

IRAN NEWS Felicitates Its Shiite Readers and Justice-Lovers on the Occasion of Birthday Anniversary Of Twelfth Imam, Hazrat Mahdi (A). The Next Issue of the News-Paper Will Be Published on Saturday.

IRAN NEWS



VOL. XXVI, No. 6916 TEHRAN Price 20,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2020 - FARVARDIN 20, 1399

2

DOMESTIC

U.S. Sanctions Violate Right to Life



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

14% of People Active In Capital Market



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

Johnson Fights Worsening Coronavirus Symptoms in Intensive Care



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Coronavirus Not an Opportunity for Athletes to Dope



> SEE PAGE 8

President Urges Friendly Countries to Pressure U.S. To Lift Iran Sanctions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Hassan Rouhani says friendly countries should exert pressure on the United States to lift its "cruel and one-sided" sanctions against Tehran at the current juncture that the Islamic Republic is diligently fighting the deadly new coronavirus pandemic.

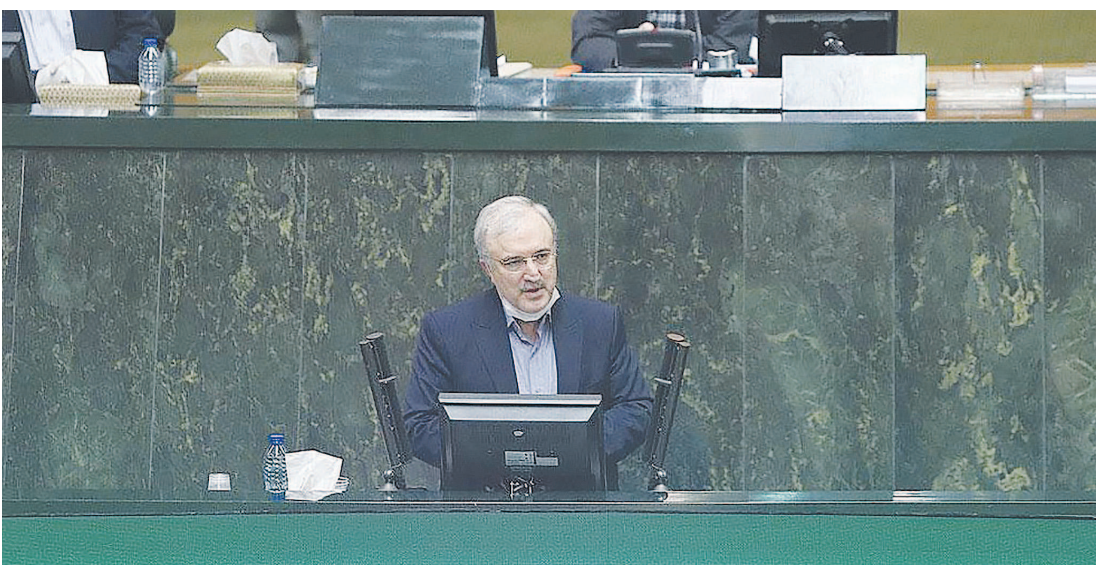
In a phone call with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, on Monday, the Iranian president emphasized that it is more difficult for Iran in comparison with other countries to battle the coronavirus when it is under the U.S. sanctions.

"The US administration has not only violated international regulations by imposing illegal sanctions on Iran, but is also breaching health regulations ratified by the World Health Organization in 2005 through its measures under the current circumstances," Rouhani said.

The Iranian president once again expressed the country's readiness to return to full compliance with its commitments under the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it clinched with major world powers in 2015 only if all sanctions against the country are removed.

See Page 7

Iran to Reach Key Stage of Battling COVID-19 by May 20



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Health and Medical Education Saeed Namaki expressed hope that the country would reach an important stage in battling coronavirus by May 20.

He made the remarks in the open session of the Iranian Parliament yesterday and said, "Effective measures have thus far been taken in controlling the outbreak and we hope that by the end of the next Iranian month [May 20] we will have reached an important stage in battling the pandemic."

While elaborating on measures taken by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in the fight against coronavirus, the health minister said, "the first signs of coronavirus was first reported in China's Wuhan city and immediately after the outbreak, Ministry of Health held an expert-level meeting and compiled comprehensive programs for combating the disease."

He further noted that universities of medical sciences in the country were prepared to produce coronavirus test kits, adding that the kits were also designed in the early days of the outbreak in cooperation with the Pasteur Institute of Iran.

"23 epidemiological teams of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education are investigating the outbreak of the disease," he added.

Coronavirosu will be contained in the country with unity, amity, and cooperation of all walks of life, he said, adding, "In the early days of the outbreak, we managed to put 36 entrances of the country under strict monitoring."

Of the other measures taken by the ministry, he pointed to ban on the export of face masks, he added.

Unlike many European countries and the US, the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education in cooperation with responsible organizations managed to offer quality medical services to coronavirus patients, Namaki emphasized.

He seized this opportunity to express appreciation to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Army, police forces, Basij volunteer Forces and Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) which cooperated with the Ministry of Health in this respect.

Unity, amity and empathy with the support of Leader of the Islamic Revolution were some of the most important factors in the fight against coronavirus, he said, adding, "for this reason, we ordered the closure of schools, universities, academic centers, Friday prayers, holy sites including holy shrines of Imam Reza and Hazrat Masoumeh (PBUH), among others."

Turning to the implementation of the Social Distancing plan, he said, "in the first phase, we followed the plan of social distancing and 'smart distancing' was followed up in the second step. For this purpose, we have compiled smart distancing plan and informed all organizations about it. Under such circumstances, not only coronavirus will be contained, but also economic activities will be prevented from a total shut-down."

Over 27,000 Iranians Recover from COVID-19

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry Spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour says 27,039 patients have so far recovered from the novel coronavirus disease, and been discharged from the hospital.

Speaking in a daily briefing on Tuesday, Jahanpour said 2,089 new cases of infection were confirmed during the past 24 hours, raising the total number to 62,589.

This is the ninth day in a row that the number of new infections is decreasing in Iran.

Jahanpour also noted that 133 patients died in 24 hours, increasing the death toll to 3,872.

He said 3,987 patients are also in the severe conditions of the disease.

So far, he added, 211,136 COVID-19 tests have been taken in the country.

Meanwhile later Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi stated that in the medical field especially prevention, protocols are just instructive.

"They themselves cannot halt or contain the disease but when implemented," he added.

See Page 7

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Qaani Visit to Baghdad Foils Coup d'Etat

Conflicts, resulted by the U.S.'s behind-the-scene efforts in Iraq's political scene and its insistence on granting the role of Iraqi premiership to some untrusted persons who are not welcomed by Iraqi people and Iraq's revolutionary parliament, revealed the U.S. hidden hands in saber-rattling in Iraq.

The U.S. by bringing its troops to Iraq tried to frighten Iraqi officials and parliament members in order to dictate its policies in Iraq but with Quds Forces Commander Esmail Qaani's visit to Iraq, the U.S.'s saber-rattling and bullying died down and led to a statement issued by eight Iraqi resistance groups against the U.S. presence in Iraq.

Last week, the U.S. deployed its Patriot missile batteries in Iraq's Kurdistan region and brought its military equipment to Iraq from Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and by publishing an article in New York Times daily it was claimed that the Pentagon intends to destroy Kataeb Hizbollah in Iraq and it spread rumor that the U.S. wanted to show muscles in Iraq, and actually dissemination of such a rumor in Iraq's media and virtual space could, to some extent, be effective in weakening the spirit and morale of Iraqi revolutionaries but visit of a team of high-ranking IRGC commanders, led by General Qaani, to Bagdad made U.S. President Donald Trump remind this famous sentence "If you strike one, you will receive ten" and he immediately took stand and said that Iran should not show tooth and nails to the U.S. forces and ordered the U.S. forces to stop their aerial maneuvers and military moves in Iraq.

This shows that the sublime spirits of martyrs Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis have been incarnated in General Qaani. That Kataeb Hizbollah of Iraq has turned into a source of anger and hatred for the Pentagon is a natural and understandable issue.

Since the day proud martyr of the resistance front Jamal Jaafar Ibrahim, known as Abu Mahid al-Muhandis, took the leadership of Kataeb Hizbollah group and gathered over 5,000 committed Shiite forces, it became one of the strongest Shiite militia groups in Iraq and Syria, and the group made Americans feel hatred and anger towards it both in Iraq and Syria like the same feeling towards Iran's IRGC. See Page 7

Iran Ready to Coop. With Turkey to Contain Coronavirus

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Turkish counterpart Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu held a phone conversation on Tuesday on the latest issues related to the coronavirus pandemic.

During the phone call, Zarif expressed his sympathy with the Turkish government and people over the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country, announcing Iran's readiness to provide any assistance in this regard.

Cooperation between the two countries in the field of transportation and transit was also discussed by the foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey.

Meanwhile later Tehran Mayor Pirooz Hanachi and his counterpart in Ankara Mansur Yavas, in a video call, exchanged views and experiences of their cities in fight against the lethal coronavirus.

During the conversation, Hanachi expressed gratitude for Turkey's humanitarian aid to Iran amid the coronavirus outbreak.

He also referred to the challenges that Tehran is faced with in the fight against the virus under the cruel U.S. sanctions, urging the issue to be discussed in the upcoming World Cities Summit.

