education." The Iranian minister said, "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran not only has hard power, but our soft power is a great capacity that must be diligently heeded, and the use of this capacity is possible and a breakthrough in health diplomacy."

Einollahi pointed to the formation of G5 with the presence of Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and the World Health Organization. "The group was launched with the aim of regional cooperation in the field of health."

Referring to Iran's establishment of Al-Sibtain International University for Medical Sciences in Iraq, Einollahi said the move was one of the examples of the Islamic Republic's soft power and expressed Tehran's readiness to establish universities in other countries as well.

Iran has made significant progress in the field of medicine over the years, particularly in the areas of manufacturing pharmaceuticals and medical equipment as well as training physicians and surgeons at state-of-the-art medical centers across the country.

### Iraq Says Iran...

FROM PAGE 1

Iraq, however, has trouble paying for those imports: it owes Iran around \$11 billion in outstanding debts, according to Iraqi officials, which it struggles to pay due to U.S. sanctions on Iran that limit dollar transactions.

While Iran has slashed gas supplies previously amid the longstanding dispute over the debt repayments, both countries have sought to find creative ways to settle parts of the debt.

During Friday's phone call, Amirabdollahian thanked Iraq for trying to resolve the issue of financial transfers with Washington, the statement said.

It noted transfers had been made from Iran's account at Iraq's state-owned Trade Bank of Iraq to a Saudi bank, with the aim of securing spending on Iranian pilgrims who will travel to Saudi Arabia for the 2023 haj season.

Iraq spends roughly \$4 billion per year on imports of Iranian gas and power while at the same time burning massive quantities of natural gas as a byproduct of its hydrocarbons sector.

## IMF, Others Should Give \$100b Climate Foreign-Exchange Guarantee

LONDON (Dispatches) - A top-level meeting in Paris next month will lay out a \$100 billion plan to drive more money into climate and development finance in poorer countries by providing currency guarantees to investors, according to a document seen by Reuters.



The plan, which has not previously been reported, was sent to the world's governments ahead of the "Summit for a New Global Financing Pact" in Paris in June by the Bridgetown Initiative spearheaded by Barbados leader Mia Mottley.

The idea, in a consultation document dated April 2023, would rely on the firepower of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral development banks (MDBs), and forms part of growing efforts to reform the international financial system.

It would see the IMF and other MDBs "cut the excessive macro-risk premia on developing countries with \$100 billion per year of foreign exchange guarantees", for financing in more volatile domestic currencies rather than the dollar or euro.

The guarantees would be for "just green transition investments", which one source involved in the plans said could include "green" bonds focused on environmentally friendly projects as well as others such as ocean-focused "blue" bonds and sustainability-linked bonds.

Their benefit is that the MDBs would step in and compensate international buyers of those bonds if the country involved devalued its currency and effectively cut the dollar-value of its bond payments.

By removing that risk for investors, it should significantly reduce the rates of interest the governments have to pay. For some it could even be the boost needed to regain access to global capital markets lost during the COVID pandemic.

A report released at the COP27 climate talks suggested developing countries would need \$1 trillion a year in public and private money annually by 2030 to tackle global warming, yet to-date capital flows are just a fraction of what is needed.

A report by the World Bank and other big multilateral lenders said they gave \$51 billion in 2021 alongside \$13 billion from private finance.

The Paris summit, hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron on June 22-23, will be attended by a number of world leaders and representatives from flagship global institutions such as the IMF and United Nations.

## Deutsche Bank Used Big Trades to Raise Cash in March Turmoil

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - As banks came under mounting pressure in March, Deutsche Bank used big trades to give its cash buffers a temporary boost, employing a method that European regulators have raised concerns over, two sources familiar with the situation said.

Deutsche swapped billions of euros in securities for cash and government bonds, the sources told Reuters, which count towards its liquidity coverage ratio (LCR). This is meant to determine the extent of a bank's access to ready cash to fund outflows such as depositor withdrawals.

While a legitimate banking practice, the move underscored concern at Deutsche over the wider turmoil. Having a large cash pile would have reassured investors and clients after Credit Suisse and a number of U.S. banks suffered deposit runs.

The trades caught the attention of European Central Bank (ECB) supervisors, who questioned Germany's largest lender about them during routine exchanges, the sources said.

Even without the trades, Deutsche would have far exceeded a 100% LCR regulatory requirement and overshot its own target, the sources said, adding that its liquidity is not a concern.

The important thing for the ECB, they said, is to establish how much liquidity a bank has at that given moment, as well as what it plans on having in the following months.

The issue is that liquidity can evaporate if short-term trades are not renewed, clouding the longer-term view.

