

**TEDPIX, the Main Index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Gained 43,122 Points to 1.999m On Tuesday, as Per Report, Over 11.163b Securities Worth 72.688 Trillion Rials (About \$149m) Were Traded at the TSE**

# IRAN NEWS

**In an Inauguration Ceremony of The Pataveh-Dehdasht Main Road In the Southwest of Iran, President Ebrahim Raisi Has Underscored That the Route Will Improve the Economy of 400 Villages Nearby**

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## Call for National Cooperation to Counter Enemy's Hybrid War

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says Iran's enemies have waged a full-scale hybrid war against the country, which can only be countered through the participation and cooperation of the entire nation.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony in Tehran on Monday as he pointed to various types of warfare the West and certain European governments have over the years waged against the Islamic Republic.

"The invasion that the enemy has launched against us has a completely global aspect; the enemy has waged war against the Iranian nation by using all it has in power, including media, communication, political, economic, intelligence and psychological tools, and has orchestrated hybrid warfare against the Iranian nation," Salami said.

"The hybrid warfare against the Iranian nation is a full-scale war as it encompasses all the features of the past wars in one compact form," he added. [See Page 7](#)

## Tehran, Cairo on Way to Upgrade Tourism Ties

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Iran and Egypt have agreed to extend mutual tourism as they are on track to restore diplomatic relations and reopen their respective embassies.

Tehran and Cairo hope to draw a roadmap for their tourism collaborations later this month as part of ongoing efforts to normalize relations between the two nations, The National reported.

According to Egyptian sources, a delegation from Egypt's Tourism and Antiquities Ministry was due to travel to Tehran to finalize details with their Iranian counterparts.

A new Egyptian tour operator is to be established aimed at being solely responsible for handling Iranian tourists, the report said.

Based on initial arrangements, Iranians will be allowed to visit Egypt on organized tours of the Red Sea resorts in the southern region of the Sinai Peninsula.

In addition, further agreements may be reached for Iranian travelers to extend their visits to religious temples in Egypt. [See Page 7](#)

## New Exporting Markets Opened to Iran



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Finance Minister and Spokesman of the economic team of the government says with recent visit of President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi to three African states doors for new exporting markets were opened.

Speaking in a press conference, Ehsan Khandouzi said that with the visit of President Raisi to three African countries new markets were opened for Iran exports that those markets had been ignored by the Iranian economic activists in the past.

He noted that African market is the land of new opportunity which had been neglected for over 11 years, adding that this market has capacity of 1200b dollars and Iran just accounted for \$600m of that figure during the previous government in Iran. He added that this figure has been increased to \$1.2b during this government and in the upcoming months it will grow.

Khandouzi also rejected fixed prices for petrochemical products and said: The price of petrochemicals should have a formula to include all local and international ups and downs.

"The price can be calculated for the next three years so economic units can predict their profits," Iran's government economic spokesman stressed.

According to Khandouzi, Iran's economic delegation visited China in the past few days, and the ministries of Iran and China confirmed the implementation of the agreed projects.

He said: 24% of Iran's trade is with China as the largest trading partner.

Referring to President's past visit to China, Khandouzi said: The strategic agreements of the President's visit were brought up and the ministries were supposed to agree on the projects and their implementations.

He added: Projects between ministries in the field of energy, industry, and trade (industrial, basic goods) were finalized.

Khandouzi emphasized: During this trip and in the meeting with China's Minister of Commerce, some obstacles were examined and in the meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of China, we talked about the implementation of 25 years Iran, china document of cooperation.

He stated: During this trip, some Chinese companies that have shares in the Iranian market had proposals that were resolved in the economic meetings.

We also had a meeting with the Iranian activists in the Chinese market to remove the barriers to their economic activity.

Referring to the visit of the economic delegation of Iran to China, Khandouzi said: "Holding the joint commission on cooperation between Iran and China took place during this trip, and good agreements were reached for the agreed projects."

On the trip, good agreements were made that we will see good developments in the coming months when the projects start working.

He also reiterated that the unemployment rate in 25 provinces of the country has dropped and in 24 provinces it has become single-digit. He further said that the unemployment rate of the youths between 15 to 24 years old has declined from 24% to 21.6%, adding that the unemployment rate among the educated people has dropped by 1.1% to 12.1%.

## U.S. Deploying F-35s to Persian Gulf Despite Stern Warning From Iran

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Pentagon says it plans to send additional fighter jets and naval assets to the Persian Gulf region to increase U.S. military presence in the region, a move that comes against the backdrop of Iran's stern warning.

Addressing a briefing on Monday, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh claimed the deployment would be an effort to counter Iran, citing a number of "alarming" events in the Strait of Hormuz earlier this month.

On July 10, an Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) commander announced that the U.S. made "unprofessional and risky" attempts to impede the seizure of a foreign oil tanker smuggling Iranian fuel in the Persian Gulf last week, but the IRGC successfully confiscated the vessel.

According to IRGC's Rear Admiral Ramazan Zir-Rahi, the vessel carrying contraband fuel had arranged military backing from U.S. military forces in the area but was still seized by Iran's naval forces.

He further elaborated that the Navy attempted to intervene as IRGC naval forces moved in to intercept the oil tanker involved in smuggling one million liters of Iranian oil and gas.

Singh, however, alleged that Iran is conducting destabilizing activities that "threaten the free flow of commerce" through the strategic Strait of Hormuz "of which the world depends on for more than one-fifth of the world's oil supply."

"The Secretary of Defense has ordered the deployment of the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, F-35 fighters and F-16 fighters to ... defend US interests and safeguard freedom of navigation in the region," she told reporters.

She did not give details about the date the fighter jets and guided-missile destroyer would be sent to the region, or how long the new deployment would last but emphasized that the move would help to monitor and secure "vital waterways." [See Page 7](#)

## Iran-China Non-Oil Trade Hits \$7.8b in Q1

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The president of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) put the non-oil trade exchanges between Iran and China in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to June 22, 2023) at \$7.8 billion.

While describing the \$30 billion trade exchanges between Iran and China last year (ended March 20, 2023), Mohammad Rezvani said that Iran exported \$3.5 billion worth of non-oil goods to China from March 21 to June 22, 2023.

In this period, Iran imported \$4.3 billion worth of products from China, he added.

Speaking in an interview with Fars news agency, Rezvani stated that Iran exported 35.5 million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$12.5 billion, in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year.

Iran's import of products in the first three months of the current Persian calendar year registered a 1 and 5.9 percent growth in weight and value respectively, the IRICA chief noted.

Iran imported 8.6 million tons of goods, valued at \$14 billion, from March 21 to June 22, 2023, he continued. [See Page 7](#)

## Pakistan Can Benefit From Iran's Huge Energy Resources

KARACHI (Dispatches) - The Consul General of Iran in Karachi Hassan Noorian has expressed his belief in the deep-rooted and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran.

During a meeting with the delegation of Karachi Press Club (KPC), the Iranian Consul General emphasized the potential for strengthening these ties through cooperation in various fields.

The delegation from the Karachi Press Club, led by their President Saeed Sarbazi, had the opportunity to engage in discussions with the Iranian Consul General. It included Vice President Mushtaq Sohail, Secretary Shoaib Ahmed, and Joint Secretary Aslam Khan.

During the meeting, the Consul General said that Iran imports basmati rice, meat, and other commodities from various countries, presenting ample trade opportunities for Pakistani businessmen. He also stressed the potential for promoting cooperation between the two nations in multiple sectors. Notably, Iran's abundant energy resources can greatly benefit Pakistan, exemplified by the ongoing Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline project. [See Page 7](#)

## Iran Reportedly Ready to Give Special Priority to India on Crude Oil

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Ali Bagheri said that his country wants to use Indian Rupee and Iranian Rial to boost trade and economic exchanges and added Tehran also prioritize the supply of crude oil to New Delhi, if it allows it.

Speaking to news agency ANI, he underscored that increased investment from India at the Chabahar would advance the completion of the port. "Any increase in the investment by the Indian party could play an important role in the advances, the progress and the completion of the Chabahar Port. We welcome any initiative by India for further investment in this project," said Bagheri.

He emphasized that since Iran is the biggest oil supplier in the world, it is ready to give priority to India if the Indian Government also shows "willingness". "We, as one of the biggest suppliers of oil in the world, are ready to give special priority to India but India should show willingness," he said.

On the trade, he said that it is on the Iranian Government's agenda that the trade between the two countries takes place in the national currencies of India and Iran. [See Page 7](#)

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# IRAN NEWS

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## Top General Highlights Sustainable Air Defense

TABRIZ (IRNA) - Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri has underlined the significance of sustainable air defense.

Speaking during a visit to the Northwest Air Defense Zone of the Iranian Army on Monday, the Iranian general said that the mission of this zone is to carry out effective and sustainable defense of the country's sky.

He stressed the need for making use of all the air defense, missile and radar systems of the Army and the IRGC, as well as the defense equipment of other Iranian forces.

## Iran Not to Tolerate Any Interference Regarding Its Territorial Integrity

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

**TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says the Islamic Republic will never tolerate any interference when it comes to its territorial integrity amid recent claims about the three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.**

Addressing a joint press conference with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi in Tehran, Amirabdollahian said Tehran would never pull any punches with any party over the country's national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The top Iranian diplomat made the remarks in reaction to a joint statement issued last week by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Russia that challenged Iran's sovereignty over the three islands.

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.

"After the Russian ambassador was summoned by the [Iranian] Foreign Ministry, we received certain explanations from Russian officials, but we do not consider them to be sufficient and we do not tolerate the repetition of such an approach by Russia or any other side in issues pertaining to Iran's territorial integrity," Amirabdollahian told the presser.

The three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs 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 Iranian FM has blasted a recent joint statement by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Russian Federation about the three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amirabdollahian further noted that Iran and Oman have been following up on the implementation of the agreements previously signed between the two countries.

Over the past 22 months, the volume of trade transactions between Tehran and Muscat have more than doubled, which is a remarkable record, he said.

The top Iranian diplomat added that a meeting of the two countries' joint economic committee would be held in Tehran to accelerate the promotion of bilateral cooperation.

"We believe that the neighboring countries can increase their relations constantly, and this is what our region needs [to achieve] for sustainable development, security and stability," he emphasized.

He urged the Persian Gulf littoral states to promote cooperation based on dialogue which is a leading factor in achieving peace, security and sustainable progress.

The Iranian foreign minister said Iran's initiative to hold a meeting with the eight Persian Gulf states plus Yemen has been welcomed by these countries and expressed hope the session would be convened in the future.

He pointed to the "strategic and consolidated" relations between Tehran and Muscat and commended Oman's contribution towards facilitating negotiations among the regional countries to bring their stance closer to one other.

Amirabdollahian also hailed Oman's diplomatic efforts to help remove unilateral sanctions against Iran and said Muscat would proceed with its role in lifting cruel sanctions against Tehran.

