

International Sociological Association (ISA) Condemned the U.S. Sanctions Against Iran Amid the Coronavirus Pandemic as “Immoral”, Calling for Their Immediate Removal

# IRAN NEWS

Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri Praised the Iranian Nation's Active Resistance in Different Arenas in the Face of the U.S.' Hostile Policies in the Past Years

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## Railroad Sole Way of Iran-Turkey Trade for Now

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Turkey has barred all trucks, even the Turkish ones, from entering the country after the outbreak of the coronavirus, the spokesperson for Iran's Customs Office said, noting that the only option left for the trade exchanges between the two neighbors is railroad.

In comments on Monday, Ruhollah Latifi said the only remaining path for exports and imports between Iran and Turkey at present is the railroad via the Razi border crossing.

More than 130 train cars are transporting commodities between Iran and Turkey, he added.

Latifi said the Ankara government decided to refuse all trucks entry into Turkey as part of the precautionary measures to contain the coronavirus spread, noting that even Turkish trucks have been stranded at the border inside Iran since April 10.

More than 210 Turkish trucks carrying export commodities have been left stranded at the Bazargan border crossing and cannot return home, even though they have cleared customs in Iran, Latifi said.

Last month, Iran's ambassador to Ankara said Iranian and Turkish cargo trucks were carrying out ground shipping service via third countries.

## Persian Gulf More Secure Place Without Alien Forces



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi in his weekly presser said, "The U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf must leave the Persian Gulf and any naval vessel should observe maritime commute regulations so not to make Iran react."

Mousavi said, "In the midst of the medical issues that the world is facing these days, diplomacy continues. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and the President of Iran Hassan Rouhani have had many contacts with their counterparts. Also, there are other programs on the agenda of our country's officials that have been informed and some of them are being implemented; in this regard, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has made 14 phone calls to officials and political figures around the world."

Foreign Ministry spokesman in a video conferencing and answering to question regarding "What is Iran's response to the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and recent tensions between Iran and the U.S.," said, "The Iranian armed forces are to patrol the region and the Persian Gulf, and these developments must take place calmly. As far as we know, the American forces prevented the normal and lawful patrol of the Iranian forces, and this has caused the Iranian forces to give them the necessary warnings."

Mousavi further stressed the need for foreign troops to leave the Persian Gulf region, adding, "Iran has been present in this region for thousands of years and the security of this region is in the hands of Iran and its neighbors, especially Oman, which is in the opposite side of the Strait of Hormuz. We are responsible for the vital strait of the world."

"As the IRGC said in a statement, foreign forces that are illegally present in the region should withdraw, and secondly, observe maritime commute regulations and not force our army to react, we are dissatisfied with their entry into the region and we hope they leave our area as soon as possible," Mousavi concluded.

Talking about the situation in Afghanistan and Iran's efforts to resolve Afghanistan's problems, the Foreign Ministry spokesman Mousavi said: "As a neighboring country, Iran wants Afghanistan to be safe, calm and stable along our eastern borders."

"The post-election political disputes in Afghanistan have prompted Iran to take action as a permanent friend of Afghanistan. Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif had contacts with Afghan officials, and the deputy foreign minister for Afghanistan affairs has made several trips to Afghanistan, where he met with senior Afghan officials", the spokesman stated.

In response to a question about Europe's commitments, Foreign Ministry Spokesman said, "INSTEX is a prerequisite for fulfilling other commitments that Europeans made to Iran after the illegal withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, and they stated that they needed a financial mechanism to fulfill their obligations. We welcome the launch of this financial channel, but we have stated that this is not all the commitments of the Europeans, and they must fulfill all the 11 commitments, including in the field of transportation, insurance energy, and so on."

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## CBI Governor Urges IMF To Resist U.S. Pressure

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati says the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should approve Tehran's request for a loan without delay and to resist U.S. pressure amid the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

Last month, the Islamic Republic asked the IMF for \$5 billion in loans to help finance its efforts to combat the disease. IMF officials have said the fund is proceeding with Iran's request, but the US has pledged to block the application.

Hemmati touched on the loss of lives to the coronavirus in Iran, appealing directly to IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva to approve the request.

"We have lost so many lives, as the Americans and Europeans have lost, and my thoughts and prayers go with them," Hemmati said in an interview with Bloomberg. "The time to act is now," he added.

Earlier this month, Iran's Vice President for economic affairs Mohammad Nahavandian said the U.S. has no right to block the loan after U.S. media reports said Washington planned to veto the Islamic Republic's request.

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## COVID-19 Kills 91 More in Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN Head of Iran's Health Ministry's Public Relations Office Kianoush Jahanpour said on Monday that 59,273 people out of a total of 83,505 infected by the coronavirus have survived while 5,209 have unfortunately succumbed to death.

Jahanpour said that 1,294 new affected cases have been detected since yesterday.

Over the last 24 hours, 91 people died due to the deadly virus, he added.

The Iranian official noted that 3,389 cases are in critical condition.

He went on to say that 353,012 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

Iran has taken numerous steps to stop the spread of the disease, from shutting down schools and universities to canceling cultural and religious gatherings. It is also constantly disinfecting and sanitizing public places.

Jahanpour said that although having less equipment none of the catastrophes in West happened in any parts of Iran.

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## Germany Rejects Suit Against Merkel Over Soleimani Assassination

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A criminal complaint filed by Germany's Left party against Chancellor Angela Merkel for helping the U.S. assassinate Iran's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani has been dismissed by the office of Germany's federal prosecutor.

Eight lawmakers from the Left Party had filed a criminal complaint against Merkel in February. The lawsuit said the U.S. Air force's base in Germany's Ramstein, believed to be used to control drones over Africa and the Middle East, was part of the operation that led to the general's assassination.

They accused the Merkel government of "abetting" the U.S. operation by failing to take action to stop the US drone attack that killed the Iranian commander.

The German paper Die Welt reported that the prosecutor's office had dismissed the complaint, saying there were no indication points to start a probe against the Merkel government.

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## China Condemns U.S., UK Criticism of Arrests In Hong Kong

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's Foreign Ministry has condemned recent remarks by Western officials who criticized the arrest of several protest organizers in the Chinese territory of Hong Kong.

The Ministry's spokesman Geng Shuang said on Monday that China and its territories, including Hong Kong, were ruled by law.

Hong Kong is a society governed by the rule of law and relevant parties must respect this, Geng told reporters during a daily briefing in Beijing.

Last week, police in Hong Kong arrested more than a dozen organizers of violent anti-government rallies in Hong Kong last year.

Police in Hong Kong have arrested more than a dozen high-profile activists and campaigners as part of a sweeping operation aimed at bringing to justice organizers of violent anti-government rallies in the Chinese territory last year. Police said all of those arrested would appear in court in mid-May.

The arrests came after a period of relative calm amid a partial coronavirus lockdown that put a cap on months of anti-government demonstrations and violent rallies in Hong Kong.

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## Iran Reportedly May Have Replicated Israeli Missile Downed in Syria

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A Russian aviation news outlet says Iran may have replicated an Israeli missile that was shot down in Syria, citing a video of the test of a new Iranian anti-tank missile.

Avia.Pro reported that the new missile seems to resemble one of the Israeli projectiles that were downed by the Russian electronic warfare system during an attack on Syria.

The report added that the downed missile was later successfully removed from the country by "Iranian intelligence service", and was studied and completely copied. The news outlet shared a video that showed the accuracy of the Iranian copy of the Israeli "Spike" missile in hitting its target.

Avia.Pro quoted experts as saying that Iran may use Israeli missiles against Tel Aviv itself in the near future. Iranian authorities have repeatedly said that the country's missile program has not been established for non-conventional purposes and is only meant as part of the country's deterrence capability.

Iran holds the very first ranking in the field of missile technology among the Middle Eastern countries, according to a commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

"Today, we rank first in the missile technology at the regional level and are placed among the few global powers in this regard," Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the Aerospace Division of the IRGC, said last August.

In June, Major General Hossein Salami, the chief commander of the IRGC, said Iran had managed to change the balance of power in its favor by harnessing the technology required for manufacturing ballistic missiles.

Salami said the Islamic Republic acquired the know-how 12 years ago while trying to prepare its defenses against the United States' aircraft carriers.



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# Leader Grants 3.9b Rials in Aid to Families of Prisoners

TEHRAN - Director-general of Hormozgan prisons said that three billion and 904 million rials have been donated by the Leader of the Revolution to the families of prisoners in need in this province.

Mustafa Kishani announced this on Monday, adding, "The cash donations of the Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, in the form of gift cards of 2 to 6 million Rials will be distributed among the families of prisoners in need of Hormozgan before the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan."

