

Director General of the Ports and Maritime Department of Hormozgan Province Said That the Transit of Oil Products in the Persian Gulf Port, Has Increased by 73% in the First 3 Months of the Current Iranian Calendar Year

IRAN NEWS

Zionists' Dreams to Act Against Iran Will Never Be Realized, the Spokesman for the IRGC Said, Adding That the Zionists Make a Lot of Bluffs But Do Not Dare to Make the Slightest Move Against Iran

VOL. XXIX, No. 7812 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY JULY 12, 2023 - TIR 21, 1402

2 DOMESTIC

Good Will to Resolve Gas Field Row With Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

> SEE PAGE 2



3 DOMESTIC

Tehran, Hanoi Urged to Focus On Barter Trade, Cryptocurrency For Boosting Bilateral Trade

> SEE PAGE 3



4 INTERNATIONAL

Erdogan Links Sweden's NATO Membership to Turkey's EU Accession

> SEE PAGE 4



8 SPORTS

Djokovic Into 14th Wimbledon Quarters

> SEE PAGE 8



Tehran Reaffirms Sovereignty Over 3 Persian Gulf Islands

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry spokesman says the country forever has full sovereignty over the three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

Nasser Kanaani's comments came on Tuesday after a joint statement issued at the end of the sixth joint ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Russian Federation, held in Moscow on Monday.

In their statement, the ministers said the issue should be settled through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the rules of international law and the United Nations Charter.

The Iranian spokesperson rejected the contents of the statement about the trio islands and said they "eternally belong to Iran and such statements are inconsistent with Iran's friendly relations with its neighbors."

Kanaani once again reaffirmed Iran's policy of good neighborliness and mutual respect and held all regional states accountable for development and stability in the region.

See Page 7

Desecrator of Quran Worked for Mossad

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Intelligence Ministry says the Iraqi national who burnt a copy of the Holy Qur'an outside a mosque in the Swedish capital of Stockholm was affiliated with the Israeli Mossad spy agency and engaged in espionage activities against resistance groups.

The Ministry said in a statement on Monday that Salwan Momika was born in Iraq in 1986 and was hired by Mossad in 2019.

Stressing that Momika was "notorious" in his home country, the statement said his notoriety and criminal record, however, was "accepted and welcomed by the Zionists" at the time.

After being recruited by the Israeli spy agency, the Iraqi man "played a major role in spying on the resistance movement and advancing the project of Iraq's disintegration," the Intelligence Ministry said.

As a reward for his betrayal of Iraq and the Islamic community, the 37-year-old was granted residency in Sweden with the assistance of the Zionists, it added.

See Page 7

Asia's Return to Power Main Challenge for West

ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
Standing Committee on Budget and Planning &
Session of the APA Working Group on Statutory Documents

10-11 July 2023 * Tehran - Islamic Republic of Iran



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker Baqer Qalibaf has described the return of Asia to the economic and political power in the world as the West's challenge.

Addressing the opening ceremony of a meeting of the permanent budget and planning committee of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Tehran on Tuesday, Qalibaf said that the meeting will have a significant impact on the identification of strengths and weaknesses of a campaign to return Asia to its deserved global status.

What we are witnessing today in the form of the rotation of power in the international system, can become a basis for Asia's call to revise and renew the structure of international bodies such as the United Nations, especially in areas of economy, trade, and the international financial system, he said.

The way forward to achieve this goal and to manage this historical turning point is to institutionalize multilateral cooperation in the framework of regional integration, he stated.

Convergence between different religions of the world is one of the important factors for the survival of humanity and for strengthening peace, security, and tolerance, elsewhere in his remarks, he said.

The interaction between different religions plays a fundamental role in strengthening convergence and mutual cooperation among the nations of the world, he said.

In accordance with international conventions and treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, any kind of religious insult and desecration and any illegal behavior against individuals and groups due to religion are prohibited, he noted.

Referring to a recent move to desecrate the Holy Quran in Sweden, Qalibaf said that the move is in contradiction to the principle of respect for religious values, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic countries strongly condemn such actions.

Insulting the holy books, religious sanctities, and the Holy Quran under any pretext by the Swedish government is not acceptable, he said, adding that disguising such actions as freedom of speech will hurt the feelings of more than one billion Muslims living around the world.

Meanwhile on the sidelines of the event Qalibaf met Arab Parliament Speaker as well as Palestinian counterpart. Qalibaf met and talked with Arab Parliament Speaker Adel al-Asoumi and in the meeting, the Speaker of the Arab Parliament stated that he is visiting Tehran for the first time, expressed his hope that these meetings will be focused on serving the nations and in line with the realization of the interests of the countries.

In this meeting, Qalibaf emphasized the expansion of parliamentary relations between Iran's Parliament and the member countries of the APA and also the Arab Parliament.

Also, the head of the delegation of the Palestinian National Council met and talked with Iran's Parliament Speaker.

In this meeting, Baqer Qalibaf and Ali Faisal, the Deputy Chairman of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), stressed the expansion of cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries.

The annual meeting of the Standing Committee on Budget and Planning as well as the Basic Documents Working Group of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) with the participation of 20 countries commenced today on Tuesday morning, hosted by Tehran.

Indonesia Seizes Iranian-Flagged Tanker

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia's coast guard said on Tuesday it seized an Iranian-flagged supertanker suspected of involvement in the illegal transshipment of crude oil, and vowed to toughen maritime patrols.

The MT Arman 114 was carrying 272,569 metric tons of light crude oil, valued at 4.6 trillion rupiah (\$304 million), when it was seized last week, the Indonesian authorities said.

The Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) was reportedly suspected of transferring oil to another vessel without a permit on Friday, the Southeast Asian nation's maritime security agency said.

The vessel was captured after being spotted in Indonesia's North Natuna Sea, carrying out a ship-to-ship oil transfer with the Cameroon-flagged MT S Tinos, the agency's chief, Aan Kurnia, said.

"MT Arman was spoofing their automatic identification system (AIS) to show its position was in the Red Sea but in reality it is here," Aan told reporters.

Aan added that the vessel also dumped oil into the ocean, in violation of Indonesia's environmental law.

The vessels' operators could not be immediately reached for comment.

Along with the Arman, authorities detained its Egyptian captain, 28 crew and 3 passengers, who were the family of a security officer on board, the agency said.

See Page 7

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The Next Station, Dollar Elimination

The Shanghai bus with choosing the Islamic Republic of Iran passed the station of West's cruel sanctions against Iran and some other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The interesting point is that Almighty God wants the last goal of the diplomacy for membership in the SCO and Russian President Vladimir Putin's felicitation to Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi to be scored during the 13th government, and finally after 16 years of waiting, Iran with signing the permanent membership undertakings during the Samarkand Summit was accepted as the 9th permanent member of the SCO.

On July 13, an online meeting of the SCO leaders chaired by India was held which was the 23rd meeting of the heads of this organization where the permanent membership of Iran in the SCO was officially announced. On June 30, the Secretary General of the SCO Zhang Ming in a phone conversation with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian had announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran, from July 4, would then have all the rights as other member countries of the organization.

This diplomatic action shows that Iran genuinely has overcome the cruel sanctions, and the diplomacy of the 13th government has opened the closed doors of the membership to the SCO. The past media memories bespeak of this fact that Iran had made great efforts for membership in the SCO in the past years. The officials of the 13th government resumed the efforts for membership as a great opportunity for the country.

After official announcement of the SCO for permanent membership of Iran and according to the tweet of the government spokesman, the bill for joining of Iran to the SCO in the government after passing all legal formalities will be passed to Majlis. Iran's efforts for joining the SCO for years had faced hurdle because of the opposition of Tajikistan due to different security and political reasons but in the current condition and especially due to the successful diplomacy of the 13th government, the hurdle of Tajikistan was removed and permanent membership of Iran with a positive approach was presented in the SCO and with the nod of the organization for Iran's membership, a lasting move was registered in the 13th government actions.

See Page 7

Iran Not Currently Developing Nuclear Weapons

TEHRAN (MNA) - A U.S. intelligence assessment has emphasized that although Iran has ramped up activities that could help it develop nuclear weapons, it is not pursuing it at the moment.

According to an Associated Press report, the assessment from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released Monday claimed that Iran has moved to increase its capacity to produce an atomic bomb since 2020 but has stopped short of that so far.

"Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device," according to the two-page unclassified synopsis of the report.

However, Iran is also pursuing "research and development activities that would bring it closer to producing the fissile material needed for completing a nuclear device following a decision to do so," the report claimed.

The report further claimed that in that regard, Iran continues to violate the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal regarding uranium enrichment that it agreed to with world powers.

See Page 7

Sokhan Gostar Institute

IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

IRGC Foils U.S. Attempt to Help Fuel Smugglers

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps says the IRGC's naval forces have seized a foreign oil tanker carrying one million liters of smuggled fuel in the Persian Gulf.

General Ramezan Zirahi said the U.S. navy tried to stop the dismantling of the fuel smuggling cell by using a warplane and two choppers but it failed in doing so.

Zirahi noted that the ship enjoyed military support from the US but thanks to the vigilance, professionalism and clout of the IRGC's naval forces, the illegal acts of the Americans in the Persian Gulf were thwarted. He said this failure made U.S. embarrassed.

Good Will to Resolve Gas Field Row With Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran says it always observes the principles of good neighborliness and mutual interests in exploiting shared hydrocarbon reservoirs, as the controversy surrounding the Arash joint oil and gas field with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait erupted anew.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani reacted to the latest claims by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait over their "exclusive rights" to Arash strategic maritime gas field, known as Al-Dorra in the two Arab countries, in the resource-rich Persian Gulf.

Earlier this month, in an interview with Saudi state-run Al Ekhbariya television, Kuwait Oil Minister Saad Al Barrak called on Iran to validate its claim to the field by demarcating its own maritime borders first.

"Whoever has a claim must start demarcating the borders. And if it has a right, it will take it according to the rules of international law," the Kuwaiti minister said.

A day after the Kuwaiti statement, the Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry said that the Arab kingdom has "full rights" along with Kuwait to the gas field.

In response to such claims, Kanaani said senior managers of the Iranian and Kuwaiti foreign ministries held their latest round of "legal and technical" negotiations in Tehran on March 13 about the demarcation of the disputed area.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always paid heed to the issues relating to maritime demarcation and exploitation of joint hydrocarbon resources by considering



the common interests and the principle of good neighborliness with all the neighbors, including Kuwait," the Iranian spokesperson added.

He once again reiterated the Iranian administration's policy on pursuing dialogue, cooperation and engagement and said all bilateral issues are pursued based on such a framework.

The row over the strategic offshore gas field, located in the interlocking marine region between Kuwait and Iran in the Persian Gulf, stretches back to 1967 when it was discovered by the Japanese firm AOC.