"These things can shift around very quickly but as a supervisor I would be worried if they were doing this at the end of quarter, just to look nicer, and I would want to look into it," said Thorsten Beck, Director of the Florence School of Banking and Finance and a co-chair of the Advisory Scientific Committee of the European Systemic Risk Board.

Deutsche's use of such trades to improve its liquidity position at the height of the recent banking turmoil has not been previously reported and conversations with the regulator are confidential.

The practice is not unusual among big banks, but it was flagged by the ECB in a 2019 stress test as a technique for making a bank look stronger.

Deutsche's trades allowed it to post an increase in its LCR in March, helping chief executive Christian Sewing praise the bank's "resilience" and "solid foundation" to



analysts when presenting the first-quarter figure in April.

Deutsche "actively manages to a conservative liquidity profile across a number of liquidity metrics," a spokesperson told Reuters. Its liquidity level reflects "prudent steering in an uncertain market environment" and the late March increase was "mainly

driven by seasonal movements," they added.

An ECB spokesperson declined to comment. March was a tense period for banks. Days after Switzerland engineered the rescue of Credit Suisse, Deutsche's customers began withdrawing deposits, its executives later said, while shares in the bank dropped as much as 15% on a single day.

One concern in the market at the time was whether banks had enough cash on hand to meet the demands of depositors. Euro zone banks are required to have an LCR of at least 100%, meaning they have enough liquid assets to cover a month's worth of outflows.

Deutsche's trades helped it raise its LCR to 143% at March 31, its first-quarter earnings report published in April showed.

The figure stood at 137% on March 23, it had reported in a filing at the time, in an unusual move meant to calm markets.

The sharp increase came as a surprise, however, after Deutsche said in February that it would steer the LCR ratio lower towards its 130% target during the year.

Such short-term fixes, which generate big LCR moves, are likely to raise fresh questions from regulators and analysts about the reliability of requirements introduced after the global financial crisis of 2008.

### Turkey Completes Nearly...

FROM PAGE 1

The remaining stretch will consist of 5-meter-high concrete barriers, 2.87 meters wide, reinforced with steel wires. Furthermore, trenches are being dug along the same route to further deter illegal crossings.

To bolster security, the gendarmerie, border units, and special operations police are also implementing necessary measures along the border. These efforts have resulted in the prevention of 155,774 illegal immigrants from crossing into the country over the past three years, according to authorities.

## PSG Goalkeeper Rico In Serious Condition

SEVILLE (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain back-up goalkeeper Sergio Rico is in "serious" condition after a horse-riding accident, the French club confirmed Sunday.

The 29-year-old Spaniard was on the bench for PSG as they won the Ligue 1 title on Saturday with a 1-1 draw at Strasbourg before heading to Spain, where the accident happened in El Rocio in Andalusia.

"He is in serious condition," said a PSG spokesperson, while Spanish newspaper Marca report he is "stable".

### 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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## Roglic Wins Giro d'Italia

ROME (Dispatches) - Primoz Roglic won the Giro d'Italia after crossing with the peloton on Sunday's final procession stage in Rome, which was claimed by Mark Cavendish in a bunch sprint.

Jumbo Visma rider Roglic has added another Grand Tour to his long list of honours which includes a treble of victories in the Vuelta a Espana. The Slovenian topped the general classification after a cruise through the Italian capital, his triumph effectively earned after snatching the lead from Geraint Thomas in Saturday's gruelling mountain-top individual time trial.

## Verstappen Extends Lead With Dominant Victory in Monaco GP

MONACO (Dispatches) - Defending double world champion Max Verstappen extended his lead in this year's title race when he drove his Red Bull to a comprehensive victory in challenging conditions in the Monaco Grand Prix.

The 25-year-old Dutchman, driving with controlled aplomb in conditions that changed from warm sunshine to a downpour, came home 27 seconds clear of Aston Martin's two-time world champion Fernando Alonso.

It was his second victory on the barrier-lined streets of the Mediterranean principality in three years, his fourth win this year and the 39th of his clear, stretching his lead ahead of Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez to 39 points in the championship.

Esteban Ocon finished a popular third for Alpine to become the first Frenchman to claim a Monaco podium since Olivier Panis won in 1996.

"That wasn't easy," said Verstappen. "It was quite a difficult one! I didn't want to go long on my first stint, but I had to stay out when the rain came down and then it was very tricky to drive."

"It was incredibly slippery and quite difficult," he said. "I clipped the walls a few times, but that's Monaco. It's nice to win and super-nice to win in this weather!"

Alonso secured his fifth podium finish in six races this year.