## Six Contracts Inked for Producing COVID-19 Vaccine

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN (MNA) – Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari said that six contracts were concluded with knowledge-based companies in the field of producing coronavirus vaccine in the country.**

In addition, a number of 76 clinical projects are underway in the country by researchers for treating coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, he added.

Turning to the achievements of knowledge-based firms, Sattari said, "these companies have managed to produce products in various fields including hospital equipment and also equipment needed in Intensive Care Unit (ICU), etc. and there is no need to import these products into the country amid coronavirus outbreak."

Producing vaccine for the disease is one of the important projects that domestic researchers are working on it, he said, adding, "knowledge-based companies have cooperated with us in this field in a way that four contracts have so far been inked in the field of producing coronavirus vaccine."

In addition, two other contracts will be inked in current week in the field of producing COVID-19 vaccine, and it is predicted that knowledge-based companies will produce



five human vaccines which will hit the market in current year, he stressed.

He further noted that more than 76 clinical projects have either been conducted or are underway by researchers in the field of treatment of coronavirus disease, he said, adding, "these projects include drug tests, treatment methods, etc."

He also said the coronavirus epidemic is now under control in the country thanks to people's cooperation and efforts by knowledge-based companies and other institutions to produce the required equipment.

Sattari added many good developments have taken place in the domain of production of new devices in the country to fight COVID -19 epidemic.

"We are seeing excellent developments in the production of reliable medical equipment such as ventilators and different apparatuses used in theatre," said Sattari.

"These companies have now received the necessary licenses and can even export their products to Europe," he noted.

## UNDP, EU Donate €10m to Help Revive Hamoon Wetland

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The United Nation's Development Plan (UNDP) and the European Union have donated €10 million to help revive Hamoon wetland in southeastern Iran, according to Ahmadreza Lahijanzadeh, an official with Iran's Department of Environment.

Lahijanzadeh said that the project is being implemented following efforts made by the Department of Environment over the past decades and thanks to international projects such as a plan aimed to protect Iranian wetlands as well.

Ali Arvahi, the director of a national plan for protecting Iranian wetlands, also told IRNA correspondent on April 4 that Iran's Department of Environment and the UNDP had signed a document on a project to revive Hamoon Wetland.

The project is aimed at upgrading the management of natural resources for reviving the ecosystems of the wetlands and supporting alternative livelihoods for local communities of Hamoon Wetland, Arvahi noted.

He said that the goal of the project is to focus on protecting the wetland and upgrading the standards of livelihood of the local people as well.

The project will be implemented for a period of five years and will receive financial support from the European Union, Arvahi said.

The official said that the project will provide an opportunity to work closer with the neighboring country of Afghanistan to ensure the necessary water resources for the wetland and minimize the pressure on it.

The project is also supposed to focus on climate conditions and adapt local agriculture to the climate of the region as much as possible, he noted.

Hamoon Wetland, located in southeastern Iran, is shared between Iran and Afghanistan. It is Iran's third biggest lake and the seventh biggest international wetland of the world.

## Zarif Urges Trump to Stop Interfering in Other Nations' Affairs

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has once again warned US President Donald Trump against interfering in the internal affairs of other countries in the age of the new coronavirus.

Zarif made the remarks in a Sunday posting on Twitter in an apparent reference to Trump's Saturday allegation that the U.S. would be willing to send ventilators to Iran to help treat coronavirus patients.

"I have offered to help them (Iran) if they want. If they need ventilators, which they do, I would send them ventilators. We have thousands of excess ventilators. We have a stockpile of ventilators," the US president said during the daily coronavirus status briefing.

In response to Trump's remarks, Zarif said, "Iran will

be EXPORTING ventilators in a few months, @realdonaldtrump," exhorting him to avoid interfering in other countries' affairs.

"All you need to do is stop interfering in the affairs of other nations; mine especially. And believe me, we do not take advice from ANY American politician," Zarif said.

Iran has been doing its utmost to contain the respiratory disease caused by new coronavirus, COVID-19, despite the hardships caused by Washington's cruel sanctions.

Tehran's battle against the virus has repeatedly drawn the praise of the World Health Organization (WHO), which has expressed certitude that the Islamic Republic has enough capabilities to stem the outbreak.

## Iran Faces No Disruption to Food Supplies Amid Pandemic

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian authorities say the country faces no disruption to food supplies amid the new coronavirus pandemic as large-scale government programs for purchase of agrifood from domestic farmers have helped boost inventories.

The spread of the COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, has left many countries short of food supplies with reports showing that panic buying by shoppers in developed countries cleared supermarket shelves of staples in the very first days of the pandemic last month.

Iran has been spared of such a disruption to food supplies since COVID-19 cases surfaced in the country in late February.

Over the past calendar year which ended late March, the Iranian government expanded its so-called guaranteed purchase program for agrifood to include fruits, vegetables and other farming products.

That came as better precipitation and a boom in exports had encouraged many farmers to expand cultivation for various fruits and vegetables.

A senior official at the Iranian agriculture ministry (MAJ) said on Sunday that the government had purchased nearly 330,000 metric tons of tomato over the last calendar year.

Hossein Shirzad, who heads Iran's Central Organization of the Rural Cooperatives (CORC), said that such a huge government scheme for buying a single item of agrifood has been a first of its kind in decades.

Shirzad said the government has implemented a same strategy for other farming products which faced an oversupply last year.

He said CORC's purchase of saffron, a relatively expensive spice whose sale in international markets have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, amounted to 72 tons in the year ending March 19.

MAJ authorities said on Saturday that Iran no longer needed to place huge orders for imports of rice from abroad as production for the grain had increased to reach nearly three million tons at the end of the past calendar year.

## Zarif Meets With Syrian President, FM



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif held separate meetings with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Deputy Prime minister and Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem on Monday.

Zarif arrived in Damascus on Monday and was welcomed by Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Sunday, "Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will leave Tehran for Damascus tomorrow, Monday, to meet and talk with Syrian officials."

He further added, "During the one-day trip, Zarif will meet with President Bashar al-Assad and al-Muallem to discuss bilateral relations, regional developments, as well as the latest political developments in Syria's fight against terrorism."

Iranian foreign minister visited Syria last April. During the visit, he met with senior Syrian officials, including the president and foreign minister, to discuss strengthening bilateral relations and developments in the region.

## 65% of Iranian Nurses in Front-Line of Fighting Coronavirus

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The deputy health minister for nursing said on Monday that 80,856 nurses, equal to 65 percent of the nurses in the public section, are in the front-line of looking after coronavirus patients.

Maryam Hazrati said in a video press conference that the number does not include the nurses of the hospitals Armed Forces, banks, charity, and the private sector.

Hazrati said that last month 4,456 nurses were recruited and 3,055 nurses volunteered to work in hospitals allocated to coronavirus hospitals.

She went on to say that the nurses who had a record of physical problems, had children, or had weak immune systems were included in the program to fight coronavirus.

She added that according to research, tiredness and sadness is clearly seen in the nurses and that's because seeing coronavirus patients die, and not due to being away from their families for a long time, hardships of the job, or fear of the virus.

She said in many hospitals centers have been established to provide psychological help for the nurses.

In the past two months, 142,925 patients with acute respiratory problems have been hospitalized, she said.

## Gov't to Loan Small, Medium Businesses To Protect National Production

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Governor of Central Bank of Iran announced Monday that the CBI will loan two-third of 750,000 billion rials to small- and medium-sized businesses that are active in production and services areas.

The remaining of the loan will be allocated to those who receive money from the government based on the targeted subsidy plan, Abdolnasser Hemmati said through a post on Instagram.

He rejected any concerns over the misuse of that loan.

CBI is planned to guarantee the continuation of production activities in the country [as Iran is fighting against the coronavirus pandemic these days while it is under the U.S. sanctions and has not had access to the medical equipment due to the bans], Hemmati noted.

The deadly coronavirus radiating from Wuhan, China, in December 2019 has affected over 2,400,000 people across the world, killing more than 165,000 people; while in Iran the number of dead is over 5,100.

## Seminaries Ready to Cooperate With Orthodox Church

QOM (IRNA)- Director of Iran's seminaries Ayatollah Alireza Arafai in a letter to general secretary of the World Council of Churches expressed readiness for establishing cooperation and consultations with the Orthodox Church.



The tragic incident of the coronavirus outbreak has caused suffering to countries and nations and has caused grief to the leaders of religions and scholars, the letter reads.

Seminaries in Qom and Iran express sympathy with those who have been affected and wish immediate recovery for the patients, he added.

Ayatollah Arafai noted that seminaries and senior scholars are ready to exchange scientific, research, cultural and rescue experiences and to open new chapter with regard to cooperation and consultations with scientific, international, academic, and religious centers.

Meanwhile, supervisor of World Council of Churches responded to Ayatollah Arafai's letter saying anti-Iran sanctions have escalated difficult current situation.