Iran and Kuwait each awarded an offshore concession, one to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the forerunner to British Petroleum, and one to Royal Dutch Shell.

The two concessions overlapped in the northern part of the field, whose total proven gas reserves are estimated to be around 20 trillion cubic feet.

Iran engaged in drilling operations in the field in the early 2000s, but those activities were stopped after a visit by a high-level Kuwaiti delegation to Tehran, as Iran didn't want any dispute.

Enemy Unable to Defeat Iran Militarily

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The enemy has come to the conclusion that it is impossible to defeat Iran in the military field through conventional methods, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Ground Force said.

Addressing an annual conference of the IRGC commanders in Mashhad, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour said the enemy has gained information about part of Iran's military and defense capabilities and arrived at the conclusion, with certainty, that it is impossible to defeat Iran's power and abilities with customary military methods.

That is why the enemy has resorted to a hybrid war in the new era of confrontation with Iran, the commander added, stressing that this hostile plot is also prone to failure.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the general pointed to the enemies' plots to carry out assassination attacks by hiring mercenary cells that have no human understanding, saying the blind terrorist attacks by the proxy forces have shed light on the links between the enemy and the terrorists and added to the public hatred of the adversaries.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Following "Ghadir" Event

TEHRAN (IP) - Interior Minister says Iran's Islamic revolution has emerged after centuries following the "Ghadir" event.

Ahmad Vahidi in a conference titled Ali (AS), the standard and role model of Islamic governance, added: Ghadir has a high position, and this fact is seen in the Holy Quran.

He noted: In the past few days and at the same time as the Ghadir festival was held in Iran, foreign media had different reactions.

Vahidi clarified: The effort to isolate these important movements continues and holding Ghadir is not less important than the "Ashura" event, if not more important.

Vahidi emphasized: "Knowing about Ghadir is urgent and necessary. Our youth must find their true identity by knowing about "Ghadir" so that they are safe against the enemy's plots."

Following the conference, Hossein Zarif Manesh, the CEO of Ghadir International Foundation, referring to the slogan of Ghadir celebration with the title of Imam Ali (AS), the standards of life and role model of governance, added: Ghadir has come to tell us how to obey.

He added that we should set Imam Ali (AS) and his government as role models for life because Ghadir is the plan of Islam for managing society.

Pointing to the importance of celebrating Islamic occasions, he said: According to the leader of the Islamic revolution, these occasions, are the days of raising awareness.

Eid al-Ghadir is an Islamic commemorative holiday and is considered to be among the significant holidays of Shi'ite Muslims. Eid is held on 18 Dhul-Hijjah at the time when the Islamic prophet Muhammad was said to have appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib as his successor.

Croatia Envoy Advises World People to Visit Iran



ISFAHAN (IRNA)- Croatia's Ambassador in Tehran Drago Stambuk has advised the people of other countries to visit Iran in order to see the realities in the country as some have presented a false image of the Islamic Republic.

Stambuk made the remarks in an economic meeting held in the central Iranian province of Isfahan on Monday with the participation of ambassadors of Russia, Tajikistan, and Malaysia in Tehran.

In his remarks, the Croatian ambassador hailed Iran as it was the first Asian country to officially recognize his country.

Then, he called for further cooperation with Iran in tourism, medical, religious, cultural, and economic fields.

Malaysian ambassador to Tehran Khairi Bin Omar who was also present in the meeting said his country was willing to widen trade exchange with Iran.

Croatia envoy advises world people to visit Iran. The figures show that the trade between Malaysia and Iran has increased during 2021 and 2022, he underlined.

At the end of his remarks, the Malaysian ambassador said his country supports the launch of a direct flight from Isfahan, located in central Iran, to Malaysia.

The first international conference focusing on nations' diplomacy was held in Isfahan on Sunday for two days. A number of diplomats, ambassadors, researchers, and university professors were present at the conference.

Iran Warns of Fresh Fierce Attacks on KRG-Based Terrorists

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran's highest-ranking military commander cautioned the Iraqi government that its failure to meet a deadline of September for action against hostile armed groups in its northern regions will result in a fresh round of Iranian military strikes against them.

Addressing an annual conference of IRGC commanders in Mashhad on Tuesday, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri bemoaned the fact that a number of neighboring states have failed to honor their commitments to border security.

"Armed secessionist groups exist in northern Iraq which cause insecurity at our borders," the top commander said.

Lauding the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Ground Force for the "effective missile and drone attacks" against the terrorist groups in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region with the purpose of protecting Iran's security, Major General Baqeri said the strikes have been suspended after the Baghdad government undertook to disarm those groups and stop their activities by the Iranian month of Shahrivar (August 23 - September 22).

The general then noted that Iran will wait until



Shahrivar and hopes that the government of Iraq would honor its commitments, adding, "If the deadline passes and they (terrorists) remain armed or carry out any operation, our operations against those groups will definitely reoccur more severely."

The IRGC launched several rounds of military strikes on the positions of separatist groups in Iraq's Kurdistan Region in 2022.

The first stage of the attacks began on September 24, after terrorists' move to ignite riots and unrest along border cities west of Iran.

The move by IRGC Ground Force to hit Iraqi-based Komalah and Democrat terrorist groups came after illegal entry by these groups' armed teams into the Iranian border cities.

The IRGC has said, "These terrorists - who are backed by the global arrogance and are based in the Iraqi northern region - were forced to flee the country after accepting heavy casualties."

The IRGC underlined that Iran on many occasions has warned officials of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region about the terrorist groups' activities in the region but they have failed to pay necessary attention to the warnings and take proper measures to prevent terrorist moves.

MP Urges France Not to Foster Anti-Iran Terrorists

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian lawmaker has called on France to change its wrong policies on Tehran instead of falling under the influence of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq terrorist organization (MKO).

Vahid Jalalzadeh, the head of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, made the remarks in two separate letters sent to Jean-Louis Boursines and Christian Cambon, who are presiding over the foreign affairs committees of the French National Assembly and the Senate, respectively.

"Instead of being influenced by the MKO's false propaganda and providing the terrorist group with platforms to spread hatred, the French government and houses of

parliament should make broad and dramatic reforms in their wrong attitude and policies regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran," he wrote.

"Such approaches can bring about peace to France and lead to the honoring of the fundamental principles of human and minority rights."

The MKO has carried out numerous terrorist attacks against Iranian civilians and government officials since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Out of the nearly 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist attacks over the past four decades, about 12,000 have fallen victim to the MKO's acts of terror.

Members of the notorious anti-Iran cult enjoy freedom of activity in the US and European countries, including France.

Also in his letters, the Iranian MP referred to the fatal police shooting of Nahel Merzouk during a traffic stop in a Paris suburb on June 27. The killing of the unarmed French teenager, of north African descent, sparked a huge wave of protests across the European country.

Jalalzadeh condemned the murder as "a flagrant violation of human rights," blasting the French administration for suppressing the protesters and using force against them.

"As a self-proclaimed advocate of human rights and democracy..., France is expected to recognize the rights of protesters to hold peaceful demonstrations in line with [the principle of] free speech and end violence against its people," he added.

"Undoubtedly, insisting on mistakes about rights issues and exploiting them to achieve some colonial objectives will further destroy the image of the country before public opinions in the world."

Reviving Idle Production Units Creates 61,000 Jobs in 2 Years

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's program for reviving idle industrial units has created job opportunities for 61,010 people across the country over the past two years, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

According to the data released by Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), 3,818 idle units have been revived during the mentioned period. As reported, the number of jobs created in the said two years has increased by 35.4 percent compared to the figure for the preceding two years.

In the past few years, many of the production units across Iran have been wrestling with financial issues as well as the problem of supplying their raw materials, so that, many have been forced to shut down or decrease their activities.

The Industry Ministry's program for reviving such units has tried to identify major problems and issues that the production units are facing in order to bring them back into the production cycle by resolving such problems.

Earlier this month, ISIPO Head Mohsen Salehinia announced that 314 idle

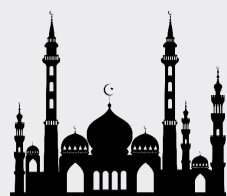
industrial units have been revived throughout the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

According to Salehinia, reviving the mentioned units created jobs for 5,623 persons.

The latest data released by the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry shows that 72,250 industrial and mining units are operating across the country in which nearly 2.43 million people are working.

According to the data, with 15,822 active units, the field of non-metallic minerals accounts for the biggest share of the mentioned units, while food and beverage products and rubber and plastic products with 8,682 and 7,524 units are in the second and third places.

In terms of job creation, the group of non-metallic minerals has also the highest employment rate, with 382,837 people working in this sector. The group of food and beverage products and the group of manufacturing chemical products are also in second and third place with the employment of 362,223 and 200,358 people.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:42
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:15
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:58

111. And if any one earns sin, he earns it against His own soul: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

112. But if any one earns a fault or a sin and throws it on to one that is innocent, He carries (on himself) (Both) a falsehood and a flagrant sin.

Surah 4. Women (111 - 112)

Tehran, Hanoi Urged to Focus on Barter Trade, Cryptocurrency For Boosting Bilateral Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Mr. Hossein Salahvarzi in meeting with Ambassador of Vietnam to Tehran Mr. Luong Quoc Huy called for using the capacity of barter trade and using cryptocurrency for broadening bilateral trade.

In the meeting both sides explored ways for boosting bilateral cooperation through removing hurdles in way of the trade and finding ways for increasing bilateral trade exchanges.

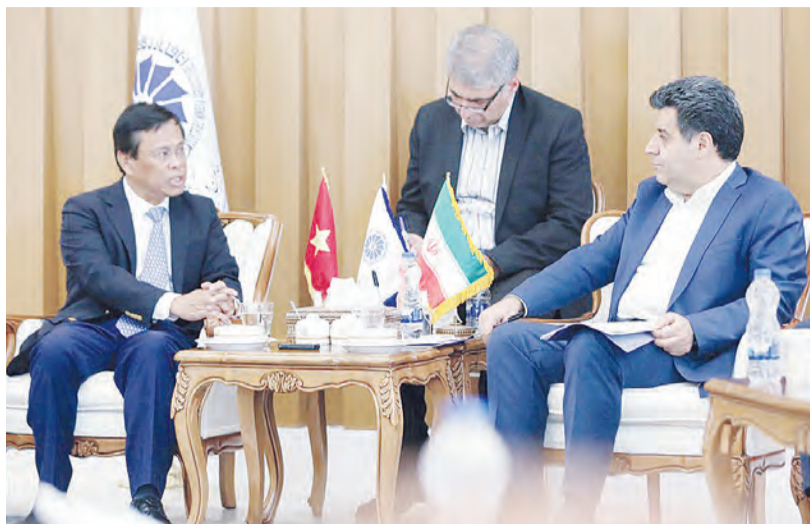
First in the meeting, Ambassador of Vietnam Mr. Huy felicitated Mr. Salahvarzi for being elected as the head of the ICCIMA and emphasized importance of trade between Hanoi and Tehran, adding that Iran in terms of economy is important country for the regional and Asian states and many states in the world and this shows the correct path of diplomacy of Iran. He noted that Iran correctly emphasizes the policy of good neighborhood and look at the East.