"It was difficult," the Spaniard said. "Max drove super-well on the medium tyres in his first stint and it was complicated out there in the rain. I think everyone did an amazing job to stay on the track."

Ocon's success came in Alpine's 50th Grand Prix and after some recent strife in the team. "A super weekend," he said. "We didn't make any mistakes and I am enjoying this and hope it is the first of many."

Ocon held off a late attack from seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton who finished fourth ahead of his Mercedes team-mate George Russell, local hero Charles Leclerc of Ferrari and Pierre Gasly in the second Alpine.

Carlos Sainz finished a frustrated eighth in the second Ferrari ahead of the McLaren duo of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri.

The race began in beautiful conditions with an air temperature of 26 degrees Celsius and the track at 47 degrees, but with rain forecast.

Alonso made a vibrant start, but it was not enough to unsettle Verstappen who pulled clear in the dash to Saint Devote where the grid order remained unchanged.

Hamilton was sandwiched between the Ferraris of Sainz and Leclerc, who had taken a three-place grid penalty for blocking Lando Norris in qualifying.

Perez, who started from the back after crashing out in qualifying, made an immediate stop for hard tyres while



Verstappen, on mediums, pulled away to lead Alonso, on hards, by five seconds by lap 15.

Sainz made early attempts to pass Ocon's Alpine and in one move he clipped the Frenchman's car, damaging his front wing.

He stayed out despite instructions to pit.

Verstappen extended his advantage to 8.4 seconds by lap 20 and 10.6 by lap 22 when dark clouds loomed.

Alarmed by tyre-wear, Verstappen warned his crew.

"Front left really isn't pretty," he said, as he approached a thicket of traffic that included Perez, in 16th.

Hamilton pitted on lap 32 for 'hards', re-joining eighth behind Russell while a frustrated Verstappen saw his lead trimmed to 7.9 seconds.

Ocon and Sainz soon followed into the pits while the Dutchman stayed out.

"It's almost undrivable," he grumbled, but was told to stay out as a stop would cost him the lead.

Perez continued his incident-plagued weekend when he hit the back of Kevin Magnussen's Haas and damaged a front wing. Perez pitted for a new one and fresh mediums returning in last place.

By lap 45, as other drivers pitted the front two were more than 30 seconds clear of the rest. By lap 52, it was raining.

In the sudden treacherous localised conditions, the drivers tip-toed to survive, or gambled.

Alonso pitted for mediums but had to come in to change again as the rain intensified. Verstappen came in for intermediates and Alonso returned to do the same.

Ten minutes of chaos ensued. Magnussen and Logan Sargeant of Williams both crashed.

"It's getting to a point where it's pretty dangerous out here," reported Hamilton, who was in close pursuit of Ocon for third and equalling Ayrton Senna's record of eight Monaco podium finish.

As the rain relented, with ten laps to go, the order was unchanged. Verstappen led by 24 seconds with Alonso second 15 clear of Ocon and resisting Hamilton over the final dash to the flag.

## Tsitsipas Survives Scare to Reach French Open Next Round

PARIS (Dispatches) - Stefanos Tsitsipas held off a spirited comeback from Jiri Vesely to reach the second round of the French Open with a four-set win.

The Greek fifth seed, who blew a two-set lead to lose the 2021 final to Novak Djokovic, won 7-5, 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (9/7) on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"The match was very inconsistent from my side," said Tsitsipas.

"I felt like I haven't played a match with so much inconsistency in a very long time."

"But otherwise I'm happy with how things turned around, and my fighting spirit kind of went on full display in those last few points of the tie-breaker."

He will next face either Spaniard Roberto Carballes Baena or qualifier Emilio Nava on Wednesday.

"It gives me a chance to go practice a bit more," Tsitsipas added when asked about his upcoming two days without a match in Paris.

"Today I got to feel the court a little bit by staying in it for a few hours. I hope that helps, too. Yeah, red wine and baguettes."

Tsitsipas appeared to be cruising to victory after battling through the first two sets.

But world number 455 Vesely, who had previously only played in two second-tier Challenger events this year, forced a fourth set.

The Czech left-hander should have pushed the match into a decider, but saw four set points slip away in the fourth-set tie-break before Tsitsipas clinched a round-two place with a crunching forehand winner.

"I felt like he started feeling the pressure a little bit more," said Tsitsipas.

## Sabalenka Powers Into French Second Round

PARIS (Dispatches) - Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka powered into the second round of the French Open with a 6-3 6-2 win over Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk in a feisty clash to start the year's second Grand Slam, but was left perplexed by jeering from some parts of the crowd.