He thanked for Arafai's letter and his wish for cooperation in world religious societies with regard to justice and welfare, especially for those who were affected by coronavirus.

He added that WCC together with National Council of Churches of Christ has recently sent a request to US president for lifting sanctions against Iran.

Earlier, Arafai in a letter to Pope Francis the leader of the Catholic Church on Saturday described the spread of coronavirus as a calamity for the entire world, saying that countering contemporary crises requires international consensus.

Rational and proper explanation of such incidents and how to encounter them, developing research to deal with social challenges, promoting social vitality, strengthening social solidarity and consolidating hope, resolve, peace and creativity in the society are among the heavy responsibilities of all elites, intellectuals and officials, Arafai said, noting that religious scholars shoulder a double responsibility in such circumstances.

Dealing with this challenge and other contemporary crises, including injustice, discrimination, inhumane sanctions, environmental crisis, war, terrorism, producing and stockpiling WMDs requires international cooperation, countering irresponsible policies of certain countries and all-out campaign against corruption, discrimination and sanctions as well as sincere adherence to common human, rational and religious teachings and consolidating foundations of justice, peace and solidarity, he said.

## Iranian Official Confers With Afghan Officials

KABUL (IRNA) -Foreign Ministry's special assistant for Afghanistan affairs discussed latest political developments with high-ranking Afghan officials during his visit to Kabul.

During separate meetings with President Ashrag Ghani, Afghanistan National Security Adviser Hamdollah Moheb and supervisor of Afghanistan Foreign Ministry Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherianfard reviewed bilateral relations and the two countries' methods for fighting coronavirus. Iran-Afghanistan relations have been growing over the past two decades and Iranian officials have always supported Iran's relations with Afghan government and people.

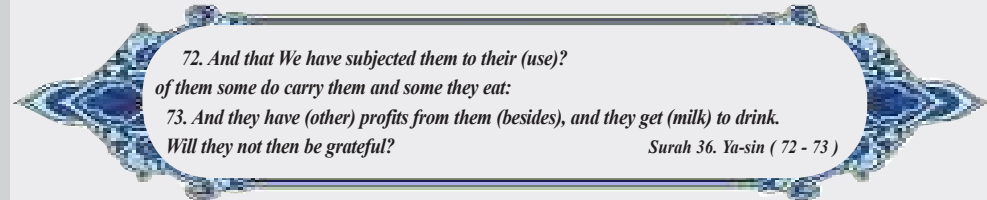
Last Iranian year (ended on March 19, 2020), Afghanistan had the largest imports from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Iran has become its largest trading partner.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:01
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:51
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:22



## Rabiei: We Have Nothing as “Normality”

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

**TEHRAN – Government Spokesman Ali Rabiei yesterday said that the current government is anti-sanctions and it is after pushing back sanctions and wiping the country from the Coronavirus.**

Speaking in his weekly presser, he said the country is marking Health Week these days and felicitated the week to all who are involved in the health sector of the country.

He added that despite the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the government has not stopped its programs and it pursues its policies and necessary plans to tackle this problem.

He reiterated that the number of production of masks has increased from 400,000 to over 4m masks since the outbreak of the virus and disinfectants are available in all stores nationwide.

He added that according to the statistics, the number of persons infected with the virus is on the decline and so far over 72m people have been screened.

Rabiei reiterated that at this moment there is nothing as normality and all should observe social distancing till the moment the health ministry announces the country is clean.

On the impacts of sanctions on the humanitarian aids, he said that the U.S. President has taken a stand which causes a psychological climate, adding that he does not unfreeze Iran's money and instead he claims Iran spends its money in other places.



He reiterated that the government will announce exactly where the loan from IMF is to be spent and today all Iranians understand that if a civilian decides to export medicines, he faces problems. Rabiei noted that currently the country is deprived of banking transactions and those who deny there are sanctions on medicines despite these evidences should tell us why imports of medicines face problem.

He also said he is surprised why some people in the country take side with the foreign-based Persian TV channels as everyone knows who run those channels and what are their goals.

Rabiei added that the government strategy in tackling with the Coronavirus is both to save people lives and their jobs and the government is determined to stop more unemployment in the country.

## 95% of South Pars Field Basic Repair Materialized

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The supervisor of the second refinery of South Pars gas field referred to a suitable schedule for repairing the refinery, saying 95% of the planned activities with regard to basic repairs were materialized during the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

Hossein Baghban said one of the achievements made by the refinery was to reduce the time of fundamental repairs by 2%.

He also referred to upgrading the propane compressor control system which will prevent the compressor stoppage to a large extent.

Improving the steam turbine control system, upgrading the propane compressor control system, and modifying the refinery's lightning arrester have been very effective in increasing the refinery's reliability and achieving this indicator.

The managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company Mohammad Meshkinfam said the offshore part of Phase 11, and six platforms of phases 13, 14, 22, 23, and 24 were installed in the last Iranian year (ended March 19, 2020), four of which have been operationalized.

Pars Oil and Gas Company has currently 17 projects in progress and 22 more will be added this year, he said.

Meanwhile the Director of Petroleum and Gas Engineering Department of Pars Oil and Gas Company announced the start of drilling operations for the first exploratory-limiting well in the Kangan and Dalan structures of the eastern part of the South Pars gas field (Yalda Structure).

Ali Akbar Majed said the company had considered geographical appraisal of Phase 12 hydrocarbon reserves in order to maximize natural gas production from the offshore project in the Persian Gulf waters.

He added, in this regard, after conducting preliminary studies and obtaining approval from the Portfolio Council of Exploration Management of the National Iranian Oil Company, drilling an exploratory-limiting well in the geological structure of the eastern nose of South Pars gas field (Yalda Structure) was considered as a priority by the Petroleum and Gas Engineering Department of POGC in the current Iranian calendar year which began on March 20.

## NIDC Manager Says Country Needs to Double Efforts

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – The CEO of National Iranian Drilling Company believes at this crucial stage, the country needs to double its efforts and endeavors, adding that in the year of surge in production, capabilities and capitals of the company should be used to the utmost.



Speaking in the operation meeting, Eng. Seyed Abdollah Mousavi hailed the efforts of the staff in the last Iranian calendar year which helped the company to materialize its schedules despite restrictions and sanctions, adding that with the current condition, it is expected that in the current year, the company would witness increase in productivity and output.

He urged all managements in the company to evaluate their systems in order to identify weak and strong points, challenges and problems and to present proper solutions for accelerating works and reaching the set goals in the oil industry which is in direct connection with saving and increasing the production. He emphasized all staff and managements should do their best to this end.

Mousavi pointed to this issue that human resources is the most valuable capital in any organization and called for creating satisfaction and incentive among the staff. He reiterated that the company follow its programs in compliance with the National Iranian Oil Company's programs and uses its capabilities in line with the goals of the oil industry.

He then pointed to the performance of the company last year, saying that the company with almost 80 percent of its operation fleet completed drilling of 115 wells over 164,000 meters. Mousavi noted that due to efforts of experienced personnel of the company, expectations of drilling equipment reduced by 5 percent last year comparing to the preceding year.

He added that in the current condition and because of the outbreak of Coronavirus, the company should follow its social responsibility along with its natural and organizational tasks and it should be more active in serving the society.

## Turkey Resumes Repairing Iran-Turkey Gasline

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The director of dispatching at the National Iranian Gas Company announced the start of repairs to the Iran-Turkey gas pipeline in Turkey.

Speaking to Shana, Mehdi Jamshididana said: “Turkey has started repairing the pipelines importing gas from Iran on its soil and has announced that the repairs would take several weeks.”

He said due to the reduction of Turkey's gas imports from Iran after the cold season and given the restrictions caused by the coronavirus outbreak, repairing operations were delayed by Turkey, which is why Iran's gas exports to Turkey are still halted.

Natural gas exports from Iran to Turkey were halted early on March 31 after an explosion and fire at a pipeline just inside the Turkish border.

## MSC to Implement over 20 Projects In Year of Surge in Production

**IRAN MEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Mobarakeh Steel Company deputy director in charge of expansion projects Ahmad Saeedbakhsh said the company is to carry out over 20 projects this year which has been named Year of Surge in Production.

Saeedbakhsh said Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) as the biggest producer of steel plate in the Middle East and one of the biggest producers of sponge iron, and with annual production of 7m tons of crude steel accounts for 51 percent of steel production in the country and has created some 351,000 direct and indirect jobs.

He added that the company has always tried to be a pioneer in production and by analyzing the market and its rivals, it has planned its strategy based on social, economic, industrial and technology developments to act globally.

He noted that to this end, the department pursued constantly all developmental and renovating projects of the company in last Iranian calendar year which ended on March 19.

