

Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology Issa Zarepour Has Said That Iran Is Preparing to Host the Meeting of The ECO Council of Ministers in Tehran, Iran, in July

IRAN NEWS

TEDPIX, the Main Index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Rose 27,015 Points to 2.189m on Sunday, as Reported, over 9.272b Securities Worth 65.936 Trillion Rials (About \$157m) Were Traded at the TSE

VOL. XXIX, No. 7799 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

MONDAY JUNE 26, 2023 - TIR 5, 1402

2 DOMESTIC

President Calls for Regularly Evaluating Population Rejuvenation Law



> SEE PAGE 2

3 DOMESTIC

Turkey Wants To Extend Contract For Iran Gas



> SEE PAGE 3

4 INTERNATIONAL

Wagner Boss Says March On Moscow Halted to Avoid Bloodshed



> SEE PAGE 4

8 SPORTS

Bublik Beats Zverev To Reach Halle Final



> SEE PAGE 8

Iran-UK Trade Increases 17% In 4 Months

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The economic exchanges between Iran and the United Kingdom (UK) increased by 17 percent in the first four months of 2023 compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

Based on a report published by the British Ministerial Department of Business and Trade, the trade between Iran and UK amounted to 27 million pounds equal to \$34 million in the mentioned four months.

As reported, during January-April 2023 the UK exported 20 million pounds equal to \$25 million worth of commodities to the Islamic Republic, registering a 25 percent rise, year on year.

Britain's imports from Iran in the first four months of this year were seven million pounds equivalent to nine million dollars, with no significant change compared to the same period last year. According to the British Ministerial Department of Business and Trade, the trade between Iran and the UK has more than tripled after BREXIT so that the trade between the two countries reached 696 million pounds in 2022. **See Page 7**

Islamic Revolution Savior of Iran From Moral, Political Decline



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has reiterated that the 1979 Islamic Revolution saved Iran from sinking into a moral, religious and political decline, crediting heroic sacrifices of martyrs and their families for the epic movement.

"Your martyrs changed the country's destiny in one of the most critical periods of its history," the Leader emphasized on Sunday while addressing a large crowd of family members of Iranian martyrs in Tehran. "The Islamic Revolution took place to preserve the country, which was rapidly falling into moral, religious and political decay, and salvaged it."

The Leader further hailed the Iranian youth for defending the country during Iraqi imposed war in the 1980s -- known as the sacred defense -- and subsequent enemy plots to destabilize the country, saying: "Then, the enemy launched a military attack. It was the youth who resisted for eight years and saved the country. Then, our youth [firmly] stood up against various sedition efforts, various moves to foment unrest, and different sorts of enemy aggressions until today."

He underlined that the youth embraced martyrdom, including in last year's riots, to save the country and steer its fate toward dignity.

The Leader also called on the media and the artists to introduce and highlight the martyrs as role models to the younger generations. He further urged the parents and spouses of martyrs to keep narrating and recounting the stories and lifestyles of their loved ones.

Ayatollah Khamenei then went on to reiterate that the memories of Iranian martyrs should live on as they are ideal "role models" for the youth.

"The behavior of these heroes, their distinguished moral traits, lifestyle, and changes in their lives set an example for the society, especially teenagers and young people," he said.

He added that publishing the memories of the martyrs' families will have a significant impact in rightfully promoting the martyrs as true role models.

Iran Urged to Provide World With Anti-Narcotics Experiences

TEHRAN (MNA) - Alexander Fedulov, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Iran Country Representative, has said Iran should provide other countries of the world with its experiences in dealing with narcotics.

"The successful experiences of Iran's anti-narcotics police in the field of combating drug transit should be made available to all countries in the region and the world in different ways," Fedulov added.

He made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran on Sunday with Iraj Kakavand, Iran's anti-narcotics police chief, IRNA reported.

The international community, while becoming more familiar with the countermeasures of the Islamic Republic of Iran, should provide more support for the fight against narcotics in this country, the UNODC official stressed.

Fedulov referred to the strengthening of the Joint Planning Cell (JPC) and conducting joint activities with other countries in the fight against drug trafficking as effective countermeasures and emphasized the need to boost cooperation. **See Page 7**

Annual Inflation Down 0.6% to 48.5% in June

LONDON (PressTV) - Figures by the Statistical Center of Iran (CBI) show that the annual inflation rate in the country dropped slightly in June.

The figures published on Saturday showed that the consumer price index (CPI) in Iran had reached 189.3 in the calendar month to June 21, up 48.5% from the year to late June 2022.

The annual inflation rate is a fall of 0.6% from the same figure reported by the SCI in late May.

The data showed that Iran's CPI had increased by 2% in June compared to May and by 42.6% from June 2022.

Headline inflation rate in Iran had climbed to 49.1% in the calendar month to late May, just shy of an all-time record.

The drop in June could be a respite for government of President Ebrahim Raisi as it is struggling to keep inflation at controlled levels.

Economists say high levels of inflation in Iran are partly tied to government's policies to reduce the country's reliance on oil revenues. However, some experts believe the policy could also entail long-term positive implications on the Iranian economy. **See Page 7**

Iran Hopes to Ink FTZ Agreement with EAEU In Coming Months

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's ambassador to Russia said that his country hopes that a free trade zone agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will be signed within the next one or two months.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Second International Altai Forum on Friday, Kazem Jalali stated, "We are in favor of signing this agreement. We really hope that this agreement will be signed in the next month or two. I met with Deputy Prime Minister (of the Russian Federation Alexey) Overchuk. We are making efforts to ensure that this agreement is signed as soon as possible."

The ambassador noted that the agreement should be ratified in the parliaments of the five countries participating in the EAEU, as well as in the parliament of Iran, TASS reported.

Earlier, Overchuk said that an agreement on a free trade zone between Tehran and the EAEU could be reached earlier than with other countries.

India Tea Exports Challenge Over Payment Mechanism

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's tea exports, which had registered almost a 15 per cent rise in 2022 at 226.98 million kg (mkg), might witness a dip in 2023 on the back of the geopolitical situation, particularly in Russia, and with Iran yet to resume issuance of registration of pro forma, which is mandatory for importing from India.

According to industry insiders, exports are likely to drop by almost 10 per cent during 2023 as India has been facing challenges in some of the traditional markets, including Iran, Turkey, Russia, Iraq, China, and Pakistan.

During January-October 2022, exports to Iran had dropped by almost nine per cent at 19.52 mkg valued at about ₹543 crore, as against 21.45 mkg estimated at ₹548 crore same period in 2021, Tea Board data suggests.

Trade sources said that Iran had stopped issuing the order for registration of Proforma required for importing tea from India since November last year. The Ministry of Agriculture, the government of Iran, as per available reports from some tea buyers, has been prevented from issuing the order of registration.

Tea buyers have advised their Indian exporters not to consign any tea cargo until further advice as any cargo without order registration is not allowed to enter any Iran Port by the customs and the cargo has to be returned to the origin country.

Though the factual reason behind this development is not known yet, but sources suggest that there has hardly been any improvement in situation since November last year.

"Exports look bleak this year as the whole issue with Iran has derailed it (exports growth). We are expecting exports to be lower by at least 10 per cent this year over last year. Exporters are facing various challenges in some of the existing markets and unless some promotional support comes in from the government it is difficult to enter into newer markets," Anshuman Kanoria, chairman, Indian Tea Exporters Association told businessline.

Iran is a vital market of Indian tea, particularly orthodox tea. Any suspension of shipments to Iran would lead to a severe adverse impact on the Indian tea market and exports.

According to Kaushik Das, Vice President and Co-Group Head, Corporate Sector Ratings, ICRA, there is a good demand for Indian tea in international markets, however, exports are impacted due to various challenges, including those related to lack of proper payment mechanism.

Interestingly, while exports to Iran has dropped by nine per cent, the same to UAE has increased by 165 per cent at 32.95 mkg estimated at ₹999 crore during January-October 2022. Sources suggest that a significant chunk of tea to Iran is being routed through UAE using the third-party currency mechanism permitted by the Reserve Bank of India for doing business with Iran. **See Page 7**

Chinese Demand for Iran Oil to Increase Further

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior oil market analyst says demand for Iranian crude oil in China could increase to record levels this summer despite continued US pressure on Iranian oil exports.

Homayoun Falakshahi, an analyst with Kpler, a major international energy data and analytics group, said in remarks published on Saturday that China "will become thirstier for Iranian oil" in the coming months mainly because of a potential drop in Russian supplies.

"Our estimate is that Russia's domestic demand will increase over summer months and this can negatively impact this country's exports, including to China," Falakshahi said in an interview with Iran's ILNA news agency.

The comments come as statements by Iranian Oil Ministry authorities and reports from international tanker-tracking services, including Kpler, have suggested that Iran's oil exports reached an average of at least 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd) in May, a figure not seen since October 2018 when Iranian shipments dropped to record lows because of US sanctions. Private refiners in China buy a bulk of Iranian oil shipments with estimates suggesting that nearly 1.5 million bpd of Iran's oil exports ends up in China. **See Page 7**

Sokhan Gostar Institute

IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39
www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com
@irannewsdaily

FM Spokesman Calls for Adding Zionist Regime to UN List of Shame

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani has called on the international community to add the Zionist regime to the United Nations' list of shame.

It is surprising that a regime with a history of imprisoning 160 children, house arresting 600 innocent kids and 600 Palestinian patients, including 30 physically and mobility disabled people, is not worthy of being included in the United Nations' list of shame, Kanaani wrote on his Twitter account in Farsi on Sunday. And this is while the child killing regime shamelessly took the lives of 26 innocent Palestinian children only during the first 6 months of the current year, the spokesman added.

Their black record in such acts should create shame and embarrassment for their Western supporters of the apartheid regime, he further noted.

President Calls for Regularly Evaluating Population Rejuvenation Law

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Emphasizing the necessity of proper distribution according to the Spatial Planning Document as well as completing the added value chain of scientific and technological activities, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said, "The speed of progress and gaining scientific authority in the country should not be allowed to be slowed down or reduced in any way".

Speaking at the meeting of the Supreme Council of Science, Research and Technology, Raisi referred to the priorities raised in this council, and emphasized on the prioritization in the implementation of the issues raised according to the necessities, needs and credits of the country.

Referring to the plan to hold the university entrance exam electronically, the President added, "This plan should be tested in detail and even implemented in some regions and provinces so that its flaws and defects are identified and fixed, so that it does not face any issues during its nationwide implementation".

The President referred to the plan to improve the efficiency of policies in the field of the country's young population, emphasizing on getting practical response from the executive policies of population rejuvenation and clarified, "A good law for population rejuvenation has been prepared and approved, but it should be regularly



implemented and its implementation should be regularly evaluated".

The President mentioned the next agenda of the meeting, which was the solutions to facilitate and remove the implementation obstacles of research and technology in the country and emphasized, "The directives and instructions should be based on the actual conditions in the field of action, including the nature of the problems and the facilities and capacities available to solve them".