Huy in the meeting revealed the invitation of Iran's Majlis Speaker from Vietnam's Parliament Speaker as the Vietnamese official is to visit Tehran next month and his goal is to broaden economic ties with Iran.

He further said that 70 heads and managers of businesses will accompany Vietnam Parliament Speaker to Tehran to Iranian economic activists for talks and knowing the economic capacities of the country. He stated that the Vietnamese official is also to meet the ICCIMA to show his good-will and will deliver a speech and therefore he is interested the ICCIMA to help the ground for this event. He said he also had talks with Iran Trade Promotion Organization for cooperation with the embassy for better holding of this meeting.

Huy then pointed to the obstacles in front of trade with Iran and said that sanctions and banking and financial relations are the main obstacle in way of trade, of course Iran's foreign policy has recently showed that it is moving for removal of sanctions in order that sanctions and banking hurdles are removed as fast as they can. The diplomat further said that for this reason before the removal of the sanctions Vietnamese companies have decided to visit to Tehran to identify opportunities for broadening economic ties between Tehran and Hanoi in the future.

He then touched upon removing banking hurdles and said that Vietnam and Iran are



facing banking mechanism hurdle in their trade tries and he had a meeting with the director general of AOCU and talked about financial mechanism. He added that next week they will decide what financial mechanism they will adopt, expressing hope that this mechanism can facilitate the way and be an efficient one.

Then Salahvarzi, for his part, said that they are well aware of the good economic growth of Vietnam as the praiseworthy economic growth has introduced Vietnam as the super star of economy. He added that considering good political relations of the governments of the two countries, they in the private sector believe they should do their best for reinforcing economic relations.

He further said that in recent years the trade between the two countries had been affected by the pandemic and sanctions but in some periods the trade between the two countries has faced upward trend but it has not been in accordance with the political tie and the ICCIMA is not happy with the volume of trade between the two countries.

Salahvarzi said that they are keen to broaden trade tie with Vietnam and establishment of the Iran-Vietnam Joint Chamber shows this interest for strengthening trade cooperation and expressed hope these relations will be based on a balanced policy and look at the East by Iran.

He added that they need some new ways for broadening economic ties and barter trade and using cryptocurrencies can be used in trade even without removal of sanctions.

He then pointed to the significance of the visit of Vietnam Parliament Speaker to Tehran and they can review and explore ways for resolving banking problem and national payment mechanism and even using barter trade.

Salahvarzi also pointed to facilitating visa process for traders as an important factor for broadening ties and called for a solution for it.

He then pointed to the fields that both countries can cooperate in them and said that both countries due to progresses in the field of startups can cooperate in it.

Tanker Truck Root Cause of Fire At Iran's Aftab Oil Refining Co.

BANDAR ABBAS (IRNA) - The Aftab Oil Refining Company has announced that the inattention of a driver of a fuel tanker truck started a fire at the company.

The public relations department of the Aftab Oil Refining Co. issued a statement on Tuesday, declaring that the fire, which broke out at 13:47 local time on Monday, occurred due to activities of the tanker truck and the transit of excessive numbers of tankers at the campus of the company, where the fire spread to oil reservoirs.

The incident has left no casualties, director general of Hormozgan governor's crisis management, Mehrdad Hassanzadeh said.

However, the firefighters were assisted by local forces from other provincial public centers succeeded in extinguishing the fire.

Located in the southern city of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, the Aftab Oil Refining Co. is the second largest refinery in Iran with the output capacity of refining over 300,000 b/d of oil.

Head of Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation Appointed

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The managing director of Farabi Cinema Foundation (FCF) – the most important cinematic institution in Iran – has been appointed by the head of the Iranian Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs.



Mohammad Khazaei, who is also the head of the FCF board of trustees, picked Majid Zeynolabedin as the managing director of the Foundation on Monday.

Zeynolabedin has an MA in political science and international affairs. He has already been an advisor to Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the managing director of the Roudaki Artistic Cultural Foundation, and the director of state TV channels 1, 3, and 5.

Established in 1983, FCF has operated in a wide range of activities covering all aspects of the cinema and film industry; however, now its objectives are mainly focused on feature films. Farabi has produced films, supplied raw materials, lent camera equipment, provided post-production facilities, published various cinematic literature, and sponsored film festivals since the very first steps of the launch of New Iranian Cinema. FCF has also organized Fajr Film Festival and Children's Film Festival over the last two decades, according to the FCF website.

First Ahvaz-Istanbul Direct Flight Launched

AHVAZ (IRNA) - The first direct flight from the Iranian southwestern city of Ahvaz to Turkey's tourist city of Istanbul was carried out on Tuesday morning, Karun Airlines declared.

CEO of Karun Airlines Mohammad Mahmoudi said that a Boeing 737 belonging to Karun Airlines left Ahvaz for Istanbul at 7:00 a.m. local time Tuesday from the Shahid Qasem Soleimani International Airport in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province.

Mahmoudi also said that the Ahvaz-Istanbul flight departs Ahvaz at 7:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays and that the return flight from Istanbul to Ahvaz is scheduled to be carried out at 12:30 p.m. on the same days.

He explained that launching the direct flight between Ahvaz and Istanbul is a measure to serve the residents of Khuzestan province.

According to the official, prior to this, he passengers from Khuzestan had to travel from Ahvaz to the capital Tehran to fly to Istanbul which is considered the gateway to Europe; so, they were forced to spend more time and money, but now they are able to travel to the Turkish city directly.

Domestic Wheat Purchases Exceed 6m mt

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Guaranteed wheat purchase from domestic farmers in Iran has exceeded 6.02 million metric tons (mt) since the start of the harvest in April, Iran's Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad (MAJ) has said.

Saeid Raad said on Tuesday that the domestic purchase of wheat from local farmers has increased by 1.292 million mt (March 21-July 10) compared to the last year's corresponding period, indicating a 27% year-on-year surge.

The government has paid the local farmers over 57% of the price of their products, he further noted.

Recently, MAJ's head of wheat farming Sohrab Sohrabi estimated that the country's wheat output will reach 12.5 to 13 million mt in the harvest period to July.

Iraq Calls for Bolstering Technological Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iraqi Minister of Health Saleh Al-Hasnawi has urged the expansion of technological relations with Iran, especially in the field of health.

Saleh Al-Hasnawi visited the Iranian Innovation and Technology House and products of health, pharmaceutical, and medical equipment companies at the Tehran International Exhibition on Monday.

Calling for expanding ties with Iran, Saleh Al-Hasnawi underlined that Iran's technologies in the field of health are very advanced and reliable.

Iran and Iraq's ties are deep-rooted, he said, adding that expanding mutual ties in the economic, trade, and health spheres are effective in strengthening the relations between the two countries.

The two sides are looking for signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of medicine, safety, and contagious diseases, he noted.

Saleh Al-Hasnawi reiterated that Iran and Iraq are trying to strengthen bilateral ties in the fields of health, exchange of information, experiences, and technologies, plus discussing the expansion of technological cooperation in the World Health Organization.

Call for Joint Investment With Oman's Private Sector

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has called for promoting joint investment between the private sectors of Iran and Oman in order to boost the trade exchanges between the two countries.

Hossein Salahvarzi made the remarks in a meeting with Omani Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim bin Ahmed Almuaini on Monday.

During the meeting, Salahvarzi expressed the readiness of the private sectors of Iran and Oman for joint investments, as well as, using transit capacities of the two countries for re-exports if the necessary infrastructure is provided by the governments of the two countries.

Referring to the 40 percent growth of trade exchanges between the two countries in the previous year, the official said: "Although this positive trend is significant, the ICCIMA is trying to increase the volume of exchanges as much as possible."

He pointed out that the Joint Economic Committee meeting of Iran and Oman will soon be held in Tehran, noting that the ICCIMA is ready to discuss ways of facilitating the trade between the private sectors of the two countries in the mentioned meeting.

"The main obstacles facing the cooperation of the two countries' private sectors are related to banking transactions and transportation," Salahvarzi added.



He further mentioned Oman's long-term development plan for 2040 and said: "The Iran chamber is working on an action plan for the active participation of the private sectors of the two countries in this development plan."

Welcoming the remarks of the ICCIMA head, Almuaini said: "The Omani government regularly encourages the country's private sector to increase exchanges with Iran and we are trying to facilitate such exchanges and remove obstacles."

"Until five years ago, the exchanges between the two countries did not exceed \$200 million dollars, but now it has increased to more than two billion dollars. Of course, although the progress of economic relations between the two countries is significant, we should not be satisfied with this level," the envoy added.

Aiming to expand economic ties, Iran and Oman signed four cooperation documents in various areas including energy, investment, and free zones during the official visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said to Tehran in late May.

The document on the energy sector was signed by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji and Omani Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser al-Aufi.

The two countries also signed three other documents to cooperate in the economic, investment, and free zones sectors.

Iran Launching \$1.43n Petrochemical Plant

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran is launching a major petrochemical plant that relies on homegrown equipment for more than 80% of its needs, a senior official in the state-owned Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) said.

Hassan Neshanzadeh, who leads Planning and Business Operations at the PGPIC, said on Monday that Gachsaran Petrochemical Company, based in southern Iran, will soon be inaugurated in a ceremony attended by President Ebrahim Raisi.

He stated that the project will increase Iran's ethylene production by 1 million metric tons (mt) per year.

Neshanzadeh said the project has cost 1.3 billion euros (\$1.43 billion), adding that a bulk of the equipment used in the plant have been provided from Iranian suppliers.

"Gachsaran is the first polyolefin unit (in Iran) with home-made furnace burners," said the official.

Gachsaran Petrochemicals will rely on 1.25 million mt per day of ethane gas as its feedstock. The gas will be supplied to the plant through a 90-kilometer pipeline from Bidboland Gas Refinery, located in the nearby Khuzestan region.

Iran's Energy Ministry has guaranteed to supply 12 million cubic meters per year of water and 50 megawatts of electricity to the plant.

The launch of the plant will generate 1,000 direct jobs in the relatively impoverished regions in southern Iran while another 3,000 jobs will be created on the supply chain of the industry.

The PGPIC accelerated construction works for Gachsaran Petrochemicals in 2019, some 15 years after it started the project.

The planned launch comes despite the fact that Iran's oil sector has been subject to a series of American sanctions since 2018.

