

Foreign Ministry Issued a Travel Advisory for Iranian Nationals to Avoid “Unnecessary Trips” to France Amid Persisting Protests Against Police Brutality Across the Country Over the Police Killing of a Teenager

IRAN NEWS

TEDPIX, the Main Index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Rose 13,459 Points to 2.157m on Sunday As Reported, Over 7.655b Securities Worth 57.175 Trillion Rials (About \$136m) Were Traded at the TSE

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Alcaraz One of the Most Talented Players Ever Claims Rival



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Persian Gulf Oil Belongs To Iran, Its Neighbors

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Persian Gulf's oil belongs to Iran and its neighbors, the Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Navy said, adding that IRGC Navy will not give up preserving the interests of the Iranian nation.

Three islands of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf have a strategic and special role, Rear Admiral Ali Reza Tangsiri said, adding that the Greater Tunb is the first island located at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz.

There is an international waterway in the Persian Gulf, but there is no international water, he said.

Persian Gulf oil belongs to Iran and its neighbors, he emphasized.

Today, the Iranian navy forces strongly warn the enemies who approach the Persian Gulf water so that they change the route, he said, adding, "We are victorious in this unequal battle against our enemies, and we will not give up preserving the interests of the Iranian nation." *See Page 7*

Iranian-Made Smart Munitions Best in World

TEHRAN (MNA) – The defense minister said the smart ammunition made by specialists and scientists in the Iranian defense industry is the best in the world.

Iranian defense minister Brigadier General Amir Mohammad-Reza Gharaei Ashtiani made the remarks in a ceremony held at the defense ministry compound with the participation of the scientists and military experts working with the ministry.

Referring to the great defense achievements made in the country despite the fact that the country's defense sector has been under severe sanctions, General Ashtiani said, "The progress in the defense and military fields is based on the teachings of the holy Quran, Islamic rules, the way shown by the Ahl al-Bayt, and in line with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's guidelines and we will definitely take more advanced and successful steps in the future than today."

"In the past, smart ammunition was considered one of the merits and was monopolized in the hands of the colonial system. No doubt, the smart ammunition made by experts and scientists in the defense industry of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the best in the world," the minister further underscored.

"Today, the defense ministry is ready to provide its scientific progress in the field of defense to other bodies and organizations," General Ashtiani concluded.

UNCTAD Says FDI Inflow To Iran Rises 5% in 2022



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has said in its latest investment report that foreign direct investment inflow to Iran increased by five percent in 2022 compared to the previous year.

The report put the Islamic Republic's FDI inflow at \$1.5 billion in 2022, while the figure stood at \$1.425 billion in 2021, IRNA reported.

According to the report, Iran was ranked fourth in West Asia in terms of the amount of FDI inflow to the country in the mentioned year.

Based on UNCTAD data, Iran also had \$100 million in foreign direct investment in other countries in 2022, up from \$82 million from the previous year.

UNCTAD has also put the global foreign direct investment in 2022 at \$1.294 trillion, indicating a decline of 13 percent compared to the previous year.

Iran has been ranked 79th among the countries of the world in terms of attracting foreign investment in 2022. The U.S. was in first place with \$285 billion of FDI, followed by China with \$189 billion, and Singapore with \$141 billion.

As for West Asia, Saudi Arabia ranked first in the region with \$7.886 billion of investment, followed by Oman with \$3.716 billion, and Bahrain with \$1.951 billion.

Foreign direct investment inflow to Iran also increased by 6.4 percent in 2021 compared to the previous year.

According to UNCTAD, the Islamic Republic's FDI inflow stood at \$1.429 billion in 2021, while the figure was \$1.342 billion in 2020.

Iran also had \$82 million in foreign direct investment in other countries in 2021, up from \$78 million in the previous year.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was established in 1964 as an intergovernmental organization intended to promote the interests of developing states in world trade.

Meanwhile the value of foreign investment in Iran from August 2021, when the current administration took office, until the first month of the current Persian calendar year (March-April 2023) hit \$6.51 billion.

The issue of foreign investment within the framework of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was put at the focal attention of the economic and diplomacy apparatuses in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi and it has led to considerable growth of investment in the country.

The value of foreign investment in Iran from August 2021, when the current administration took office, until the first month of the current Persian calendar year hit \$6.51 billion, showing an 84.3 percent growth compared to the same period during the previous administration.

When the administration took office in August 2021, giant steps were taken in line with strengthening ties with neighboring and regional countries in all fields, especially in the economic field, according to FARS news agency.

According to the statistics of the Foreign Investment Organization, 401 foreign investment projects, valued at \$10.765 billion, were approved by this administration.

In general, the total number of foreign investment projects approved since August 2021 up to the first month of the current year hit 356, valued at \$6.50 billion.

UNDP-Japan Project Saves 27% of Water for Irrigation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP), a joint initiative between the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Government of Japan, has so far led to 27 percent water saving for irrigation in the country.

The three-year (2021-2024) cooperation between the DoE, Japan, and UNDP Iran has been initiated to up-scale successful practices to additional pilots in the Urmia Lake basin and two new replication sites including Shadegan and Bakhtegan Wetlands.

The use of some innovations, including subsurface irrigation systems for vineyards, has reduced irrigation water by more than 50 percent, IRNA quoted Mehri Asna-Ashari, the CIWP manager, as saying.

Since 2014, together with the Government of Japan, UNDP has been supporting Lake Urmia restoration efforts. The project covers 202 villages in northwestern East and West Azarbaijan provinces.

Alongside this, UNDP Iran is implementing the Sistan Project – a joint initiative between the DoE, other national partners, and the European Union's Department of International Partnerships (DG INTPA) to boost socio-economic development in Sistan-Baluchestan province, restore Hamoun Wetlands and promote alternative climate-smart livelihoods.

Besides, the issue of diversifying livelihoods compatible with wetland resources is pursued in the four provinces of West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Fars, and Khuzestan, she added. *See Page 7*

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Don't Test Wrath of Muslims

Muslims in the world may have differences but they all are united and unanimous in their basic principles which are the Holy Quran and their Prophet and they can't tolerate any insult to their basic principles and this is the reason some enemies of Islam use this tool of insult to Muslims' beliefs and principles.

In recent decades the number of sacrileges has been on the rise mostly they have come from Europe, the so-called land of freedom of expression, but we cannot understand why freedom of expression is just for insulting Islam and nobody insults other religions. We see insulting Islam as freedom of expression but when somebody wants to question Holocaust or other issues immediately he comes under any kind of fire and even go to prison.

In recent years, Europe has turned into a haven for those who want to insult Islam and create Islamophobia, and countries like Sweden and Denmark have turned into the centers for insulting Muslims and each time, the insult has faced with a serious revolt from Muslims in the world as Muslims have shown the insulters that the Holy Quran and their Prophet are their red lines and they will not tolerate any blasphemy and insult against their sanctities.

Now Sweden which has turned into haven for terrorists and opposition groups as well as enemies of Islam is challenging with a blasphemy. Muslims worldwide have poured into streets especially gathered in front of Sweden Embassies to express their anger.

This time the condition is in a way that even the European Union has strongly denounced the recent Quran burning outside a mosque in the Swedish capital of Stockholm, calling it "a clear act of provocation."

In a statement on Saturday, the EU said this "offensive, disrespectful" act does not reflect the opinions of the bloc, stressing that "manifestations of racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance" have no place in Europe.

It went on to say that the EU continues to uphold freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, both within its member states and internationally.

The statement further emphasized that "now is the time to stand together for mutual understanding and respect and to prevent any further escalation."

It also noted that the incident was deemed even more offensive as it took place at the time when Muslims were celebrating Eid Al-Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice.

The EU also condemned the storming of the Swedish embassy in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, the statement said. *See Page 7*

Tanzania Exports To Iran Up by 35%

DODOMA (Dispatches) – Tanzania and Islamic Republic of Iran's trade volume has increased rapidly within a period of two years, with the former's exports value to the latter reaching \$35m (approximately 81.9bn/-), according to the latest data.

The trade data recorded between 2021-2022 shows that the East African member state's exports to the Asian country soared by 35 per cent as compared to data recorded between 2019-2020.

Speaking at a commemoration event of Iran's Day held at Saba Saba grounds where the 47th Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair (DIFT) is going on, Iran's Ambassador to Tanzania, Hussein Behineh said in the same period, the SADC member state imported goods whose value amounted to \$95m dollars (approximately 222.3bn/-) from its Asian counterparts.

According to the diplomat, Iran's exports to Tanzania increased by 15 per cent in 2021/22 compared to 2019/20.

The volume of trade between Iran and Tanzania in 2021/22 financial year increased significantly compared to 2019/20, thanks to trade and interaction of people of the two nations, backed up by their long history. *See Page 7*

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Iran Urges France to End Violence Against Its Citizens

TEHRAN (MNA) - The spokesperson of the Iranian foreign ministry called on the French government to end the violent treatment of its people and preserve the right of citizens to peaceful protests.

In reaction to recent developments in France after the deadly police shooting of a 17-year-old teen, Nasser Kan'ani urged the French government and police to pay attention to the demands of the protesters while exercising restraint and avoiding violence.

Having discriminatory behavior toward the immigrant population and European countries' avoidance to correct wrong behaviors have caused unfavorable conditions for European citizens, including in France, Kan'ani said.

Iran Halts Sending New Envoy to Sweden Over Quran Desecration

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Iran has halted "administrative phases" to dispatch an ambassador to Sweden over the government-sanctioned desecration of the holy Qur'an in the European nation, Foreign Minister Hossein Amiradollahian declared.

"Despite the conclusion of administrative phases, the procedures of dispatching an ambassador to Sweden has been halted for the time-being due to its government's sanctioning of desecration of the holy Quran," the top diplomat declared Wednesday in a Twitter post.

He further noted that he had held detailed discussion with Iran's new envoy to Sweden, Hojatollah Faghani, on the latest events in the Scandinavian country.

Prior to Amiradollahian's statement, an informed source in Tehran's foreign ministry was cited in an IRNA report as saying that Iran does not intend to dispatch a new ambassador to Sweden over the state-sanctioned, anti-Islam action.

The source made the remarks on Sunday, four days after an Iraqi citizen residing in Sweden stomped on Islam's holy book and set several pages alight outside Stockholm's central mosque with heavy police presence that constituted a deliberate government-approved demonstration to insult Muslims and Islamic sanctities.



The blasphemous act had been authorized by the Swedish police under the pretext of free-speech laws.