Raisi described the creation of a system for ideas and needs and said, "The very important point is that the speed of progress and gaining scientific authority in the country should not be allowed to be slowed down or reduced in any way".

Referring to the fact that the country has more than 101,000 faculty members at universities and scientific centers, the President emphasized the use of this scientific support to speed up the country's progress".

FM Says Confident Russia Will Get Through Wagner Mutiny



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says he is confident Russia will get through the current circumstances amid an armed insurrection carried out by the Wagner private military group against Moscow.

In a phone conversation on Saturday, Amirabdollahian and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov discussed mutual relations and the latest developments in Russia, particularly in the capital Moscow and the city of Rostov.

The top Iranian diplomat rejected any foreign interference in the domestic affairs of countries. Amirabdollahian said the events in Russia were of an "absolutely domestic nature."

He said Iran supports the rule of law in all countries, including in the "neighboring and friendly country of Russia."

Lavrov, for his part, put a premium on the implementation of law and its impact on Russia's territorial integrity.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has vowed to crush the armed mutiny after Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed he had taken control of the southern city of Rostov as part of an attempt to oust the military leadership.

Assassination of Martyr Soleimani, Crime Against Fighting Terrorism

TEHRAN (IP) - The head of American Human Rights Review and Disclosure Week, Kazem Gharibabadi, has condemned the assassination of Qassem Soleimani and his companions as a heinous crime against countries that fight terrorism.

Speaking at an event honoring the martyrs of the 7th Tir, Gharibabadi stated that the killing of two major commanders in the fight against terrorists in Iran and Iraq was not only a crime against the people of Iran but also against those in the region and countries involved with terrorist groups.

Gharibabadi went on to criticize America's history of violence, stating that it has killed over 35 million people throughout its history.

He cited examples such as the killing of 27 million red-skinned people during America's founding and 4.5 million soldiers and civilians during the Vietnam War. He also pointed out America's involvement in killings and crimes against humanity in Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Gharibabadi highlighted America's record on human rights violations within its own borders. He noted that over 4 thousand women are killed every year in America, and more than 4 thousand people die in its prisons.

Given these circumstances, Gharibabadi argued that America is not in a position to talk about human rights and that it is our duty to expose these crimes to public opinion around the world.

As Secretary General of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, Gharibabadi's comments reflect Iran's ongoing condemnation of America's actions towards Soleimani and its broader foreign policy approach.

Iran Proposes Political Solution for Ukraine Crisis

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has announced that the Islamic Republic is against war and believes that the Ukraine crisis has a political solution.

Iran has proposed a political solution for the crisis because any effort to help arm one side of the war will lead to aggravation of tension and reduction in stability in the region, Amirabdollahian said during the talks held over the phone on Sunday with his Danish counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

The two foreign ministers also exchanged views about the latest situation of bilateral relations.

Over the phone, Amirabdollahian described Tehran-Copenhagen ties as historical underlining the importance of continuing regular negotiations to enhance cooperation.

For his part, the Danish foreign minister said talks with the Islamic Republic are important.

In the end, the two sides agreed to work on a mechanism for fostering consular and political consultations.

65 Iranian Universities Among THE 2023 Ranking

TEHRAN (IP) - Times Institute of Higher Education (THE) 2023 released the names of 65 Iranian top institutions in the list of the best institutions in Asia.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023 includes 1,799 universities across 104 countries and regions. THE has been providing trusted performance data on universities for students and their families, academics, university leaders, governments, and industry, since 2004.

It creates university rankings to assess university performance on the global stage and provides a resource for readers to understand the different missions and successes of higher education institutions.

The Sharif University of Technology is ranked first among Iranian universities and 64th in Asia on the Times Institute of Higher Education list.

Two Iranian universities are reported as 'reporters,' meaning they have provided their data to Times Higher Education Institute, but did not meet the minimum requirement to obtain the Asian rank.

In the 2023 edition of the Times Institute of Higher Education Asian University Ranking System, 928 institutions from 36 Asian countries are on the final list.

The Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2023 use the same 13 performance indicators as the (THE) World University Rankings, but they are recalibrated to reflect the attributes of Asia's institutions.

Universities in the Asian section are judged across all their core missions - teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook - to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons available.

Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2022 contained 58 Iranian Universities as the top Asian institutes.

Dust Storm Victims on the Rise, Hundreds Hospitalized

TEHRAN (IFP) - The number of people who were sent to the hospitals due to the dust storms in Sistan and Baluchistan Province has topped 300, that's according to the head of the Crisis Management HQ in the southeastern Iranian province.

Majid Mohebbi the managing director of the Crisis Management Headquarters of Sistan and Baluchistan said, over the past 4 days 320 people were hospitalized due to the dust storms hitting various parts of the province.

The official added 273 people were treated on an outpatient basis while 57 others are still in hospitals.

The Meteorological Organization of Sistan and Baluchistan had earlier announced that the dust storms will continue until Monday.

According to the provincial officials, strong winds with a speed of 97 km/h ripped through Zabol on Sunday morning and the resulting dust reduced the horizontal visibility to 350 meters.

Heads of Three Branches of Power Sit for Joint Meeting

TEHRAN (IP) - The heads of the three branches of power of the Islamic Republic of Iran consulted in a joint meeting regarding the coordination and relations between them in order to improve and facilitate the tasks and administrative ties.

In the joint meeting of the heads of the three branches of power that was held on Saturday evening hosted by the President's Office, President Ebrahim Raisi, Speaker of Iran's parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Chief of Iran's Judiciary Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i discussed the coordination between three branches of power and the related issues in order to improve and facilitate the working process and administrative relations between them.

Raisi Calls on Iran Envoys to Implement Leader Instructions

TEHRAN (MNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi called on a number of Iranian ambassadors to fully implement the instructions of the Leader regarding the principle of dignity, wisdom, and expediency.

Raisi made the remarks on Sunday in a meeting with Iranian newly-appointed ambassadors to Finland, Bulgaria, Kuwait, Armenia, Turkey, Mauritania, Kyrgyzstan, Bolivia, Australia, the Philippines, and Sweden.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in his recent meeting with the ambassadors, explained in detail the ways to act based on the integrated principle of dignity, wisdom, and expediency, he said.

Raisi called on the envoys to fully implement the instructions of the Leader in this regard, he said.

Iran enjoys diverse capacities with many countries in the world, including the said countries, Raisi.

Raisi called on the ambassadors to use all their efforts to actualize these capacities in order to expand sustainable economic and commercial relations between the two sides.

Emphasizing that the government's approach is aimed at restoring balance to Iran's foreign policy, he emphasized boosting relations with neighboring, friendly, and aligned countries.

Second Project on Reviving Lake Urmia to Be Inaugurated

TEHRAN (MNA) - The wastewater treatment plant of the city of Urmia, as the second project aimed at reviving Lake Urmia, will come on stream in the near future.

Once the project is inaugurated, 51 million cubic meters of treated wastewater will be transferred to Lake Urmia, Mohammad- Sadeq Motamedian, the governor-general of West Azarbaijan province and the secretary of the national working group for Lake Urmia restoration, said, IRIB reported.

This important project started in the calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) but stopped in the year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021) due to financial problems, he explained.

So far, a total of 22 trillion rials (some \$4.5 million) has been invested in the project, he noted.

Lake Urmia in the northwestern West Azarbaijan province started to dry up in the 2000s.

The lake is the largest lake in West Asia and the sixth-largest Salt Lake in the world with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 square kilometers.

Provincial officials have said that water levels in the lake will increase to above two billion cubic meters in the near future.

The figure comes just more than a month after the government inaugurated a project to transfer water from a neighboring dam as part of its efforts to revive the lake.

As the first project to revive the Lake, the construction of a tunnel with a length of 36 kilometers to transfer water from the Dam to the Lake started in 2015, IRNA reported.

26th Int'l ELECOMP Exhibition Kicks Off in Tehran

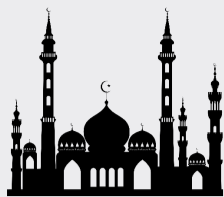
TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The 26th International Exhibition of Electronic, Computer and E-Commerce (ELECOMP) was inaugurated at Tehran's Permanent International Fairgrounds on Sunday in a ceremony attended by Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Issa Zarepour.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition, Zarepour pointed to the speed of mobile internet in Iran and said that the speed of cellphone internet has doubled since the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi assumed office in August 2021. He referred to the e-commerce and platforms that should be created for this purpose and said the development of communications infrastructures is one of the main platforms for the development of electronic commerce dubbed 'e-commerce'.

"Better Future for the Digital Economy" is the motto of this year's exhibition, he said, adding that the current administration has predicted a good package for ameliorating and improving the future of digital economy in the 7th Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan.

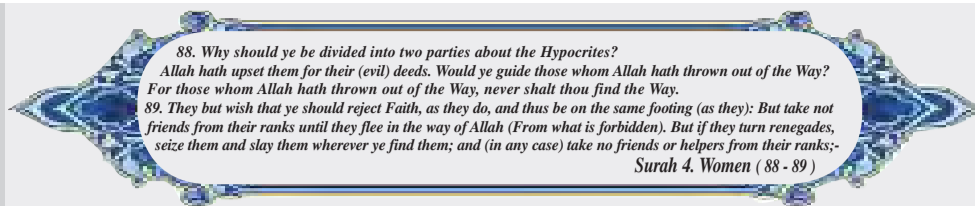
Elsewhere in his remarks, the ICT minister pointed to the upcoming Forum of ICT ministers of member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Tehran and said, "I asked some ICT ministers of other countries to attend the forum in order to set up an infrastructure for taking advantage of the capacities of one another." Suitable ways have been provided for domestic knowledge-based companies in order to export their products overseas, he further said.

More than \$200 million worth of contracts have been concluded with foreign companies over the past six months, Zarepour said, hoping that his ministry would pave the way for the export of other similar products overseas.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:07
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:04
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:50



Turkey Wants To Extend Contract For Iran Gas

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Director of the Iran National Gas Company (NIGC) Majid Changi says Turkey wants to extend its contract for importing gas from Iran and there is still time for talks.

Speaking to ILNA, Changi said that talks with Turkey for extending gas imports contract from Iran which will expire in 2026 but there is still time for striking the deal. He reiterated that Turkey is determined to continue purchase of Iran gas.

On settling account with Iraq over its debt for importing gas from Iran, he said that Iraq's energy ministry has paid all of its debts to Iran and Baghdad currently has no debt over gas imports from Iran but the problem is the transfer of the money from Iraq's TBI bank and it should be resolved soon.

Touching upon imports of gas from Turkmenistan, he said that currently both countries are negotiating and the talks will continue more.

Changi also said that the government has approved new tariffs for those who overconsume gas and it will be announced soon. He added that the condition for



tariffs has been improved comparing to last year and in this directives, some incentives have been taken into consideration for those who efficiently use gas.

