

**A Member of Majlis National Security
And Foreign Policy Commission
Said That Improving Amicable
Relations With Neighboring and
Regional Countries Is the Main
Policy of the Current Administration**

IRAN NEWS

**TEDPIX, the Main index of Tehran
Stock Exchange (TSE), Drops
6,848 Points to 2.208m on Sunday, as
Reported, Over 9.897b Securities Worth
68.562 Trillion Rials (About \$163n)
Were Traded at the TSE**

VOL. XXIX, No. 7787 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

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Iran Warns EU Against Unconstructive Behavior

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says the parties to negotiations to remove anti-Iran sanctions must avoid politicized and unconstructive behavior.

In a 90-minute phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Saturday, Raisi said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly verified Tehran's full compliance with its legal commitments as per the 2015 nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He said certain European countries' miscalculation in dealing with the Iranian nation is rooted in being caught in the trap of false information spread by terrorist, separatist and opposition groups.

The Iranian president placed a premium on avoiding interference in the domestic affairs of countries and respecting the principle of national sovereignty.

Iran showed to the world the peaceful nature of its nuclear program by signing the JCPOA, with six states, namely the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China. However, Washington's unilateral withdrawal in May 2018 and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran left the future of the deal in limbo.

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Iran Achievements in Nuclear Industry Gained Under Threats, Sanctions

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has highlighted the Islamic Republic's remarkable progress in the nuclear industry, saying the achievements in the high-tech field have been gained under the threats and sanctions by the enemies.

Mohammad Eslami made the statement before the launch of an exhibition showcasing Iran's latest achievements in the nuclear industry at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Hosseinieh on Sunday.

"These achievements were made under heavy threats and sanctions from the enemies," Eslami said, adding, "Achieving complex nuclear technologies in such difficult conditions has not been easy whatsoever, but our country's young scientists achieved them without using foreign capacities."

Pointing to the AEOI's goal of manifesting the effects of nuclear energy in society and people's lives, Eslami said, "The fields of health, medicine, food security and agriculture, industry, water and soil and environment have been discussed in the exhibition, and the achievements of these sectors are introduced."

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Nothing Wrong With a Deal If Nuclear Infrastructure Remains Intact



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says there is nothing wrong with reaching a deal if Iran's nuclear infrastructure remains untouched, urging vigilance when dealing with the West, as "it has reneged on its promises many times and its untrustworthiness is now proven."

The Leader made the remarks in a meeting with a group of nuclear experts and officials in Tehran on Sunday. Ayatollah Khamenei said that Iranian nuclear managers, authorities and activists have over the past years set up important infrastructure for the country's nuclear industry.

"You may want to reach agreements in some fields. Nothing is wrong with [reaching] agreements, but the infrastructure must remain intact. They must not be harmed. They are the fruit of others' endeavors," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

"We were dealt blows because of these misplaced trusts. It is very important that a nation and the officials of a country know and understand where they should trust and where not. We have understood it over the past twenty years. We understood who is trustworthy and who is not," the Leader said.

He also said the enemies use the claim that Iran is developing nuclear weapons as an excuse to target Iran, but the claim is no more than a lie and they are well aware of it.

"The enemies have created a nuclear challenge for us for twenty years because they know that the movement in the nuclear industry is the key to the country's scientific progress," the Leader said. "The excuse of nuclear weapons is a lie and they (the enemies) know it too."

"Based on our Islamic basis, we do not want to go towards [nuclear] weapons. Otherwise, they (the enemies) would not have been able to stop it, as until now they could not stop our nuclear developments," Ayatollah Khamenei stressed.

The Leader described the nuclear industry as one of the most important components of the country's power, credibility and strength, saying that the industry is key to progress in many fields.

He further said that the industry improves people's lives in technical, economic and health sectors and adds weight to the country's global and international political standing.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the 20-year nuclear challenge demonstrated the extraordinary ability and talent of Iranian youth despite sanctions as well as threats against scientists and the assassination of some of them.

The challenge also laid bare the inhuman, unfair and bullying logic of opponents, who have expectations from us beyond existing safeguards agreements, the Leader asserted.

The challenge, he added, further exposed the unreliability of the promises made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the opposite in the talks aimed at reviving the 2025 nuclear deal.

Trump Slams U.S. Justice System as Weaponized, Corrupt

GEORGIA (Dispatches) - Former US president Donald Trump has railed against the "weaponized and corrupt" US justice system, after prosecutors indicted him for mishandling classified materials.

Trump rallied his supporters on Saturday to back him in his fight against what he called the unfair legal attack in his appearance before two state Republican conventions — first in Georgia and then North Carolina.

"The baseless indictment of me by the [incumbent US president Joe] Biden administration's weaponized department of injustice will go down as among the most horrific abuses of power in the history of our country," he said.

"I will never yield. I will never be deterred," he vowed. "We're going to evict a totally corrupt president named Joe Biden from the White House."

He lashed out at Justice Department Special Counsel Jack Smith for indicting him on multiple felony charges. "You're dealing with crazy lunatics."

The 37-count criminal indictment against Trump, released on Friday, accused the former president of risking some of the country's most sensitive security secrets, including some about US nuclear secrets and military plans.

It alleges that Trump has kept classified US government documents at his Florida estate Mar-a-Lago and conspired to prevent their return to the White House.

Trump is running for a second term in the White House and is a front-runner for the Republican nomination in the 2024 US presidential election. He claimed the charges are "politically motivated" and he was being pursued in court because he was running for a second term in the White House.

"That's why they're doing it, if I wasn't, there would be no witch hunt, there would be no indictment," he told supporters.

Trump is due to go on trial in New York next March in a state case regarding hush-money paid to Stormy Daniels, an adult movies star.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

IAEA Serving The Zionists

The United Nations and its bodies have been established to help peace, justice and impartiality in the world but sometimes they disappoint people worldwide and they act in favor of certain countries especially Israel, the U.S. and Western countries, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is one of them which disappoints nations over its double-standard acts and decisions, and one is its approach regarding the peaceful nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in its decisions the agency tries to please the Zionist regime and the Westerners.

On Thursday the board of governor of the IAEA ended its meeting without issuing any serious statement against Tehran but it came under fire of criticism from the West and Israel. The agency still continues its claim about Iran's nuclear program and it insists Iran has not responded to its questions properly.

Reacting to this statement, Iran's mission to the Vienna-based organizations highlighted the Islamic Republic's full commitment to its nuclear obligations, calling on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to act professionally instead of relying on "fabricated information" provided by the Israeli regime.

In an explanatory note to the IAEA dated June 5, the mission said the Islamic Republic is determined to continue its compliance with its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA).

Iran has done its utmost to enable the Agency to continue its verification activities in Iran, which is unique in the Agency's verification system, the statement read.

It came after IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi sent a report entitled "NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran" to the IAEA's Board of Governors, repeating the old allegations against Iran's nuclear program.

The statement also pointed to the so-called "undetected" locations claimed in Grossi's report, saying there has not been any undeclared location that is required to be declared under the CSA as Iran's nuclear activities remain peaceful under the agency's full-scope safeguards.

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Iraqi Source Confirms Plan To Pay \$2.76b of Iran's Debts

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - A source in the Iraqi foreign ministry has confirmed the Arab country will pay \$2.76 billion worth its energy debts to Iran as part of a recent understanding with US authorities.

A Saturday report by Reuters news agency quoted an unnamed official in the Iraqi foreign ministry as saying that Baghdad had received a sanctions waiver from the United States to be able to make payments to settle part of heavy arrears it owes to Tehran for imports of natural gas and electricity.

The "senior official" said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had given the clearance for the payment to Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein on the sidelines of a conference in Saudi Arabia on Thursday.

Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ahmed Al-Sahhaf also confirmed in a short statement that Hussein had made progress "regarding financial dues between Iraq and Iran during his discussion with his American counterpart in Riyadh".

Iraq relies on imports from Iran for a major part of its gas and electricity demand. However, US sanctions on Iran have made it difficult for Iraq to pay for imports leading Iran to regularly cut gas flows.

A senior Iranian businessman who watches over trade between Iran and Iraq said earlier on Saturday that some \$2.7 billion worth of Iran's frozen funds in Iraq had been released.

Yahya Al-e Eshaq, who chairs Iran-Iraq joint chamber of commerce, said the funds will be used for imports of basic goods into Iran as well as for payments related to Iranian pilgrims traveling to Saudi Arabia to attend this year's hajj ceremony.

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Iran, Russia Discuss Crypto And Blockchain Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran and Russia in a meeting discussed cryptocurrency and blockchain cooperation.

Professionals and business leaders from Iran and Russia experts discussed the potential and pitfalls of cryptocurrency and blockchain use at the 15th International Financial Industry Exhibition (FINEX) in Tehran.

The meeting brought together speakers including Mustafa Amiri, secretary of Iran FinTech Association; Abbas Ashtiani, CEO of Iran Blockchain Association; Alexander Brazhnikov, executive director of the Russian Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Industries Association; and Hossein Khosropour, head of the Innovation and Investment Support at the ICT Ministry, way2pay website reported Saturday.

President Calls for Accelerating Loan Grants For House Construction

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi in the 8th session of the Supreme Housing Council in his government emphasized the need to speed up the granting of loans to housing construction projects, and obliged the governor generals to speed up the renovation of worn-out areas.

In this meeting, the President also urged the governorates and the relevant departments in the provinces to identify the lands that have remained undecided for more than 10 years and construction has not been done on them, and by providing the necessary incentives and also using the legal mechanisms approved in the Supreme Council of Urban Planning, to add these lands to the country's housing construction capacity.

Organizing the rental market and monitoring the performance of communication platforms in the field of housing market and renting in order to prevent speculation

and price fixing in the housing market were among the other emphasis of the President in today's meeting of the Supreme Housing Council.

Referring to the increase in the share of housing in the household portfolio, Dr Raisi called on all officials and institutions to seriously fulfil their duties in the field of implementing the national housing movement, so that people's concerns regarding housing provision will be resolved as much as possible.

In this meeting, it was decided that the regulation and control of the real estate market should be implemented nationwide in the entire country, provided that a favourable result is obtained in the trial implementation.

While appreciating the warm and sincere welcome of the people of East Azerbaijan province to the Popular Administration, the President called this encouraging presence meaningful in the conditions of combined warfare and the enemy's continuous efforts to create despair in the country, and praising the awareness and intelligence of the people of East Azerbaijan province, and added, "This epic presence makes the responsibility of the Popular Administration heavier in following up and solving the problems of the province".

Conditions Set for Unblocking Social Networks

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Whenever foreign platform holders make commitments to the government and Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of Iran, a decision will be made about lifting filtering on them, according to Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi.

Vahidi made the remarks in reaction to a question about lifting restrictions on foreign social networks.

As it has already been announced, whenever foreign platform holders make commitments to the government and Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of Iran, a decision will be made about lifting filters on them, Vahidi said.

He pointed out that as per reports, they have seemingly not made any commitments yet.

Tehran's Mayor Heads for Belgium

TEHRAN (IP) - The mayor of Tehran headed to Brussels, the capital of Belgium, in order to participate in the general assembly of Metropolis (Association of Major Metropolises of the World).