The sacrilegious Quran burning, which coincided with the start of the Muslim Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) at the end of the annual Hajj pilgrimage, sparked a wave of anger and condemnations across the Muslim world.

During the session, the ministry's director-general for Western Europe told the Swedish envoy that the act of insult served as an instance of hatemongering and inclination towards aggression that had been excused through the abuse of the principle of free speech.

Stockholm's silence had emboldened those who have violated one of the fundamental and obvious principles of human rights, namely the principle of respect for religious and divine values, the Iranian official added.

Senior Egyptian Official Due In Tehran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A director general in Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is to visit Iran at the head of a delegation in forthcoming days, an Iranian official has announced.

Hormatollah Rafiei, the head of the board of directors of the Iranian Air Travel and Tourism Offices, made the announcement at a press conference in Tehran on Sunday.

In his remarks, the official referred to the symbolic launch of a direct flight between Tehran and Cairo soon.

As he said, Iraq mediated Iran-Egypt talks on the expansion of tourism cooperation.

As long as Iran does not have a consulate in Egypt, the travels to that country will be made through Iraq, Rafiei noted.

A few days ago, on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amiradollahian said the Islamic Republic welcomes normalization of relations with all Islamic countries, including Egypt and Morocco.

Iran, Russia To Boost Cooperation

MOSCOW (IP) - The Commander of Iran's Police Force said that Iran and Russia were interested in cooperating in security and law enforcement areas.

Iran's Chief of Police visited Moscow last week to meet with Russian security and law enforcement officials.

Brigadier General Ahmadreza Radan, at the end of his three-day trip to Moscow, said that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Iran and Russia over security and law enforcement, showing the two countries shared interests in police cooperation.

General Radan stated that Tehran-Moscow's common interests and the Memorandum of Understanding between Iran and Russia paved the way for more cooperation between the two countries.

He enumerated Iran and Russia's cooperation in countering terrorism, fighting extremism, securing cyberspace, combating narcotics, border security, and citizens' affairs.

During his three-day trip to Russia last Tuesday, the Iranian Police Chief visited the Commander of the Russian National Guard and exchanged views on police cooperation with his counterpart.

Iran Exporting Shrimps To 21 Countries: Official

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Some 37,000 tons of shrimp were exported overseas during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2023), the director general of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) said, adding that the country is currently exporting shrimp to 21 countries.

Vahid Madani made the comments on Saturday and stated that the farmed shrimp in the country is currently exported to Russia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, Qatar and neighboring Turkey.

Planning is underway for producing farmed shrimp in the country as an export-based product, he said, noting that the shrimp farmed in the country is now exported to at least 21 countries.

Madani put the farmed shrimp exported to other countries last year (ended March 20, 2023) at more than 37,000 tons.

Iran Fisheries Organization is seeking to attract investors for diversifying the packages and supply of this product in order to develop the export of farmed shrimp, the director general added.

Iranian Refugees Down By 14% in 2022



TEHRAN (MNA) - The number of Iranian refugees worldwide has decreased by 14 percent in 2022 compared to a year earlier, Iran Migration Observatory has reported.

According to the report, the population of Iranian refugees living in the host countries has decreased from 143,000 in 2021 to 122,000 in 2022.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), put the population of Iranians seeking asylum in the world at 69,237 in 2022, which has increased compared to 68,940 last year.

Germany and Turkey were the two main destinations for registering Iranian asylum seekers in 2012 and 2017, while Britain and Germany were the top destinations in 2022.

According to UNHCR, the world had at least 108 million forced migrations and displacements in 2022. Turkey, Iran, Colombia, Germany, and Pakistan have respectively hosted the largest number of people in refugee status or similar status.

Ivo Freijsen, the representative for UNHCR in Iran, has said Iran is an exemplary country that has acted very well in hosting refugees and has been hosting them for a long time.

Forty years have passed since Iran started hosting them [refugees]. As we have always said, Iran has had positive approaches toward refugees, we appreciate that, and we are honored to support Iran's efforts, he said in an exclusive interview with Iran Newspaper published on September 4, 2022.

In fact, Iran provides wide-ranging services for refugees such as basic healthcare services, education, and vocational training.

IRGC People-Oriented Entity

TEHRAN (IP) - Majlis Speaker says as the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is a people-oriented entity, it is in people's service during peacetime in different areas.

Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf said on Sunday that with its intelligence superiority, IRGC has been monitoring the country and region and thwarted the enemies' plots against Iran.

He made the remarks at the Congress of Commemorating IRGC's Intelligence Organization Martyrs.

He stated that the enemies of Iran and their elements within the country try to undermine the popular entity, noting that IRGC is a people-oriented ideological entity and a legacy-bearer martyrdom culture.

He highlighted the culture of Jihad (endeavor) and martyrdom and trust in God as the code of victory over enemies, through which Martyr Lt. Gen. Soleimani succeeded in crushing the US-baked terrorist Daesh (ISIS) group.

The parliament speaker stressed that IRIGC must remain people-oriented and popular, saying people with different thoughts are thankful for the security of the country maintained, to a great extent, by IRGC and the sacrifices of its staff, including the intelligence organization.

Qalibaf reminded the attendees of the fact that the power of the Islamic Republic arises from the heart of the people, and the more the people wholeheartedly support the system, the more it gets consolidated as it was so during the Sacred Defense era.

Lieutenant General "Qassem Soleimani," the former commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, together with "Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis," the vice-chairman of the Popular Mobilization of Iraq (Al-Hashd al-Shaabi) and 8 of his companions, on Friday morning, January 3, 2020, near the Baghdad airport, in a terrorist attack by the White House and by "Donald Trump's order," then President of the United States, was assassinated by the missiles fired by US army drones.

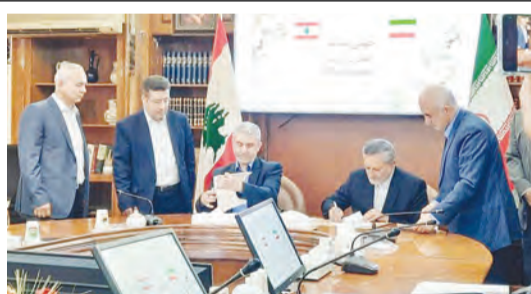
Iran Ready to Develop Socio-Economic Cooperation With Lebanon

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare Solat Mortazavi has announced his ministry's readiness to transfer know-how in different economic, social, and educational arenas to the Lebanese Ministry of Labor.

Mortazavi said on the sidelines of the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding with Lebanese Minister of Labor Mustafa Bayram on Sunday that the two sides prepared a cooperation agreement that will be inked to pave the way for extensive cooperation; so, we are ready to offer our experiences to Lebanon.

Lebanon is an important part of the Islamic world and Iran enjoys vast relations with Islamic countries, particularly the Arab country, the Iranian minister said, adding that we consider Lebanon dear; so, defending the country is considered defending the Islamic Ummah.

Bayram, for his part, expressed gratitude to the Islamic Republic for standing by other nations and for



the costs Iran pays because of being subject to sanctions and cruel siege, but it has been able to turn sanctions into opportunities via embarking on resistance.

The Lebanese minister of labor further stated that due to Lebanon's internal problems, we are under a cruel siege that has had an economic and social impact, but despite numerous woes, we are trying to serve the people and on this trip, we are looking for cooperation and use of the experiences of the Islamic Republic to turn threats into opportunities.

Chadormalu Co. Continues Leadership In National Development

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Chadormalu Mineral and Industrial Company signed an agreement with Energy Ministry for construction of the first solar power plant with capacity of 100 megawatts.

According to reports, during the ceremony for signing the agreement, the CEO of Chadormalu Company Eng. Taherzadeh pointed to the general policies of the establishment and attention to the non-oil economy and said that mine and mining industries due to diver mineral materials, available energy, efficient manpower and access to free water enjoys high advantages for materializing improving the national economy.

He added that for implementing the developmental projects of the country, paying attention to providing infrastructures like electricity is inevitable and necessity for sustainable development. He added that attention to the clean energies in production and consumption can pave the ground for green industry and therefore with good action from energy ministry, Chadormalu Complex could enter the issue as an applicant. He added that the company signed an agreement for construction of a 100-megawatt solar power plant in Khezrabad district of the town of Ashkezar in Yazd province with cooperation of Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA).

Taherzadeh added that with construction of this power plant, Chadormalu will increase sustainability of its power network especially in the peak times and it will inject over 190m kilowatt-hour of clean electricity to the national electricity grid.



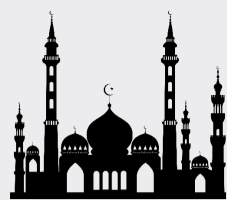
Top Officials Stress Fast Approval of Chastity and Hijab Bill

TEHRAN (MNA) - The heads of three branches of the Iranian government thanked for the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's guidelines and emphasized the need for acceleration in the process to approve the Chastity and Hijab bill.

In Saturday evening's regular meeting of the heads of three power branches, which was hosted by Parliament speaker at the parliament compound, President Raisi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Judiciary Chief Gholmhossein Mohseni-Ejei stressed the approval of a comprehensive bill that includes various aspects of the issue of chastity and hijab as soon as possible.

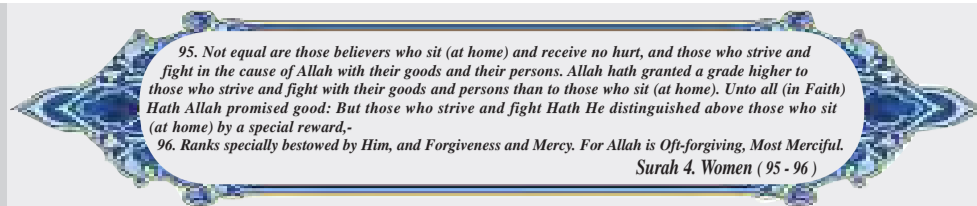
Expressing gratitude to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for presenting his final say on the issue of unofficial documents, the three top officials expressed hope that the finalization of the law on organizing unofficial documents will not only prevent corruption in that area but also will prevent a large number of cases from entering the judiciary.

Raisi, Ghalibaf and Ejei further discussed the regulations observing holding parliamentary elections with the aim of increasing turnout rate and people's participation.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:08
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:08
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:53



ICCIMA Ready to Cooperate With IRU in Regional Transit

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Hossein Selahvarzi has voiced the readiness of ICCIMA to cooperate with the International Road Transport Union (IRU) in transportation across the region and beyond.

Selahvarzi made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran with two IRU representatives on Saturday.

He also said that Iran Chamber of Commerce stands ready to cooperate in holding international events to help promote transit.

