

The Chairman of the Iran Red Crescent Sent a Letter to the Head Of Ukraine's Red Cross, Voicing Readiness to Dispatch Rescue Teams and Humanitarian Aid to The European Country

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani on Thursday Expressed Concern Over The Destruction of the Kakhovka Dam And Its Humanitarian, Environmental, And Economic Effects

VOL. XXIX, No. 7785 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SATURDAY JUNE 10, 2023 - KHORDAD 20, 1402

2 DOMESTIC

President Vows No Retreat in Dealing With Enemies



> SEE PAGE 2

3 DOMESTIC

Trade With Neighboring States Grows 14.5% y/y



> SEE PAGE 3

4 INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine Dismisses Counteroffensive Reports



> SEE PAGE 4

8 SPORTS

West Ham Secure Conference League Glory



> SEE PAGE 8

Europe Urged to Avoid Provocative, Unconstructive Approach

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's permanent representative at the United Nations office in Vienna has urged the European governments to avoid "provocative and unconstructive attitudes" towards the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program and work towards the resolution of disputes.

Mohsen Naziri Asl made the statement at a session of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Wednesday while explaining Iran's principled stance regarding the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Referring to Iran's constructive measures in cooperation with the IAEA since the previous Board of Governors' meeting in March, Naziri Asl said expectations from Iran were "unreasonable," and "illogical."

"Iran's nuclear activities, including [uranium] enrichment at various levels, are completely peaceful and in accordance with the Iranian people's rights based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and are under the supervision and verification of IAEA's safeguards," the top diplomat emphasized.

See Page 7

Tehran Denies Reaching Interim Deal With Washington



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran roundly rejected reports that it and the United States are reaching an "interim deal" that foresees some sanction relief for the Islamic Republic in exchange for changes in the country's peaceful nuclear energy program.

Iran's UN mission made the remarks on Thursday after the London-based Middle East Eye (MEE) news and analysis website claimed that the countries were close to clinching such a deal amid the stagnation of talks on the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The JCPOA was reached in 2015 between Iran and world countries, including the United States. It enabled limited sanction relief for the Islamic Republic, which, in turn, volunteered to change some aspects of its nuclear work.

The U.S., however, left the agreement in 2018 under former president Donald Trump, returning all the sanctions that the deal had lifted.

Negotiations to revive the agreement started in April 2021. The talks have, however, stalled amid Washington's refusal to offer guarantees that it would not ditch the deal again.

"There is no interim deal [meant] to replace the JCPOA," said the Iranian mission to the United Nations, adding that no such agreement is on the agenda.

Also on Thursday, a White House National Security Council spokesman similarly rejected the MEE report, calling it false and misleading.

Trump's successor Joe Biden has alleged an interest in returning the US to the JCPOA. Biden's administration has, however, not only stopped short of taking any measures that could lift the talks out of its current impasse but has also imposed many rounds of its own sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Mohsen Naziri Asl, Iran's permanent representative at the United Nations office in Vienna, touched upon the United States' self-proclaimed desire to return to the JCPOA on Wednesday. "Despite the arduous negotiations that lasted for more than 18 months, mainly due to the lack of American political will and determination, we could not bring the talks to a conclusion," he said.

Some media outlets claimed that negotiations have made significant headway and the two sides have reached an agreement on a temporary deal to take to their respective superiors, the sources said.

Under the terms of the deal, Iran would commit to ceasing its 60 percent-and-beyond uranium enrichment activities and would continue its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the monitoring and verification of its nuclear program.

In exchange, the sources said, Tehran would be allowed to export up to a million barrels of oil per day and gain access to its income and other frozen funds abroad.

Those funds would have to be exclusively used to purchase a range of essential items, including food and medication.

In addition to the bilateral talks between Iran and the US, Qatar has emerged as a facilitator, offering its assistance in resolving banking-related issues that have emerged as a significant point of contention.

Reacting to this report, both Tehran and Washington rejected it and called it baseless.

Israel Seeking to Disrupt Tehran-Riyadh Relations

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Iran's new ambassador to Saudi Arabia says Israel is disgruntled with the restoration of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Riyadh and is seeking to disrupt it.

Alireza Enayati made the remarks in an interview with Iran's Arabic-language al-Alam news network on Wednesday, after he was accredited by Riyadh as Iran's new ambassador.

"Many of our friends and brothers welcomed the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia," he said, adding that others are either just upset or, like the Israeli regime, find it unbearable and try to disrupt those relations.

However, he said, what is important is to have a constructive cooperation with each other and prioritize the issue of regional security based on economic, commercial, social and cultural development.

Enayati went on to say that providing security in such a way can lead to the withdrawal or reduction of foreign forces in the region. "When cooperation between all regional countries is reinforced, no element can disrupt it," he argued.

See Page 7

Russia to Study Iran's Plan to Create a Natural Gas Hub

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's agencies will study Iran's plans to create a natural gas hub on the Persian Gulf in cooperation with Russia, Qatar, and Turkmenistan, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Thursday.

On Wednesday, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji said that Iran is looking to set up a natural gas hub in the Persian Gulf and is cooperating with Russia, Qatar, and Turkmenistan to that end.

"With the cooperation of Russia, Turkmenistan, and Qatar, we are trying to have a gas hub in the Asaluyeh region, and its preparations are being planned," Iranian media quoted Owji as saying.

Asaluyeh is a port and energy hub in the southern Bushehr province in the Persian Gulf.

Russia welcomes initiatives aimed at addressing energy security, Ryabkov said on Thursday, as quoted by Russian news agency Interfax.

"We welcome initiatives that help deal with the energy security problem in a broad sense and contribute to continued development of Russian-Iranian relations, and in general, we are open to constructive ideas," Ryabkov was quoted as saying.

See Page 7

Iran, Pakistan, China Hold First Trilateral Talks on Counterterrorism

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Representatives from Iran, China and Pakistan have met in the Chinese capital Beijing for talks on security and counterterrorism.

The meeting was held on Wednesday, and marked the first trilateral talks between Iran, China and Pakistan on security and counterterrorism.

The Iranian delegation was led by Director General of the Foreign Ministry's South Asia Affairs Rasoul Mousavi, who is also an assistant to the country's foreign minister.

Bai Tian, the director general of China Foreign Ministry's Department of External Security Affairs, and Abdul Hameed, the director general of Pakistan Foreign Ministry for Counter Terrorism led their respective delegations as well.

The three sides "held detailed discussions on the regional security situation, particularly the threat of terrorism faced by the region," said a statement by the Pakistani Foreign Ministry.

Based on the outcome of the Wednesday consultations, the parties to the talks decided to "institutionalize the trilateral consultations on counter terrorism and security for which further details will be worked out," the statement added.

Iran's Mousavi and Pakistan's Abdul Hameed also held a meeting with Assistant Foreign Minister of China Nong Rong.

No IAEA Resolution Against Iran

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The UK, France, Germany, and the U.S. debunked Tehran's explanations on its nuclear dossier at the UN watchdog, the IAEA, wrapped up its discussions on Iran with no resolution.

On Wednesday, the E3 as well as the United States submitted separate statements to the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors over the Islamic Republic's implementation of its obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement, noting that the answers that Tehran provided over the cases of uranium traces are not technically credible.

However, diplomats told Iran International's Vienna correspondent that no resolution or even any specific statement to censure Iran's activities and lack of cooperation is expected by the IAEA board of governors.

See Page 7

Saudis Snub U.S. Push on Tel Aviv Ties, Oil Prices

Riyadh (Dispatches) - Saudi officials have snubbed U.S. Secretary of State's latest push for the Kingdom's normalization of relations with the Israeli regime and his bid to win further concessions on oil prices and Riyadh's recent resumption of ties with Syria and Iran during his high-profile visit to Saudi Arabia.

Speaking in a news conference alongside Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in Riyadh on Thursday, the visiting Antony Blinken reiterated that Washington will continue to play an integral role in expanding normalization between the Tel Aviv regime and Saudi Arabia.

Blinken, who was in the kingdom as part of a US push to defuse rows that have touched on oil prices, and Riyadh's opening to Iran, further insisted that normalizing relations between Israeli regime and its neighbors was a priority for Washington.

The Saudi foreign minister, however, rebuffed his American counterpart, saying that the kingdom believes "normalization of ties with Israel will have limited benefit without a pathway to peace for the Palestinians."

"The Palestinian issue was and remains the central issue for Arab countries, and it is at the top of the kingdom's priorities," Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had also underlined during the Arab League summit in Jeddah on May 19. "We will not delay in providing assistance to the Palestinian people in recovering their lands, restoring their legitimate rights and establishing an independent state on the 1967 borders with East al-Quds as its capital," he further noted at the time.

See Page 7

Sokhan Gostar Institute

IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

Iran Starts Building 2 Nuclear Power Plants

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran has kicked off the construction of two nuclear power plants with the capacity of producing 1080 megawatts in southern Bushehr Province.

Ahmad Mohammadzadeh, governor-general of Bushehr Province, said on Wednesday evening that the important projects are being designed and manufactured by young Iranian engineers. The official noted that prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the nuclear projects had been implemented by foreigners, but the Iranians are completing the nuclear power plants now.

According to the governor-general, the Islamic Revolution has created profound and important transformations and the Islamic Republic is capable and powerful in all dimensions.

President Vows No Retreat in Dealing With Enemies

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi insists his government will not back down from ensuring sustainable economic growth despite the brutal U.S.-led sanctions against Tehran, further underlining his administration's determination to tackle existing problems.

"We do not view surrender and retreat as the way to deal with the conspiracies and plots of our enemies. We are determined to solve problems. We can overcome such challenges only by means of becoming strong and building a strong Iran," Raisi said on Thursday as he addressed a group of religious scholars, clerics and Friday prayer leaders during a visit to the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz, which serves as the capital of East Azarbaijan province.

He noted that enemies have been devising conspiracies over the past 44 years to undermine the Islamic establishment in Iran, recalling Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's remarks that the enemies that are infuriated by and try to downplay the Islamic Republic's achievements have resorted to evil plots to foment riots in Iran.

"Despite all the hardship imposed on the Iranian nation, the people have turned all threats and sanctions into opportunities," Raisi emphasized.

The president continued to refer to the challenges that his administration has been facing ever since it took office in early August 2021 and the steps that the government has taken to



confront them, namely overcoming budget deficit without borrowing directly from the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), controlling liquidity growth, significantly increasing production, ensuring food security through timely supply of basic commodities, setting records in foreign trade and expanding trade exchanges especially with neighboring countries.

Raisi further pointed out that enemies have resorted to spreading rumors, targeting the psychological status of the nation with inaccurate economic figures, and falsely suggesting high levels of inflation as parts of their persisting cognitive and hybrid warfare against Iran in efforts to hinder the nation's progress.

"Despite all these conspiracies, we are trying to stabilize the country's economy. With trust in God as well as people's support and help, we will definitely succeed in this path," the Iranian president added.