Alireza Zakani, the mayor of Tehran, left for Brussels, the capital of Belgium, Sunday morning in order to participate in the Metropolis General Assembly.

Lotfollah Foruzandeh, Deputy Finance and Urban Economy of Tehran Municipality, and Mehdi Abbasi, Head of the Urban Planning and Architecture Commission of Tehran City Council, are also accompanying the mayor of the capital on this trip.

Metropolis is an international non-governmental organization that works with non-profit goals and without political affiliation. The management and issues of the world's megacities are the focus of the attention of Metropolis. This association is also a part of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

The aforementioned association was founded in 1984 by the initiative of the municipality of Paris and started working in Montreal (Canada) in 1985.

The main goal of Metropolis is to promote sustainable urban development in large cities in order to improve the quality of life of citizens by guiding the global network of metropolises and monitoring the development path of important metropolitan areas in the world. This organization, which is an international non-governmental organization; is an organization between the important metropolises of the world, and its main field of activity is metropolitan management.

Since 1992, Tehran Municipality has become a member of the Association of Major Cities of the World, and the cities of Tehran, Mashhad, and Tabriz are members of this association.

Record-Breaking of Steel Production Hub of Eastern Country

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Khorasan Steel Complex (KSC) had a brilliant performance in production and sales during the last Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht.



According to reports, the CEO of KSC Mr. Tahmoures Javanbakht said the revenues of the company from sales of products in Ordibehesht hit 1103b tomans which shows 8% growth to the previous month of Farvardin and the figure shows 15% growth comparing to the same month last year.

He noted that requirement for continuous growth in production is to curb inflation structurally, adding that despite problems in the field of providing sustainable energy, Khorasan Steel Company with its all capability seek increase in production.

He noted that steel products of KSC in Ordibehesht were 57,678 tons which shows 24% growth comparing to the previous month of Farvardin. He added that by the way steel products production in Ordibehesht shows 5% growth comparing to the same month last year.

Javanbakht then gave details of production growth in the company and said that the iron sponge production in Ordibehesht in KSC was 140,933 tons which shows 25% growth comparing to Farvardin and 4% growth comparing to month of Ordibehesht last year.

He also announced growth in pellet production in this company and produced 208,956 tons of pellet in Ordibehesht which shows 57% growth comparing to Farvardin and it was 1.4% more than the same month last year.

Iran-Russia Petrochemical Cooperation: A Favorable Opportunity

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali says a favorable opportunity has been created for Tehran-Moscow cooperation in the petrochemical sector.

Jalali highlighted the increase in Iran-Russia trade volume over the past year and noted that Iran's exports to Russia have diversified beyond agricultural commodities and horticultural crops.

The two countries are now expanding their cooperation and trade transactions, particularly in the petrochemical and technological sectors.

Jalali also mentioned that Tehran and Moscow are collaborating in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment fields. He referred to Iran's participation in Rosplast 2023, the 13th International Exhibition of Machinery and Materials for Plastics Industry held in Moscow from June 6-8, as a display of Iran's petrochemical progress in Russia.

The ambassador stated that the Russian exhibition was an excellent opportunity for Iran to develop its markets, establish joint ventures with participating countries, and showcase its petrochemical achievements.

Jalali emphasized that Iran's petrochemical industry has made significant progress after the Islamic Revolution, with an annual production capacity of 90 million tons. He concluded by stating that Iran's petrochemical products are now recognized worldwide.

U.S. Not to Be Dominant Power in New World Order



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri has reiterated that the world is on the cusp of a new order, in which the United State will no longer be the dominant power while emerging powers such as Iran will have a more active role.

"The world is on the brink of a new order, where America is no longer at the top of the global power hierarchy, and the Zionist regime is also on a path of weakening," General Baqeri told a gathering of senior defense officials on Saturday.

He cited the failure of the US military adventurism in the region, including most notably its withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan, as a sign of decline of the United States on the global stage.

"Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with divine assistance, is gaining strength and utilizing its capacities for a leap forward in all areas," he noted.

Gen. Baqeri also hailed the successful mission of the 86th flotilla of the Iranian Navy, which ended its historic round-the-world voyage last month and returned to Iran's territorial waters after sailing some 65,000 kilometers on the high seas.

"In this voyage, the Islamic Republic of Iran's message of power, peace, and friendship was conveyed to all continents and across oceans, demonstrating the power and geographically influential development of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he stated.

Iran, Africa to Boost Business Collaborations

TEHRAN (IP) - In a meeting to discuss Iran-Africa's available opportunities for cooperation, Iranian and African officials emphasized the necessity of creating a comprehensive database of Iranian-African businessmen.

Iran-Africa cooperation meeting was held with the presence of economic activists, some Iranian ambassadors in Africa, including Congo, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Burkina Faso, the president and members of the Board of Directors of the Iran-East Africa Chamber, the head of the African Department, the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and a representative of the Ministry of Iran's Foreign Affairs.

In the meeting, the Secretary General of the Iran Chamber Iraj Sheidaei emphasized the support of the Chamber from economic activists developing Iran-Africa trade.

Head of international affairs of Iran Chamber Niloofar Asadi



enumerated the export of technical and engineering services, road and dam construction, electricity and power plants, petroleum derivatives, petrochemical products, agricultural equipment and machinery, medicines, and medical equipment as the areas of cooperation between Iran and Africa.

On the sidelines of discussing the availabilities of cooperation between Iran and Africa, some members of the joint chamber and economic activists suggested the creation of a database of businessmen.

Later in the meeting, Iran's ambassador to Burkina Faso Mojtaba Faghihi emphasized Africa's will to trade with Iran.

Regarding Iran-Kenya export and import, Iran's ambassador to Kenya said that Iran exports petrochemical products to Kenya and imports agricultural items, including tea and coffee from Kenya.

Tehran to Host Abadiran Expo For Eradication of Deprivation

TEHRAN (IP) - The Vice-President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, and the Chief of the National Elite Foundation announced that Abadiran (Developed Iran) exhibition will be held at Mosaala, Tehran, aiming to eradicate deprivation.

Attending a press brief on June 11, 2023, Rouhollah Dehghani Firouzabadi stated that the people of less privileged and deprived areas have a very high capacity to realize popularization and a knowledge-based economy, continuing: People should feel that they have obtained a result in exchange for spending money on knowledge and technology. He further noted: Since people's support has been effective and pioneering in all sectors, we need to support and create grounds for community participation, especially in less privileged areas, in the realization of the knowledge-based economy.

He pointed out: "Abadiran" is a national program, of which the Vice-Presidency of Science, Technology and Knowledge-based Economy is only a part of it, and it aims to develop the capacities of disadvantaged regions in the field of knowledge-based economy.

Iran's SEPAM to Replace SWIFT In Trade Transactions

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

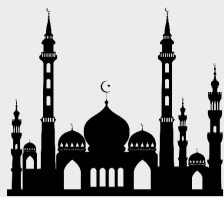
TEHRAN (IRNA) - The secretary general of the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) says the rupee, rouble, yuan, and Iran's financial messaging system SEPAM will respectively replace the dollar and SWIFT in trade exchanges beginning next month.

Farhad Morsali said Iran's SEPAM has been accepted by members of the bloc as an internal financial messaging system, Fars News Agency reported on Saturday. He said it will take six months for the union's own messaging system to be ready, and in the meantime, the members should replace SWIFT with SEPAM, for which Iran will charge a fee.

Iran unveiled SEPAM in October 2013 as an alternative to SWIFT, a European financial messaging system that is being gradually abandoned by countries.

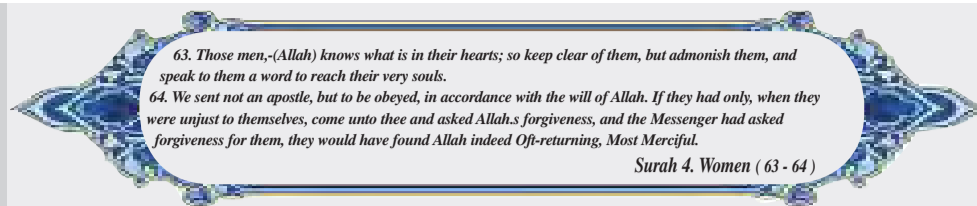
Last month, the central bank governors of ACU member states decided at a summit in Tehran to create an internal financial messaging system to replace SWIFT in banking transactions between them. The decision was in line with the efforts made by ACU members to reduce the domination of the US dollar in global trade.

Iran's CBI governor Mohammad-Reza Farzin said on May 24 that the bloc will diversify the basket of currencies it accepts for payment settlements to help the global de-dollarization bid.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:04
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:41
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:01
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:48



Bangladesh Determined To Deepen Ties With Iran

BY: F. TAHERPOOR

TEHRAN – Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran on Saturday held a ceremony and reception at Parsian Evin Hotel of Tehran to celebrate the Independence Day.



Independence of Bangladesh was declared on 26 March 1971, celebrated as Independence Day, from Pakistan. The Independence Day of Bangladesh is celebrated on 26 March when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the Independence of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran celebrated the day with delay because of New Year holiday in Iran as well as Holy Month of Ramadhan.

Respected Ambassador of Bangladesh to Tehran Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury hosted the event which started with playing national anthems of Bangladesh and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization Mr. Mehdi Zeighami was the chief guest of the event where many diplomats, military men and businessmen were also present.

Addressing the participants in the event, Ambassador of Bangladesh Mr. Karim Khan welcomed the guests for their presence for marking the Independence Day of Bangladesh and said 26 March, is Bangladesh's Independence and National Day but the embassy was holding the ceremony in Tehran with delay because of Ramadhan and New Year in Iran, adding, "Our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence on 26 March 1971 and paid deepest tribute to the Father of the Nation and the greatest Bengalee of all time. He then pointed to the efforts of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for the prosperity and independence of the country.

He added, "In early '70s, after the independence, the war-ravaged country was described by some international experts as an international "basket case" and a test case for development. Many doubted that we would survive. But Bangladesh proved them wrong. After 52 years, Bangladesh is a different country, may be a success story. He noted, "In the last 52 years, our national income increased around 30 times from where it was in 1972. We were one of the poorest countries in 1972 with per capita GDP \$93, after 52 years, our per capita GDP is around \$2800. Life expectancy at birth in 1971 was 46, now it is 72. We have achieved significant progress in the socio-economic sectors, in many cases better than regional countries. Bangladesh is now the 3rd largest vegetables producer, 4th largest sweet-water fish producer and 5th largest rice producer in the world."

The diplomat added, "Bangladesh under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

is focused on economic development and improving wellbeing of the people. Since 2009, Bangladesh returned to the track of fast development under the able leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She is leading Bangladesh to materialize her vision of transforming the country into a developed one by 2041. The daughter of the Father of the Nation has been rising up to the peoples' expectations despite many challenges. Bangladesh is determined to realize the dream of Golden Bengal of the Father of the Nation – the dream of a happy and prosperous Bangladesh."

Karim Khan then pointed to the relation of Iran and Bangladesh and said both countries enjoy long standing friendly and brotherly relations, adding that religious and cultural linkages between the people of the two countries are millennium old."