At Least 29 Killed in India Monsoon Floods

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Days of intense monsoon rains across northern India have left at least 29 people dead, rendering many areas inaccessible with bridges smashed and roads blocked, officials said.

Television footage showed flash floods and landslides triggered by torrential rain, washing away vehicles, demolishing buildings and ripping down bridges in the hilly state of Himachal Pradesh, the worst affected area.

"In the last two days, the death toll due to monsoon rains has risen to 20 in Himachal Pradesh," said Omkar Sharma, a senior official heading disaster management in the state.



Two IS Jihadists Arrested In Niger Joint Operation

NIAMEY (Dispatches) - Two leading jihadists from the Islamic State's Sahel affiliate have been arrested in a joint operation by Niger and French forces, a senior security source said Monday.

The two members of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) were captured in western Niger on separate days last week after being "very actively sought", the source said.

The two were detained in Tillaberi region near the border with jihadist-hit Burkina Faso.

The source named the two as Abu Maryam also known as Zaid, and Sita Ousseini, alias Loukoumane, who is described in search notices as a native of Niger.



Erdogan Links Sweden's NATO Membership to Turkey's EU Accession



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, in an unexpected move, said the European Union should open the way for Ankara's accession to the bloc before Turkey's parliament approves Sweden's bid to join the NATO military alliance.

Turkey's bid to join the EU has been frozen for years after membership talks were launched in 2005 under Erdogan's first term as prime minister.

The ties between Ankara and members of the bloc soured several years ago, especially after a 2016 failed coup attempt in Turkey, but have since improved. The bloc depends on the help of NATO ally Ankara, particularly on migration.

In a surprise change of tack, Erdogan on Monday linked Ankara's approval of Sweden's NATO bid to Turkey finally joining the EU.

"I am calling from here on these countries that are making Turkey wait at the door of the European Union for more than 50 years," Erdogan said, speaking ahead of his departure for the NATO summit in Vilnius.

"First, come and open the way for Turkey at the European Union and then we will open the way for Sweden, just as we did for Finland," he said, adding that he would repeat his call during the summit.

A European Commission spokesperson said NATO and EU enlargement were "separate processes."

"The accession process for each candidate country is based on the merits of each country," the spokesperson said, adding that the two processes cannot be linked.

Asked about Erdogan's comments, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said while he backs Ankara's membership of the EU, as far as he was concerned Sweden had already met the conditions required to join NATO.

"It is still possible to have a positive decision on Sweden in Vilnius," Stoltenberg told a news conference.

Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership last year, abandoning policies of military non-alignment that had lasted through the decades of the Cold War in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

While Finland's NATO membership was green-lighted in April, Turkey and Hungary have yet to clear Sweden's bid. Stockholm has been working to join the bloc at the summit in Vilnius.

Erdogan said Sweden's accession hinged on the implementation of a deal reached last summer during the alliance's summit in Madrid, adding that no one should expect compromises from Ankara.

Ankara says Sweden has not done enough against people Turkey sees as terrorists, mainly members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) that is considered a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the EU and the United States.

Sinan Ulgen, former diplomat and director of the Istanbul-based Centre for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies, said Erdogan's move would not strengthen Turkey's hand at the Vilnius summit.

"The positive side of this surprise move is that it showed Turkey still has an EU membership perspective. But it is hard to say it would help any progress on Turkey's EU membership bid," he said.

Erdogan also said that an end to the war between Ukraine and Russia would ease Kyiv's NATO membership process.

Russia Confirms Wagner-Putin Meeting

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin for three hours, days after a short-lived rebellion led by the mercenary chief and his private army, the Kremlin has confirmed.

Monday's announcement came shortly after Russia's defence ministry published a video featuring the country's military chief, Valery Gerasimov, marking the first time he has been seen publicly since Wagner's rebellion aimed to oust him.

Both updates appeared to be an attempt by Moscow to take control of the narrative surrounding the Wagner Group after a turbulent period. During last month's unexpected yet brief revolt in Russia, the Wagner chief denounced Gerasimov and Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu, accusing them of failing to provide his fighters in Ukraine with ammunition.

The Putin-Prigozhin meeting took place at the Kremlin on June 29 and involved commanders from the military company, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.

Germany Sends Troops to Australia as Focus Shifts to Indo-Pacific

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany will, for the first time, send troops to Australia as part of joint drills with about 30,000 service members from 12 other nations, underlining Berlin's increased focus on the Indo-Pacific amid rising tensions with China in the region.

Up to 240 German soldiers, among them 170 paratroopers and 40 marines, will take part in the Talisman Sabre exercise from July 22 to August 4, the largest drills between Australia and the US, held biannually, according to army chief Lieutenant General Alfons Mais.

"It is a region of extremely high importance for us in Germany as well as for the European Union due to the economic interdependencies," Mais told the Reuters news agency in an interview published on Monday, hours before the first German troops were to leave for Australia.

The Germans will train in jungle warfare and landing operations alongside soldiers from countries such as Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, France and Britain. "We aim to demonstrate that we are reliable and capable partners that contribute to stabilising the rules-based order in the region," Mais said.

When asked what message the first deployment of German troops to Australia was meant to send to China, he underscored Berlin did not aim to antagonise anybody.

"It generally makes sense to get to know the perspective others have upon the world," said the lieutenant general, adding that the current security challenges were much less clear-cut than before 1990.

"The Cold War was easy, it was a bipolar world. Today, we can no longer focus on Europe only ... we have to position ourselves much more broadly," the army chief underscored.

China is Berlin's most important trading partner, and 40 percent of Europe's foreign trade flows through the South China Sea, a waterway that is a focal point for territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific.

In 2021, a German warship sailed into the South China Sea for the first time in nearly 20 years.



North Korea May Shoot Down U.S. Spy Planes Violating Its Airspace

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea accused the United States of violating its airspace by conducting surveillance flights and warned that, while Pyongyang was exercising restraint, such flights may be shot down.

Provocative military actions by the United States were bringing the Korean peninsula closer to a nuclear conflict, said an unnamed spokesperson of North Korea's Ministry of National Defense in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

The report also cited the use of U.S. reconnaissance planes and drones and said Washington was escalating tensions by sending a nuclear submarine near the peninsula.

"There is no guarantee that such a shocking accident as the downing of the U.S. Air Force strategic reconnaissance plane will not happen" in waters east of Korea, the spokesperson said.

The statement cited past incidents of the North shooting down or intercepting U.S. aircraft at the border with South Korea and off the coast. North Korea has often complained about U.S. surveillance flights near the peninsula.

There was no immediate response from the U.S. military stationed in South Korea to a request for comment.

South Korea's military said North Korea's claim of airspace violation is not true. It said U.S. air surveillance assets conduct routine reconnaissance flights around the peninsula, adding the allies work closely together to monitor the North.

The moves by the United States to introduce strategic nuclear assets to the Korean peninsula is "the most undisguised nuclear blackmail" against North Korea and regional countries and presents a grave threat to peace, KCNA said.



"Whether the extreme situation, desired by nobody, is created or not on the Korean peninsula depends on the future action of the U.S., and if any sudden situation happens ... the U.S. will be held totally accountable for it," it said.

Later on Monday, Kim Yo Jong - the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un - said the country would respond decisively if the U.S. military entered North Korea's economic zone again, according to state media KCNA.

U.S. and South Korean forces have been conducting air and navy drills this year that involved a U.S. aircraft carrier and heavy bombers. A U.S. nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine also made a port call at Busan in South Korea last month.

The North's statement denounced what it called a U.S. move to deploy a strategic nuclear submarine carrying nuclear warheads to the Korean peninsula for the first time since 1981.

In April, the leaders of South Korea and the United States agreed a U.S. Navy nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine will visit South Korea for the first time since the 1980s but no timetable has been given for such a visit.

It was part of a plan to boost the deployment of American strategic assets aimed at a more effective response to North Korea's threats and weapons tests in defense of its ally South Korea.

In June, a U.S. B-52 strategic bomber took part in air military drills with South Korea in a show of force following North Korea's failed launch of a spy satellite at the end of May.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said it was time to show "the international community's determination to deter North Korea's nuclear weapons program is stronger than North Korea's desire to develop nuclear weapons," in written comments to the Associated Press published on Monday.

Biden Hails Rock Solid U.S.-UK Ties

LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Joe Biden made a whistle-stop trip to Britain, hailing the "rock-solid" friendship with Washington's close ally before meeting King Charles for a discussion with the monarch and finance chiefs on tackling climate change.

Biden's visit to Britain kicked off a three-nation trip that will include the NATO summit in Lithuania, at which allies aim to show solidarity with Ukraine against Russia's invasion while not yet accepting Kyiv as an alliance member.

The president's meeting with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, their fifth in as many months, lasted less than an hour, with the focus on Ukraine. "We've got a lot to talk about," said Biden as they sat in the garden of Sunak's Downing Street office. "Our relationship is rock-solid. Couldn't be meeting with a closer friend and a greater ally."

Sunak and Biden shared notes before the NATO summit which kicks off on Tuesday. Ahead of the trip, Biden urged caution for now on Ukraine's campaign to join NATO, whose mutual defence pact obliges all members to come to the aid of any member that is attacked.

"We want to work with the U.S. and our allies on the pathway for Ukraine to join," Sunak's spokesperson told reporters, saying it would not be appropriate for Ukraine to join while the war was ongoing.

The leaders also discussed the U.S. decision to send Ukraine cluster munitions, which are banned by more than 100 countries, including Britain, which view them as a potential threat to civilian populations because they typically release large numbers of smaller bomblets that can kill indiscriminately.

Russia, Ukraine and the United States have not signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which bans their production, stockpiling, use and transfer.

"We stand by our obligations under the convention, which include discouraging their use. There is no change from us on that, obviously it is for each country to make a decision," Sunak's spokesperson said.

After the meeting, Biden, 80, headed to Windsor Castle to meet the king, where he was greeted with traditional pomp and ceremony in the castle quadrangle.



What Makes South Asia So Vulnerable To Climate Change?

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Heavy monsoon rains in Pakistan over the past week killed at least 50 people across the country, nearly a year after massive flooding killed more than 1,700 people and affected 33 million others.

In neighbouring India, about a dozen districts in the northeastern state of Assam were hit by deadly flash floods in June, forcing thousands to flee their homes and seek refuge at makeshift relief camps.

The ravaging floods – which killed at least 11 people – meant many faced the daunting task of rebuilding their lives as they returned to destroyed homes and drowned livestock.

Climate-change-induced downpours, drought, and soaring temperatures have become increasingly common across the eight countries of South Asia, making it one of the world's most vulnerable regions to the impacts of global warming.

Saleemul Haq, director at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, said the region is particularly at risk because of a combination of geography, population and poverty.