Raisi also said U.S. authorities have admitted that Washington's so-called campaign of "maximum pressure" against the Islamic Republic has failed to achieve its evil aims.

New Railway to Shorten Tehran-Tabriz Distance Inaugurated

TEHRAN (MNA) - On the second day of the second visit of President Raisi's trip to East Azerbaijan on Friday, the Bostanabad -Tabriz railway and the Khavaran station were put into operation in Raisi's presence.

President Raisi arrived in Tabriz in East Azarbaijan province on Thursday morning.

On the visit second day of Raisi's visit on Friday morning, the second phase of the Miyaneh-Tabriz railway mega project which is the Bostanabad-Tabriz section of the railway was put into operation in the presence of the president.

The first train used the newly inaugurated railway to mark the start of its operation.

The 44 km long railway shortens the railway between Tehran and Tabriz for about 4 hours of travel time as compared to the previous 12-hour time.

The Miyaneh-Bostanabad-Tabriz railway project also connects Iran's rail transit to Europe for the first time. The railway connects Iran's railway network to Nakhchivan (Azerbaijan), Yerevan and Tbilisi railways through Jolfa to increase the volume of exports of goods from Iran to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey.

Tehran, Baku Seek Resolution of Existing Misunderstandings



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Azerbaijan have laid emphasis on the need for the resolution of existing misunderstandings between the countries towards the alignment of their mutual ties in their natural course.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Azeri counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov made the remarks during a telephone conversation on Thursday as they examined the latest state of the bilateral ties.

The top diplomats stressed that the quality of the countries' relations had to befit the principle of good neighborliness and correspond to the countries' mutual interests.

The officials insisted on the need for a continuation of consultations between the two sides, adding that the countries had to exchange technical and specialized teams that would address the elimination of their standing differences.

They also highlighted the need for proper management of each side's media outlets' coverage of their relations.

The relations became strained in January when the Eurasian country's Embassy in the Iranian capital of Tehran came under an attack.

Azerbaijan termed the attack as a "terrorist" incident, although, a probe has shown that the attacker had been motivated by "personal and family-related problems."

Azeri President Ilham Aliyev also blamed the incident on the "Iranian establishment."

Azerbaijan has, at the same time, been boosting its ties with the Israeli regime.

Major Copper Smelter Opened in Iran's Azerbaijan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has opened a new copper cathode production plant in its northwestern Azerbaijan region where the country's second largest copper reserves are located.

A Thursday report by the IRIB News said the new copper cathode plant, located in Varzaqan region in East Azerbaijan province, will be able to produce 3,000 metric tons (mt) of copper cathode per year.

The plant uses heap leaching method to process 14 million mt of copper ore per year, said the report.

The plant has created 175 permanent jobs and another 525 jobs on the wider industrial sector. The government has spent 15 trillion rials (\$30 million) to open the project.

Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, who was on a provincial trip to East Azerbaijan, used a video conference link to open the project.

Raisi had promised in a previous trip to East Azerbaijan that he would make the preparations for the launch of an independent company in the region to control the

Sungun copper mine which is the largest open-cast copper mine in Iran.

Sungun had been controlled by National Iranian Copper Industries Co. (NICICO) a company that is mostly focused on vast copper mines and smelters in Iran's southeastern province of Kerman.

Raisi said in a gathering of people in the East Azerbaijan's provincial capital of Tabriz on Thursday that an independent company had been set up to control the copper industry in the region.

He said the company will spend its entire revenue in projects in East Azerbaijan and will operate independent of the NICICO.

Iran, Netherlands Stress Importance of Continued Dialogue

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran and the Netherlands consider dialogue as the logical path to protect the interests of both sides despite some existing differences, Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani said.

The Iranian official made the comment in a phone talk with his Dutch counterpart Marcel de Vink.

Bagheri Kani said that the Islamic Republic is protecting the basis of its ties with the Netherlands by adopting a logical behavior and expects the same from the other side.



He also said that the two countries have a variety of fields for cooperation and interaction, and welcomed the continuation of political consultations between the two sides.

The Iranian official meanwhile invited his Dutch counterpart to visit Tehran.

The Dutch deputy foreign minister on his part said that his country and Iran should

continue dialog based on mutual respect and understanding. Bagheri Kani and de Vink discussed consular relations between the two countries as well.

Philippines, Libyan Ambassadors Submit Credentials to FM

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - At the beginning of their mission, new ambassadors of the Philippines and Libya met with Iran's Foreign Minister and submitted their credentials to him.

The new ambassador of the Republic of Philippines to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Roberto G. Manalo, met with the Iran Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, at the beginning of his diplomatic mission in Tehran, and submitted a copy of his letter of credentials to him.

Also, the new ambassador of Libya to Iran Ali Juma Hassan Fudhail, met with Amirabdollahian and presented his credentials to the Iranian Foreign Minister.



Also, he will present a copy of his credentials to the foreign minister and deputy foreign minister of Pakistan.

Mohammad Ali Hosseini, the former Iranian ambassador to Pakistan, who had begun serving in the post in mid-December 2019, returned home last month after ending his mission.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi met and held talks with new Iranian ambassadors in seven countries last month, including with Amiri, saying that efforts to develop bilateral economic and political relations as well as providing services to Iranians living abroad should top the priorities of Iranian envoys in other countries.

Iran's New Envoy in Pakistan Seeking Increased Political, Economic Ties

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Iran's newly appointed ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghaddam has arrived in the country with an agenda to strengthen economic and trade relations and to deepen political ties between the two neighboring countries.

Chargé d'affaires of Iran's Embassy in Pakistan and a group of diplomats welcomed Amiri as he arrived in Islamabad International Airport on Wednesday.

Iran's new ambassador is scheduled to meet with Pakistan's president in the coming days to present his credentials to the head of state.



Qalibaf Congratulates New Speaker of Turkish Parliament

TEHRAN (IP) - Majlis Speaker congratulated the election of the new Speaker of the Turkish Parliament.

Turkey's parliament elected Numan Kurtulmuş as its new speaker as he applied as the joint candidate of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

Under the bylaw of the parliament, a candidate should get 401 votes for the election to be concluded in the first two rounds. If the election goes to the third round, a simple majority - 301 votes - is sufficient to determine the new speaker who will undertake the role for two years.

Kurtulmuş won by 321 votes in the third round of voting.

Iran's Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf congratulated Kurtulmuş on his election as the new Speaker of the Turkish Parliament.

In his message, Qalibaf emphasized the deep ties between the two nations, and the will of the Iranian Parliament to develop and expand close parliamentary cooperation, and expressed hope that the relations between the two countries will increase day by day.

Iran Missile Activities Legitimate Based on Int'l Laws

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani has emphasized that the missile activities of the Islamic Republic are conventional and defensive as well as legitimate based on international laws.

Kanaani ruled out interventionist statements by certain Western states on the unveiling of Fatah missile, stipulating that these countries, that have a long history in violating international commitments in different fields of nuclear tests, non-proliferation regime, atomic missiles as well as destructive regional and international interference, do not deserve the right to comment on legitimate defensive capabilities of Iran.

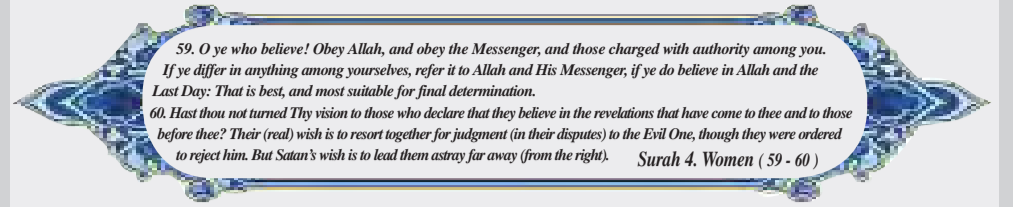
The US, the UK and Australia, that signed AUKUS agreement, is an obvious discriminatory approach by nuclear powers in transferring technology and highly enriched uranium and in contradiction to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), he noted.

Kanaani appreciated Iranian armed forces' efforts to create effective deterrence in the face of foreign threats and in defending the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:40
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:48



Trade With Neighboring States Grows 14.5% y/y

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Official figures published by the Iranian Economy Ministry show that trade exchanges between the Islamic Republic and its neighboring countries witnessed a 14.5-percent growth in value during the last Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 21, 2022-March 20, 2023).

The ministry released its figures in a report published on Thursday.

During the year 1401, Iran traded a total of 96,767 tons of goods with all of its 15 neighboring countries namely Iraq, the UAE, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Armenia, the Azerbaijan Republic, Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan Turkmenistan, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

That amount of trade was worth \$58,843 million and increased by 14.5 percent year-on-year. Of the total trade with the neighboring states in the year 1401, non-oil exports of Iran stood at \$30,537 million. That was up by nearly 19.5 percent compared with a year before.



The non-oil exports weighed 75,184 tons, showing a slight increase (0.1%) compared with the previous year 1400 when Iran exported 74,622 tons of non-oil goods to its neighbors.

Iraq, Turkey, the UAE, Afghanistan and Pakistan were respectively the top importers of Iranian goods in 1401.

Figures by the Iranian Economy Ministry also show that the country's imports from its neighboring countries grew 9.6 percent in value in the year 1401, but decreased 21.6 percent in weight.

During that period, the Islamic Republic imported 21,583 tons of goods worth \$28,306 million from its neighboring countries.

The UAE, Turkey, Russia, Pakistan and Oman were the top importers of goods to Iran.

The current government is focused on boosting trade with neighboring countries and in recent months the trade with the neighboring states has increased considerably and it is expected it to increase more through preparing infrastructures and required mechanisms.

Two Homegrown Agro Systems Unveiled

TEHRAN (IRNA) – The Islamic Republic of Iran has unveiled two indigenous systems in the fields of agriculture and bio-product irradiation and insect sterilization (SIT).

The IRAD-BR-XR-01 or X-ray system for nuclear agriculture research, biological products irradiation, and insect sterilization (SIT) is also a high-tech device with applications in medicine, nuclear agriculture research, and insect sterilization.

Also, the 60 kW microwave pesticide machine is the first industrial product of Iran Radiation Application Development Company based on non-ionizing wave technology that has the ability to pesticide all kinds of foods such as rice, pistachio, dates, cereals, grains, and figs.

The country's fundamental policies are aimed at expanding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the field of health promotion and public health.

Tax Revenues Up 45% y/y In March-May

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Iran's National Tax Administration (INTA) collected as much as 880 trillion rials (\$1.762 billion) of taxes in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – May 21), according to INTA chief Mohammad Hadi Sobhanian.

Sobhanian said that the figure is 45% higher in comparison to 610 trillion rials (\$1.221 billion) of tax revenues collected in March-May 2022.

Direct taxes – 460 trillion rials – accounted for some 53% of Iran's tax receipts during the two months to late May while indirect tax was responsible for 47% or 420 trillion rials of the tax revenues over the same period, he added.