Saeedbakhsh added that last year and on average, some 100 projects were under implementation in the company, adding that the total amount of the contracts for projects on inside fences of the company and Saba Steel Complex was valued over 15,000b rials plus 35m euro, reiterating the company has paid over 6,000b rials plus 20m euros of this amount for the project and the remaining amount will be paid as soon as the company gets bills and documents from the contractors.

He said the cost for timely implementation of the projects due to fluctuation in the forex market and sanctions is a significant figure.

Saeedbakhsh added that last year several projects were completed that he can point to some of them like implementing the project for roller screener in the pelletizing unit, protective fence of beneath conveyor belt at Shahid Kharrazi unit, project for developing the warehouse for slab and DCS project.

He then added that some new projects are to be exploited in the inside fence which are all under construction.

## CEO of NICICO Visits 120,000-Ton Smelting Plant



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – The CEO of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) yesterday visited Khatoon Abad Smelting and Refining Plant.

According to reports, Dr. Ardesheer Saad Mohammadi during his visit was accompanied by his media advisor and head of public relations Mr. Heydar Zeighami, head of security of the company Mr. Mehdi Salmani, manager of Shahr-e Babak Copper Complex Mr. Hassan Mahdaviipoor and some of officials of Shahr-e Babak Copper Complex, and he visited the latest developments in the developmental project at Khatoon Abad Smelting Plant.

Exploitation from the Khatoon Abad Smelting Plant was launched mid-last year to boost the capacity from 80,000 tons to 120,000 tons. The project started amid sanctions and came on stream in just 5 months and it was for the first time in Kerman Province that copper smelting capacity hit 400,000 tons and it was an important step towards materializing the slogan of Year of Surge in Production.



**SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT**

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FP/12-99/003	P/F "VARCO" TOP DRIVE
FP/12-99/004	P/F "NATIONAL" DRAWWORKS TYPE 110-M & 110-UE
FP/12-99/005	P/F ADJUSTABLE & GATE VALVE
FP/12-99/006	P/F GATE VALVE FC HYDRULIC OPERATED

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,233,780	Tender No. : FP/12-99/002 Indent No.:08-22-9845173	4,760,000,000
	3,233,783	Tender No. : FP/12-99/003 Indent No.:08-22-9845172	32,500,000,000
	3,233,784	Tender No. : FP/12-99/004 Indent No.:08-22-9845155	7,400,000,000
	3,233,785	Tender No. : FP/12-99/005 Indent No.:08-22-9845103	3,645,000,000
	3,233,787	Tender No. : FP/12-99/006 Indent No.:08-22-9845102	18,898,600,000

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.
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Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof. (Close date :1399/2/15- May 04,2020)	
	Distribution Place	Submitting Method
	Hall No.:113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148660 Room No. 431, 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, Oil central building No.8, Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran – Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank.</li> <li>Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.</li> </ul>
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	Address
	35 Days after the last time of Purchasing. ( Close date 1399/3/19 – June 08 ,2020)	Hall No. 107, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	31,143 Euro	Regarding Tender No. FP/12-99/002 Rial / 4,760,000,000
	1,625,000,000 Rial / 11.026 Euro	Regarding Tender No. FP/12-99/003
	370,000,000 Rial / 2,421 Euro	Regarding Tender No. FP/12-99/004
	183,000,000 Rial / 1,198 Euro	Regarding Tender No. FP/12-99/005
	945,000,000 Rial / 6,520 Euro	Regarding Tender No. FP/12-99/006
Type of guarantee	Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.	
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.	

**(Foreign Procurement Dept.)**

More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: [www.nidc.ir](http://www.nidc.ir) [http://sapp.ir/nidc\\_pr](http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr)



## Armed Bandits Kill Dozens Of Villagers in Nigeria

KATSINA (AFP) - Gunmen killed 47 people in attacks on villages in the northwestern Nigerian state of Katsina in the early hours of Saturday, local police said.

"Armed bandits", some of whom wielded AK 47 guns, carried out the attacks, Katsina police said in a statement on Sunday.

Hundreds of people have been killed in the last year by criminal gangs carrying out robberies and kidnappings in northwest Nigeria. Such attacks have added to security challenges in Africa's most populous country, which is already struggling to contain Islamist insurgencies in the northeast and communal violence over grazing rights in central states.



## Mali Election Runoff Tarnished by Intimidation

BAMAKO (Dispatches) - Acts of intimidation and allegations of vote buying marred the final round of legislative elections in Mali on Sunday aimed at reviving confidence in embattled institutions despite a bloody jihadist conflict and a virus pandemic.

In central Mali, the president of a voting station was forcibly removed and representatives of the electoral commission "chased away by armed men", one of the representatives told AFP.

Military sources confirmed the incident.

Elsewhere, voting was cancelled after jihadists threatened to attack voters, witnesses said.



## Death Sparks Unrest at Major Migrant Camp in Greece



ATHENS (AFP) - A fire ripped through one of Greece's largest migrant camps leaving widespread damage and many people homeless after the death of an Iraqi woman sparked unrest, officials said Sunday.

The blaze late Saturday at Vial camp on Chios island destroyed the facilities of the European asylum service, a camp canteen, warehouse tents and many housing containers, Migration Ministry Secretary Manos Logothetis told AFP.

"A large part of the camp's administrative services was destroyed," said Logothetis, adding that no injuries were reported.

The UN refugee agency's spokesman in Athens, Boris Cheshirkov, said the damage is still being evaluated but that many camp residents have likely been left homeless.

"Authorities are still assessing the damages but a few hundred people are likely affected because their shelters have burned down. We have donated tents to the authorities which can quickly be put into use and we will assist in replacing the warehouse tents," he told AFP.

Anissa, a 22-year-old asylum-seeker from Somalia who declined to give her last name out of concern for her safety, said the fire "burned two big tents and each tent has more than 20 homes" inside. Aziza Husseini, a 30-year-old mother of two from Afghanistan, said a group of camp residents "attacked the food warehouses, set fire to the info point, took the food refrigerators into the camp and set them on fire."

"We are not safe at all, we are very scared... We can't sleep at night," she said.

Both women said police fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.

At least three vehicles outside the camp were also gutted.

A police source in Athens said two Afghans and an Iraqi had been arrested in relation to the unrest, which erupted after a 47-year-old asylum seeker from Iraq died in the camp on Saturday.

"We managed to restore order at around 1 am... There were many people who took part in the incidents," another police source on Chios said.

The Iraqi woman who died had been taken with a fever to a hospital earlier this week. At the time, a test for coronavirus had returned negative, state news agency ANA reported Saturday.

Migrant camps in Greece have been under quarantine in recent weeks, with authorities trying to keep residents apart from locals.

The virus has so far killed 110 people in Greece. Another 67 are in intensive care.

No coronavirus cases have been reported in island camps so far, but two camps on the mainland have registered cases.

As with all of Greece's island camps, Vial is massively overcrowded with more than 5,000 people living in space intended for around 1,000.

Some 100,000 asylum seekers are currently stranded in Greece after other European states closed their borders in 2016.

## At Least 13 Killed in Canada Rampage

MONTREAL (Dispatches) - A gunman killed at least 13 people in an overnight shooting rampage across rural Nova Scotia, before being found dead Sunday after one of Canada's worst killing sprees in decades, federal police said.

Identified as 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman, the suspect had been on the run since Saturday night, when police were alerted to shots fired in the town of Portapique, around 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Halifax, capital of the Atlantic province.

Gun violence in Canada is far less than in the neighboring United States, and weapons more strictly controlled, and the killings were the country's worst since 1989 when a gunman murdered 14 female students at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique.

"I can report that there were 13 victims so far, plus the suspect, that are deceased," the commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Brenda Lucki, told Canadian broadcaster CBC.

The victims included a female RCMP officer, Constable Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran of the Force, while a second officer was injured.

In Nova Scotia several victims were discovered both outside and inside a house in the town, sparking a 12-hour manhunt through multiple communities.

"The search for the suspect ended this morning. When the suspect was located. And I can confirm that he is deceased," Chief Superintendent Chris Leather told a press conference earlier.

Leather said that at one point the suspect appeared to be wearing part of a police uniform and was driving a vehicle made to look like an RCMP cruiser.

RCMP tweeted several times that he was not an officer and warned he was considered "armed and dangerous."

"The initial search for the suspect led to multiple sites in the area, including structures that were on fire," Leather told the news conference.

Leather said there was no final count on the number of victims, and that the investigation was in its early stages.

Another police spokesperson said, without further details, that the gunman was killed after an officer intervened.

Police said they had no indication of a motive at this stage. Lucki told CBC said there was no indication "at this point" of a terrorist motive.

"What I would say is that it appears to be at least in part, very random in nature," said Leather.