Iraq has recently joined the TIR Convention which will remove a large part of challenges to border transit with the country, Selahvarzi said, adding that considering the high experience of the Iran Chamber of Commerce TIR department, it held training courses for the Iraqi side.

He noted that the Iran Chamber of Commerce has good relations with the country's executive bodies and will make every effort to remove the red tape to help facilitate trade, investment and transit.



In the meantime, Behnam Faramarzian, the director of international transportation and TIR carnet department of Iran Chamber of Commerce, said that Iran has been the world's top issuer of TIR carnets since 2021.

He said that Iran aims to expand its Ro-Ro system of transit and launch well-equipped terminals with the help of IRU and other international transportation organizations.

Kazam Asayesh, a senior manager with TIR and Transit of IRU, hailed the successful cooperation between IRU and the Iran Chamber of Commerce as a good example of cooperation.

The statistics suggest that Iran Chamber of Commerce has had a significant role in enhancement of transit through the Iranian routes, he said.

Asayesh added that Iran has set a good model for other countries in this regard. He added that if Iran minimizes its border problems, its transit routes with offering facilities and reducing cost of transit will become compatible, adding that it only needs to increase coordination between the related bodies on the country.

He reiterated that Iran should be more active in the issue of E-TIR and it should not let lag behind other countries and in this regard Iran Custom Administration should be active and pursue the issue.

MAPNA Group Introduces New CEO, Members of Board of Directors

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – MAPNA Group by issuing a statement in its website announced its new CEO and members of board of directors.

According to the statement, the board of directors of MAPNA Group on Tuesday held a meeting where they hailed and honored its former CEO Dr. Abbas Aliabadi who left the job for becoming minister of industry, mine and trade.

Then the board of directors elected Mohammad Owliya, the CEO of MAPNA Turbine Engineering and Manufacturing Company (TOGA) as the new CEO of MAPNA Group to replace Aliabadi. Meanwhile in the meeting, Alireza Vahabzadeh was elected as the head of board of directors, Khalil Behbahani as the deputy head of board of directors and Mohsen Amiri as a new member of the boards.

The new CEO of MAPNA Group Mr. Owliya is a master of mechanical engineering from Sharif University and has ended his study for the Ph.D. in University of Birmingham of UK. He has been cooperating with MAPNA Group in different jobs and positions since 1999 and been a member of board of directors of different companies of the group.



Production Growth and Development, Two Pillars of Resistance Economy

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – On the occasion of National Day of Industry and Mine, the CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) Mr. Ataollah Maroufkhani in an article felicitated the day and those who endeavor for the progress and prosperity of the country whole-heartedly.

Maroufkhani in his article pointed to choosing June 29 as the national industry and mine that the industry which has proved today that it can

be a turning point in increasing GDP, investment growth and per capita, sustainable job creation and ultimately relying on it for economic development and capability of the country against threats and sanctions if it is paid more attention.

He added that the country has no way but all-out development in the field mine and mining industries for getting rid of reliance on oil economy as we have seen in recent years that specially national steel industry has been the leader in production and development and as a generative industry has played considerable role in job creation and economic boom.

Maroufkhani then highlighted some major performance of mining sector and reiterated that production growth and development are two major pillars of the resistance economy.

He noted that steel production in Iran despite decline in the global production has grown by 5% in five months of 2023 and with a look at the recent achievements of Hormozgan Steel Company, one can easily find that if this industry does not face shortage of raw materials and energy restriction it can play role in materializing the goals of the Outlook Document and annual steel production of 55m tons. He further reiterated that HOSCO last year and in a unique epic materialized the slogan of the year production, knowledge-based and job creation with 1.545m tons of steel production; a valuable achievement that shows 102% more than annual schedule and nominal capacity of the company.

Maroufkhani added that with all-out cooperation and efforts of his colleagues, more successes will be attained. He reiterated that mining industry is an industry that under domestic and foreign investment can have strong presence in the international competition scene and bring honor and dignity for the country and concluded his article with congratulating the day to all people involved in this industry.



Opening Another Window of Shiraz Urban Diplomacy to the World

The cooperation agreement was signed between the Shiraz and Novi Sad municipalities with the virtual presence of the mayors of these two cities and the ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Serbia, aimed at deepening the good relations between the two friendly countries and cooperation and exchange of experience between the two cities in various fields of urban management such as culture, investment and tourism.

According to the news website of Shiraz Municipality, a cooperation agreement between Shiraz Municipality and Novi Sad was signed with the virtual presence of the mayors of these two cities and the ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Serbia, with the aim of deepening the good relations between the two friendly countries and the cooperation and exchange of experience between the two cities in Various areas of urban management such as culture, investment and tourism were concluded.

Synergy of Multiple Capacities of Urban Management by Concluding Shiraz- Novi Sad Cooperation Agreement

In the ceremony of signing this cooperation agreement which was held in the presence of the ambassador of the Republic of Serbia in Iran in the municipality of this metropolis, the mayor of Shiraz expressed his

appreciation for the presence of the ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Serbia for providing the basis for this understanding, by enumerating the characteristics of Shiraz, including its ancient history and numerous capacities. In terms of various aspects of tourism such as historical, cultural and medical, he said: Today, the agreement between Shiraz Metropolitan Municipality and Novi Sad is signed in various fields which is a serious capacity for Shiraz's urban diplomacy in the international relations of urban management. Mohammad Hasan Asadi explained the background of this issue and determination of both sides for signing MoU on cooperation in the Iranian calendar and said: In Shiraz Municipality, we are pursuing the goal that beside to revive and strengthening existing relations with friendly and sister cities, to establish and expand interactions with other cities of the world is on the agenda, and this lets us prove the interaction in practice with executive measures. This senior official of urban management

of Shiraz metropolis who were emphasizing the shared points and capacities of these two cities from the two continents of Asia and Europe, also emphasized the synergy of these capacities and the continuation of this MoU and the advancement of various cultural goals, , tourism, economy and information technology emphasized.

Deepening the Relations Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Serbia by Signing the Shiraz- Novi Sad MoU

The mayor of Novi Sad, who spoke online with the presence of the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Serbia, counted many capacities of this city like a university city with capabilities in the field of information technology and the cultural capital of Europe in 2022, and concluded this agreement between two cities in order to deepen the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Serbia.

Milan Duric said considering the multinational capacity and cultural commonality of Novi Sad city with the metropolis of Shiraz, the signing of MoU beside creating synergy in various areas of urban management such as culture will lead to economic trade exchanges and numerous projects.

The Turning Point of the Good Relations Between Iran and Serbia With the Signing of the Shiraz- Novi Sad MoU

The ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Serbia also expressed appreciation to the city management of Shiraz and Novi Sad for the creation of this MoU and said this agreement and cooperation document, in addition to strengthening the capacities of these two cities, is another turning point in the relations between the two countries of Iran and Serbia which brings the strengthening of relations between the two friendly countries. Rashid Hassanpour Bani pointed to the creation of different platforms through this synergistic urban capacity and emphasized on the stabilization and strengthening of these capacities.

Presidents' Emphasis on the Expansion of Relations Between Iran and Serbia

The ambassador of the Republic of Serbia in the Islamic Republic of Iran also pointed out that we are witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the beautiful city of Shiraz and the city

of Novi Sad, and stated: This agreement is not only between Shiraz and Novi Sad, but also between the two countries of Iran and Serbia, in line with the emphasis of their presidents and the expansion of relations between the two countries.

Dragan Todorovic noted: The dimensions of this agreement are wide and from today we can try to develop relations between Shiraz and Novi Sad and on a macro level between the two countries in various fields and strengths. Serbia and Iran from Shiraz. He pointed out that we have different and good capacities in Shiraz, he expressed hope that this new way will be effective in the communication between the two friendly countries and the source of good things. The ambassador of the Republic of Serbia in the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that Shiraz is famous for his famous poets such as Hafez and Saadi in Serbia and called for the strengthening of interactions

between the two cities, which will strengthen the relations between the two countries. This cooperation agreement will be in various fields of urban management such as culture, investment, information technology and tourism with a special emphasis and exchange of experience regarding planning based on the capacities of the parties.

A look at Novi Sad, the cultural capital of Europe

Novi Sad is the capital of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the second largest city of the Republic of Serbia after Belgrade and an important cultural center of this country, known as the Athens of Serbia, which has been awarded the titles of European Youth Capital and European Cultural Capital in 2019 and 2022, respectively. Novi Sad Every year it hosts prestigious international events in cultural fields such as literature, classical and local music, film, children's literature, theater and musical and puppet shows.



Biden to Host Swedish PM for Talks

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Joe Biden will host Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson next week to talk about transatlantic security cooperation and the war in Ukraine, the White House said.

The two leaders “will review our growing security cooperation and reaffirm their view that Sweden should join NATO as soon as possible,” the White House said in a statement about the July 5 meeting.

Sweden asked to join NATO in May 2022, three months after Russia invaded Ukraine, but its membership bid, which must be ratified by all 31 member states, has been blocked by Turkey and Hungary.



Venezuela Blasts U.S. for Critique Over Barred Opposition Candidate

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela’s government said it rejected the U.S. stance around the South American country’s upcoming elections, calling it “interference,” a day after the U.S. criticized Venezuela’s decision to disqualify an opposition candidate.

Maria Corina Machado, one of the favorites to win the Venezuelan opposition’s nomination for president in an October primary, has been barred from holding public office for 15 years.

In response, the U.S. State Department said Venezuelans should be able to act freely in the 2024 presidential elections, and disqualifying Machado “deprives” them of political rights.



Spain PM Pledges EU Support for Ukraine



KYIV (Dispatches) - Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez pledged the EU’s “unequivocal” support for Ukraine in Kyiv as Spain assumed presidency of the bloc, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hit out at foot-dragging over pilot training by “some” Western nations.

Sixteen months into Russia’s invasion, Ukraine says it is fighting “fierce” battles as part of its counteroffensive launched last month after weeks of anticipation.

But both Zelensky and his commander-in-chief Valery Zaluzhny registered their frustration over the slow deliveries of weapons and lack of clarity over pilot training.

Sanchez visited Kyiv on the first day of Spain’s EU presidency, saying this “demonstrates a clear and unequivocal political commitment” to Ukraine’s bid to join the 27-nation bloc.

His trip came ahead of a key NATO summit in Vilnius later this month that is expected to map out the future relationship between Ukraine and the Western military alliance.

“In the next few months, we will make progress on issues that are essential for the future of the European Union, yet Ukraine is going to be at the centre of all our debates,” Sanchez told reporters during a joint news conference.

