

**Health Ministry Spokesman  
Announced That 88 More  
Coronavirus Infected Patients Lost  
Their Lives and the Death Toll  
Reached 5,297 people While So Far  
60,965 Patients Have Recovered**

**Iraq Has Reportedly Reduced Its  
Electricity and Gas Imports From  
Iran by 75 Percent After Achieving  
A Strong Level of Self-Sufficiency  
In Its Own Energy Production**

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## Iran Extends Range of Its Naval Missiles to 700km

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy says the country has increased the range of its naval missiles to 700 kilometers without any assistance from other countries.

"There was a time when the farthest range of our naval missiles did not exceed 45 km and even that was achieved with assistance from American military advisors," Brigadier General Alireza Tangsiri said in an interview.

"However, we have developed subsurface and surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 700 kilometers, which have been totally made by domestic military elites," he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Tangsiri emphasized that foreigners are the source of insecurity in the region and said, "Wherever the Americans have been present, insecurity has followed and we know of nowhere [in the world] where the presence of the Americans has led to security."

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## German Firm Investing €400m in Petchem Project In Chabahar

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iranian authorities say a notable German company is bringing in some 400 million euros worth of investment into a major petrochemical project in the southeastern port of Chabahar.

The Fars news agency cited a senior Iranian official as saying on Monday that the German firm would invest in machinery and equipment needed for a methanol production project in Chabahar.

Ahmad Jamali, a deputy head of Iran's high council on free trade zones, did not disclose the name of the German company but said that it had previously worked in Iran.

"Required permits have been obtained from the foreign investment board, Oil Ministry and free zones (council) and the execution phase is due to begin because the investor has been allocated with a land," said Jamali.

Chabahar, a main Iranian ocean port on the Sea of Oman, has seen a boom in foreign investment over the past years mainly because India is seeking to contribute to building out the port to facilitate its trade access to Afghanistan and countries in the Central Asia region.

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## Judiciary Dismisses UN Rights Report on Prison Furloughs



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Judiciary spokesman dismissed as politically-motivated a United Nations human rights report that suggests Iranian prisoners face discrimination when it comes to receiving furloughs during a new coronavirus outbreak, saying Iran's performance in dealing with the issue - compared to that of the West - has been "exemplary."

"The Islamic Republic's performance in both protecting the inmates' health and prisons' security and granting furloughs to them can be looked upon as an exemplary and outstanding model," Iran's Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili said Tuesday.

Esmaili's remarks came after UN human rights experts called for the immediate release of prisoners, including dual nationals and foreigners, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit Iran and other world states.

Judiciary Chief Hojjatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi says Iran has temporarily released around 70,000 prisoners in order to prevent a further spread of the new coronavirus.

In a report released on Friday, UN experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, said the Islamic Republic should expand its temporary release of thousands of detainees, claiming that "Iran's prisons have long-standing hygiene, overcrowding and healthcare problems."

Esmaili said that the UN experts would better report on what the United States, Britain and other European countries, where the coronavirus is more prevalent than in Iran, have done about their detainees.

"We have not seen any reports of furloughs or assistance to detainees from the countries" making such claims against Iran, he said, stressing that justice has been served and no distinction has been made among the inmates.

Ismaili said that Iran has recently furloughed more than 1,000 foreigners in order to prevent a further spread of the pandemic.

"We do not recognize dual citizenship, and our criteria for granting leave are the type of crime, the time served, the potential risks that an individual can pose to the society, and the eligibility to parole," he added.

He went on to say that the Judiciary is not seeking slogans and politicizing and looks at the implementation of civil rights as its practical duty.

Esmaili said that Iran's Judiciary has tried to turn the Corona threat into an opportunity.

"Despite the reduction of social and administrative activities due to the spreading of the Coronavirus, Iran's Judiciary has managed to take important steps," he added. 207

## S. Korean Bank Fined After Iran Problem

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Federal and New York authorities fined a South Korean bank over long-running gaps in its defenses against money laundering, after the lender's Manhattan branch was used to launder cash for Iran.