## North Korea's FM Denies Letter Sent to Trump

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea on Sunday denied a letter was sent to U.S. President Donald Trump, North Korean state news agency KCNA said, citing a Foreign Ministry press chief.

The denial comes after Trump told reporters that he recently received a "nice note" from North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump had said on Saturday in Washington: "we're doing just fine with North Korea."

Speaking of a U.S. media report, KCNA said in the statement, "he could have referred to the personal letters that had been exchanged in the past, we are not sure."

"But there was no letter addressed recently to the U.S. president by the supreme leadership of the DPRK."

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is North Korea's official name.

North Korea's foreign ministry said in the statement quoted by KCNA that relations between the U.S. and North Korean leaders "are not an issue to be taken up just for diversion nor it should be misused for meeting selfish purposes".

An official from South Korea's presidential office on Sunday told reporters that Trump mentioned the letter to South Korean President Moon Jae-in during a phone call with him on Saturday.

Trump had sent a letter to North Korean leader Kim in March, which North Korea said was a sign of "the special and very firm personal relations" between the two leaders, despite recent friction.

## Bolsonaro Joins Protest Against Stay-at-Home Orders

BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro on Sunday joined hundreds of demonstrators outside army headquarters in the capital Brasilia protesting stay-at-home orders issued by state governors.

The crowd of around 600 called on the army to intervene in the handling of the coronavirus pandemic and demanded the closure of Congress.

Some held up posters declaring "Military intervention with Bolsonaro".

"I am here because I believe in you and you are here because you believe in Brazil," the president told the crowd from the back of a pick-up truck.

Bolsonaro, a former army captain, has constantly criticised partial quarantine measures adopted by governors, including those in charge of the country's most populous states, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, to halt the spread of the coronavirus.

On Friday, he sacked his health minister, who

supported the restrictions that Bolsonaro says are damaging the economy.

Brazil, with a population of more than 200 million, has the most COVID-19 cases in Latin America -- more than 38,000 as of Sunday, with more than 2,400 deaths.

During his address, which was interspersed with fits of coughing, the president made no response to the crowd's call for military intervention nor the demand to close Congress.

"You must fight for your country. Count on your president to do what is necessary so that we can guarantee democracy and what is most dear to us, our freedom," Bolsonaro said.

The most populous states of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro on Friday extended partial quarantine measures.

A majority of Brazilians approve the government's confinement regulations despite its impact on the economy, according to a poll published Saturday.



## Turkish, U.S. Leaders Discuss Cooperation Amid Pandemic



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - The presidents of Turkey and the U.S. agreed on Sunday to cooperate against the global coronavirus pandemic and its effects.

In a phone call, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump discussed bilateral relations and regional developments, according to a statement released by Turkey's Communications Directorate.

The statement said that Erdogan and Trump agreed to continue close cooperation against the threat posed by the novel coronavirus outbreak on public health and the economies of both countries as a requirement of the "spirit of solidarity" of the NATO Alliance.

The coronavirus death toll in Turkey reached 2,017 as of Sunday, with 86,306 cases to date, according to the country's Health Ministry.

Meanwhile, the U.S. on Sunday reported 2,009 additional coronavirus-related deaths over the past 24 hours, surpassing the 39,000 mark, according to the Maryland-based Johns Hopkins University. The university's running tally counted a total of 39,135 deaths and 737,319 cases.

After originating in China last December, COVID-19, the disease caused by coronavirus, has spread to at least 185 countries and regions across the world. Europe and the U.S. are currently the worst-hit regions.

The pandemic has killed over 163,300 people, with total infections exceeding 2.37 million, while more than 611,100 have recovered from the disease, according to Hopkins data.





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**Parsian**

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## ECB Will Do More If Needed to Keep Prices Stable

PARIS (Reuters) - The European Central Bank will take further action if necessary to keep prices stable in line with its mandate, ECB policymaker Francois Villeroy de Galhau said in a newspaper interview published on Saturday.

With inflation below its 2% target, the ECB will have to keep interest rates "very low" and liquidity "very abundant", Villeroy, who is also governor of the Bank of France, told French weekly Le Journal du Dimanche. "And if we had to do more to fulfil the price stability mandate entrusted to us by the (EU) treaties, we will do more in all independence," Villeroy said.



## Coronavirus Affects 81% of Global Labor Force

LONDON (Dispatches) - The International Labour Organization (ILO) told the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) that workplace closures have risen so fast that 81% of the global workforce live in countries with mandatory or recommended closures. ILO Director-General Guy Ryder urged the IMF and the World Bank to focus their response on "providing immediate relief to workers and enterprises to protect businesses and livelihoods, particularly in hard-hit sectors and in developing countries."

"The crisis has uncovered the huge decent work deficits that still prevail in 2020 and shown how vulnerable millions of working people are when a crisis hits," he said as part of written statements released in Geneva.

Addressing the spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, Ryder said priority should be given to the impact on smaller enterprises, unprotected workers and those in the informal economy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Workplace closures have increased so rapidly in recent weeks that 81% of the global workforce lives in countries with mandatory or recommended closures."

"In upper-middle-income countries, this represents 87% of the workforce and 70% in high-income countries. COVID-19 is now also impacting the developing world where capacities and resources to respond to the crisis are severely constrained," said Ryder.

The ILO has also shown that working hours will decline by 6.7% in the second quarter of 2020, which is equivalent to the loss of 195 million full-time jobs.

Ryder recommended stimulating the global economy and demand for labor by using available fiscal and monetary tools and debt relief.

"Public investment in health systems would be doubly effective as a crucial contribution to beating the pandemic and creating decent jobs," he asserted.

Additionally, providing immediate assistance will help sustain enterprises, preserve jobs and support incomes.

In this context, Ryder highlighted the need to invest in social protection measures, which can help mitigate the worst shocks of the crisis while acting as an economic stabilizer.

Further, he said, ensuring adequate protection will help support all those who continue to work during the crisis.

"That requires guarantees for safety and health in the workplace, properly designed work arrangements such as teleworking and access to sick pay," said Ryder.

Worldwide, there are over 2.21 million cases of the coronavirus, with nearly 151,000 reported deaths. Over 564,500 people have now recovered from the coronavirus, according to data compiled by U.S.-based Johns Hopkins University.

Despite the severity of the virus, most people experience mild symptoms and recover in due time.

## Britain Mulling New Business Support Scheme

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain is considering a new bailout mechanism to help firms affected by the coronavirus, Sky News reported on Saturday, saying that individual loans to companies could be bundled together into securities.

Finance minister Rishi Sunak has already set out a range of different schemes to help companies through a national lockdown which has effectively shuttered large parts of the world's fifth largest economy.

Sunak was now considering an additional programme to help provide loans to companies in sectors seen as making a material contribution to the economy such as aviation, retail and hospitality, Sky News reported citing a document circulated to City of London institutions by the finance ministry.



Asked about the report, the finance ministry said: "We're always open to ways to improve the package but no decisions have been taken."

Sky News said the proposal included several variations around the concept of pooling loans into a securitisation vehicle, which could then be partially backed by the government or sold to the Bank of England.

The scheme would potentially benefit larger firms who cannot issue debt in their own right which is eligible for an existing support scheme, but who require loans larger than those available through a separate program aimed at small and medium-sized companies.

The document seen by Sky pre-dates a Treasury decision announced last week which allowed firms with higher turnover to access government support aimed at mid-sized companies.

## Turkey Holds Talks for Swap Agreements With Central Banks

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's central bank is in contact with other central banks regarding new swap agreements as well as strengthening the existing business alliance and closely monitoring the global economic situation to tackle the coronavirus' negative impact on the Turkish economy, the central bank's chairman said Sunday.

In an interview with Anadolu Agency (AA), Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT) President Murat Uysal said that they recently participated in several international video conferences on reducing the financial system's stress and securing uninterrupted conduct of international trade.

"At the meetings, it was emphasized that it is particularly important for global central banks and fiscal authorities to take action promptly and continue their cooperation in the current period," he said, highlighting that the CBRT has long-standing swap agreements with certain countries to support trade in local currencies and now they are in close contact with other central banks "to further strengthen our cooperation and establish new swap agreements."

Uysal stressed that they are "closely monitoring the impact of the pandemic on both the global and the Turkish economy. To counter its potentially negative impact on the Turkish economy, we introduced a set of measures including a policy rate cut to inject much-needed liquidity into markets and improving the cash flow of firms."

Uysal explained the aim of the series of measures is to provide banks with flexibility in Turkish lira and foreign exchange liquidity management and thus enhance predictability, along with securing an uninterrupted flow of credit to the hardest-hit corporate sector.