Sobhanian said Iran's tax revenues in the calendar month of Ordibehesht (April 21 – May 21) reached 450 trillion rials (\$901 million), a rise of 40% compared to the same month in 2022.

SMEs to Take Part at 18th China International SME Fair

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Iran Small Industries & Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) will run a pavilion at the 18th edition of China International Small- and Medium Enterprises (CISMEF).

Known as the largest exhibition event in the field of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the exhibition will kick off in China's Guangzhou on June 27 and run until June 30.

Iran's SMEs will showcase their latest products and achievements in this exhibition within the framework of the pavilion of the ISIPO.

The expo had been scheduled to be held in June 2022 but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and in order to promote the quality and effectiveness of activities of the exhibition and attain the objectives of economic enterprises.

Iran Producing 36 Biotech Drugs, Vaccines

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Some 36 biotech drugs and vaccines are currently produced by Iranian pharmaceutical companies and 15 others are under being developed, according to a businessman with knowledge of the matter.

Fereydoun Mahboudi, a board member of the Association of Producers and Exporters of Biotech Products of Iran, said that Iran has cut back as much as \$4 billion on its drug imports bill through the domestic production of biotech medicines.

Some 45 Iranian pharmaceutical companies are presently producing biotech products in the country, Mahboudi said.

The businessman said the global market of biotech drugs are expected to hit \$900 billion by 2030, as he expressed hope that Iranian companies could increase their share of the global trade for those drugs.

30% Rise in Wheat Purchases in April-June



TEHRAN (PressTV) – The government's wheat purchases have increased significantly in the two months to early June compared to the same period last year.

CEO of Iran's Government Trading Corporation (GTC) said that it had bought some 3.5 million metric tons (mt) of wheat from domestic farmers since the start of this year's harvest in April.

Saied Raad said the purchases had increased by 30% compared to the same period in April-June 2022.

Raad said the government has spent some 256 trillion rials (\$512 million) to settle payments related to nearly half of the wheat purchased from domestic farmers this year.

Iran is expecting a major surge in domestic wheat output this year. The Iranian agriculture ministry's guaranteed purchase program offers farmers 150,000 rials (\$0.3) for each kilogram of wheat they deliver to GTC silos.

Government authorities have said that they can import wheat from other countries at prices lower than those offered to domestic farmers.

However, they say maintaining self-sufficiency in wheat production is key to Iran's food security policies, especially at a time the country faces trade restrictions because of American sanctions.

Estimates suggest that total wheat output in Iran could reach 14.5 million mt this year, up from 13.2 million mt reported in 2022. The GTC plans to buy at least 8 million mt of that output until the end of this year's harvest in late July with resources that would amount 1,200 trillion rials (2.4 billion).

IRISL Launches Regular Shipping Line to Syria



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) in line with its assigned task and national view to transport of goods to different destinations in the world has launched a container shipping line with Syria through which every month a ship will carry Iran's non-oil goods to the Arab country.

"For the current year 1402 (started on March 21), a regular program of shipping cargo to Syria has been put on the agenda, based on which, at least one sea voyage every month has been planned to export Iranian goods to this country," IRISL said in a statement.

As reported, last year IRISL fleet made 14 voyages to

Syria to deliver 6,522 TEU of non-oil goods to the country and for the first half of the year the group has planned monthly and regular shipment of goods to Syria.

Accordingly, this year too, the owners of businesses interested in exporting to Syria can hand over their export cargoes to the national shipping fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran in coordination with the company's container shipping department.

The statement reiterated that the group has put on its agenda a regular monthly shipping operation to Syria and it will have at least one voyage for exporting of Iranian goods to Syria per month.

The group has urged Iranian exporters who intend to ship their cargoes to Syria to deliver their goods to IRISL fleet.

NIGC Most Profitable Company in Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures published by Iran's finance ministry show the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) was the most profitable firm in the country in the year to late March 2021.

The figures covered in a Wednesday report by the official IRNA news agency showed that the NIGC had earned 530 trillion rials (nearly \$2 billion considering exchange rate at the time) in untaxed profits in the calendar year to March 20, 2021, making it the most profitable on a list of 77 large state companies in Iran.

A bulk of NIGC's revenues comes from exports of natural gas to Iraq and Turkey.

The five other profitable companies on finance ministry's list were the National Iranian Oil Company, the state Organization of Making Targeted Subsidies, the state mining and metals company IMIDRO, the Post Bank and the Telecommunication Infrastructure Company.

Iran's Government Trading Corporation (GTC), a subsidiary of Iran's agriculture ministry which is responsible for the country's grains purchases and imports, was the most loss-making state company in Iran in the year to late March 2021 with some 390 trillion rials in losses before tax.

Other most loss-making companies in Iran in year to March 2021 were state electricity company Tavanir, Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company and the country's second largest lender Bank Sepah.

Iran Buys 2 Airbus Planes Owned by French Armed Forces

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A Dutch website specializing in aviation industry news has confirmed that an Iranian airline has purchased and taken delivery of two Airbus A340 passenger planes.

The long-range, wide-body planes, which were formerly owned by the French Air and Space Force (AAE), landed in Iran on May 23, the report said.

The aircraft had been retired from service with the AAE in December 2020 and were stored in Châteauroux, France, from March 2021 until spring 2022.

The two planes had not flown for a year before they made their way to Iran.

Analysts say that Iran's ability to purchase and operate military-owned aircraft from the heart of Europe shows the diminishing impact of sanctions imposed by the United States and other Western governments.

Following the nuclear deal of 2015, Iran placed orders for 200 brand new passenger planes from Airbus and Boeing. The contracts, however, were scrapped in 2018 after the United States withdrew from the accord and restored sanctions on Iran.

Iran, Brunei to Boost Cooperation in Medicinal Plants, Traditional Medicine

TEHRAN (IP) - The Foreign Minister of Brunei, Erywan bin Pehin Yusof, recently visited Iran's Innovation and Technology House in Tehran to explore opportunities for collaboration between the two countries in the field of medicinal plants and traditional medicine.

During his visit, Yusof expressed interest in the achievements of Iran's knowledge-based companies and praised the country's progress despite facing sanctions.

Mojtaba Ghadamgaahi, head of the International Business Development Office, highlighted the cultural commonality between Iran and Brunei as Muslim countries. He noted that Islamic medicine and medicinal plant companies were keen on partnering with Iranian knowledge-based companies.

Ghadamgaahi also emphasized that many of Iran's innovations in medicinal plants and traditional medicine were particularly intriguing to Yusof.

This visit marks a significant step towards strengthening ties between Iran and Brunei in this important field.

Pope in Good Condition After Hernia Operation

ROME (Dispatches) - Pope Francis, 86, spent a restful night and was in good condition after a hernia operation, the Vatican said, as doctors cautioned his age and health issues could affect his recovery time.

"Pope Francis passed a quiet night and managed to have a lengthy rest," the Vatican said.

"He is in a generally good condition, is alert and is breathing without assistance," it said in a statement. The Argentine pontiff was "grateful" for those sending him well wishes and asked people to pray for him, it added.



Turkmenistan Vows to End Smoking Within Two Years

ASHGABAT (Dispatches) - Turkmenistan's leader launched an "unprecedented" anti-smoking crusade, ordering the Central Asia country to rid itself completely of tobacco within two years.

President Serdar Berdimukhamedov said the "uncompromising" struggle against smoking would include a crackdown on "illegal importations of tobacco products and their sales, including shisha pipes and electronic cigarettes," state media reported.

"Our state will launch a vast anti-tobacco movement of unprecedented size to help expand the tobacco-less countries of the world," he added.



Ukraine Dismisses Counteroffensive Reports



KHERSON (Dispatches) - Hundreds of Ukrainians were rescued from rooftops in the flood-stricken southern region of Kherson after the destruction of a dam submerged villages, fields and roads, as Kyiv dismissed reports a counteroffensive had begun.

Drone video showed areas where often only the roofs were visible above the flooding. The region's governor said some 600 square kilometres, or 230 square miles, were under water.

The dam collapse happened as Ukraine prepared a counteroffensive, likely the next major phase in the war in which tens of thousands of people have been killed, millions uprooted and entire cities reduced to ruins since Russia's "special military operation" began on Feb. 24 last year.

NBC news, citing a senior officer and a soldier near the front lines, said the offensive had begun. The Washington Post cited "four individuals" in the armed forces saying the same thing.

Asked about the reports, a Ukrainian armed forces general staff spokesperson said: "We have no such information." In its daily Ukraine briefing, Britain's defence ministry on Thursday reported heavy fighting along "multiple sectors of the front", adding that Kyiv held the initiative in most areas.

Ukraine's military said the flooding in Kherson had forced Russian troops to retreat by five to 15 km and had "practically halved" Russian shelling.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield situation. Russia did not immediately comment.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the bursting of the Soviet-era Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which sent waters cascading across the war zone of southern Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday, forcing tens of thousands to flee.

Moscow and Kyiv also accused each other on Thursday of shelling the area as rescue workers in rubber dinghies tried to save people and animals from the still rising flood waters.

Russian shelling killed a civilian in the Ukrainian city of Kherson, about 60 km (37 miles) downstream from the dam, on Thursday as people were being evacuated, Ukraine's Prosecutor General said. Two people were wounded. A Reuters reporter in Kherson said he could hear what appeared to be artillery fire but could not immediately provide details.

The Kremlin similarly accused Ukraine of shelling Russian rescue workers in the area, without providing evidence.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said his forces had repelled overnight attempts by Ukrainian forces to break through the frontline in the Zaporizhzhia region adjacent to Kherson.

Reuters could not independently verify his assertion.

Friends and family of stranded residents posted appeals online with names, photos and GPS locations of residents. The coordinator of a volunteer group on the Telegram messaging app said the appeals were getting more urgent because people were running out of food and drinking water.

One man, Sergei, told Reuters the last time he spoke with his 83-year-old father-in-law in the Oleshky region was several days before the dam collapse.

Four Children Wounded in Knife Attack in French Alps

ANNECY (AFP) - A Syrian refugee armed with a knife stabbed four preschool children and injured two adults by a lake in the French Alps on Thursday in an attack whose motive remains unclear.

The youngest victim in the quiet town of Annecy was just 22 months old and investigators are trying to understand the reasons for the frenzied morning rampage in a sunny public park.

The attacker, dressed in black and carrying a blade around 10 centimetres (four inches) long, could be heard shouting "in the name of Jesus Christ" on a video taken by a bystander and seen by AFP.

"There's no obvious terrorist motive," local prosecutor Line Bonnet-Mathis told reporters at a press conference alongside Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, who rushed to the lakeside town around 30 kilometres (20 miles) south of the Swiss city of Geneva.

Borne said the suspect was "not known by any intelligence service" and did not have "any history of psychiatric problems". Recently divorced and in his early 30s, he had previously lived for 10 years in Sweden where he was granted refugee

status in April, security sources and his ex-wife told AFP.