The state-backed Industrial Bank of Korea must pay a combined \$86 million for lapses dating back to 2010, which centered on failing to install and maintain an adequate transaction-monitoring system. The New York State Department of Financial Services is fining the bank \$35 million. Separately, federal investigators and the New York State Attorney General's office have required the bank to pay \$51 million. A spokesman for the bank said he had no immediate comment.

Starting in 2011, Kenneth Zong, an Alaskan, conducted more than \$1 billion of illegal transactions on behalf of Tehran using his accounts with the bank, according to law-enforcement officials. Mr. Zong convinced bank officials that the Iranian government owed him cash for construction materials he had sold to it, according to the Justice Department. Mr. Zong fabricated invoices, contracts, and bills of lading to deceive bankers, prosecutors have said.

The bank then released cash held in one of its Korean won-denominated accounts to Mr. Zong. The Industrial Bank was one of only two in South Korea that Seoul officials had designated in 2010 to conduct permissible trade with Tehran while also complying with U.S. sanctions. Relevant Industrial Bank accounts have been frozen since last year, as the U.S. strengthened its sanctions regime on Tehran, the bank spokesman said.

Mr. Zong then converted the cash into U.S. dollars through the bank, before wiring the money to Iranian officials world-wide. Tehran awarded Mr. Zong with a fee estimated at up to \$17 million for his services, U.S. prosecutors have said.

Mr. Zong has been indicted on 47 counts of violating Iran-related sanctions in the U.S. He was in South Korean custody as of late 2018, after local courts convicted him of tax law violations, related to the transactions, the Justice Department has said. He hasn't been permitted to leave South Korea following the convictions, according to the New York Attorney General's office on Monday. Mr. Zong's son, Mitchell Zong, was also indicted on a charge of conspiring to commit money laundering with his father, and was sentenced to 30 months in federal prison and fined \$10,000 in December 2018. Mitchell Zong laundered about \$980,000 of "Iranian derived funds," according to the Justice Department. The Zongs and their legal representatives couldn't be immediately reached.

New York officials said Industrial Bank had repeatedly failed to set up sufficient compliance systems despite several warnings during and after the Zong family's actions, which lasted until at least 2014. It was only in 2019 that officials deemed its compliance program adequate.

## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



## U.S. Economy in Abeyance More Than Ever

There had been, in the past, several predictions and articles on the possible collapse of the U.S. economy in the world media and publications, but nobody ever believed that the Coronavirus could disrupt solidarity of the U.S. federative ruling and thought while now one governor after the other launches scathing attack at the President.

One of the European publications which seems to be a weighty one and somewhat a reliable one among people is German weekly Der Spiegel. The weekly which is accused of being pro-Zionist in Germany last week in an article with the title of "How Trump is Fueling a Corona Disaster" tried to study the dimensions of catastrophic disaster management of the White House in the U.S. and sudden and unexpected collapse of the U.S. economy.

The weekly claims "Coronavirus has swallowed all economic and financial sectors in the U.S. It first affected nightclubs, restaurants and movie halls that they are all facing economic collapse and according to the Americans, they are close to the bankruptcy."

The weekly's report raises this question whether the world is to witness an internal burst in another superpower country.

How can it be said an economy is on the verge of collapse? Can loss of jobs of about 20 percent of the people and closure of the enterprises be considered as an index for the economic collapse? Can the inefficiency of the central government of the U.S. in disputes between governors and mayors with the President be considered a sign of collapse? Aren't the miles-long queues of the hungry people at food banks for getting meal the signs of the economic collapse? How much poverty is acceptable in a country? How does capitalism look at the poverty? Or according to that rich American remark "anyone who does not have wealth is better to die" is considered as the criteria for human survival?

Der Spiegel continues in the article, "Coronavirus effect is tangible nowhere in the U.S. better than the long queues for distribution of free food for needy people. One of the managers of the charity institutes in Chicago says the institute distributes over three tons of food stuff daily among the needy people. In Manhattan, people also stand in long queues in front of a building where free food is distributed among the people. These scenes are so black and that one can hardly distinguish such scenes in the past three decades."

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## Pakistan Wants to Boost Trade With Iran

QUETTA (Dispatches)- Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri has said the incumbent federal government wants to strengthen trade and bilateral relations with Iran and achieve set business targets as the two neighboring countries share deep religious and cultural ties.