See Page 7

Former World Politicians Urge U.S. to Ease Iran Bans

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A group of 24 senior diplomats and defense officials have called on U.S. President Donald Trump to make a targeted effort to ease Washington's rules, which prevent Tehran from trading in medical and humanitarian goods, in order to save "potentially hundreds of thousands of lives" across the Middle East amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement on Monday, the group said the move "could potentially save the lives of hundreds of thousands of ordinary Iranians and, by helping to curb the virus's rapid spread across borders, the lives of its neighbors, Europeans, Americans and others," The Guardian reported.

Former EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, former director general of the World Health Organization Gro Harlem Brundtland, four former NATO secretary generals and senior American diplomats in the administrations of George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama are among the main supporters of the call.

Signatories also include former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, former U.S. defense secretaries William Cohen and Chuck Hagel, former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Hans Blix, former U.S. treasury secretary Paul O'Neill, former US lead diplomat on the Iran deal, William Burns, and former NATO secretary general George Robertson.

The United States reinstated its sanctions against Iran in May 2018 after leaving a United Nations-endorsed nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic and five other major powers -- the UK, France, Russia, China plus Germany.

While the Islamic Republic is battling the fast-spreading outbreak, the Trump administration refuses to ease up its "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. It has even tightened sanctions several times in recent weeks, making it almost impossible for Iran to access life-saving medications and medical equipment necessary in the fight against the deadly new coronavirus pandemic.

See Page 7



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

No Int'l Sport Event Until Summer

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Official with Ministry of Sports and the Youth said on Tuesday that no international sport event will be held until summer in the world and the recess may prolong.

Mehdi Alinejad, the Deputy Minister for Championship and Professional Affairs, said that due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Olympic Games were postponed for a year, that is, there are 15 months to that date.

Iran has so far had 50 quotas for the Olympics, he Alinejad said.

U.S. Sanctions Violate Right to Life

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Judiciary Spokesman condemned the U.S. sanction against Iran amid the COVID-19 crisis and called it against international standards and the right to life.

Speaking at his press conference via video conferencing on Tuesday, Gholam-Hossein Esmaili slammed the U.S. sanctions against the Iranian nation while the country is grappling with the coronavirus, saying, “Unfortunately, the U.S. actions are not compatible with any of the legal and international standards, and everyone agrees that the right to life is a fundamental right and health is a public right for all ethnicities, and nationalities.”

Answering the question of Iran Press correspondent, Esmaili added, “Recent U.S. actions, including sanctions on medical supplies and maritime and cargo thefts, are examples of crimes against humanity. Of course, it is interesting that this oppressive country has not been able to control this disease in its own country.”



He stated, “International institutions must prove their independence and get out from under the pressure of bullying governments and perform their duties because today we are witnessing the failure of the performance of international institutions.”

Given the negative impacts of the U.S. unilateral coercive measures on not letting combat the coronavirus, the official referred to international human rights organizations’ responsibility on the U.S. manner that has endangered the human beings’ health and life and stated: “The US recent measures on sanctioning especially foodstuff and medicines is counted as a robbery. It even plays discrimination against humanity by doing so, even it is not able to combat the COVID-19 in its own country.”

Lawmakers Reject Motion on Holding Virtual Sessions

TEHRAN (MNA) – Majlis said no to a triple-urgency motion which aimed to hold the parliament sessions virtually during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The decision was made today at the open session of the Parliament which was the first one held in the new Iranian calendar year and after the implementation of social distancing guidelines.

The national taskforce for fighting COVID-19 had ordered on the closure of the Parliament in the early stages of the outbreak and after a number of lawmakers had tested positive for the disease. Meanwhile, lawmakers were seeking to hold sessions via video-conferencing. According to MPs, three virtual sessions were held during the past weeks which were not successful due to technical problems and lack of required internal regulations.

Lawmakers also rejected another triple-urgency motion today on putting the country under full lockdown for one month. The outnumbering cons believed that the plan is contrary to the country’s Constitution, impose enormous costs to the government, and limits civil rights.

Iranian Model for Fighting Pandemic Based on Domestic Initiatives

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) says the model used by the country to fight the ongoing coronavirus pandemic should be based on exclusive and domestic initiatives, noting that Iranians have learned how to weather critical conditions.

“The Iranian model for fighting coronavirus must be based on exclusive and domestic initiatives,” Ali Shamkhani said in a post on his official Twitter account on Monday.

Warning about the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, Shamkhani said, “The economic consequences of coronavirus are severe,” adding, however, that “doctors and laborers” form the two main pillars of the strategy that would help the country go through this crisis.

Iran’s security chief also warned about efforts

made to create a dichotomy between continuing economic activities under the conditions that the country’s economy is hit hard by unilateral US sanctions, and taking healthcare measures to put a brake on the virus spread, which requires temporary shutdown of many businesses.

“The false ‘economy-health’ duality should not [be allowed] to bring us to a halt,” Shamkhani said, adding, “We have acquired the art of living under conditions of crisis since many years ago.”

The United States reinstated its sanctions against Iran in May 2018 after leaving a United Nations-endorsed nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic and five other major powers -- the UK, France, Russia, China plus Germany.

Since then, Washington has corded other countries to follow suit and mount pressure on Iran or face punishment.

Int'l Cooperation Required To Fight Coronavirus

QOM (IRNA) - Director of Iran’s seminaries Ayatollah Alireza Arafai in a letter to Secretary General of UNESCO Audrey Azoulay underlined the need for international collaboration to fight coronavirus pandemic and other contemporary challenges and called for revising policies on the environment and countering irresponsible policies of some countries.

The letter which was sent on Monday reading that religious leaders in Qom and Iran are worried about spread of coronavirus and are praying for rapid solution of the challenge and other contemporary crises.

Highlighting all the scientific and sanitary recommendations as well as global consensus in fighting the pandemic, dealing with the challenge and other contemporary crises including injustice, discrimination, inhuman sanctions, environmental problems, war and terrorism require international cooperation.

“Iran’s Seminary considers religion a part of solution to the problem and calls for a revision in policies on environment and countering irresponsible policies of certain countries,” Arafai said.

The seminary also invites all to have a spiritual attitude towards nature and abide by common human, rational and religious teachings, he said, noting that it is also ready to cooperate in fight against the rapid spread of the virus and other contemporary challenges.

COVID-19 Crisis Proves U.S. Inability for Self-Governance

TEHRAN (IP) - Special Assistant to the Speaker of Iran’s Parliament for International Affairs said that the COVID-19 crisis proved that the US hegemony is neither capable of governing the world nor it can govern its country.

In his latest tweet released on Monday night, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said: “Coronavirus crisis proves the US hegemony is incapable of the world’s management but also demonstrates its inability in statecraft.”

He said the crisis has negated unipolar and the so-called world order claimed by mankind.

Iran’s top diplomat added that the post-COVID-19 world will have another shape, with more beliefs in God’s omnipotence.

Support for the U.S. President Donald Trump’s handling of the coronavirus pandemic has diminished over the past two weeks, according to a new survey.

Army Day Parades Canceled

TEHRAN (MNA) – Deputy Coordinator of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Army, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, announced that nationwide parades for the National Army Day on April 17 will not be held due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Making the remarks in a press conference in Tehran on Tuesday, he said the Army will instead implement another plan dubbed ‘parade of service’ with the motto of ‘assistants of health’ across the country.

The Army units will start implementing anti-coronavirus measures, including disinfecting public places, distributing sanitary packages in poor neighborhoods, and providing hospital beds from April 8, he said.

Sayyari noted that Army’s main duty is to maintain the defense capability and ensure the country’s security, adding, “The coronavirus outbreak has not affected the defense power of the Army and we have managed to perform our operations in the best shape while adhering to health principles.”

Iranian armed forces have entered the stage of fighting against the outbreak early on by manufacturing necessary equipment and products, establishing field hospitals, and disinfecting cities.

IRICA Unveils Smart Customs Service

TEHRAN07 (MNA) – Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) unveiled its ‘smart customs service’ on Tuesday in the presence of First Vice President Es’hagh Jahangiri, and ministers of finance and trade.

The inaugurated service seeks to facilitate and increase the security of Iran’s international trade.

As reported, First Vice President Es’hagh Jahangiri, Trade Minister Reza Rahmani and Finance Minister Farhad Dejpasand, on Tuesday morning.

The service is also meant to develop Iran’s smart and dynamic risk management and e-TIR system as well as its cross-border trade single window.

Process of Coronavirus Infection “Descending”

TEHRAN (IP) – Addressing yesterday’s Majlis open session the Interior Minister noted that the process of coronavirus infection is descending.

Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli stated that good steps have been taken in controlling coronavirus and people have cooperated vigorously.

The minister went on to say that the governors of 1357 cities have acted well and now there is total coordination between provincial and national organizations and they are totally aware of the situation, but it does not mean that we have come back to the normal situation, and efforts of both government and people are needed.

Head of Budget and Planning Organization Mohammad Baqer Nobakht also attended the parliament and said that we have encountered unavoidable costs in coronavirus situation.

“3,560 billion tomans was allocated to the National Task Force in Combating Coronavirus. 600 billion tomans is considered for medical universities. 12,400 billion is considered for supplying equipment and kits”, Nobakht highlighted.

Nobakht went on to say that 75,000 billion tomans will be allocated to the jobs in which the employers may fire their staff due to the coronavirus crisis.

