

TEHRAN -- Iran's Ministry of Petroleum on Sunday brought online a major port on the Persian Gulf coast to expedite exports of petroleum products from the giant energy hub of South Pars.

The Siraf Exports and Service Port was inaugurated upon an order by President Hassan Rouhani. The port, located in the southwestern province of Bushehr, has two wharfs which will be dedicated to exports of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and sulfur. The products will be directly supplied from nearby refineries that run on natural gas pumped from the South Pars.



TEHRAN -- Iran's Foreign Ministry on Sunday strongly rejected recent charges against the country's central bank and a number of other banks by the government of Bahrain, noting that such measures are purely based on political motivations.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly rejects accusations leveled against the Central Bank of Iran and other Iranian banks in Bahrain," Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said. "Bringing up such cases and leveling baseless accusations and allegations against the Central Bank of Iran, Saderat and Melli banks, and their managers are solely based on political motivations and lack any legal value."

Viewpoint

Sheikh Zakzaky's Acquittal - Triumph of Truth Over Tyranny

Isotopic Unit of Khondab Nuclear Complex Opens



Korean Shooter Jin Jong-oh Apologizes to Javad Foroughi



Iraq's PMU Launches Anti-Terrorist Operation in Diyala



Hundreds Urge Probe Into Indigenous Schools in Canada

MONTREAL (AFP) -- Hundreds of protesters in Canada's capital called for a probe into a boarding school system for indigenous children, as outrage built after the discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves at several of the facilities.

Until the 1990s, some 150,000 indigenous, Inuit and Metis youths were forcibly enrolled in the schools, where students were physically and sexually abused by headmasters and teachers who stripped them of their culture and language.

"Indigenous Peoples need truth and justice," MP Mumilaq Qaqqaq wrote on Instagram.

"That means a special prosecutor and a fully-funded independent investigation, with international observers present, into Canada's crimes against Indigenous Peoples," she added, calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Justice Minister David Lametti "to stop making excuses" and launch a probe.

The demonstrators gathered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa after two lawmakers from the left-wing New Democratic Party (NDP) called for a protest.

The NDP called on Trudeau's government in early July to appoint a special prosecutor to lead an independent investigation into the country's painful history of residential schools for indigenous children.

"People have been shocked by the number of graves that have been found... These are not accidents, these are not tragedies they represent a policy that was about the destruction of a people," NDP lawmaker Charlie Angus told public broadcaster CBC.

Since late May, more than 1,000 unmarked graves were found near former residential schools -- discoveries that have outraged the country.

Thousands died at the schools, and many were subjected to physical and sexual abuse, according to an investigative commission that concluded the Canadian government engaged in "cultural genocide."

More than 4,000 died of disease and neglect in the schools, according to a commission of inquiry that concluded Canada had committed "cultural genocide."

A Bitter Farewell



President Rouhani and members of his administration pose for a group picture after the last cabinet session in Tehran, Aug. 1, 2021.

TEHRAN -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei will officially confirm Ebrahim Raisi as the Islamic Republic's new president in a ceremony on Tuesday, marking the end of Hassan Rouhani's government.

Both Ayatollah Khamenei and Raisi are scheduled to give speeches in the televised event that will formally approve his presidency.

A swearing-in ceremony will take place on Aug. 5, during

which Raisi is expected to present his proposed cabinet, including his picks for minister of foreign affairs and minister of petroleum.

Raisi has said he intends to continue negotiations with world powers to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, which has been put on hold until he takes office, but has signaled that he won't make the issue the centerpiece of his foreign policy.

Iran's economic problems amid the most draconian Ameri-

can sanctions will be the new president's greatest challenge, according to Clement Therme, a researcher at the European University Institute in Italy.

"His main objective will be to improve the economic situation by reinforcing the Islamic Republic's economic relations with neighboring countries," Therme told AFP.

"The goal would be to build a business model that would protect Iran's economic growth from American policies and decisions."

Therme believes Raisi's main priority will be to "remove U.S. sanctions" so Iran can bolster trade with its neighbors and non-Western countries such as China and Russia.

The 2015 deal saw Iran accept curbs on its peaceful nuclear energy program in return for an easing of sanctions.

But former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord three years later and ramped up sanctions again, prompting Tehran to pull back from most of its nuclear commitments.

Trump's successor Joe Biden has signaled his readiness to return to the deal but he has been apt to retain the main gamut of the coercive measures as leverage against the Islamic Republic as formal talks with the agreement's remaining parties -- Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia -- have gone on for months in Vienna.