Referring to the ongoing talks in Yemen, the Iranian foreign minister expressed hope that the intra-Yemeni negotiations would put an end to the war, establish lasting peace, remove the humanitarian blockade and boost development and progress.

Elsewhere in the presser, Amirabdollahian reiterated Iran's support for the territorial integrity of the countries engaged in the war in Ukraine in accordance with international law and stressed the need to end the war through political approaches.



The Omani foreign minister, for his part, said his country has always been following a policy to promote peace and security through a strong will.

Albusaidi added that firm political determination would result in proper solutions to all problems.

Referring to his fruitful talks in Tehran on issues of common concern, he noted that the sides discussed a possible agreement on preferential tariff.

The Omani foreign minister arrived in Tehran earlier on Monday to hold talks with senior Iranian officials about the latest mutual, regional and international developments.

## Italy Launches Center For Visa Applicants

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Ambassador of Italy Giuseppe Perrone on Tuesday opened the visa application center which will be managed by service provider Visametric.

According to the reports, in a ceremony Mr. Perrone inaugurated the center and the applicants can take action for getting visa via this center.

All relevant information on the visas application process is available at [www.visametric.com/iran/italy/en](http://www.visametric.com/iran/italy/en). The center is located as Khaled Islambouli Street of Tehran.



## Iran, Pakistan Reconvene Consular Commission After 8 Years

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The joint commission of Iran and Pakistan on consular affairs was held in Tehran after an eight-year hiatus.

The 6th joint consular commission of Iran and Pakistan was held in Tehran on Monday.

Alireza Bikkeli, the Iranian Foreign Ministry's deputy for consular issues, parliament and Iranian expatriates, and Syed Ali Murtaza, the deputy interior minister of Pakistan, presided over the meeting.

Delegations from the two neighbors discussed important consular issues, including facilitating the issuance of visas for Iranian applicants, solving the problems of students and transit drivers, releasing confiscated barges, pursuing and expediting the implementation of judicial agreements like the transfer of convicts and the extradition of criminals as well as the signing of judicial assistance deals, dealing with the affairs of prisoners and other problems of nationals, recognizing driving licenses of two countries, engaging in police and border coordination and cooperation and boosting scientific and academic interaction and exchanges, the Foreign Ministry's website reported.

They also underlined the policy of neighborliness and the need for maximum use of consular potentials to resolve problems and expand bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan.

The diplomats decided that the consular issues raised in the meeting will be continuously followed up by both sides to achieve results.

## Iran Embassy in Denmark Condemns Insulting Holy Books

LONDON (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark, in a statement condemned the insult to the holy books of various religions, including the Holy Quran, the Bible and the Torah.

"Insulting and burning the holy books of different religions is not only a clear example of religious hatred, but also an insult to its followers and a clear violation of human rights," parts of the Iranian embassy's statement read.

It added that offensive actions such as insulting religious books are not freedom of speech, but rather an open expression of hatred.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran called on all governments to ensure that extremists are not given the opportunity to harm the feelings of the followers of any religion under the banner of freedom of expression.

The Swedish government has caused widespread anger among Islamic countries by allowing an extremist to burn a copy of the Holy Quran.

## Iran, UAE to Jointly Partake in Iraq's Infrastructure Projects

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Hossein Selahvarzi has proposed collaboration with United Arab Emirates (UAE) chambers of commerce to jointly participate in Iraq's infrastructure projects.

As the ICCIMA portal reported on Tuesday, Selahvarzi made the proposal in a meeting with the Chairman of the UAE Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Mohammed Al Mazrui on the sidelines of the 35th board meeting of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (ICCIA) in Baku.

The two sides exchanged a list of Iraq's infrastructure projects to be further reviewed by the contractors of the two countries, according to the report.

Speaking in this meeting, the ICCIMA head referred to the significant level of trade between the two countries, saying: "Strengthening and developing logistics cooperation in the entry points of the two countries and joint investment in this sector can be the basis for the further improvement of trade between Iran and the UAE."

## Tehran, Algiers to Cement Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IP) - The ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Algeria met and consulted with the Algerian Speaker of the Parliament to boost bilateral ties.

Mohammad Reza Babaei, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Algeria, met the Speaker of the People's National Assembly (lower house of Parliament), Ibrahim Boughali.

In this meeting, the two sides stressed the bilateral relations and ways to expand ties, as well as expanding economic and commercial relations and bringing them to the level of political relations.

The Speaker of the Algerian Parliament stressed the support of cooperation and coordination between the parliaments of the two countries and the activation of parliamentary relations.

Iran's Ambassador pointed to the distinct relations between the two countries and praised the honorable, special, and strategic positions of Algiers in the regional and international arena.

In this meeting, Babaei congratulated Algeria on its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and praised the country's efforts to approve the bill on respect for religions in the Human Rights Council.

Recently, Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf came to Tehran on an official visit and met and talked with senior officials of our country, including Ebrahim Raisi and Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, President and Foreign Minister of Iran.

## Raisi Tasked Police, Judiciary to Address Violations of Hijab Rules

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian administration's spokesman says President Ebrahim Raisi has tasked the Judiciary and law enforcement officials to address violations of Islamic dress code within the framework of the existing laws.

"In the face of social norm-breakings, the president has repeatedly urged people and executive authorities to

pay attention to the necessity of adhering to the law," said Ali Bahadori Jahromi in a tweet.

The comments come amid criticism of the re-launch of patrols by the so-called morality police to enforce the country's mandatory hijab rules.

The patrols had been suspended following the protests and riots that broke out in the country in September last

year in the wake of the death of a young woman in the custody of the same police force.

Observers have warned that the move could lead to a new wave of unrest and tensions in the country.

Under the Iranian laws, observing the Islamic hijab in public is mandatory in the country.

## Iran's AEO, Contemporary Honor In History, Despite Sanctions

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Atomic Energy Organization Chairman said that the Atomic Energy Organization is one of the contemporary honors of the country's history, which has been able to excel in many headlines during threats, sanctions, and psychological pressure.

The closing ceremony of the 'I am nuclear technology festival' was held on July 17, 2023. The event was held in cooperation with the Research Institute of Nuclear Sciences and Technologies and Iran's Nuclear Society (NSTRI).

Mohammad Eslami emphasized that all the fuss in the world is that our nuclear industry does not succeed.

He further stated: We must be able to bring the National Nuclear Olympiad to the international level.

Also, as the other keynote speaker, Iran's Education Minister, said: In the document of fundamental transformation, new and nuclear technologies are also included.

Khoda-Morad Sahrai emphasized: The lower the age of development, the better the learning result.

He further stated: That nuclear achievements and their applications should be included in textbooks and explained to families and students.

## Iran to Establish 50,000 Islamic Neighborhoods Within Five Years

TEHRAN (IP) - In a bold initiative to foster community development and promote Islamic values, the commander of the Basij Organization, Brigadier General Gholamreza Soleimani, announced plans to establish 50,000 Islamic neighborhoods across the country over the next five years.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of an exhibition focused on the development of Islamic neighborhoods, General Soleimani emphasized the role of Basij as a platform for creativity and innovation. He highlighted the successful experience of Islamic neighborhoods as a testament to the people's active involvement under the guidance of Basiji principles.

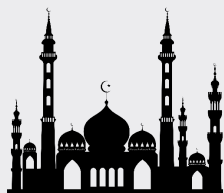
General Soleimani provided insightful statistics, revealing that 13,000 Basij bases opted to participate in the Islamic neighborhoods initiative last year alone. Encouraged by the growing interest, this year witnessed an expansion to 16,000 Islamic neighborhoods.

Building upon this momentum, Basij's strategic document now aims for an ambitious target of 50,000 Islamic democratic neighborhoods within the next five years, facilitated through collaboration with Basij and the active participation of the public, as said by him.

Underscoring the importance of community engagement in realizing Islamic democracy, General Soleimani stressed that by implementing the derived models, Basij bases can chart their evolutionary path, contributing to economic, cultural, political, security, and defense aspects.

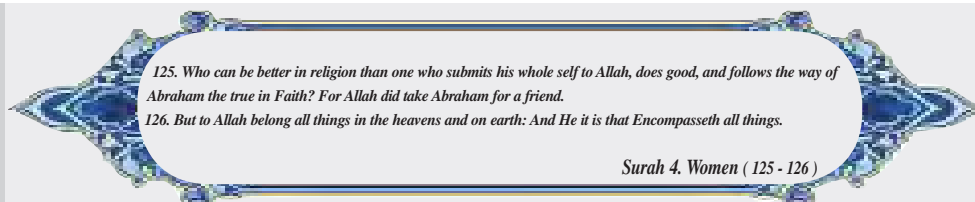
On Monday, Major General Hossein Salami, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps commander, visited the exhibition showcasing Basij's Islamic Neighborhoods. The exhibition featured 50 booths representing Basij provincial corps from across the nation, showcasing their dedication to advancing the ideals of Islamic community building.





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:39
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:22
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:03



# 68 Semi-Finished Projects to Go on Stream By Mid-March 2024

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – Oil Minister said 68 semi-finished projects worth \$15 billion will be put into operation by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2024).**

Javad Owji, who made the announcement in the inauguration ceremony of Gachsaran olefin plant in the southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, added 130,000 barrels of oil and 40 million cubic meters of gas will be added to the country's output when the projects come on stream.

Projects of Phase 2 of Abadan Refinery-Integrated Petrochemical Plant, refinery of Phase 14 of South Pars gas field, and associated petroleum gas (APG) collection were among those inaugurated in recent months, mentioned the minister, continuing the third olefin plant of the country was also put into operation today after long years.

He explained that APG of oil fields in southern Iran are processed at Persian Gulf Bidboland Gas Refinery and the produced ethane is transmitted to Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex.

He referred to the lengthy construction of Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex, lasting for 17 years, adding his ministry accelerated the implementation of the project in the past



two years and managed once again to develop the country's petrochemical value chain.

Owji said five more petrochemical projects will be inaugurated within the next eight months. He also said South Pars Phase 11 will be ready soon for official inauguration in the presence of the president after a two-decade hiatus.

Given Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad's 92 billion barrels of oil in place (OIP), the southwestern province can produce 500,000-600,000 barrels per day (bpd), said the minister, continuing the Oil Ministry has planned oil and gas projects worth \$2.6 billion for the province over the past two years.

According to him, Dehdasht Petrochemical Complex, whose feed is supplied by Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex, will become operational by mid-March 2025.

## Leader Hailed for Resolving the Bill For Registration of Real Property



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Notaries and Notary Assistants of Iran in a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei hailed him for his deep look and thought and brave decision and said Leader's wise remarks untied the Gordian knot of the bill on mandatory official registration of the real property transactions.

Ali Khandani in his letter to the Supreme Leader for his entering this issue and resolving the problem Supreme Leader in his meeting with Judiciary officials said that unofficial transactions of real property is one of the source of corruption and these types of transactions should not be allowed and the final expediency for the country and establishment is to approve the bill on obligation in official registration of real property.