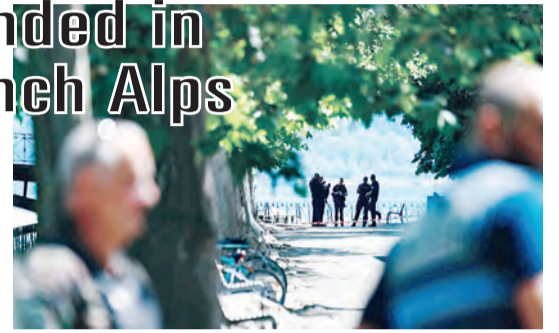
"He called me around four months ago. He was living in a church," his ex-wife said on condition of anonymity, saying he had left Sweden because he had been unable to get Swedish nationality.

Witnesses described him running around the park on the banks of Lake Annecy wearing a bandana and sunglasses, apparently attacking people at random.

"He wanted to attack everyone. I moved away and he lunged at an old man and woman and stabbed the old man," former professional footballer Anthony Le Tallec, who was running in the park, told the local Dauphine Libere newspaper.

All four child victims, which include British and German boys, are in a critical state in a local hospital.

"We have already deployed British consular officials who are travelling to the area to make themselves available to support the family," British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly told a press conference during a trip to Paris.



India Slams Canada for Parade Float Showing Ex-PM Gandhi's Murder

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Parade in Canadian city depicts the 1984 assassination of Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards in apparent glorification of violence by Sikh separatists.

India has hit out at Canada for allowing a float in a parade depicting the 1984 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards, perceived to be a glorification of violence by Sikh separatists.

"I think there is a larger underlying issue about the space which is given to separatists, to extremists, to people who advocate violence," India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told reporters in New Delhi while commenting about the tableau in a parade.

"I think it is not good for relationships, not good for Canada," he said.

Canada's High Commissioner in India also condemned the incident at a parade by Sikh activists in the Canadian city of Brampton.

Video circulated in recent days on the internet showed a tableau from the parade featuring Gandhi wearing a blood-stained white saree with her hands up as turban-clad men pointed guns at her. A poster behind the scene read: "Revenge".

"I am appalled by reports of an event in Canada that celebrated the assassination of late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi," Cameron MacKay said on Twitter.

US politics, Canada's multiculturalism, South America's geopolitical rise—we bring you the stories that matter.

"There is no place in Canada for hate or for the glorification of violence. I categorically condemn these activities."

Several members of Gandhi's Congress party condemned the holding of the parade in the Canadian city and demanded action from the Indian government.

"It's not about taking sides, it's about respect for a nation's history & the pain caused by its Prime Minister's assassination," former Congress Mumbai leader Milind Deora wrote on Twitter. Gandhi was assassinated in 1984 by two Sikh bodyguards after she allowed the storming of the holiest Sikh temple, aimed at flushing out Sikh separatists who demanded an independent homeland to be known as Khalistan.

At Least 11 Killed in Afghanistan Mosque Explosion

KABUL (Dispatches) - At least 11 killed and more than 30 others wounded in blast during memorial for former deputy governor of Badakhshan.

An explosion near a mosque in northern Afghanistan killed at least 11 people at a memorial service for the Taliban's provincial deputy governor, who died in an attack earlier this week, officials said.

A former Taliban police official was among those killed and more than 30 others were wounded in the explosion near Nabawi Mosque on Thursday, according to Abdul Nafi Takor, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the interior ministry.

Takor said there were concerns that the number of casualties could rise further.

The explosion happened during the memorial service for Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi, the deputy governor of Badakhshan who was killed in a car bombing on Tuesday. That attack in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan, also killed the deputy governor's driver and wounded 10 other people.

Moazuddin Ahmadi, the Taliban official in charge of information and culture, said Safiullah Samim, a former Taliban police chief in Baghlan, was killed in Thursday's blast.

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai condemned the attack, saying in a tweet that the bombing of

mosques is an act of "terrorism" and goes "against human and Islamic standards".

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. The ISIL (ISIS) armed group claimed responsibility for the car bombing on Tuesday.

The Taliban administration has been carrying out raids against members of ISIL, which has claimed several major attacks in urban centres.

The group has targeted Taliban administration officials and claimed the killing of the governor of northern Balkh province in an attack in March.

Several senior Taliban officials attended Ahmadi's funeral, which took place on Wednesday, along with hundreds of residents of Faizabad.

The Taliban military chief, Fasihuddin Fitrat, denounced the attacks in Badakhshan and asked people to cooperate with Taliban security forces and report suspicious activities in their areas.

In December, a car bombing killed Badakhshan's provincial police chief as he was on his way to work.

The ISIL regional affiliate - known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province - said at the time that it had carried out that attack. The group said it had parked an explosive-laden car on the road and detonated it when the police chief was close by.



Kosovo Urged to Back Down in Serb Standoff Or Face Consequences

PRISTINA (Dispatches) - The United States and the European Union told Kosovo to back down in a tense standoff with Serbs in the north of the country or face "consequences" from its longtime Western allies.

The warnings came as U.S. and EU envoys concluded visits to Kosovo and Serbia to calm tensions that flared into violence last week, wounding dozens of NATO peace-keeping soldiers and Serb protesters in northern Kosovo.

The violence erupted after Kosovo authorities installed ethnic Albanian mayors in municipal offices. The mayors were elected on a turnout of just 3.5% after Serbs who form a majority in the region boycotted local polls.

U.S. envoy to the Western Balkans Gabriel Escobar said that Kosovo must give greater autonomy to the Serb-majority municipalities if it wants to move closer to joining NATO and the EU.

"The actions taken or not taken could have some consequences that will affect parts of the relationship (between Kosovo and the United States), I don't want to get there," Escobar told Kosovo media on Tuesday before going to Belgrade.

He and the EU's Miroslav Lajcak did not elaborate on what other consequences Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti's ethnic Albanian-dominated government might face if it did not accede to their demands.

"I don't think that these things are resolved with pressure and by mentioning consequences and even sanctions," Kurti told reporters on Wednesday.

"We have challenges with EU and U.S. envoys but our bilateral relations with the EU and U.S. are excellent."

Lajcak said on Monday that the envoys presented proposals to Kurti to de-escalate the situation in northern Kosovo, adding they had a "long, honest, difficult discussion".

The United States and the EU have called on Kurti to withdraw the mayors from their offices and to pull out the special police units that helped install them from the northern municipalities.

They have also called for fresh local elections to be held in the north, with Serb participation, and for Kosovo to implement a 2013 agreement to set up an association of Serb municipalities to give that community more autonomy.



UNESCO Hails \$2.9b Australian Plan to Protect Great Barrier Reef

PARIS (Dispatches) - The UN's cultural agency UNESCO welcomed commitments from Australia to protect the Great Barrier Reef, with the government pledging 4.4 billion Australian dollars (\$2.9 billion) to safeguard the natural wonder.

The fate of the reef has been a recurrent source of tension between UNESCO and Australian authorities in recent years, with the UN agency threatening to put the world's largest coral system on a list of "in danger" global heritage sites.

Behind-the-scenes diplomacy from Australia has averted such a move while fresh commitments from the Labor government of Anthony Albanese, made in a letter seen by AFP, drew praise from the Paris-based organization. "UNESCO welcomes Australia's decision to implement urgent new protection measures to safeguard the Great Barrier Reef recommended by UNESCO," UNESCO said in a statement sent to AFP.

Australian Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek announced on Monday that gillnets -- vertical nets that can be up to kilometre long -- are to be phased out by 2027 in a bid to conserve fish populations and prevent the deaths of turtles and dolphins.

In a letter sent to UNESCO chief Audrey Azoulay last week, Plibersek also pledged "combined investment of 4.4 billion Australian dollars" (\$2.9 billion) from the state Queensland and federal governments to protect the reef.

"Our governments are pleased to further commit substantial actions to secure the future of the Reef," Plibersek wrote on May 25.

Albanese's centre-left government, which ended nearly a decade of conservative rule in May last year, has implemented a series of ambitious policies to protect the environment and commit Australia to more demanding climate change targets.

In February, it blocked a planned coal mine around 10 kilometres from the reef and last year it scrapped funding for two dams, including one called the Hells Gates project in Queensland.

There has been a "radical change" in approach under Albanese compared with his rightwing predecessor Scott Morrison, one UNESCO diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The reaction from the conservative Australian government was unusually strong," he added. "It wasn't possible to have a dialogue with them. We had a position based on scientific observation and they made it all about diplomacy."

The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia's premier tourist drawcards.

A decision by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee to put it on the "in-danger" list was seen as a potentially embarrassing PR blow that would risk putting off international visitors.

UNESCO began a monitoring mission there in March 2022 to assess the impact of pollution, fishing, climate change and coral-bleaching that are seen as imperilling one of the world's most complex ecosystems. "For many years, UNESCO has not ceased alerting the world to the risk of this site losing its universal value forever," Azoulay said in the statement on Tuesday.

Australian commitments include the creation of "no fishing" zones for around a third of the reef by 2025, a "considerable" reduction in agricultural and industrial pollution, as well as a reduction in the country's carbon emissions.

UNESCO runs a list of sites with World Heritage status around the world, a prestigious title that countries compete to bestow on their most famous natural and man-made locations.



AI Doctor Better at Predicting Patient Outcomes, Including Death

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Artificial intelligence has proven itself useful in reading medical imaging and even shown it can pass doctors' licensing exams.

Now, a new AI tool has demonstrated the ability to read physicians' notes and accurately anticipate patients' risk of death, readmission to hospital, and other outcomes important to their care.

Designed by a team at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, the software is currently in use at the university's affiliated hospitals throughout New York, with the hope that it will become a standard part of health care.

A study on its predictive value was published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

Lead author Eric Oermann, an NYU neurosurgeon and computer scientist, told AFP that while non-AI predictive models have been around in medicine for a long time, they were hardly used in practice because the data they needed requires cumbersome reorganization and formatting.

But "one thing that's common in medicine everywhere, is physicians write notes about what they've seen in clinic, what they've discussed with patients," he said.

"So our basic insight was, can we start with medical notes as our source of data, and then build predictive models on top of it?"

The large language model, called NYUTron, was trained on millions of clinical notes from the health records of 387,000 people who received care within NYU Langone hospitals between January 2011 and May 2020.

These included any records written by doctors, such as patient progress notes, radiology reports and discharge instructions, resulting in a 4.1-billion-word corpus.

One of the key challenges for the software was interpreting the natural language that physicians write in, which varies greatly among individuals, including in the abbreviations they choose.

By looking back at records of what happened, researchers were able to calculate how often the software's predictions turned out to be accurate.

They also tested the tool in live environments, training it on the records from, for example, a hospital in Manhattan then seeing how it fared in a Brooklyn hospital, with different patient demographics.

Overall, NYUTron identified an unnerving 95 percent of people who died in hospital before they were discharged, and 80 percent of patients who would be readmitted within 30 days.

It outperformed most doctors on its predictions, as well as the non-AI computer models used today.