He reiterated Iran and Bangladesh are working to deepen bilateral relations and to explore further areas of mutually beneficial cooperation. He reiterated that Dhaka is determined to boost its tie with Tehran.

Then Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization Mr. Zeighami, for his part, felicitated the independence day of Bangladesh and pointed to the commonalities of both states.

He added that for the last forty-eight years, Iran and Bangladesh have always made their efforts to keep their friendly, brotherly, and balanced relations on the basis of mutual respect and common interests and in addition, with the advent of the Islamic Revolution, these relations further deepened due to the common approaches. During the past years, bilateral political relations have been at an acceptable level.

He then said another issue that he would like to mention today is about the economic growth of Bangladesh in recent years which has been praised by the global community, adding that this issue shows the determination of the government and people of this country for change and progress.

In the end, he extended his congratulations on the graduation of Bangladesh from the least developed countries into the developing countries in 2026 and once again, I extend my felicitation to the government and people of Bangladesh on the occasion of Independence Day.

Earlier second secretary of Embassy of Bangladesh Oalid Islam briefed the participants of the history of the independence of Bangladesh.

Role of ESCO in Developing National Rail Infrastructure Revealed

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) as the founder of steel production in Iran with its round-the-clock efforts of its staff in recent years and in the tough sanctions condition has registered many considerable achievements in line with meeting the demands of the country in different scenes.



Studies show that the price of any share of ESCO in last November after a decline came back to the rising track and its positive trend in the peak times of the market in the current year reached around 567 toman.

This 189% growth raises this serious question in the minds of investors whether ESCO will attain more growth in the stock market. The CEO of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) Mr. Mehdi Koohi in an interview answered to this question and said it is positive.

Koohi went on to say that the first project in line for coming on stream is the plant oxygen project which was started in 2013 and currently it has progressed 99% and will come on stream in the summer.

He added that other projects which are to be inaugurated this year are LF1 and LF3 projects which have progressed 84% and 58% respectively. He noted among the projects of LF1 is repair of ladle furnace No.1 and the other project is to build ladle furnace No.2 and it is expected these two projects to come on stream during the Ten-Day-Dawn (anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution) festivities.

Koohi then pointed to other projects of the company which have been started and will come on stream this year or next year. He then pointed to the environmental activities of ESCO and noted that the next step of the company is to complete the wastewater installations and system of towns of Fooladshahr, Imanshahr and Flavarjan, adding that this will happen through cooperation with MAPNA Group and it will become the biggest water desalination of the West Asia. He added the project of wastewater installations of those three towns have progressed 70% which will come on stream by the yearend.

He then pointed to the role of ESCO in developing rail transport of the country and said that in meeting with managers of urban train companies which was held in Mashhad, ESCO announced readiness for supply of required rails of those companies.

Koohi reiterated that ESCO meets the demands of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and Infrastructure Company, noting that production of 100,000 tons of rail by the yearend is on the agenda of ESCO as 60,000 tons of this product has been used in the rail networks of the country so far.

Rating of Research Projects Based On Needs of MSC

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Head of Technology Department of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) in the first meeting of supreme committee of innovation center of MSC Technology University said that students and teachers in all fields of study can cooperate with the Mobarakeh Steel Innovation Center based on their interests and expertise.



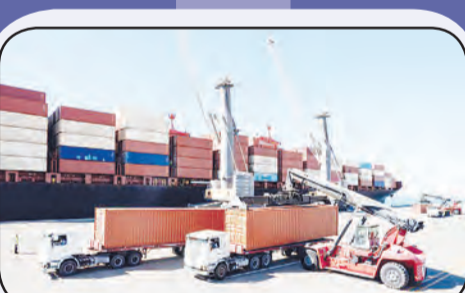
Mohammad Nazemi Harandi said that research projects of students are rated and prioritized based on the needs of the MSC and they are rated and defined based on priority and number-cost of the project and accordingly they can determine the amount and type of support from the research projects.

He went on to say that university students and teachers in all fields of study can cooperate with the Mobarakeh Steel Innovation Center based on their interests and expertise.

He then pointed to the significance of the approach in observing social responsibilities and social support to research in MSC and noted that promotion of support model of MSC from research projects in line with supporting students and teachers is very important, adding that all as citizens should be effective in the field social responsibility and the approach of the company for support to research in the scientific and industrial community should be reinforced.

At the end of the meeting, some prioritized approved research projects were discussed and participants exchanged views on ways for increasing cooperation between MSC and Isfahan University of Technology.

Revival of Basic Goods Transit to Afghanistan Via Chabahar



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The first batch of Iran's humanitarian goods donation to Afghanistan arrived in Chabahar Port by 100 containers of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line and after unloading was sent to Afghanistan through combined transport.

As per report, according to agreements between Iran and friendly countries it was decided that all international humanitarians to Afghanistan would be done through the existing capacities of Chabahar Port.

In this line and with colorful role of IRISL group the North-South Corridor turned into the main path for sending goods to Afghanistan. IRISL since last year and with using the infrastructures favorably and the access of portal equipment and capacities of Chabahar has started regular services from Chabahar to different destination.

The group has also increased its container services in Chabahar which has created new routes for services to neighboring states through the international North-South Corridor.

Pictorial Display of Grandeur of Shiraz In Cultural Capital of Hungary

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

SHIRAZ – Due to efforts of the Communications and International Affairs Office of Municipality of Shiraz, a cultural event of photo exhibition on Shiraz was held in its sister city of Pecs in Hungary with the presence of cultural and diplomatic officials of both countries as well as citizens of this European city.

According to the Communications Office of Municipality of Shiraz, a photo exhibition on the grandeur of the city of Shiraz was held in its sister city of Pecs of Hungary with efforts of this office.

Peter Hoppal, a member of Hungary's National Assembly and Head of Iran-Hungary Friendship Group and former mayor of Pecs Mr. Zsolt Páva were among the participants in the opening ceremony of the exhibition.

Before the opening of the event, mayors of Shiraz and Pecs as well as Iran's ambassador and parliament member paid homage to the bust of great Iranian poet Hafez with putting wreath of flower.

Addressing this cultural event, Iran's ambassador to Hungary called the day an important day in the bilateral calendar of sisterhood relation of Shiraz and Pecs, adding that they have gathered at this beautiful and historic city of Pecs to inaugurate the exhibition on Shiraz, the most prestigious and prominent city of his country in the past millenniums. Hamid Arefi said Shiraz has been the cradle of Iran's civilization and the event bespeaks of joint determination and fruitful path that both sides are moving on this path. He hailed this cultural move and expressed hope the sincere and warm relation of these two cities would continue and soon a photo exhibition on Pecs would be held in Shiraz.

Then Mayor of Metropolis city of Shiraz



Mr. Mohammad Hassan Asadi, for his part, on behalf of heaven-like Shiraz, city of hoisted domes, city of science and literature and capital of culture and art of Islamic Iran civilization, he was carrier of the message of peace and friendship of noble Iranian nation and intellectual citizens of Shiraz for the noble and dear citizens of Hungary especially citizens of the sister city of Pecs.

The Mayor of Shiraz stipulated that Shiraz is the city of Hafez whose thought is inspiration for many of big literary men of the world and it is the city of Saadi whose book of Boostan (Garden) is among the top 100 literary books of all time.

He termed Pecs as the land of the first scientific and cultural issues and noted that this city hosts the first university of Hungary which is one of the oldest universities in Europe and the first public library of Hungary has been established in this city.

Asadi went on to say that today a new chapter has opened in the valuable cultural exchanges between the two sisters cities and hailed continuity of ties between these two cities. He also praised for choosing this library for holding the exhibition which reminds us of choosing Pecs as the cultural capital of Europe in 2010.

Meanwhile mayor of Pecs expressed his satisfaction over holding the exhibition that presents cities with those valuable photos. He added that Pecs has the same meaning for Hungarians that Shiraz has for Iranians.

Shiraz and Pecs signed the sisterhood agreement on May 9, 2016, as the world's oldest cities, Shiraz and Pecs date back to more than two thousand years ago indicating their rich culture.

Iran's Wheat Production Expected To Hit 12m mt

Iran has nearly 4 million hectares of rain-fed farms and 2 million hectares of farms under irrigation, Fatemi said, adding that in irrigating cultivation, production is made with as few as 5% fluctuation while the rain-fed cultivations depend highly on precipitations and weather conditions.

"This year, the cultivation situation was good and it is expected to harvest nearly 12 million tons of wheat," he noted.

TEHRAN (PressTV) - As much as 12 million metric tons (mt) of wheat is expected to be produced by Iranian farmers in the current crop year, according to a person with the knowledge of the matter.

Underlining the significance of meeting the country's needs for wheat as one of the most strategic basic goods, Ataollah Fatemi, the head of Iran's National Wheat Growers Foundation, said that part of the issue of wheat is related to production and another part relies on the sales.

He added that production of wheat depends on weather conditions and precipitations and differs from one year to another year and from one province to another.

5 Killed in Explosion at Turkey's Rocket and Explosives Factory

ANKARA (Dispatches) - An explosion at a rocket and explosives plant in Turkey caused a building to collapse on Saturday, killing all five workers inside, an official said.

The explosion occurred at around 8:45 a.m. at the compound of the state-owned Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation, on the outskirts of the capital, Ankara, Gov. Vasip Sahin told reporters.

Sahin said the explosion was likely to have been caused by a chemical reaction during the production of dynamite. Prosecutors have launched a formal investigation, he said. Gray smoke was seen rising from the compound as ambulances and fire trucks rushed to the area, private NTV television reported.



Kazakh President to Skip Russian Davos

ASTANA (Dispatches) - Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will not attend the annual economic forum in Russia's St Petersburg next week, the government said, after refusing to toe the Kremlin's line over the Russian invasion of Ukraine at last year's event.

The Kazakh government said only two officials will represent the Central Asian nation at this year's forum. Until its invasion of Ukraine, Russia regularly hosted world leaders and business titans at the forum, but Western officials and business figures now shun it, and last year Tokayev stole the limelight by rejecting the Kremlin claims on Ukraine.



Zelensky Says Counteroffensive, Defensive Actions Taking Place

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that counteroffensive and defensive actions are underway against Russian forces, asserting that his top commanders are in a "positive" mindset as their troops engaged in intense fighting along the front line.

The Ukrainian leader, at a Kyiv news conference alongside Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, responded to a question about Russian President Vladimir Putin's comment a day earlier that Ukraine's counteroffensive had started — and Ukrainian forces were taking "significant losses."

Zelensky said that "counteroffensive, defensive actions are taking place in Ukraine. I will not speak about which stage or phase they are in."

Top Ukrainian authorities have stopped short of announcing a full-blown counteroffensive was underway, though some Western analysts have said fiercer fighting and reported use of reserve troops suggests it was.

"I am in touch with our commanders of different directions every day," he added, citing the names of five of Ukraine's top military leaders. "Everyone is positive. Pass this on to Putin."