He shared these views while meeting with Iranian Consul General Agha Muhammad Rafiee here in Quetta the other day. "Pakistan has historic relations with Iran and other Islamic countries hence Prime Minister Imran Khan is keen to further strengthen them. All resources are being utilized to achieve trade goals with Iran," Suri said.

Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI) also organized a farewell party for Iranian diplomat in which Suri especially participated to honor the services of the outgoing consul general.

President QCCI Balochistan Ghulam Farooq Khilji, Senior Vice President Badaruddin Kakar and other members called deputy speaker's attention towards closure of trade activities through Iran and Afghan borders and urged the government to re-open borders for import and export businesses by adopting safety precautions for the Covid-19.

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# Iran, Russia, Turkey to Discuss Syria Situation

TEHRAN (Tasnim)- According to Russian foreign ministry, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian and Turkish counterparts Sergei Lavrov and Mevlut Cavusoglu will hold the online meeting on April 22, TASS reported.

“We confirm that trilateral ministerial Astana peace talks on Syria will be held on April 22 via video conference,” the ministry said. On Monday, during a meeting with Syrian President Bashar Assad in Damascus, Zarif announced that the trilateral talks will focus on Syria’s constitutional committee as well as the latest developments in the province of Idlib.

## Tehran Urges Rome to Take Action Against U.S. Inhumane Measures

*IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK*

**TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani says Iran expects European countries, especially Italy, to take action against the U.S. inhumane measures and its violation of international rules in the current difficult circumstances.**

Speaking in a Monday phone call with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, President Rouhani said protecting the lives of human beings is more important than anything else.

However, he noted, in the current difficult circumstances the US pressure on the Iranian people is more inhumane than ever.

He stated the continuation of this pressure is a brutal crime against a great nation and against all human principles and international regulations.

Stressing that countries will not be able to overcome this difficult crisis without each other’s help, he said, “By working together and sharing experiences, we can control this virus.”

Rouhani also expressed sympathy with the Italian people over the coronavirus, underscoring that Iranian knowledge-based companies have made good progress to combat the virus. “Tehran is ready to cooperate with Rome by sharing its experience in controlling the disease.”

Referring to Italy’s position on the 2015 nuclear deal and its support for the international agreement, Rouhani stressed, “We are ready to completely fulfil our commitments under the JCPOA if the other party complies with all its obligations and refrains from threatening.”

“Italy has always played an important role in our foreign policy, and I hope it will call on the European Union to fully implement the JCPOA,” the Iranian president added.

“Unfortunately, the financial mechanism designed by Europe (INSTEX) has not yet been able to take a significant and effective step and play a role.”

Pointing to the U.S. opposition to the International Monetary Fund’s granting of a loan to Iran, Rouhani said, “Today, political issues should not be raised as in the past, and human issues and saving human lives should be given priority.”

“At this point, it is clear that the fate of the international community is completely interdependent, and I hope that Europe, and especially Italy, will be able to take an action that benefits all nations in this critical context.”



Elsewhere in his statements, Iran’s president talked about the importance of ensuring security and stability in the region, underlining that “According to the Hormuz Peace Initiative (HOPE), stability and security of the region will be achieved only through cooperation between the countries of this region.”

The intervention of foreigners, especially the US whose name is associated with crime and jeopardy, threatens the peace of the region, underpinned Rouhani.

For his part, the Italian Prime Minister expressed sympathy with the government and people of Iran over the COVID-19 outbreak, saying the Islamic Republic’s problems are well understood by Italy because the two countries are both involved in the same problem.

He also noted that Rome welcomes the exchange of joint experiences of the two countries against the coronavirus.

Conte also touched upon expanding and deepening of bilateral relations, saying “We are ready to cooperate with Iran regarding the JCPOA and the strengthening of the EU’s financial mechanism as well as the serious participation of countries in this plan.”

“We are also trying to work together with European countries and member states at the G7 and G20 to take effective actions.”

The Italian Prime Minister also stressed Iran’s constructive role in establishing peace and stability in the region and countering terrorism, reiterating that “every opportunity should be seized to resolve issues and ensure security in the region, and we will always emphasise Iran’s significant role in this matter.”