But, to the team's surprise, "the most senior physician who's actually a very famous physician, he had superhuman performance, better than the model," said Oermann.

"The sweet spot for technology and medicine isn't that it's going to always deliver necessarily superhuman results, but it's going to really bring up that baseline."

NYUTron also correctly estimated 79 percent of patients' actual length of stay, 87 percent of cases where patients were denied coverage by insurance, and 89 percent of cases where a patient's primary disease was accompanied by additional conditions.

AI will never be a substitute for the physician-patient relationship, said Oermann. Rather, they will help "provide more information for physicians seamlessly at the point-of-care so they can make more informed decisions."



Think Morals Are Declining? So Has Everyone, Ever



PARIS (Dispatches) - Do you feel like society's morals have declined recently? You are far from alone, and may be suffering from a "psychological illusion," according to new research.

At every point over the last 70 years, people across the world have continuously believed that morality is declining, US psychologists found by looking at historical surveys.

But rather than morals steadily falling throughout history, the researchers suggested this perception is an illusion caused by rose-tinted memories of the past and a focus on the grim news of the present.

In a study in the journal Nature, the researchers quoted an observer as saying that "the process of our moral decline" has led to "the dark dawning of our modern day".

They then revealed that this is a quote from the Roman historian Livy written more than 2,000 years ago.

"This feeling is always there, you can find quotes from any era of history where people are decrying the decline of people's interpersonal goodness," Adam Mastroianni, a researcher at New York's Columbia University and the study's lead author, told AFP.

The researchers first looked at 177 opinion polls that included more than 220,000 people in the United States from 1949 to 2019. In 84 percent of the polls, a majority reported that morality had declined -- and the rate remained steady regardless of the year.

Similar surveys from 59 other countries found a remarkably similar rate -- 86 percent -- agreed that morals had tumbled.

"People all over the world believe that morality has declined, and they have believed this for as long as researchers have been asking them about it," the study said.

Heat-Trapping Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Soars to New Record

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Heat-trapping carbon dioxide soared to record levels in May, peaking at 424 parts per million and blowing past levels not seen in more than 4 million years, scientists announced.

The annual increase in the Keeling Curve, measured at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Mauna Loa Atmospheric Baseline Observatory, is one of the largest on record, according to scientists from NOAA and Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego.

"Every year we see carbon dioxide levels in our atmosphere increase as a direct result of human activity," said NOAA administrator Rick Spinrad.

"Every year, we see the impacts of climate change in the heat waves, droughts, flooding, wildfires and storms happening all around us," Spinrad added. "While we will have to adapt to the climate impacts we cannot avoid, we must expend every effort to slash carbon pollution and safeguard this planet and the life that calls it home."

The rise in carbon dioxide levels has been extreme since the advent of industrialization.

"CO2 levels are now more than 50% higher than they were before the onset of the industrial era," Scripps Institution of Oceanography announced in a tweet Monday.

Carbon dioxide generally peaks annually in the Northern Hemisphere in May. This year's 424.0 parts per million is a 3.0 ppm increase over May of 2022 and is the fourth-largest annual increase on the Keeling Curve.

This year's measurements were taken from a temporary sampling site at the summit of Hawaii's Mauna Kea volcano after lava flows cut off access to the Mauna Loa observatory in November 2022. Scripps' May measurements came in at 423.78 ppm and were taken at Mauna Loa.

Every year, NOAA's Global Monitoring Laboratory takes the Mauna Loa data and combines the measurements with sampling stations from around the world.

The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization also warned in November that emissions levels for all three main greenhouse gases -- carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide reached record highs in 2021.

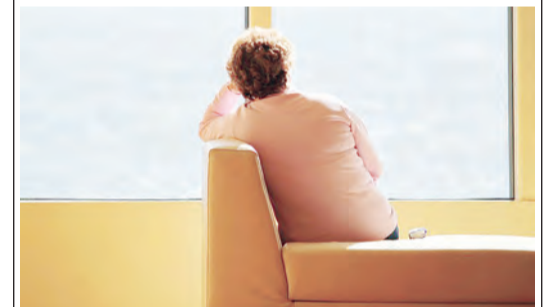
Scientists blame the burning of fossil fuels to generate electricity and provide transportation for carbon dioxide pollution, with additional blame on deforestation and agriculture. Carbon dioxide traps heat, like other greenhouse gases, and increases the onset of extreme weather events, such as heat waves and flooding. In addition to rising seas, scientists warn increasing carbon dioxide threatens the world's oceans by raising water temperatures and disrupting marine ecosystems.

"What we'd like to see is the curve plateauing and even falling because carbon dioxide as high as 420 or 425 parts per million is not good," Scripps geochemist Ralph Keeling warned.

"It shows that as much as we've done to mitigate and reduce emissions, we still have a long way to go."



Loneliness May Increase Risk of Death Among Cancer Survivors



LONDON (Dispatches) - There's a "loneliness epidemic" in the United States, and feelings of isolation have been linked to heart disease, stroke and other health conditions.

Now, new research suggests that cancer survivors who feel lonely may be more likely to die than survivors who have more social support.

"Loneliness may be linked to worse survival following a cancer diagnosis through multiple mechanisms, such as the increased risk of experiencing negative emotions such as hostility, stress and anxiety, increased unhealthy behaviors including smoking, alcohol abuse and less physical activity, or through physiological pathways such as immune system disorders," explained study author Jingxuan Zhao. She is a senior associate scientist at the American Cancer Society.

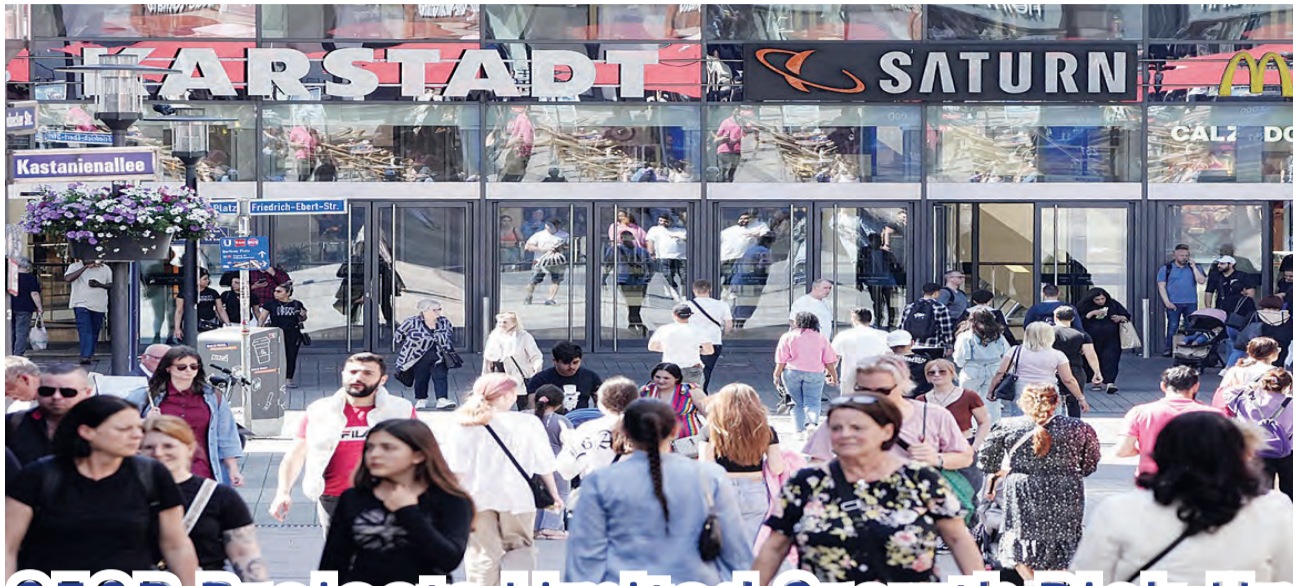
"It is also possible that cancer survivors who feel lonelier might not receive the practical and emotional support they need for their symptoms," Zhao added. For the study, Zhao and her colleagues looked at data on nearly 3,450 cancer survivors aged 50 and older who were part of the 2008-2018 Health and Retirement Study. These folks were followed through the end of 2020.

The researchers assessed loneliness every four years and grouped folks into four categories: low/no loneliness; mild loneliness; moderate loneliness; and high loneliness.

Cancer survivors who reported any loneliness were more like to die during the follow-up period than their counterparts who were not lonely. The more lonely a person was, the greater their risk of dying, the study showed. These findings held even after investigators controlled for other factors that could affect the risk of dying, such as age.

Brazil's Federal Subsidies Reach Highest Level

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil's federal government subsidies surged to the highest level in six years in 2022, said the Planning Ministry, in a sharp increase driven by elevated borrowing costs and the implementation of new tax benefits, particularly on fuels. In its annual report on the subject, the Planning Ministry emphasized that subsidies reached 581.49 billion reais (\$118.55 billion) last year, equivalent to 5.86% of gross domestic product (GDP). That marks a rise from 4.78% of GDP in 2021 and represents the steepest level since 2016, when it was 6.13%. "Every time it becomes more expensive for the Treasury to refinance its debt, the cost increases for the government and the Union in terms of credit subsidies generated," said Sergio Firpo, the secretary of monitoring and evaluation of public policy at the ministry.



OECD Projects Limited Growth Pick-Up

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The global economy is set to navigate a challenging path to recovery this year and next, as inflation continues to hinder household spending and the impact of higher interest rates weighs on growth, banks and markets, according to a leading intergovernmental organization.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Wednesday moderately upgraded its growth projections for the world economy, citing easing inflation and China's relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions. However, the OECD cautioned that the recovery still faces a "long road."

The Paris-based group, comprised of 38 member countries, raised its global growth forecast this year to 2.7% from an estimated 2.6% in its previous report in March. It foresaw only a tiny acceleration to 2.9% next year, according to its latest economic outlook, unchanged from March's forecast.

The rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic and energy price spike tied to Russia's invasion of Ukraine is likely to be weak by past standards, with an average growth of 3.4% recorded in the pre-pandemic years 2013-2019.

The path ahead is fraught with risks, from an escalation of Russia's war in Ukraine - with a dam collapse Tuesday that the sides blamed on each other - to debt troubles in developing countries and rapid interest rate hikes having unforeseen effects on banks and investors.

"The global economy is turning a corner but faces a long road ahead to attain strong and sustainable growth," the intergovernmental organization said. "Global economic developments have begun to improve, but the upturn remains fragile."

It was a more optimistic outlook than the World Bank gave Tuesday, citing similar risks in its expectation for 2.1% global growth this year. That was still an upgrade from its January forecast of 1.7%.

Energy prices have fallen to pre-invasion levels, helping ease the worst of the recent outbreak of inflation. But those costs are still higher than before Russia began massing troops on Ukraine's border in early 2021.

Meanwhile, China's reopening after drastic pandemic measures has provided a boost to global activity.

But core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food prices, is proving persistent as some companies raise prices to increase profits and workers push for higher wages amid relatively low unemployment.