On supply of fuel to power plants, he said that so far this year some 209 million cubic meters of gas has been given to the power plants which show considerable rise comparing to last year.

He added that the company has plans to strengthen pipelines in the country especially in the risky and dangerous areas.

Changi admitted that the company faces 250 million cubic meters of gas disequilibrium and to overcome it, optimization and storage are on the agenda.

He went on to say that for storing the gas, the company has two reservoirs in Shourjeh and Sarajeh and it has readiness for launching more reservoirs for the winter time and it has taken some incentives for it.

CBI Allocates \$1b for Medicine Imports in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) - The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has announced the allocation of one billion dollars for the import of medicine and medical equipment in three months, IRIB reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the country's senior health officials, including the health minister and heads of the Social Security Organization and Food and Drug Administration of The Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammadreza Farzin noted that the CBI plans to allocate over \$3.5 billion of subsidized foreign currency for the import of medicine and medical equipment in the current Iranian calendar year (ends in late March 2024).

Official Puts Iran's Three-Month Auto Output at 325,000

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran produced some 325,000 cars in the first three months of the current calendar year (March 21 - June 21), according to a senior official with the country's Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade (MIMT).

Abdollah Tavakkoli Lahijani, the director for MIMT auto industries department, told IRNA economic correspondent on Saturday that the initiatives introduced by President Ebrahim Raisi's administration are yielding fruit and the country is witnessing regulation of auto market.

He said that some 277,000 sedan vehicles were produced in the March-June period which account for 85.2% of the country's total auto output.

He added that the country has produced as much as 36,000 pick-up vehicles which shows a 27% rise compared to figures reported in last year's same period.

The Iranian private sector produced a roughly 67,000 cars in the period under review up 96% year-on-year from 36,000 cars produced by the country's private sector in the same period of 2022, the official said.

He put the share of the Iranian private sector from the country's auto output at 21%.

Safa Co. Can Produce Over 200m Ball Point Pens Annually

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The CEO of Safa Ball Point Pen Industrial Company (Iranian Kian Brand) in an interview said that the company can produce 200m ball point pens, 50m marker pens and 120m pencils with the highest quality.

Vahid Shojaee Nia in the interview said that Safa Ball Point Pen Industrial Company started its production in 2009 with the brand name of Kian and those products included different types of ball point pen, marker pens and this year the company intends to add rollerball pen, highlighter marker pen and correction fluid to its products.

He stipulated that the company currently with using the latest machineries and experienced and skillful staff as well as quality control lab and getting national standard certificate and ISO9001 and ISO14001:2015 certificates can produce annually



over 200m ball point pens, 50m markers and 120m pencils with highest quality and they are real rival for the importing products.

Shojaee Nia further said that currently the company produces 10m ball point pens and 1.5m markers per month which are sent to the market and it accounts for 60% of the domestic stationery market, reiterating that 25% of the products are exported to the neighboring countries.

He added that the company use raw materials produced in the domestic petrochemical companies but the biggest challenge for the company is the forex problem for importing the required raw materials.

He reiterated that the products of the company are offered by the active representatives of the company and customers who encourage the domestic products can get their required products easily through those representatives.

Iranian Automaker Expanding Its Exporting Markets

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Kerman Motor Company (KMC), a distinguished Iranian powerhouse in the private automotive manufacturing sector, has achieved a groundbreaking milestone by successfully exporting its exceptional fleet of domestically produced vehicles. The heralded entry of the illustrious J4 sedan into the burgeoning Iraqi market signals KMC's inaugural triumph in delivering its automotive prowess to the heart of Baghdad.

Guided by the visionary leadership of CEO Saman Firoozi, Kerman Motor Company shrewdly identified Iraq as its primary export market, setting the stage for an ambitious expansion roadmap that includes penetrating the vast realms of Russia, CIS nations, and North Africa. At the forefront of this audacious venture stands the J4 sedan, the epitome of KMC's engineering excellence and a testament to their unwavering commitment to automotive innovation.

Kerman Motor's voyage into the realm of vehicle exports serves as a testament to the unparalleled resilience and unwavering determination of Iran's private automotive industry, persistently thriving amidst formidable competition and navigating the challenging currents of international economic landscape. This resounding triumph is a testament to the unwavering dedication and unparalleled expertise of the company's brilliant personnel, fortified by the formidable capabilities of Iran's indigenous component manufacturing sector.

Firoozi, in his resolute pursuit of Kerman Motor's global ascendance, expounds upon the meticulousness of their export programs, disclosing ambitious plans to venture into three pivotal markets within the region. Committed to broadening its export horizons, Kerman Motor harnesses the immense potential of its domestic capabilities, meticulously crafting high-quality products that epitomize excellence in order to carve a commanding position within the global marketplace. With a fervent dedication to advancing Iran's automotive industry and emerging as an unrivaled symbol of automotive ingenuity, Kerman Motor embraces the mantle of industry vanguard.

This momentous undertaking has prompted Kerman Motor to invest substantially in elevating the caliber of their vehicles to meet and exceed stringent international standards. The illustrious J4 sedan, proudly built upon an indigenous platform, symbolizes Kerman Motor's unwavering commitment to domestic production, boasting an impressive localization rate surpassing 70%. Collaborative ventures with a prestigious cohort of 120 revered local suppliers further bolster the company's unwavering standing within the domestic component manufacturing landscape.

Yet Kerman Motor's ambitions extend beyond the realms of exports, as they aspire to nurture a resolute national automotive brand that resonates with a discerning global audience. Envisioning the ascent of Iranian vehicles in market share

worldwide, the company strives to invigorate economic growth, stimulate foreign exchange inflows, and create an abundance of employment opportunities.

Firoozi confidently outlines the trajectory of Kerman Motor's automotive exports, envisaging an exponential expansion of volumes into untapped markets, exploring uncharted frontiers, amplifying the competitive edge of Iranian-made vehicles, revolutionizing quality and technology, and elevating production capacities to unprecedented heights.

In the closing chapter of this resounding success story, Kerman Motor embarks on an extraordinary odyssey of automotive exports, led unwaveringly by the lauded J4 sedan. The company remains steadfast in its pursuit of establishing enduring partnerships with international enterprises, fostering synergistic technical and technological collaborations to pave the way for shared growth and prosperity. The forthcoming exportation of the revered J4 sedan to discerning markets such as Iraq, Russia, and beyond is poised to propel Kerman Motor's export volumes to remarkable new heights, simultaneously empowering and amplifying the triumphs of other esteemed Iranian automakers.

Notably, the J4 sedan, produced with a localization rate exceeding a remarkable 70%, stands as a testament to the harmonious fusion of economy, contemporary aesthetics, and cutting-edge technology, seamlessly intertwining style, performance, and innovation to deliver an unparalleled driving experience.



ECO Meeting Urges Easing Customs Relations Among Member States



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - ECO Customs Cooperation Council (ECO-CCC) convened in Turkey where participants underlined the need for easing customs relations among member countries as well as the necessity of fight against smuggling.

They also stressed the significance of electronic trade and extra-territorial trade to further facilitate exchanges and reduce trade costs among member countries.

Sama Farkhondehnejad, who represented Iran Chamber of Commerce in the council meeting, said that the private sector viewpoints for reducing customs tariffs have to be taken into consideration.

She also highlighted the role of electronic exchange of the data as another mechanism to help facilitate trade and increase commercial and transit exchanges.

Taking pre-emptive measures to prevent customs violations and adopting plans to facilitate trade and protect people in the face of the dangers of extra-territorial trade were among other issues discussed in the meeting.

Thermal Power Plants' Output Exceeds 80m MWh in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's thermal power plants generated more than 80 million megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) to play a significant role in the country's electricity supply in the mentioned period.

According to Naser Eskandari, a deputy with the Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH), combined cycle power plants accounted for 55 percent of the total power generation by the country's thermal power plants in the mentioned period.

As IRNA reported, the output of combined cycle power plants reached 44 million MWh in Q1 this year, registering a four percent increase, year on year.

Also, the share of gas units in electricity production in the first quarter of this year was 18 million MWh while the share of steam units was 18 million MWh, Eskandari said.

Around 40 Missing in Italy Migrant Boat Shipwreck

ROME (Dispatches) - Around 40 people are missing after a migrant boat capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa, the UN said.

The shipwreck took place on Thursday and at least one newborn baby is among those missing, said UNHCR representative to Italy Chiara Cardoletti.

The vessel left from Sfax in Tunisia and was carrying 46 migrants from Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, said Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman for the UN migration agency IOM.

The boat capsized in strong winds and high waves, he said. "Some survivors were taken to Lampedusa and others were brought back to Tunisia".



Erdogan Urges Putin to Act With Common Sense

ANKARA (Dispatches) - President Tayyip Erdogan spoke by telephone with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and urged him to act with common sense, the Turkish presidency said, after Russian mercenary fighters began an armed mutiny overnight.

Putin, who described the Wagner Group's actions as "treason" in an emergency televised address, said anyone who had taken up arms against the Russian military would be punished. Erdogan was among the first leaders to hold a phone call with Putin after his speech on Saturday. The Turkish presidency said the two discussed recent developments in Russia and Erdogan told Putin that Turkey was ready to do its part to help bring about a peaceful resolution.



Wagner Boss Says March on Moscow Halted to Avoid Bloodshed



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin says he ordered his mercenaries to halt their march on Moscow to avoid "shedding Russian blood".

Prigozhin said while his men are just 200km (120 miles) from Moscow, he decided to turn them back to avoid to prevent killings.

The comments by Prigozhin in an audio message came after Belarus' leader Alexander Lukashenko said he negotiated with the mercenary boss to stop Wagner's troop movement.

He accepted Lukashenko's offer to halt the Wagner group's advance and further steps to de-escalate the tensions, Lukashenko's office said, adding the proposed settlement contains security guarantees for Wagner troops. It did not elaborate.

Prigozhin did not say whether the Kremlin responded to his demand to oust Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu. There was no immediate comment from the Kremlin.

Moscow erected checkpoints with armored vehicles and troops on its southern edge, Red Square was shut down and the mayor urged motorists to stay off some roads as the Russian capital braced for the arrival of a private army led by a rebellious mercenary commander.

President Vladimir Putin vowed harsh consequences for organizers of the armed uprising led by his onetime protege, Prigozhin, who brought his forces out of Ukraine, seized a key military facility in southern Russia and advanced toward Moscow.

Prigozhin's actions represented the most significant challenge to Putin's leadership in his more than two decades in power. In a televised speech to the nation, Putin called the rebellion a "betrayal" and "treason."

"All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment," Putin said. "The armed forces and other government agencies have received the necessary orders."

Authorities declared a "counterterrorist regime" in the capital and its surrounding region, enhancing security and restricting some movement.

On the southern outskirts, troops erected checkpoints, arranged sandbags and set up machine guns.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin warned that traffic could be restricted in parts of the capital. He declared Monday a non-working day for most residents.