"Over a billion and a half people are living in an area that is not such a big part of the world. It has major river systems from the Hindu Kush and the Himalayan mountain regions flowing through," he told Al Jazeera.

Some 750 million people in South Asia have been affected by at least one natural disaster, according to data compiled by the Washington-based World Bank.

The lack of land to grow food, water shortages, and displacement of populations are some of the challenges the region is facing as climate experts predict irreversible consequences to the livelihoods of hundreds of millions.

For thousands of years, South Asia was seen as the world's "granary" for agriculture – a region with weather patterns well-suited for growing crops, Pakistan-based climate scientist Fahad Saeed told Al Jazeera.

"However, with the onset of climate change, the delicate balance which was important for crops to grow has been disturbed," Saeed said.

Results from a study published in 2021 on wheat production up to 2050, using crop simulation models, found the most negative effects will be seen in South Asian nations with a yield decline of 16 percent.

Environmentalist Anjal Prakash said climate change will have "significant implications" for food security in South Asia.

"Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and storms ... pose substantial challenges to agricultural systems in the region," said Prakash, adding livestock productivity and fisheries will be adversely affected.

Furthermore, Prakash said climate change could also make water availability of a significant issue in the region, which has one of the highest number of glaciers in the world, situated in the Himalayas.

"Melting glaciers and changes in rainfall patterns can disrupt irrigation systems, affecting crop growth and exacerbating water scarcity," Prakash, who has previously worked with the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, asserted.

A University of Leeds study published in 2021 found the ice from glaciers in the Himalayas is melting "at least 10 times higher than the average rate over past centuries", a result of human-induced climate change.

Researchers said the Himalayas, which cover countries such as Pakistan, Nepal and India, had lost 40 percent of their ice over several hundred years.

Water scarcity and low crop yields will result in adding to the continuing hunger crisis in the region, climate experts said.

In 2021, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said some 21 percent of people in South Asia faced severe food insecurity, a 2 percent rise from 2020. In the same year, the region had the highest number of undernourished people in the world – 330 million – the FAO said.

Fears of declines in food production, together with other climate-related calamities such as rising sea levels, have also raised the alarm as millions in South Asia are being internally displaced.

A report published by activist group ActionAid in 2020 estimated the region could see up to 63 million people become migrants by 2050 as a result of extreme weather events.

Huq said displacement from human-induced climate change was further adding to economic migration from rural to urban areas – a continuing phenomenon worldwide – with South Asia being a major "hotspot", with the greatest displacement taking place in low-lying coastal areas.

"Climate change ... is exacerbating the 'push factor' – the motivation to migrate away from place of residence – for people who are living in places where they can no longer continue to have livelihoods that they used to have, whether it's farming or fishing," he said.

"From the damage that occurs to infrastructure, agricultural land and homes, many people that evacuate aren't able to go home again. They become effectively refugees."



Heat Wave in U.S. Turns Texas Prisons Into Ovens

HOUSTON (Dispatches) - On the afternoon of July 4, as Americans were celebrating the country's independence with elaborate fireworks displays, a prisoner named Joseph Martire passed out in his cell in Texas, amid the excessive heat that has been swamping much of the southern United States in recent days.

In concrete, brick and metal penitentiaries, industrial fans churn warm vapor without really cooling the air. And with no air conditioning in most prisons, when outside temperatures exceed 40°C (104 Fahrenheit), it can feel even hotter inside the cells.

Some prisoners sabotage the toilets in their cells to make the water overflow and wet the floor, which they then sleep on. Others wet their clothes to try to stay cool, according to convicts, ex-convicts and family members who spoke to AFP.

In recent weeks, 35-year-old Martire had four heat-related health episodes at Estelle Prison in Huntsville, where he has served 16 years.

"I just passed out, the medical (staff) refused to see me and I don't know what to do," he told his family by phone. They called the prison administration to seek help.

When other inmates sense that someone has passed out in a nearby cell, they yell to attract a guard's attention, but staff shortages often mean delays, Martire said.

The stricken inmate is then taken to an administrative area of the jail that does have air conditioning for so-called "respite." Prisoners try to linger as long as possible.

"I've already had too many issues with my health before from the heat," Martire said.

Asked what the heat in the cells is like, Amite Dominick of the NGO Advocates for Texas Community Prisons replied: "The fastest way I can explain that is, go sit in your car on a triple-digit day. Bring a blow-dryer with you. Crack your window a little bit."

The Texas Tribune news site reported that at least nine people had died in state prisons in June from heart attacks or other possibly heat-related causes.

But Amanda Hernandez, spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), which is in charge of prisons, said the last heat death occurred in 2012.

In June, the department treated seven cases of people affected "beyond first aid," but there were no fatalities, she said.

The department, which oversees 126,000 prisoners, said that 32 people died in June, from a variety of causes.

Dominick took issue with that breakdown.

"The coroner will usually report something like 'cardiac arrest' because heat stroke is highly correlated with cardiac arrest," she said.

"We're seeing the same reports. We're seeing medical evidence for what happens to the body.

"You know, during these types of temperatures, these are heat-related deaths," Dominick added.

Sean Adams, 36, served time in a prison called the Clemens Unit, in the Texas city of Brazoria, but which inmates call "Burns Like Hell."

"It's one of the older units that was made out of, you know, red bricks," Adams said. "And so red bricks are essentially what ovens are made out of."

The prisons agency said inmates have access to ice and water, and can go to air-conditioned rest areas when necessary.

Samantha, whose daughter is a 25-year-old inmate at the Lane Murray prison, said three prisoners died there in June from heat-related causes.

"The way that they're treated is so inhumane," she said.

"In the summer months, when you're inside, you see multiple heat-induced seizures every day," said Marci Marie Simmons, a 44-year-old ex-convict and activist.

She said that in late June, a 36-year-old inmate died in the Estelle prison hours after speaking with her mother and complaining about the heat.

"If we go and leave a kid or a human being or an animal in a vehicle, we're going to prison. But the state of Texas wants to cook our Texans," said Michelle Lively, whose partner Shawn McMahon, 49, is in Wynne prison.

"And some of them are dying, and they have short, like, stupid drug charges and they have a death sentence because they can't handle the heat," she said.

In leaks to the media, prison workers have also complained about their working conditions, including the heat.

Dominick said legislative efforts to do something about the heat have fallen short, with bills demanding air conditioning in prisons withering in the conservative-majority Texas Senate.



Can Honey Help with Seasonal Allergies?

LONDON (Dispatches) - There is a popular phrase that says, "honey cures pollen allergies," indicating that consuming honey may treat seasonal allergies. But is there any truth to that statement? This article will explore the relationship between honey and allergies to determine if there is a connection between the two.

Seasonal allergies most often occur during the fall or spring months as a result of blooming plants (usually ragweed) and pollen release.

There is a theory that honey can cure seasonal allergies because honey contains pollen from bees, which would increase exposure to the allergen and decrease sensitivity to it over time.

Research has been inconclusive regarding the use of honey for seasonal allergies but it is unlikely that it is a treatment option due to the limited amount and incorrect type of pollen in it.

Seasonal allergies most often occur during the fall or spring months as a result of blooming plants (usually ragweed) and pollen release. The severity of the allergy depends on many factors including weather and time of day. Signs and symptoms of seasonal allergies include: Runny nose, Congestion, Red, watery, and/or Itchy Eyes, Postnasal Drip, Fatigue and Cough

Seasonal allergies are more than just a small annoyance for most people. In many cases, the allergies become disruptive and may decrease quality of life.

The process of bees making honey is complex. The bees collect pollen and nectar from flowers and store it in their second stomach for transport back to the hive. While flying back to their hive, the nectar begins to mix with enzymes to start the process of honey production. Once back at the hive, the bee transfers the nectar to another bee, which adds more enzymes to it and finishes making the honey.



Theoretically, by eating honey you would be exposing yourself to small amounts of what you are allergic to, and over time, this exposure would make you less sensitive to it. This mechanism is similar to that of receiving allergy shots. However, there are a few problems with this theory.

Though bees do pick up pollen that ends up as an ingredient in honey, it is typically not the same pollen that causes allergies. The pollen that causes seasonal allergies is usually from weeds, trees, and grass. Bees are more likely to obtain their pollen from colorful flowers, most of which do not cause allergies.

Even if the pollen found in honey were the correct kind to decrease allergy sensitivities, it likely would not matter since the pollen is only found in trace amounts in the honey. During the honey-making process, most of the pollen is filtered out. Additionally, honey sold in stores usually goes through more filtering steps during the bottling process, removing even more of the pollen.

Unfortunately, there has not been much research conducted that explores the relationship between honey and seasonal allergies. Two small studies, both conducted over ten years ago, show conflicting information. The first study, conducted in 2002, compared allergy symptoms between three

groups. One group consumed local raw honey, another group had commercially made honey, and the last group had a placebo. Results showed no differences in allergy symptoms between the groups.

The other study, conducted in 2013, compared the effects of raw honey to placebo on seasonal allergies. After eight weeks, the group that had honey showed improvement in allergy symptoms. However, it is important to note that both of the groups were also treated with an antihistamine medication. It is impossible to determine whether it was the honey or the medication that caused the improvement in allergy symptoms.

To be able to claim a relationship between honey and the treatment of allergy symptoms, more research needs to be conducted.

While honey may not be effective for the treatment of seasonal allergies, it does offer other several other health benefits. There is limited research on the benefits of honey but there are some indications that honey may help.

Known benefits of honey:

- *May help treat heart disease and gastrointestinal disorders.
- *Offer antidepressant, anticonvulsant, and anti-anxiety benefits.
- *Associated with improved cough and cold symptoms.

Is honey safe for everyone?

Honey is generally safe for everyone except babies under the age of one. Honey can cause botulism in babies from exposure to bacterial spores. Babies are especially susceptible to this type of infection. Though rare, there are some individuals that may be allergic to honey, making it an unsafe option.

So, while honey may not be effective for treating seasonal allergies, it may offer other health benefits, making it a solid addition to your diet.

France Upbeat on Attracting Major Tesla Investment

PARIS (Dispatches) - French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said he was "very hopeful" Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk will pick France for a substantial investment linked to the production of electric vehicles in Europe. Musk recently met French government officials, including President Emmanuel Macron, as he explores options for future production sites. Asked whether an investment could be linked to battery cells or other parts of Tesla's business, Bruno Le Maire told LCI television "several options are on the table". He (Musk) knows that he would be welcome in France", Le Maire said, adding: "It's up to him to take the decision."



Yellen Sees Progress In Rocky U.S.-China Ties

BEIJING (Dispatches) - U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said 10 hours of meetings with senior Chinese officials in recent days were "direct" and "productive", helping stabilise the superpowers' often rocky relationship as her four-day Beijing trip ended.