The U.S. sanctions choked Iran, including by seeking to stop its oil exports, and the economy contracted by more than six percent in both 2018 and 2019.

This was a blow to Rouhani who had sought to liberalize the

economy and develop the private sector.

The policy has drawn a lot of criticism among many Iranians who believe the outgoing administration wasted much of its time on chasing untrustworthy Europeans instead of relying on domestic capabilities.

"In this government, it was shown up that trust in the West does not work," Ayatollah Khamenei told President Hassan Rouhani and members of his cabinet in a farewell meeting this week.

"Others should use your experiences. This experience is a distrust of the West," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said Washington is "stubborn" and insists on adding a sentence to the existing nuclear deal.

"By adding this sentence, they want to provide an excuse for their further interventions on the nuclear deal and (Iran's) missile work and regional issues," the Leader said. "Then if we refuse to discuss those issues, Americans will accuse Iran of violating the nuclear deal and they will say the agreement is over."

The Leader charted out the path for the next administration, saying domestic programs should in no way be tied to Western states under any circumstances due to the proven failure of such an approach.

"Wherever you tied your work to the West, you failed, and wherever you rose and moved forward without trusting the West, you succeeded," the Leader said.

"Whenever you postponed issues with agreements with the West or negotiations with the West and America and the like, you were stuck and could not progress," the Leader said. "Because they don't help. They are the enemy after all."

The economic problem has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic amid the U.S. sanctions which has disrupted Iran's access to medical equipment and healthcare necessities.

Raisi himself has already said he will not negotiate with the other parties to the nuclear deal, and indirectly with the U.S., just for the sake of negotiations.

His government will support talks that "guarantee national interests", he has said.

Six rounds of nuclear talks between Iran and world powers were held in Vienna between April and June. The last round concluded on June 20, and no date has been set for another.

Officials in Tehran said there would be no new talks until Raisi assumed office.

Anger Mounts as Millions Face Homelessness

Biden, Congress Allow Eviction Ban to Expire

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anger and frustration mounted in Congress over the weekend as a nationwide eviction moratorium expired during a surge in the COVID-19 pandemic. One Democratic lawmaker even camped outside the Capitol in protest as millions of Americans faced being forced from their homes.

Lawmakers said they were blindsided by President Joe Biden's inaction as the midnight Saturday deadline neared, some furious that he called on Congress to provide a last-minute solution to protect renters. The rare division between the president and his party carried potential lasting political ramifications.

New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said Sunday that Democrats have to "call a spade a spade" after the deadline expired.

"We cannot in good faith blame the Republican Party when House Democrats have a majority," the progressive congresswoman said on CNN's

"State of the Union."

Ocasio-Cortez and other Democrats joined Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., on Saturday evening and overnight Sunday as Bush camped outside the Capitol. "I don't plan to leave before some type of change happens," Bush said, though the House had already left for its August recess.

More than 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction, some in a matter of days. The moratorium was put in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of the COVID-19 crisis when jobs shifted and many workers lost income.

Democrats piled on in frustration.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., the chair of the Financial Services Committee, said Saturday on CNN: "We thought that the White House was in charge."

"We are only hours away from a fully preventable housing crisis," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., during a floor speech in a rare Saturday session as senators labored over an infra-

structure package.

"We have the tools, and we have the funding," Warren said. "What we need is the time."

The eviction ban was intended to prevent further virus spread by people put out on the streets and into shelters. Congress approved nearly \$47 billion in federal housing aid to the states during the pandemic, but it has been slow to make it into the hands of renters and landlords owed payments.

The day before the ban was set to expire, Biden called on local governments to "take all possible steps" to immediately disburse the funds.

"There can be no excuse for any state or locality not accelerating funds to landlords and tenants that have been hurt during this pandemic," he said in a statement late Friday.

Brian Deese, director of the White House National Economic Council, echoed that sentiment Sunday on Fox News Channel. "No landlord should evict without seeking that rental

assistance, and states and localities need to get that money out urgently, and they can do that," Deese said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi urged House Democrats in a letter Saturday night to check into how the money already allocated has been distributed so far in their own states and localities. She said the Treasury Department, which transferred the funds earlier in the year, offered to brief lawmakers next week.

Biden set off the scramble by announcing Thursday he would allow the eviction ban to expire instead of challenging a recent Supreme Court ruling signaling this would be the last deadline.

The White House has been clear that Biden would have liked to extend the federal eviction moratorium because of the spread of the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus. But there were also concerns that challenging the court could lead to a ruling restricting the administration's ability to respond

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