Crews dug up sections of highways to slow the march of the Wagner mercenary army. Access to Red Square was closed, two major museums were evacuated and a park was shut.

Prigozhin's private army appeared to control the military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, a city 660 miles (over 1,000 kilometers) south of Moscow that runs Russian operations in Ukraine, Britain's Ministry of Defense said.

Wagner troops and equipment also were in Lipetsk province, about 360 kilometers (225 miles) south of Moscow, where authorities "are taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the population," said regional Gov. Igor Artamonov, via Telegram. He did not elaborate.

The dramatic developments came exactly 16 months after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Europe's largest conflict since World War II, that has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions and reduced cities to rubble.

Ukrainians hoped the Russian infighting would create opportunities for its army to take back territory seized by Russian forces.

Air Strikes, Artillery, Killings In Sudan as Aid Stalls

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Artillery fire, air strikes and gun battles rocked Sudan's capital, witnesses told AFP, as the UN urged a stop to "wanton killings" that have left decomposing bodies in Darfur.

While fighting rages, relief efforts have stalled after more than two months of fighting between rival generals.

Houses in Khartoum shook from the fighting that continued unabated, residents said, with entire families sheltering in place, running low on vital supplies in the baking summer heat.

The United Nations says nearly 1.5 million people have fled the capital since violence erupted in mid-April, pitting the regular army against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Entire districts of Khartoum no longer have running water, and those who remain in the city have had no electricity at all since Thursday, several residents told AFP.

The battle for power between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, has killed more than 2,000 people, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.



Sierra Leone Votes in National Elections Amid Economic Crisis

FREETOWN (Dispatches) - Sierra Leone went to polls in a tightly contested presidential and parliamentary elections amid a cost-of-living crisis.

Some 3.4 million people are registered to vote, 52.4 percent of whom are under 35 years old, according to an electoral commission spokesman.

Thirteen candidates are vying for the presidential post, including incumbent Julius Maada Bio, with a crippling economic crisis, which sparked deadly riots last year, on top of the poll agenda.

Presidential candidates must secure 55 percent of valid votes for a first-round win. Incumbent Bio's main challenger is Samura Kamara of the All People's Congress (APC) party.

Bio, 59, of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), narrowly beat Kamara, who is aged 72, in a run-off in 2018.

Rising food prices are a key issue for many voters in the import-dependent nation of eight million people.

Year on year inflation hit 43 percent in April, according to the latest official figures.

Both Bio and Kamara told AFP they would prioritise boosting agricultural production. Boubacar Conteh, 27, from Wellington in the east of Freetown, waited since four in the morning to cast his ballot.

"I want my country to change - I need change," he said.

The deeply poor West African nation was battered by a brutal 1991-2002 civil war and the Ebola epidemic a decade later, and further pummeled economically by the COVID pandemic and fallout from the war in Ukraine.

Voters will also elect members of parliament and local councils in a proportional representation system after a last-minute switch from a first-past-the-post system.

Under a recently passed gender act, one-third of all candidates must be women.

A new 11.9 percent vote threshold will make it difficult for independents and minority parties to secure seats in the parliament.

Russia, China Block Move for New Antarctic Marine Reserves

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - Members of a multinational group on Antarctic conservation failed to agree on a roadmap for the creation of three new marine protected areas -- a goal that has proven elusive for years.

"No agreement was reached. It was not possible to obtain... a road map" for protected areas in the seas around Antarctica, Cesar Cardenas, a member of the Chilean Antarctic Institute and part of the Chilean delegation, told AFP.

Cardenas said Russia and China resisted new protected areas. The bid to create the sanctuaries around Antarctica to counter climate change and protect fragile ocean ecosystems would safeguard nearly four million more square kilometers (1.5 million more square miles) of ocean from human activities.

The areas are home to penguins, seals, toothfish, whales and huge numbers of krill -- a staple food for many species.

Members of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) met to discuss plans for three new marine protected areas (MPAs): in East Antarctica, the Weddell Sea and the Antarctic Peninsula.

There are two in Antarctica now: around the South Orkney Islands, comprising an area of 94,000 square kilometers, created in 2009, and one of 2 million square

kilometers in the Ross Sea region, established in 2016.

Activists voiced disappointment at the lack of action.

"Unfortunately this special meeting ended as the previous six annual meetings have done: with two countries blocking the will of the other 25 CCAMLR members to move towards a network of Southern Ocean MPAs," Andrea Kavanagh of the nonprofit Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy said in a statement.

Beijing and Moscow have been key in blocking the expansion scheme since it was first floated by Australia, France and the EU in 2010 before being scaled down in 2017 in an attempt to win greater support.

Antarctica is particularly threatened by global warming.

"One of the biggest threats to this area is climate change, which is causing sea ice to decrease significantly. The presence of sea ice is essential to the life cycle of Antarctic krill," said Rodolfo Werner, scientific and political adviser to the Southern Ocean and Antarctic Coalition (ASOC).

"The creation of marine protected areas is very important, because above all it protects the biodiversity... by removing the stress of fishing in these areas," he added.

Studies have shown that the melting of western Antarctica's biggest glaciers, which contain enough water to raise the oceans by several meters, appears irreversible.



Argentina Political Drama Heats As Election Battle Lines Drawn

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentina's presidential election battle lines have hardened after economy minister Sergio Massa entered the race in a dramatic late twist to take on front runners including a conservative city mayor, ex-security czar and libertarian economist.

After months of behind-the-scenes negotiations, a deadline for candidates closes on Saturday night, marking the serious start of a race towards Oct. 22 general elections to choose a leader who can steer the South American country out of economic crisis, with inflation over 100%, rising poverty and dwindling foreign currency reserves.

There will be a primary vote on Aug. 13 within political blocs, a ballot which will also be a key litmus test of voter sentiment, with the ruling Peronist alliance reeling in opinion polls as the embattled economy struggles.

The most notable late confirmation has been Economy Minister Sergio Massa, whose candidacy was announced somewhat unexpectedly Friday night.

"This completely changes the political scene," said Alejandro Corbacho, director of political science program at Argentine University UCEMA. "He has the support of important business sectors here and he's going to be a competitive candidate."

The ruling party announced Massa and chief of staff Agustin Rossi as the unified coalition ticket just a day after interior minister Eduardo 'Wado' de Pedro announced his candidacy and ambassador to Brazil Daniel Scioli reaffirmed his decision to run. Neither has publicly ended his candidacy. Both were polling behind Massa.

Competing to lead the main conservative opposition bloc - which tops overall polls - are moderate Buenos Aires city mayor Horacio Larreta and more hard-line ex-security minister Patricia Bullrich. Behind them is centrist congressman Facundo Manes.

Bullrich, who touted party unity at a Friday press conference and later blamed Massa for the country's economic issues, pledged wholesale change if she won.

"This ticket is committed to deep change," she said. "Argentina needs leaders with conviction because the problems to solve are deep."

Omega-3 Fatty Acids May Help Slow Physical Decline In Patients With ALS

LONDON (Dispatches) - Consuming omega-3 fatty acids like flaxseed oil and walnuts may help slow the decline in physical function related to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), new research suggests.

ALS (formerly known as Lou Gehrig's disease) is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. People with ALS lose the ability to initiate and control muscle movement over time. The average life span after diagnosis is two to five years.

A slower decline in symptoms may also slightly extend survival for people with ALS, the researchers noted. The new study findings were published online June 21 in the journal *Neurology*.

"The link our study found between diet and ALS is intriguing and suggests, but does not prove, that people with ALS may benefit from incorporating more omega-3 fatty acids into their diet," said Dr. Kjetil Bjornevik, an assistant professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, in Boston.

"It will now be important to conduct additional research looking specifically at the plant-based omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid in people with ALS to further explore this possibility," Bjornevik said in a journal news release.

Besides flaxseed oil and walnuts, good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include canola oil and pumpkin seeds.

Consuming more omega-6 fatty acid could also be beneficial, the investigators found.

To study the link between diet and ALS, the researchers followed 449 people with ALS for 18 months. Participants' average age was 58. About 28% died by the end of the study period.

Analyzing omega-3 fatty acids in participants' blood, the researchers grouped them into four categories from lowest to highest.

Participants were also tested on 12 aspects of physical function, including swallowing, speaking, chewing; the ability to use muscles in the hands, arms, legs and torso; and respiratory function.

Total scores ranged between zero and 48, with higher scores indicating better function and less severe symptoms.

An omega-3 fatty acid called alpha-linolenic acid was the most beneficial. This can be found in flaxseed, walnuts, chia, hemp and many common vegetable oils.

Participants who had the highest amount of alpha-linolenic acid had an average score of 38.3 at the start of the study. Those with the lowest amount had an average score of 37.6.

Fewer people from the group with the most alpha-linolenic acid died during the study, with 21 deaths (19%), compared to people in the lowest group, with 37 deaths (33%).

Those with the highest concentration of alpha-linolenic acid had a 50% lower risk of death during the study period compared to people with the lowest amount, the findings showed.

Higher levels of an omega-3 fatty acid called eicosapentaenoic acid was also associated with a lower risk of death during the study period. This can be found in fatty fish and fish oil supplements.

An omega-6 fatty acid called linoleic acid that is found in vegetable oils, nuts, meats, seeds and eggs was associated with improved survival, too, according to the report.

The researchers did not have access to participants' overall diet or consumption of supplements, so that is considered a limitation of the study.

The ALS Association funded the research.



Effects of Traumatic Brain Injury Can Last For Years

LONDON (Dispatches) - A traumatic brain injury (TBI) can have long-term effects, much like a chronic condition, a new study says.

Looking at hundreds of patients, researchers found that problems related to traumatic brain injuries can last for years, with people improving and declining at different time points. These problems encompassed memory, thinking and everyday functioning.

"TBI is essentially a chronic condition like many other chronic conditions," said lead researcher Benjamin Brett, an assistant professor in the Departments of Neurosurgery and Neurology at the Medical College of Wisconsin. "Things can change, both up and down, improve and decline throughout multiple years."

Because of this, there's a need to monitor patients "well beyond that post-injury period," Brett said. "We need to establish systems of care that involve continued monitoring and treatment."

The idea may be controversial, however.

A chronic condition implies an underlying disease that is expected to change and/or get worse in predictable ways, said Dr. Daniel Torres, a neurologist at Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

"I would not consider TBI a chronic condition because it is an unpredictable condition with which different individuals can have greatly different consequences," Torres said.

For the study, Brett and his colleagues collected data on more than 900 people who had mild TBIs, mostly concussions, and nearly 200 people who had moderate to severe TBI. These were conditions like fractured skulls or penetrating injuries.

The researchers compared the TBI patients with more than 150 people who had orthopedic injuries but no head injuries. All were followed for up to seven years.

During follow-up, patients were tested on thinking, memory, mental health and ability to perform daily activities. They were also asked about their abilities and symptoms, including headache, fatigue and sleep disturbances.

Brett's team found that 21% of people with mild TBI experienced a decline reflected in overall test scores, as did 26% of people with moderate to severe TBI and 15% of people with no head injury.