## Zarif Hits Out at U.S. Refusal to Lift Sanctions on Iran, Syria

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran’s foreign minister has used a meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus to hit out at the Trump administration’s refusal to lift sanctions imposed on both countries.

During his first visit to Syria in a year, Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that the United States had shown its inhumane face to the world by refusing to lift sanctions during the coronavirus pandemic.

“The U.S.’ real agenda in not lifting its cruel sanctions on countries fighting this disease has now become clear”, a statement from Tehran said.

Iran’s efforts to contain COVID-19, the highly infectious respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus, have been hampered by its inability to import vital medical equipment due to the sanctions.

The country has seen the highest number of infections in the region with more than 83,500 confirmed cases and 5,200 deaths.

Assad criticized the U.S. for keeping economic sanctions in place on countries like Syria and Iran “despite these exceptional humanitarian conditions”, the Syrian presidency said in a statement.

He also condemned “ongoing encroachments by Turkey on the sovereignty and territory of Syria” in the country’s north where Ankara has deployed troops, set up military posts and backed rebels battling the government.

Earlier on Monday, Zarif met with his Syrian counterpart Walid Mualllem, according to the foreign ministry.

They stressed “the importance of continued coordination and the exchange of information and expertise between ... the two countries to enhance their ability to confront” the pandemic and “secure the necessary needs and requirements for prevention, diagnosis and treatment”.

## Iran Expects Kuwait to Take Anti-U.S. Stances

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran’s president said Kuwait is expected to adopt stances against the US government’s inappropriate behavior.

In a telephone conversation with Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday, President Hassan Rouhani voiced Iran’s readiness for collective cooperation to ensure regional and international peace and stability and also to cope with the coronavirus in the current delicate situation.

“We expect the friendly country, Kuwait, to adopt stances on the regional issues and also (against) the U.S.’ inappropriate behavior,” the Iranian president said, according to his official website.

Reiterating the necessity of concerted efforts in the fight against the novel coronavirus, Rouhani said, “The Islamic Republic has gained good experiences in this field and is ready to transfer its experiences to friendly countries, including Kuwait.”

He also appreciated the efforts made by the emir of

Kuwait for regional stability, saying, “I emphasize that there is no way to ensure security and stability in the region except through cooperation and friendship among the countries of the region itself.”

In turn, the Emir of Kuwait described Iran as a brotherly nation, adding, “Today, we are all in a difficult situation and in order to overcome this situation, we must cooperate with each other and develop our communication.”

He also welcomed the initiative presented by Iran to provide security in the region, known as Hormuz Peace Endeavour, and noted, “Kuwait’s positions have always been for peace and we hope some of our friends and brothers in the region will behave wisely.”

Appreciating Iran’s behavior and its logical stances on important regional and international issues, the Emir of Kuwait welcomed Iran’s readiness to share the experience in combatting coronavirus with his country.

He went on to say that visa issuance for Afghan drivers and

merchants resumed after two-month hiatus. Turning to the visa requirements of Afghan’s trades and industrialists, he stated, “visa will be issued for Afghan’s traders and industrialists for air travel provided that they should win health certificate in the field of non-infection to COVID-19.”

Regarding terms and conditions for issuance of visa for Afghan drivers, Javanmard Ghasab added, “visa of Afghan drivers will be issued if they receive a health certificate and lack of being infected with COVID-19.”

## Iran Not to Leave Friends Alone in Hard Times

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian President’s Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi highlighted the country’s strategies amid the coronavirus pandemic battle, saying that Iran will not leave its friends in hard times.

“The quality of friendship is tested in hart times, and Iran will not leave its friends alone in this situation,” Vaezi wrote on his Instagram late on Monday, implying the need for all-out cooperation between the countries to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Commemorating the national day of the renowned 13th-century Iranian poet, Saadi Shirazi, who is most well-known for its moral lessons, Vaezi said that Iranians still believe in ideals portrayed by Saadi, who considered “all humans as different parts of a whole body”.

“The world is more in need of his lofty ideas and teachings, at a time when bullying powers are engaged in sanctions and piracy,” he added, reiterating Tehran’s readiness to help friendly countries fight the novel virus.