Before departing China, Yellen said the United States and China remained at odds on a number of issues but expressed confidence that her visit had advanced efforts to put the relationship on "surfer footing".

"The U.S. and China have significant disagreements," Yellen told a press conference at the U.S. embassy in Beijing, citing Washington's concerns about what she called "unfair economic practices" and recent punitive actions against U.S. firms.

"But President (Joe) Biden and I do not see the relationship between the U.S. and China through the frame of great power conflict. We believe that the world is big enough for both of our countries to thrive."

With U.S.-China relations at a low over national security issues, including Taiwan, U.S. export bans on advanced technologies and China's state-led industrial policies, Washington has been trying to repair ties between the world's two biggest economies.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Beijing last month, the first trip by the top U.S. diplomat in Biden's presidency.

Climate envoy John Kerry is expected to visit this month.

The U.S. diplomatic push comes ahead of a possible meeting between Biden and President Xi Jinping at September's Group of 20 summit in New Delhi or a Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation gathering scheduled for November in San Francisco.

Yellen said her visit aimed to establish and deepen ties with China's new economic team, reduce the risk of misunderstanding and pave the way for cooperation in areas such as climate change and debt distress.

"I do think we've made some progress and I think we can have a healthy economic relationship that benefits both of us and the world," she said, adding that she expected increased and more regular communications at the staff level.

Briefing reporters after the visit, a senior Treasury official said the trip as expected did not result in specific policy breakthroughs, but was "very successful" in terms of "re-establishing contact" and building relationships.

She said Chinese officials raised concerns about an expected U.S. executive order restricting outbound investment, but she assured them any such measure would be narrow in scope and enacted in a transparent way, through a rule-making process that would allow public input.

Yellen said she told Chinese officials they could raise concerns about U.S. actions, so that Washington could explain, and "possibly in some situations, respond to unintended consequences of our actions if they're not carefully targeted."

Yellen met with officials including Premier Li Qiang and People's Bank of China Deputy Governor Pan Gongsheng, whom she referred to as the head of the central bank, appearing to confirm his expected promotion.

She also met U.S. companies doing business in China, climate finance experts and women economists.

In her meetings with officials, she urged more cooperation between the sides on economic and climate issues while criticising what she called "punitive actions" against U.S. companies in China.

Vietnam's Economic Moment Has Arrived

HANOI (Dispatches) - After decades of showing promise, Vietnam's economic moment may have finally arrived. It was the fastest-growing economy in Asia last year (8 per cent growth) and one of only a handful globally to achieve two consecutive years of growth since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The south-east Asian nation has become a major beneficiary of manufacturers' efforts to "de-risk" their exposure to China as geopolitical tensions between Beijing and the west mount. Foreign direct investment soared to a decade high in 2022. Big names including Dell, Google, Microsoft and Apple have all shifted parts of their supply chain to the country in recent years, and are looking to do more as part of a "China plus one" strategy.

The allure is obvious. Since the late 1980s, its communist government has overseen a transition from a controlled economy to a more open and capitalist model. In turn, its proximity to China and vast young, cheap and well-educated workforce has attracted manufacturers. Though "Made in Vietnam" was initially synonymous with apparel such as Nike shoes, it is now increasingly associated with higher-end electronics such as Apple's AirPods.

Businesses have grasped the opportunity to diversify their supply chains, as rising labour costs and political risks erode China's relative advantage as a business destination. Over \$20bn in FDI flowed in last year mainly from Japan, Singapore, and China. The US share of imports from Vietnam has also risen almost 2 percentage points since US-China trade tensions began to flare in 2018.

Rapid export-led growth has pulled millions out of poverty in recent decades, but Vietnam's economy is now at a crossroads. In the near-term, to continue riding the wave of investor attention, it needs to bolster its business environment. In the long run, to meet

Saudi, Russian Supply Cuts Reflect Demand Concerns

LONDON (Dispatches) - The recent decision by Saudi Arabia and Russia to extend existing crude oil supply cuts did not have the expected effect on prices, but analysts said the limited increase in prices reflects demand-based worries by investors.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest exporter of crude oil, announced its intention on Monday to unilaterally extend production cuts of 1 million barrels per day (bpd) through August, leaving the door open for further extensions.

Russia followed suit with an announcement of a voluntary reduction of exports by 500,000 bpd in August, on top of the 700,000 bpd in place since March.

Algeria later said it would also reduce output by an extra 20,000 bpd in August, bringing its total cut to 68,000 bpd since April.

The new reductions were additions to the group's already-existing output cap of around 2 million bpd announced in October 2022 and 1.6 million bpd in May.

The supply restrictions came amid concerns about dwindling supplies and deteriorating global economies as a result of inflation and rising interest rates.

Russia and Saudi Arabia said the cuts, which were approved despite persistent requests from the International Energy Agency and the United States for more production amid rising threats of a global recession, are intended to maintain market balance.

Business Leaders Left in Limbo by Rate Hike Impact Lag

PARIS (Dispatches) - An unusually long lag in the time interest rate hikes are taking to feed through to the economy has left corporate leaders guessing whether to prepare for a hard or soft landing.

Although central banks in the United States and Europe have raised interest rates at the fastest pace in decades in an effort to tame inflation, most economies have so far escaped the painful recessions triggered by previous tightening cycles.

For corporate leaders at a weekend economics conference in the southern French town of Aix-en-Provence, that delay has left them questioning when and how much higher borrowing costs will affect them, especially if central banks keep hiking.

"There's no real consensus at the moment about the increase in interest rates among economic actors," Jeremie Delecourt, chief operating officer at French private equity fund Ardian, told Reuters.

"The fact everyone is asking the question is interesting, there are those who are optimistic and others who are pessimistic," he added.

In the euro zone, the peak is near after a combined 4 percentage points rise in the past year, ECB policymaker and French central bank governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau said on a panel at the conference.

But he also said that rates would be left high for as long as necessary to ensure that inflation is headed back to the European Central Bank's 2% target by 2025.

The ECB raised interest rates to their highest level in 22 years last month and promised another hike this month, with possibly another in September.

Jean-Louis Giredolle, head Lazard in France, told a panel that there was a danger central banks would fight inflation with the same zeal they fought deflation and go too far.

"The scenario that I fear is that we get the landing wrong, the opposite of 'whatever it takes', the of investment bank head said, referring to former ECB president Mario Draghi's 2012 pledge to steer the euro zone through its debt crisis.

The full impact of rate hikes is taking more time than usual because many households and companies entered the new era of higher borrowing costs with solid cash levels, the result of strong savings during the pandemic.

Additionally, labour markets are strong on both sides of the Atlantic and corporate profits have so far held up, while housing markets are generally cooling but not in a tailspin.

Turkey Vows to Reinstate Fiscal Discipline, Lower Budget Deficit

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek reiterated the country's aim of ensuring fiscal discipline and lowering the budget deficit.

"In the upcoming period, we will not allow permanent deterioration in public finance indicators by controlling the budget deficit and re-establishing fiscal discipline. We take the necessary measures for this," Şimşek said in a Twitter post.

The budget deficit for the first five months of the year was TL 263.6 billion (\$10.12 billion), compared to TL 124.6 billion a year ago due to increased spending ahead of the May elections and the impact of February's earthquakes.

The minister commented on the recovery process after the deadly February earthquakes in Türkiye's southeast.

"This year, we anticipate earthquake-related expenses to reach TL 761.7 billion (\$29.2 billion), equivalent to 3.1% of the national income," Şimşek remarked.

He further highlighted that construction has commenced for 179,000 houses in the earthquake-stricken region, with plans to deliver 319,000 to the victims within approximately one year.

Regarding the National Solidarity Package currently under discussion in parliament, Şimşek explained its objective to mitigate the impact of the earthquake's additional costs on the budget.

"These regulations will indirectly contribute to maintaining control over the current account deficit," he added.

The government has presented an additional budget proposal of TL 1.12 trillion to parliament.

Within the supplementary budget, the largest portion of funds, amounting to TL 483 billion, is allocated to the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), while the Treasury and Finance Ministry receives TL 279.8 billion.

The additional budget designates TL 80.5 billion for interest expenses and approximately

TL 101 billion for goods and services expenditures. Capital transfers and expenditures are allocated TL 484 billion and TL 67.4 billion, respectively.

According to the proposed budget, the Defense Ministry is set to receive TL 30.8 billion.

Furthermore, the draft anticipates tax collection of TL 1.15 billion, with income tax revenues estimated at TL 203.2 billion and corporate tax revenues at TL 166.3 billion.

The draft budget also outlines the collection of TL 32.6 billion from motor vehicle taxes and TL 309.9 billion from value-added tax (VAT).

Last week, the VAT on goods and services saw an increase of two percentage points. The VAT rate has risen from 18% to 20% and applies to various items like white goods, furniture and electronics.

Bank Negara Malaysia Retains 2023 GDP Growth Projection at 4-5%



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is still maintaining its forecast for the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth this year at between 4.0 per cent and 5.0 per cent, said newly-appointed governor Datuk Abdul Rasheed Ghaffour.

Domestic demand remains resilient and improvements can be seen in the job market, which continue to support consumer spending, he said.

"The tourism sector is recovering well and is expected to keep growing. In fact, we see airlines raising flight capacity to meet higher travel demand.

"Lastly, our multi-year infrastructure projects continued to spur economic activity," he told Bernama in his first exclusive media interview since taking up his current post.

Abdul Rasheed, whose five-year term as BNM governor began on July 1, said a fuller picture of Malaysia's performance for the first half of 2023 would be unveiled in a few weeks when the Department of Statistics releases the second-quarter GDP data.

In its Economic and Monetary Review 2022 report released on March 29, 2023, BNM said the Malaysian economy is expected to grow between 4.0 per cent and 5.0 per cent in 2023, driven mainly by firm domestic demand amid challenges arising from slowing global growth.

"In tandem with more subdued global trade activity, as similarly observed in other economies, gross exports are expected to expand modestly at 1.5 per cent in 2023," it said.

Nevertheless, further recovery in inbound tourism and moderation in import growth would continue to provide support to net export growth, the central bank said.

In the first quarter of 2023, Malaysia's economy recorded a better-than-expected growth of 5.6 per cent driven mainly by private sector expenditure amid further expansion of household spending, continued investment activity, improving labour market and higher tourism activities.



Iran Meets Domestic Needs for Cement

TEHRAN (IRNA) - About 16.4 million metric tons (mt) of cement has been produced in Iran during the first three months of the Iranian calendar year starting on March 21, 2023, an industrial official has announced. Despite the claim made by some media, delivery of cement for domestic use has increased, Ali Akbar Alvandian, the secretary of Cement Industry Employers Association of Iran told reporters at a press conference in

Tehran on Tuesday. Some media had claimed that Iran exported its produced cement before meeting the needs inside the country; meanwhile, the claim has been rejected by Alvandian. From the total production of cement which has been 17.6 million mt during the three months in Iran, 16.4 million mt has been delivered to the various industries inside the country, and the rest exported, the official underlined.