He said the European Commission had recently issued an interim assessment on the status of Ukraine’s candidacy to join the bloc. “The report is positive and shows significant progress,” Sanchez added.

Kyiv also said this week that the time had come for NATO to clarify its stance on Ukraine’s membership.

At the joint news conference with Sanchez, Zelensky said that during the Vilnius summit he wanted his country to receive an “invitation” to join NATO after the war. “We need a very clear and understandable signal at the Vilnius summit that Ukraine can become an equal member of NATO after the war,” Zelensky said.

“This invitation to the alliance is the first, very practical step, it would be very important for us.”

Sanchez and Zelensky released a joint declaration stating that Ukraine’s EU candidacy will be a priority for Spain’s presidency of the bloc.

The declaration also said that “Spain supports strengthening NATO’s partnership with Ukraine, including through the creation of a NATO-Ukraine Council.”

Ukraine received EU candidacy status a year ago and is hoping to begin formal negotiations this year on what it needs to do to firm up its membership bid.

Zelensky thanked Sanchez for his support, but he also sounded testy when a journalist asked him about Western plans to send F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine.

“I have the same questions you just asked. The same questions to our esteemed partners,” he said.

“Do they have an understanding of when Ukraine can get the F-16?” he said. “There is no schedule of training missions. I believe that some partners are dragging their feet. Why are they doing it? I don’t know.”

Ukrainian forces have claimed limited gains in a highly touted counteroffensive to win back territory that Russia captured after launching its full-scale offensive in February last year.

Ukraine’s military commander-in-chief Zaluzhny also expressed frustration, saying in an interview published Friday that his country’s counteroffensive plans have been limited by the lack of adequate firepower, from modern fighter jets to artillery ammunition.

Macron Scraps Trip Amid Rioting Across France

NANTERRE (Dispatches) -President Emmanuel Macron scrapped an official trip to Germany after a fourth straight night of rioting and looting across France in defiance of a massive police deployment. Hundreds turned out for the France’s Interior Ministry announced that in the latest night of violence, 1,311 people had been arrested around the country, where 45,000 police officers fanned out in a so-far unsuccessful bid to restore order. In the violence sparked by the teen’s death on Tuesday, some 2,400 persons have been arrested overall.

The protesters and rioters turned out on the streets of cities and towns, clashing with police, despite Macron’s appeal to parents to keep their children at home. About 2,500 fires were set and stores were ransacked, according to authorities.

Leaders of Germany’s main opposition bloc are calling for voters turned off by the government to back them in two major state elections this fall.

Racism, hatred and sometimes violence against Muslims in Germany are widespread and often part of their everyday experience.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is insisting that right-wing populism won’t gain the upper hand in his country, days after a far-right party won control of a county administration for the first time since the Nazi era.

German authorities are investigating a video showing a man in neo-Nazi clothing handing balloons to kindergartners a day after the country’s main far-right party won control of a county administration.

The violence in France was taking a toll on Macron’s diplomatic profile. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s office said that Macron phoned on Saturday to request a postponement of what would have been the first state visit by a French president to Germany in 23 years. Macron had been scheduled to fly to Germany on Sunday evening for the visit to Berlin and two other German cities.

Macron’s office said he spoke with Steinmeier and, “given the internal security situation, the president (Macron) said he wishes to stay in France over the coming days.”



Dutch King Formally Apologizes for Netherlands’ Historic Role in Slavery

THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - Dutch King Willem-Alexander apologized for his country’s role in slavery and asked for forgiveness in a historic speech greeted by cheers and whoops at an event to commemorate the anniversary of the abolition of slavery.

The king’s speech followed Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte’s apology late last year for the country’s role in the slave trade and slavery. It is part of a wider reckoning with colonial histories in the West that have been spurred in recent years by the Black Lives Matter movement.

In an emotional speech, Willem-Alexander referred back to that apology as he told a crowd of invited guests and onlookers: “Today I stand before you. Today, as your King and as a member of the government, I make this apology myself. And I feel the weight of the words in my heart and my soul.”

The king said he has commissioned a study into the exact role of the royal House of Orange-Nassau in slavery in the Netherlands.

“But today, on this day of remembrance, I ask forgiveness for the clear failure to act in the face of this crime against humanity,” he added.

Willem-Alexander’s voice appeared to break with emotion as he completed his speech before laying a wreath at the country’s national slavery monument in an Amsterdam park.

Slavery was abolished in Suriname and the Dutch colonies in the Caribbean on July 1, 1863, but most of the enslaved laborers were forced to continue working on plantations for a further 10 years. Saturday’s commemoration and speech mark the start of a year of events to mark the 150th anniversary of July 1, 1873.

Research published last month showed that the king’s ancestors earned the modern-day equivalent of 545 million euros (\$595 million) from slavery, including profits from shares that were effectively given to them as gifts.

When Rutte apologized in December, he stopped short of offering compensation to descendants of enslaved people.

Gaza Rulers Hamas Display Weapons for First Time

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - The armed wing of Gaza’s Islamist rulers Hamas has put its weapons on public display for the first time, drawing hundreds of Palestinians including children brandishing rocket launchers for selfies.

Dressed in black balaclavas and tactical camouflage suits, members of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades mingled with young men and women at the exhibition in Gaza City’s Unknown Soldier’s Square.

“Resistance is an image and a memory. Take souvenir photos with many of al-Qassam’s weapons,” the group said in an invitation on social media and posters in mosques.

The event was the first at which Hamas has allowed the public to take photos of weapons.

It follows the latest surge in worsening Israeli-Palestinian violence, which cost 16 Palestinian and four Israeli lives in the occupied West Bank over six days in late June.

In May, militant groups in Gaza and Israel traded cross-border fire for five days, killing 34 Palestinians, among them six commanders of the Islamic Jihad, fighters from other Palestinian armed groups and civilians including children. One Israeli woman died.

Among the Hamas weapons on display in Gaza City on Friday were a range of locally manufactured missiles, “Shihab” drones, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and Russian-made “Kornet” missiles.

Exhibitions are also scheduled to take place on Saturday in the north and centre of the Gaza Strip, where people are normally forbidden to approach and photograph military sites.

At the entrance to the Gaza City exhibition a banner welcomed visitors, some of whom had come with their families and children, an AFP correspondent said.

Dozens of uniformed al-Qassam Brigades members were on hand.

A young boy in fatigues and wearing a green Brigades headband smiled for the cameras as a man propped a rocket launcher on his shoulder.

Another held the controls of an anti-aircraft gun as young men posed in front of a display of rockets on stands.

“I came with my family to take photos with the weapons and reinforce the spirit of resistance in our children,” said Gaza resident Abu Mohammed Abu Shakian.

The exhibition is “encouraging and means that the liberation of our land is near”, added Shahadeh Dalou, who also came with his children.

Bassam Darwish, 58, said people wanted to show their support for the al-Qassam Brigades.

Hamas is considered a terrorist organisation by the United States, Australia, Britain, Israel and the European Union.



U.S. State Department Review of 2021 Afghanistan Evacuation Critical of Biden, Trump

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A U.S. State Department report criticized the handling of the 2021 evacuation from Afghanistan, saying decisions by President Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump to withdraw troops had “serious consequences for the viability” and security of the former U.S.-backed government.

Adverse findings in the report also reflected badly on Secretary of State Antony Blinken, without naming him. They included the department’s failure to expand its crisis-management task force as the Taliban advanced on Kabul in August 2021 and the lack of a senior diplomat “to oversee all elements of the crisis response.”

“Naming a 7th floor principal ... would have improved coordination across different lines of effort,” said the report, referring to the State Department’s top floor where Blinken and senior diplomats have offices.

The review, and a similar Pentagon study, contributed to a report released by the White House in April. But the State Department review’s critical findings were not reflected in the White House report.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre defended Biden’s handling of the Afghan pullout.

“He had to make a decision,” she told reporters on Friday. The United States had poured “billions of dollars into a war with no end in sight” and that “he wanted to stop that, he wanted to end that,” she said.

Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Trump, wrote in an email: “There’s only one person responsible for the disastrous pullout of Afghanistan — Joe Biden.”

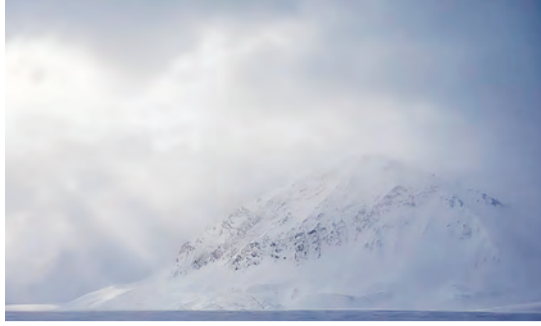
The White House report effectively blamed the chaotic U.S. pullout and evacuation operation on a lack of planning and troop reduction rounds by Trump following a 2020 deal with the Taliban to withdraw U.S. forces.

“I can’t speak to that internal coordination piece and how the administration settled on the core conclusions that it presented” in April, a senior State Department official said.

The official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, declined to say why the review dated March 2022 was withheld from release until the eve of the July 4 holiday weekend.



Climate Nears Point of No Return



SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - The target of keeping long-term global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) is moving out of reach, climate experts say, with nations failing to set more ambitious goals despite months of record-breaking heat on land and sea.

As envoys gathered in Bonn in early June to prepare for this year's annual climate talks in November, average global surface air temperatures were more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels for several days, the EU-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said.

Though mean temperatures had temporarily breached the 1.5C threshold before, this was the first time they had done so in the northern hemisphere summer that starts on June 1. Sea temperatures also broke April and May records.

"We've run out of time because change takes time," said Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick, a climatologist at Australia's University of New South Wales.

As climate envoys from the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters prepare to meet next month, temperatures broke June records in the Chinese capital Beijing, and extreme heatwaves have hit the United States.

Parts of North America were some 10C above the seasonal average this month, and smoke from forest fires blanketed Canada and the U.S. East Coast in hazardous haze, with carbon emissions estimated at a record 160 million metric tons.

In India, one of the most climate vulnerable regions, deaths were reported to have spiked as a result of sustained high temperatures, and extreme heat has been recorded in Spain, Iran and Vietnam, raising fears that last year's deadly summer could become routine.

Countries agreed in Paris in 2015 to try to keep long-term average temperature rises within 1.5C, but there is now a 66% likelihood the annual mean will cross the 1.5C threshold for at least one whole year between now and 2027, the World Meteorological Organization predicted in May.