Trudeau, the first foreign leader to visit Ukraine since devastating floods caused by a breach in a Dnieper River dam, offered up monetary, military and moral support. He pledged 500 million Canadian dollars (\$375 million) in new military aid, on top of more than 8 billion Canadian dollars (\$6 billion) that Canada has already provided since the war began in February 2022, and announced 10 million Canadian dollars (\$7.5 million) for humanitarian assistance for the flood response.

Trudeau said the dam's collapse was "a direct consequence of Russia's war," but he didn't blame Moscow directly. Ukraine's General Staff said Saturday that "heavy battles" were ongoing, with 34 clashes over the previous day in the country's industrial east. It gave no details but said Russian forces were "defending themselves" and launching air and artillery strikes in Ukraine's southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.

Recent Western injections of billions of dollars' worth of military equipment — some of it high-tech and top-of-the-line — to Ukraine has raised expectations about when it would be used, and to what effect against dug-in Russian lines.

For months, Ukrainian commanders in the eastern city of Bakhmut — which was largely devastated in a month-long fight that has been one of the bloodiest battles of the war — have used the language of counteroffensive and defensive operations to describe the activity there.

Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar said Friday that the epicenter of the fighting has been in the east, particularly in the Donetsk region, and cited "heavy battles" in Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Marinka.

Valerii Shershen, a spokesperson for Ukraine's armed forces in Zaporizhzhia, told Radio Liberty that they were searching for weaknesses in Russia's defense in that region, to the west.

Ukraine's nuclear energy agency Energoatom said the last operating reactor at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, had been placed in "cold shutdown" mode. That's a process in which all control rods are inserted into the reactor core to stop the nuclear fission reaction and generation of heat and pressure.

The plant's other five reactors already were in cold shutdown amid concerns about the plant's exposure to the fighting.

Energoatom said in a statement late Friday that there was "no direct threat" to the Zaporizhzhia plant because of the breach of the Kakhovka dam further down the Dnieper River, which has forced thousands of people to flee flooding and also sharply reduced water levels in a reservoir used to help cool the facility.

Water levels in the Kakhovka reservoir, which feed the Zaporizhzhia plant, remained stable on Saturday, Energoatom said. The site's power units have not been operating since September last year. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency is due to visit Ukraine in the coming days.

Ukrainian authorities reported Saturday that at least six civilians have died across the country as Russian forces launched Iranian-made Shahed drones, missiles, and artillery and mortar strikes.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported that three people were killed and more than two dozen wounded overnight in an attack targeting the Black Sea port of Odesa. A spokesperson for Ukraine's southern operational command, Natalia Humeniuk, said two children and a pregnant woman were among those wounded.

Two people were killed in a Russian attack on the town of Orehkova in the Zaporizhzhia region, according to governor Yuriy Malashko.

In Ukraine's northeast, a 29-year-old man was killed as more than 10 drones targeted the Kharkiv region, its governor, Oleh Syniehubov, reported Saturday. He added that at least three other civilians were wounded.

Guatemala Releases Military Officials Convicted of Grave Crimes

GUATEMALA CITY (Dispatches) - A Guatemalan appeals court disobeyed a ruling from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights by ordering the release of three former high-ranking military officers convicted of crimes against humanity.

In March, the regional human rights court halted the release of the prisoners "to prevent irreparable damage to the right of access to justice for the victims".

Friday's verdict was not the first time Guatemala authorities have disregarded rulings by the court — they have been condemned for it 14 times before.

The original 2018 sentencing of the men actually came about as a result of a 2004 condemnation by the rights court, which rebuked decades of impunity in a case centered around the forced disappearance and aggravated rape of members of the Molina Theissen family.

But it was the first case Guatemala authorities have done so in a situation that involves releasing prisoners already convicted of serious crimes.

Nord Stream Sabotage Probe Turns to Clues in Poland

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Investigators in Germany are examining evidence suggesting a sabotage team used Poland as an operating base to blow up the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported.

The investigators reconstructed the two-week voyage of the Andromeda, a 50-foot (15-metre) yacht suspected of being involved in the sabotage of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, the newspaper said.

The Journal on Saturday cited people familiar with the voyage as indicating the sabotage crew placed deep-sea explosives on Nord Stream 1, before they set the vessel on a course towards Poland. It added Germany was trying to match DNA samples found on the vessel "to at least one Ukrainian soldier".

The evidence included data from the Andromeda's radio and navigation equipment, as well as satellite and mobile phones and Gmail accounts allegedly used by the perpetrators, WSJ reported.

"Taken together, the details show that the boat sailed around each of the locations where the blasts later took place — evidence that fortified investigators' belief that the Andromeda was instrumental in last year's destruction of the pipeline," it said.

Investigators began looking at the vessel after a tip from a Western intelligence service, the newspaper said. Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office and Poland's government spokesman did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"Information about Polish or Ukrainian clues in the destruction of NS1 and NS2, repeated in the media space, is consistently used by the Russian apparatus of influence to create the impression/presumption among the recipients that Warsaw and Kiev were behind this incident," Stanislaw Zaryn, deputy to Poland's minister coordinator of special services, wrote on Twitter.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 put Europe's reliance on Russian natural gas in the political spotlight. The destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines hastened the region's switch to other energy suppliers.

Earlier this week, the Washington Post reported the US government learned from a European intelligence agency of a secret plan by Ukraine's military to attack the pipelines using divers, who reported directly to the commander-in-chief of the armed forces three months before the September 2022 explosions. On Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky denied his government's involvement in the sabotage of the gas pipelines.



Montenegro Holds Snap Parliamentary Vote

PODGORICA (Dispatches) - Montenegro held an early parliamentary election Sunday, a vote that could provide indications of whether the small NATO member in the Balkans will overcome the deep political divisions and instability that have hampered its route to joining the European Union.

Some 542,000 voters were eligible to choose among 15 parties and coalitions fielding candidates, ranging from groups that are staunchly pro-Western to ones that are pro-Serbian and pro-Russian.

The election will be Montenegro's first in more than 30 years that does not feature Milo Djukanovic, who served almost continuously as the country's prime minister or president since 2001. He lost a presidential election in April and has taken a back seat in politics. Polls and analysts predict that the centrist Europe Now movement, led by financial expert Milojko Spajic and the current president, Jakov Milatovic, is most likely to be the top vote-getter but without enough seats in parliament to form a new government on its own.

Spajic, 37, a former finance minister who in 2021 created economic reforms that included increases in average wages, now promises further salary hikes, as well as a seven-hour working day instead of the current eight hours.

Sudanese Capital Quiet as Ceasefire Takes Hold

CAIRO (Dispatches) - The Sudanese capital Khartoum was relatively calm on Saturday as a U.S. and Saudi-brokered 24-hour ceasefire took effect, providing a window for humanitarian assistance and giving the public a break from the intense fighting.

The short ceasefire follows a string of violated truces between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), whose power struggle erupted into violence eight weeks ago, sparking a humanitarian crisis.

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia said they shared "frustration" over the violations in a statement announcing the latest truce, and they threatened to adjourn the talks, which have continued indirectly, if fighting continues.

The fighting has turned the metropolitan area including Khartoum and its sister cities Bahri and Omdurman into a war zone, and led to conflict in the Darfur and Kordofan regions to the west.

Before the start of the truce at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT), residents reported anti-aircraft missiles firing in southern Khartoum and the Sharg el-Nil district across the Nile, which also saw air strikes.

The fighting has displaced more than 1.9 million people, 200,000 or more of whom have crossed the border into Egypt.

Those who have taken the long journey have complained of poor conditions and long wait times.

On Saturday two people attempting to cross the Ashkeit border said they had been turned back as a new rule had come into effect requiring all Sudanese to obtain a visa before entering Egypt, reversing a longtime exemption for women, children, and the elderly.

"We spent two nights in the neutral territory and now they are turning us back," said Sundus Abbas, a doctor speaking to Reuters by phone from between the countries' checkpoints. "Some people are refusing to leave," she said.

Confirming the new rule, Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid said authorities had detected "the spread of unlawful activities by some individuals and groups on the Sudanese side" including issuing fraudulent visas.

Colombian Gang Leaders Announce Talks to Address Urban Violence

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - In the slopes overlooking downtown Medellin, Colombia's second-largest city, gun-toting gangs reign over vast stretches of neighbourhoods, overseeing the local drug trade, demanding extortion fees from businesses and enforcing rules about who comes and goes on their turf.

Now, such gangs, which employ up to 14,000 people, have declared that they are ready to give it all up. On June 2, after nine months of secret meetings with officials, 16 gang leaders — imprisoned at a maximum security prison outside of Medellin — announced that they would officially begin dialogues with the government to discuss their disarmament and reintegration into society.

"We want to start down a different path: one of peace, of forgiveness and of reconciliation," said Sebastian Murillo, a spokesperson for the gangs and a jailed leader of La Oficina, a drug-trafficking group originally founded as part of Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel.

Since the 1980s, Colombia has pursued talks with the politically motivated rebel and paramilitary groups that have fuelled a nearly six-decade-long conflict in the countryside. But for the first time, Colombia is now using a similar approach to dismantle urban gangs, seeking to end criminal rule in the cities.

"One way that Colombia has learned to reduce violence is through peace processes," said German Valencia, a researcher at Antioquia University's Institute of Political Studies. "But a peace process doesn't have to necessarily be political."

In the wake of a 2016 peace deal between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government, violence has returned to pockets of the country. More than 50 armed groups now compete for lucrative drug routes and illegal mine networks abandoned by the FARC. President Gustavo Petro has pledged to cut down the number of groups through dialogue and negotiation, as part of his "Total Peace" strategy.

The National Liberation Army (ELN), a leftist rebel organisation, and a dozen other groups control large swaths of Colombia's rural areas nowadays. On Friday, the ELN signed a temporary ceasefire with the government — a major milestone — while the other armed groups have likewise expressed interest in government dialogue.



Scientists Reveal Particular Deficiency in Diets May Drive Ageing

LONDON (Dispatches) - Ageing could be accelerated by the deficiency of a molecule found in protein rich foods including meat or fish, a new study has revealed.

A team of international researchers found that taurine supplements can slow down ageing in mice and monkeys – extending the healthy lifespans of middle-aged mice by up to 12 per cent.

The scientists said their findings, published in the journal, *Science*, make the case for further studies with human trials.

Study leader Vijay Yadav, assistant professor of genetics and development at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, said: "Human society is ageing."

"It is associated with changes in molecular composition within us."

He added: "For the last 25 years, scientists have been trying to find factors that not only let us live longer, but also increase healthspan, the time we remain healthy in our old age."

"This study suggests that taurine could be an elixir of life within us that helps us live longer and healthier lives."

Taurine is an amino acid found in meat, fish and eggs, and plays an important role in supporting immune health, nervous system function and energy production.

Some energy drinks have taurine added to them, due to its hypothesised effect on mental and athletic performance.

Previous research has shown taurine deficiency to be associated with ageing but Prof Yadav said it was not clear whether it actively directs the ageing process or is just a passenger going along for the ride.

For the study, the researchers looked at blood samples and measured the taurine concentrations at different ages in mice, monkeys, and humans.

They tested nearly 250 female and male mice around 14 months old, about 45 years of age in people terms, giving half of them a taurine supplement and the other half a control solution.