Will France's Riots Benefit Far-Right Le Pen?

PARIS (Dispatches) - In her first speech in parliament as France's riots ebbed this week, far-right leader Marine Le Pen accused the government of turning the country into a "hell" that she had foreseen.

"The reality is that you didn't want to hear any of the warnings," said the 54-year-old, whose 89 MPs form the biggest opposition party in parliament since elections last year.

"We predicted what is happening despite great adversity. Unfortunately we were right." She and her father Jean-Marie have been forecasting France's demise and even civil war since the 1970s in doom-laden speeches focused on the presence of foreigners in France.

"Above all and before anything else, we need to stop anarchic immigration," Le Pen continued.

The political fall-out from France's worst urban violence since 2005 remains highly uncertain, leading to speculation about who stands to gain from the breakdown in law and order that has shocked millions of French people.

Le Pen and many others on the right have sought to blame the mass looting and clashes on immigrant-origin communities, mostly from former French colonies in Africa, who have settled in suburban areas in towns and cities since the 1960s.

Despite the riots being sparked by allegations of police brutality and racism after the fatal shooting of Nahel M. -- a 17-year-old boy of Algerian origin in Paris -- many analysts feel the far-right promise of a radical crackdown on crime and immigration could find new takers.

"I think we'll see a rise of several points for the National Rally in an extension of the quite incredible gains they've made over the last few years," Olivier Babeau, co-founder of the right-leaning Institute Sapiens think-tank, told AFP.

"Without them really doing or saying much, events are helping them convince part of the population," he added.

Le Pen achieved her highest-ever score in last year's presidential elections -- 41.5 percent in the second round --- and then celebrated record parliamentary election results two months later.

Jean-Yves Camus, a far-right specialist at the Jean Jaures Foundation, agreed that Le Pen and the even more radical anti-Islam politician Eric Zemmour looked the most likely to gain from the riots.

"There's a risk that Eric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen benefit from the situation, notably during the European elections which will take place next year," he told AFP.

The government has sought to counter the narrative being pushed by the far-right and in the mainstream Republicans party that immigrants were to blame for the unrest, which saw 273 buildings belonging to the security forces and 168 schools damaged.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said that 90 percent of the roughly 3,500 people arrested during the five nights of the most severe rioting were French nationals.

"Yes, there were some who could be from immigrant backgrounds," Darmanin, who has Algerian roots, said of the lists of names of detainees he had seen while touring police stations.



"But there were a lot of Kevins and Matteos too," he told a hearing in the Senate on Wednesday.

"This identity-based analysis seems wrong to me," he said, while acknowledging that the question of how best to integrate immigrants was "interesting."

Camus believes that the government might be credited by some voters for having brought the unrest under control in under a week thanks to a massive deployment of up to 45,000 security forces at their peak.

The last nation-wide riots in 2005 lasted for nearly three weeks and led the government to resort to a state of emergency.

"Without having to use a state of emergency and with a strategy of responding gradually, the government demonstrated that it was able to contain the movement," he told AFP.

President Emmanuel Macron has condemned the "inexcusable" police shooting which sparked the riots, which saw an officer open fire at point-blank range having stopped a 17-year-old driving a Mercedes without a licence in a west Paris suburb.

The centrist head of state has promised a response, but major police reform -- called for by the left -- remains off the table.

Macron has so far focused on how to punish parents whose children commit crimes amid shock about the young ages of many of the rioters.

The country's leftist alliance is also at odds, with the head of the radical France Unbowed party Jean-Luc Melenchon creating rifts with his Socialist and Communist allies by failing to unequivocally call for calm.

He has suggested the riots were "poor people rebelling."

Left-leaning Le Monde newspaper sharply criticised him in an editorial, saying that he was "at odds with a very strong demand for a return to order which is rising in public opinion."

"In a country shocked by five days of urban riots, the left is not reassuring," it said on Thursday.

The Next Station...

FROM PAGE 1

The SCO member states and observer state rank first in producing and consuming the most amount of energy in the world and this shows us that this organization in the field of import and export of energy can have close cooperation among its member states and at the same time to have great impact on the price and energy market in the world.



Iran as a permanent member of the SCO can take advantage of the existing advantages in exports of oil and gas to the SCO member states. In fact, the sales channel and return of money from energy exports can be considerably facilitated. Of course this status more depends on the condition that international sanctions against Iran are presumed fading out because under the massive and expanded sanctions of the West, some of big companies even in the SCO states will continue their cautions and will act with doubt in oil and gas trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The self of opening the way for Iran for maximum passing from the sanctions even made the UN Chief António Guterres officially announce publicly his demands for removal of Western sanctions against Iran. This remark pines hope on better outlook for cooperation with big companies in the SCO realm.

It is worth noting that the next move of the 13th government can be formalizing the permanent membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), that in the past some approvals have been shown regarding Iran's membership as an observer state but the dossier of Iran's membership in the WTO has remained without any result due to different reasons predominantly political and some infrastructural reasons. In between and regardless of the U.S. sanctions and its sabotages and obstructionism on course to Iran's membership, the issue of noncompliance of Iran's economic structures with the WTO rules and lack of the grounds for joining this organization has been brought forth.

In terms of economy, we should acknowledge that the membership in the SCO has been in line with reducing the West's hegemony in the political and economic fields. The trade turnover of these 9 members of the SCO is currently around \$7,000b and eliminating and ditching the dollar from their trade with this huge volume will be a devastating blow to the monetary credit and power of the U.S. dollar.

With official announcement of countries like India, China, Russia, Iran and Indonesia, the road for commuting for the next station which is the elimination of dollar is being paved day in day and therefore hopefully we can say that the next station will be the dollar elimination from trade.

Tehran Reaffirms Sovereignty...

FROM PAGE 1

The three Persian Gulf islands have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world. However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands.

The three islands fell under British control in 1921 but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

Iran recognizes that Arabs ruled the islands for centuries, but all historical documents show that they did so from the Iranian port city of Lengheh and therefore as Iranian subjects.

Iran Not Currently...

FROM PAGE 1

"Iran continues to increase the size and enrichment level of its uranium stockpile beyond JCPOA limits," the report claimed, adding that it also continues to exceed JCPOA restrictions on advanced centrifuge research and development.

The report added that these findings have been generally supported by inspections from the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition to the nuclear findings claims, the US intelligence report said that Iranian ballistic missile programs continue to pose a significant threat to countries around the Middle East. "Iran has emphasized improving the accuracy, lethality, and reliability of its missiles," it said.

Tehran has invariably asserted that its nuclear program is aimed at purely peaceful purposes and that the Islamic Republic had no intention of developing nuclear weapons.

Canada Opposes Use of Cluster Bombs That U.S. Is Sending to Ukraine



OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Canada is against the use of cluster munitions that Washington has promised to give Ukraine for its counteroffensive against occupying Russian forces, Ottawa said, reiterating a commitment to the Oslo agreement that bans the controversial weapon.

The U.S. said on Friday that it would supply Kyiv with the widely banned bombs as part of a new \$800 million security package that brings total U.S. military aid to more than \$40 billion since Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine has welcomed the U.S. decision, saying it would help liberate Ukrainian territory, but promised the munitions would not be used in Russia.

Cluster munitions typically release large numbers of smaller bomblets that can kill indiscriminately over a wide area. Those that fail to explode pose a danger for decades after a conflict ends.

"We do not support the use of cluster munitions and are committed to putting an end to the effects cluster munitions have on civilians -- particularly children," the Canadian government said in a statement.

Another U.S. ally, Germany, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have expressed their opposition to the U.S. sending cluster munitions to Ukraine.

The bombs are prohibited under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was opened for signature in Oslo in 2008. While more than 100 countries are signatories, Russia, Ukraine and the United States have not signed on to the Convention, which bans production, stockpiling, use and transfer of the weapons.

"Canada is fully compliant with the Convention and we take seriously our obligation under the Convention to encourage its universal adoption," the federal government said in the statement.

The Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is one of Ukraine's most vocal supporters, and has committed billions of dollars in financial, military, humanitarian and other assistance since last year.

China Tightens Scrutiny of Japanese Food, Citing Safety Reasons

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China will tighten its scrutiny on food from Japan and maintain curbs on some Japanese imports, the government said on Friday, citing Tokyo's decision to discharge treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima plant into the sea.

The Japanese plan, approved on Tuesday by the U.N. nuclear watchdog, has faced opposition at home and abroad. Japan insists the releases will be safe and meet global standards.

China's customs administration said in a statement it was stepping up monitoring of products including seafood and keeping curbs on produce from one-fifth of Japan's prefectures for safety reasons.

In the immediate aftermath of the 2011 disaster, China banned the import of food and agricultural products from five prefectures. It later widened its ban to 12 prefectures, before removing two of them.

China will "strengthen supervision" and "rigorously examine" certificates for food imports, especially aquatic products, from the other non-banned prefectures, the administration said, emphasising restrictions on the 10 prefectures remain in place.

Some Japanese officials worry that China, the biggest buyer of its seafood exports, may halt purchases of those items after Tokyo begins the water discharge later this summer.

Desecrator of Quran Worked...

FROM PAGE 1

The statement said Momika continued his "mercenary work for the usurping regime" during his stay in Sweden and was involved in various missions conducive to his new condition.

"One such mission was that in recent weeks, following the Zionist regime's plan to suppress the legitimate resistance of the people in the areas occupied in 1967 and the West Bank of the Jordan River, ... this traitorous agent implemented a dark and blasphemous project," the statement added, referring to the burning of the holy Muslim book.

Iran's Intelligence Ministry underlined that the desecration of the Holy Qur'an by Momika was part of the Israeli project to detract public attention away from the regime's atrocities in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin and the Palestinian resistance at that time.

"The evil show of the desecration of the holy Muslim

book was organized and executed precisely with the aim of creating ... media propaganda and marginalizing the news of the heinous and widespread crimes of the Zionist regime in the West Bank, especially the oppressed Jenin," the statement said.

"This is common practice among the Zionists, who, along with every killing and destruction project, implement another criminal project in order to divert attention from the previous one," it added.

On June 28, the Iraqi immigrant stomped on the Qur'an 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.

Indonesia Seizes...

FROM PAGE 1

After the two supertankers attempted to escape, authorities focused their pursuit on Arman, assisted by Malaysian authorities as the vessel sailed into their waters, Aan said.

The Tinos was supposed to have been scrapped in 2018, he added. It was built in 1999 while the Arman was built in 1997, according to shipping database Equasis.