High land temperatures have been matched by those on the sea, with warming intensified by an El Nino event and other factors.

Global average sea surface temperatures hit 21C in late March and have remained at record levels for the time of year throughout April and May. Australia's weather agency warned that Pacific and Indian ocean sea temperatures could be 3C warmer than normal by October.

Global warming is the major factor, said Piers Forster, professor of climate physics at the University of Leeds, but El Nino, the decline in Saharan dust blowing over the ocean and the use of low-sulphur shipping fuels were also to blame.

"So in all, oceans are being hit by a quadruple whammy," he said. "It's a sign of things to come."

Thousands of dead fish have been washing up on Texan beaches and heat-induced algal blooms have also been blamed for killing sea lions and dolphins in California.

Warmer seas could also mean less wind and rain, creating a vicious circle that leads to even more heat, said Annalisa Bracco, a climatologist at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Though this year's high sea temperatures are caused by a "perfect combination" of circumstances, the ecological impact could endure, she said.

"The ocean is going to have a very slow response as it accumulates (heat) slowly but also keeps it for very long."

Climate experts say the extent and frequency of extreme weather is increasing, and this year has also seen punishing droughts across the world, as well as a rare and deadly cyclone in Africa.

Will Artificial Intelligence Really Destroy Humanity?



PARIS (Dispatches) - The warnings are coming from all angles: artificial intelligence (AI) poses an existential risk to humanity and must be shackled before it is too late.

But what are these disaster scenarios and how are machines supposed to wipe out humanity?

Most disaster scenarios start in the same place: machines will outstrip human capacities, escape human control and refuse to be switched off.

"Once we have machines that have a self-preservation goal, we are in trouble," AI academic Yoshua Bengio told an event this month.

But because these machines do not yet exist, imagining how they could doom humanity is often left to philosophy and science fiction.

Philosopher Nick Bostrom has written about an "intelligence explosion" he says will happen when superintelligent machines begin designing machines of their own.

He illustrated the idea with the story of a superintelligent AI at a paperclip factory.

The AI is given the ultimate goal of maximising paperclip output and so "proceeds by converting first the Earth and then increasingly large chunks of the observable universe into paperclips".

Bostrom's ideas have been dismissed by many as science fiction, not least because he has separately argued that humanity is a computer simulation and supported theories close to eugenics.

He also recently apologised after a racist message he sent in the 1990s was unearthed. Yet his thoughts on AI have been hugely influential, inspiring both Elon Musk and Professor Stephen Hawking.

If superintelligent machines are to destroy humanity, they surely need a physical form.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's red-eyed cyborg, sent from the future to end human resistance by an AI in the movie The Terminator, has proved a seductive image, particularly for the media.

But experts have rubbished the idea.

"This science fiction concept is unlikely to become a reality in the coming decades if ever at all," the Stop Killer Robots campaign group wrote in a 2021 report.

However, the group has warned that giving machines the power to make decisions on life and death is an existential risk.

Robot expert Kerstin Dautenhahn, from Waterloo University in Canada, played down those fears.

She told AFP that AI was unlikely to give machines higher reasoning capabilities or imbue them with a desire to kill all humans.

"Robots are not evil," she said, although she conceded programmers could make them do evil things.

A less overtly sci-fi scenario sees "bad actors" using AI to create toxins or new viruses and unleashing them on the world.

Large language models like GPT-3, which was used to create ChatGPT, it turns out are extremely good at inventing horrific new chemical agents.

A group of scientists who were using AI to help discover new drugs ran an experiment where they tweaked their AI to search for harmful molecules instead. They managed to generate 40,000 potentially poisonous agents in less than six hours, as reported in the Nature Machine Intelligence journal.

AI expert Joanna Bryson from the Hertie School in Berlin said she could imagine someone working out a way of spreading a poison like anthrax more quickly.

Gene Variant Linked to Multiple Sclerosis Severity

PARIS (Dispatches) - Scientists have discovered a genetic variant linked with multiple sclerosis becoming more debilitating over time, in research hailed as a first step towards a new drug.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a lifelong condition in which a person's body is attacked by its own immune system, causing a range of symptoms including problems with vision, movement and balance.

For some people, the symptoms can come and go in phases called relapses, while in others they become progressively worse.

There are treatments that can help control the symptoms, but there is no cure or way to slow down the disease from getting worse.

In a study published in the journal Nature Wednesday, researchers from more than 70 institutes around the world said they had found the first-ever genetic variant linked to MS severity.

First, the researchers combined the genetic data of 12,000 people with MS to study what variants they shared and how quickly their disease advanced.

Out of seven million variants, they found a single one associated with the disease progressing faster.

The variant sits between two genes called DYSF and ZNF638, which had never before been linked to MS, according to the study.

The first gene works to repair damaged cells, while the other helps control viral infections.

The genes are much more active in the brain and spinal cord than the immune system, where drug research has previously focused, the study said.

To confirm what they found, the researchers then looked at the genetics of nearly 10,000 more patients, finding similar results.

"Inheriting this genetic variant from both parents accelerates the time to needing a walking aid by almost four years," US researcher and study co-author Sergio Baranzini said in a statement.

Sleep in the Deep: Do Octopuses Dream Like Humans?

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Octopuses are fascinating because of their tentacular intelligence, which brings them so close to human beings. But that's not all they have in common with us. According to a new Japanese-American study, these sea creatures are also capable of dreaming.

Researchers at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) and the University of Washington examined the brain activity and skin colour changes of 29 octopuses belonging to the nocturnal Octopus laqueus species. They found that, during the day, the octopuses closed their eyes and adopted a resting posture akin to sleep. Every hour or so, these animals also underwent rapid changes in skin colour lasting about a minute, as well as changes in respiratory rate, and body and eye movements.

These observations enabled the scientists to deduce that octopuses go through two different sleep stages: quiet sleep and active sleep. It is in the latter phase that contractions of different parts of the octopus's body and rapid changes in the texture and pattern of its skin occur, as the researchers describe in their paper, recently published in the journal Nature.

To test this hypothesis, the biologists verified whether the octopuses were really asleep in the active sleep stage by subjecting them to various external stimuli. In particular, they tapped on the tanks in which the animals were resting to observe their reactions. The sea creatures reacted differently when they were awake or in a quiet or active sleep phase. The research team also found that, if the octopuses were deprived of sleep for two days, they subsequently entered the active sleep stage earlier and more frequently. This finding suggests the existence of a homeostatic process, which is one of the key criteria for sleep.

In addition, probes recording the neuronal activity of octopuses revealed the existence of brain waves resembling sleep spindles. Sleep spindles are a set of waves thought to protect sleep by inhibiting sensory input. Although their exact function is still a mystery, even in humans, scientists believe that these spindles contribute to the consolidation of memories. Biologists have noted that, in octopuses, these waves occur in brain regions associated with learning and memory, suggesting that they potentially have a function similar to that in humans.

These sleep spindles could explain the changes in octopus skin patterns observed by scientists. Indeed, octopuses can imitate their environment by modifying the texture and appearance of their epidermis instantly and in a variety of ways, thanks to thousands of pigmented cells called chromatophores. This defence mechanism enables them to hide from potential predators.



Vitamin D Supplements May Help Prevent Heart Attacks in Older People

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Known for its benefits to bones and skin, vitamin D may also reduce the risk of cardiovascular events. A new study by researchers in Australia reveals that monthly vitamin D supplements may even prevent heart attacks in people over 60.

This is not the first time that scientists have investigated the effects of vitamin D on cardiovascular health, but until now, there has been no evidence of a potential link between the two. This new research is the largest trial ever carried out on the subject. A team of researchers in Australia set out to determine whether monthly vitamin D supplementation in older people could have an impact on the rate of cardiovascular events, and more specifically, on the rate of heart attacks and strokes.

Published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ), the study involved 21,315 Australians aged between 60 and 84, who received either a dose of oral vitamin D or a placebo at the beginning of each month, for up to five years. In the end, over 80 per cent of study participants claimed to have taken at least 80 per cent of the suggested doses throughout the study period. The researchers then cross-referenced and analysed data from these participants about any hospital admissions and deaths, to determine whether they had suffered heart attacks and strokes, or undergone coronary revascularization.

The researchers report that the rate of major cardiovascular events was 9 per cent lower in the vitamin D supplement group, corresponding to 5.8 fewer events per 1,000 participants. More specifically, the rate of heart attack was 19 per cent lower in the vitamin D supplement group than in the placebo group, and the rate of coronary revascularization was 11 per cent lower. On the other hand, the scientists noted no difference in stroke rates.

IT, Auto Stocks Help Indian Shares Hit New Highs

BENGALURU (Dispatches) - Information technology (IT) and auto stocks helped India's benchmark indexes hit fresh record highs, after robust economic data from the United States eased fears of a slowdown and improved broader sentiment. The Nifty 50 rose as much as 1.21% to hit an all-time high of 19,201.70, before closing at 19,189.05. The S&P BSE Sensex also gained 1.26% to settle at a fresh record of 64,718.56. The Nifty 50 has risen over 10.5% in the three months ended June 30, its best performance since the September quarter of 2021. The benchmark also logged its best week in over 11 months and extended gains for the fourth month in a row.



Pakistan Clinches Last-Gasp \$3b IMF Bailout

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Pakistan secured a badly-needed \$3 billion short-term financial package from the International Monetary Fund on Friday, giving the South Asian economy respite as it teeters on the brink of default.

In a long-awaited decision for Pakistan, the IMF said it had reached a staff-level deal with the 220 million nation, which will now be subject to approval by its board in July.

The new nine-month standby arrangement came hours before a current IMF agreement expires, offering relief to Pakistan, which is battling an acute balance of payments crisis.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said it would put Pakistan "on the path of sustainable economic growth".

With sky-high inflation and foreign exchange reserves barely enough to cover one month of controlled imports, which analysts say Pakistan's economic crisis could have spiralled into a debt default in the absence of an IMF deal.

The deal came only after Sharif held marathon meetings with IMF head Kristalina Georgieva on June 22, which he said represented "a turning point" as the fund's managing director had not initially appeared very forthcoming.

Pakistan will receive formal documents on the deal, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told Reuters, which he said he would "sign, seal and return".

The new deal, which Dar said on Thursday was expected soon, will disburse an upfront amount of \$1.1 billion shortly after the IMF board's meeting in July, he said.

Dar said Pakistan aimed to take the central bank's foreign exchange reserves to \$14 billion by the end of July. "We have stopped the decline, now we have to turn to growth," he added.