“We do not feel weak and will leave behind this tough period successfully”, Nobakht concluded.

Iran Ready to Share Experiences in Coronavirus Fight With Turkey

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Iranian Armed Forces are prepared to share their experiences in the battle with the novel coronavirus with the military forces of Turkey, Iran’s highest-ranking military commander said.

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri and Turkey’s Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar held a telephone conversation on Monday evening.

In the talks, the top Iranian commander said the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran are ready to share their experiences in the battle with COVID-19 with the military forces of Turkey and other countries.

Highlighting Iran’s successful plans to contain the spread of the coronavirus by taking advantage of the military forces, Major General Baqeri said more than one million volunteer members of Basij have rushed to help the medical society in the fight against the disease.



He also noted that the Iranian Armed Forces have launched extensive plans to offer medical services amid the outbreak of the coronavirus, carry out scientific research, and produce medical supplies.

The commander also noted that the Iranian military forces have so far treated 8,000 coronavirus patients, prepared 3,000 hospital beds and 11,000 beds in convalescent homes, and dispatched special units to 3,000 locations across the country to clean and disinfect the public places.

The Turkish defense minister, for his part, congratulated Iran on its success to handle the outbreak of the coronavirus, and called for the exchange of experiences between the armed forces of the two neighbors in the scientific and specialized fields for the fight against COVID-19.

Iranian Students Can Come Back to Italy

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Embassy in Rome said on Tuesday that Iranian students can come back to Italy if they register with Italian Post Office, but, it made clear that Italian residency permit is not an electronic residency permit of the European Union.

The Embassy said that upon numerous questions made by Iranian students in Italy whether or not their departure from Italy under the current circumstances will create residency problems, Iranian Embassy contacted relevant Italian officials with the Interior Ministry Administration of Border Control and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Iranian embassy explained that the Iranian citizens who intend to apply for or extend their Italian residency permit can leave Italy and return to the country once again only if they hold their passport and a post receipt which shows they have posted their request for an Italian residency permit. However, it noted that holding a post receipt is not equal to an electronic residency permit or permission into the European Union.

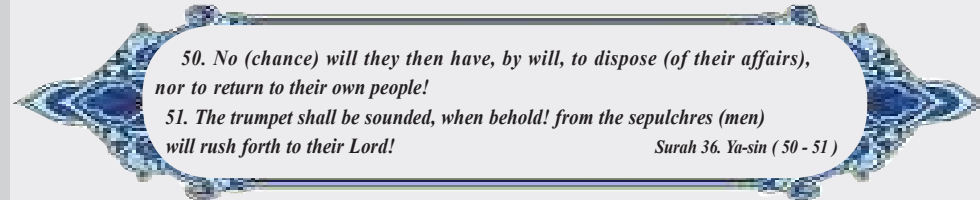
The Embassy cautioned Iranian students that registering with Italian Post Office and fill-out of the application provided by the Italian Post Office before departure from Italy, cannot be used as permit for transit passage from Schengen Area.

The Embassy advised the Iranian citizens to take direct flights from Iran to Italy when they want to come back to Italy after the current coronavirus crisis.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:50
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:11
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:38



14% of People Active In Capital Market

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) says currently about 14 percent of people in the country are involved in the stock market trade, as investment in the stock market in a span of three to five years is more profitable than investment in the gold and forex markets.

Speaking to Fars News Agency and when was asked how the ground can be prepared for presences of majority of the people in the stock market, Shahpour Mohammadi said country should work on investment funds because people are eager to be present in the capital market but first indirect tools like investment funds should be equipped more.

Mohammadi added that the idea of investment in the capital and stock market should be taught in schools and universities because it is a daily job and people have to know all skills of investing in capital market before entering it.

He also said that all supportive laws about the current companies in the capital market should be changed, adding that all issues about one listed company in the stock market are transparent but they may also have some defects but the company is in better condition comparing to other companies.

Mohammadi added that all should work together to bring discipline and transparency to all segments of the economy and the government should levy heavy taxes on those economic activities which disrupt the economy like hoarding.



He noted that to support production and companies in the stock market which are almost production units, the government should levy heavy taxes on those who invest in the gold and forex taxes or hoard vehicles, real estate property and apartment and this move will strengthen production companies and the stock market.

He added that currently some 11.2m people have codes for trading in the market and it is almost 14 percent of the total population while India with population over some 1.3b has only 25m codes for its people for trade in the stock market.

On the recent growth in the stock market index despite the existing economic condition, he said that the SEO as a supervising body cannot talk about the trend in the market but something is important that if people want to purchase shares, they should only not think about the total index in the market and they should only focus on the index on the certain company that they want to investment on it.

INSTEX Activities Only Limited to Coronavirus Era



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran-Austria Chamber of Commerce says activities of European Union's financial mechanism, INSTEX, is currently limited to the Coronavirus era and Iran's main challenge will be providing necessary financial resources for saving the INSTEX activities.

Speaking to ILNA, Pedram Soltani said that the main challenge for Iran regarding the INSTEX is to provide financial resources for it in order that the trade through the channel could survive and this trade should be formed via the sales to EU, via oil and oil products revenues and state-owned forex or via the blocked money in the banks across the world. He added that the country should take advantage of its oil revenues frozen in China, South Korea, Turkey, Iraq, and in Japan and Europe if they are allowed to be transferred.

On the activities of INSTEX, he said, "We do not have a few options to choose whether to join INSTEX or not because INSTEX is a financial mechanism which had been promised to Iran by EU 18 months ago for trade with Iran and Iran pursued it and insisted on its operation. But it lasted too long and became more complicated that even EU did not expect it. Of course in this delay, we were also guilty and some sabotages and hurdles in the country slowed down the process."

Soltani added that hurdles and sabotages on Iran's joining the FATF by the owners of the power even made EU become sensitive and cautious towards Iran.

He noted that Iran is currently involved in fighting with Coronavirus and maybe EU with a humanitarian approach took action to launch this financial mechanism and the first transaction was for medicines but the main challenge for INSTEX is to inject cash in it and the country should work for injecting cash in it from its frozen money in some countries if they are allowed to be transferred.

On Austria's joining the mechanism, he said Austria has announced its readiness to join INSTEX and it is ready for cooperating as the mechanism is now fully ready but it first needs financial resource to be used by any country like Austria.

Soltani added that currently and due to humanitarian purpose, the mechanism is used for trade with Iran only for food and medicines but he does not think the trade exceeds medicines and food and it will continue till the moment Iran can pass Coronavirus era and then everything will be like before.

Some New Insurance Companies to Start Operation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Bimeh Markazi (Central Insurance) Company says the climate for competition for all insurance companies is prepared and some new companies are to step into the market this year.

Speaking in the board of directors of the company, Golamreza Soleimani said that the competition climate has been provided for all insurance companies but those companies which have smartized their systems and offer e-insurance services have better chance to succeed in this market.

He also said after the outbreak of Coronavirus in the country, all economic equations have been disrupted and this crisis can also have its effect on the performance of the insurance industry.

He then detailed the measures and actions of the insurance companies in fight with Coronavirus, and commemorated memories of victims of insurance industry.



Soleimani also pointed to the role of insurance industry in year of "production Leap", adding that the industry should help production with full strength and it also should focus on its own job for expanding insurance penetration rate in the society.

He noted that the company has issued licenses for new insurance companies, adding that it will boost competition in the insurance industry, reiterating that this industry is ready to cover insurance for quality of products and other services related to the production sector.

Soleimani reiterated that promoting the culture of insurance in the society is the most important mission of insurance industry, adding that if the public relations of insurance industry become more active and act with more coordination, achieving sublime goals of the industry will not be far-fetched.

Iran, Armenia Trade Exchange Resumed But limited

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The trade exchanges between Iran and Armenia resumed to a limited extent," the head of Iran's Export Confederation Mohammad Lahoti told in an exclusive interview.

The Iranian official added that at present, Iran-Armenia exchanges are carried out according to health protocols between the two sides.

"Goods that can be exchanged between the two countries are exported by Transshipment method and they are exported only from the Meghri border," he said.

The head of Iran's Export Confederation confirmed "Of course, agricultural and food products not currently exporting; adding that only Armenian citizens can travel to this country after 14 days of quarantine.

Lahoti pointed to the situation of other borders and said "At the Iraqi border, goods are transported only through Bashmak and Marivan border and in Oman, goods are traded in limited numbers in some ports, such as the port of Sultan Qaboos."

"We are currently witnessing a large volume of goods for export from China to Iran in the United Arab Emirates ports," he said.

Iran is Armenia's sixth-largest trading partner, with over \$400 million in trade turnover last year. More importantly, it is also a crucial link to the outside world, representing one of only two open land borders for the landlocked country: some 80 percent of Armenia's borders -- with Azerbaijan and Turkey -- are sealed due to the long-running conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Last month in the special Committee meeting on Prevention of Corona Virus in Armenia, the Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan emphasized the importance of continuing trade relations with Iran and urged the Armenian Minister of Economy to take action to remove any obstacles to trade between the two countries.

The Coronavirus, officially known as Covid-19, was first detected in Wuhan, China, and has now spread to more than 120 countries.



Face Mask Production Line Inaugurated in Tehran

TEHRAN (MNA) – The production line of various types of face masks was put into operation in Nasirabad Industrial Park of Robat Karim, Tehran on Tuesday as part of efforts to contain the coronavirus.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the presence of First Vice President Es'hagh Jahangiri.