Iran has offered to cooperate with regional and friendly countries in the battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

## Iran, Afghanistan Discuss Regional Developments

KABUL (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry’s special assistant for Afghanistan affairs discussed latest regional developments and Afghan peace process with high-ranking Afghan officials during his visit to Kabul.

Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian reviewed latest political developments in the country, peace process and issues of mutual interest during separate meetings with Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, former Afghan president, Leader of Afghan Jamiat-e Islami Salahuddin Rabbani and Leader of the Islamic Dawah Organization of Afghanistan Abdul Rasul Sayyaf.

Meanwhile, in a meeting with UN Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan Ingrid Hayden on Monday, Taherian shared views on current developments in Afghanistan and its peace process and stressed the need for strengthening role of the UN in Afghan affairs.

On Sunday, he held talks on bilateral relations and the two countries’ methods for fighting coronavirus with President Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan National Security Adviser Hamdollah Moheb and supervisor of Afghanistan Foreign Ministry Mohammad Hanif Atmar.

## Iran Working With UN to End Yemeni People’s Suffering

TEHRAN (Tasnim) –Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif outlined the measures taken by the Islamic Republic to promote peace in the region and said the country is working with the UN to put an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people.

“Our regional peace & counterterrorism efforts: Today I met w/Pres. Assad & FM of Syria ahead of Astana ministerial video conference,” Zarif tweeted late on Monday.

“Re Afghanistan, our Special Rep has met with all sides in Kabul in past days. On Yemen, our Special Rep working with UN & Yemenis to end suffering,” he added.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of fugitive former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

### SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



### Subject : Invitation to Tender

(second stage)

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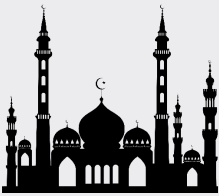
TEHRAN (MNA) –Iranian Commercial Envoy to Afghanistan

Mohammad Mehdi Javanmard Ghasab said that the visa problem of Afghan drivers and traders has been settled.

Given the significance of trade between the two countries of Iran and Afghanistan, issuance of visa for Afghan traders, industrialists, and drivers for entering the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran was settled after necessary follow-ups made by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Industry Ministry, Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) and Iranian Embassy to Afghanistan, he added.

## Afghan Drivers, Merchants’ Visa Problem Settled





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)

■ Evening (Maghreb)

■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

■ Tomorrow's Sunrise

13:02

20:02

04:50

06:20

74. Yet they take (for worship) gods other than Allah, (hoping) that they might be helped!

75. They have not the power to help them: but they will be brought up (before Our Judgment-seat) as a troop (to be condemned).

Surah 36, Ya-sin ( 74 - 75 )

Next Majlis to Stand Against The Gov't Passiveness

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Former Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini says next parliament (Majlis) will stand against the government's inefficiencies and passiveness and it will have a different and strong approach.

In an interview with Mehr news agency, Hosseini who has recently elected as Majlis deputy from the town of Tonekabon constituency said that his approach towards his revolutionary friends in Majlis will not be as war for power in Majlis, and competition among principalists will not turn into dispute.

On his and his colleagues approach towards the current problems in the country resulted from President Hassan Rouhani's government who used to blame previous government's performance, Hosseini said that 11<sup>th</sup> Majlis will stand against any inefficiencies, sluggishness, passiveness and senility.

Hosseini , who was Finance Minister and Economic Affairs in President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's governments, continued his criticism on the economic performance of the ruling government and said in recent years, the per capita income has dropped, distribution of revenue has deteriorated, and consequently, people's welfare has worsened. He noted that these weak performances have led to the rise in social pressure and decline in public participation in the elections, reiterating that if the 11<sup>th</sup> Majlis does not find a way for solving these problems, this Majlis will also join to the history.

Hosseini also criticized the government's policies for economic management of the Coronavirus effects, saying that unfortunately the government's economic policy-making for reducing economic effects of the Coronavirus outbreak

witnesses passiveness in recognition, decision-making, implementation and effectiveness. He noted for this reasons he believes the government has not taken any effective measure in this regard.