The risk of oil spills and accidents is growing as hundreds of extra ships, some without insurance cover, have joined the opaque parallel trade over the past few years.

Aan vowed that Indonesia's coast guard, assisted by other authorities, would strengthen patrols in its waters. Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago, with about 17,000 islands.

"We have to be firm, tough," he said. "There has to be a deterrent effect so it will not happen again."

Thomas Blazes To 200m Title

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Gabby Thomas endured heartbreak at the 2022 U.S. championships as a hamstring injury derailed her tilt at the 200m title but she made up for that by posting a world leading time of 21.60 to win this year's event.

On the final night of action in Eugene, Oregon, teenager Erriyon Knighton scorched to victory in the men's race in 19.72, while Rai Benjamin showed he has recovered from an early-season injury by cruising to the 400m hurdles titles.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

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

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

Former Juventus Chairman Agnelli Given a 16-Month Ban

MILAN (Dispatches) - An Italian soccer court has imposed a 16-month ban from the game on former Juventus Chairman Andrea Agnelli in a case over irregularities in the club's payments to players, the national football association (FIGC) said. Agnelli, one of the figures behind a failed European Super League project in 2021, was also given a 60,000 euro (\$66,000) fine, the FIGC said. He was Juventus chairman for more than a decade but announced his resignation last November following a financial scandal that hit Italy's most successful soccer team.

Djokovic Into 14th Wimbledon Quarterfinals

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic breached the previously impregnable defenses of Hubert Hurkacz to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals for the 14th time. Defending champion Djokovic, chasing a record-equalling eighth title and 24th Grand Slam, won 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (8/6), 5-7, 6-4.

In the fourth set, Djokovic broke for a crucial 4-3 lead, ending Hurkacz's perfect run of 67 service games at the tournament this year.

Victory in his 100th match at the tournament gave Djokovic a 90th win.

He is also on a 32-match win streak at the All England Club, while his 56th Grand Slam quarter-final spot is second only to the 58 of Roger Federer.

"Big credit for Hubert for playing an amazing match, he put up a great performance," said 36-year-old Djokovic.

"Honestly I don't recall the last time I felt this miserable on returning games. He has one of the best serves in the world and it's difficult to read it on one of the quickest surfaces in the sport. It was not enjoyable for me."

Djokovic will face Andrey Rublev for a place in the semi-finals.

That match will take place on Centre Court, where Djokovic has not lost since 2013.

"I feel a great connection with this court. Every match that I win, every time I step on the court I feel more confident to play the match and hopefully the love affair continues for a long time," he said.

Djokovic had been two sets up overnight when the match was suspended due to a local curfew.

He had squandered five break points in those sets and Hurkacz eventually made him pay by breaking in the 12th game of the third set on Monday.

But Djokovic hit back to break for 4-3 in the fourth and from then on there was no way back for the 17th-seeded Pole despite his 33 aces and 64 winners.

Djokovic will take a 3-1 career lead over seventh-ranked Rublev into their quarter-final on Tuesday.

In early action, Russian teen sensation Mirra Andreeva lost to US 25th seed Madison Keys while defending women's champion Elena Rybakina



progressed when Beatriz Haddad Maia quit in tears.

World number three Daniil Medvedev reached his first Wimbledon quarter-final when Czech opponent Jiri Lehecka retired with an injury.

The first result of the day was on No. 2 Court, where 16-year-old Andreeva's fairytale run was brought to an end.

The teenager, who came through qualifying, looked set for a place in the quarter-finals when leading Keys by a set and 4-1 but the American fought back to win 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2.

The match ended in controversy when Andreeva was handed a penalty point for banging her racquet into the surface.

The sanction took Keys to match point.

In the first match on Centre Court, Rybakina was 3-1 up when Brazilian world number 13 Haddad Maia took a medical timeout to treat a lower back injury.

Meanwhile defending champion Elena Rybakina made the Wimbledon quarter-finals after opponent Beatriz Haddad Maia quit in tears with injury after just five games.

Rybakina was 3-1 up when Brazilian world number 13 Haddad Maia took a medical timeout on Centre Court to treat a lower back injury.

She limped back onto the court but was reduced to walking pace and was in tears as she saw out the fifth game before retiring.

"It's never easy to finish a match like this. I hope it is nothing really serious, it is really unlucky for Beatriz," said Rybakina.

"Hopefully she is going to get better and I am just happy to play another round."

She added: "I was feeling the ball really well even though it was really windy today."

World number three Rybakina will face either two-time champion Petra Kvitova or 2022 runner-up Ons Jabeur for a place in the semi-finals.



Family Feeling Key Reason For Joining Al-Ettifaq

LONDON (Dispatches) - Steven Gerrard said a "family feeling" at Saudi Arabian Pro league club Al-Ettifaq was one of the things that persuaded him to accept a coaching job with the side.

The former England and Liverpool captain signed a three-year contract last week after previously saying he would not be taking up an offer to join the team.

The 43-year-old Gerrard had a change of heart and has become the latest big name to join the Saudi league.

"When I went to Saudi I got a real family feeling. It made me actually feel welcomed," Gerrard told Al-Ettifaq's Twitter account on Sunday.

"There are three things I always consider in order — it needs to be right for my family first and foremost. We have to be excited and motivated by the challenge," he said.

"Secondly I think the football project needs to be ambitious, it needs to be for the right reasons, and then of course you need to feel secure with the contract, but this comes at the very end.

The move is the latest in a number of high-profile deals since Al-Nassr signed Cristiano Ronaldo last December. Former Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema joined Al-Ittihad in June.

Gerrard follows in the footsteps of his former team mate Robbie Fowler who was appointed coach of Saudi second division team Al-Qadsiah on Thursday.

Wimbledon Says No Plans to Issue Statement After Azarenka Booing

LONDON (Dispatches) - Wimbledon chiefs said Monday they have no plans to issue a statement after Belarusia's Victoria Azarenka was booed off court following her defeat by Ukraine's Elina Svitolina.

Svitolina won a gripping three-set match on Court One late Sunday to set up a quarter-final clash with world number one Iga Swiatek.

As has become common, Svitolina did not shake hands with Azarenka in protest over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Belarus is a key military ally of Moscow. Azarenka, who held her hand up in the direction of Svitolina, seemingly in a gesture of respect, left the court to a chorus of boos from some sections of the crowd.

The two-time Australian Open champion said her treatment "wasn't fair".

"I thought it was a great tennis match," she added. "If people are going to be focusing only on handshakes or the crowd, quite drunk crowd, booing in the end, that's a shame."

Svitolina and her fellow Ukraine players all refused to shake hands with Russian and Belarusian rivals at the recent French Open.

She called on the sport's governing bodies to explain the position of Ukraine players.

"I don't know if it's maybe not clear for people, some people not really knowing what is happening," she said. "So I think this is the right (thing) to do."

But All England Club chief executive Sally Bolton said on Monday that Wimbledon had no plans to issue such a statement.

"Historically in tennis the decision on how a player reacts at the end of a match is entirely a personal decision for them and I think we don't really want to start mandating what happens," she said.

"I think we have an incredibly knowledgeable audience at Wimbledon and I think in most part they would understand what was happening." She admitted it is impossible to control the crowd, calling for the sporting action to be centre stage.

"Having witnessed one of the most incredible matches on Number One Court, to an absolutely rapt audience, we should be focusing on the tennis and the match that we saw, not all the other stuff that went on," she said.

AC Milan, Chelsea Agree to Pulisic Transfer Fee



Per the latest report from Fabrizio Romano, Pulisic is heading to Italy this week to complete his medical and become a new AC Milan player. Per the report, Pulisic will sign

a four-year contract with the Italian giants. With Milan signing Ruben Loftus-Cheek from Chelsea this summer and already having great success with signing Fikayo Tomori and Olivier Giroud from Chelsea in recent years, it appears the West London to Milan pipeline is in full-flow once again.

Chelsea are said to be asking close to \$32 million for Pulisic and that is putting some clubs off (including Milan) due to his contract situation.

Pulisic, 24, has just one year left on his current contract at Chelsea and it is highly-likely he will move on this summer. But he is right to prefer a move to AC Milan (a Champions League club) over Lyon.

Mauricio Pochettino has added Christopher Nkunku and Nicolas Jackson in attack as Chelsea rebuild under their new manager and Pulisic will not fit Pochettino's system.

Wembanyama Has 27 Points, 12 Rebounds in Loss

LAS VEGAS (Dispatches) - Victor Wembanyama, the NBA's top draft pick, showed improvement in his second game with San Antonio, scoring 27 points in an 85-80 NBA Summer League loss to Portland.

The 19-year-old French center, who stands 7-foot-4 (2.24m), has been hyped as the NBA's best prospect since LeBron James 20 years ago, but had received a wake-up call in his first game against NBA talent.

This time though, Wembanyama grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds, blocked three shots and made a steal in just under 27 minutes on the court. He sank 9-of-14 shots from the floor, 2-of-4 from 3-point range, and 7-of-12 from the free throw line.

"He was a tough matchup for us," said Portland guard Michael Devoe, who scored a game-high 29 points.

"We just wanted to be physical with him and try to make him make tough shots over us. He did a great job but I think defensively we did a great job too."

In his debut on Friday, Wembanyama struggled with nine points, eight rebounds, five blocked shots and three assists in just over 27 minutes as the Spurs beat Charlotte 76-68. He made only 2-of-13 shots from the floor and just 1-of-6 from 3-point range.

Against the Trail Blazers, Wembanyama looked more comfortable with the Spurs offensive schemes, something he said was a problem in his first game, and was able to make dunks and grab attacking rebounds.



McLaren Still Have Plenty of Work to Do

LONDON (Dispatches) - McLaren impressed with their new-found speed at Silverstone but Lando Norris warned there would still be times when they looked painfully slow.

Norris finished second behind Red Bull's runaway championship leader Max Verstappen for the team's first podium appearance in the 10th race of a season they started on the back foot. His McLaren team mate Oscar Piastri finished fourth.

"It was amazing to watch how good his car was in high speed," commented Mercedes' seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton, who finished third after chasing Norris to the chequered flag.

"That McLaren is a rocket ship. At high speed it was insane."

Norris felt the aerodynamically upgraded Mercedes-powered car was indeed very competitive, and almost on a par with dominant Red Bull on the high-speed parts of the circuit.

"Towards the medium speed (areas) like Stowe, I would say we're close to being the best car on the grid," he said.

"But we do have a poor car and I say poor, I would say pretty terrible, in the slow-speed corners. Extremely difficult to drive.

"We're going to go to a couple of tracks coming up where I'm sure people are going to be saying, 'What have you done now?' Like, 'How has it got so bad all of a sudden?'"

"It's just this track's allowed us to look after the tyres nicely, keep them in a good condition. Simple as that. So a lot of it is track-specific."