Most of the decline was in the ability to function with daily activities, such as caring for oneself, living unassisted, driving and engaging in social activities. Over an average of two to seven years after injury, 29% of those with mild TBI declined in their everyday abilities as did 23% of those with moderate to severe TBI.

Some patients, however, showed improvement in those same areas, with 22% of those with mild TBI improving over time and 36% of those with moderate to severe TBI, Brett noted.

Older patients tended to show a decline, while more educated patients tended to show improvement, he said.

Brett also said that patients' overall health may play a part in how they recover from a TBI and whether they improve or decline over time.

But Torres, who was not part of the research, said the study does not prove that TBI is causing those other problems like functional decline.

"Lifestyle choices also greatly impact whether a given problem caused by TBI becomes chronic," he said.

Recent studies in dementia and degenerative conditions have shown the dramatic effect that healthy lifestyle changes can have on the development and progression of these diseases, Torres noted.



Changes in Gene Expression During Space Travel May Weaken Immune System



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Space travel appears to weaken astronauts' immune systems, and researchers believe changes in gene expression are the culprit.

These immune deficits aren't permanent. They disappear when back on Earth, often within weeks, according to new research published Thursday in *Frontiers in Immunology*.

"Here we show that the expression of many genes related to immune functions rapidly decreases when astronauts reach space," said study lead author Dr. Odette Laneuville, an associate professor of biology at the University of Ottawa in Canada.

"The opposite happens when they return to Earth after six months aboard the ISS [International Space Station]," Laneuville added in a journal news release.

Astronauts seem more susceptible to infections in space, often getting skin rashes and a variety of other diseases on the ISS, evidence has suggested. They also shed, or emit, more live virus particles, including those for the Epstein-Barr virus; varicella-zoster, which is responsible for shingles; and herpes-simplex-1, the source of "cold sores."

To delve into this, the researchers studied gene expression in leukocytes (white blood cells) in 14 astronauts. Among them were three women and 11 men living on the ISS from 4.5 to 6.5 months between 2015 and 2019.

The research team drew blood from each astronaut at 10 time points, including pre-flight, in flight and after their return to Earth. The investigators found that 15,410 genes were differentially expressed in these white blood cells. The researchers identified two clusters among these genes, with 247 and 29 genes, respectively, that changed their expression in tandem during the studied timeframe.

Sinking Seamount Offers Clues to Slow Motion Earthquakes

LONDON (Dispatches) - Scientists have long puzzled over what happens when seamounts -- mountains and volcanoes on the seafloor -- are pulled into subduction zones. Now, new research from The University of Texas at Austin shows that when seamounts sink, they leave behind a trail of soft sediments. The researchers think the sediment patches help tectonic pressure escape gradually in slow slip earthquakes instead of violent tremors.

The findings, published June 7, 2023, in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, can be used to adjust earthquake models and help scientists unravel the mechanisms that drive earthquakes.

The research was led by Nathan Bangs, a senior research scientist at the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics. In 2018, Bangs led an ocean seismic survey that resulted in the first ever 3D scan of a large subducting seamount. Known as the Pāpaku Seamount, the long extinct volcano lies some three miles under the seafloor inside the Hikurangi subduction zone off the coast of New Zealand.

Images from the scan show the seamount colliding with the subduction zone and the pattern of stresses, fluids and sediments surrounding it. Previous models suggested sediments are pushed down the subduction zone ahead of the seamount, but the scan revealed something different: a massive sediment trail in Pāpaku's wake.

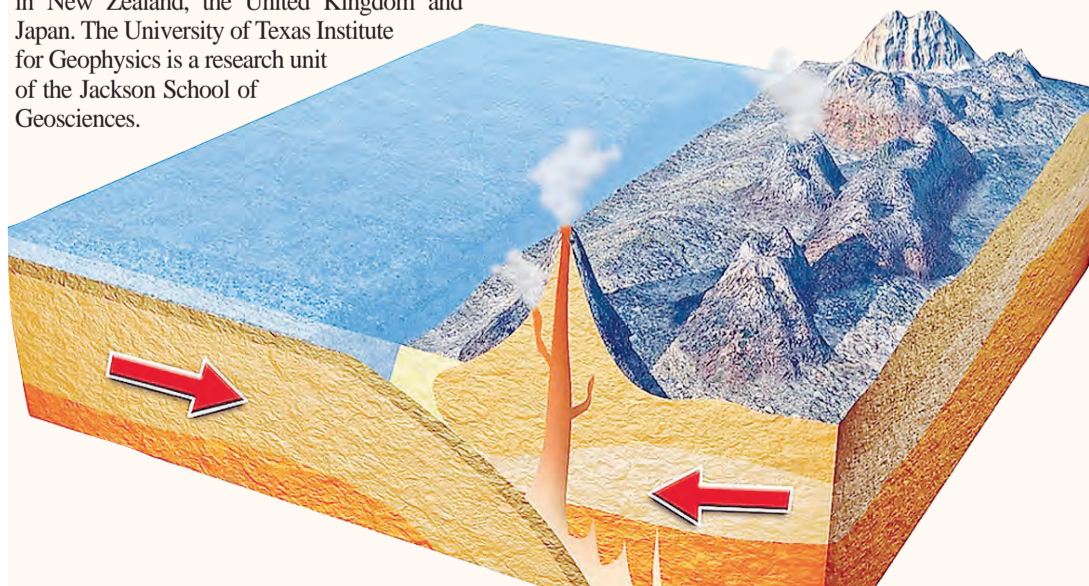
In another surprise, the scientists spotted the fading trail of a much larger seamount that had long since sunk beneath New Zealand's North Island.

According to Bangs, the discovery suggests that sinking seamounts drag down enough water-rich sediment to create conditions in the crust suitable for slow slip earthquakes, at least in New Zealand.

"That older one seems to be very much linked to an uplifted ridge that's really in the bullseye of where recent slow slip activity has been," Bangs said. "There could be other places like Cascadia (in the U.S. Pacific Northwest) that have subducting seamounts and a lot of sediment, but because the subducting crust there typically has less water than Hikurangi, they may be less likely to have the same kind of shallow slow slip activity."

Slow slip earthquakes are slow motion versions of large earthquakes, releasing similar levels of pent-up tectonic energy but in a harmless creeping fashion that can take days or weeks to unfold. Scientists believe that the make-up of the crust is a major factor in how tectonic energy is released, with softer, wetter rocks allowing plates to slip slowly, while drier, brittle rocks store energy until they fail in violent and deadly megaquakes. The new findings reveal how those conditions sometimes come about and importantly, said Bangs, tell scientists what to look for at the world's other subduction zones.

The research and seismic survey were funded by the National Science Foundation and similar scientific agencies in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Japan. The University of Texas Institute for Geophysics is a research unit of the Jackson School of Geosciences.



Irrigation May Be Shifting Earth's Rotational Axis



LONDON (Dispatches) - Runoff from irrigation has moved so much water from land to sea that Earth's rotation might have measurably shifted.

Computer simulations suggest that from 1993 through 2010, irrigation alone nudged the North Pole by about 78 centimeters, researchers reported in the June 28 *Geophysical Research Letters*. That would make irrigation the second largest contributor to polar drift after the ongoing rebound of Earth's surface following the retreat of glaciers since the last ice age.

Researchers have long known that the North Pole wanders across the Arctic seascape in a circle a few meters in diameter. Seasonal weather patterns cause part of this cyclical drift, and long-term variations in the temperature and salinity of ocean water help drive a 14-month-long oscillation dubbed the Chandler wobble.

But those repeated vacillations aren't the only things that move the pole around, says Clark Wilson, a geophysicist at the University of Texas at Austin. There is also a subtler, noncyclic polar drift caused by the movement of land-based water to the sea from melting glaciers worldwide and from ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica, he says.

Runoff from irrigation also plays a role — and a surprisingly large one at that.

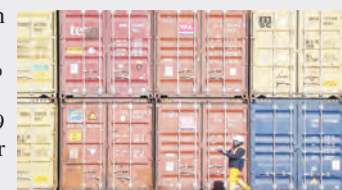
In the first study to try and tease out the contributions of these water movements, Wilson and colleagues used computer simulations to assess how the impoundment of water behind dams, glacial melt, irrigation and several other factors might affect polar drift. Previous studies have suggested that irrigation shifted about 2 trillion metric tons of water from land-based aquifers to the oceans from 1993 through 2010 — enough to raise global sea level more than 6 millimeters.

Turkey's Trade Deficit Widens to \$12.5b in May

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's trade deficit widened 17.6% year-on-year to \$12.5 billion in May, according to official data released Friday.

Turkish exports grew 14.4% from a year ago to \$21.7 billion in May, while imports surged 15.5% to \$34.2 billion, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) said in a statement.

Excluding energy products and non-monetary gold, Turkey saw a foreign trade deficit of \$5.9 billion last month. The exports-to-imports coverage ratio decreased to 63.4% in May this year compared to 64% in May 2022.



UN Calls for End to Obstacles to Extend Black Sea Grain Deal

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The United Nations urged the elimination of all obstacles for the guaranteed continuation of the Turkey- and U.N.-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative, which allows the safe transport of Ukrainian grain.

Speaking at a Security Council meeting on Ukraine, Rosemary DiCarlo, U.N. under-secretary-general for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, recalled the Black Sea Grain Initiative has enabled the safe transportation of over 32 million metric tons of foodstuffs.

"We urge all obstacles to be removed to ensure the continuation of this agreement," said DiCarlo.

She voiced disappointment about the slowing pace of the implementation of the initiative.

"Food exports through the maritime humanitarian corridor have dropped from a peak of 4.2 million metric tonnes in October to 1.3 million metric tons in May, the lowest volume since the initiative began," she noted.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. envoy at the U.N., said Russia has long blocked grain exports that benefit African and Middle Eastern countries and "feed so much of the world" for a long time.

"That's what makes the Black Sea Grain Initiative such a critical arrangement, one that we must extend next month for the benefit of all," she said.

Noting that Russia used the threat of withdrawing from the agreement, Thomas-Greenfield said: "We must urge Russia to stay in the Black Sea Grain Initiative."

Geng Shuang, China's deputy permanent representative to the U.N., expressed deep concerns about the impact of the Ukraine crisis on the world economy, saying that people should be prevented from suffering.

The Black Sea Grain Deal should be implemented in an effective and balanced way, and the agreement between Russia and the U.N. should be taken seriously, he said, in reference to a separate but linked agreement that aimed to remove obstacles by the West to vital Russian grain and fertilizer exports, which Russia says the West is not abiding by.

Meanwhile, Russia will continue to provide assistance to developing countries that need grain and fertilizer, Vassily Nebenzia, Russia's permanent representative to the U.N. said.

"However, covering commercial supplies of grain from Ukraine to Western states, under slogans of protection of the interests of those in need, is something which we refuse to do. Contrary to the assertions of the Under Secretary General, they (the poorest countries) received less than 3% of all food deliveries," he said.