He also said one virus has brought Majlis down from being above all affairs, adding that unfortunately the role of Majlis as an influential body has become colorless and instead the role of Majlis Speaker has become colorful.

Hosseini reiterated that Majlis Speaker should not be above all affairs. He further said if the role of economic experts in running Majlis is not defined and formed, all should wait for major specialized economic decisions to be made with political approach.

He said next Majlis priority should be economy because most people in the country believe that economy is the main issue in the country and this belief should exist in all establishment bodies and managements.

Hosseini is considered to be one of the major contenders for Majlis Speaker job in upcoming Majlis which will start its work in June. Former Tehran Mayor Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Mostafa Mirsalim and Hamidreza Haji-Babae are his main rivals for the top seat.

KSC Sets Record for Six-Month Period Production

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of sales and marketing department of Khouzesan Steel Company Mr. Mahmoud Landi says the tireless staff of the company once again proved their capabilities and set a new record for production of steel ingots this time for a six-month period.

Landi said that the Supreme Leader has named this year "Surge in Production" and it has boosted motivation among the staff of the company for more production and improving the quality.

He added although the outbreak of Coronavirus has caused some health restrictions for the staff, they set a record despite all restrictions and on April 2, they produced 13104 tons.

Landi added that improving the monthly record after two years is the result of strong determination of staff, adding that monthly production of 345,358 tons of ingots which was achieved last month is indebted to non-stop endeavors of the staff and full support of the CEO. He noted that this start in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year is good news for having a successful year ahead.

He concluded that he hopes by moving on the path of the Supreme Leader, the company could materialize the slogan of Surge in Production.

Gov't Taking Delivery of 3m Tons of Wheat

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran is taking delivery of around three million metric tons of wheat from Russia and Germany as part of efforts to improve food supplies for the current Persian calendar year which started in March.

A senior official at the Government Trading Corporation of Iran (GTC) said on Monday that wheat imports had increased significantly this year to ensure the country would not run short of supplies of the staple grain in case of any disruption to the markets because of the new coronavirus pandemic.

Hossein Fallahnejad named Russia and Germany as the sole origins of the wheat purchases.

GTC authorities had earlier indicated that around one million tons of wheat would be shipped to ports north of Iran from Russia and countries in the Black Sea region across the Caspian Sea.

However, Fallahnejad said that 58 ships carrying wheat had been unloaded at three southern ports of Chabahar, Imam Khomeini and Bandar Abbas since February. He added that another five ships were also being unloaded in southern ports. He said ships carrying the remaining one million tons of the purchased wheat would dock at unspecified Iranian ports until the end of March. For the past two years, Iran has been taking steps to ensure there would be no disruption to food supplies at a time the country is under a series of unprecedented sanctions by the United States.

MSC to Follow Path of Sacred Defense Fighters With Boosting Production

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- The CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company says the company will follow the path of the Sacred Defense fighters by materializing the slogan of Surge in Production.

Speaking in the commemoration ceremony held for two unknown martyrs of the company, Eng. Hamidreza Azimian honored the sublime status of martyrs, adding that the responsibility that martyrs with sacrificing the lives have left on shoulders of people, makes all materialize the annual schedule as the company did last year which was named year of pick-up in production despite all restrictions and problems in the national steel industry. He noted all staff in the company should do their most through unity to achieve excellence goal of the biggest steel-making group of the country in this year which has been named as year of surge in production.

Azimian added that bravery of martyrs is the sublime lesson of them left for the country and today success lies in economic war which brings pride and honor for the country and everybody should not spare any effort.

He reiterated that Mobarakeh Steel Company despite the outbreak of Coronavirus and by realizing the critical condition in the country did not stop production and they sent new records.

NICICO Renovates, Overhauls Slag Carrier

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK


TEHRAN – The CEO of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) Dr. Ardeshir Saad Mohammadi visited Sarcheshmeh Copper Steel and was kept in track of latest developments in the complex in boosting production, indigenization, fight with Coronavirus, renovation and major overhaul of one slag carrier and purchase of one ambulance for crisis management.