With the daily production capacity of 30,000 different types of filtered face masks, usable at hospitals, this industrial factory meets the demands of pharmacies, drugstores and medical centers of metropolis Tehran.

This Industrial Group Complex, which has previously

worked in the field of producing various types of safety footwear, changed some of its production lines to join the efforts in containing the outbreak of coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, in the country.

Presently, 250 people are working in this industrial and production unit. Various types of multilayered face masks produced in this factory are licensed by the Medical Equipment Department.

Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Reza Rahmani and Tehran Governor General Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey also accompanied Jahangiri in this inaugural ceremony.

Iran's Application for IMF Loan Underway

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Central Bank of Iran announced late Monday that Iran's application for access to its rights in International Monetary Fund (IMF) to contain the spreading virus is underway.

As far as CBI knows, the IMF will approve the financial aid to countries after the administrative procedures are completed, it said.

CBI Public Relations Department urged the media outlets to follow up the issue through official resources.

Since the 1979 revolution, Iran has never asked the IMF for help and has criticized it and other international financial organizations such as the World Bank for ideological reasons.

Since the Trump administration eliminated waivers permitting the purchase of Iranian oil in May 2018, Iran has struggled to earn the dollars and euros that are needed to keep its economy supplied with advanced goods. Consequently, over the 18 months, Iran has seen inflation reach as high as 40 percent, straining the finances of ordinary households and pushing as many as 1.6 million Iranians below the poverty line.

BMI Urges People to Use Online Banking Services

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) has urged people to use online banking service while the country is fighting with Coronavirus and experiencing lockdown and social distancing.



Speaking in a press conference, Dr. Mohammad Reza Hosseinzadeh said that according to the health ministry statement, banks are considered as one of the contaminated places for contracting Coronavirus and despite requests of banks from clients for using online services and to avoid physical presence in the banks, people still rush to the banks for their banking services and his colleagues in the banks offer services to meet people's demands.

Hosseinzadeh who is head of coordination council of banks admitted that 42 bank staff have lost their lives because of contracting Coronavirus and emphasized the role of banks and performance of their staff in the current condition.

On cooperation with owners of industries and occupations, he said that BMI will do its best to alleviate the woes of owners of some jobs who have suffered financially because of the outbreak of Coronavirus by extending maturity date of their installments.

He reiterated that those owners and job owners who avoid dismissing their staff because of the Coronavirus effects will be granted some loan facilities to continue their jobs.

Hosseinzadeh went on to say that banking system is one of the jobs which has suffered financially because of the virus, admitting that transactions have fallen in this period and it is expected dear people to understand the current condition and to cooperate with banks' staff in this critical moment.

He further said that to materialize the Supreme Leader's remarks for surge in production, banks have especial programs for the current year to boost economy and domestic production in order to push national economy and industry forward.

He stated that working hours of the banks will be based on what has been approved by the government.

He once again urged people to avoid their physical presence in banks and instead they use online services.

Sistan and Baluchestan's Exports At Over 2m Tons Last Year

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Director General of Sistan and Baluchestan Road Maintenance and Transportation Department General Ayyoub Kord announced on Tuesday that in the last Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020) the south eastern province have exported 2.092 million tons of goods.

"The figure shows a growth of 19 percent from the preceding year, when exports of the province stood at 1.75 million tons.

The exports level was achieved when in the last month of 1398, Iran's border trade was hit by the outbreak of coronavirus.

According to Kord, "some 859,668 passengers commuted through the provinces borders, registering a growth of 32 percent in the year before."

He named expansion of exports and improvement of infrastructure in the province's borders as the two major targets of his department in the newly started Iranian year.

Global Coronavirus Infections top 1.3M

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The novel coronavirus cases around the world surpassed the 1.3 million mark on Monday, according to data by the U.S.-based Johns Hopkins University.

The university's running tally counted 1,309,439 cases.

After emerging in Wuhan, China in December, the COVID-19 virus has spread to at least 184 countries and regions with a death toll of more than 72,600 and over 273,500 recoveries.

Italy, Spain and France continue to be the most affected countries, while the highest number of positive cases are in the U.S. with nearly 350,000. The U.S. has reported over 10,300 deaths.



Ex-Chad Dictator Temporarily Released From Jail

DAKAR (Dispatches) - A Senegal judge has granted Chad's former dictator Hissene Habre two months' leave from prison, where he is serving life for crimes against humanity, as the jail is being used to hold new detainees in coronavirus quarantine.

Habre, who ruled Chad from 1982 to 1990, was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity at an African Union-backed trial in the Senegalese capital Dakar in 2016.

A Chadian commission of inquiry estimated 40,000 people were killed by his regime. After he was overthrown, Habre fled to Senegal and for more than 20 years lived freely in an upmarket Dakar suburb with his wife and children.



Johnson Fights Worsening Coronavirus Symptoms in Intensive Care



LONDON (Reuters) - British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was being treated for worsening coronavirus symptoms in an intensive care unit on Tuesday, with his foreign minister deputising for him as the nation tackles the COVID-19 crisis.

Johnson, 55, was admitted to St Thomas' Hospital in central London late on Sunday after suffering persistent coronavirus symptoms, including a high temperature, for more than 10 days.

His condition rapidly deteriorated over the next 24 hours, and he was moved to an intensive care unit - where the most serious cases are treated. Although he had received oxygen, his office said he was still conscious.

Downing Street said the move to intensive care was "a precaution should he require ventilation to aid his recovery". Britain has no formal succession plan should a prime minister become incapacitated.

"The PM has asked Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who is the First Secretary of State, to deputise for him where necessary," Downing Street said.

Just hours earlier, Johnson's office said he was in good spirits and Raab had told a news conference that the prime minister was still running the government.

The pound edged lower against the dollar and the euro in Asia on Tuesday, trading at \$1.2234 following a 0.3% decline on Monday. "The government's business will continue," a sombre Raab, 46, told reporters, saying Johnson was in the safe hands of a brilliant medical team. "The focus of the government will continue to be on making sure that the prime minister's direction, all the plans for making sure that we can defeat coronavirus and can pull the country through this challenge, will be taken forward."

Britain has some important decisions to make in its fight against the coronavirus outbreak. The official death toll in the United Kingdom currently stands at 5,373, and last week the health minister said the deadliest peak for deaths was projected to be Easter Sunday, April 12.

The country is in a state of virtual lockdown, a situation due to be reviewed early next week, and some ministers have suggested it might need to be extended because some people were flouting the strict rules.

There have also been calls for ministers to detail what the exit plans were from the shutdown, which has hammered the world's fifth-biggest economy after the government ordered restaurants, bars, and nearly all shops to close and told people to stay at home to curb the spread of the virus.

Johnson tested positive for the virus on March 26, the first leader of a major power to announce that he had tested positive for COVID-19.

After 10 days of isolation in an apartment at Downing Street, he was still fighting the virus on Sunday evening with a high temperature and persistent cough, prompting his admission to hospital. He was last seen in a video message posted on Twitter on Friday when he looked weary.

"There is no doubt this turn of events means Boris Johnson is extremely sick," said Derek Hill, a professor of medical imaging at University College London (UCL).

Buckingham Palace said Queen Elizabeth had been kept informed by Downing Street and U.S. President Donald Trump said all Americans were praying for his recovery.

World Short of Six Million Nurses

GENEVA (Dispatches) - As COVID-19 captures global headlines, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned Tuesday that the world needs nearly six million nurses.

The UN's health agency along with partners Nursing Now and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) underscored in a report the crucial role played by nurses, who make up more than half of all health workers worldwide.

"Nurses are the backbone of any health system," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. "Today, many nurses find themselves on the frontline in the battle against COVID-19," he noted, adding that it was vital they "get the support they need to keep the world healthy."

The report said that there are just under 28 million nurses on the planet.



U.S. Coronavirus Deaths Pass Bleak 10,000 Milestone

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Americans were put on notice Monday not to let up in the fight against the coronavirus, as a grim milestone of 10,000 deaths cast a pall over the first signs of optimism about the outbreak's trajectory.

The United States has emerged as one of the world's worst-hit nations, with a steadily mounting number of fatalities and millions facing the possibility of economic ruin.

Authorities began the week by telling frightened communities to brace for one of the worst periods yet in an outbreak that has not yet reached its peak.

Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins University, which has been keeping a running tally of coronavirus numbers, said more than 368,000 U.S. cases had been confirmed, with 10,986 deaths by late Monday.

Only Italy (16,523) and Spain (13,341) have seen more of their citizens killed by the pandemic. There was a glimmer of hope, however, in New York, the main focus of the U.S. outbreak, where there have been more than 4,750 deaths statewide and 130,000 cases.

Governor Andrew Cuomo said Monday the death rate had been "effectively flat" for two days. The state reported 599 new deaths, similar to Sunday's tally of 594 and down from a record 630 on Saturday.

But the governor ordered schools and non-essential businesses to remain shut for a further three weeks, telling reporters: "Now is not the time to be lax."

"It is hopeful but it is also inconclusive," Cuomo said, adding that it would be a "mistake" to relax restrictions too early.

"If the curve is turning, it's because the rate of infection is going down. If the rate of infection is going down, it's because social distancing is working."

The pandemic has killed nearly 75,000 worldwide since the new coronavirus emerged in December in China, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources.