In his letter, Khandani hailed the brave decision of the leader and his deep vision on the issue adding that the Notary is proud and determined to follow the decision of the Leader and act like soldiers in the front of fair registration and law-orientation of the leader in order to bring peace and trust to registration of the transactions.

Khandani later in a radio program highlighted the advantages of the bill which will minimize the number of fraud.

The bill serial times were passed and rejected by Majlis and the Guardian Council and finally went to the Expediency Council for final say and correcting the bill and finally was approved in the council after the Leader's remarks.

Khandani reiterated that people will be the real winners of this decision and law and transfer of real property will be done after verification of all documents and their registration.

## Iran Calls for Launching Islamic Common Market

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Hossein Selahvarzi has stressed the need for launching an Islamic common market.

Selahvarzi was addressing the 35th meeting of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA) in Baku on Monday.

He said that the ICCIA is the collective voice of Islamic economic actors and a source of support for trade interests of the Muslim world.

"As recommended in our religion, the more the economic and commercial cooperation between countries, the more peace and security will be established among governments and nations," Selahvarzi said.

He added that encouraging fair and halal trade is one of the ways to strengthen friendship among nations.

Referring to the 2 billion population of the ICCIA member countries which accounts for nearly 25% of the world population and their annual \$1.8 trillion foreign trade, he said that the volume of trade and economy of these countries can even grow much further.

The Iran Chamber of Commerce also urged the need for establishment of direct and effective relations between private sectors of Islamic states so as to pave the way for exchange of knowledge and experiences between entrepreneurs and businesspersons.

He reiterated the need for pushing with projects like launching an Islamic common market within a 10-year plan and setting out a proposed package for preferential trade among Islamic nations.

## Azerbaijan Intent on Expanding Economic Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev says his country is intent on expanding trade and economic ties with Iran despite political rifts caused by an attack in late January on the Azerbaijani embassy in Tehran.

Shahin Mustafayev, who co-chairs an intergovernmental economic commission between Iran and Azerbaijan, said on Monday that Baku seeks to complete joint border projects with Iran to help boost trade between the two countries.

Mustafayev made the remarks in a meeting held in the Iranian border city of Astara with Iranian transportation minister and co-chair of Iran-Azerbaijan joint economic commission Mehrdad Bazrpash.

"Azerbaijan believes in expanding continued and stable cooperation with Iran," he said, adding that some 2,452 Iranian companies are currently operating in Azerbaijan as a result of growing economic ties between the two countries.



Before the meeting, Mustafayev and Bazrpash toured an unfinished bridge on the Astarachay river on the border between Iran and Azerbaijan. The project seeks to facilitate the movement of cargo trucks between the two countries.

Senior government officials from the two sides, including regional governors, were present in the Monday meeting in Astara.

The meeting comes some five months after Baku decided to evacuate its embassy in Tehran following an attack on the mission which Tehran blamed on personal motives of the attacker.

Iranian and Azerbaijani officials sought to repair their ties during a recent summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Baku.

The two countries have stakes in a major international transport corridor project that passes through their territories.

Tehran and Baku have also expanded their energy cooperation in recent years under a gas swap arrangement that also involves Turkmenistan.

## Iran Becomes 5th Country Mastering Pneumonia Vaccine Technology

TEHRAN (MNA) – An Iranian official says the Islamic Republic has become the fifth country in the world to master the technology that is required to produce pneumonia vaccine.

The announcement was made on Monday by Mostafa Qane'i, the secretary of the Knowledge-Based Health Economics Development Headquarters, which is affiliated with the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-based Economy.

"The technology used to produce this vaccine is complicated. It was previously exclusive to four countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran has become the fifth country to master this technology," the official said.

"The production of pneumonia vaccine for children is currently going through its final stages," he added. Noting that the country has to prepare vaccine doses for as many as 1.5 million newborns every year and that every newborn needs three doses, Ghane'i said domestic production of this vaccine will reduce its imports from other countries and, as such, will greatly contribute to cost reduction in this field.

The country is also in the final stages of producing a childhood diarrhea vaccine and is in the process of producing a cervical cancer vaccine for women, the official stated.

"We are also planning to produce a quadrivalent vaccine for cervical cancer, which will be offered at a lower price compared to its foreign counterpart. A bivalent vaccine for cervical cancer is currently available on the market and the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-based Economy is planning to produce a quadrivalent vaccine in cooperation with knowledge-based companies, which will be as effective as its foreign counterpart," Qane'i said. "During the coronavirus pandemic, we managed to produce and supply the vaccines that the country needed and we are now in possession of necessary infrastructure and technologies to produce this vaccine," he said.

## Iran Among Top 10 in Renewable Energy

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran has very good capacities in the energy sector," said the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Iran's Electricity Industry Syndicate (IEIS) at the opening ceremony of the second conference on renewable energy development in the country's industries.

Payam Bagheri enlisted the appropriate level of solar radiation and wind corridors as the existing capacities of renewable energies in Iran.

He symbolized energy as the driving force of the country's economic development and added that renewable energies are the locomotive of development that can resolve the imbalance in the electricity sector of the country.

A while ago, Ali Akbar Mehrabian, Iranian Minister of Energy, said that the production of renewable energy in Iran exceeded 1,000 megawatts.

## Iran Private Sector Highly Inclined to Interaction With Saudi Arabia

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has voiced the readiness of Iranian private sector for more cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

Hossein Selahvarzi made the remarks in a meeting with President of Mecca Chamber of Commerce Abdullah Saleh Kamel who also chairs the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA).

The meeting happened on the sidelines of the 35th meeting of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA) in Baku on Tuesday.

Selahvarzi said that in line with the economic diplomacy and de-escalation policy pursued by the Iranian government, the country's private sector is much more eager to engagements with Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia. The Iran Chamber of Commerce president voiced the eagerness of Iran's private sector for halal cooperation with the ICCIA member countries.

He urged the need for the ICCIA member countries to trade in national currencies.

Expressing his happiness with the resumption of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Selahvarzi also expressed hope that Iran Chamber of Commerce will begin close cooperation with Saudi chambers of commerce.

The Saudi side, for his part, welcomed close cooperation with Iran Chamber of Commerce, expressing readiness for dispatching delegations to Iran and receive delegations from the country as well. He also stressed the need for further investments of ICCIA member states in different projects of one another.

## Iran to Send Commercial Attaché to Brazil Soon

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Iran is planning to dispatch a commercial attaché to Brazil in the near future, IRNA reported on Tuesday, quoting the acting head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Mehdi Zeyghami made the announcement at a conference on Iran-Brazil trade opportunities in Tehran.

Back in May, Mohammad Rajabnejad, the head of TPO's Department of Commercial Attachés and Trade Centers, said that the number of Iran's commercial attachés in the country's trade partners is going to increase to 30 by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024).

## Turkmenistan Joins Int'l North-South Transport Corridor

TEHRAN (IRNA) - After Iran, Russia and India accepted the accession of Turkmenistan to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the country could join the multi-modal transportation project.

According to AKIpress News Agency cited by the IRNA ON Tuesday, Turkmenistan had previously requested to be allowed to take part in the international project, and Director General of the Transport and Communications Agency under the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan Mammetkhan Chakyyev announced that preparations are underway in this respect.

He added that the country plays a significant role in the development of the international supply chain because of its geographical position.

The International North-South Transport Corridor is the name of a large transportation project, which was launched following an agreement between India, Iran and Russia in 2000. The INSTC is known as an important communication bridge between Europe, Scandinavia and Russia with the littoral states of the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia.

The INSTC in comparison to the Suez Canal can cut half the transportation route, which will decline expenditure and time for transports.

Azerbaijan Republic, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Tajikistan, Turkiye and Ukraine also joined the INSTC later.



## South Korea Flood Death Toll Rises to 40

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol blamed authorities' failure to follow disaster response rules as the death toll from days of torrential rain rose to 40, including a dozen people found dead in a submerged underpass.

Deluges have pummelled central and southern regions since Thursday as the rainy season that started in late June reaches its peak. The interior ministry has also reported nine people missing and 34 injured across the nation.

Twelve deaths, including three bodies found overnight, occurred in a tunnel in Cheongju, 110km (68 miles) south of Seoul, where 16 vehicles, including a bus, were swamped by a flash flood on Saturday after a river levee collapsed.



## Kim Yo Jong Warns U.S. Against Foolish Act

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea's Kim Yo Jong, sister of leader Kim Jong Un, said that the United States should avoid any "foolish act" that could put its security at risk and rejected offers of talks as a ploy, state news agency KCNA reported.

Kim made her comments after White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the United States remained concerned that North Korea would carry out another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test, after it last week fired an ICBM off its east coast. "The U.S. should stop its foolish act of provoking the DPRK even by imperilling its security," Kim said in a statement carried by KCNA. DPRK refers to the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



## Moscow Halts Grain Deal in What UN Calls a Global Blow



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russia halted participation in the year-old U.N.-brokered deal that lets Ukraine export grain through the Black Sea, spreading fear in poorer countries that price rises will put food out of reach.

Hours earlier, a blast knocked out Russia's bridge to Crimea in what Moscow called a strike by Ukrainian sea drones. Russia said two civilians were killed and their daughter wounded in what Moscow cast as a terrorist attack on the road bridge, a major artery for Russian troops fighting in Ukraine.

The Kremlin said there was no link between the attack and its decision to suspend the grain deal, over what it called a failure to meet its demands to implement a parallel agreement easing rules for its own food and fertilizer exports.

"Unfortunately, the part of these Black Sea agreements concerning Russia has not been implemented so far, so its effect is terminated," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres signalled that Russia's withdrawal meant that the related pact to facilitate Russia's grain and fertilizer exports was also terminated.

"Today's decision by the Russian Federation will strike a blow to people in need everywhere," he told reporters.

Moscow said it would consider rejoining the grain deal if it saw "concrete results" on its demands but that its guarantees for the safety of navigation would meanwhile be revoked.

In Washington, the White House said Russia's suspension of the pact "will worsen food security and harm millions". Ukraine and Russia are some of the world's biggest exporters of grain and other foodstuffs and any interruption could drive up food prices across the globe, especially in the poorest countries.

Shashwat Saraf, the emergency director in East Africa for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), said the impacts would be far-reaching in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, which have been facing the Horn of Africa's worst drought in decades.

"I don't know how we will survive," said Halima Hussein, a mother of five children living in a crowded camp in Somalia's capital Mogadishu for people displaced by years of failed rains and violence.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy raised the prospect of resuming grain exports without Russia's participation, suggesting Kyiv would seek Turkey's support to effectively negate the Russian de facto blockade imposed last year.

"We are not afraid," spokesperson Serhiy Nykyforov quoted Zelenskyy as saying. "We were approached by companies, shipowners. They said that they are ready, if Ukraine lets them go, and Turkey continues to let them through, then everyone is ready to continue supplying grain."