The team found that consuming taurine supplements increased average lifespan by 12 per cent in female mice and 10 per cent in males.

This translates to three to four extra months for mice, equivalent to about seven or eight human years, the researchers said.

The team also found that daily intake of 500 and 1000 milligrams of taurine supplement per kilogram of body weight was also associated with improvements in strength, coordination, and cognitive functions in the rodents.

Prof Yadav said: "Not only did we find that the animals lived longer, we also found that they're living healthier lives."

The team then tested the effects of taurine supplements in middle-aged monkeys and found that those taking it every day for six months also showed improvements in their immune systems, bone density and overall metabolic health.

The researchers then looked at data from a study involving 12,000 European adults aged 60 and over. They found that people with higher taurine levels were healthier, with fewer cases of type 2 diabetes, lower obesity levels, and lower levels of inflammation.

Prof Yadav said: "These are associations, which do not establish causation but the results are consistent with the possibility that taurine deficiency contributes to human ageing."



Asia's Most Cycling-Friendly Cities

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - In October 2022, Singapore will become the first southeast Asian country to host a Tour de France Criterium event. It's one of several Asian countries going all out to become more bike-friendly – here's our pick of the best Asian cities for some good old-fashioned pedal power.



Singapore

Singapore is arguably Asia's most bike-friendly destination – a place where bike paths open up every corner of the city. Not convinced? Outside of F1 events, it's even possible to cycle along the circuit's pit lane. Our favorite routes include the Park Connector network, a 300km tangle of cycle paths, and the Rail Corridor, a 24km bicycle path in the footprint of an old railway.

The most popular bikeshare schemes are Anywheel and SG Bike, and nervous cyclists can relax – bike lanes are smooth and well maintained, and cyclists are given a wide berth by other vehicles. These include buses, whose drivers give a polite double-toot when approaching cyclists. The speed limit for cyclists using Singapore's bike paths is generally fixed at 10km/h – don't be surprised to see speed-gun-wielding enforcement officers tasked with keeping riders in check.

Bangkok, Thailand

Although Bangkok's still got some way to go when it comes to expanding its network of bike lanes, it's a fantastic city for cycling, and it's only going to get better. Lumpini Park and Benjakitti Park, both of which are in the city centre, are fantastic cycling spots, and there are some brilliant guided cycling tours, too. We recommend the ones run by Co van Kessel (covankessel.com), founded by a bike-mad Dutchman who lived in Bangkok. Co died in 2012, but his tours, led by a fleet of passionate Thai guides, continue. Itineraries range from sunrise bike rides around Chinatown to longer slogs out to the banana plantations on Bangkok's outskirts.

Osaka, Japan

Japan is a seriously underrated cycling country. This is, after all, where hip-bike brand Tokyo Bike was founded in 2002. Its birthplace, the quiet Tokyo neighbourhood of Yanaka, is a fantastic place to explore on two wheels – though Osaka is top choice for some Japanese pedal power. Proof of Osakans' love of cycling is the fact that it's the only city in Asia with two Rapha Clubhouses (spaces created as meeting places for cyclists, with bike-themed stores and cafes), though Osaka's cyclists are a wonderfully diverse group, ranging from road cyclists to fans of vintage bikes. The city's cyclists are also known for their love of a DIY approach, frequently blinging out their wheels and making bikes from scratch. The attitude here is incredibly laidback – don't be surprised to see a local pedalling against the traffic while taking a selfie.

Xiamen, China

The star of the show is here is the Xiamen Cycle Way, an elevated 7.6km cycle path created by Danish architects Dissing + Weitling Architecture. Think of it as the High Line, but solely for bikes. It's the world's longest elevated bike route, connecting five residential areas, and has 11 entry and exit points which make breaking it down into smaller chunks a breeze. Other features dotted along the route include bike roundabouts, bicycle parking, and bicycle service pavilions. It was commissioned by Xiamen's municipal planning department as part of an effort to make the city more bike-friendly at a time when Chinese cities are notorious for their omnipresent traffic jams.

Cheap Diabetes Drug Reduces Risk of Long Covid

PARIS (Dispatches) - People who took a cheap diabetes drug after testing positive for Covid-19 had a 40 per cent lower risk of getting long Covid, a U.S.-based study said today.



The finding was hailed as a potential "landmark" in the fight against the still little-understood condition, which the World Health Organization estimates affects one in 10 people who get Covid.

The study said it was the first randomised, placebo-controlled phase 3 trial – considered the gold standard in research – to show that taking a drug can prevent long Covid.

It tested a drug called metformin, which was originally developed from the French lilac flower, and has been the most common medication used to treat type 2 diabetes across the world for decades.

This means the drug is known to be safe, as well as being inexpensive and widely available.

The study covered 1,126 overweight or obese people in the United States, half receiving metformin and half a placebo in the days after testing positive for Covid.

After 10 months, 35 of the participants who took metformin were diagnosed with long Covid, compared to 58 for the placebo group, representing a 40 per cent reduction in risk.

The trial was conducted between December 2020 and January 2022, meaning it included the Omicron variant, which research has suggested causes long Covid at a lower rate than previous strains.

The team behind the Covid-Out trial had previously shown that metformin reduced coronavirus patients' risk of emergency department visits, hospitalisations and death by more than 40 per cent.

Carolyn Bramante, a researcher at the University of Minnesota and the new study's lead author, told AFP that "our data show that metformin reduces the amount of SARS-CoV-2 virus" in patients.

The research was published in the *Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal.

Jeremy Faust, a doctor at Harvard Medical School not involved the study, said in a linked comment piece that if confirmed, the findings "are profound and potentially landmark" for long Covid.

Frances Williams, an epidemiology professor at King's College London, pointed out that 564 people had to take the drug "to prevent 23 hypothetical cases".

"This means 24 people would need to take metformin to prevent one case of long Covid," she said, adding that this was a lot of drugs to stop such a poorly understood condition.

The researchers cautioned that they did not test metformin on people who had already been diagnosed with long Covid, so the findings did not mean it could be used to treat the condition.

Aviation Turbulence Strengthened as The World Warmed

LONDON (Dispatches) - The skies aircraft fly through are bumpier today than four decades ago, scientists have found, after producing a new analysis showing that turbulence has increased as the climate changed.

New research from the University of Reading shows that clear-air turbulence, which is invisible and hazardous to aircraft, has increased in various regions around the world.

At a typical point over the North Atlantic – one of the world's busiest flight routes – the total annual duration of severe turbulence increased by 55% from 17.7 hours in 1979 to 27.4 hours in 2020, the research found. Moderate turbulence increased by 37% from 70.0 to 96.1 hours, and light turbulence increased by 17% from 466.5 to 546.8 hours.

The team behind the study, which is published today (Thursday, 8 June) in *Geophysical Research Letters*, say the increases are consistent with the effects of climate change. Warmer air from CO2 emissions is increasing wind shear in the jet streams, strengthening clear-air turbulence in the North Atlantic and globally.

PhD researcher Mark Prosser said: "Turbulence makes flights bumpy and can occasionally be dangerous. Airlines will need to start thinking about how they will manage the increased turbulence, as it costs the industry \$150-500m annually in the USA alone. Every additional minute spent travelling through turbulence increases wear-and-tear on the aircraft, as well as the risk of injuries to passengers and flight attendants."

While the USA and North Atlantic have experienced the largest increases, the new study found that other busy flight routes over Europe, the Middle East, and the South Atlantic also saw significant increases in turbulence.

Professor Paul Williams, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Reading who co-authored the study, said: "Following a decade of research showing that climate change will increase clear-air turbulence in the future, we now have evidence suggesting that the increase has already begun. We should be investing in improved turbulence forecasting and detection systems, to prevent the rougher air from translating into bumpier flights in the coming decades."

New Transplant Method Could Expand Supply of Donor Hearts

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A new transplant method that "reanimates" donor hearts appears safe and effective, a new clinical trial has found – in an advance that could substantially expand the supply of donor hearts available in the United States.



The trial tested an approach that allows doctors to transplant hearts from donors who have succumbed to "circulatory death" – meaning the heart has stopped beating. Traditionally, heart transplants could only be done with a heart from a donor on life support who has been declared brain dead. That means all brain functions have ceased, but the heart and other organs are being maintained by machines.

But thanks to a new "heart-in-a-box" device, doctors can now take a donor heart that has stopped beating and essentially revive it, and test its function to determine if it's suitable for transplant.

In the new trial, conducted at 15 U.S. transplant centers, doctors found that the approach was on par with traditional heart transplants.

Of 80 patients who received a reanimated donor heart, 94% were alive six months later. That compared with 90% of 86 patients who received hearts from brain-dead donors.

Experts said the results, published Thursday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, are "exciting."

The transplant approach, known as donation after circulatory death (DCD), could expand the national supply of donor hearts by about 30%, said lead researcher Dr. Jacob Schroder, surgical director of the heart transplant program at Duke University, in Durham, N.C.

"That's still not enough," Schroder said. "But I'd say this is the biggest thing to happen in heart transplantation since heart transplantation."

DCD hearts come from donors who have suffered devastating injuries that have left them on life support with no chance of recovery. In most cases, they have severe brain injuries that fall short of the strict criteria used to declare brain death. Instead, they succumb to "circulatory death" after the family decides to withdraw life support.

In the United States, DCD transplants have long been done with other organs, including the kidneys, liver and lungs. Those organs, particularly the kidneys, can tolerate a period of oxygen deprivation after circulatory death. The heart, which has stopped beating in cases of circulatory death, has been the exception. "For the longest time," Schroder explained, "we didn't have the methods to preserve and reanimate the heart."

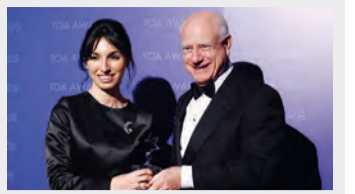
But in recent years, with the emergence of the new technology, transplant centers in some other countries have been using DCD hearts. Small studies in Australia and the United Kingdom have indicated that transplant recipients fare just as well with DCD hearts as they do with conventional transplants.

Hafize Erkan Named Turkey's New Central Bank Governor

ANKARA (Dispatches) - President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan named Hafize Gaye Erkan, a finance executive in the United States, as Turkey's new central bank governor, the country's Official Gazette said.

Erkan's predecessor Şahap Kavcıoğlu has been named as head of the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK), the Official Gazette said.

A former co-CEO at First Republic Bank and managing director at Goldman Sachs, Erkan met with newly appointed Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek in Ankara on Monday. The meeting came after Erdoğan won reelection on May 28 that extends his rule into the third decade and as he reshuffled his economic team.



Inside OPEC+, Saudi Lollipop Oil Cut Was a Surprise Too

LONDON (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia kept under wraps its plan to make a deep cut to its own oil output during a weekend of OPEC+ talks in Vienna, several OPEC+ sources told Reuters, with some member states only learning about the reduction from the final news conference.

Saudi Arabia is the top OPEC producer and the member with the most flexibility to raise or cut output, giving the kingdom unrivalled influence over the oil market - although the impact on oil prices since announcing its plans has been modest so far.

The Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman has previously used the power of surprise in managing oil markets, where prices have come under pressure due to concerns about the weakness of the global economy and its impact on demand.

Days before the OPEC+ meeting, Prince Abdulaziz said he would inflict more pain on short sellers - those who bet that oil prices will fall - and told them to watch out. He announced the output cut after the meeting, calling it a "Saudi lollipop".

Four OPEC+ sources, who were among their countries' delegations involved in policy talks, said they only heard details of the Saudi cut at the Sunday evening news conference - and that the idea of a cut didn't come up during a weekend of discussions on a broader deal to limit supply into 2024.

"No information on the additional cut was shared prior to the press conference," one of the four sources said. "It was a surprise one, once again."

Saudi Arabia said it would cut output in July by 10% or 1 million barrels per day (bpd) to 9 million bpd and may extend cuts further if needed. Meanwhile, OPEC+ agreed to extend cuts into 2024 but didn't commit to any fresh cuts in 2023.

OPEC+, which groups the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, pumps around 40% of the world's crude.

As well as the Saudi cut, OPEC+ lowered its collective production target for 2024 and the nine participating countries extended the April voluntary cuts to the end of 2024.

The United Arab Emirates secured a higher output quota that it had long been seeking - an issue that has caused tension between the group and Abu Dhabi, which has been increasing its output capacity.

The Saudi Energy Ministry and OPEC's Vienna headquarters did not respond to requests for comment.

In the days leading up to the June 4 meeting, two other OPEC+ sources said there was an idea for more cuts by OPEC+ states, although this did not proceed to advanced discussions in Vienna.

Saudi Arabia, other OPEC+ sources said, recognized it would be difficult to secure cuts from others such as the UAE and Russia, which according to sources in the days before the meeting was reluctant to cut output further.

"The Saudis were cognizant this time they could not push the others," an OPEC+ source said. "The UAE are happy with the new quota and it is a big relief for the Saudis." Still, Saudi Arabia did manage to persuade other members of OPEC+ that have been unable to produce at required levels due to lack of investment in capacity - notably Nigeria and Angola - to accept lower production targets for 2024 after long meetings.

China Inflation Stays Low as Growth Sputters

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Chinese inflation came in flat again in May, official figures showed today, as the country's economy sputters owing to softening demand and falling exports, leading to calls for a rate cut and a bigger government stimulus.

The consumer price index (CPI) rose 0.2 per cent on-year, from 0.1 per cent in April, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), said. The figure was in line with expectations of analysts polled by Bloomberg.

Beijing has kept interest rates low compared to other major economies, but the near-zero inflation highlights challenges faced by policymakers as they try to stimulate the economy.

Top economist and government adviser Liu Yuanchun yesterday called for regulators to cut borrowing costs further to ease the financing burden of small and medium-sized private businesses.

Private companies' borrowing costs exceeded that of large state-owned enterprises, Liu said, according to Bloomberg News. Large state-owned enterprises enjoyed loan rates lower than 1.8 per cent but many private firms had to pay nearly 9 per cent, he said on the sidelines of the Lujiazui Forum in Shanghai.

"It'll be better if the rate cut comes as a part of a package of support policies," he said.

China's six largest state-owned commercial banks cut interest rates for savers yesterday to boost spending, according to announcements on their websites, after being asked by the central bank.

The country's producer price index (PPI) - which measures prices paid by wholesalers - dropped a bigger-than-expected 4.6 per cent in May, from a 3.6 per cent decline in April, and the biggest drop since 2016.



PPI has fallen for eight consecutive months because of sluggish domestic demand and lower commodity costs.

Other economic data released recently also signal weakness in the world's second-largest economy, despite the lifting of strict pandemic rules at the end of last year.

Exports sank in May for the first time since February, state media reported earlier in the week, breaking a two-month growth streak as a post-Covid rebound faded.

The Chinese economy is weighed down by a debt-laden property sector and a global economic slowdown.

"The risk of deflation is still weighing on the economy," Zhiwei Zhang, Chief Economist at Pinpoint Asset Management, said.

Kazakh President Calls for Global Cooperation at Astana Int'l Forum

ASTANA - On June 8 and 9, Kazakhstan was the host to one of the biggest economic events in the region and Asia as high-level delegates from diverse backgrounds and perspectives across the world attended Astana International Forum (AIF) Astana, capital of Kazakhstan Republic.

The forum brought together renowned leaders, policymakers, scholars, and experts to give them a voice that can empower their ideas for change.

In the opening ceremony and in his address at the plenary session, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev described the current era as "a period of unprecedented geopolitical tensions" characterized by the "process of destroying the very foundation of the world order that has been built since the founding of the United Nations."

He emphasized that the global system must work for all, bringing peace and prosperity to the many, not to the few.

President Tokayev shared the stage with heads of state and government and executives of international organizations, including the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov, and Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva. Richard Quest, distinguished British journalist and CNN International news anchor, moderated the plenary discussion.

In her remarks, Georgieva stressed the importance of human contribution to world development, urging the young population to realize their potential.

"We know that there are a lot of opportunities. For example, in the private sector. The most valuable asset of the region are people! Some 60% of people are under 30. Central Asia can demonstrate to the rest of the world that working together is possible," she said.

Georgieva emphasized the need for multilateralism and cooperation, saying that "if we master the political will, we can do it."

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addressed the AIF participants via a video address, calling on the world community to act promptly "to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reform an unfair financial architecture and address common threats at a series of important summits starting with the SDG Summit."

President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Japarov, spoke to moderator Richard Quest about regional integration, stating that "Central Asian countries need to act together as a region through solidarity and coordinated policies."

Chairwoman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Željka Cvijanović, Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov, Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Audrey Azoulay, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana and Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Helga Schmid also attended the flagship session of the AIF.

The two-day international event aimed to find solutions to the current global challenges and find ways to promote peace, prevent conflict, and organize the global order for the benefit of the whole world.

Meanwhile on June 9, President Tokayev highlighted the essential contribution of the United Nations (UN) to the agenda of the Astana International Forum (AIF) during a meeting with the UN delegation on June 9 in Astana, reported the Akorda press service.

The UN delegation included Armida Alisjahbana, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ivana Živković, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), David Chikvaizhe Chef De Cabinet, Office of the UN Director-General, and Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator for Kazakhstan.

Tokayev emphasized the UN's exceptional role in strengthening peace and ensuring security.

The President stressed the need to carry out a comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council, noting the importance of its expansion. He also reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to join efforts with the UN to strengthen its role.

Over 20 different UN institutions are successfully operating in Kazakhstan. Tokayev reiterated the initiative to open the UN Regional Center for Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty. The center will focus on strengthening the coordination of UN agencies with the region's governments by adopting comprehensive measures to advance the 2030 Agenda.

High-ranking UN diplomats shared their impressions of the AIF, highlighting the platform's strategic importance in developing approaches to addressing the pressing challenges of our time. Central Asia's role was particularly noted in the transport and logistics sphere and digitalization.

The parties discussed the prospects for developing multifaceted cooperation between Kazakhstan and the UN institutions and exchanged views on topical issues of the international and regional agenda.

The swap was less than the \$42 billion of looming debt that analysts had estimated the country would rework, of which just under half is held by private investors.

U.S. Weekly Jobless Claims Race to 1-1/2-Year High

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits surged to the highest level in more than 1-1/2 years last week, but layoffs are probably not accelerating as the data covered the Memorial Day holiday, which could have injected some volatility.

The largest increase in applications in nearly two years reported by the Labor Department on Thursday was driven by rises in Ohio, Minnesota and California. After rampant fraud in Massachusetts briefly boosted claims to a 1-1/2-year high in May before being revised away, economists cautioned against reading too much into the latest rise.

"The jump in claims could be a sign of a pickup in layoffs, but given the volatility of claims from week-to-week, it is too soon to reach that conclusion," said Conrad DeQuadros, senior economic advisor at Brean Capital in New York. "The narrowness of the increase in claims by state is a further factor suggesting we should wait for additional confirmation before concluding layoffs have picked up, especially given the fraud in Massachusetts recently."

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits jumped 28,000 to a seasonally adjusted 261,000 for the week ended June 3, the highest level since October 2021. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 235,000 claims for the latest week.

Unadjusted claims increased only 10,535 to 219,391 last week, with applications in Ohio surging 6,345 and filings in California shooting up 5,173. Claims increased 2,746 in Minnesota. Applications in Ohio have risen in recent weeks, attributed by the state to layoffs in the manufacturing, automobile, and transportation and warehousing industries. Auto manufacturers usually close plants in summer for retooling.

Argentina Scores Record Debt Swap Cutting \$30b Owed Near-Term

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentina has completed its largest ever domestic debt management operation, officials said, lowering near-term obligations by \$30 billion over the next four months and pushing off payments beyond national elections later this year.

The debt swap comes at a time of increasingly strained public finances, made worse by triple-digit inflation, a steadily weakening local currency, plus most recently a severe drought that slashed critical farm export income by some \$20 billion.

The economy ministry said in a statement the debt swap reduced payments due between June and September by about 7.4 trillion pesos (\$30.3 billion), with the transaction obtaining a 78 per cent acceptance rate from debt holders.

A government spokesperson hailed the operation as "very successful" earlier on Thursday before the details were announced on the swap, which is part of a wider push to restructure government debts and avoid default.

The operation cut government debt maturities for the remainder of this year by 64%, the economy ministry said, to 4.2 trillion pesos from 11.6 trillion pesos.

"Today we carried out the largest public debt swap in Argentine history in the domestic market," Finance Secretary Eduardo Setti wrote in a post on Twitter.

While the cash-strapped government hailed the near-term debt reduction, S&P Global Ratings lowered its local currency rating for the country to "selective default" on what it described as "another distressed exchange" that pushed off debt payments to 2024 and 2025.

"We consider this transaction distressed based on the likelihood of conventional default - absent participation of creditors - given the sovereign's pronounced macroeconomic vulnerabilities and limited ability to extend maturity and place paper in the local market without reliance on exchanges," the rating agency said in a statement.

The IMF, however, welcomed Argentina's debt swap, adding that the operation should safeguard debt sustainability.

The debt swap follows similar but smaller domestic operations in January and March. Due to past defaults, global capital markets are largely closed to Argentina.

The swap was less than the \$42 billion of looming debt that analysts had estimated the country would rework, of which just under half is held by private investors.

Iran to Become a Major Geopolitics Player in Global Economy

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A recent discovery of a lithium reservoir in Iran could lead to a shift in the regional balance of power and grant Tehran an unprecedented geopolitical and economic position.

Israeli geopolitics expert Anat Hochberg Marom told Israeli Maariv newspaper on Saturday that “Israel” will closely monitor how Tehran will try to use this discovery to its advantage. It is expected that Iran’s economic position and geopolitical influence will grow even greater soon, especially in light of the discovery of a massive lithium field containing 8.5 million tons of the precious mineral, making it the second-largest in the world after Chile. It is located in the Hamedan province in western Iran.



Germany Pushes for Citizenship Reforms to Tackle Labor Crunch

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany is forging ahead with plans to reform its outdated citizenship law, a move rooted in the country’s drive to attract qualified workers to address a worsening dearth of skilled labor.

