

TEHRAN -- The number of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in Iran stayed unchanged at 144,727 with another zero deaths over the past 24 hours, Iran's Health Ministry announced on Monday.

However, 145 new cases of infection with COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, 70 of whom were hospitalized, it added. The ministry noted that 7,336,791 patients out of a total of 7,562,755 infected people have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

# Kayhan International



German Defense Minister Resigns Under Pressure

BERLIN (Reuters) -- German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht resigned from Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government on Monday, the culmination of growing doubt about her ability to revive Germany's armed forces against the backdrop of the Ukraine war.

Her decision dealt a blow to Scholz at a time when Germany is under pressure to approve an increase in military support for Kyiv, and Germany's defense capabilities have been called into question after several Puma infantry tanks were put out of service during a recent military drill.

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Viewpoint

Ottawa Regime's Bleak, Black, Bloody Human Rights Record

Raisi Calls for Measures to Ensure Medicine Supply



Iran's Women's Ice Hockey Beat Saudi Arabia to Reach Final



Palestinian Minor Martyred, Resistance Warns Zionist Aggressors



## Planned Strike by Teachers Add to UK's Woes

LONDON (Reuters) -- Teachers in England and Wales were set to announce strike action later on Monday, joining nurses, rail workers and others in staging industrial action in a further headache for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government.

The Sunday Times cited union sources as saying members in England and Wales had voted to back strikes beginning in February.

National Education Union (NEU) joint general secretary Mary Bousted said she favored staging a walkout on Feb. 1, the date 100,000 public sector workers are due to strike in what could become Britain's biggest day of coordinated industrial action for decades.

Sunak is coming under increasing pressure to try to resolve pay disputes with hundreds of thousands of workers following months of strikes which have caused widespread disruption.

With inflation running at more than 10%, workers from multiple sectors are demanding higher wages.

The NEU, the largest education union in the United Kingdom with around 500,000 members, said the government had offered its members a 5% pay rise which it says equates to a pay cut due to spiraling prices. Low pay for teachers has pushed many to leave the profession, the union said.

The government has said it cannot afford big wage rises and warned that any big boost to salaries would exacerbate the inflation problem.

Bousted told Sky News the NEU's internal polling suggested it would meet the threshold for strikes.

"We will know at 5pm tonight, we will declare the pattern of action then," she said.

Last week, a strike ballot by a different teachers' union in England fell short of the required turnout threshold. A union for headteachers in England and Wales will also announce on Monday whether it will proceed with strike action.

Teachers in England last held a strike in 2016 but the majority of schools remained open. A larger scale walkout by teachers took place in 2008.

Teachers in Scotland have already held strikes which have closed many schools. On Monday they began a rolling 16-day walkout which will impact two local authorities each day.

A decision by teachers to strike would be "regrettable" Transport Minister Mark Harper said on Sunday.

While there are hopes that a new offer for rail workers could end walkouts in that sector, nursing representatives have warned their strikes could intensify.

Members of the Royal College of Nursing will strike on Wednesday and Thursday, and the union has warned their next round of strikes could be more severe, with double the number of nurses in England to walk out in February unless a resolution is found.

## Isaac Herzog Warns Again: Divisions Tearing Zionist Entity Apart



Tens of thousands attend a protest in Tel Aviv's Habima Square.

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- Israel's president Isaac Herzog revealed Monday that the Zionist regime has entered a profound disagreement that will tear the entity apart.

Herzog said in media statements, "This conflict worries me deeply, as it worries many across Israel and the diaspora."

"I am now focused on two critical roles that I believe I bear as president at this hour: averting a historic constitutional crisis and stopping the continued rift within our nation," he added.

Herzog noted that over the past week he has worked around the

clock and in every possible way with the relevant authorities to restrain the deepening strife.

He said he is unsure his efforts will bear fruit, as the road is long and the gaps between the parties are wide.

The occupying regime of Israel has been witnessing two weeks of political tensions, against the backdrop of the Israeli opposition's organization of mass demonstrations on Saturday, against the policies of the new regime, especially with regard to the changes that Netanyahu intends to bring about under the pretext of reforming the

judiciary in Occupied Palestine.

Tens of thousands gathered in the pouring rain to protest against the plan to weaken the supreme court and empower the parliament to appoint judges.

The parliament includes some of the most extremist members who have articulated highly racist and provocative views against Palestinians.

Netanyahu's cabinet is extremely weak after making numerous concessions to hardline parties in order to form a cabinet.

Authorities estimated that up to 80,000 people came out for

the Tel Aviv protest Saturday, while several thousand rallied in front of the president's residence in Al-Quds. Marches were also held in other cities across Occupied Palestine, including in the northern city of Haifa.

The police blocked the road leading to Netanyahu's residence in Al-Quds. Security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, one of the most extremist politicians in the Zionist regime, had ordered the police to crack down on the protesters by using water cannons and arresting those who try to block roads.