The blast on the road bridge to Crimea could have a direct impact on Moscow's ability to supply its troops in southern Ukraine, and reveals the vulnerability of Russia's own Black Sea infrastructure to devices such as seaborne drones: small, fast remote-controlled boats packed with explosives.

Images showed a section of the road bridge had come down and traffic was halted in both directions, although a parallel railway bridge was still operational. Blasts were reported before dawn on the 19-km (12-mile) bridge, which Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered built after seizing and annexing the peninsula from Ukraine in 2014.

Putin told officials repair work should start quickly and that Russia would respond to the "senseless" attack.

Kyiv gave no official account of the blasts but Ukrainian media quoted unidentified officials as saying Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) was behind it. SBU spokesperson Artem Dekhtyarenko euphemistically alluded to the idea that the agency would reveal the details of the blast after Ukraine won the war, without directly claiming responsibility.

## Scorching Heatwaves Set to Break Records Around the Globe

ROME (Dispatches) - Unforgiving heat scorched parts of the Northern Hemisphere, triggering health warnings and fanning wildfires in the latest stark reminder of the effects of global warming.

From North America to Europe and Asia, people gulped water and sought shelter from the sweltering heat, as temperatures crept toward record highs.

Europe, the globe's fastest-warming continent, was bracing for its hottest-ever temperature this week on Italy's islands of Sicily and Sardinia, where a high of 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit) is predicted, according to the European Space Agency.

"We're from Texas and it's really hot there, we thought we would escape the heat but it's even hotter here," Colman Peavy, 30, said as he sipped a capuccino at an outside terrace in central Rome with his wife Ana at the start of a two-week Italian vacation. The mercury was due to hit 40C after noon on Monday in Rome, where some 15,000 braved the temperatures the previous day to hear Pope Francis lead prayers, using parasols and fans to keep cool.



## Death Toll in Kenya Starvation Cult Case Passes 400

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - The death toll in an investigation linked to a Kenyan cult that practiced starvation to "meet Jesus Christ" has exceeded 400 after 12 more bodies were found on Monday, a senior official said.

"Total death Toll - 403," Coast Regional Commissioner Rhoda Onyancha told AFP in a message, following the latest round of exhumations in the Shakahola forest, where cult leader Paul Nthenge Mackenzie allegedly urged followers to starve to death.

"Exhumation continues tomorrow," Onyancha added, as investigators search for more graves in the forest, where the first victims -- some dead, others alive but weakened and emaciated -- were discovered on April 13.

According to government autopsies, starvation appears to have been the main cause of death, although some victims, including children, were strangled, beaten or suffocated.

Mackenzie, a former taxi driver-turned-preacher, has been in police custody since mid-April. On July 3, a court in the port city of Mombasa extended his detention by a month pending investigations.

State prosecutors have said he is facing terrorism or genocide-related charges, but he has not yet been required to enter any plea.

The self-proclaimed pastor and father of seven set up the Good News International Church in 2003.

Questions have been raised about how he managed to evade law enforcement despite a history of extremism and previous legal cases.

It has also drawn President William Ruto to weigh in on the sensitive subject of Kenya's homegrown religious movements -- and failed efforts to regulate unscrupulous churches and cults that have dabbled in criminality. There are more than 4,000 churches registered in the East African country of around 50 million people, according to government figures.

Mackenzie fell foul of the law in 2017 after he was accused of urging children not to attend school, claiming the Bible did not recognise education.

He was arrested again in March, after two children starved to death in the custody of their parents but was subsequently freed on bond.

## Attacks and Displacement Spread in Sudan's Darfur

DARFUR (Dispatches) - The paramilitary force battling the army in Sudan has taken control of a town in South Darfur, triggering clashes, looting and a new wave of displacement, conflict monitors and a witness said.

Clashes between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the army around the town of Kas had caused up to 5,000 households to flee, some of them from camps for displaced people, according to a tracking system run by the International Organization for Migration.

The war that erupted between the army and the RSF in the capital Khartoum has led to a surge of ethnically-charged violence and displacement in Darfur, the RSF's powerbase and a region already suffering from long-running conflict.

The RSF said on Sunday that it had taken control of an army base in Kas, seizing vehicles and weapons and capturing 30 soldiers as part of the wider conflict.

The Darfur Bar Association, an activist group that monitors the conflict, condemned what it called an attack on Kas by the RSF that had led to looting and theft.

Alfadil Mohamed, a witness, told Reuters there had been heavy clashes in the town, resulting in at least three deaths and the displacement of residents towards the east.

On Friday the U.S.-based Sudan Conflict Observatory reported that the RSF and aligned forces had allegedly carried out the targeted destruction of at

least 26 communities in Darfur, forcibly displacing at least 668,000 civilians, since mid-April.

It said that the pattern of the attacks primarily against non-Arab communities was identical to those deployed by Sudan's government and the allied Janjaweed militias in 2003-2004, when mass atrocities were committed as they fought to crush a rebellion.

The RSF developed from the Janjaweed militias into a large and well-equipped fighting force with official status. It has said that recent violence against civilians in Darfur was tribal, and that it was not party to it.

The current war, which erupted amid disputes over a planned transition towards civilian rule, has led to the displacement of more than 3 million people, including more than 700,000 who have crossed into neighbouring countries.

Fighting has continued in the capital, where the army said that on Saturday and Sunday the RSF had hit the Medical Corps complex and the military-owned Aliaa hospital in Omdurman, one of Khartoum's twin cities.

Aliaa, which treats both military and civilian patients, had also been hosting former Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir, who was transferred there from prison before the start of the conflict along with other prominent detainees. The army did not give an update on Bashir's current whereabouts.



## Erdogan Is Open to Meeting With Syria's Assad



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan said that he was open to a meeting with Syrian President Bashar al Assad, but that setting the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Syrian territory as a precondition for talks was "unacceptable".

Turkey has been the biggest military and political ally of the Syrian opposition, which controls the last rebel bastion in northwest Syria. Ankara has set up dozens of bases and deployed thousands of troops in northern Syria, preventing the Russian-backed Syrian army from re-taking the region.

Speaking to reporters in Istanbul ahead of his departure for a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates, Erdogan said that Turkey has never "shut the door" to discussions with the Syrian government.

"We can hold a four-party summit (with Syria, Russia and Iran), and I am also open to a meeting with Assad. What matters here is their approach toward us," Erdogan said.

Damascus' condition of a complete withdrawal of Turkish forces for such a meeting was "unacceptable", he added.

Erdogan first said earlier this year that he may meet Syrian President Assad as part of a new peace process, but Assad said in March that there was no point in a meeting with Erdogan until Turkey's "illegal occupation" ended.

"We are fighting against terrorism there. How can we withdraw when our country is under continuous threat from terrorists along our border... We expect a fair approach," Erdogan said.

The defence ministers of the two countries met late last year for the highest-level talks between the two neighbours, whose governments have been at odds since 2011, when the Arab Spring uprisings reached Syria and plunged the country into war.

The foreign ministers of the two countries also met in Moscow in May ahead of Turkish elections as part of talks overseen by Russia.



## Alzheimer's Diagnosis Revamp Embraces Rating Scale Similar to Cancer

LONDON (Dispatches) - Alzheimer's disease experts are revamping the way doctors diagnose patients with the progressive brain disorder - the most common type of dementia - by devising a seven-point rating scale based on cognitive and biological changes in the patient.

The proposed guidelines, unveiled by experts on Sunday in a report issued at an Alzheimer's Association conference in Amsterdam, embrace a numerical staging system assessing disease progression similar to the one used in cancer diagnoses. They also eliminate the use of terms like mild, moderate and severe.

The revamp - replacing guidelines issued in 2018 - was prompted by the increased availability of tests detecting key Alzheimer's-related proteins such as beta amyloid in the blood and new treatments that require confirmation of disease pathology prior to use.

The new system is designed to be more accurate and better reflect a person's underlying disease, according to Dr. Clifford Jack of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, lead author of the report sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association and the National Institute of Aging, a part of the U.S. government's National Institutes of Health.

The change comes at a time when doctors are preparing to identify and treat patients with Eisai (4523.T) and Biogen's (BIIB.O) drug Leqembi, which won Food and Drug Administration approval this month, and Eli Lilly's experimental drug donanemab, which is now under FDA review.

"We really are getting into an era of much more personalized medicine, where we're starting to understand that there are certain biomarkers that are elevated to certain degrees in people in different stages," said Dr. Maria Carrillo, chief scientific officer for the Alzheimer's Association.

Under the new diagnostic approach, patients would receive a score of 1 to 7 based on the presence of abnormal disease biomarkers and the extent of cognitive changes. The system also includes four biological stages ranked a, b, c and d. For example, Stage 1a is when a person is completely asymptomatic but has abnormal biomarkers.

"Stage 1a is really the beginning of evidence that someone has the disease," Jack said.

In Stage 2, an individual may have abnormal biomarkers and very subtle changes in cognition or behavior. Stage 3 is roughly equivalent to the current presymptomatic stage known as mild cognitive impairment, while stages 4, 5, and 6 are equivalent to mild, moderate and severe dementia.

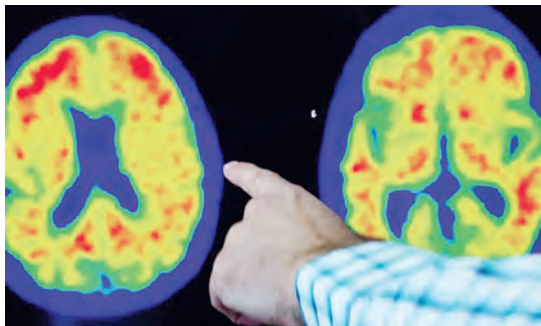
The new scale also includes a Stage 0 for people who carry genes that guarantee they will develop Alzheimer's. This category includes people with Down Syndrome, 75% of whom develop Alzheimer's as adults.

Noting the new system's similarity to cancer stages, Jack said, "There's no such thing as mild breast cancer. They're numeric stages." Jack also noted that many other conditions can cause dementia but not all dementia is Alzheimer's disease.

The proposed guidelines are intended for doctors to use in clinical practice as many face the prospect for the first time of offering patients treatments that can slow the course of the disease, rather than just treat symptoms.

The draft guidelines are open for expert review and comment and will be revised later to reflect that input, according to a spokesperson for the Alzheimer's Association.

Alzheimer's, which gradually destroys memory and thinking skills, is characterized by changes in the brain including amyloid beta plaques and neurofibrillary, or tau, tangles that result in loss of neurons and their connections.



## 5 Things Neuroscientists Do To Keep Their Brains Healthy

LONDON (Dispatches) - Neuroscientists explain how they keep healthy brains with regular exercise, enough sleep, and more.

Keeping your brain healthy is important for delaying neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's.