The landmark agreement brokered by Türkiye and the U.N. and signed last July in Istanbul by Türkiye, the U.N., Russia and Ukraine, ensured the resumption of grain exports from Ukrainian ports. The exports had been halted due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that began in February 2022.

The deal has been renewed several times since then and was extended for another two months on May 18.

Malaysia on Track for High-Income Nation by 2025

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia is on track to becoming a high-income economy by 2025 and emerge as a trillion-dollar economy by 2036.

This will partially be attributed to the country's emerging role as a technology leader, S&P Global Market Intelligence chief economist for Asia Pacific Rajiv Biswas said.

A high-income economy according to the World Bank in 2022 is a country with a gross national income per capita of more than US\$13,200. Malaysia had a GNI per capita of US\$12,000 in 2022.

Biswas told the News Straits Times that Malaysia is among the countries where the industry structure has shifted towards electronics and integrated circuits manufacturing. This industry shift will become an important economic driver for Malaysia.

He said Malaysia has joined the ranks of other technology leaders in the Asia Pacific region namely South Korea, Japan, China, Singapore and Vietnam.

Biswas added that this is especially important because Asia is the biggest driver of global growth, and in the next 10 years half of the total increase in global gross domestic product (GDP) will derive from the Asia Pacific region.

"Malaysia's exports of electrical and electronics products accounted for 38 per cent of total merchandise exports.

"Over the next 20 years, Malaysia will further develop as a hub for exporting manufacturers of electronics, software services and communications industry such as information technology business process outsourcing," he said.

Biswas explained that Malaysia is also one of the beneficiaries of a shift in supply chains where many companies are seeking to reduce its dependency on Northeast Asia due to high labour costs besides geopolitical reasons and natural disasters.

"Malaysia has stable infrastructure, reliable communications, good transport and low risk of natural disasters," he said.

In terms of achieving trillion-dollar economy status, Biswas said this would be a meaningful milestone for Malaysia because S&P forecasts show that at a GDP of US\$1 trillion by 2036, GDP per capita will be US\$26,300.

"What's really important is GDP per capita, because if a country becomes a trillion dollar economy but the population is huge then it does not really help that much," he said.



Dutch to Shut Europe's Biggest Gas Field After Quakes

THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - The Netherlands said it would end production at Europe's largest gas field on October 1 after years of earthquakes, despite global energy worries sparked by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Wells at the massive Groningen field in the northern Netherlands will remain open for one more year in case of a cold winter but then be shut down forever, the government said.

Residents near the huge site, which opened in 1965, have complained for more than two decades of being terrorised by quakes directly attributed to drilling operations.

"We are really turning off the tap," said Hans Vijlbrief, the Dutch minister for extractive industries. The decision was an "important moment after decades of gas extraction," he added.

"The problems of Groningen residents have not yet been solved and unfortunately the earthquakes will continue for years to come, but the source of all misery will be closed from October."

The Netherlands first said five years ago that it would close the site by 2030 due to the increasingly severe quakes, which damaged homes and traumatised locals.

Although gas extraction from the field has been almost cut to zero over the last few years, the Dutch government kept the site operational due to the global energy uncertainties prompted largely by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

But Prime Minister Mark Rutte's cabinet decided at a meeting on Friday to completely end production by October 1.

The government said that "due to the uncertain international situation" it would be possible to draw gas from the Groningen site for one more year "in very exceptional situations."

These would include "very severe cold" or a gas shortage.

But the final 11 wells would then be "permanently closed" by October 1, 2024, it said.

Oil giants Shell Netherlands and ExxonMobil have equal stakes in NAM, the company responsible for drawing gas from the Groningen field since the early 1960s.

A top Shell official said in March this year that the gas field "must be closed".

So far Groningen's residents, who suffered severe damage to their homes and buildings from the slew of quakes, have received a trickle of compensation. They have been caught in a bottleneck of bureaucratic bungling and red tape, said a report by a parliamentary commission of inquiry earlier this year.

The Netherlands, which has around a third of its surface area lying below sea level is particularly vulnerable to climate change. It is also under pressure to cut its reliance on fossil fuels.

An environmental group won a landmark case in 2019 in Dutch courts, ordering the government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25 percent by the end of 2020.

Investor Confidence Crisis Grips Siemens Energy After Record Sell-Off

SIEMENS ENERGY



FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - A record sell-off in Siemens Energy shares has laid bare a major loss of confidence by investors in the group's ability to fix its struggling wind turbine division, leaving them fearful of what else to expect down the road.

Siemens Energy's stock plunged by a third on Friday, knocking nearly 7 billion euros (\$7.6 billion) off the group's market value, after it warned of deeper quality problems at Siemens Gamesa - just weeks after the group managed to acquire the remaining stake in the wind turbine unit.

The full takeover, first outlined last year, was the result of Siemens Energy's inability to address Siemens Gamesa's long-standing operational problems as the owner of a majority, but not 100%, stake in the separately listed entity - a structure inherited following the spin-off from Siemens.

The takeover of the remaining third it did not already own in Siemens Gamesa cost the German group 4.05 billion euros and was sold by Siemens Energy as a way to get a better handle on the problems.

"If there is reason to believe there are more skeletons in the closet than initially thought, I would wait before any takeover," Felix Schroeder of Siemens Energy shareholder Union Investment said.

"They had time ... But apparently they were not ready. That is disappointing and now costs hard-earned credibility," Schroeder said. "You have to ask the question why they didn't realize this earlier and why they didn't wait with the takeover."

Siemens Energy CEO Christian Bruch said on Friday that the takeover of Siemens Gamesa had not been a mistake and that the price had seemed right at the time when the offer was made.

Eurozone Economic Growth Slows to 5-Month Low in June

LONDON (Dispatches) - Eurozone economic activity worsened in June to a five-month low, hit hard by a fall in industrial production, a keenly watched survey showed.

The Eurozone entered a technical recession at the start of the year, according to official figures published earlier this month.

But inflation remains well above the European Central Bank's target of two percent, which will keep pressure on the Frankfurt-based body to keep raising interest rates despite the stagnant economy.

Data from the HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) survey published by S&P Global fell to 50.3 in June from 52.8 in May. A figure above 50 indicates growth.

The data demonstrated "renewed weakness in the economy after the brief growth revival recorded in the spring," S&P Global said.

It noted the first fall in new business orders since January, slowing employment growth and pessimism over future production.

"After Eurozone GDP fell for the second time in a row in the first quarter, the probability has increased somewhat that the GDP change will again carry a negative sign in the current quarter, due in part to weak services activity in France," said Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at Hamburg Commercial Bank.

France recorded the weakest performance in the Eurozone in June, with the "steepest" drop in activity in the manufacturing and services sectors since February 2021.

U.S. Business Activity Growth Cools as Manufacturing Weakens

NEW YORK (Bloomberg) - U.S. business activity expanded in early June at the slowest pace in three months, held back by a deeper contraction at factories.

The S&P Global flash June composite purchasing managers index fell 1.3 points to 53, the group reported Friday. Readings above 50 indicate growth.

The report offered mixed news on inflation. A gauge of factory input prices shrank the most in over three years while a similar measure for

service providers climbed to a five-month high. However, the composite measure of prices received dropped to the lowest since 2020.

The group's overall services gauge remained elevated on robust demand, which helped drive a measure of expectations to a more than one-year high.

Healthy demand for services stood in sharp contrast to a further deterioration at factories. The manufacturing gauge fell to a six-month low, with new orders matching the fastest rate of contraction since May 2020.

"Growth remains dependent on service sector spending," Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said in a statement. "The question remains as to how resilient service sector growth can be in the face of the manufacturing decline and the lagged effect of prior rate hikes."

In Europe, economic momentum nearly came to a halt in June, according to S&P Global data. A euro area purchasing manager's index slid to a five-month low 50.3, led by France and Germany's struggling factories.

The report showed the composite input-price index picked up from a month earlier, mainly due to wage pressures in the service sector.

At the same time, prices charged by service providers showed the slowest growth in five months and indicated respondents aren't necessarily passing on all of those costs to consumers. That helped drag the composite measure of selling prices to the lowest level since October 2020.

Weighing firm demand and sticky price pressures in the service sector against cooling factory activity is a challenge facing the Federal Reserve when deciding the trajectory of monetary policy. Central bankers are expected to resume their tightening campaign soon after a brief pause this month.

"It is encouraging to see the overall rate of selling price inflation for goods and services drop to the lowest since late 2020 in a sign that the Fed is winning its fight against inflation," said Williamson.

Iran Has Potential to Respond to 20% of World's Lithium Demand

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran has the potential to respond to 20% of the world's demand for lithium, according to a lawmaker of the Iranian parliament.

Ahmad Hossein Fallahi, a representative of the people of the city of Hamedan in the Iranian Parliament, made the remarks in a TV interview late on Saturday as he was referring to a large lithium reserve that has been recently discovered in his constituency.

He said several countries had requested to cooperate with Iran in plans to extract lithium from the newly-discovered reserve. "We can use this element in electric car batteries, and with this volume, we can supply 20% of the world's lithium," he explained.



Nigeria Amasses \$3b Debt to Traders for Oil Swaps

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Nigeria has accumulated up to \$3 billion in debts to trading houses such as Vitol and oil majors such as BP for fuel supplies and is trailing four to six months behind schedule in repaying them with cargoes of crude, four traders and executives told Reuters.

Nigeria will likely take months to clear the debt, which will complicate reforms by new President Bola Tinubu aimed at weaning Africa's largest economy and most populous nation off costly fuel subsidies that have contributed to growing debt and foreign exchange shortages.

In his first two weeks in office, Tinubu removed petrol price caps and restrictions on the naira currency - liberalisation changes that investors have been awaiting for more than a decade.

As part of those reforms, Nigeria, Africa's top oil producer, plans to scrap an old scheme by which it swaps its crude for gasoline imports. Nigeria for years sold the gasoline, bought at the open market price, to its population at a discount, and the government paid the difference.

The subsidy costs about \$10 billion last year. The last time the government tried to end the scheme, the move led to protests. Nigeria needs imports because it lacks the refinery capacity necessary to meet domestic demand.

The head of Nigeria's state oil firm NNPC, Mele Kyari, said earlier this month it was ending the swaps - known as Direct Purchase Direct Sale (DSDP) - after years of criticism by civil society groups including the Nigerian Extractive Transparency Initiative for a lack of transparency and corruption.

Kyari said payments would be now made in cash but traders say NNPC is still importing gasoline via swaps for July delivery and has to pay for those cargoes in crude as well as the pending payments for previous months of swaps.

The arrangement has for years involved more than a dozen foreign and local trading consortia and backpayments are expected to continue until at least October 2023, according to the four traders involved in business with NNPC.

NNPC, which claims the government owes it \$6 billion for subsidised fuel sales, declined to comment. The government declined to comment. Swaps participants including Vitol, Mercuria, BP and TotalEnergies also declined to comment.