Authorities have warned that between 100,000 and 240,000 people could die in the United States, even in a best-case scenario with social distancing guidelines being observed.

25 Soldiers Killed by Suspected Jihadist Attack in Mali

DJENNE (Dispatches) - Twenty-five Malian soldiers were killed and six injured in an apparent jihadist attack on Monday, the government said, in the latest bout of violence to hit the war-torn West African state.

A dozen assailants were also "neutralised", the government said in a statement, during what it called a "terrorist attack" on a military base in the northern town of Bamba.

A local official said the attackers arrived on motorbikes and in cars.

"Investigations are still ongoing on the ground because the death toll must be higher than the 20 deaths announced," the official said.

Mali has been struggling to contain a jihadist revolt that first broke out in the north in 2012, and has since spread to the centre of the country and neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger. Thousands of Malian soldiers and civilians have died, despite the presence of thousands of French and UN troops.

It was not immediately clear who carried out Monday's attack.

A resident of Bamba, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity, said armed men had been riding motorbikes around nearby villages since

Sunday, before gathering for the dawn attack.

"We saw 23 bodies on the spot," the Bamba resident said, describing the aftermath of the raid. The resident added that militants had destroyed the camp and stolen equipment.

"No civilian was hurt, this was an operation against the camp," the resident said.

A Malian army official stationed in northern Mali confirmed an attack had taken place in Bamba but said there had been losses on both sides.

He added the army did not have a clear idea of enemy losses as the raiders took their casualties with them when they left.

Another military official told AFP that reinforcements had been dispatched to the area.

The attack in Mali follows another in jihadist-ridden northern Cameroon on Sunday.

Two suicide bombers -- suspected to be members of Nigeria's Boko Haram jihadist group -- blew themselves up in a border town in the Central African country and killed eight people.

The Mali attack comes despite attempts to reinvigorate the country's political life in the hope of staunching the bloodshed.



Russia Chides Regional Chiefs for Overzealous Coronavirus Lockdowns



MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's prime minister on Monday issued an unusual rebuke to regional governors for closing their borders after some regions, including Chechnya in the south, imposed tough restrictions against the coronavirus.

Many regions including Moscow, the epicentre of Russia's outbreak, have imposed partial lockdowns to curb the spread of the virus. President Vladimir Putin last week said regions should consider further measures that made sense locally.

The mainly Muslim region of Chechnya said last week it would close its borders with the rest of Russia from April 5 despite having reported only a dozen confirmed cases of coronavirus.

The southern Astrakhan region also restricted entry to its territory, while other regions such as Murmansk in the far north restricted entry to individual areas, the Kommersant newspaper reported, although those moves received less public attention.

Russia fought two brutal wars with separatists in Chechnya after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The region is now headed by Kremlin-backed governor Ramzan Kadyrov whom human rights defenders accuse of rights abuses that he denies.

On Monday, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, without naming the regions in question, said that "several regions (had) closed their administrative borders, obstructing the passage of people and transport onto their territory."

"The government's signals about the unacceptability of this were heard," he said. "...I would like once again to address the leaders of the regions: do not confuse regional powers with federal (ones)."

Responding on social media, Kadyrov said it was unclear if the comments had been directed at Chechnya, but that the region had not restricted the entry of transport or cargo.

He added though that Chechnya would not allow in anyone not registered as living there for safety reasons. "We've already had a bad experience. They brought in the infection, tens have fallen ill, one woman has died."



Jordan Apt (\$2000)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Velenjak Villa (\$4000)
1500sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Zaferanieh (\$2400)
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F

Niavaran (\$2300)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna, J
balcony, pkg, F.F

Pasdaran Villa
800sq.m, 5bdrs
S/p, yard, & pkg lots

Dibaji (\$2500)
240sq.m, 3bdrs, F.F

Jordan bldg (\$7000)
5storey, 20bdrs, pkgs

Farmanieh (\$1800) 2bdrs
Farmanieh (\$2300) 3bdrs
Both with S/p, S, J, & F.F

Cell: +989121907875
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
Fax : 88506474

Commercial office
Farmanieh (\$30 per sq.m)
4storey, 16unit, & pkg lots



IRAN NEWS
ADVERTISING
44253401

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865



IRAN NEWS
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS
ADVERTISING

TEL: 44253448-50
FAX: 44253234
ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM

EU Clears 50b Pound UK Umbrella Scheme to Support Economy

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Commission said on Monday it had approved a 50 billion pound British “umbrella” scheme to support companies affected by coronavirus outbreak. The approval is in line with modified EU rules allowing a temporary and limited amount of aid to businesses facing a sudden shortage of liquidity. The British aid would take the form of grants, equity injections, tax advantages and loans.

Britain left the European Union at the end of January, but continues to be subject to EU rules for a transition period set to last until the end of 2020.

With the coronavirus lockdown ravaging European economies, the bloc has stepped up calls for London to extend that time to allow the sides to agree on a new trade partnership after talks came to a virtual halt as capitals switched focus to fighting the pandemic.



Turkish Economy to Keep Growing Post-COVID-19

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey’s economy will catch up with its sustainable trend of growth next year, a Fitch Ratings’ sovereign team director said on April 6.

Turkey’s gross domestic product (GDP) will expand by 4.5% in 2021 after struggling this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, Douglas Winslow told Anadolu Agency.

“In the first quarter of this year- before the coronavirus shock- economic growth had accelerated to above 6% ... we now anticipate a very sharp contraction in the second quarter, flatter growth in the third quarter, and then recovery in the fourth quarter, as activities begin to normalize after the partial lockdown,” he said.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), in 2019 Turkey’s economy posted growth of 0.9%.

If the virus is not effectively contained, and partial lockdown conditions continue into the third quarter, significantly weaker growth would be expected, Winslow warned.

Pointing to Fitch’s updated growth forecast of 0.8% for Turkey despite a global contraction, Winslow said: “Part of the reason we still forecast slight GDP growth for 2020 as a whole is the strong momentum early in the year driven by a recovery in private bank lending, as well as the lower interest rate.”

He added that a sizeable fiscal stimulus through Turkey’s Economic Stability Shield and further measures to prop up lending in state banks will provide some additional support to economic activity.

Last month, Turkey unveiled a relief package worth 100 billion Turkish liras (\$15.4 billion)- the Economic Stability Shield- to limit the economic fallout from COVID-19.

As Fitch forecasts the eurozone to shrink by 4.2% this year, Turkey’s net exports will have a negative impact on GDP growth this year, Winslow said.

“This is likely to outweigh the benefits to the Turkish economy from lower imports and any potential relocation of export capacity,” he added.

Winslow said the country’s year-end inflation rate was revised down to 8.5% driven by “weaker GDP growth.”

The annual inflation rate in March was 11.86%, according to TÜİK.

Last September Ankara targeted inflation for this year of 8.5%, while the Central Bank has forecast 8.2%.

Fitch also projects a 100 basis point cut in Turkey’s interest rates to 8.75% at the end of the year.

On March 17, in an extraordinary meeting, the Turkish Central Bank’s Monetary Policy Committee cut its policy rate from 10.75 to 9.75.

German Economy Likely to Contract by 3-6% This Year

BERLIN (Reuters) – The German economy is likely to shrink by 3-6% this year, the head of the Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI), Federation of German Industries industry association said on Monday, adding that this forecast was based on economic activity being disrupted for a maximum of six weeks.

Europe’s largest economy is in virtual lockdown. Schools, shops, restaurants and sports facilities have closed and many firms have stopped production to help slow the spread of the disease.

Germany is in virtual lockdown, with more than 100,000 people infected and 1584 deaths from the pandemic. The economy had fared well during the first two months of the year – before Germany went into virtual lockdown in March – and the virus has taken a heavy toll on the economy since mid March probably reaching its peak in May.

“The declines I’ve talked about will probably be at least as bad, if not even worse than with the banking and stock market crisis of 2008/2009,” Altmaier said, without giving an exact prediction.

The German economy shrank by 5.7% in 2009.

“This means that after 10 good years of economic growth, we’ll have a recession again this year for the first time since 2009,” Altmaier added.

France May See Deepest Post-WW2 Downturn This Year

PARIS (Reuters) - France will likely see its deepest economic downturn this year since the end of World War Two, far surpassing the slump seen after the global financial crisis, its finance minister said on Monday.

Bruno Le Maire told a Senate hearing by teleconference that euro zone’s second-biggest economy would likely contract more than it did in 2009. “That shows the magnitude of the economic shock we are facing,” he said.

The government estimated last month in an emergency budget update that the economy

would contract 1% this year, but has since indicated that it would have to revise that figure.

With the French economy currently running at two-thirds of normal levels, each month of government-imposed confinement could knock 3 percentage points off of growth, the INSEE official stats agency estimated last month.

Some 5 million French workers - one out of four in the private sector - have been put on furloughs subsidised by the state to avoid mass permanent layoffs, the Labour Ministry said on Monday.

China’s Vehicle Production to Drop 11.5% This Year

BEIJING (Reuters) - China’s light vehicle production will drop 11.5% this year to around 21.6 million vehicles and will rebound by 7.5% next year, research firm IHS Markit predicted on Monday.

Production and demand for vehicles have been hammered across the world by lockdowns aimed at curtailing the coronavirus outbreak, which has spread from China to Europe, the United States and elsewhere.