Neuroscientists' additional advice includes keeping close friendships and trying new things.

In a viral TikTok video with more than 10 million views, neuroscience PhD student Emily McDonald discusses three things she does each day to protect her brain — stay off her phone in the morning, think positive thoughts, and avoid processed foods.

The advice McDonald gives in her video isn't bad advice, two neuroscientists told Insider. But there's a lot more to keeping the brain healthy and the science behind it.

Jason Shepherd, an associate professor of neurobiology at the University of Utah, and Talia Lerner, an assistant professor of neuroscience at Northwestern University, told Insider what they do to keep their brains healthy.

### 1. Catch some zzzz's

Practicing good sleep hygiene and getting six to eight hours of sleep each night is one of the best things you can do for your brain health, Shepherd told Insider. He aims to get about six to seven hours of shut-eye a night.

Sleep helps the brain process new information, form memories, reinforce new concepts and ideas, and remove toxic buildup of proteins known as amyloid plaques that commonly accumulate in the brains of people with Alzheimer's.

Sleep also helps boost brain plasticity, the brain's ability to adapt to new situations and experiences. And the more your brain can adapt to new challenges, the more you can improve and preserve your cognitive function as you age, research has shown.

### 2. Get your heart pumping

Shepherd said he also exercises daily to keep his brain healthy, since regular exercise increases blood flow to the brain and a strong heart helps pump enough blood to the brain to keep it performing optimally.

Research shows that people who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's and exercise may also delay cognitive decline as people age.

The official recommendation from the CDC is 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise, but however and whenever you can get your body moving is better than nothing, Shepherd said.

For him, this usually means walking his dogs a couple miles once or twice a day and refereeing rugby games on the weekends.

### 3. Go to lunch with a friend

Loneliness can harm a person's mental health, emotional wellbeing, and brain health, so it's important to stay connected to others, Lerner said.

"In general, people with strong social networks tend to live longer," Lerner said. "Spending time with other people is good for your emotional life, which is good for brain health."

Studies show strong social connections can also lower the risk of depression and anxiety, and help people cope better with hardships.

But staying connected to others can be a challenge, especially as you age, Lerner said. With friends scattered across the country, Lerner said she uses social media and messaging apps to help her stay in touch with loved ones.

She also regularly volunteers at her kids' school as a way to meet other parents in her community.

"Even if you don't have kids, volunteer work is rewarding and good for you," Lerner said.



## Study Sheds Light on Treatments to Prevent Cancer, Infectious Diseases



PARKVILLE (Dispatches) - Researchers have figured out how one particular sort of immune cell, which defends the body against disease and infection, originates in the body. Additionally, a recent study suggests that the discovery may aid in the creation of other preventative medicines.

The study, which was co-led by Federation University Australia and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, has revealed how these specialized white blood cells function and can trigger an immunological response.

Understanding the role of these cells, according to associate professor Dan Pellicci, could enable the prevention of cancer and other highly contagious diseases as COVID-19, Strep A, and tuberculosis.

The study, which was published in Science Immunology, included samples from heart surgery patients up to the age of 16 that were given to the Melbourne Children's Heart Tissue Bank. The 'gamma delta T cells' were examined by the researchers from these samples in the context of the thymus gland, a tiny organ situated within the chest, close to the heart.

Associate Professor Pellicci said the study showed for the first time how this organ produced these infection-fighting immune cells.

"We have large numbers of these specialised cells in our blood and tissues, which accumulate as we become adults. Until our study, it was unclear how these cells develop in the body," he said.

"We have shown how these cells are trained over three stages, similar to receiving a primary, secondary and tertiary education, and fully formulate within the thymus. Following this education, the cells are ready to enter the rest of the body and are completely capable of fighting infections."

## Canada Expected to Allow Medically Assisted Deaths

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Canada is expected to allow medically assisted death soon for the people already distressed with their medical conditions and evaluate death as a better alternative.

The new mental health provision will make Canada one of the most expansive countries in the world when it comes to medical assistance in dying (MAID), according to an expert panel report to Canada's parliament

More than 30,000 people have died with medical assistance in Canada since 2016, more than 10,000 of them in 2021 when the law was expanded to people whose deaths were not "reasonably foreseeable." Even after the change in the legislation, about 98% of the assisted deaths in 2021 were people deemed near their natural death, according to Health Canada data.

The procedure is only available to people covered by a Canadian healthcare program. It requires a written application and assessments from two independent medical practitioners, including at least one specialized in their condition if the applicant is not near their natural death. The procedure frequently involves an injection administered at home.

Canadian federal government is considering recommendations from a parliamentary committee to allow advance requests and "mature minors" - people under 18 deemed capable of making this decision - to access assisted death.

Quebec passed a law June 7 that would allow people to make advance requests for assisted death that would go into effect when they reach a predetermined point of incapacity due to Alzheimer's or similar conditions.

The vast majority of assisted deaths in Canada conformed to the legal rules but provincial authorities deemed a small number worthy of investigation, according to previously unreported provincial government data. Provinces and territories are responsible for health care in Canada.

But Georges L'Esperance, president of the Quebec Association for the Right to Die with Dignity, said it could take up to two years for the provision to go into effect.

Dying With Dignity Canada has organized nearly 10,000 letters this year to government officials seeking to legalize advance requests across Canada, spokesperson Sarah Dobec said.



## Has Humanity Defeated Ageing?



LONDON (Dispatches) - Scientists have achieved a major breakthrough in combating ageing and age-related diseases. The study by the researchers from Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology was published in the journal Aging-US.

Humanity's attempt to prevent ageing: What is the breakthrough?

The researchers have introduced a chemical method through a 'single pill' to reprogram body cells, following which the cells effectively return to a younger state.

This achievement represents a significant advancement, as previously only gene therapy could achieve similar results.

The researchers reportedly built upon the Nobel Prize-winning discovery in 2012 that certain genes, known as Yamanaka factors, could transform adult cells into pluripotent stem cells which have unlimited capacity to divide, self-renew and differentiate into cells of early primary germ cell layers, namely mesoderm, endoderm, and ectoderm.

The key challenge was to reverse cellular ageing without triggering cancerous growth.

Lead scientist David A. Sinclair, a Professor in the Department of Genetics at Harvard, expressed the significance of this achievement, stating that while ageing could previously only be slowed down, it can now potentially be reversed.

"This new discovery offers the potential to reverse ageing with a single pill, with applications ranging from improving eyesight to effectively treating numerous age-related diseases," Sinclair said.

He noted that this breakthrough eliminates the need for gene therapy, which had limited accessibility.



## Turkey Increases Fuel Tax as It Bolsters Stretched Budget

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey raised tax on petrol to help to fund a 1.12 trillion lira (\$42.2 billion) increase to its 2023 budget after February's earthquakes and the May presidential election sent spending soaring.

The additional fuel tax will help with a budget deficit that jumped to 263.6 billion lira in the first five months of the year, up from 124.6 billion lira a year earlier, but it could also stoke inflation that had declined to 38.21% in June from a 24-year high of 85.51% last October.

The wider deficit was largely because of increased spending ahead of May elections, when President Tayyip Erdogan was elected for a third term, as well as on rebuilding work after the earthquakes in southern Turkey.



## China's Frail Q2 GDP Growth Raises Urgency for More Policy Support

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economy grew at a frail pace in the second quarter as demand weakens at home and abroad, with the post-COVID momentum faltering rapidly and raising pressure on policymakers to deliver more stimulus to shore up activity.

Chinese authorities face a daunting task in trying to keep the economic recovery on track and putting a lid on unemployment, as any aggressive stimulus could fuel debt risks and structural distortions.

Gross domestic product grew just 0.8% in April-June from the previous quarter, on a seasonally adjusted basis, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday, versus analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a 0.5% increase and compared with a 2.2% expansion in the first quarter. On a year-on-year basis, GDP expanded 6.3% in the second quarter, accelerating from 4.5% in the first three months of the year, but the rate was well below the forecast for growth of 7.3%.

The annual pace was the quickest since the second quarter of 2021, but it was heavily skewed by economic pains caused by stringent COVID-19 lockdowns in Shanghai and other major cities last year.

"The data suggests that China's post-COVID boom is clearly over," said Carol Kong, economist at Commonwealth Bank of Australia in Sydney.

"The higher-frequency indicators are up from May's numbers, but still paint a picture of a bleak and faltering recovery and at the same time youth unemployment is hitting record highs."

Some economists say China could miss its modest 5% growth target for this year if the decelerating pace doesn't ease off.

More timely June data, which was released alongside the GDP numbers, showed China's retail sales grew 3.1%, slowing sharply from a 12.7% jump in May. Analysts had expected growth of 3.2%.

Industrial output growth unexpectedly quickened to 4.4% last month from 3.5% seen in May, but demand remains lukewarm.

Private fixed-asset investment shrank 0.2% in the first six months, a sharp contrast to the 8.1% growth in investment by state entities, suggesting weak private business confidence.

Recent data showed a rapidly faltering post-COVID recovery as exports fell the most in three years due to cooling demand at home and abroad while a prolonged downturn in the key property market has sapped confidence.

The weak overall momentum and a global recession risks have raised expectations policymakers will need to do more to shore up the world's second-biggest economy.

Authorities are likely to roll out more stimulus steps including fiscal spending to fund big-ticket infrastructure projects, more support for consumers and private firms, and some property policy easing, policy insiders and economists said.

But a quick turnaround is unlikely, analysts say.

All eyes are on an expected Politburo meeting later this month, when top leaders could chart the policy course for the rest of the year.

Asia shares slipped, while the eased after the underwhelming data.

While China is seen on track to hit its modest 2023 growth target, there are risks of the goal being missed.

## Indonesia Upbeat on 5% Growth Despite Gloomy China Outlook

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said she was optimistic about the 5% economic growth target this year despite the darkening global outlook, especially from China.

"We are optimistic for 2023 because we see the figures on the first half," Indrawati said on Sunday in an interview with Bloomberg Television's Haslinda Amin ahead of the G-20 finance chiefs' meetings in India.

Southeast Asia's largest economy flashed another round of warning signs on Monday, with exports plunging 21% in June due to the sharp drop in global commodity prices. More worryingly, soft domestic demand pushed imports down 18% last month, lower than all the forecasts in a Bloomberg survey of economists.

"The second half, there is a positive side from our own side, explicitly on household consumption," Indrawati said, adding that elections next year will spur the economy thanks to extra spending from the government as well as political parties.

Her comments came as finance chiefs from the world's largest economies grapple with the risk of a global recession, brought about by high interest rates and still-elevated inflation. Indrawati said Indonesia was looking to strengthen its ties with India as both economies look for ways to shield against the impact of China's lackluster performance.

"Their economic growth is remarkably very strong. And that's why they need quite a lot of imported commodities from Indonesia," she said in reference to India. "We're here trying to discuss on the partnership which is going to be much benefiting both sides."