"Our third goal is to support the cash flow of exporting firms through rediscount credits. Lastly, to strengthen the monetary transmission mechanism, we took a number of steps to prop up the Primary Dealership System and the liquidity in the Government Domestic Debt Securities (GDSS) market and to preserve market depth. Due to the COVID19-induced uncertainty and economic agents shifting to liquid assets, we have seen reduced depth for GDSS transactions. As this can cause the monetary policy transmission mechanism to weaken, we decided to boost the liquidity in the GDSS market," he continued.



## Europe Needs at Least 500b Euros From EU Institutions for Recovery

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Europe will need at least another 500 billion euros from European Union institutions to finance its economic recovery after the coronavirus pandemic, on top of the agreed half-a-trillion package, the head of the euro zone bailout fund said.

In an interview with Italy's Corriere della Sera paper, published on Sunday, European Stability Mechanism Managing Director Klaus Regling said the easiest way to organise such funds would be via the European Commission and the EU budget.

"I would say that for the second phase we need at least another 500 billion euros from the European institutions, but it could be more," Regling told the paper.

"For that, we need to discuss new instruments with an open mind, but also use the existing institutions, because it is easier, including in particular the Commission and the EU budget. Rethinking European funds can go a long way in keeping the European Union together," Regling said.

European Union finance ministers agreed on April 9th on safety nets for sovereigns, companies and individuals worth in total 540 billion euros.

They also agreed that the euro zone, which the IMF predicts will plunge into a 7.5% recession this year because of the pandemic, will need money to recover, but they had different ideas on how much is needed and how to raise it.

EU leaders are to discuss that at a videoconference on April 23. The idea around which a compromise may emerge is likely to involve the European Commission borrowing on the market against the security of the long-term EU budget and leveraging the money to achieve a bigger effect.

## India Toughens Rules on Investments From Neighbors

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India has stepped up scrutiny of investments from companies based in neighboring countries, in what is widely seen as a move to stave off takeovers by Chinese firms during the coronavirus outbreak.

India's trade ministry said in a notification dated April 17 the changes to federal rules on investment were meant to curb "opportunistic takeovers/acquisitions". It did not mention China.

Investments from an entity in a country that shares a land border with India will require government approval, it said, meaning they cannot go through a so-called automatic route.

"These times should not be used by other countries to take over our companies," a senior government official told Reuters.

Similar restrictions are already in place for Bangladesh and Pakistan. But up to now, they have not applied to China and India's other neighbors including Bhutan, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Nepal.

"This will certainly impact sentiment among Chinese investors. However, greenfield investments will not be impacted," said Santosh Pai, a partner at Indian law firm Link Legal that advises several Chinese companies.

Australia has also said all foreign investment proposals will be assessed by a review board during the coronavirus crisis to prevent a fire sale of distressed corporate assets. Germany has taken similar measures.



A February report by research group Gateway House said Chinese foreign direct investment into India stood at \$6.2 billion.

China's Bytedance has plans to invest \$1 billion in Indian, while automakers including Great Wall Motor Co Ltd (601633.SS) and MG Motor, a unit of China's SAIC (600104.SS), have said they intend to invest millions.

Delano Furtado, a partner with law firm Trilegal, said the notification may also impact Chinese companies with existing investments in the country.

"Any follow-on investments in those entities may now require approvals," he said.

India's notification also said government approval would also be needed to change the ownership of an Indian entity that had existing foreign investment.

## Brazil's Economy Could Recover in Quarter Four



BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil's central bank president Roberto Campos Neto said on Saturday (Apr 18) that Latin America's largest economy will begin to recover from the coronavirus crisis in the fourth quarter, according to an interview in local media.

Brazil has more coronavirus cases than any other country in Latin America. On Saturday, the health ministry said the number of confirmed cases rose by 2,917 to 36,599. Deaths rose by 206 to 2,347, the ministry said.

"I think the last quarter will show improvement," he said in the interview with website Poder360, which has published a teaser but will publish the interview in full on Sunday.

"Now the question is the third quarter, to what extent will it be impacted?"

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has repeatedly dismissed the severity of the coronavirus outbreak and criticized social isolation guidelines, arguing that the economic toll will kill more people than the virus.

On Saturday, he repeated this argument in Brasilia, meeting with a small crowd of protesters on the streets and broadcasting the encounter on Facebook Live.

He said that Brazil's federal government will be expected to compensate states more than 100 billion reais (US\$19.09 billion) in tax revenue lost due to lockdown policies that have negatively affected the economy. But Bolsonaro said there is no room in the country's budget to afford those costs.

Campos Neto added that the central bank will issue a formal forecast for Brazil's economy soon, but that it could take some three more months to be able to formally assess the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the Brazilian economy.



## New Narcotics Cargo Seized in Central Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) - Deputy Police Commander of Yazd Province Colonel Mohammad Reza Hashemifar said that law enforcement troops have confiscated 116 kilograms of illicit drugs in the province. Hashemifar said that police forces have identified and busted an illegal drug cargo in a residential area in Yazd. "91 kg of opium and 25 kg of hashish have been seized in the operation

and 3 smugglers have also been arrested and delivered to the judiciary," he said. The Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug trades originating from Afghanistan in the past four decades, despite its high economic and human costs. The country has spent more than hundreds of millions of dollars on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.



## Hungry, Jobless Americans Turning To Food Banks to Survive Pandemic

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - American families slammed by the coronavirus pandemic are turning more and more to food banks to get by, waiting hours for donations in lines of cars stretching as far as the eye can see.

And with 22 million people out of work seemingly overnight as business after business closes under the Great Lockdown, these charities feeding hungry and scared people fear the day will come when they cannot cope with the tsunami of demand.

On Tuesday, for instance, some 1,000 cars lined up at a distribution center set up in Pennsylvania by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Demand for its bags of food soared nearly 40 percent in March.

At eight centers like that one, some 227 tonnes of food were placed in the trunks of cars of families suddenly unable to put meals on the table, said the organization's vice president Brian Gulish.

"A lot of people are utilizing our service for the first time. They've never turned to a food bank before," said Gulish. So they do not know there is a network of 350 distribution points in southwest Pennsylvania.

"That's why those lines are so long. Because they don't know that network that we have," Gulish added.

All over America, from New Orleans to Detroit, people abruptly stripped of a paycheck are flocking to food banks -- sad scenes of desperation among people waiting for their small share of stimulus money included in the \$2.2 trillion emergency relief package approved by Congress last month.

Perhaps the most dramatic picture of some Americans' new food insecurity unfolded April 9 in San Antonio, Texas, where a staggering 10,000 cars showed up at one food bank, with some families arriving the night before to just sit and wait.

"We have gone for months without work," a woman who gave her name only as Alana said at a food distribution center in Chelsea in suburban Boston.

"I find a lady yesterday with a 15-day-old baby, a newborn. The husband is not working, she has two more kids. She was having no food in her house," said Alana.

Everywhere, food bank officials say their needs in the pandemic era have skyrocketed all of a sudden -- by 30 percent, for example, at a network in Akron, Ohio.

"We built a supply chain over the years that would serve a certain anticipated need for food. Ramping that up 30 percent overnight is nearly impossible," said Dan Flowers, CEO of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank.

In part this is because the food banks are caught up in the maelstrom that has hit the US food industry.

With restaurants closed because of the lockdown, Americans are stocking up on everything in grocery stores, which no longer can make as many product donations as they usually do. Ditto for restaurants that often donate surplus food to homeless shelters.

Fortunately, the U.S. food industry is in fact making donations.

Food banks including 200 local branches of an organization called Feeding America are even getting special kinds of loads to hand out.

U.S. food giant JM Smucker, maker of many well-known products such as Folgers



coffee, is a regular donor and has sent extra pallets of food to banks in Ohio. And a distillery called Ugly Dog in Michigan dispatched a truckload of hand sanitizing gel made from residual alcohol and packed in pint bottles that normally hold booze, said Flowers.

Cash donations are also coming in, ranging from anonymous people to the likes of Jeff Bezos, the world's richest person, who donated \$100 million to Feeding America.

"If it wasn't for that, these food banks would not be able to meet this demand," said Flowers.

The Food Bank For New York City, a major one in the Big Apple, is ordering higher volume than it normally does, said Zanita Tisdale, its director of member engagement.

"We know if we're going to go back in a week the cost may have increased significantly or the turnaround time for getting that product to our warehouse may have extended exponentially," she said.

As supply chains get more complex and the legions of desperate families grow, there is the issue of those manning the food banks, who are simply exhausted after weeks of toil.

"Our staff is worn out. They've been working so hard. We're all ready for this to end," said Flowers.

After a month of all this frenetic work, the food banks are holding up, at least for now. But the future -- like for so much of the new world created by the pandemic -- is uncertain.

"The supply is still good, but a month from now we don't know," said Gulish.

The relief plan passed by Congress includes \$850 million for food banks and Flowers says he expects that cash to start flowing in June.