Pakistan's sovereign dollar bonds were trading higher after the announcement, with the 2024 issue enjoying the biggest gains, up more than 8 cents at just above 70 cents in the dollar, according to Tradeweb data.

The gains were most pronounced in shorter-dated bonds, reflecting lingering scepticism over the longer-term fiscal outlook for the country.

The \$3 billion IMF funding is higher than expected as it looks set to replace the remaining \$2.5 billion from a \$6.5 billion longer-term Extended Fund Facility agreed in 2019.

The deal will also unlock other bilateral and multilateral financing. Long-time allies Saudi Arabia, the UAE and China have already pledged or rolled over billions of loans.

"This will support near-term policy efforts and replenish gross reserves," the IMF said.

The new arrangement builds on the 2019 programme, IMF official Nathan Porter said in a statement, adding that Pakistan's economy had faced several challenges in recent times, including devastating floods and rising commodity prices.

UK Economy Makes Slow Start to 2023 as Inflation Weighs

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's economy made a lackluster start to 2023 as inflation ate into households' disposable income, official figures showed, and economists see a risk of recession ahead as higher interest rates keep up the pain even as inflation eases.

The economy grew by just 0.1% in the first three months of the year, unchanged from an initial estimate by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and leaving output 0.5% lower than it was in the final quarter of 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Households dug into their savings - although the overall saving ratio remained higher than before the pandemic - and the cost of living increased faster than incomes.

The squeeze on households looks set to continue, as the Bank of England raised interest rates to a 15-year high of 5% in June and investors see little sign that it is about to end its tightening cycle.

"The final Q1 2023 GDP data confirms that the economy cleared of a recession at the start of 2023. But with around 60% of the drag from higher interest rates yet to be felt, we still think the economy will tip into one in the second half of this year," said Ashley Webb, an economist at consultancy Capital Economics.

While the BoE forecast last month that inflation would drop to just over 5% by the end of the year, BoE Governor Andrew Bailey said last week that inflation was proving stickier than expected after it held at 8.7% in May.

Britain's economic recovery since the pandemic has been much slower than almost every other big advanced economy, though Germany has struggled too and its economy in the first quarter was also 0.5% smaller than before the pandemic.

In annual terms, Britain's economy had grown just 0.2% by the end of the first quarter.

Some economists said the weak GDP data stood at odds with more robust trends for jobs, wages and consumer confidence, and further sluggish growth was more likely than outright recession.

"We expect unemployment to inch up, but only slowly and to a limited degree," HSBC economist Liz Martins said.

British households have been put under pressure by a surge in inflation, which hit a 41-year high of 11.1% last year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent natural gas prices soaring and has been slow to fall since.

Friday's figures showed households' real disposable income - money available after adjusting for inflation, taxes, and benefits - was 0.8% lower than the previous quarter. This was the biggest drop since the second quarter of 2022, and 0.5% lower than a year earlier, reflecting higher costs for electricity, gas, and food.



BIS Warns World Economy at Critical Juncture in Inflation Fight

LONDON (Dispatches) - The world's central bank umbrella body, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), called for more interest rate hikes, warning the world economy was now at a crucial point as countries struggle to rein in inflation.

Despite the relentless rise in rates over the last 18 months, inflation in many top economies remains stubbornly high, while the jump in borrowing costs triggered the most serious banking collapses since the financial crisis 15 years ago.

"The global economy is at a critical juncture. Stern challenges must be addressed," Agustin Carstens, BIS general manager, said in the organisation's annual report published on Sunday.

"The time to obsessively pursue short term growth is past. Monetary policy must now restore price stability. Fiscal policy must consolidate."

Claudio Borio, the head of BIS's monetary and economics unit, added there was a risk an "inflationary psychology" was now setting in, although the bigger-than-expected rate hikes in Britain and Norway last week showed central banks were pushing "to get the job done" in terms of tackling the problem.

Their challenges are unique by post-World War Two standards though. It is the first time that, across much of the world, a surge in inflation has co-existed with widespread financial vulnerabilities.

The longer inflation remains elevated, the stronger and prolonged the required policy tightening, the BIS report said, warning that the possibility of further problems in the banking sector was now "material".

Turkey Eyes to Surpass \$120b in Service Exports Toward Yearend

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's Trade Ministry has announced that service exports in the first four months amounted to \$25.8 billion, with a target to surpass a total of \$120 billion for the entire year.

In a statement, the Trade Ministry emphasized the need to bolster and support all sectors of export, including tourism, air, land, sea and rail transportation, health tourism, foreign student enrollment, informatics and software, as well as TV series exports.

Highlighting Turkey's growth in service exports over the past two decades, the statement revealed a significant increase of over sixfold.

Service exports, which stood at \$14 billion in 2002, witnessed a 47% surge in 2022 compared to the previous year, setting a new record at \$90.5 billion.

Consequently, the services balance of \$50 billion played a pivotal role in mitigating the current account deficit.

Turkey's performance in international service exports propelled it to the 23rd position, accounting for a 1.3% share in the global market, according to the statement.

The statement highlighted Turkey's notable achievement of registering the highest growth rate among the top 30 exporting countries in the world, following Spain.

With an increase of 22.6% in service exports during the first four months of this year, reaching \$25.8 billion, Turkey solidified its position.

The Trade Ministry has allocated TL 774.7 million for the service sectors since the beginning of 2023, with a total budget of TL 2.5 billion allocated for 2023.

The ministry stressed its commitment to advancing toward these targets by increasing investments and providing support to sub-sectors and items that contribute positively to the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT)'s Balance of Payments, recognizing that creativity, innovation, and the efficient utilization of resources are crucial in today's property-intensive world.

The country's overall exporters have achieved their best May sales ever last month despite a fallout after devastating earthquakes in early February and challenges plaguing the global economy.

Outbound shipments rose 14.4% year-over-year to nearly \$21.7 billion (TL 453.12 billion).

Imports rose 16% year-over-year to \$34.3 billion in May, the official data showed, driving a 19% increase in the foreign trade deficit to nearly \$12.7 billion.

Sri Lanka Asks Foreign Investors for a 30% Haircut In Debt Restructure

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka announced a restructuring plan for its massive domestic debt to meet targets set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and aim to turn around its economy, which has been hammered by a financial crisis.

The island nation is asking foreign investors in its international sovereign bonds to take a 30% haircut and is seeking similar concessions from holders of its other dollar-denominated bonds as it seeks to restructure its debt, its central bank governor.

A severe shortage of dollars tipped the country of 22 million people into its worst financial crisis since independence from Britain in 1948, triggering its first foreign debt default in May 2022.

Pledging to put its mammoth debt burden on a sustainable track, Sri Lanka locked down a \$2.9 billion bailout from the IMF in March. The domestic debt restructure is needed to help the country reach the IMF programme goal of reducing overall debt to 95% of GDP by 2032.

On Thursday, the country's central bank unveiled the restructuring plan, which includes exchanging treasury bills into long-term bonds.

Under the domestic debt revamp, holders of locally issued dollar-denominated bonds such as Sri Lanka Development Bonds (SLDBs) will be given three options, central bank governor Nandalal Weerasinghe said.

The first would be treatment similar to investors in the country's international sovereign bonds - a 30% principal haircut with a 6-year maturity at a 4% interest rate.

"We are asking foreign debt holders for a 30% haircut but that is still under discussion," Weerasinghe said.

Sri Lanka currently has \$12.5 billion in international sovereign bonds.

Domestic bondholders will be given two other options:

- Similar treatment to that being proposed to bilateral dollar creditors: No principal haircut, with a 15-year maturity and 9-year grace period at 1.5% interest rate.

- Exchange their holdings for local currency denominated instruments: No principal haircut with a 10-year maturity at the SLFR (Sri Lanka Standing Lending Facility Rate) + 1% interest rate.

- Local currency bonds held by superannuation funds proposed to be exchanged for longer maturity bonds (2027 to 2038), with a step-down coupon structure of 12% (till 2025E) and 9% till maturity.

- Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) holdings of Treasury bills to be converted to bonds maturing between 2029 and 2038, with a step-down coupon structure. This will be implemented in Phase 2 of the domestic debt restructuring.

Canada's Economy Gathered Pace In May After Stalling in April



OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Canada's economy regained momentum in May after stalling in April, Statistics Canada data showed, leaving the door open for the Bank of Canada to hike interest rates in July.

The economy was unchanged in April from March, missing forecasts, in what economists said was the fallout from a federal civil servant strike in April. There was likely a 0.4% jump in real gross domestic product in May, Statscan said.

Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast a 0.2% month-over-month rise in April. March GDP was upwardly revised to 0.1% growth from an initial report of flat growth.

Canada's goods-producing sector expanded 0.1% in April, but were offset by a slight decline in the service-producing sector.

"It's a mixed picture... From a bigger-picture view, it's not at all surprising that the economy didn't manage to grow in April, given the large public-sector strike" in April, said Doug Porter, chief economist at BMO Capital Markets.

While April's growth underperformed expectations, the strong forecast for May aligns with signs that the economy is keeping hotter than anticipated despite a record-pace monetary tightening cycle by the Bank of Canada.

The central bank cranked up its key interest rate to a 22-year high of 4.75% earlier in June over concerns that inflation could get stuck above its 2% target.

The preliminary growth estimate for May, which can change when final data is released next month, was led by increases in the manufacturing and wholesale trade sectors, as well as by offices of real estate agents and brokers, Statscan said.

"Real estate has been picking up steam in recent months in these GDP numbers, something the Bank of Canada won't be thrilled about," Desjardins economist Tiago Figueiredo said.

UK to Breach Iran Nuclear Deal With Refusal to Lift Sanction

TEHRAN (MNA) – The UK and other European powers are expected to breach Iran's nuclear deal as they confirm they are not going to lift sanctions on Tehran's use of missiles this October as required in the agreement, British source claims.

The EU sanctions are set to expire on 18 October under a UN resolution that enshrined the 2015 nuclear deal.

The decision by European powers to also breach the deal represents a risk since it is not clear how Tehran will react at a time it is already close to being able to manufacture weapons-grade enriched uranium, The Guardian claimed. Iran has always proved that it has never sought to produce nuclear weapons and the nature of its nuclear program is strictly peaceful and clear.



All Eyes in Brazil on Michelle Bolsonaro as Her Husband's Career Implodes

RIO DE JANEIRO (Dispatches) - Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's hopes of reclaiming the presidency in 2026 may be over. But that doesn't mean there won't be a Bolsonaro running in three years' time.

Brazil's federal electoral court (TSE) froze Bolsonaro's political career, barring the far-right nationalist from public office until 2030 for spreading baseless claims about the country's voting system in last year's election.