## Bangladesh Will Again Seek Duty Benefits in U.S.

DHAKA (Dispatches)- Bangladesh will again urge the U.S. for duty-free access as the tariff imposed on exports from the country is one of the highest faced by goods entering the western nation, according to Senior Commerce Secretary of Bangladesh Tapan Kanti Ghosh.

Ghosh told The Daily Star that he would raise this demand at the sixth edition of the Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (Ticfa).

The two-day annual forum that aims to identify and address obstacles for increasing bilateral trade and investment between the two countries is set to kick off in Dhaka on September 11.

At the Ticfa, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the chief trade negotiating body of the U.S., may raise concerns on the condition of labour and intellectual property rights in Bangladesh, among other trade related issues.

At the Ticfa, the United States Trade Representative may raise concerns on the condition of labor and intellectual property rights in Bangladesh.

However, the main topic of discussion for Bangladesh will be about securing duty-free access or reduced tariff for exports to the U.S. market, Ghosh added. Exported goods, particularly garment items, currently face 15.62 per cent duty when shipped to the U.S.

Ghosh said Bangladesh has already withdrawn the rule requiring double fumigation of U.S. cotton, which was a long-time demand of the American government.

So, Bangladesh will now raise the issue of being granted duty-free access at the Ticfa meeting.

The fifth round of the Ticfa meeting was held in America's Washington in December last year.

The meeting was co-chaired by Christopher Wilson, assistant trade representative of the USTR for south and central Asian affairs, and Tapan Kanti Ghosh, senior secretary of the commerce ministry, according to a statement from the USTR.

Both delegations included officials from trade, labour, agriculture, and other relevant ministries, as per a statement from the USTR. During the meeting, the U.S. and Bangladesh discussed a range of issues impacting bilateral trade, including market access for agricultural products, labor rights, digital trade policies, intellectual property protection, and policies impacting the investment climate.

The two countries stressed the importance of their strong economic and trade relationship, with the countries having surpassed \$10 billion in two-way trade in 2021.

## Yellen Eager to Work With China on Debt, Other Global Challenges

GANDHINAGAR (Dispatches) - U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said she was "eager" to work with China on areas of mutual interest, including debt restructurings for poorer countries, and that multilateral development banks needed reforms before capital increases could be considered.

At a press conference before a meeting of Group of 20 finance ministers and central bankers in India, Yellen said her visit to Beijing last week helped put the U.S.-China relationship on "surer footing" and that the world's two biggest economies had an obligation to the world "to cooperate on areas of mutual concern".

"There is much more work to do. But I believe this trip was an important start," Yellen said. "I am eager to build on the groundwork that we laid in Beijing to mobilise further action."

Concerns remain about China's unfair trade practices, which prompted Washington to impose tariffs on Beijing. "They really have not been addressed," she said.

U.S. corporations want to see an environment where they could "invest and thrive in China", Yellen said.

Washington will continue to cut off Russia's access to military equipment and technologies that Moscow needs in the invasion of Ukraine, Yellen said.

"One of our core goals this year is to combat Russia's efforts to evade our sanctions. Our coalition is building on the actions we've taken in recent months to crack down on these efforts," she added.

India, which chairs the G20 this year, has sought a largely neutral stance on the war, generally declining to blame Russia for the invasion Moscow launched in February last year, urging a diplomatic solution and sharply boosting its purchases of Russian oil even as Western nations seek to squeeze Moscow.

Yellen said she would continue to push hard at the G20 meeting, in Gandhinagar in the northwestern Indian state of Gujarat, for "full and timely participation of all bilateral official creditors on pending debt restructurings".

She said she discussed Zambia's restructuring with her Chinese counterparts and, although it took too long to negotiate, differences were overcome.

"We should apply the common principles we agreed to in Zambia's case in other cases - rather than starting at zero every time. And we must go faster," Yellen said, adding she hoped debt treatments for Sri Lanka and Ghana could be finalized quickly so the International Monetary Fund (IMF) could move forward with initial loan program reviews this fall.

## Kazakhstan Increases Oil Exports Via Azerbaijan



ASTANA (Dispatches) - Kazakhstan is increasing the export of crude oil through non-Russian routes, as part of its diversification strategy.

The country's major oil transporter KazTransOil revealed that the flow of Kazakh oil to European markets through Azerbaijan increased in April-June.

Citing a source from the energy company, Trend reported on Thursday that the flow of Kazakh oil from the Tengiz field through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline reached 347,100 tonnes in the second quarter of this year.

In Q1 2023, the company exported only 19,200 tonnes of Tengiz oil via this route -- approximately 18 times less than Q2.

KazTransOil also experienced a notable surge in the volume of oil transported through its main pipeline network during Q1 2023. The remarkable growth was achieved as the total volume reached 10.3 million tonnes, marking a 591,000-ton increase compared to the same period of the previous year.

The transportation of Kazakh oil for export to European markets through Azerbaijan increased on the back of a master agreement signed earlier between Azerbaijan's SOCAR and Kazakh national energy company KazMunayGas. The document provides for transporting 1.5 million tons of oil annually from the Tengiz field, through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

In 2022, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev emphasized the significance of fully leveraging the potential of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), also known as the Middle Corridor, which stretches from China to Europe covering Central Asia and South Caucasus.

The Trans-Caspian route matters to Kazakhstan's economic security and has grown more important, as exports through Russian territory are becoming increasingly difficult due to the fallout from Moscow's Ukraine war.

## UK Joins Trans-Pacific Trading Bloc in Biggest Post-Brexit Deal

LONDON (Dispatches) - The United Kingdom formally signed a treaty to join a major Indo-Pacific bloc, which the country's government hailed as its biggest trade deal since Brexit.

Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch signed the accession protocol for the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in New Zealand.

It makes the United Kingdom the first new member and first European nation to join the bloc since it was created in 2018. The CPTPP comprises the U.K.'s fellow G-7 members Canada and Japan, plus long-standing allies Australia and New Zealand, alongside Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

It has been seen as a bulwark against Chinese dominance in the region, although Beijing has applied to join.

Badenoch said in an interview with Sky News that the deal showed the U.K. "looking outwards toward the world."

"We have a seat at the table in the fastest-growing region, countries are queuing up (to join)," she added.

"I'm really excited that we've brought home the biggest trade deal since we left the European Union."

London has been pushing a "Global Britain" strategy since formally severing nearly 50 years of ties with its nearest neighbours in the European Union three years ago.

Sunday's signing at a CPTPP meeting in Auckland was the formal confirmation of the agreement for U.K. membership after nearly two years of talks. The government said it will cut tariffs for UK exports to CPTPP countries, which with U.K. membership will have a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of 12 trillion pounds (\$15.7 trillion), and account for 15% of global economic output.

It will give British businesses trade access to a market of more than 500 million people and access to the wider region, it added.

The agreement is expected to come into force in the second half of next year, after parliamentary scrutiny and legislation.

U.K. accession to the CPTPP - the successor to a previous trans-Pacific trade pact that the United States withdrew from in 2017 under president Donald Trump - has, however, been met with a mixed reception.

For Brexit supporters, it has been seen as a chance for the U.K. to join other trading blocs with faster-growing economies than those closer to home - and boost the country's international geopolitical and economic clout.





## Dust Storm Brings Iran Megacity of Mashhad to Standstill

TEHRAN (IFP) - A heavy dust storm brings businesses and sports activities to a halt in Iran's northeastern city of Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi Province.

According to the Iranian weather authority, the air quality in Mashhad decreased because of the dust storm to a "dangerous" level for all age groups, promoting officials to close down businesses and advise against sports activities on Tuesday.

People, especially the elderly and those suffering from heart and lungs complications, have been advised to stay indoors. Health sources say dozens of people have sought aid at hospitals for breathing problems.



## India Blasts Chandrayaan-3 Lander Toward Moon's South Pole

BENGALURU (Dispatches) - India's space agency launched a rocket on Friday that sent a spacecraft into orbit and toward a planned landing next month on the lunar south pole, an unprecedented feat that would advance India's position as a major space power.

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) LVM3 launch rocket blasted off from the country's main spaceport in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh on Friday afternoon, leaving behind a plume of smoke and fire.

About 16 minutes later, ISRO's mission control announced that the rocket had succeeded in putting the Chandrayaan-3 lander into an Earth orbit that will send it looping toward a moon landing next month.

If the mission succeeds, India would join a group of three other countries that have managed a controlled lunar landing, including the United States, the former Soviet Union and China.

The Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft would also be the first to land at the lunar South Pole, an area of special interest for space agencies and private space companies because of the presence of water ice that could support a future space station.

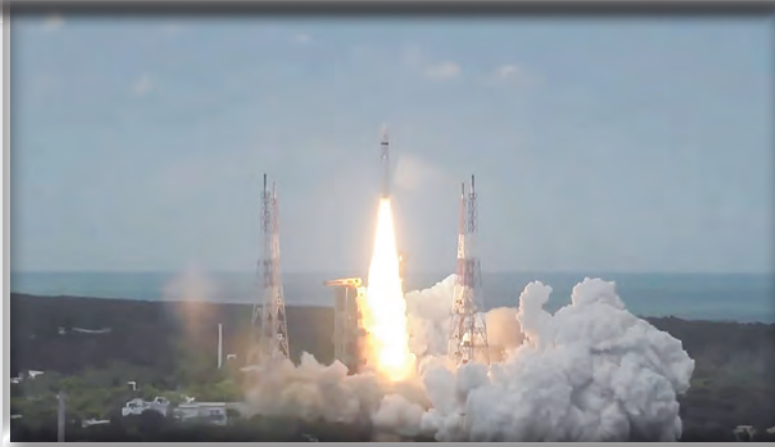
The rocket blasted off from India's main spaceport at 2:35 p.m. local time (0905 GMT). Over 1.4 million people watched the launch on ISRO's YouTube channel, many offering congratulations and the patriotic slogan "Jai Hind" (Victory to India).

India's much-awaited moon mission Chandrayaan-3 has been scheduled for launch on July 14, 2023.

In 2019, ISRO's Chandrayaan-2 mission successfully deployed an orbiter but its lander and rover were destroyed in a crash near where the Chandrayaan-3 will attempt a touchdown.

Chandrayaan, which means "moon vehicle" in Sanskrit, includes a 2-metre-(6.6-foot)-tall lander designed to deploy a rover near the moon's south pole, where it is expected to remain functional for two weeks running a series of experiments.

The lunar landing is expected on Aug. 23, ISRO has said.



The launch is India's first major mission since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government announced policies to spur investment in space launches and related satellite-based businesses.

Modi had earlier said on Twitter that the moon mission "will carry the hopes and dreams of our nation".

"As Mother India enters into the next 25 years, she pledges to play a leading global role in the emerging world scenario," Deputy Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh said in an event at the spaceport to celebrate the launch.