"Swaps will ultimately stop but not yet. We are getting our swaps crude cargo in October at the earliest," one major player said.

NNPC had made a rare cash payment in May to some partners of around \$200 million, two trading sources said, but no further payment has taken place since amid the government's cash struggles.

Nigeria's falling oil production has exacerbated the country's fiscal problems, because it reduces the revenue that could be used to repay debt.



Nigeria used to produce 1.8 million barrels per day of crude but output has fallen in recent years to as little as 1.1 million during due to lack of investment.

Paying for fuel deliveries with crude cargoes means there is less crude for Nigeria and NNPC's to export, and so less revenue.

NNPC's contribution to state coffers went from a peak of more than \$30 billion a year in 2011 to zero in 2022 as it retained revenues to cover gasoline sale losses.

International monetary experts have long suggested Nigeria remove fuel subsidies and liberalise its foreign exchange to address its fiscal crisis.

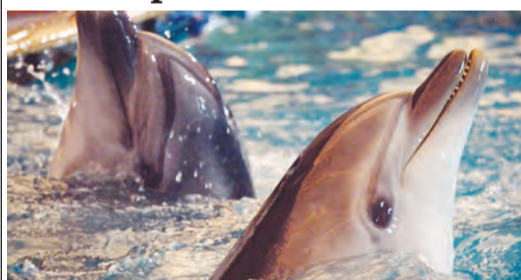
In recent years, Nigeria's central bank kept the naira fixed at an artificially high rate that gradually rose from 200 to 450 naira to the dollar that only a few players, including the NNPC, could access. That shut out potential private gasoline importers from the market.

President Tinubu allowed the naira to fall steeply in recent weeks, and eliminated preferential naira rates, a move that means all potential importers get the same forex costs and could compete in fuel imports.

But the naira volatility, which makes it tough to calculate potential profits, and uncertainty over whether firms will be able to get money out of the country due to continued dollar shortages, has for now deterred private firms from importing fuel.

Besides private importers, Nigeria will also depend on businessman Aliko Dangote's refinery to cover fuel demand in the future. Nigeria's first major oil plant is unlikely to start full-scale operations before next year.

Russia Is Training Combat Dolphins in Crimea



LONDON (Dispatches) - British military spies said Russia appears to be training combat dolphins in the annexed Crimean peninsula to counter Ukrainian forces.

In its latest update on the conflict, UK Defence Intelligence said the Russian Navy had invested heavily in security at the Black Sea Fleet's main base at Sevastopol since last year.

"This includes at least four layers of nets and booms across the harbour entrance. In recent weeks, these defences have highly likely also been augmented by an increased number of trained marine mammals," it added.

"Imagery shows a near doubling of floating mammal pens in the harbour which highly likely contain bottlenosed dolphins."

The animals were "likely intended to counter enemy divers", it added.

The Russian Navy has used Beluga whales and seals for a range of missions in Arctic waters, the update said.

A harness-wearing whale that turned up in Norway in 2019, sparking speculation it was being used for surveillance, reappeared off Sweden's coast last month.

Norwegians nicknamed it "Hvaldimir" -- a pun on the word "whale" in Norwegian (hval) and a nod to its alleged association with Russia.

Hvaldimir's harness had a mount suitable for housing an action camera, and the words "Equipment St. Petersburg" printed on the plastic clasps.

In 2016, Russia's defence ministry sought to buy five dolphins as part of attempts to revive its Soviet-era use of the highly intelligent cetaceans for military tasks.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States used dolphins during the Cold War, training them to detect submarines, mines and spot suspicious objects or individuals near harbours and ships.

A retired Soviet colonel told AFP at the time that Moscow even trained dolphins to plant explosive devices on enemy vessels.

They knew how to detect abandoned torpedoes and sunken ships in the Black Sea, said Viktor Baranets, who witnessed military dolphin training in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras.

The US Navy used sea lions deployed to Bahrain in 2003 to support Operation Enduring Freedom after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington.

More Ships Are Getting "Greener"

LONDON (Dispatches) - The number of "green" ships ordered is growing in size, as the industry is beginning its long journey towards decarbonization. In its latest weekly report, shipbroker Intermodal said that "the shipping decarbonization pathway is well underway. During 2022 the process of decarbonization has hit a turning point as the majority of the newbuilt vessels ordered incorporated some kind of emission abatement technology and/or were capable of or ready to use alternative fuels. The subsequent trend has been extended through 2023 so far and is anticipated to be long-lived".

According to Ms. Chara Georgousi, Research Analyst, "in terms of alternative fuels, at the time of writing, 0.54% of the world fleet is using alternative fuels, while 14.69% of the total orderbook will be alternatively fueled. We can now count 911 vessels in water using LNG, 182 vessels using LPG, 127 vessels using methanol, and only 27 vessels using hydrogen. Out of the current orderbook, 10.31% of the vessels are LNG-fueled, 2.03% are methanol-fueled, 1.91% are LPG-fueled, and just 0.42% are powered by hydrogen. During the first five months of 2023, 20% of the vessels that have been ordered will have the capability to use alternative fuels. More specifically, 6% out of them will be LNG-fueled, 9% are methanol-fueled, and only 5% are LPG fueled".

Intermodal's analyst added that "at the time of writing, we can count 5,122 scrubber-fitted vessels, out of which 34.67% are bulkers, 23.62% are containers, 13.86% are crude oil tankers and 11.42% are chem/oil tankers. In particular, 30.75% of the world crude oil tanker fleet is scrubber fitted, followed by containers with a share of 20.38% of the world container fleet and bulkers with 13.32% of the world dry bulk fleet.

Under the current IMO regulations, ships with scrubbers installed can continue to burn HSF0. Scrubbers typically have a payback time between 2 and 3 years



when the spread between HSF0 and VLSFO is wider than \$100/mt. However, the spread is now at considerably lower levels than the highs seen in July 2022 and although it has been narrowing on the back of recessionary worries, HSF0 prices have held up better than VLSFO. As a result, demand for scrubber retrofits has dramatically softened compared to the peak seen in 2019 and

since scrubber retrofits at shipyards are scheduled months or years in advance, we anticipate that the scrubber market will remain at or near its current level. The majority of the scrubber installation projects are retrofits, with the share of the vessels that have been retrofitted reaching 67%, while only 33% of the vessels have been fitted with scrubbers at their newbuilding stage. However, during the first five months of 2023, we have witnessed an increase in newbuilding orders for vessels with scrubbers. More specifically, according to our preliminary data, 153 scrubber-fitted vessels have been reportedly ordered compared to 111 for the same period in 2022 and 179 for the whole of 2022".

Ms. Georgousi added that "against a backdrop of uncertainty regarding the regulatory framework paired with a lack of evidence on alternative fuel efficiency, a recent survey conducted by the Global Centre for Maritime Decarbonization (GCMD) and presented at the Nor-Shipping 2023 showcased the progress of the shipping industry's pathway towards decarbonization. More specifically, the 130 key maritime players who participated in the survey highlighted the industry's high ambition to cut CO2 emissions. A surprising 70% of the participants consider the process of decarbonization a top priority, while 30% of them have already developed plans for the reduction of GHG emissions. Lastly, 75% of the respondents have a net-zero or intermediate target for their CO2 emissions", she concluded.

Brexit an Economic Disaster for UK and German Trade

LONDON (Dispatches) - Brexit has been an "economic disaster" for trade and investment ties between the United Kingdom and Germany, leading to a fall in German direct investment and seeing the UK decline in importance as a trading partner, German economists said.

Britain voted on June 23, 2016, to exit the European Union and it left the EU's single market at the start of 2021.

"Brexit is an economic disaster for both sides of the channel," Volker Treier, head of foreign trade at the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), told Reuters on Thursday. Last year, Germany exported goods worth 73.8 billion euros (\$80.57 billion) to the UK, 14.1% less than in 2016. The year of the referendum, the UK was Germany's third most important export market, but by 2022 the country had slipped to eighth place, Treier said.

Iran-UK...

FROM PAGE 1

The volume of economic exchanges between the two countries reached its highest level over the last 10 years in 2022, registering a significant growth of 72 percent.

The value of trade between the two countries amounted to 191 million pounds in 2020 when the UK exited the European Union. The trade increased to 405 million pounds in 2021 and then to 696 million pounds in 2022.

Despite this significant growth, Iran was ranked 98th among the UK's trading partners in 2022, and trade with Iran has constituted only 0.1 percent of the country's total foreign trade.

Iran Urged to...

FROM PAGE 1

Kakavand, for his part, said the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been decisive and serious in the field of dealing with narcotics at the regional and global level, and the proof of this claim is more than 4,000 martyrs in this way.

"Since the country is at the forefront of the fight against narcotics, the level of support from UNODC and the international community should be proportionate to the activities and actions at the regional and global level."

In June 2022, Fedulov said UNODC attaches special importance to the regional and global role of Iran in the fight against narcotics and, as a leading United Nations agency, wishes to provide practical assistance to the Government of the Islamic Republic.

The UNODC Office attaches special importance to the regional and global role of the Islamic Republic in the fight against narcotics, and the discovery of narcotics by the law-enforcement forces of Iran shows the country's efforts with the United Nations beyond the regional level, he explained.

Annual Inflation...

FROM PAGE 1

The policy has been a response to sanctions imposed by the US on Iran's oil exports since 2018.

Iranian authorities say the global inflation in prices of food and grain has also been to blame for the rise in Iranian consumer prices in recent months.

The SCI uses fixed prices reported in 2021 as the baseline for its calculation of inflation rate in Iran. Figures reported by the Central Bank of Iran, which are based on prices reported in 2016, have also pointed to declining trend in Iran's inflation rate in June.

Chinese Demand for...

FROM PAGE 1

Falakshahi said Saudi Arabia's desire to deepen cuts to its oil exports, a policy meant to affect international oil prices, would also allow Iran to increase its supply of crude oil to Chinese buyers in the next few months.

That comes as Saudi Arabia's oil supplies to China reached 1.75 million bpd in May and has remained at the same levels in June, he said.

Experts say the increase in Iranian oil exports in recent months have been a major sign that US sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector have failed for good.

India Tea...

FROM PAGE 1

It is to be noted that ever since the US imposed sanctions on Iran, India could not engage in dollar-denominated trade with the country. Hence, a rupee-rial trade mechanism was put in place in 2018. Under this, oil refineries from India would deposit Indian rupees in the two designated banks - UCO Bank and IDBI Bank - for import of crude oil from Iran; the fund was used to clear dues of exporters from the country to Iran.

However, since there have been no oil imports by India since May 2019 due to US-led sanctions, the accumulations in the rupee-rial accounts have been depleting drastically. So dipping into that fund is no longer an option.