The ruling represents a devastating setback for the 68-year-old career politician who was until recently Brazil's most powerful man.

But it may not spell the end for the Bolsonaro clan.

Speaking on Thursday shortly after landing in Rio de Janeiro, where he was greeted with shouts of "criminal" and "coup-monger," Bolsonaro backed his wife Michelle for 2026.

"Of course, I would support a Michelle candidacy," he said.

In an Instagram post shortly after the TSE ruling, Michelle wrote: "'Our dream is more alive than ever.' ... I am at your command, my CAPTAIN."

Bolsonaro, who also faces a number of criminal probes that could land him in jail, is blamed by many Brazilians for birthing a nationwide election denial movement after his loss in last year's vote to leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

He has previously suggested that once "out of the game" he could become a political king-maker. But many of his ex-allies are already pinning their 2026 hopes on newer faces like Sao Paulo Governor Tarcisio Freitas and Minas Gerais Governor Romeu Zema.

His best chance at remaining relevant may now lie with his family.

Michelle Bolsonaro is a political newcomer, but her folksy demeanor and emphasis on traditional values have won her fans among Brazilian working-class women. Her profile rose during the 2022 campaign, when she became increasingly visible at Bolsonaro events as he struggled to appeal to female voters. She joined his conservative Liberal Party last year, and is now head of its women's movement.

She has not ruled out the possibility of running for office.

"If, while I'm on this path, and my heart burns for it, I could come to be a legislative candidate," she said in May.

Like roughly a third of Brazil's 200 million people, Michelle, 41, is an Evangelical Christian. Evangelicals were big backers of Bolsonaro's conservative family values,



and remain wary of Lula.

William Douglas, an Evangelical federal appeals court judge who was among names mooted for Bolsonaro's pick for the Supreme Court in 2021, said Michelle held appeal for some voters.

"Certainly, some Evangelical women will identify with her, but I think she will have more success with voters of the former president," he said.

And she is not the only Bolsonaro with a shot at Brazil's top job. Two of Bolsonaro's sons from a previous marriage are federal lawmakers. They may harbor their own presidential ambitions, although neither has announced a run.

Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, 42, was a key backroom player in Brasilia during his father's four years in office, appointing allies throughout the federal bureaucracy. But he remains stained by corruption allegations, which he has denied, from his time as a Rio state lawmaker.

Congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro, 38, has played the role of the Bolsonaro family's foreign emissary, appearing at U.S. gun shows and conservative political conferences where he rubbed shoulders with high-profile right-wingers like Steve Bannon. But he remains a polarizing figure, with fringe political views and limited support.

Don't Test...

FROM PAGE 1

Of course Europeans should not expect Muslims to sit silent and passive against insulting their beliefs and principles and they should find some solution to decrease the number of sacrileges and not fanning the flame of anti-Islam actions, and supporting insult under the banner of freedom of expression is not acceptable.



On Wednesday, a 37-year-old Iraqi man stomped on the Quran before setting several pages alight in front of Stockholm's largest mosque. The insult to the Muslim holy book was made under the authorization and protection of the Swedish police.

The incident, coinciding with the start of the Muslim Eid al-Adha and the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, drew the anger of Muslims from across the world.

People in other Muslim countries also took to the streets in protest against the move.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has convened an emergency meeting of its executive committee to address the consequences of the sacrilegious act.

Sweden has repeatedly permitted Quran burning in recent years. In January, a Swedish-Danish right-wing extremist burned a copy of the Quran near the Turkish embassy in Stockholm.

We have not still forgotten that Turkey has set condition for Sweden's joining the NATO bloc and it has called for extradition of terrorist group members and we know that many anti-Islamic Revolution groups' members are in Sweden and as long as this country follows this policy of being haven for terrorist and anti-Islam people, we cannot expect the number of insult to Islam to decrease.

People in Muslim countries have also taken to the streets in protest against the move, including Iran, where people held a demonstration outside Sweden's embassy in Tehran on Friday. But we expect all Muslim governments react strongly regarding this insult rather than letting their people do it.

Iran, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait and a number of other countries have voiced diplomatic protest against the Swedish government's authorization of the Quran desecration.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson on Friday distanced himself from the blasphemy. "This is a serious security question. There's no need to insult other people," the right-wing premier said.

The perpetrator of the insult told a Swedish newspaper late Thursday that he intended to repeat his protest in July. "Within 10 days I will burn the Iraqi flag and the Koran in front of Iraq's embassy in Stockholm," he told Expressen.

Despite his distancing, we know that Sweden has repeatedly permitted Quran burnings in recent years. In January, a Swedish-Danish right-wing extremist burned a copy of the Quran near the Turkish embassy in Stockholm.

So we recommend European countries to stop provoking Muslims' sentiment and not to play with the fire of wrath of Muslims because Muslims tolerate everything but insult to their Holy Quran and Prophet, and we also recommend Europe to stop playing with the phrase of "Freedom of Expression" which is only used for their own purposes and ignoring the rights of Muslims and disrespecting them.

UNDP-Japan Project...

FROM PAGE 1

"In addition, training, capacity building, participation, and awareness programs are continuously implemented every year."

In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

So far, for 44 wetlands in the country, such as Parishan and Shadegan wetlands, and Lake Urmia, environmental management plans have been prepared, of which 28 plans have been approved and the rest are awaiting approval or are under preparation. Wetlands cover around 6 percent of the Earth's land surface and 40 percent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.

Wetlands play an important role in coastal environments-economies: health, food supply, tourism, and jobs. Wetlands are providing essential ecosystem services such as water regulation, including flood control and water purification. More than a billion people across the world depend on wetlands for their livelihoods - that's about one in eight people on Earth.

However, wetlands are among the ecosystems with the highest rates of decline, loss, and degradation. Wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests and are Earth's most threatened ecosystem. In just 50 years - since 1970 - 35% of the world's wetlands have been lost.

NIDC Digs 27 Oil and Gas Wells in 100 Days

TEHRAN (MNA) - National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) dug and completed the digging operations of 27 oil and gas wells during the first 100 days of the

current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 30), the company's managing director said.

According to Hamidreza Golpayegani, the drilled wells consisted of two development, and 25 workover ones, Shana reported.

Golpayegani had earlier declared the company's infrastructure improvement in line with the programs of the Oil Ministry as the most important achievement of NIDC in the past year.

Speaking at the company's annual board meeting, the official said NIDC's performance in various operational, technical, engineering, support, services, and headquarters departments has been significant and

improved in the previous year compared to the preceding two years.

"According to the statistics of our planning department, the productivity index [of the company] reached 62 percent past year, while this figure was 48 percent in 1400," he noted.

NIDC managed to dig and complete 99 oil and gas wells in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 21).

According to Masoud Afshar, the deputy head of NIDC for drilling operation, the drilled wells consisted of 15 development, five exploratory, and 79 workover ones.

Envoy to China Meets SCO Chief to Discuss Economic Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's newly-appointed ambassador to China has met with Zhang Ming, secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), to explore ways to enhance economic cooperation with the organization's eight member countries.

In a social media post on Saturday, Mohsen Bakhtiar said he had met with Zhang on Friday ahead of the SCO's virtual summit next week.

"During this meeting, we exchanged views on Iran's active participation in the organization and the strengthening of economic cooperation with the eight member countries, including China," Bakhtiar added.

Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be officially announced during the upcoming summit on July 4.

In a phone call on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian told Zhang that Tehran would officially introduce its coordinator to the SCO's secretariat in the coming week.

Headquartered in China, the SCO is a diplomatic organization with eight members, namely Russia, India, Pakistan, and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Iran to Launch 6 Petrochemical Projects By in Coming Months

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said on Saturday that six petrochemical projects, costing \$2.7 billion and with the nominal production capacity of about 5 million tons/year, would come on stream by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (to end March 20, 2024).

NPC Chief Executive Morteza Shahrirzaei announced this on Saturday, noting that the Hoveyze Gas Refinery in the Persian Gulf was put into operation about a month ago.

Iran's petrochemical industry is one of the most FOREX-yielding industries in the country during the sanctions period and this has solved many of the country's foreign exchange problems.

The NPC put the FOREX revenues obtained from the export of petrochemical products from 2019 to 2022 at about \$49 billion.

So far, \$79 billion has been invested in Iran's petrochemical industry and it seems that the trend of investment in this strategic industry will continue in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi.

Tanzania Exports...

FROM PAGE 1

"With good and advanced knowledge and expertise in the fields of engineering, oil and gas and petrochemicals, agriculture, fisheries, livestock, health industries and international trade, Iran can be a complementary economic partner to the growing economy of Tanzania.

"Being a country with a population of more than 60 million, and which is strategically located to serve six land linked countries, and with membership in the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) SADCC, Tanzania can be the ultimate link between Iran and East and Southern Africa," the envoy said.

The diplomat said a wide range of goods traded between Iran and Tanzania indicates that the relationship between the two nations is being implemented in a reciprocal manner.

According to him, this year marks the 41th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries with the two nations cooperating in a number of programs.

He thanked Tanzania Trade Development Authority (TanTrade), Director General Ms Latifah Khamis on proper preparations for the 47th trade fair, saying the event serves an important

opportunity and platform to introduce Iran's goods to Tanzania.

Meanwhile, Tantrade Board chair Prof Ulingeta Mbamba said the sixth-phase government under the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan has thrown weight behind improvement of the business environment. He welcomed investors from Iran to explore various trade and investment opportunities available in the country.

On her part, TanTrade Director General encouraged Tanzanians to explore business opportunities in Iran which is doing well in the areas of biomedical technologies, extractive industry and education.

Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair (DITF) is an annual event organised by TanTrade in collaboration with public and private sectors.

DITF has positioned itself as an international trade promotion platform considered to be the largest of its kind in the Eastern and Central African Region in terms of the number of exhibitors and visitors.

It has been designed to facilitate exhibitors to showcase and demonstrate their goods, services and technology, attain new markets and explore new markets and investment opportunities.

Persian Gulf Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

He added "Our youth should get to know about the sea, we are a maritime country, and the sea is a great and strategic opportunity for us.

Tangiri stated: "Ninety percent of trades are carried out by sea, and oil and gas are two essential resources of the country in the ocean."

He added: "If there are no ships and missiles, there is no livelihood. This power caused the US to retreat in the Persian Gulf."

The IRGC Navy commander pointed out that Iran has many essential islands, and 2,200 km in the south have a water border, so the youth should be familiar with these capacities.