Since 2020, when India opened to private launches, the number of space startups has more than doubled. Late last year, Skyroot Aerospace, whose investors include Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC, launched India's first privately built rocket.

## Call for National Cooperation...

FROM PAGE 1

Underlining that the Islamic Republic has overcome difficult problems and hardships with the help of people over the years, the IRGC's chief commander said, "Success in [repelling] the new war is possible with the participation, cooperation and presence of all people."

Back in February, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Iran's Army chief, said that the enemy resorted to hybrid war against the Islamic establishment after it was dealt heavy blows by the Iranian nation and Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

"By adopting different plots and strategies in recent years, the enemy has been trying to block the path of the Islamic Revolution and deal a blow to the Islamic Republic," Mousavi said.

"However, with people's resistance and the Leader's wise leadership, the enemy's plots have failed one after another. Therefore, relying on psychological and media operations, the enemy has organized an extensive hybrid war against the [Iranian] nation and the Islamic establishment."

## Tehran, Cairo on Way...

FROM PAGE 1

To buttress tourism, direct flights between Iran and Egypt will be resumed in the coming weeks if a detailed agreement is reached. Moreover, it is discussed that Iranian tourists will be offered entry visas upon arrival in Egypt.

In addition to helping to normalize relations, attracting Iranian tourists will provide financial benefits to Egypt, which is grappling with an economic crisis in part as a result of the Russian-Ukraine war, the report said.

Officials from Cairo and Tehran have recently held several rounds of talks in Baghdad to discuss normalizing relations, which soured following Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the Islamic has targeted to surge its foreign arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

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## Iran-China Non-Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

Rezvanifar went on to say that Iran's non-oil trade in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year registered a 24.42 percent growth in terms of weight and an 8.84 percent decline in terms of value compared to the same period last year.

In this period, five countries, namely China, Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and India were Iran's top export target markets, he added.

Under the 25-Year Iran-China Partnership Cooperation Contract, China should be one of the important trade partners of the Islamic Republic of Iran. China is regarded as one of the important customers of Iranian oil and gas condensates and Iran plays an important role in the transit of goods from China and India to the European countries.

## Pakistan Can Benefit...

FROM PAGE 1

KPC President Saeed Sarbazi suggested exchanging visits of journalist delegations between the two countries, which received positive feedback from the Iranian Consul General. The Consul General also accepted an invitation from Secretary Shoaib Ahmed Khan to visit the Press Club.

The forthcoming visit of the Iranian Consul General to the Karachi Press Club, along with the newly appointed Ambassador to Pakistan, is anticipated to further foster cooperation and understanding between the media communities of both nations. This exchange of visits aims to bolster the already robust Pakistan-Iran relations and explore new avenues of collaboration.

By enhancing cooperation across diverse sectors and facilitating people-to-people interactions, Pakistan and Iran are poised to forge a stronger and more fruitful partnership.

The Iranian Consul General's visit to the Karachi Press Club will serve as an important step toward this goal, fostering mutual understanding and deepening the bonds between the two nations.

## A Mild Winter Could Cut Europe's Natural Gas Prices in Half

LONDON (Dispatches) - Europe's natural gas stockpiles are at elevated levels and on track to be full sooner than planned. This gives governments and industries confidence that last year's energy crisis will not be repeated.

The benchmark natural gas prices are one-tenth of the records seen last summer when Russia slashed pipeline supply to Europe.

Volatility, however, will continue as prices and demand ahead of and during the coming winter will depend on two factors that are out of EU control—the weather and the contribution of renewable energy sources to the mix depending on the weather.

Thanks to milder winter weather, reduced EU consumption, and demand destruction in industry due to the high energy costs, Europe made it through the 2022/2023 winter without gas shortages or gas rationing.

Ahead of the 2023/2024 winter, Europe can only hope for another winter of milder temperatures without prolonged periods of freezes that would boost demand for heating and for gas-fired power generation.

In case of another mild winter – which is possible but far from certain – Europe's gas prices could plunge from current levels and halve to \$16.85 (15 euros) per megawatt-hour (MWh), according to Morgan Stanley.

"If weather is persistently warm and renewables perform strongly," the benchmark gas prices could crumble to the levels from the end of 2020, Morgan Stanley analysts wrote in a research note this week, as carried by Bloomberg.

## 3 Persian Gulf Islands Linked to mainland With Fiber Optics

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Communications and Information Technology of Iran Issa Zarepour has said that for the first time, his ministry has connected the Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Lesser Tunb, and the Greater Tunb to the Iranian mainland with the use of fiber optics.

Answering questions on his performance at the Iranian parliament on Tuesday, Zarepour noted that more than 150 kilometers of cable was laid under the sea to this end, and fortunately, people of the three islands have access to stable internet.

The minister further referred to the launch of 600 sites with fifth-generation internet, saying that for the first time, the ministry sets the record of 6.5 terabits per second for domestic traffic, so people increased their usage of domestic platforms over the past year.

Nowadays, domestically-developed messengers became popular, he stated, arguing that over 40 million Iranians are utilizing domestic messengers. The ministry also designed a safe internet service for children.

Zarepour also mentioned that the progress of the national information network reached 62% from 23% at the beginning of the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi.

Touching on his ministry's efforts to dodge the US-imposed sanctions on internet services, he said that Washington banned 100k widely used internet services for Iranian users, but the ministry tried to nullify the sanction; thus, the Iranian elite and programmers could utilize the services without requiring VPN service.

## Crushing Medical Debt Is Turning Americans Against Their Doctors

NEW YORK (Dispatches)- For Emily Boller, it was a \$5,000 hospital bill for a simple case of pink eye that took four years to pay off. For Mary Curley, it was the threatening collection letters from a lab that arrived more than two years later, just as her husband lost his job and the family was fighting to save their home.

For Cory Day, it was a \$1,000 fee he was charged at an emergency room outside Los Angeles, even though he only checked in and then left before being seen. "I feel like the hospital is a predator," Day said. "This is a place that's supposed to be looking after you."

The experience offered a stark lesson, he said: "Don't trust the system."

Reporting on medical debt over the past two years, I've spent hundreds of hours on the telephone, in the living rooms and at the kitchen tables of patients like Boller, Curley and Day. They are among the 100 million people in America who have been driven into debt by medical and dental bills.

Many of my conversations with patients have revealed a deep and disturbing disillusionment with our healthcare system. Medical providers ignore this at their peril — and at a high risk to Americans' health.

Doctors and hospitals have long held an exalted position in American life, retaining public confidence even as the public has steadily lost trust in other institutions such as government, law enforcement and the media. Growing up, I shared this faith. My father was a physician who never hesitated to get up in the middle of the night and drive to the hospital to operate on a sick child in his care. But as a journalist covering healthcare the past 15 years, I've seen patients' faith shaken.

They're tired of shocking medical bills they didn't expect and can't afford. And they're disgusted by the collection notices, the threatening phone calls and appointments they can't get because they owe money.

Many Americans say they simply no longer trust their medical providers. This is borne out by a nationwide poll conducted by KFF as part of an investigation of medical debt. Just 15% of people with healthcare debt said they have a lot of trust that providers have patients' best interests in mind. That's about half the rate as among people without such debt.

Many caring people who work in healthcare understand this. I've met countless compassionate physicians, nurses and others who see firsthand the toll that debt is taking on their patients.

But I've seen a lot more denial and finger-pointing by healthcare leaders. Hospitals and doctors blame the government for underpaying them and blame insurers for selling plans with unaffordable deductibles. Insurers blame providers for obscene prices. Everyone blames drug companies.

And so, the suffering of patients deepens.

In a project on medical debt with NPR, KFF Health News documented cancer patients forced to hold off debt collectors while fighting off nausea and other toxic side effects of chemotherapy; older workers whose retirement savings were obliterated; 30-somethings unable to buy a home because their credit was ruined by healthcare debt; new mothers forced to take on extra work; parents unable to buy Christmas gifts for their children; and seniors who cut back on food because of medical debt.

That our healthcare system would do this to people should be reason enough for hospital executives, insurance CEOs and senior physicians to stop the blame game and look in the mirror.

If nothing else, this should be a flashing red light: the simmering resentment of growing numbers of patients who feel victimized by this system.

## Iran Reportedly Ready...

FROM PAGE 1

"This is on our agenda, using our national currencies in our trade, commercial and economic exchanges particularly the example of India. We have made good progress in this...Hopefully, this could take new momentum and we could see widespread use of our national currencies in this process," the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister said.

It is worth mentioning Russia emerged as the largest single supplier of crude oil to India ever since the Ukraine war escalated in February last year. Earlier, Iraq and Saudi Arabia were its primary suppliers in the past decade, as well as the UAE and the US. However, since Moscow offered oil at a discounted rate, it

remained on the top list for the eighth consecutive month in June.

Earlier in March, Iran reiterated India to buy crude oil from Tehran as it purchased from Russia by evading Western pressure. The Ambassador of Iran to India, praised New Delhi's effort to continue buying oil from Moscow, keeping in mind the benefit of the Indian economy and people. He asserted buying oil from Iran is in favor of New Delhi. "As India resisted the pressure for buying oil from Russia, we believe that India could and we hope that for the benefit of the Indian economy and people, the Indian government will start importing oil," said Elahi.

## U.S. Deploying F-35s...

FROM PAGE 1

On Friday, an unnamed senior American defense official also said the US will send F-16 fighter jets to the Persian Gulf region this weekend in a bid to "protect ships" from "Iranian seizures."

The official claimed that the F-16s will give air cover to the ships moving through the strategic Strait of Hormuz and increase the US military's visibility in the area, the Associated Press reported.

Iran says it views US military vessels lurking in the waters of the Persian Gulf as a threat to its security and a source of tensions and instability in the region.



## Ceballos Set to Miss Start of Season Injured

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos will likely miss the start of the season after his club confirmed he suffered a hamstring injury. The 26-year-old Spaniard will be sidelined for up to six weeks according to reports in Spanish media, ruling him out of Los Blancos' pre-season tour and potentially the first two rounds of La Liga fixtures. Ceballos renewed his Madrid contract until 2027 this summer but faces a tough battle to establish himself as a regular starter, with veteran midfielders Luka Modric and Toni Kroos signing new deals too.

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## Inter Miami Complete Signing of Midfielder Busquets

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Inter Miami have completed the signing of former Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets on a deal until 2025, the Major League Soccer side said. Busquets, 35, will be reunited with his friend and former team mate Lionel Messi after not renewing his contract at Barca following an 18-year stay. The 2010 World Cup winner will join the squad in the coming days and will occupy a Designated Player slot, the club added.

## Brown Shows Star Power for LA Clippers in Summer League

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kobe Brown thought he deserved to go higher in the NBA draft, and he's beginning to show why.