“The latest forecast takes the extended shutdown of auto plants in March and the supply chain disruption caused by the extended shutdown of the plants in Hubei province into consideration,” IHS Markit said in a post on its social media wechat account.

“For Chinese automakers which purchase auto parts from Europe, the disruption of production in Europe may be a risk factor. But at this stage, we have not seen the European coronavirus epidemic directly affect Chinese auto production,” IHS Markit added.

Last week, IHS Markit estimated China’s light vehicle sales this year would drop 9.9% from last year to around 22.4 million vehicles, if China’s central government does not roll out measures to boost auto demand.

China’s Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM), which expects China’s overall auto sales to drop 5% this year, is calling on the government to help after industry-wide sales plunged a record 79% in February from a year earlier, with demand pummelled by the coronavirus pandemic.



OPEC Can’t Save the Oil Market



LONDON (Oil Price) - Even if the OPEC+ group and other major oil producers in the world were to agree to deep production cuts, they would be unable to prevent what is sure to be an enormous global inventory build this quarter due to unprecedented demand destruction, Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), told Reuters.

The measures many countries have taken to try to flatten the curve of the coronavirus pandemic are destroying unprecedented volumes of oil demand as more than 3 billion people—from India to Europe to the United States—remain in lockdown.

As a result of restricted commuter travel, grounded flights, and economic slowdown, demand for oil in April is expected to drop by 20 million bpd year on year, and probably more.

Even if OPEC+ plus other producers were to discuss, agree to, and implement a collective cut of 10 million bpd, global oil inventories would still rise by 15 million bpd in the second quarter, the IEA’s chief told Reuters.

Earlier this week, the IEA said that the world has seen some oil shocks before, but “none has hit the industry with quite the ferocity we are witnessing today.”

The reason the shock is unique this time around, the IAE says, is because one of the usual stabilization factors, consumers, is unable to do its part. As billions of people around the world are still in lockdown, consumers are unable to react to falling prices like they usually do—by consuming more. So far as long as the pandemic lasts, boosts in demand that were seen during other oil shocks are “highly unlikely.”

Meanwhile, producers from the OPEC+ group and from another group are expected to discuss potential ways to react to the massive demand loss and the low oil prices that hit their lowest level in 18 years earlier this week.

While U.S. President Donald Trump touted a cut of 10 million bpd, and possibly 15 million bpd, many oil analysts, cited by Reuters, remain highly skeptical that an agreement of these proportions could be reached and implemented.

All Hands on Deck to Fight a Once-in-a-Lifetime Pandemic

By UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

Only by coming together will the world be able to face down the COVID-19 pandemic and its shattering consequences. At an emergency virtual meeting last Thursday, G20 leaders took steps in the right direction. But we are still far away from having a coordinated, articulated global response that meets the unprecedented magnitude of what we are facing.

Far from flattening the curve of infection, we are still well behind it. The disease initially took 67 days to infect 100,000 people; soon, 100,000 people and more will be infected daily. Without concerted and courageous action, the number of new cases will almost certainly escalate into the millions, pushing health systems to the breaking point, economies into a nosedive and people into despair, with the poorest hit hardest.

We must prepare for the worst and do everything to avoid it. Here is a three-point call to action -- based on science, solidarity and smart policies -- for doing just that.

First, suppress transmission of the coronavirus.

That requires aggressive and early testing and contact tracing, complemented by quarantines, treatment, and measures to keep first responders safe, combined with measures to restrict movement and contact. Such steps, despite the disruptions they cause, must be sustained until therapies and a vaccine emerge.

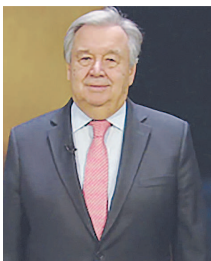
Crucially, this robust and cooperative effort should be guided by the World Health Organization, a member of the United Nations family; countries acting on their own -- as they must for their people -- will not get the job done for all.

Second, tackle the devastating social and economic dimensions of the crisis.

The virus is spreading like wildfire, and is likely to move swiftly into the Global South, where health systems face constraints, people are more vulnerable, and millions live in densely populated slums or crowded settlements for refugees and internally displaced persons. Fuelled by such conditions, the virus could devastate the developing world and then re-emerge where it was previously suppressed. In our interconnected world, we are only as strong as the weakest health systems.

Clearly, we must fight the virus for all of humanity, with a focus on people, especially the most affected: women, older persons, youth, low-wage workers, small and medium enterprises, the informal sector and vulnerable groups.

The United Nations has just issued reports documenting how the viral contagion has



become an economic contagion, and setting out the financing needed to address the shocks. The International Monetary Fund has declared that we have entered a recession as bad as or worse than in 2009.

We need a comprehensive multilateral response amounting to a double-digit percentage of global Gross Domestic Product.

Developed countries can do it by themselves, and some are indeed doing it. But we must massively increase the resources available to the developing world by expanding the capacity of the IMF, namely through the issuance of special drawing rights, and of the other international financial institutions so that they can rapidly inject resources into the countries that need them. I know this is difficult as nations find themselves increasing domestic spending by record amounts. But that spending will be in vain if we don’t control the virus.

Coordinated swaps among central banks can also bring liquidity to emerging economies. Debt alleviation must also be a priority -- including immediate waivers on interest payments for 2020.

Third, recover better.

We simply cannot return to where we were before COVID-19 struck, with societies unnecessarily vulnerable to crisis. The pandemic has reminded us, in the starkest way possible, of the price we pay for weaknesses in health systems, social protections and public services. It has underscored and exacerbated inequalities, above all gender inequity, laying bare the way in which the formal economy has been sustained on the back of invisible and unpaid care labour. It has highlighted ongoing human rights challenges, including stigma and violence against women.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts to build more inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change and other global challenges. The recovery must lead to a different economy. Our roadmap remains the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations system is fully mobilized: supporting country responses, placing our supply chains at the world’s disposal, and advocating for a global cease-fire.

Ending the pandemic everywhere is both a moral imperative and a matter of enlightened self-interest. At this unusual moment, we cannot resort to the usual tools. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures. We face a colossal test which demands decisive, coordinated and innovative action from all, for all.

We Don't Need Charity From Trump

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called for the US to stop sanctions on Iran, including oil sanctions.

In a Tuesday tweet, Zarif wrote, “Iran is rich in human & natural resources. We don’t need charity from @realDonaldTrump —who’s forced to buy ventilators from sources he’s sanctioned.”

“What we want is for him to STOP preventing Iran from selling oil & other products, buying its needs & making & receiving payments,” he added.



Malaysia on the Verge of Recession

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - A recession seems imminent with Malaysia’s GDP may shrink to a low of -2% in 2020 due to the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) warned.

It said the global economy is projected to register a negative growth in 2020 due to the significant economic repercussions arising from the virus, while Malaysia’s Movement Control Order (MCO) will dampen domestic economic activity.

“We project Malaysia’s GDP for 2020 to be between 0.5% and -2%. In the first half of this year (1H20), spillovers from the global slowdown and our pandemic containment measures will result in large output losses,” BNM governor Datuk Nor Shamsiah Mohd Yunus (picture) said in a virtual press conference last Friday.

“This will take a toll on the economy, but it is necessary to keep the pandemic at bay. At the end of the day, the preservation of life is paramount,” she said.

Malaysia’s GDP grew 4.3% in 2019, the lowest since the global financial crisis, mainly due to commodity supply shocks and slow public investment activity.

The central bank’s estimate is even bleaker than the World Bank’s, which recently slashed its growth projection for Malaysia to -0.1% in 2020 from 4.5% previously.

“We are mindful that the situation surrounding Covid-19 is highly fluid and the situation is constantly shifting. The GDP forecast is our best estimate based on what we know today. Great uncertainty remains,” Nor Shamsiah added. The International Monetary Fund is expecting the global economy to undergo a recession in 2020 that’s at least as damaging as the global financial crisis, though recovery will come in 2021.

Malaysia will also be affected by volatility in oil prices and continued commodity supply disruptions, as the drought last year will affect oil palm yields and maintenance works will hamper production in a number of oil and gas facilities.

According to BNM assistant governor Marzunisham Omar, oil prices are expected to range between US\$25 (RM109) and US\$35 per barrel this year, During the MCO period, the domestic economy will be operating at around 45% of its capacity. The labour market is expected to be considerably weaker as well. “We expect the unemployment rate to increase to 4%. Our unemployment rate was 3.7% during the global financial crisis and 3.2% during the Asian financial crisis in 1998,” Marzunisham said.

Headline inflation is seen to average between -1.5% and 0.5% in 2020 (2019: 0.7%), reflecting significantly lower global oil and commodity prices.



On a brighter note, growth prospects are expected to improve towards year-end, in line with projected global demand recovery, continued support from policy measures, recovery in commodities supplies and higher public sector spending, BNM said in its 2019 Economic and Monetary Policy Review.

The RM250 billion worth of stimulus measures are estimated to add 2.8% to the 2020 GDP growth, while the RM15 billion in capital expenditure to build major transport infrastructure will help lift 2020 GDP growth by 1%, Nor Shamsiah said. BNM also has the “flexibility and space” to “deploy” its policy levers where necessary, including monetary policy, macro prudential and micro prudential policies, and oversight over financial institutions.