He added: "The Islamic Republic has the deepest water in the Persian Gulf, which ships have to pass through."

He said: "We must narrate the work of the martyrs for the youth as owners of the Islamic revolution and know that we are victorious in the unequal battle because it is God's promise."

Winks Joins Leicester From Tottenham

LONDON (Dispatches) - Former England midfielder Harry Winks joined Leicester from Tottenham for a reported fee of £10 million (RM59.2 million).

The 27-year-old spent last season on loan at Sampdoria after falling down the pecking order at Spurs.

Winks made 203 appearances for Tottenham and won 10 England caps over the past nine years.

"I'm really excited for the challenge ahead. It's an amazing club with great history and the facilities are incredible," said Winks.

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Green Stays in Golden State Warriors

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Four-time champion Draymond Green will stay with Golden State while reigning NBA champion Denver lost guard Bruce Brown to Indiana according to multiple reports as NBA free agency dealmaking began Friday.

Brown has agreed to a two-year deal worth US\$45 million with the Pacers while the Warriors kept Green on a four-year deal worth US\$100 million, according to ESPN and The Athletic.

Alcaraz One of the Most Talented Players Ever Claims Rival

LONDON (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz has been labelled 'one of the most talented players ever' by top 5 rival Stefanos Tsitsipas, who drew comparisons to another Spaniard in Rafael Nadal.

Alcaraz reclaimed his spot at the top of the ATP rankings once again, after winning his first grass court title at Queen's Club and the 20-year-old will now enter Wimbledon as the top seed for the first time in his career.

The world No.5 Tsitsipas has not fared well in his previous meetings with Alcaraz, and spoke of the intensity that the young Murcian has brought to the sport.

"Carlos has shown us that tennis is a more intense sport than we expected," claimed Tsitsipas. "Rafa [Nadal] brought something new with his tennis."

The Greek continued, "I think Carlos, now, is young blood, he runs very fast, he hits the ball very hard. He plays very free and is one of the most talented players I have ever seen. He's going to be hard to beat. I know he is very good."

"He has shown in the last games we've played that he is a tough opponent. I try to make the best of this. I hope that different results can come."

While Alcaraz has been conquering the grass, Tsitsipas has been struggling on the surface and has only won one of his four ATP tour matches in the build-up to Wimbledon.

Both players are in the top half of the Wimbledon draw, with Alcaraz drawing against tour veteran Jeremy Chardy and Tsitsipas with former No.3 Dominic Thiem, and would have to break uncharted territory to meet in the semi-final at SW19.

As mentioned, Tsitsipas has struggled against the No.1 and in-fact has not won a single match in their handful of meetings to date.

Meanwhile Nick Kyrgios believes a sense of on-court freedom is key to mastering the grass-court game. The 28-year-old Australian, who racked up a Tour-leading 12 wins on the surface in 2022, is renowned for enrapturing fans



with his unpredictable, imaginative strokeplay.

"I think just the ability to take one hand off the racquet [is vital on grass]," Kyrgios told ATPTour.com last week. "Volleys, slicing, blocking returns, all the intangibles. You get so many bad bounces on grass, and [you have to be] able to slice and drop shot and bring so many different aspects to the game."

Kyrgios' homeland has a deep-rooted culture of grass-court tennis. The Australian Open was held on the surface until 1987, and the country's ATP Tour stars continue to live up to that history. This year has been no exception, with Jordan Thompson ('s-Hertogenbosch) and Alex de Minaur (at the Queen's Club) both reaching ATP Tour finals across the opening two weeks of the grass-court season.

"I think you look at some of the best grass-court players in the world, someone like Roger [Federer] was so good because he was able to adapt and hit so many different shots," said Kyrgios. "I think Aussie's don't mind getting a bit dirty and trying to find different ways to win. So that's why you see so many of us having some good results on [grass]."

"Pretty much as soon as we played tennis there were national tournaments in Australia on grass. Under 10s, 12s, 14s. So we all grew up on and we were all very comfortable on it. There's no surprise when I see other Aussies having good results on it. We all feel really comfy on it."

French Striker Thuram Signs for Inter Milan

MILAN (Dispatches) - French international striker Marcus Thuram signed for Inter Milan on a free transfer, the Serie A club announced.

Son of 1998 World Cup winner Lilian Thuram, the 25-year-old signed a five-year deal with last season's Champions League finalists worth a reported €6.5 million (RM33.13 million) a season.

Inter secured his services on the back of his most successful season for Bundesliga side Borussia Moenchengladbach in which he scored 13 goals — he became a free agent at the end of the campaign.

"Marcus Thuram signs for Inter," read a statement on the club's website.

"The forward, who was born in 1997, joins the Nerazzurri following four seasons with Borussia Moenchengladbach."

Thuram will play up front alongside Lautaro Martinez after picking the country of his birth rather than Paris Saint-Germain, replacing veteran Edin Dzeko who signed for Turkish giants Fenerbahce last week.

He was born in Parma where his father played for five seasons, winning the Uefa Cup and Italian Cup in 1999 as part of a star-studded outfit which also featured Italian icons Gianluigi Buffon and Fabio Cannavaro.

Yates Wins First Stage of Tour de France

PARIS (Dispatches) - Britain's Adam Yates pipped his own twin brother Simon to claim the opening stage of the Tour de France and don the first yellow jersey of this year's race at the end of a 182.5-km loop around Bilbao.

Adam got the better of identical twin Simon to triumph for the first time on a grand tour, while his UAE Emirates team leader Tadej Pogacar finished third, also raising his arms in celebration.

Yates, who had set a devilish pace for Pogacar in the brutal climb shortly before the finish, pushed on in the descent to Bilbao, joined by his brother who is riding for the Jayco-AIUla team.

Adam was the stronger in the final uphill drag to prevail by four seconds, with Pogacar, who showed great legs in his first stage race since breaking a wrist in April, crossing the line 12 seconds off the pace.

"My brother came across to me and we started working together. At first, I didn't know if I should work with him, so I asked my team on the radio and they said 'Yeah, go for it,'" said Yates after his maiden victory on a grand tour.

"We're really close. To share this experience with him is really nice - but I wish he would pull a little bit easier because he almost dropped me one moment! I'm super happy, I just want to keep my feet on the ground." Overall, Yates leads his brother by eight seconds after picking up 10 seconds for the stage win, while Pogacar is 18 seconds off the pace.

Pogacar took a four-second bonus for his third place to take a slight advantage over defending champion Jonas Vingegaard, who was the only main contender to follow the Slovenian when he attacked on the Cote de Pike, 10 km from the finish.

Earlier, Spain's Enric Mas became the first of the 176 riders to abandon the race, quitting after crashing heavily on a descent some 22 kilometres from the line.

Arsenal Signs Rice With Record \$132.8m Transfer Fee



The two sides are still working out the details of the payment terms, but the deal has been agreed upon in principle, per the report. The agreement concludes a bidding war

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal has agreed to pay a £105 million transfer fee to acquire the rights to Declan Rice from West Ham United, The Athletic reports. Per the conversion rate on Wednesday, that adds up to roughly \$132.8 million.

The agreement sets a new record for an English player's transfer in the Premier League, breaking Manchester City's £100 million fee in 2022 to acquire Jack Grealish.

The Red Bull drivers exchanged sharp words after an opening lap battle that saw Verstappen run wide on the grass at one point, but they recovered to triumph.

Verstappen Leads Perez Home in Red Bull 1-2 In Spielberg Sprint

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen led team-mate Sergio Perez home with a dominant display as Red Bull stormed to a comfortable one-two in Saturday's wet-dry sprint race at the Austrian Grand Prix.

The defending double world champion and series leader added eight points to move into a 70-point lead in the drivers' title race as he won by 21.102 seconds. Ferrari's Carlos Sainz finished third ahead of the two Aston Martins of Lance Stroll and two-time champion Fernando Alonso with Nico Hulkenberg finishing sixth for Haas ahead of Alpine's Esteban ocon.

Mercedes' George Russell took a bold eighth ahead of Lando Norris in his upgraded Mercedes and team-mate seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton who had started 18th.

The Red Bull drivers exchanged sharp words after an opening lap battle that saw Verstappen run wide on the grass at one point, but they recovered to triumph.

"Once I got back in the lead, it was a good race," said Verstappen. "I had to manage the tyres, 24 laps is a lot for 'inters' and we had a hairy moment out of Turn One."

Perez said: "I had a good start and a bit of a fight with Max before I lost a position to Nico. I had to fight to get back past him."

"I think Max was angry at Turn Two, but I didn't see him there. Visibility was so bad. I gave him the place back."

Heavy rain showers left the track in semi-wet conditions and everyone except Valtteri Bottas began the race on intermediate tyres, the Finn, starting 19th, gambling on dry mediums. He pitted for intermediates after the formation lap.

Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari started ninth, after taking a three-place grid penalty for impeding Oscar Piastri, before the lights went out and Perez out-started Verstappen to prompt an opening lap scrap for positions.



Iniesta Plays Last Game for Japan's Vissel Kobe

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Spanish football legend Andres Iniesta played his last game for Japanese club Vissel Kobe on Saturday, as he prepares to continue his illustrious career elsewhere.

The 39-year-old started the game in midfield wearing the captain's armband and played the first 57 minutes of Kobe's 1-1 home draw with Consadole Sapporo in the J-League.

Iniesta made over 600 appearances for Barcelona, winning the Champions League four times and claiming nine La Liga titles before joining Kobe in 2018.

He has said he intends to keep playing but has not announced where his next move will be. On Saturday, in the 36th minute, he broke into the penalty area and tried to score a goal to the cheers of the spectators.

But 12 minutes into the second half, he was substituted with his team a goal down.

"Thank you Iniesta for playing for Vissel Kobe for many years," a fan tweeted as the Spanish player retreated to the bench.

"Iniesta, thank you for coming to Japan," another fan tweeted.

After the final whistle, a cheering spectator was seeing holding a banner that read "Gracias Iniesta."

Iniesta joined Kobe on a three-year deal on a reported annual salary of \$30 million, which he extended in May 2021. He won Japan's domestic Emperor's Cup in 2019 and led Vissel to the semi-finals of the Asian Champions League a year later.

But he has been used sparingly by the club this season, explaining in May that he wanted to leave Kobe so that he could "retire while I'm still active".

He played for Kobe in a friendly against Barcelona in Tokyo last month, sharing a hug with manager and former midfield partner Xavi as he left the pitch.

Widely considered one of the greatest players of his generation, Iniesta has been linked with a non-playing role at Barcelona.