The OECD sees inflation declining to 5.2% by year-end from 7.8% at the end of last year in the Group of 20 (G-20) countries that make up more than 80% of the global economy. The U.S. should see annual inflation of 3.2% by the last quarter of this year, and Europe's rate should fall to 3.5%.

Those levels would provide some relief but are still above the 2% inflation targets for the European Central Bank (ECB) and U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed), which have been rapidly raising interest rates to fight inflation. That increases the cost of borrowing to buy houses and invest in business expansion.

Japan Keeps Growth Focus But Signals End to Crisis-Mode Fiscal Largesse

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan is committed to putting economic growth before fiscal reform, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government said in its draft mid-year policy framework, while signalling an end to crisis-mode stimulus spending to return to one in "peacetime".

The draft plan, which was presented at Kishida's top economic advisory panel on Wednesday, underscored the challenge for the leader, who is seen as a fiscal hawk, to strike a balance between economic growth and fiscal consolidation.

Japan has the industrial world's heaviest public debt that is more than double the size of its economy, the world's third-largest. Like many other countries, it is now facing additional fiscal strains due to heavy spending rolled out to cushion the economic blow from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As we emerge from the coronavirus crisis and as the economy normalises, we strive to prevent crisis-time fiscal spending from being prolonged, while bringing spending structure back to peacetime," the draft report said.

The closely-watched policy framework will be approved by Kishida's cabinet this month, along with a separate action plan on his "new capitalism" agenda.

"Japan has been an outlier of the global trend that has moved away from crisis-mode stimulus. Policy normalisation is definitely a step in the right direction," said Takahide Kiuchi, executive economist at Nomura Research Institute.

"It's easier said than done though, given his big spending plans with doubling defence and child care spending," he added, noting lawmakers were also bracing for a potential general election. For the second straight year, the framework dropped a specific timeframe to balance the budget, reflecting a compromise Kishida may strike with reflationary forces within his own Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Analysts see the budget-balancing goal as rather symbolic.

"We will not abandon the flag of fiscal reform," Economy Minister Shigezumi Goto told reporters after the panel's meeting. "There's no change to the government stance of striving to achieve a primary budget surplus in fiscal 2025," Goto added.

Currently, Japan aims to swing a primary budget surplus, which excludes new bond sales and debt-servicing costs, by the fiscal year ending in March 2026.

The target was originally set for the early 2010s but has been delayed four times since then.

Several rounds of heavy stimulus spending to cope with the pandemic pushed up the annual budget from some 100 trillion yen to around 140 trillion yen (\$1 trillion) during fiscal 2020 to 2022.

Japan's delay in unwinding fiscal largesse has prompted International Monetary Fund (IMF) to urge the country to pursue fiscal consolidation by meeting any increase in government expenditure with steps to boost revenues.

The framework said the government will conduct a review of any progress of its fiscal reform in the fiscal year 2024 so as to create a medium-term economy and fiscal scheme.



China's Exports Tumble in May as Global Demand Falters

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's exports shrank much faster than expected in May while imports extended declines with a grim outlook for global demand, especially from developed markets, raising doubts about the fragile economic recovery.

The world's second-largest economy grew faster than expected in the first quarter thanks to robust services consumption and a backlog of orders following years of Covid disruptions, but factory output has slowed as rising interest rates and inflation squeeze demand in the United States and Europe.

Exports slumped 7.5 per cent year-on-year in May, data from China's Customs Bureau showed today, much larger than the forecast 0.4 per cent fall and the biggest decline since January. Imports contracted 4.5 per cent, slower than an expected 8.0 per cent decline and April's 7.9 per cent fall.

"The weak exports confirm that China needs to rely on domestic demand as the global economy slows," said Zhiwei Zhang, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management. "There is more pressure for the government to boost domestic consumption in the rest of the year, as global demand will likely weaken further in the second half."

Highlighting the extent of the weakness, the data shows trade was worse even than when the port of Shanghai, China's busiest, was shut down due to strict Covid curbs a year earlier.

The figures also add to a growing list of indicators that suggest China's post-Covid economic recovery is quickly losing steam, bolstering the case for more policy stimulus.

Asian stocks fell into the red after the data as did the yuan and the Australian dollar, a commodity currency that is highly sensitive to swings in Chinese demand.

China's post-pandemic stock rally has faded as small-time investors turn bearish on equities and double down instead on safer assets amid a stuttering economic recovery. The economy has been hit by a double whammy of faltering demand at home and abroad with the ripple effects felt across the region.

South Korean data last week showed shipments to China slid 20.8 per cent in May, marking a full year of monthly declines, with Korean semiconductor exports dropping 36.2 per cent, suggesting weak demand for components for final manufacture.

Chinese imports of semiconductors fell 15.3 per cent, as the market for the consumer electronics exports that include such parts softened.

Demand for raw materials broadly weakened with coal imports pulling back from the 15-month high hit in March, amid soft appetite from the power and steel sectors. Copper imports slid 4.6 per cent in May from a year ago.

Pakistan Approves 3.5% GDP Growth Target for FY 2023-24 Budget



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan approved an estimated 3.5% GDP growth target for its 2023-24 financial year budget, the country's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government was set to present the annual budget on Friday, at a time when the South Asian country faces its worst economic crisis with months of delay in securing funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Iqbal said the growth target was realistic. "We're taking those choices which take the country toward stability," he told a press conference in Islamabad after a meeting of National Economic Council (NEC) chaired by the prime minister approved the estimated budget figures.

He did not disclose other budget targets except for the GDP and development spending which he said will be 1150 billion Pakistani rupees (\$4.02 billion).

Iqbal made the announcement hours after a government source gave the figures to Reuters, including the 3.5% GDP target, and a 21% inflation projection for the FY 2023-24.

Pakistan, which is also in political turmoil, has been caught up for months in an acute balance of payments crisis, with its central bank's foreign exchange reserves dipping to as low as to cover hardly a month of controlled imports.

Iqbal also pointed out the dismal condition of the economy, saying the government would not be able to pay off debt fully through federal revenue.

"This is a defining moment of where we've reached," he said. "(The country) will need to borrow for the rest of budget that includes salaries for the government, defense budget, development budget, pension, subsidies."

U.S. Inflation Easing as Some Sectors Slow

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. economy is strong amid robust consumer spending but some areas are slowing down, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said, adding that she expects continued progress in bringing inflation down over the next two years with a strong labor market.

Yellen, in a CNBC interview, also said that while banks may struggle with commercial real estate and face some consolidation, there is ample liquidity in the system and banks should generally be able to withstand any strain.

Yellen said that inflation can subside while maintaining a strong labor market, with unemployment in the 4% range, up slightly from the 3.7% reading in May.

"We've always thought an unemployment rate with four as the first digit is a very strong labor market," Yellen said. "Clearly, Americans feel good about their job prospects. They're finding work quickly."

She said the economy has slowed somewhat, easing pressures in the labor market, but "we still have a very healthy labor market, wage gains are significant." Yellen said that legislation to lift the debt ceiling and reduce U.S. deficits by more than \$1 trillion over a decade would support the Federal Reserve's efforts to bring down inflation.

Asked about former Richmond Federal Reserve President Jeffrey Lacker's view that the federal funds rate, at 5.0-5.25% now, will have to rise to 6% to tame inflation, Yellen said that was a decision for the Fed.

"Consumer spending has continued to grow in a pretty robust way, but you're also seeing areas of the economy that are slowing down," Yellen said. "And this is a judgment that my former colleagues at the Fed are very capable of making. As I said, I think what's important is to try to bring inflation down. That's a top priority."

World Bank, OECD Up 2023 Growth Forecasts for Turkish Economy

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have upgraded their growth forecast for Turkey's economy for 2023, citing domestic demand as the main driver and challenges over inflation and rebuilding after devastating earthquakes in early February.

The Turkish economy is projected to expand by 3.2% this year, the World Bank said in its latest Global Economic Prospects report. This is up from a 2.7% forecast issued in January

but below a 5.6% growth rate in 2022.

The development lender sees the economy growing 4.3% next year, compared to its earlier forecast of 4%. It expects Turkey to grow by 4.1% in 2025, it said Tuesday.

The OECD expects the Turkish economy to grow 3.6% in 2023, up from its projection of 2.8% expansion in March, according to its latest Economic Outlook report, released on Wednesday.

In contrast to the World Bank, the Paris-based group lowered its 2024 forecast, now seeing the economy growing 3.7% versus a 3.8% projection in March.

The World Bank cited the fallout from the catastrophic earthquakes that struck Turkey's south on Feb. 6, killing over 50,000 people, leveling hundreds of thousands of buildings and causing massive infrastructural damage.

"Turkey was hit by two major earthquakes in early February, with direct losses estimated at 4% of 2021 GDP. However, the full costs of recovery and reconstruction could be twice as high," its report said.

It also referred to the uncertainties over monetary policies and high inflation, which has moderated since the beginning of the year, lastly easing to an annual 39.6% in May, according to official data.

"The evolution of macroeconomic policies is uncertain against the backdrop of high inflation, which has been met with further interest rate cuts by the central bank, alongside the general elections that took place last May," it said.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was reelected on May 28 to extend his rule into a third decade, announced his new Cabinet at the weekend and reshuffled his economic team. Erdoğan named Mehmet Şimşek, a former deputy prime minister who foreign investors well regard as treasury and finance minister.

Şimşek served as finance minister between 2009 and 2015 and deputy prime minister in charge of the economy until 2018. Soon after taking office, the former Merrill Lynch economist said: "We have no choice but to return to the rational ground."

Iran Ready for Extraterritorial Cultivation in Sulaymaniyah

KURDISTAN (IP) - The governor of Kurdistan of Iran says this province has special capacities in the field of agriculture, and for its development, and it is ready for extraterritorial cultivation in Sulaymaniyah province of Iraq.

The governor of Kurdistan, Esmail Zarei-kosha, at the head of a delegation, visited Sulaymaniyah province of the Kurdistan region of Iraq to participate in an investment conference.

On Thursday, at the 2023 investment conference in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, referring to the agricultural capacities of Iran's Kurdistan province, Zarei-kosha said: "We are ready for bilateral cooperation with Sulaymaniyah, Iraq in the field of agriculture." Iran and the Kurdistan region of Iraq have extensive political, economic, and scientific cooperation due to various common grounds.



China's Economy Is in Trouble: What Does That Mean for the U.S.?

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - As China struggles to emerge from the economic catastrophe caused by the coronavirus pandemic, its continued efforts seem to have stalled on a number of fronts, as debts mount and consumers show renewed caution about spending.

And as the recovery falters, a moment of truth looms, with potentially enormous consequences for the United States.

Because the economies of the U.S. and China are so deeply connected, policymakers in Washington and finance titans in New York are closely following Beijing's response to what could be a temporary setback — or a widening crisis with global implications.

And even as diplomatic links between the two nations fray, business ties persist. Elon Musk of Twitter and Tesla, Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan and Tim Cook of Apple have all recently visited China, in what could be seen as an attempt at reassurance.