“These are trying times. I believe we have what it takes to endure and emerge stronger. Malaysia has done this before and we can do it again,” Nor Shamsiah stated. “Most businesses have earnings buffers over four times their debt.”

Indian Economy to Take at Least 2-3 Quarters for Recovery

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The situation during the ongoing COVID-19 will be grim and the recovery thereafter will also take time as private equity experts fear that more people will die from hunger than pandemic in India most people under estimating the gravity and period of impact, which at the very least will take two to three quarters.

At a private equity webinar, Shailendra Singh, Managing Director at Sequoia Capital flagged that fear that more people will die from hunger than pandemic in India.

He added that most people are under estimating gravity and the period of impact, which will be the at the very least two to three quarters.

Singh said they are asking every portfolio co to re validate the 5 critical assumptions their business hinges on. “You will be surprised that how many of them have actually changed/ could change in long run (Zivame),” he added. They have also advised companies to look at adjacent markets or alternative business models.

Singh said that economic recovery will not start before Q3/Q4 of this financial year. Most countries will move manufacturing towards domestic markets especially in healthcare and R&D and reliance on China will go down.

WHO Calls for “Support Nurses and Midwives” on World Health Day 2020

TEHRAN (WHO) - By highlighting the theme of this year’s World Health Day as “Support nurses and midwives” the World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges the critical role that nurses and midwives play in keeping the world healthy and calls to world leaders to invest in nurses and midwives as part of their commitment to health for all.

“Nurses account for more than half of all the world’s health workers, providing vital services throughout the health system. Historically, as well as today, nurses are at the forefront of fighting epidemics and pandemics that threaten health across the globe. Around the world they are demonstrating their compassion, bravery and courage as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic: never before has their value been more clearly demonstrated” WHO stated on World Health Day 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic underscores the urgent need to strengthen the global health workforce. A new report, The State of the World’s Nursing 2020, provides an in-depth look at the largest component of the health workforce. Findings identify important gaps in the nursing workforce and priority areas for investment in nursing education, jobs, and leadership to strengthen nursing around the world and improve health for all.

“Nurses are the backbone of any health system. Today, many nurses find themselves on the front-line in the battle against Covid-19,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “This report is a stark reminder of the unique role they play, and a wakeup call to ensure they get the support they need to keep the world healthy.”

“The current situation makes the theme of the World Health Day and the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife even more relevant and meaningful as we acknowledge and pay tribute to all health workers. We need to ensure that all nurses and midwives operate in an environment where they are safe from harm, including those providing services in countries in emergency. And we need to ensure that they have access to a functioning health care service,” said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

“Your work with patients and communities in hospitals, in- and out-patient clinics, and health centers is the very foundation not only of the health system, but of the social compact of the whole society, particularly at these times of physical distancing and isolation. We salute also all Behvarz and Moragheb-e-Salamat (health workers at PHCs) who play such an important role as part of the community health workforce. We have the highest esteem and respect for your daily effort to overcome fear and anxiety among the community and the patients, and at the same time to deal with your own challenges and concerns for your families. We are here to support you, nurses and midwives and fellow health workers” said Dr Christoph Hamelmann, the WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran in a joint



video message with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME).

“Now during the emergency of the COVID-19 epidemic, you are the pillars of care for pregnant women, lactating mothers, for the newborn and children, for adolescents, the working population, and the elderly, not only with regard to the

corona virus and the special precautions in care that needs to be considered, but at the same time for all the other urgent health care needs of the population”.

“This World Health Day, we cannot celebrate together physically, but in our hearts and minds we are celebrating together – we are celebrating you, dear nurses, midwives and fellow health workers” he added.

The report, The State of the World’s Nursing 2020, by the World Health Organization (WHO) in partnership with the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and Nursing Now, reveals that today, there are just under 28 million nurses worldwide. Between 2013 and 2018, nursing numbers increased by 4.7 million. But this still leaves a global shortfall of 5.9 million - with the greatest gaps found in countries in Africa, South East Asia and the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region as well as some parts of Latin America.

Revealingly, more than 80 per cent of the world’s nurses work in countries that are home to half of the world’s population. And one in every eight nurses practices in a country other than the one where they were born or trained. Ageing also threatens the nursing workforce: one out of six of the world’s nurses are expected to retire in the next 10 years.

President...

FROM PAGE 1

“The removal of sanctions and fulfillment of its commitments by Europe are a necessity, which has become more significant at the current specific situation,” the Iranian president pointed out.

The United States reinstated its sanctions against Iran in May 2018 after leaving a United Nations-endorsed nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic and five other major powers -- the UK, France, Russia, China plus Germany.

The United States has refused to lift sanctions on Iran and even tightened them several times in recent weeks, making it almost impossible for the Islamic Republic to access life-saving medications and medical equipment necessary in the fight against the deadly new coronavirus pandemic.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian president welcomed an initiative by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to declare a global ceasefire amid the coronavirus pandemic, expressing hope that it would also include the economic war on Iran.

Rouhani also described as “positive but insufficient” the initial steps taken to implement INSTEX, a trade mechanism set up by Britain, France and Germany in 2019 to protect companies doing business with Iran from Washington’s sanctions.

He emphasized that the mechanism should not be limited only to medical equipment and food, but must be also implemented in a way that would enable Iran to “use it to meet all our country’s requirements.”

The three European signatories to the JCPOA unveiled the long-awaited direct non-dollar payment mechanism meant to safeguard their trade ties with Tehran following the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal and in the face of the “toughest ever” sanctions imposed by the United States against the Islamic Republic.

Qaani Visit to...

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Muhandis was also Iraq’s National Security Advisor and commander of Hashd al-Shaabi. This group along with 6 more revolutionary groups in Iraq saved the country from chaos in 2016 because of the U.S. plans to topple the Iraqi government and also in 2019 by the U.S. plans and Saudi Family’s financing, and it made Iraqi people aware of goals behind the U.S., Saudi Family and Zionist regime’s sinister plans.

The U.S. report on the so-called terrorism in 2016 was published by its State Department on July 19, 2017 in seven chapters, and the government officially revealed its animosity to Kataeb Hizbollah in its website.

In the chapter six and under the title of “Foreign Terrorist Organization”, the report details some information on the group. It says the group came into existence in 2006 and on July 2, 2009 it was designated as a foreign terrorist organization. Kataeb Hizbollah is a hardliner Shiite group with an anti-West ideology, and it is a rebellious and radical group, the report adds. Before the U.S. troops’ pullout in 2011, the group used to attack Iraqi, American and coalition targets in Iraq and it threatened politicians and civil personalities who used to back legal political process in Iraq. This group, for promoting and publicizing its operations, forces mass media to disseminate videos of their attacks. Kataeb Hizbollah is linked to Iran Ideologically and is financed by this country, the report continued.

Although attribution of the group to Iran by the U.S. State Department can be considered as an exaggeration, but since Shiite group is avid advocate of Late Imam Khomeini (R)’s doctrine, it is natural that Iran is always dragged into any operation by the group.

But this part of claim that Iraqi people and government have called for Iran’s advisory help especially from the Quds Forces and has boosted the country’s capability to stand against the U.S. bullying and excessive demanding is not wrong.

Today the U.S. feels humiliation more than ever and it is on verge of expulsion from Iraq and ultimately from the region, and it has shown its incredibility and being a paper tiger to the world and for world judgment even in the case of fighting the Coronavirus.

This time only the dissemination of news about Quds Forces official’s visit to Iraq thwarted all plans and plots for coup d’etat in Iraq.

Former World...

FROM PAGE 1

The statement by the world’s former diplomats and officials further said, “Though never intended to kill, U.S. ‘maximum pressure’ through sanctions on Iran are compromising the performance of the Iranian healthcare system as Iran’s outbreak moves into its second month.”

It added, “Despite humanitarian exemptions provided under U.S. and international law, these sanctions make the importation of medicine, medical equipment and raw materials needed to produce these goods domestically slower, more expensive, and complicated.”

The signatories also urged Trump not to use US voting rights on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) board to disrupt an Iranian request for a \$5bn (£4bn) loan and to issue a statement supporting the use of INSTEX, a trade mechanism set up by Britain, France and Germany in 2019 to protect companies doing business with Iran from Washington’s sanctions.

Over 27,000 Iranians Recover...

FROM PAGE 1

Deputy Health Minister referred to the great cooperation of people during the New Year holidays, especially their cooperation to stay inside their homes on April 07 which is called “Nature Day”.

“Iran is still in its first phase combating the virus. Protocols are important but people play a greater role than them by implementing the rules and health protocols” Raisi stressed.

Iran’s deputy Health Minister also mentioned that places, where to provide people’s basic amenities, have not been shot down. He went on to say: “Our motto is still “Stay at Home” and the other motto to add is while outside home following the hygienic rules to be immunized and protected is necessary.”

Iran Ready to...

FROM PAGE 1

Turkey sent a consignment to assist Iran with its fight against COVID-19 on March 30. The consignment weighs around 10 tons of medical equipment, including medicines, masks, insulated clothing, gloves, goggles, and forehead thermometers, hygienic and disinfectant products.

As of Tuesday, the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Iran has reached 62,589, while 27,039 have recovered from the disease, according to the Health Ministry.

Foot Injury Improving as Tennis Remains on Hold

LONDON (AFP) - Two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep had good news for her Twitter followers on Monday, saying she can run without pain on her injured right foot.