Some booing and jeering could be heard after the match as Kostyuk refused to shake hands with her opponent, having said beforehand that she would not do so with Russian and Belarusian players due to Moscow's invasion of its neighbour.

Sabalenka, who appeared to sarcastically bow to the crowd following the win, said she initially thought the boos were aimed at her.

"It was a very tough match, I mean tough emotionally. I'm sorry guys, I didn't get it at first, I thought this booing was against me so I was a little surprised," she said.

"But then I felt your support, so thank you so much."

The world number two has previously said she has nothing against Ukrainian people and felt bad for them as Moscow's invasion rages on. Belarus has been a staging ground for Russia's actions.

Sabalenka appeared in a spot of bother on her serve early on and fell behind 2-3, but the unseeded Kostyuk could not build on her advantage and the Australian Open champion struck back immediately with a powerful crosscourt volley on breakpoint.

Second seed Sabalenka wrapped up the first set in style in front of a sparse Court Philippe Chatrier crowd before pouncing in the next with an early break and another to go up 4-1, as Kostyuk wilted under the Paris sun.

## Crouser Shatters Own Shot Put World Record

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Two-time Olympic champion Ryan Crouser demolished his own shot put world record, throwing for 23.56 metres at the Los Angeles Grand Prix.

The American surpassed his previous mark of 23.37 metres, which he achieved at the U.S. Olympic Trials in Eugene, Oregon in June 2021.



## Bayern Back Tuchel After Sackings

MUNICH (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich chairman Herbert Hainer promised manager Thomas Tuchel's job is safe with the freshly-minted German champions, while confirming the return of former executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Bayern on Saturday overcame a two-point deficit to leaders Borussia Dortmund to win their 11th straight German title, but announced the sacking of CEO Oliver Kahn and sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic at full-time.

In a specially convened press conference on Sunday, Hainer explained the duo were sacked because the club's "performance in the second-half of the season was not how we imagine FC Bayern to be," but said the club had "absolutely no thoughts" of firing Tuchel.

"We are absolutely convinced by Thomas Tuchel. He is one of the best managers in Europe and has shown that at several clubs."

"I don't know why Thomas Tuchel should not be our coach."

Tuchel was appointed in March after Kahn and Salihamidzic sacked then manager Julian Nagelsmann.

While Kahn was replaced by former CFO Jan-Christian Dreesen, a new sporting director has not yet been appointed.

Hainer however confirmed the return of Rummenigge, who played for the club for a decade and served as CEO until he was replaced by Kahn in 2021.

The chairman said the club would lean heavily on Bayern's sporting expertise, including the returned Rummenigge as well as giving Tuchel a bigger role.

Hainer also revealed that the Kahn and Salihamidzic had been told of the decision on Thursday, "early enough so that they would have time to deal with the situation" and "out of respect for these two icons of Bayern Munich."

While Salihamidzic made the trip to Cologne for Bayern's title-deciding match, the club prevented Kahn from attending because he was "too emotional".

Hainer said Salihamidzic took the decision "very well" but "we had the same conversation with Oliver Kahn and unfortunately it did not go so well."

## White Shines as Celtics Force Game 7 vs. Heat

BOSTON (Dispatches) - The Boston Celtics were three seconds away from being eliminated in the Eastern Conference finals when Derrick White inbounded the ball to Marcus Smart.

Instead of being a spectator, White darted toward the left corner and with no Miami Heat players around him, headed toward the basket as Smart's shot went in and out. His instincts put him in perfect position to score on a tip-in just before the buzzer sounded as Boston scored an unlikely 104-103 victory. "It doesn't do no good to stand in the corner there whether he makes it or not," White said. "So I was just crashing the glass and it came right to me."

White's dramatic basket gave second-seeded Boston its third straight victory to become just the fourth team in NBA history to force a Game 7 after losing the first three games of a playoff series.



## Leicester, Leeds Relegated From Premier League

LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - Leicester were relegated from the Premier League just seven years after a spectacular title triumph as Everton prolonged their 69-year stay in the English top flight by beating Bouremouth 1-0 on Sunday.

Leeds will also return to the Championship after three seasons in the Premier League as their relegation was confirmed by a 4-1 defeat to Tottenham.

Abdoulaye Doucoure was Everton's hero after the French midfielder smashed home from the edge of the box on 57 minutes to spark jubilant celebrations around Goodison Park.

In contrast, Leicester were crestfallen as they went down, despite their 2-1 win over West Ham.

Everton began the afternoon in control of their own fate but put a raucous support of 40,000 fans at Goodison Park through the mill before securing survival.