"Let's not try to hurt China, the Chinese people," Dimon said during last week's visit. "You're not going to fix these things if you are just sitting across the Pacific yelling at each other."

Chinese President Xi Jinping sits next to a Chinese flag against a blue backdrop at a desk with flowers, another flag, a bottle and a microphone.

China was already experiencing an economic slowdown in 2019, in part due to restrictive trade policies implemented by the Trump administration. The virus exacerbated and accelerated existing challenges, disrupting manufacturing and confining consumers to their homes.

Now, life in China is returning to normal, but its economy continues to show signs of burgeoning problems that clash with the image of an unstoppable global force.

Under current President Xi Jinping, China cemented its status as a manufacturing giant while also lifting its own residents out of poverty. In 2012, the communist nation's gross domestic product was \$8.5 trillion. By the time Xi's second term ended, in 2022, the GDP had risen to \$18.5 trillion, an astonishing growth of more than 100%.

By contrast, the Chinese economy grew by only 4.5% in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. It was an improvement over 2022, which saw only 3% growth, but still shy of the 5% target set by Beijing.

Granted, the U.S. economy only grew 1.3% in the first quarter of 2023, but some observers believe that China's slowdown is indicative of deeper problems that could soon emerge — problems that had long been concealed by China's insular leadership.

"Something is rotten in the Chinese economy," investor Ruchir Sharma recently argued, pointing to what he described as "unsustainable" levels of government investment and debt accumulation.

After the 2008-'09 financial crisis, China allowed municipalities to use "local government funding vehicles," or LGFVs, to borrow money to pay for infrastructure projects. The debt was principally repaid through fees generated by a booming real estate market, which gravitated toward inland regions far from the overdeveloped coast.

It was always a risky play — but never more so than today.

Real estate growth effectively froze during the pandemic, while government spending increased. Those dynamics have raised the possibility that some local governments could default on their debt obligations, triggering a broader economic crisis.

A recent analysis by the Rhodium Group found that of 205 cities surveyed, 102 had struggled with debt servicing in 2022. Analysts for Goldman Sachs recent said that they saw "risks on the rise, especially for the less developed inland regions."



Last year, Xi's government announced a 16-point plan to galvanize an anemic real estate market, which would replenish municipal coffers and, presumably, keep the LGFVs from collapsing.

But so far, the measures do not appear to have worked, leading Beijing to unveil new measures to boost the real estate sector last week.

Real estate accounts for about 25% of China's gross domestic product, meaning that the sector is critical for the nation's economic health (by contrast, real estate accounts for 17% of the gross domestic product in the United States).

As with other aspects of China's economy, the real estate market is recovering from the prolonged period of "zero-COVID" — lockdowns and intensive surveillance measures implemented at the slightest sign of the coronavirus — which severely disrupted economic activity.

But the recovery has been faltering. Relative to April, May saw a nearly 15% drop in residential sales.

"The basic picture was one of regression," a Bloomberg analyst recently assessed, describing the real estate sector as "still sick."

Ultimately, whether ordinary people are willing to spend money on goods and services — condominiums, smartphones, restaurant meals — is revealing of how they see their own financial prospects.

Businesses are also unlikely to make new investments if they perceive the economic climate to be unfavorable or uncertain.

On that front, China fares poorly. Business confidence plunged after a crushing 2022; meanwhile, consumer confidence remains "weak and shaken," Pepsi chief financial officer Hugh Johnston judged last month in an interview with Reuters.

Also, foreign investors are pulling out of China, another bad sign.

"Unlike previous cycles, we see no easy fix this time. The real barrier to sustaining the growth recovery is a lack of confidence," economists with Nomura Holdings recently wrote.

Most analysts believe that Chinese consumers and enterprises will eventually recover their confidence, while Beijing will shore up other sectors of the economy. But that could take years. And even then, the pre-pandemic powerhouse may only live on in memory.

Iranian, Turkish Armed Forces Must Continue Military Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Chief of General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri has said that the armed forces of Iran and the neighboring Turkey should continue their cooperation.

Bagheri made the remark on Thursday in a phone talk with Lieutenant General Yaşar Güler, who was appointed as Turkey's new defense minister on June 3.

The top Iranian general congratulated Güler on his new post. Bagheri described Iran and Turkey as "good and strategic neighbors", saying that they share "friendly and peaceful borders", which highlights the necessity of continued cooperation between their armed forces.

The top Iranian general also emphasized the need for bilateral meetings at different levels as well as holding joint military drills by the two countries.

He invited the Turkish defense minister to visit Iran as well. The Turkish minister on his part stressed the importance of increasing military ties between the two neighboring countries.

He also expressed gratitude to Iran for its "brotherly and friendly" support to Turkey in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in February this year.

FM Calls for Understanding Among Lebanese Parties to Elect President

TEHRAN (IP) - In a meeting with the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Beirut, Iran's Foreign Minister emphasized the need for understanding between Lebanese parties and groups to elect the president of this country.

In this meeting, Iran's Minister of Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian emphasized on increasing the level of relations between the two countries, especially in the political and economic fields.

Amirabdollahian also stressed the importance of Lebanon and its role in the axis of resistance.

He called on the Lebanese parties to speed up the election of the president and stressed that it seems that the countries of the region are also paying attention to this issue trying to help solve this issue.

Lebanon has entered its eighth month without being able to elect a president.

Mojtaba Amani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Lebanon, also presented a report on the mission and the state of bilateral relations.

Iran Delegation Attends INTERPOL Conference in Singapore

TEHRAN (MNA) - Heading an Iranian delegation, the Director General of Iran's Interpol has traveled to Singapore to take part in the 18th edition of the Interpol Conference underway in the southeast Asian country.

Brigadier General Majid Karimi had several bilateral and multilateral meetings with senior police officials of the participating countries and managers of specialized departments of the Interpol organization.

Referring to the importance of the three-day conference, Karimi said, "Various areas of international crimes, including drug trafficking, arms and ammunition trafficking, human trafficking and other violent crimes were discussed [in the meetings]." According to Brigadier General Karimi, Iran's delegation reached good agreements with some countries regarding increasing the level of police interactions, the extradition of international defendants, especially those charged with economic crimes and smuggling.

Addressing the multi-faceted challenges posed by a complex and increasingly deadly criminal landscape is the focus of INTERPOL's Heads of National Central Bureaus (NCBs) annual meeting taking place this week from June 7 to 9, according to a report released by the Interpol on its website. Through panel-based discussions and regional roundtable sessions, some 270 delegates from 133 countries will identify best practice to counter cybercrime, organized, terrorism and other emerging criminal trends.

Saudis Snub U.S. Push...

FROM PAGE 1

Blinken also reiterated on Thursday that Washington will not normalize relations with Syria and does not support other nation's normalization of ties with the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

For his part, Prince Faisal defended the landmark decision to lift Syria's Arab League suspension, which came shortly after the start of the country's foreign-sponsored conflict 12 years ago.

"Syria made very clear commitments to address concerns of the international community," the chief Saudi diplomat said.

"We have differences of opinion but we're working on finding a mechanism for us to be able to work together," the Saudi foreign minister also pointed out during the press conference with the US secretary of state.

The Saudi foreign minister also highlighted that China and Saudi Arabia are close and strategic allies and have been increasing cooperation in the energy and financial sectors, and that "cooperation is likely to grow."

He said Saudi Arabia's ties with the United States and China were not a "zero-sum game."

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud appreciates China's efforts in brokering a rapprochement deal between Riyadh and Tehran. "I don't ascribe to this zero-sum game," Prince Faisal said in Riyadh. "We are all capable of having multiple partnerships and multiple engagements and the US does the same in many instances."

"So I'm not caught up in this really negative view of this. I think we can actually build a partnership that crosses these borders," the top Saudi diplomat said.

No IAEA Resolution...

FROM PAGE 1

The E3 said Iran's activities such as centrifuge configuration changes at Fordow without prior notice to the IAEA and detection of particles of uranium enriched at 83.7% took place in the context of over four years of a lack of substantive cooperation with the IAEA regarding possible undeclared nuclear material three undeclared locations in Iran two decades ago.

Referring to the three earlier resolutions by the IAEA board against Iran, the latest in November, the E3 said that the IAEA decided it is "essential and urgent" that Iran act to

fulfil its legal obligations and clarify all outstanding safeguards issues without delay. "Iran's longstanding lack of cooperation with the Agency, incremental and limited steps are neither sufficient nor satisfactory," read the statement. The U.S. said in its statement that "The Agency now says it has no further questions related to two of the four sites at this stage, but this does not constitute 'closure' of these files, as some have inaccurately claimed."

During the past few weeks, reports have surfaced that Tehran and Washington have been in close — yet indirect — contact with each other to reach an interim agreement.

Europe Urged to...

FROM PAGE 1

Touching upon the United States' desire to return to the JCPOA and its subsequent negotiations, Naziri Asl said, "Despite the arduous negotiations that lasted for more than 18 months, mainly due to the lack of American political will and determination, we could not bring the talks to a conclusion."

The Iranian envoy said the U.S. government has recently stated on multiple occasions that the revival of the JCPOA is "not on the agenda for months," expressing concern that some parties have turned a blind eye to the "irresponsible attitude," and are even aligning with it.

"The measure shows that miscalculations and minor political considerations are dominating the revival of an agreement that the international community has invested for years to achieve," Naziri Asl said.

Iran's permanent representative at the United Nations office in Vienna called on the European governments to refrain from provocative and unconstructive attitudes, adopt good faith, and continue working in a process that leads to the resolution of "shared concerns."

"It is a matter of serious concern that despite Iran's extensive cooperation with the UN nuclear agency, the European Union, especially Germany, Britain and France, continue to resort to outdated tactics and play a dirty game with political motivation to target Iran's ongoing cooperation with the IAEA," Naziri Asl said.

"The practical cooperation of Europe with the illegal unilateral coercive measures of the United States and the confiscation of Iranian assets is in complete contradiction to the verbal support of the JCPOA," he added.

Iran proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear program to the world by signing the JCPOA with six world powers. However, Washington's exit in May 2018 and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran left the future of the deal in limbo.

Israel Seeking to...

FROM PAGE 1

The envoy also noted that the Islamic Republic has always declared its readiness to strengthen its relations with its neighbors, adding that the ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia as two regional heavyweights will certainly have a positive impact on regional issues.

Iran and Saudi Arabia could also cooperate in many fields that could provide economic opportunities for the development of regional countries, he said.

The ambassador also said that Iran's relations with some of its neighbors are "very strong" and their economic cooperation is constantly growing.

Enayati also lauded China's role in promoting the resumption of Tehran-Riyadh ties following high-stakes talks between the two sides in Beijing.

After several days of intensive negotiations hosted by China, Iran and Saudi Arabia clinched a deal on March 10 to restore diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and missions within two months after seven years of estrangement.