"I think we'll get back on track then. I'm mostly concerned about the next six to eight weeks," said Flowers.

## Italy PM Calls for EU Solidarity In Support of Coronabonds



FRANKFURT (Reuters) - Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has repeated calls for the European Union to issue common euro zone bonds to demonstrate the bloc's solidarity in tackling the coronavirus crisis.

Conte said in an interview to be published in Germany's Sueddeutsche Zeitung today that issuing such bonds was not about socialising previous or future individual Italian debt.

Excerpts of the interview were released on Sunday in German ahead of publication of the newspaper.

Conte said Germany and the Netherlands must change their views to signal that Europe speaks as one, adding he wanted the joint bonds to be specifically applied and limited in time.

Germany, Europe's biggest economy, flanked by the Netherlands, has said it does not consider common euro zone bonds the right way to support health spending and economic rescue packages in the 19-nation euro currency bloc.

Berlin wants to tap the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) instead, while the European Investment Bank (EIB) could also step up efforts to give struggling companies loan guarantees.

It was unclear whether ESM assistance - where Italy stood to get access to possibly between 35 and 37 billion euros - would come without strings, Conte was quoted as saying.

EU heads of governments are due to hold a video summit over how to tackle the economic fallout of the crisis on Thursday, where differing views on coronabonds, mostly demanded by southern EU member states, are expected to be voiced.

The pandemic has grounded businesses, triggered company insolvencies, undermined state budgets and curbed consumer spending across the EU.

## Japan Switching Manufacturing to ASEAN

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently declared a state of emergency for the coronavirus pandemic and unveiled a massive stimulus package to help the economy overcome the crisis.

The rescue package, which at JPY108 trillion (US\$992 billion) or about 2.7 times Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) is the biggest in Japan's history. The stimulus package is equivalent to 20 percent of the country's GDP, contains measures aimed at mitigating the economic and social impact of the pandemic and targets individuals, multinational corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The rescue package includes an economic support fund worth about US\$2.4 billion to help finance local businesses bringing manufacturing back to Japan from China, or to move it to other



countries in Southeast Asia. The move is aimed at reducing future risks of supply chain disruption in case of another black swan. Until the COVID-19 outbreak, China was Japan's biggest trading partner.

In the last couple of decades, China has become the factory of the world. Manufacturers have

moved production to China to reduce costs, and to be close to one of the biggest markets in the world. Besides, it often was the only way to sell their products in the Chinese market. Over time, manufacturing in China has moved up the value chain from producing low added-value products such as clothing and basic components to high added-value industries such as 5G technology and aerospace.

The effects of the recent virus lockdown in China were soon felt by many Japanese, Korean and other manufacturers that saw the supply of components for their factories grind to a halt as factories in China shuttered.

That has given a new impetus to the effort of reducing Japan's reliance on factories in China. Bloomberg reports that according to a February survey by Tokyo Shoko Research Ltd., 37 percent of the 2,600 respondents were diversifying procurement outside of China during the pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic is just the latest contributing factor in a trend which started with the trade war between China and the United States (US). Many companies with manufacturing bases in China have started shifting some of their operations to Southeast Asia to avoid growing US sanctions.

### China...

FROM PAGE 1

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "condemned" the arrests on Saturday, calling the individuals detained "pro-democracy advocates."

"Beijing and its representatives in Hong Kong continue to take actions inconsistent with commitments made under the Sino-British Joint Declaration that include transparency, the rule of law, and guarantees that Hong Kong will continue to 'enjoy a high degree of autonomy,'" Pompeo said.

Hong Kong has been governed under a "one-country, two-system" model since the city, a former British colony, was returned to China in 1997.

The city had been rocked by turbulent protests since June last year, when the government of the semi-autonomous territory proposed a bill that would have reformed the city's extradition law. The bill was later withdrawn, but protests continued and took on violent forms.

The Chinese government says the United States and Britain fanned the flames of the unrest in Hong Kong by supporting the rioters. More than 7,000 people have been taken into custody for their involvement in the protests since June last year, with many having been charged with rioting, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Following the newer arrests, a British Foreign Office representative also said the UK expected any arrests and trials to be "conducted in a fair and transparent manner."

### Persian Gulf...

FROM PAGE 1

Mousavi also reacted to the U.S. officials' efforts to extend Iran's arms embargo saying, "I advise Americans if they are concerned about of arms stockpile they must stop selling, the madly and greedily sale of all kinds of deadly weapons to countries in the region and the world that have resulted in nothing but instability and fratricide.

Mousavi continued to say: "This is one of the wonders and the interesting humor of the times that the law-breaking government that violated the JCPOA and violated Security Council Resolution 2231 is still pursuing its provisions and continues to violate it and compels others to move forward in the same track."

He added, "With these actions, the Americans want to divert the world's public opinion from economic terrorism against the Iranian people."

The spokesman said there was no reason for the Security Council to violate UNSCR 2231, and that the U.S. request of others was "illegal".

Regarding the regional cooperation between Iran and the PGCC member states in the current situation, the spokesman said, "Among the good things and opportunities that Coronavirus has had along with the threats against us in the world, are the approaches and the views of different countries to each other. Iran is always ready to interact and talk closely with its neighbors in the region, especially in the Persian Gulf. In any case, we have announced and presented many plans and initiatives in this field, and without preconditions, we are ready to talk to friends in the region." Mousavi underscored.

"If the countries of the Persian Gulf, especially one or two countries that are a little more misunderstood, are ready, Iran is ready to enter into dialogue and interaction with these brothers at any level and in any situation that requires this time, which we hope to happen," he highlighted.

Mousavi also rejected that Coronavirus is produced from a laboratory in Wuhan, calling this politicizing the Corona issue by the US.

### COVID-19 Kills...

FROM PAGE 1

On the exact time of declaring the public about Coronavirus outbreak in Iran said that after 45 minutes of approving the first test in Iran it was shared with the media which is unique, and this bilateral trust helped us in the next steps.

About the validity on the news and statistics of COVID-19, Jahanpour stated that many people follow the news every day and what we share is what has been identified for sure, and nowhere in the world official statistics is based on guesses, but those with wrong intentions will not be convinced with medical statistics.

National Task Force for Combating Corona was our main plan for combating COVID-19 which has the most people's participation in three phases: the first phase is called modest social distancing which was the first four weeks; the second phase was significant social distancing and the third phase is smart social distancing since it is impossible to close the production sections longer, he declared.

### CBI...

FROM PAGE 1

There is a perception that the US dominates the IMF, that the fund is in effect an instrument of the US Treasury Department, and thereby Washington undermines the legitimacy of the organization.

The US has the largest number of shares within the IMF, giving it 16.5% of the body's total votes. Technically, other IMF member countries could amass a majority of votes to approve Iran's loan even with U.S. opposition. The Europeans and many other countries have reportedly come out in favor of the loan.

"The last time I checked, it's not the United States running the IMF, but its management and the board of governors who oversee the work and ensure that the IMF delivers on its mandate," Hemmati said.

The U.S. bid to block Iran's application is in sync with its "maximum pressure" campaign which has intensified against Iran in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

### Germany...

FROM PAGE 1

On January 3, the U.S. assassinated Martyr General Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and a group of their companions in Baghdad. The operation was conducted with the authorization of US President Donald Trump.

Both commanders enjoyed deep reverence among Muslim nations over their endeavors in eliminating the U.S.-sponsored Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

The Merkel government has been criticized for its pro-Israeli policies.

Last year, Germany passed a law condemning the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), a pro-Palestinian boycott movement, as anti-Semitic. Reacting to the passage of the law, the BDS movement -- founded in 2005 by Palestinian activists -- accused Berlin of "complicity in Israel's crimes of military occupation, ethnic cleansing, siege and apartheid."

Five United Nations special rapporteurs also challenged the German law as "anti-Semitic" and called on Berlin to provide information on how the anti-BDS legislation complies with international human rights law, freedoms of opinion and expression, and the right to peaceful assembly.



## Germany to Host Exhibition Event Without Fans in May

MUMBAI (Reuters) - The German state of Rhineland-Palatinate is set to host an exhibition event without the presence of fans from May 1 as the professional tennis season remains shut due to the novel coronavirus, according to The Telegraph newspaper.

Professional tennis came to a halt in March after countries started closing borders and imposed lockdown to contain the spread of the virus, and all events are currently suspended till at least mid-March.

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## Neuer Irritated as Bayern Contract Talks Stall

BERLIN (AFP) - Bayern Munich captain and goalkeeper Manuel Neuer told German media Sunday he has become "irritated" with negotiations to extend his contract, which have reportedly stalled in recent weeks.