Brown, the final pick in the first round at No. 30 overall, is proving he has a chance to make an impact as a rookie for the Los Angeles Clippers after putting together one of the more complete game lines in Las Vegas. He scored 35 points on seven 3-pointers Friday night to go along with eight rebounds, four steals, three assists and two blocks in a 102-91 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Through four games, the Missouri product named after former Los Angeles Lakers great Kobe Bryant, is averaging 17.5 points, 8.8 rebounds, 2.3 steals and 1.3 blocks and seemingly is making his mark as a rotational player for the Clippers. The Clippers close out the summer on Sunday when they face the Los Angeles Lakers.

Ausar Thompson, right, hugs family and friends after being selected fifth overall by the Detroit Pistons during the NBA basketball draft, Thursday, June 22, 2023, in New York. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

The Detroit Pistons and Indiana Pacers used lottery picks on players who should make their biggest early impact on defense while the rest of the Central Division teams sat out the first round of Thursday's draft.

Miami Heat forward Jimmy Butler talks during a news conference, Sunday, June 11, 2023, in Denver. Miami takes on the Denver Nuggets in Game 5 of the NBA Finals on Monday. (AP Photo/Jack Dempsey)

In Summer League playoffs, the Cleveland Cavaliers face the Brooklyn Nets in one semifinal Sunday, while the Utah Jazz and Houston Rockets meet in the other. The winners will play Monday night in the championship game.

### HORNETS 109, TIMBERWOLVES 102

Amari Bailey scored 17 points to lead five Charlotte players in double figures and Kobi Simmons added 13 points and eight assists in a consolation game.

Nathan Mensah shot 6 of 7 from the field and finished with 14 points and Justin Robinson scored 13 for the Hornets (1-4). Trevon Scott added 10 points and seven rebounds, and James Nnaji also scored 10 points with five blocks.

Javonte Cooke led Minnesota (1-4) with 16 points on 7-of-9 shooting. Wendell Moore Jr. scored 15 points, Josh Minott and Leonard Miller each added 13 and D.J. Carton had 10 points and seven assists.

## Tour de France Duel Could Be Decided at Individual Time Trial

PASSY (Dispatches)- Jonas Vingegaard and Tadej Pogacar remain neck-and-neck in the standings after two hard weeks of the Tour de France, but stage 16's individual time trial could be the moment that decides the title.

Defending champion Vingegaard remains 10 seconds ahead of two-time winner Pogacar in what is proving to be another gripping duel for the yellow jersey.

However, neither rider can go into Tuesday's stage with the utmost confidence of beating the other because one slip on the 22.4km race against the clock can blow away two weeks of hard work.

Riders embark individually at two-minute intervals in reverse order of the current overall standings.

That means that Jumbo-Visma rider Vingegaard is last down the ramp at Passy, the picturesque town in view of Mont Blanc.

The Dane has spent the past two weeks insisting he never thinks about his rival. But will he be able to do that with the swashbuckling Slovenian out ahead of him on what is a truly challenging course?

Three years ago Pogacar bamboozled Primoz Roglic in a similar situation by riding flat out from start to finish, to rip the title from his grasp at the last gasp.

Vingegaard, however, seems less sensitive to provocation.

## China Wins More Diving Gold At World Championships

FUKUAKA (Dispatches) - Chinese divers continued their dominance at the world championships in Japan on Monday, winning another two gold medals to make it seven out of seven so far.

Chang Yani and Chen Yrwen won the women's 3m synchronized springboard before compatriots Lian Junjie and Yang Hao took gold in the men's 10m synchronised event.

China won every diving gold at last year's world championships in Budapest and have so far maintained a perfect record in the southern Japanese city of Fukuoka.

Chen, who picked up a fourth world championships gold medal, said she preferred diving in pairs events because it gave her "a sense of security".



RAPTORS 108, WARRIORS 101

Joe Wieskamp scored 27 points on 8-of-11 shooting and Gradey Dick added 21 points for Toronto in a consolation game against Golden State.

Markquis Nowell finished with 17 points and 12 assists for the Raptors (1-4). DJ Hogg scored 12 points.

Lester Quinones made four 3-pointers and hit 12 of 13 from the free throw line to finish with 32 points for Golden State (0-5). Trayce Jackson-Davis had 18 points on 8-of-12 shooting and grabbed 10 rebounds. Brandin Podziemski added 11 points, six rebounds and five assists.

### KINGS 92, BUCKS 84

Jalen Slawson had 17 points, seven rebounds and four assists, while Souley Boom added 15 points to help Sacramento past Milwaukee in a consolation game.

Mike Daum added 14 points for the Kings (3-2), Alex O'Connell scored 12 and Aleem Ford 11. Chris Livingston led the Bucks with 22 points and Craig Randall, who made just 6 of 22 from the field and 3 of 17 from 3-point range, added 20 points and eight assists.

### BULLS 90, WIZARDS 85

Javon Freeman-Liberty had 24 points, seven rebounds, five assists and two blocks to lead Chicago over Washington in a consolation game.

Dalen Terry was 7 of 10 from the field and 4 of 5 from 3-point range and finished with 20 points for the Bulls (3-2). Adama Sanogo scored 15 points and grabbed nine rebounds and Yago Dos Santos added 13 points, including four 3s.

Jules Bernard led the Wizards (2-3) with 17 points. Tristan Vukcevic scored 15, Donovan Williams added 14 and DJ Stewart 13.



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Not even the pouring rain could spoil Lionel Messi's Inter Miami welcome party in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where the new face of Major League Soccer (MLS) was introduced to a packed stadium of adoring fans.

Messi, seven months removed from leading Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar, was presented to fans during a glitzy event called "The Unveil" at Miami's home stadium. After being introduced, the seven-times Ballon d'Or winner walked toward midfield along a spotlight-lined catwalk wearing a T-shirt and jeans and was presented with his No. 10 shirt before addressing the crowd with a few brief remarks in Spanish.

"I am very happy to have chosen to come to this city with my family, to have chosen this project and I have no doubt that we are going to enjoy it very much," said Messi.

"We are going to have a good time and great things are going to happen. Thank you very much, thank you all for this day.

"I can't wait to start training to compete. I feel the same desire I've always had to compete, to really want to win and to help it (Miami) continue to grow."

After his remarks, a video compilation of well wishes was played on the stadium's big screen and included messages from the likes of former NFL quarterback Tom Brady and NBA player Stephen Curry.



## Guardiola Stunned as Mahrez Agrees to Join Saudi Club

Raheem Sterling and Gabriel Jesus have all departed, with Jack Grealish, Julian Alvarez and Erling Haaland being brought in to replace them.

Mahrez would definitely be one of the biggest losses of all. The Algeria international has scored 78 goals and made 59 assists in 239 appearances for Man City since joining from Leicester back in 2018.

He hasn't shown any signs of slowing down, either. Last term, he scored 15 goals and assisted 13 times in 47 appearances across all competitions.

Mahrez played a key role in a historic treble-winning campaign for the Cityzens and has now won 11 major trophies during his time at the Etihad.

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City star Riyad Mahrez has reportedly 'agreed personal terms' with Saudi club Al Ahli, who are considering a £30m bid for the winger.

Pep Guardiola has overseen significant changes to his front line in recent years. Leroy Sane, Raheem Sterling and Gabriel Jesus have all departed, with Jack Grealish, Julian Alvarez and Erling Haaland being brought in to replace them.

Mahrez would definitely be one of the biggest losses of all. The Algeria international has scored 78 goals and made 59 assists in 239 appearances for Man City since joining from Leicester back in 2018.

He hasn't shown any signs of slowing down, either. Last term, he scored 15 goals and assisted 13 times in 47 appearances across all competitions.

Mahrez played a key role in a historic treble-winning campaign for the Cityzens and has now won 11 major trophies during his time at the Etihad.

But he now looks set to become the latest superstar to ditch the Premier League for Saudi. According to transfer journalist Ben Jacobs, Al Ahli have reached an agreement on personal terms with Mahrez.

Reports suggest the Saudi club have offered the attacker a contract worth a staggering £25m per season (approx. £480,000 a week). As mentioned, they are tipped to submit a bid of £30m to Man City.

If he completes the move, he could be playing alongside Liverpool icon Roberto Firmino next season, who signed for Al Ahli in early July.

Transfer journalist Fabrizio Romano has insisted that there is work still to be done on the deal.

"Al Ahli are pushing to sign Mahrez. The agreement with the player is almost done, but not yet with Man City," Romano told his YouTube channel.

"City still don't have an official bid, so they will get back to work on Monday and start conversations with Mahrez to understand the state of his conversations with Al Ahli.

"Then they'll negotiate with Al Ahli if the player gives the final greenlight. So we're not yet at the done deal stage, but Al Ahli are pushing for Mahrez."

On the subject of cost, Romano stressed Man City "will not let Mahrez go for free." It remains to be seen whether £30m will be enough to convince Man City to sell him.

## Kane Totally Committed To Tottenham

PERTH (Dispatches) - New Tottenham coach Ange Postecoglou said Harry Kane was "totally committed" to his vision for the north London club as speculation mounts over the England captain's future.

Kane has entered the final 12 months of his six-year Spurs contract and has been courted aggressively by Bayern Munich.

Unfazed by the uncertainty ahead of next month's start of the English Premier League season, Postecoglou said his initial discussions with Kane had been instructive.

"I had a good chat with Harry... nothing earth-shattering or defining," he said before Tottenham's pre-season friendly against West Ham in Perth tomorrow.

"Me and Harry were perfectly aligned in... we want to see a successful team this year.

"He's here and while he's here, he's totally committed to what we're doing."

Bayern Munich honorary president Uli Hoeness added to the tug-of-war for the 29-year-old's services by telling journalists on Saturday Kane's "mind is made up" to switch to the Bundesliga champions.

"No one has spoken to me from Munich," Postecoglou said.

"If other clubs want to talk about our contracted players, that's more of an issue for them than us.

"There are a lot of people that know Harry better than me but he's not going to get fazed by anything."



## Son Would Rather Play for Spurs Than Move to Saudi Club

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min said he would have moved to Saudi Arabia to continue his career if he wanted to but opted to stay with the Premier League club to redeem himself after a disappointing 2022-23 campaign.

Son won the Premier League Golden Boot for most goals in the 2021-22 season with 23 strikes but injuries and a loss of form saw the South Korea international score only 10 times last season as Spurs finished eighth.

The 31-year-old had been linked with a lucrative transfer to Saudi Arabia but at a press conference in Perth ahead of a pre-season friendly against West Ham United, he vowed to stay with the north London side.

"Probably if I wanted to go there (Saudi Arabia) I would be out there, not here," he said with a laugh. "I love playing football. Obviously money is also important, but I dream of playing in the Premier League and still a lot of things to do.

"Especially last season I suffered physically. This is not the Sonny that I know. So I want to prove that this season that I'm the Sonny that we all know. I want to prove that to myself and I want to give back to the club where I belong.

"Saudi, obviously most people are going at the moment which is really, really interesting. But the Premier League is still a dream for me to play (in) and I'm looking forward to this season."