The new plan includes passing a law that would allow the governing coalition to override supreme court rulings by a simple majority of 61 votes in the 120-member Knesset.

It also seeks to end the supreme court's ability to revoke administrative decisions on the grounds of "reasonability," significantly decreasing judicial oversight.

The plan envisions giving the regime and the coalition in parliament absolute control over appointing judges.

Additionally, the plan includes changing the law so that ministers would be able to install political appointees as legal advisers in their ministries, something that is not under their authority today.

Opposition parties, grassroots organizations and others have come out strongly against the plan, with legal experts saying it will eliminate the ability of the judicial branch to do the checks and balances against the executive and legislative branches, which are both controlled by the governing coalition.

The plan, announced less than two weeks after Netanyahu's right-wing regime took office, has deepened political divisions and stoked fear among some that the heightened tensions could tear the Zionist society apart.

China's foreign minister said Monday the occupying regime of Israel must stop "incitements and provocations" against Palestinians, particularly in Al-Quds amid rise in tensions in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Qin Gang said, "We urge the Israeli side to stop incitement and provocations and to avoid any unilateral move that may aggravate the situation."

Over the past months, the Zionist regime has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these

## Europe in Throes of Violence as Cocaine Spreads

LE HAVRE, France (AFP) -- They could be scenes straight from gangster movies, except all happened for real in the French port of Le Havre over the past year.

A drug gang smashing its way out of the port in a lorry loaded with cocaine under police fire; another criminal band storming a depot inside the tightly-controlled zone to grab a hidden shipment of the drug.

And then there was the container cracked open in daytime traffic just outside the gates by a gang who set it on fire once they retrieved a cache of the white powder.

"There is so much money to be made they do not think twice about taking big risks," a police officer in the Channel port told AFP.

Le Havre is one of northern Europe's big five container ports. And its vast cargo terminals where the River Seine reaches the sea have become the main point of entry for cocaine into France.

A record 10 tonnes of the drug were seized on its quays in 2021 -- up 164 percent on the previous year -- as a vast wave of cocaine has poured into Europe from South America.

The explosion in the trade has led to a massive escalation in violence and corruption in the port, most of it focused on the port's 2,200 dockers, the main target of the drug trafficking mafia.

The dockers, organized under the banner of the communist union, the CGT, have long been the masters this world apart of giant cranes and mountains of multi-colored containers.

"Not just anyone can get into the port of Le Havre, so to get the drugs out, the traffickers need accomplices -- most of all dockers," a police source told AFP.

Several dockers have been jailed over the past few years for working with the drug gangs, and the names of others have popped up in police wiretaps.

One of them told his lawyer

how he got entangled in the trade. "Before I used to make 200 or 300 euros (\$320) a month from selling (stolen) perfume or cartons of cigarettes. One day some guys asked me to take some bags out (of the port) for 1,000 euros a bag.

"It started like that," he said.

In fact, according to a "price list" discovered in 2017, the "narcos" were offering dockers up to 75,000 euros to help get a container out of the port, with 10,000 for the loan of a security badge and 50,000 for moving a container.

"Some dockers do it for the money, but most are threatened or pressured into it," insisted lawyer Valerie Giard, who has defended several.

"The traffickers come up to them at the school gates or in a cafe and show them photos of their family," Giard said. "They tell them that if they don't do what they say, they'll be trouble. Once they get them involved,

they never get out." Those who resist face more muscular methods.

In June 2018, a docker was kidnapped near his home and found a few hours later his face battered and the calves of his legs stabbed with a screwdriver.

The 54-year-old told police his abductors demanded he pay them several million euros, saying he was "a big fish. We know where you work, and that you can get containers out" of the port.

A police informant later told investigators that the man had "refused to work" for a trafficker.

Two dozen Le Havre dockers have been kidnapped or held hostage since 2017, the authorities say -- some by drug traffickers but others by small-time hoodlums who assumed they had profited from trade.

"Abducting port workers has become the big local sport," said Giard.

At least one of the kidnappings turned deadly. On June 12, 2020

the bloody body of docker Alan Affagard was found behind a school in a suburb of Le Havre.

The big outspoken union man had been investigated two years earlier, accused of helping get a tonne of cocaine out of the port -- a claim he denied.

His wife told police that the 40-year-old had been abducted the night before he was found dead by three masked men. Shortly before he had gone to the police after receiving "threatening messages".

Three well-known Le Havre underworld figures have since been hit with conspiracy charges but the docker's killers are still free.

Affagard's murder sent a chill through the port.

"The press see this case as being the arrival of drug cartel violence here," said lawyer Guillaume Routel, who has made his name defending dockers. "That is certainly exaggerated, but anyone handling cargo in the port feels in danger."

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