The Romanian star had barely wrapped up a victory at the WTA tournament in Dubai in February when she pulled out of the following tournament in Doha with the injury, which an MRI showed to be tendinitis and inflammation.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

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

E-Mail Address:
info@irannewsdaily.com
ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St.,
Golestan II St, Golestan St. Marzadaran
Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and
Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Zhang Guowei Retires at 28

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's world silver-medallist high jumper Zhang Guowei, renowned for his flamboyant twerking celebrations, has stunned fans by announcing his retirement aged 28.

The colourful Zhang won silver at the Beijing 2015 World Championships and also competed at the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympics.

"I'm sorry, I really can't jump anymore, I've decided to retire," Zhang told his 3.4 million followers on the Twitter-like Weibo on Sunday.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2020

Coronavirus Not an Opportunity For Athletes to Dope

LONDON (Dispatches) - Athletes are fooling themselves if they think they can use the chaos caused globally by the coronavirus pandemic to cheat, World Anti-Doping Agency president Witold Banka has told AFP.

The Pole said physical testing might be virtually at a standstill but WADA and national anti-doping agencies possessed other weapons they can deploy in the fight against doping.

Canada and Russia have gone public in saying they have suspended their testing programmes while the British anti-doping body has significantly reduced its testing.

"COVID-19 is not a space for the athletes to cheat," Banka said in a phone interview from his home in Poland.

"They should not feel it is a time for cheating. Otherwise, the anti-doping agencies will use their weapons to catch them."

The 35-year-old former Polish sports minister, who only took up his post on January 1 after being elected to replace Craig Reedie, said he hoped it would not take long once the pandemic was over to return testing to its "full power".

In the meantime WADA would rely on other means to keep tabs on athletes.

"Testing is not our only weapon and we have some strong ones," Banka said.

"There is the athlete biological passport, there is long-term analysis of samples, there is intelligence.

"The biological passport is a useful tool for the profile of the athletes.

"Also they are still obliged to tell us of their whereabouts even if we cannot go and test them."

Banka is mindful however that on a global basis, combating the coronavirus is the number one priority.

"Anti-doping is not as important as people's lives," he said.

The former international 400 metres runner said he had been in regular contact with leading sports bodies including the International Olympic Committee and the National Anti-Doping Organizations to discuss the current situation.

"We issued guidelines for them that cover a number of areas that may be affected by COVID-19."

The pandemic has forced Banka to put on hold several ideas he wants to implement, especially a bid to increase funding for the anti-doping fight.

"I am pursuing the idea of a Solidarity Fund to serve regions like Africa, for example, where they have very limited anti-doping systems (there is just one accredited laboratory in South Africa)," he said.

"We are still working on that, this is a very important issue."

He aims to encourage sponsors and corporate partners to back the fight against doping with hard cash.

"The idea is to get them to contribute a minimum of their sponsorship investment in sport (to anti-doping efforts)."



Such corporate involvement could go some way to resolving an age-old problem for WADA, and one Reedie frequently raised -- that their budget is insufficient for the size of the task they face.

"We are a strong organisation with powerful tools," said Banka.

"But taking into account our budget, \$36-40 million a year, that is not in line with the expectations towards the organisation expressed by our stakeholders. We want, or rather have to, increase it.

"That is why we are looking for some alternative sources of funding."

Banka said proudly that WADA "plays many roles" and achieves a lot even with the budget constraints but stresses that with extra funding "it could do a lot more".

"One aspect we would like to address is that at the 2016 Rio Games, 10 percent of the medallists came from countries who either have very weak anti-doping systems or none at all," he said.

"That is a cause for concern and one which we should have the capability to address.

"That would be possible if sponsors were willing to contribute to the Solidarity Fund."

Banka said the coronavirus pandemic would not deter WADA from its over-riding goal.

"This is a new world for all of us," he said.

"WADA, though, will do everything to maintain the integrity and beautiful idea of clean sport."

Real Madrid And Barca Coach Antic Dies



MADRID (Dispatches) - Serbian coach Radomir Antic, the only person to manage Atletico Madrid, Real Madrid and Barcelona, died on Monday at the age of 71 following a long illness.

"The Atletico de Madrid family is mourning the passing of Radomir Antic, one of our legendary coaches. You will forever live in our hearts. Rest in peace," the club tweeted.

Spanish sports daily Marca said Antic had been suffering from a serious illness for a long time.

Antic, who first moved to Spain as a player with Real Zaragoza in 1978, managed Atletico across three different spells between 1995 and 2000 and led the club to a league and cup double in his first season.

He also coached Barcelona during the second part of the 2002-03 campaign after replacing the sacked Louis van Gaal. His first stint at one of Spain's big clubs came during a 10-month spell with Real in 1991-92.

On the international stage, he led his native Serbia to the 2010 World Cup, where his team beat Germany 1-0 in the group stage but failed to advance to the knockout rounds.

Guardiola's Mother Dies After Contracting Virus

LONDON (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola's 82-year-old mother has died after contracting coronavirus, Manchester City announced on Monday.

"The Manchester City family are devastated to report the death today of Pep's mother Dolores Sala Carrio in Manresa, Barcelona, after contracting coronavirus," the Premier League club said in a statement.

"Everyone associated with the club sends their most heartfelt sympathy at this most distressing time to Pep, his family and all their friends."

Guardiola, 49, last month donated one million euros (\$1 million) to buy medical supplies for the fight against the coronavirus pandemic in his native Spain.

He also issued a video as part of the club's Cityzens At Home initiative urging fans to stay at home.

Spain declared Monday a fourth consecutive drop in the number of coronavirus-related deaths, with 637 over the past 24 hours, the lowest number in nearly two weeks.

Fatalities, which were sharply down on the record 950 on Thursday, brought the total deaths in the country to 13,055, second only to Italy.

Sabatini Doubts Tennis Can Return in 2020

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentinian tennis great Gabriela Sabatini has cast doubt over whether the professional tennis circuit will resume this year amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Sabatini said the sport must address other priorities before restarting its packed international calendar, possibly in 2021, reports media.

"In the coming months I think it will be difficult to hold any sporting event," Sabatini told the Subidos a la Red podcast, published on Sunday. "I have my doubts that something can be done this year in tennis," added the 49-year-old, who retired in 1996 after a career that included the 1990 US Open title and 11 Grand Slam singles semi-final appearances.

Liverpool Should Be Awarded Premier League Title

LONDON (AFP) - UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said on Monday that there is "no way" Liverpool should finish the season without the Premier League title, even if the campaign is cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool appeared set to secure a first English top-flight title in 30 years when the season was suspended, sitting 25 points clear of second-placed Manchester City.

"There is no way Liverpool could end without the title. If the matches are played, then they will almost certainly win it -- theoretically, they still haven't earned the title but they almost certainly will," Ceferin told Slovenian sports daily Ekipa.

"In case the matches cannot be played, we will need to find a way..."

"And, once again, I see no scenario according to which Liverpool would not be the winners. I realise fans might be disappointed if the match is played in an empty stadium or even if it is resolved around a table, but I believe that one way or another they will win the title."

All major European leagues are currently suspended, as are the Champions League and Europa League competitions.

When asked if Ceferin thought games could be played this summer, he said he was "optimistic".



Ronaldo on Course to Become Football's First Billionaire



ROME (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo is still firmly on course to become the first ever footballer to reach the \$1bn mark.

Despite taking a multi-million euro pay cut to help Juventus through the Covid-19 pandemic, the Portuguese superstar will still be raking in the cash this year.

Golf star Tiger Woods and boxing legend Floyd Mayweather are the only other active sportsmen to have reached \$1bn.

Despite the fact Ronaldo is not the best-paid footballer on the planet in terms of wages - that accolade belongs to Lionel Messi - he earns ridiculous amounts through other ventures.

The Juve star has sponsorship deals with Nike, his own underwear brand and a whole host of other advertising projects which bring in a serious amount of money. In a report by Forbes, they declare that Ronaldo earns around £36m-a-year from these ventures alone.

The 35-year-old pockets around £53m-a-year from Juventus with bonuses and other contractual agreements factored in, taking him close to £100m-a-year in total.

It means that the reported £3.45m pay cut he is taking due to the coronavirus outbreak will hardly impact his financial standing.

Kyrgios Offers to Drop Food at Doorstep of Those in Need

MUMBAI (Reuters) - Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios once again showed his compassionate side on Monday, pledging to help hungry people and drop off food at doorstep for those in need during the coronavirus pandemic.

Kyrgios, who was placed on probation by the governing body of men's tennis over his on-court behaviour last year, emerged as Australia's hero earlier in 2020 during the bushfire crisis.

His "bad boy" image was transformed since his appeal to the tennis world kickstarted a campaign that raised millions of dollars for the victims of the crisis before and during the Australian Open Grand Slam in Melbourne. "If ANYONE is not working/not getting an income and runs out of food, or times are just tough ... please don't go to sleep with an empty stomach," Kyrgios wrote on Instagram with a caption "real talk".

"Don't be afraid or embarrassed to send me a private message. I will be more than happy to share whatever I have. "Even just for a box of noodles, a loaf of bread or milk. I will drop it off at your doorstep, no questions asked!"

The 24-year-old Kyrgios is spending time in his hometown of Canberra with the sport suspended across the world till at least mid July as countries have gone into lockdown to contain the spread of the virus.