The changes also aim to enhance integration and participation of immigrants, who remain largely under-represented in the political sphere.

The figures on Germany’s labor crunch present a damning picture.

Just over 43% of German companies reported a shortage of skilled workers this January, inching down from an all-time high of nearly 50% last July, according to data from Ifo Institute, one of the country’s largest think-tanks.

The issue affects companies across the service, industry and construction sectors, with health care, childcare, engineering, and IT being particular areas of concern.

When the government put forward a plan in March, Labor Minister Hubertus Heil said securing the “skilled labor base is one of Germany’s greatest economic tasks for the next few decades.”

Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s coalition government is aiming to finalize the draft law before the summer holidays, after which it will be submitted for parliamentary approval.

Canan Bayram, an experienced lawmaker from the co-ruling Greens Party, told Anadolu that the planned reform would simplify the process and enable multiple citizenship for immigrants.

“I’m hopeful we will soon get a very good legislation, and we will make life easier for immigrants here,” she said.

“I worked as a lawyer, and I know that the current law, with restrictions on dual citizenship, creates many problems for immigrants, either here or in their country of origin.”

According to official statistics, over 9 million foreign citizens have lived and worked long enough in the country to apply for German citizenship, but remain reluctant to do so, most of them put off by tedious bureaucratic procedures or strict regulations.

Bayram underlined that Germany’s existing citizenship law is unfair toward particular immigrant groups, especially Turkish citizens.

Germany has a 3 million-strong Turkish community, many of whom are children or grandchildren of workers who immigrated in the 1960s.

Around 1.5 million of them still do not have German citizenship due to discriminatory legislation.

Turkish citizens have been unwilling to apply as they do not want to give up their nationality, said Bayram.

“Multiple citizenship has been possible for any person coming from European Union countries, for Americans, but denied for many others. We’re saying that this law, this practice is wrong,” she said.

“In fact, this law was long known to be legislation aimed at Turks. That was a law discriminating against Turkish citizens. Now we’re putting an end to this, we’re changing it.”

Many immigrant groups, including Turkish citizens, often find themselves in a disadvantaged situation in the German labor market, and while dealing with bureaucratic matters.

They are also under-represented in political life, as many of them cannot vote in local or national elections.



Mikolaj Ciechanowicz, a senior expert on immigration, said reforming the law would definitely address these problems by enhancing integration and political participation.

“This is an overdue reform that has been expected and hoped for by many people for many years,” he told AA.

After the reform, many immigrants would likely apply for German citizenship, said Ciechanowicz.

“Maybe it’s better to use the term participation. This would enhance participation, it’s also about political participation, and it is a point that is now being addressed with this reform,” he said.

Ciechanowicz, who is the manager of non-profit organization Deutschlandstiftung Integration, said acquiring German citizenship strengthens the feeling of belonging to the country.

“If the majority of society sends a signal that they are welcome, that we are all natural citizens here, and we want to and can live together on this basis, then a big step forward would be taken. And that is why I support, and Deutschlandstiftung Integration supports, these steps,” he said.

In each year over the past decade, the number of immigrants becoming citizens in Germany has been under 170,000. In 2022, a total of 168,545 foreigners acquired German citizenship.

Ciechanowicz said Germany is currently facing a significant shortage of skilled workers, and reforming citizenship and immigration legislation is also important to address this major problem.

“I believe that Germany has an existential interest in enabling immigration, as much and as targeted as possible, and this step towards modern immigration law and modern naturalization law is part of this package,” he said.

“Everyone knows about the problem of a shortage of skilled workers in Germany, and that we can only maintain our prosperity and our future with targeted and controlled immigration.”

Iran, India Agree on Forming Joint Agricultural Cooperation Committee

TEHRAN (MNA) - Agricultural officials of Iran and India have agreed to form a joint committee for agricultural cooperation between the two countries within the next three months.

As reported, the agreement was reached in a meeting between Iran’s Deputy Agriculture Minister Mohammad Mehdi Borumandi and Secretary of India’s Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry Manoj Ahuja in New Delhi.

Borumandi, who has traveled to New Delhi to hold talks on the agricultural cooperation between Iran and India, met with his Indian counterpart to review the latest status of bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture.

The officials also agreed to hold the first joint working group on agricultural cooperation between the two countries in the near future.

In the meeting, Borumandi stressed Iran’s readiness for cooperation in various fields including horticultural products, medicinal plants, combating plant pests, agricultural technologies, exchange of professors and experts, and cooperation between research institutions of the two countries.

He considered the removal of tariff barriers on agricultural trade as a necessity for the future expansion of relations.

Manoj Ahuja, for his part, highlighted the cultural and geographical affinities between the two nations and expressed his country’s readiness to develop agricultural relations with Iran.

Welcoming the fields proposed by the Iranian side for cooperation, the Indian official announced that the ban on the exports of kiwi to India, which had been temporarily prohibited since last year due to quarantine considerations, has been lifted.

The trade between Iran and India reached \$510 million in the first quarter of the current year, according to the data released by India’s Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

According to the report, agricultural products and especially rice had the largest share in India’s exports to Iran. Rice accounted for 63 percent of the total volume of exports, while fruits with \$15 millions, and tea with \$10 million ranked second and third.

Iran Warns EU...

FROM PAGE 1

Negotiations started in the Austrian capital city of Vienna in April 2021, with the intention of removing anti-Iran sanctions and examining the United States’ seriousness in rejoining the accord.

Raisi and Macron also exchanged views on ways to improve relations and the latest developments in the region. On the conflict in Ukraine, the Iranian president said Tehran was against war and believed diplomacy would be the best solution.

Macron, for his part, said Paris was keen to boost engagement with Tehran and called for the continuation of the talks between the two sides.

The French president said the sanctions-removal talks should continue until the sides reach a conclusion. He said Iran is a part of the solution to the crisis in Ukraine and called for Tehran’s greater role in this regard.

Earlier in the day, Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president’s deputy chief of staff for political affairs, said in a post on Twitter that the Iranian and French presidents agreed on a roadmap for further engagement.

Iran Achievements in...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran’s nuclear chief underscored the use of nuclear energy in people’s daily lives and said the central part of the issue are power plants and the production of atomic electricity, which is being used by world countries as a source of clean energy.

Pointing to radiation as one of the most important parts in the field of nuclear energy, which can be used in medicine, Eslami said, “Radiopharmaceuticals are widely used in the medical field; every year, about one million patients benefit from radiopharmaceuticals that are produced by atomic energy in the field of diagnosis and treatment, especially for cancer.”

The head of the AEOI also said that replacing radiation to combat agricultural and food pests is one of the most important achievements of atomic energy for public use.

“The use of radiation in agriculture has two features; it gives health as a gift to the society because pesticides will not be used in agriculture, and of course, it prevents agricultural runoff and waste,” Eslami added.

The nuclear chief also underlined that the economic conditions caused by the use of radiation in agricultural products would increase the export of such products and said, “We will no longer see pests in the agricultural sector.”

Meanwhile on Saturday, Eslami said the purpose of enriching uranium to a high level of purity was

the removal of anti-Iran sanctions.

Speaking in an interview with Tehran-based Ettelaat newspaper, Eslami added that a December 2020 parliamentary law -- dubbed the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions -- was also passed with the same purpose.

He said the AEOI is enriching uranium to the purity level of 60% in accordance with the parliamentary law for different purposes, including the production of radiopharmaceuticals and detectors.

“We used 60% enriched uranium in the production of fuel plates and especially raw materials for the production of radiopharmaceuticals such as molybdenum,” the Iranian nuclear chief emphasized. Eslami further pointed to claims that Iran’s nuclear program pursues military purposes and said the AEOI’s main goal is to implement the parliamentary law which is aimed at convincing or obliging the opposite sides to “reduce the cruel economic sanctions against Iran.”

The Iranian nuclear chief added that the AEOI is carrying out its activities based on national objectives and the IAEA rules, emphasizing that the country’s nuclear work is under the UN nuclear agency’s surveillance.

He criticized the JCPOA parties for failing to remain committed to the agreement, saying, “They did not even allow others to work with the Islamic Republic.”

IAEA Serving...

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“On the issue related to the so-called three locations, it should be highlighted that the origin of the issue goes back to the fabricated information provided to the Agency by an ill-intended third party, namely the Israeli regime,” the mission said.



The statement stressed that the allegations were made as Israel declines to have a single commitment under any weapons of mass destruction (WMD) instruments, including in particular the NPT, and repeatedly threatens to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes.

The Iranian mission to the Vienna-based organizations said it is “regrettable” that the IAEA considers all fabricated documents and fake information provided by the Israeli regime as authentic.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has so far rendered its full cooperation under the CSA to the Agency and it has to be re-emphasized that all Iran’s nuclear material and activities have been completely declared and verified by the Agency,” it said.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly expects that the Agency conduct its reporting on verification activities in Iran based on the principals of impartiality, professionalism and objectivity.”

The statement also stressed that the agency should not disregard the possibility of involvement of Iran’s staunch enemies in providing false and fabricated information and committing various sabotage acts.

“While all Iran’s nuclear material and activities have been under the Agency’s strict verification and monitoring activities coupled with Iran’s cooperation and voluntary transparency measures, questioning the peaceful nature of Iranian nuclear program has no justification,” the mission noted.

Iran and the IAEA agreed in March to take steps aimed at facilitating enhanced cooperation and expediting the resolution of outstanding safeguards issues.

The two sides are currently in a dispute triggered by the agency’s Israeli-influenced accusations against Tehran’s peaceful nuclear activities.

Tehran has strongly rejected claims about the existence of undeclared nuclear activities or material in the country, urging the IAEA to act professionally and refrain from making unfounded allegations.

In recent years Iran’s dossier in the IAEA has turned into a tool for pleasing the Zionists and the West as well as into a tool for increasing pressure on Tehran while Tehran follows its peaceful nuclear program based on its international commitment but each time the agency under the pressure of the Zionist puts some charge and claim on the table to increase pressure on Iran for getting concessions from Tehran for the West and Israel but Tehran has strongly defended its rights and will not retreat from its rights.

The IAEA is recommended to stop pleasing the West and Israel through making baseless accusations against Iran because they are in vain and are unable to stop the determined Iranian nation who has chosen its path and march ahead as the IAEA or such international bodies which are not impartial are unable to break the strong determination of the nation, and sanctions and bullies are unable to stop Iran from pursuing its rights.

Trump Slams U.S...

FROM PAGE 1

Georgia prosecutors are also investigating his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in that state.

He is also due to appear in federal court in Miami to answer the explosive charges he put US national security “at risk” by willfully retaining classified defense information, conspiring to obstruct justice, corruptly concealing documents, and making false statements.

It is the first-ever criminal prosecution against a former US president. The charges, brought by Smith, carry up to 20 years in prison each.

Nonetheless, the indictment does not prevent Trump from campaigning or taking office if he were to win the November 2024 presidential election.

Legal experts say there would be no basis in the US legal system to block his swearing-in even if he were convicted and sent to prison over the criminal charges.

Moreover, the US Department of Justice is part of the executive branch, and presidents are the top federal law enforcement officers in the country. Federal prosecutors generally serve at their pleasure.