Observers have welcomed the development as a counterweight to efforts aimed at alienating regional countries from each other, arguing that the detente — to the dismay of the US and Israel — has the potential to ease tensions across a region characterized by turbulence for decades.

Russia to Study...

FROM PAGE 1

"Definitely, economic operators and the relevant executive federal agencies will thoroughly study this idea. We have close contacts with all the above-mentioned actors in this context," Ryabkov added.

Iran is estimated to hold the world's second-largest natural gas reserves, second only to Russia, and ahead of Qatar, Turkmenistan, and the United States. With 32 trillion cubic meters, Iran is home to 16% of global natural gas reserves.

A lot of Iran's gas reserves are concentrated in the South Pars offshore field in the Persian Gulf, which it shares with Qatar.

Development of Iran's massive gas reserves has been challenging because of the pullout of Western supermajors such as TotalEnergies in the wake of the reinstated U.S. sanctions against Tehran by former President Donald Trump.

Di Maria Quits Juventus After One Season

PARIS (Dispatches) - Argentina winger Angel Di Maria has quit Juventus after one season, becoming a free agent amid claims he could be targeted by a club in Saudi Arabia. The 35-year-old World Cup winner touched down in Turin after seven seasons for Paris Saint-Germain, going on to score eight goals in 40 games for Juve in a trophy-less season. "I leave with the peace of mind of having given all to help the club to continue winning titles, but it was not possible," Di Maria said on Instagram.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard:
(+98) (21) 44253448
Public Relations Tel:
(+98)(21) 44253450
Editorial Board: 44253449
Public Relations Fax:
(+98)(21) 44253395
Advertising Department:
Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
Website:
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:
info@irannewsdaily.com
ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by: Entekhab-e Rasaneh
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Indian Wrestlers Suspend Protest

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's top wrestlers said they had decided to suspend protests after the country's sports minister promised a swift probe of their federation chief who they accused six months ago of sexually harassing female athletes. The wrestlers have been camping in New Delhi for months seeking the arrest of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who has denied the allegations.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

SATURDAY JUNE 10, 2023

West Ham Secure Conference League Glory

PRAGUE (Dispatches) - Jarrod Bowen slid home a 90th-minute winner as West Ham United secured a last-gasp 2-1 victory over Fiorentina in the Europa Conference League final to clinch a first major European trophy in over half a century.

The match at Prague's Eden Arena looked like it was heading to extra time when Lucas Paqueta slipped a ball through to Bowen who outpaced the defenders on a quick counter attack and fired past Fiorentina keeper Pietro Terracciano.

The goal made Bowen the first English player to score the winner in a major European final since Arsenal's Alan Smith in 1994 and capped a campaign in which West Ham were unbeaten in 15 UEFA Europa Conference League matches.

"You make that run 10 times and you might get it once," Bowen told BT Sport. "I had a lot of time but I was confident and when I saw it going in, I didn't know what to do. This was the biggest game of my career."

"I obviously dreamed of scoring but to score the winner in the last minute. It's what you always say you want to do. To do it in front of these fans. I thought I was going to cry. I'm just happy."

West Ham took the lead in the 62nd minute when Said Benrahma converted a penalty after a VAR review confirmed a handball by the Italian side's captain Cristiano Biraghi, who had been a thorn in West Ham's side with his runs down the flank.

Fiorentina immediately stepped up the pace after going behind and were rewarded five minutes later when Giacomo Bonaventura controlled the ball with two defenders on him and sent an angled shot past West Ham keeper Alphonse Areola.

"I have had a long career in football and you don't get many moments like this," West Ham Boss David Moyes told BT Sport. "These sorts of moments as managers don't come around often. This is a great moment for us."

Both sides struggled to create much in a nervy opening half with Fiorentina controlling possession but lacking a cutting edge in the final third, while West Ham had long spells without the ball.



When the referee blew the final whistle, the West Ham players raced to the corner to celebrate in front of their fans who revelled in the team's first win in a European final since they lifted the Cup Winners' Cup in 1965.

"It hurts to lose like this. We played well but we can't concede such an easy goal in the final minutes. The team gave their all but in certain situations we have to be more concentrated — keep controlling the game and pressing. In finals, small details make the difference," said Fiorentina defender Nikola Milenkovic.

The supporters of both teams made their presence felt in a noisy atmosphere, though the referee was forced to stop play midway through the opening half after West Ham fans threw cups at Fiorentina's Biraghi, hitting the defender on the head and drawing blood.

UEFA had allotted only 5,780 tickets to each club, leaving legions of supporters unable to attend the match at Slavia Prague's stadium with a capacity set at 18,000 for the final.

Many thousands of West Ham supporters instead watched the match in bars and fan zones around the city. Earlier in the day, Czech police said they had detained 16 Fiorentina supporters after they attacked West Ham fans in a local bar and a police officer.



PARIS (Dispatches) - Casper Ruud will play Alexander Zverev in the French Open semi-finals after the Norwegian fourth seed beat Denmark's Holger Rune 6-1, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Ruud, who lost last year's Roland Garros final to Rafael Nadal, defeated sixth-ranked Rune for the fifth time in six matches and avenged his loss in the semi-finals at Rome in May.

"I kind of looked at it as though he was the favorite - he won the last time we played and he's had a better year than me so far," said Ruud.

"I was feeling like the underdog even though I was seeded number four and he was seeded number six."

Ruud fended off two break points in the opening game of the match and then consistently put pressure on Rune's serve, breaking twice in a lopsided first set.

He dominated the second in similar fashion before Rune threatened a comeback as he forced a fourth set.

Sheikh Jassim Makes Final Bid to Buy Man Utd

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani has submitted an improved fifth and final bid for Manchester United and wants an answer by today, according to reports.

Sheikh Jassim is in a bidding war with British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe after the pair emerged as the main contenders to buy the Premier League club.

United announced in November that the board was exploring "strategic alternatives to enhance the club's growth", with a full sale one of the options.

Current owners, the Glazer family, are understood to value United at £6 billion (\$7.5 billion) and the Raine Group was brought in to oversee the process.

The fifth offer remains for 100 percent of the club and Sheikh Jassim's bid team have set Friday as a deadline to make headway in discussions, reports said on Wednesday.

While the offer is understood to remain after that point, the end of the week would mark the end of their ongoing engagement in the process.

INEOS chemical company founder Ratcliffe appeared to be the front runner after a third round of bidding closed in late April.

Ratcliffe, a boyhood United fan who failed in his attempt to buy Chelsea last year, reportedly wants to purchase a controlling stake of more than 50 per cent.

That would allow the Glazers to remain involved -- a move that would be deeply unpopular with supporters.

United lost Saturday's FA Cup final to Manchester City but they won the League Cup and finished third in the Premier League in Erik ten Hag's first season in charge.

The lengthy ownership saga means there is an air of uncertainty over the future of the club as they prepare for an important summer transfer window.

Co-owner Avram Glazer was at Wembley for Saturday's 2-1 defeat to City and ignored questions about the takeover as he left through the interview area.

Asked about the potential takeover and summer improvements, United boss Ten Hag said: "I think in this moment I don't want to discuss that."

Real Madrid to Sign Bellingham From Dortmund for €103m



expensive 17-year-old in football history. He quickly became a regular in the Dortmund side, anchoring the midfield and starting over 30 Bundesliga games in each of his last two seasons in Germany.

MADRID (Dispatches) - Borussia Dortmund have agreed to sell England midfielder Jude Bellingham to Spanish giants Real Madrid for an initial fee of €103 million, the Bundesliga club said in a statement.

The 19-year-old, who had been linked with several major European clubs, joined Dortmund from Birmingham City in 2020 for £25 million, becoming the most

England manager Gareth Southgate made Bellingham the youngest English player to represent his country at a major tournament during the 2021 European Championship.

He soon became a permanent fixture in England's midfield, playing all five games at the World Cup in Qatar where they were knocked out in the quarter-finals by France.

Bellingham was linked with Premier League clubs who wanted to bring him home, including Liverpool whose manager Jurgen Klopp said they were forced to pull out of the race to sign him due to his price tag.

At Real Madrid, he will join a side rich in young midfield talent in Federico Valverde, Eduardo Camavinga and Aurelien Tchouameni as the club look to build for the future and replace long-time stalwarts Toni Kroos and Luka Modric.

Dortmund said the variable transfer compensation paid by Real will be a maximum of around 30 per cent of the initial fee based on Bellingham's performances and the Spanish club's success on the pitch.

Messi to Join Inter Miami After PSG Exit

LONDON (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi will snub a lucrative contract in Saudi Arabia and move to Major League Football side Inter Miami as a free agent after parting ways with French champion Paris St Germain, the BBC reported.

Messi, who played his final game for PSG over the weekend, was also linked with a return to Barcelona but the Spanish club have had their hands tied due to La Liga's financial fair play rules.

Should the deal with Miami go through, the 35-year-old Argentine will play outside Europe for the first time since he joined Barca's academy at the age of 13 and became the Spanish club's all-time record goal scorer with 672 goals.

Messi had wanted to go to a club where he could eventually have an ownership stake, a source with knowledge of the negotiations told Reuters this week. He also wanted to maximise his existing deal with Adidas and MLS's relationship with Apple.

MLS earns a flat fee of about US\$200 million per year from Apple until it reach a certain threshold of subscriptions, after which point they will earn a share of the revenue from those subscriptions.

Messi's move to MLS is expected to drive viewers to the Apple TV streaming platform, as the world's most recognizable football player.

Messi, who led Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar in December and has earned a record seven Ballon d'Or awards, won the Ligue 1 title in his two seasons with PSG as well as the French Super Cup in 2022. The forward was also linked with a move to Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal after he received a formal offer.



FIFA Made False Claims About Carbon Neutrality At Qatar World Cup

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Football's world governing body FIFA made false and misleading statements about the reduced environmental impact of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, a Swiss regulator said.

The Swiss Fairness Commission, the self-regulatory body of the advertising and communications industry, made its determination after investigating five claims that Zurich-based FIFA marketed the tournament as being carbon neutral.

The commission, which issues recommendations, but no state-enforceable judgments, advised FIFA from making unsubstantiated claims in future. It said complainants usually implement its recommendations voluntarily.

FIFA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Complainants from Switzerland, France, Belgium, the UK and the Netherlands said FIFA made false statements in its communications about carbon neutrality at the World Cup, the commission said. "The Second Chamber of the Commission has now upheld all five complaints following a complex process," it added.

FIFA had promoted the Qatar World Cup as the first completely climate neutral tournament, saying it was committed to reducing and offsetting carbon emissions it generated.

But the Climate Alliance, a network of groups which launched the complaint last year, was concerned about the environmental impact from the construction of air-conditioned stadiums and the thousands of fans who flew to the tournament.

In its decision, the commission said it should not be claimed that sustainability goals have been achieved if there are no definitive and generally accepted methods for measuring them, or ensuring measures have been implemented.

"FIFA was not able to provide proof that the claims were accurate during the proceedings as required by the commission," it said.