"Given the higher demand for orthodox tea in international markets, producers have gone in for higher production of such teas this year. Any impact on exports of these teas could have an impact on domestic market and affect prices," Das said. Source: Tea Board of India

Leipzig Sign Baumgartner From Hoffenheim

BERLIN (Dispatches) - RB Leipzig have signed Austrian international Christoph Baumgartner from Hoffenheim for €27 million (RM137 million), the German Cup holders announced. The 23-year-old attacking midfielder — who signed a contract taking him up to 2028 — becomes the club's second most expensive signing after Germany winger David Raum who arrived in 2022, also from Hoffenheim. "I really wanted to go to a club which can win titles," Baumgartner said in a statement today.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

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

E-Mail Address:
info@irannewsdaily.com
ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St.,
Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzadaran
Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
printed by: Omid Nashr Chap Iranian
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and
Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Getafe Extend Bordalas Deal After Liga Survival

MADRID (Dispatches) - Getafe extended coach Jose Bordalas' contract by two years today after he helped them earn La Liga survival. The 59-year-old was appointed for the second time at the club in late April on a short-term contract until the end of the season, after Quique Sanchez Flores was sacked with the team battling relegation. Getafe stayed up on the final day of the season, finishing 15th, two points above the relegation zone.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

MONDAY JUNE 26, 2023

Bublik Beats Zverev to Reach Halle Final

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Alexander Bublik eased past home hope Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-5 to reach the final of the Halle ATP tournament. Bublik, 26, will play his first final of the season in the Wimbledon warm-up grass-court event against Russian Andrey Rublev. Kazak Bublik won his only title last year in Montpellier against Zverev and now holds a 3-1 record against the German. On Saturday, Bublik took less than an hour and a half to dispatch the former world number two, firing down 14 aces with a strong service game. In the first set, he quickly took the lead with a break in the fourth game (3-1), and then counted on his serve (6-4) to pull him through. The two players duelled until 5-5 in the second set, when Zverev collapsed, allowing Bublik to confidently seal victory 7-5. Later former finalist Rublev blasted past Bautista Agut 6-3, 6-4 to reach the Terra Wortmann Open title match once again. The third seed, who fell against Ugo Humbert in the championship match in Halle in 2021, was locked in from ball one, using his flat groundstrokes to dictate. He demonstrated great footwork to attack on his forehand, striking 29 winners to overpower the Spaniard. With his one-hour, 42-minute win, Rublev set a final meeting against Alexander Bublik on Sunday, when he will chase his second tour-level title of the season (Monte-Carlo). If Rublev lifts his 14th tour-level trophy, he will have captured an ATP 500 title on grass, clay and hard courts. Bublik moved to within one win of capturing his first grass-court tour-level title when he defeated home favourite Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-5.



Meanwhile top two seeds Barbora Krejckikova and Jelena Ostapenko will meet in the final of the Birmingham Open after coming through their semi-finals in contrasting fashion. Krejckikova has been untouchable so far this week. The world number 12 is yet to drop a set as she eased past China's Zhu Lin 6-3, 6-2. "I'm really happy with the way I played today," said the 2021 French Open champion. "It's always difficult to play on the grass because the game can change quickly, so I'm happy how I handled the match and that I'm in the final." By contrast, Ostapenko has been taken to a deciding set in all four of her matches in Birmingham, but has battled through to reach her first final of the season. The Latvian came from behind after dropping the opening set to fourth seed Anastasia Potapova to win 5-7, 6-2, 6-4. "Every match I play a little bit up and down but in general I'm happy I came through this match," said Ostapenko. "It's important to win these matches where sometimes you are not playing your best but you just fight for every point." On their form on grass this week, Krejckikova appears the favourite, but Osapenko has won four of the six meetings between the pair, including a straight sets victory when they last met in Rome in May. Meanwhile Ekaterina Alexandrova moved into the semi-finals of the Berlin Open after wildcard Veronika Kudermetova withdrew before the match at Rot-Weiss Tennis Club. Alexandrova, ranked No 22, will play the winner of the match between Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia, the No 3 seed, and Czech Petra Kvitova, the No 7 seed, next. In the previous rounds of the Berlin tournament, Ekaterina Alexandrova beat Liudmila Samsonova (6-4, 6-3) and American Coco Gauff, the No 5 seed (6-4, 6-0). Kudermetova, ranked No 13, won against Chinese Qinwen Zheng (6-4, 6-2) and Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, the top seed (6-2, 7-6 (2)) earlier in the tournament.

Alcaraz Makes Semifinals At Queen's

LONDON (Dispatches) - Top seed Carlos Alcaraz reached the semi-finals at the Queen's Club Championships with a 6-4 6-4 victory over Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov as the Spaniard warms up for Wimbledon. The world No. 2 is playing on grass for the first time since his fourth-round Wimbledon exit last year as he acclimatises to the surface and the win was his best performance this week. "The movement on grass, I try to move easy and move well," Alcaraz told the BBC. "I watched the best players in the world, trying to imitate them a bit. And I think I did well." "I'm a guy who learns so fast . . . I'm playing at such a great level and feeling really, really comfortable playing on grass." He will face big-serving American Sebastian Korda, who beat Briton Cameron Norrie 6-4 7-6(1) to extend his Queen's debut. Australia's seventh seed Alex de Minaur was the first player to book a place in the semi-finals, holding off Adrian Mannarino of France for a 6-4 4-6 6-4 victory. De Minaur faces second-seeded Dane Holger Rune on Saturday after the 20-year-old beat Italy's Lorenzo Musetti 6-4 7-5. Alcaraz, who studied Andy Murray and Roger Federer to improve his tennis on grass, had 10 winners in the first set to Dimitrov's four but trailed the former Queen's champion 3-0 in the second before finding his rhythm and roaring back to win.

Ceballos Extends Madrid Deal Until 2027

MADRID (Dispatches) - Real Madrid have renewed midfielder Dani Ceballos' contract until June 2027, the Spanish side said. The 26-year-old Spain international's previous deal was set to expire next week. "Ceballos has defended Madrid's shirt in 120 games across four seasons, in which he has won 11 trophies," said Madrid in a statement. Ceballos follows midfielder Toni Kroos and defender Nacho Fernandez in extending his contract at the Santiago Bernabeu. Madrid have a host of midfield options after the signing of Jude Bellingham, while veteran Luka Modric is also poised to stay, with Spanish reports saying he will agree an extension next week.

Kvitova Ousts Garcia to Reach Berlin Semifinals

BERLIN (Dispatches)- Former Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova edged Caroline Garcia 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) to seal her spot in the semi-finals of the rain-hit WTA German Open in Berlin. The seventh-seeded Czech -- Wimbledon champion in 2011 and 2014 -- built on a solid first serve to defeat her third-seeded rival. "I never played her on this surface and it was an advantage for me," said the 33-year-old Czech. "It's sweet revenge after my defeat in the Cincinnati final (last year)." The quarter and semi-finals are being played on Saturday, after rain washed out play on Friday in the traditional Wimbledon warm-up. France's Garcia, the world number four, had been in the game until conceding her serve in the seventh game of the first set which the Czech won in 52 minutes. She saved break points in the second set, notably at 4-4, but was unable to match Kvitova in the tie-break with the Czech player sweeping 7 points to 3. Kvitova next takes on 22nd-ranked Ekaterina Alexandrova who advanced to the last four after fellow Russian Veronika Kudermetova withdrew.

Inter Miami to Sign Barca Midfielder Busquets



MIAAMI (Dispatches) - Barcelona's former Spain midfielder Sergio Busquets is joining Inter Miami as a free agent, the Major League Soccer club announced. The 34-year-old will be reunited with his friend and ex-Barca team mate Lionel Messi after not renewing his contract at the Nou Camp following an 18-year stay. Miami made the news official by posting a

video on social media showing quotes from the likes of Pep Guardiola, Xavi Hernandez, Luka Modric and Messi praising Busquets. The former Barcelona captain, who retired from international duty last year, played over 700 games for the Spanish champions, winning nine LaLiga crowns, seven Copa del Rey titles, three Champions League trophies and three Club World Cups. Busquets was also linked with moves to the Saudi Arabian league as Al Hilal and Al Nassar made bids for his services. Miami are reportedly looking to sign a third former Barca player as they are keen on left-back Jordi Alba, who is also leaving the Spanish club after the end of the season.

Tsitsipas Says Comments About Kyrgios Misinterpreted

ATHENS (Dispatches) - Stefanos Tsitsipas has said comments he made about Nick Kyrgios at last year's Wimbledon have been "misinterpreted" after his remarks were featured on Netflix documentary Break Point and perceived as racist on social media. Tsitsipas, 24, was knocked out by Kyrgios in a bad-tempered third-round clash at the grasscourt Grand Slam and described the Australian's approach to tennis as "uneducated", saying he brought "that NBA basketball attitude" to the sport. The Greek world number five said there had been an "unfortunate misunderstanding that has a distorted picture of my intentions" in a lengthy statement posted to his Facebook page today. "It has come to my attention that some individuals have misinterpreted my comments regarding Nick Kyrgios ... insinuating racism where none exists," Tsitsipas wrote. "I want to emphasize that I harbor no prejudice towards anyone based on their background, ethnicity, or interests. I deeply regret if my words were misinterpreted or caused offence, as that was never my intention." Tsitsipas added his remarks were not meant to undermine Kyrgios' ability or intelligence. "I simply intended to express my perspective on certain aspects of his playing style, drawing comparisons to the passion and intensity often associated with basketball," he said. "It was an attempt to highlight the dynamic and captivating nature of his approach to the game, not a criticism of his character or capabilities." "Moving forward, I commit to being more mindful of my words and the impact they may have." The 28-year-old Kyrgios, who reached the Wimbledon final last year, saw off Tsitsipas in four sets in a match that often threatened to spiral out of control.



Guerreiro Joins Bayern From Dortmund on Free Transfer

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich have signed Borussia Dortmund left-back Raphael Guerreiro on a free transfer, the Bavarian club announced. Guerreiro, 29, joins Bayern after seven seasons at Dortmund, where the Portuguese international won two German Cups. His deal with the German champions is set to run until 2026. A Euro 2016 winner with Portugal, Guerreiro will reunite at Bayern with manager Thomas Tuchel, who brought the defender to Dortmund when he managed the club. "When the call came from FC Bayern, my decision was made quickly. It's an honour for me to play for this big club and I also really appreciate Thomas Tuchel from our time together at Dortmund," the defender said in a statement. "I'm a player who always likes to have the ball — it's about dominating the game and I want to create chances. "I will do everything to win as many titles as possible. That is the philosophy of FC Bayern." Guerreiro can also be deployed in midfield, where he was a major creative presence at the latter end of the season for Dortmund. Guerreiro put in a league high 12 assists this season, in addition to four goals. "Raphael Guerreiro has been one of the best and most consistent players in the Bundesliga for years," said Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen. Bayern won the 2022-23 Bundesliga title on goal difference from Dortmund on a nail-biting final day. It was their 11th straight league title. Several players have made the move from Dortmund to Bayern over the past decade, including Robert Lewandowski and Mario Goetze.