The justice department’s decades-old policy says that a sitting president cannot be prosecuted. The department can deviate from the policy in “extraordinary circumstances” with the approval of the US attorney general.

If Trump wins the presidency again, he could possibly pardon himself.

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Vingegaard Cruises to Dauphine Penultimate Stage Win

PARIS (Dispatches) - Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard won the seventh and penultimate stage of the Criterium du Dauphine to consolidate his overall lead. The reigning Tour de France champion pulled clear five kilometres out to cross the summit finish line 41 seconds clear of British rider Adam Yates with Australian Jai Hindley back in third. Vingegaard goes into Sunday's closing stage to Grenoble with a lead of over two minutes in the general classification.

Celta Vigo Coach Leaves After Liga Slump

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Celta Vigo parted ways with coach Carlos Carvalhal after a collapse in the final few months of the season which almost ended in relegation from La Liga. The Galicians beat Barcelona on the final day to survive but won just one of their prior 11 matches in the Spanish top flight. "Celta and Carlos Carvalhal have ended their contractual relationship as coach of the Celta first team," said Celta in a statement.

Rodri Strike Gives Man City Victory In Champions League Final

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Manchester City tasted Champions League glory at last on Saturday as a second-half Rodri strike gave the favorites a 1-0 victory over Inter Milan in a tense final, allowing Pep Guardiola's side to complete a remarkable treble.

Rodri fired in from a Bernardo Silva cutback midway through the second half at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium to decide a game in which City were knocked out of their usual rhythm and lost Kevin De Bruyne to injury.

Erling Haaland, scorer of 52 goals this season, went a fifth straight match without finding the net, but City still had enough to edge out opponents who had never been expected to get this far in the first place.

"It wasn't easy. What a team we faced, unbelievable," Rodri told British broadcaster BT Sport.

Having already claimed a fifth Premier League title in six seasons, and added the FA Cup, City are the first English club to win such a treble since Manchester United in 1999.

That same month 24 years ago, City won the English third-tier play-off final on penalties against Gillingham.

Now they have established themselves as England's dominant side and have finally added the biggest prize in European club football, two years after losing to Chelsea in their first final.

"I think we made history. The good thing is that we want more. This project is to want more, more ambition," Rodri added.

The match was watched by owner Sheikh Mansour, who made a very rare appearance at a City game as his team capped their rise from also-rans to superpower in the years since he bought the club in 2008.

Twelve years after last lifting the trophy with Barcelona, meanwhile, Guardiola joins an elite club of coaches to have won the competition three times.

Yet having brushed aside RB Leipzig, Bayern Munich and Real Madrid to reach the final, City did not have it easy against Inter, who saw Federico Dimarco and substitute Romelu Lukaku both almost equalize.

Inter had hoped to spring a surprise and lift the trophy for the fourth time. It was not to be, but Simone Inzaghi's side will be back in the competition again next season.

Victory for Guardiola's men, to go with the three titles of rivals United, means Manchester becomes just the second city to produce two different winners of the competition, after Milan.



The occasion did not match the drama of the last Champions League final held at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium.

Liverpool triumphed here in 2005, recovering from a three-goal deficit against AC Milan to draw 3-3 before winning on penalties.

However, it also passed off without serious incident, a year after chaos overshadowed the final at the Stade de France in Paris, even if the stadium's location some 25 kilometres west of central Istanbul did not make access simple for supporters.

City, with Nathan Ake starting ahead of Kyle Walker in defence, expected Inter to come out and attempt to thwart them, and the first half went according to plan for the Italians.

They pressed and snapped at City's heels, although the best chance fell to Guardiola's men when De Bruyne set up Haaland for an effort that was well saved by Andre Onana.

City were then dealt a major blow as De Bruyne -- who came off hurt in the 2021 final -- departed with an apparent leg injury on 36 minutes, to be replaced by Phil Foden.

It was just as the prospect of extra time, and a final finishing past midnight, that the game opened up.

Lautaro Martinez could not take a chance that was gifted to him by a poor Silva ball back towards his own goal, and City struck on 68 minutes.

Manuel Akanji's pass found Silva in the box and his cutback came off a defender before falling for Rodri to fire in.

It was a second goal in the competition for the Spanish midfielder following his brilliant opener against Bayern in the first leg of the quarter-final.

Inter's resistance was broken, and yet they nearly levelled almost immediately as Dimarco's header hit the bar.

They nearly did so again in the 88th minute as Ederson somehow got in the way of a goal-bound Lukaku effort.

After coming so close in recent Champions League campaigns, finally it was City's time.

Ruud Reaches French Open Final



PARIS (Dispatches) - A flawless Casper Ruud returned to the French Open final for a second year running by dismantling German 22nd seed Alexander Zverev 6-3 6-4 6-0 in a battle of big-hitters to set up a showdown with 22-times Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic.

Ruud, who was swept aside by Rafa Nadal in straight sets as the Spaniard won his 14th crown on the Parisian clay last year, endured an up-and-down 2023 season until his return to Roland Garros where he has returned to peak form.

The 24-year-old will face the ultimate test in his quest for a maiden Grand Slam when he meets Djokovic, who advanced to the title clash after beating an ailing Carlos Alcaraz.

"It's going to be tough this year against Novak. Two of the toughest in history and will be the underdog again," Ruud said.

"I know Novak is trying to be the greatest. I'm going to try my best. He's going for Grand Slam number 23 and I'm going for my first, so there's a big difference."

Ruud swapped early breaks with Zverev before turning up the heat on a warm evening on Court Philippe Chatrier by pounding the German with some vicious, spin-heavy forehands to go up 5-2 en route to claiming the opening set.

Zverev, playing in a third straight Roland Garros semi-final at the scene of his season-ending ankle injury last year, wasted an early opening in the next set and found himself in trouble as fourth seed Ruud snatched another break in the seventh game.

Kohli Holds Firm Against Australia in WTC Final Thriller

LONDON (Dispatches) - Virat Kohli defied Australia to give India hope of an extraordinary win in the World Test Championship final at The Oval.

India were 164-3 at stumps, still needing a further 280 runs to reach what would be a record-breaking total of 444 on Sunday's scheduled fifth and final day.

Star batsman Kohli, however, was 44 not out, while Ajinkya Rahane was unbeaten on 20 after he had already marked his first Test in over a year by top-scoring with 89 in India's first-innings 296.

The scale of India's task was emphasised by the fact that only four teams in 146 years of Test cricket have made more than 400 to win in the fourth innings, with the West Indies' 418-7 against Australia at St John's in 2003 the highest such total.

Australia, by contrast, require just seven more wickets Sunday to win the only major global men's trophy to have so far eluded them and ensure they head into next week's Ashes opener against England at Edgbaston in buoyant mood.

India captain Rohit Sharma set the initial tone for a daunting chase with several boundaries, including a pulled six off left-arm quick Mitchell Starc.

But on the stroke of tea, opening partner Shubman Gill fell to a controversial catch when Cameron Green, who had taken an undisputed blinder in the first innings to remove Rahane, dived low to his left following an edge off Scott Boland.

The decision was referred by the on-field umpires to TV official Richard Kettleborough.

And with the 'soft signal' recently abolished, there was no on-field guidance for Kettleborough to follow in determining if the ball had brushed the turf after Green had grabbed hold.

Kettleborough eventually ruled in Australia's favour, prompting chants of "cheats, cheats, cheats" from the massed ranks of India fans in a crowd of nearly 25,000 when the decision was flashed up on The Oval's giant screens.

Rohit and Cheteshwar Pujara continued to attack Australia's quicks as India looked to go one better after losing the inaugural 2021 WTC final to New Zealand in Southampton.



Bagnaia Wins Italian MotoGP Sprint Race

MUGELLO (Dispatches) - World champion Francesco Bagnaia shrugged off tricky Tuscan conditions to win his home Italian MotoGP sprint race at Mugello on Saturday.

The Ducati star capitalized on his record lap time to secure pole in qualifying earlier to beat Marco Bezzecchi and Jorge Martin.

Bagnaia now has a four-point lead over Bezzecchi, riding for Italian legend Valentino Rossi's VR46 team, going into the sixth round of the championship.

Bagnaia, nursing an ankle injury from his crash last time out at Le Mans, led from Marc Marquez but Jorge Martin nabbed the lead at the end of the opening lap.

Alex Marquez, who set off in third, lasted only as far as turn one when he slithered out of contention on the gravel run off.

As rain drops began to splatter on Ducati's home circuit Bagnaia regained the lead with eight of the 11 laps remaining. Under ominously dark clouds Bagnaia was being hunted down by Bezzecchi, who came into this weekend just one point adrift in the championship standings.

Bezzecchi, who started back in seventh, kept up the fight on his compatriot and friend but Bagnaia had the race in the bag, to the delight of his legion of fans.

"It was a bit scary at the start and had to be careful not to panic with the rain, but my pace was good. I really enjoyed the day - Mugello is beautiful," said Bagnaia after his third sprint success of the season.

"Job done today!" he added.

Now he goes in search of a third race win at a track where he won 12 months ago.

Messi Gets Superstar's Welcome in China

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Hundreds of jubilant fans greeted Lionel Messi as he arrived in Beijing, where his World Cup-winning Argentina will face Australia in a friendly match next week.

"Messi! Messi!" chanted several hundred fans who were waiting for the football superstar at the airport, many wearing the blue-and-white striped jersey of the Albiceleste's No 10, according to social media images.

Several hundred others waited outside the team's hotel, not far from the banks of the Liangma River, popular with Beijingers for strolls.

This is Messi's seventh trip to China, the last being in 2017, according to local media.

Several banners written in Spanish and English welcomed the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner at the hotel. "I waited from 9 am to noon," said Liu Yuheng, who wore the jersey of Barcelona, the club where Messi spent most of his career.

"I thought he would come through the main door but not through the back door. I was a little disappointed not to see him," the 26-year-old told AFP.

"As I couldn't buy a ticket for the game, I booked a room in the same hotel as Messi and was hoping to catch a glimpse of him."



Swiatek Wins French Open Title in a Thriller

PARIS (Dispatches) - Iga Swiatek battled past Karolina Muchova 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 to win her third French Open title and become the first woman to successfully defend the Roland Garros title since 2007.

The 22-year-old Swiatek is just the third woman in the Open era to win each of her first four Grand Slam finals, the Pole adding to her 2020 and 2022 titles in Paris and last year's US Open triumph.

Monica Seles and Naomi Osaka are the only other players to accomplish the feat.

Swiatek, the world number one from Poland, is also the youngest woman to claim back-to-back French Open titles since Monica Seles in the early 1990s.

Justine Henin was the last woman to win successive Roland Garros crowns when she captured her third in a row and fourth in total 16 years ago.

"I know I have said this every year, it isn't really about the performance, I really love being here - it's my favourite place on tour," said Swiatek.

Swiatek's latest coronation caps another dominant two weeks on the clay in Paris, where her record stands at 28 wins and two losses in five visits.



Muchova, at 43 in the world, was the fourth lowest ranked woman to reach the French Open final, her first championship match at a major.