"All talks I have had since I have been here have been confidential... nothing has ever leaked," the 34-year-old told Germany's most popular daily Bild. "But now, details about the current talks are constantly appearing in the media, and are often untrue. That irritates me. It's not something I am used to at Bayern."

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SPORTS

TUESDAY APRIL 21, 2020

# Premier League's Transfer Market Bubble Set to Burst

LONDON (Dispatches) - The financial squeeze put on Premier League clubs by the coronavirus crisis could be felt across the continent in the coming months as the well to fund massive transfer fees runs dry.

For each of the past four summers, Premier League clubs have flexed their financial muscle to splurge over £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) on transfers.

That has helped spread the wealth of television contracts worth billions across Europe and crucially down the divisions to cash-strapped clubs in England.

Now even the world's richest league is facing economic meltdown.

Premier League matches have been suspended indefinitely with no return expected before mid-June at the earliest.

Broadcasters could be due a rebate worth a reported £762 million if the season is not completed and, even when the games do recommence, they are likely to be behind closed doors, quashing income from gate receipts.

Moreover, a number of major sponsors such as airlines and gambling companies have been just as badly hit by the COVID-19 shutdown, which is expected to lead to a curb on commercial revenue.

Rather than the usual arms race for talent, Premier League clubs are fretting about just meeting their wage bills for the next few months.

"Many clubs could be threatened by insolvency and transfer plans came to a standstill for most clubs because of the many uncertainties," said Matthias Seidel, founder of Transfermarkt, a website specialising in transfer values.

According to Transfermarkt, 1.8 billion euros (\$2 billion) has already been wiped off the value of Premier League squads.

## Silverstone Open to Hosting Two Races Without Spectators

LONDON (Reuters) - Silverstone would be willing to host an unprecedented two successive grands prix without spectators to help Formula One fight back from the coronavirus crisis, circuit boss Stuart Pringle said on Sunday.

The season has yet to start but the Liberty Media-owned sport's management are hoping to get going in the European summer with a revised and reduced schedule that could run into next year.

Pringle told the Guardian newspaper that he had discussed "all sorts of permutations" with Formula One, including two races over the same weekend or consecutive weekends at the British track.

No circuit has ever hosted two races in succession in the same season.

"I have complete confidence in our ability to put on these events. We have a lot of experience, a lot of knowledge, we can turn that on definitely," said Pringle.

While some countries are starting to ease strict lockdown conditions imposed to tackle the coronavirus crisis, events involving large crowds of people are likely to remain banned for some time.

Official guidance in Britain is for people to stay at home and to practice social distancing if they do have to go outside.

Every race on the original F1 calendar has been cancelled or called off up to the French Grand Prix at Le Castellet on June 28, but that is also expected to be postponed.

That would leave Austria on July 5, at a circuit owned by energy drink Red Bull who have two F1 teams, two weeks before the British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

"I think F1 will make a calendar-wide decision in the earlier part of May," said Pringle, whose circuit drew the biggest crowd of any last year and is a short drive from seven of the 10 teams' headquarters.

Silverstone also hosted the first world championship grand prix in 1950.

"They can't set this ball rolling unless they have a solution that stands a fighting chance of running successfully over multiple races," said Pringle.

"That timescale would suit us if we didn't have to put in the infrastructure for accommodating the public."

"There's no doubt the actual value of players right now has gone down in all squads," said Brighton owner Tony Bloom. "How much less, I have no idea. It depends on how the next few months play out."

Such uncertainty has led for calls to do away with transfers entirely to avoid the unseemly sight of clubs, who have asked staff to take pay cuts and in some cases relied on government money, spending money on new players.

"If you're trying to get 30 percent pay cuts from existing players, you may have to put a transfer embargo in place," former Manchester United captain Gary Neville told Sky Sports.

However, embargoes may only accelerate fears that clubs lower down the pyramid will not survive the crisis.

Proceeds from transfer sales are commonly used in the lower leagues to cover running costs and will be needed even more without the regular income of gate receipts to rely on.

"I think there will be significant transfer fee deflation," football finance expert Kieran Maguire told AFP.

## Japan Virus Expert Pessimistic Olympics Can Be Held in 2021

TOKYO (LONDON) - A Japanese expert who has criticised the country's response to the coronavirus warned Monday that he is "pessimistic" that the postponed Olympics can be held even in 2021.

"To be honest with you I don't think the Olympics is likely to be held next year," said Kentaro Iwata, a professor of infectious diseases at Kobe University.

Japan and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) agreed last month to delay the Tokyo 2020 Games until July 2021, after pressure from athletes and sports federations.

But in recent days, as the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread worldwide, there have been questions about whether even a year-long delay will be sufficient.

"Holding (the) Olympics needs two conditions, one: controlling COVID-19 in Japan and (two) controlling COVID-19 everywhere, because you have to invite the athletes and the audience from all over the world," Iwata told journalists at a press briefing.

"Japan might be able to control this disease by next summer, I wish we could, but I don't think that would happen everywhere on Earth, so in this regard I'm very pessimistic about holding the Olympics Games next summer," Iwata said he could only see the Games being held next year if they were significantly altered, "such as no audience, or very limited participation".



"There will be a significant number of clubs that when some form of transfer market returns, they will be close to going out of business and therefore will accept fire sale prices. The vultures and predators will pick off good players for very modest fees."

The fear for those reliant on transfer fees, though, is that the damage has already been done. Given the vast sums involved, transfer fees are very commonly paid over the course of a player's contract.

Based on accounts published to the end of the 2018/19 season, Premier League clubs owed £1.6 billion in outstanding transfer payments, £900 million of which was to foreign clubs.

Maguire warns of the domino effect whereby if one club fails to meet its transfer debt, it could spark a series of defaulted payments on other deals or even worse force clubs into insolvency.

"The concern is that financial problems in one league could spread throughout the industry just like the pandemic," he said.

Bundesliga chief executive Christian Seifert told the New York Times earlier this month that the transfer market will "collapse" and that "some leagues will understand that money is nothing that is coming automatically every month from heaven."

That may have been a slight on the Premier League's overindulgence on transfer fees.

But as the biggest spender, the economic earthquake felt by English football will ripple across Europe for some time to come.



## Leclerc Wins Virtual China Race

LONDON (Dispatches) - Ferrari's Charles Leclerc claimed a second victory in the Formula One Esports Virtual Grand Prix championship on Sunday, marking his Shanghai win by cooking pasta.

Leclerc started on pole and finished ahead of Red Bull's Alex Albon and Guanyu Zhou, who races in Formula 2.

"I'm actually enjoying very much playing, and streaming. And I enjoy it even more when I win," tweeted 22-year-old Leclerc who also has two wins in the real F1 world championship.

"But the post-race celebrations are somehow feeling a bit different."

"Switching off the computer and go cook white pasta is a bit less glamour than spraying champagne on the podium."

The Formula One world championship has yet to get underway this season due to the spread of the coronavirus.

Nine of the scheduled 22 races have either been cancelled or postponed.

## Djokovic Opposes Compulsory Coronavirus Vaccination

BELGRADE (Reuters) - Novak Djokovic faces a dilemma if it becomes compulsory for players to get vaccinated before they can begin competing once the tennis season resumes following the hiatus created by the coronavirus pandemic, the world number one said on Sunday.

"Personally I am opposed to vaccination and I wouldn't want to be forced by someone to take a vaccine in order to be able to travel," Djokovic said in a live Facebook chat with several fellow Serbian athletes.

"But if it becomes compulsory, what will happen? I will have to make a decision. I have my own thoughts about the matter and whether those thoughts will change at some point, I don't know."

"Hypothetically, if the season was to resume in July, August or September, though unlikely, I understand that a vaccine will become a requirement straight after we are out of strict quarantine and there is no vaccine yet."

Last month, former world number one Amelie Mauresmo said the rest of the 2020 tennis season might be wiped out, saying that action should not resume before players can get vaccinated against the novel coronavirus. "International circuit = players of all nationalities plus management, spectators and people from the 4 corners of the world who bring these events to life. No vaccine = no tennis," the two-time grand slam winner said in a widely shared tweet.



BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Eden Hazard has recovered well from ankle surgery, Belgium's coach Robert Martinez said on Sunday but without offering a time frame for a return to action for the Real Madrid forward.

Hazard had the operation in Dallas last month after fracturing his ankle.

The 29-year-old had looked set for another lengthy spell on the sidelines because of the injury but the suspension of football due to the coronavirus pandemic means that he could still feature this season depending on when action in La Liga resumes.

Hazard was hurt in late February in Real Madrid's loss to Levante, having only just returned weeks earlier after a three-month layoff.

"I know he is recovering well. He is not far from running again and there are no complications," Martinez said in an interview with several Belgian media outlets.

"Everything went well with the operation, but you also hope that everything goes well in the four to five weeks afterwards without complications, and there were none," Martinez said.