During the visit, Dr. Saad Mohammadi was accompanied by his advisor and head of public relations Heydar Zieighami, member of board of directors Eng. Ali Mohammadi, head of security department Mehdi Soleimani and the CEO of Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex Mr. Hossein Ahmadi as well as some officials of the complex.


The slag carrier KREZZ model B621 was repaired and overhauled by the different units of the company like construction workshop and planning departments.

The carrier caught fire two times and it was considered as a surplus stuff in the complex but due to efforts of engineers, the carrier was repaired and overhauled and all of needed parts were provided by the domestic companies.

Dr. Saad Mohammadi also visited the ambulance which has been bought by the crisis management of Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex. The ambulance is equipped with more devices which enables it to give services in the emergency condition.



SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



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National Iranian Drilling Company	3,233,705	Tender No. :FP/09-98/067-4 Indent No.:01-22-9747011	147,100,000,000

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	Based on minimum scoring ( 50 Points ) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
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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.	
	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 11thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN – Tel : 061 34148601 Room No. 431, 4th floor ,Oil central building No.8,Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran – Iran Tel: 021-66700249
	Submitting Method	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. Avoid any payment other than the bank method (in person) and also provide a deposit. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	• 14 Days after the last time of Purchasing.
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Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	4,910,000,000 Rial/ 38,699 Euro
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.

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Crude Steel Production Rises 6% at ESCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) says the company posted considerable increase in production of different products in the last Iranian calendar year despite sanctions and restrictions.

Eng. Mansour Yazdizadeh said that the company by proper planning and efforts of staff and management could maintain the production and even boost it despite sanctions and restrictions last year and it is determined to maintain production rise this year, too.

He added that some 2.526m tons of melted cast-iron was produced at ESCO which shows some 5 percent growth comparing to the preceding year. He added that the company also witnessed 14% growth in agglomerate production, 2.5 percent in dried coke production, 6 percent in crude steel production and 5.5 percent growth in the total production of main products of the company.

Yazdizadeh noted that due to high capabilities and necessary know-how, technology of the company and good quality of steel products in accordance with international standards, the company can improve its marketing for exports.

He added that the amount of company's exports last year stood at 1.5m tons of different steel ingots and rolling products.

Yazdizadeh also stated that the company started mass producing of special steel for railways and new types of these products are to be produced this year.



## Erdogan Announces Four-Day Lockdown From Thursday

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that a four-day lockdown would be imposed in 31 cities from Thursday as part of efforts to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

Turkey has imposed such measures over the past two weekends. Speaking after a cabinet meeting, Erdogan said the lockdown would be longer this time due to a national holiday that falls on Thursday, adding that weekend lockdowns could continue "for some time".

Over the weekend, the number of confirmed cases in Turkey exceeded any country outside Europe and the United States. Total cases rose to 90,980 on Monday.



## Death Toll from Canada's Shooting Rises to 19

PORTAPIQUE (Reuters) - The death toll from the worst mass shooting in Canadian history rose to 19, including a police officer and the gunman, Canadian police said on Monday, adding that they expected to uncover more fatalities from the weekend massacre in Nova Scotia.

The gunman, who at one point masqueraded as a policeman and also painstakingly disguised his car to look like a police cruiser, shattered the peace of rural communities in the Atlantic province during a 12-hour rampage that started late on Saturday, authorities said on Sunday. "We're relatively confident we've identified all the crime scenes," Nova Scotia RCMP Chief Superintendent Chris Leather told reporters on Monday, but said that fires set at some of those sites, mostly residences, made the search for other victims difficult.



## WHO Insists It Hid Nothing



GENEVA (AFP) - The World Health Organization insisted Monday that it sounded the alarm on the novel coronavirus right from the very start and had hidden nothing from Washington about the deadly pandemic.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said there were no secrets at the UN agency after being blasted by the United States for allegedly downplaying the initial COVID-19 outbreak in China.

"We have been warning from day one that this is a devil that everyone should fight," Tedros told a virtual briefing in Geneva.

The virus, which emerged late last year in the Chinese city of Wuhan, has so far infected more than 2.4 million people globally and killed more than 165,000, according to an AFP tally. The United States has by far the highest death toll of any country, at more than 40,000 fatalities, and President Donald Trump has faced criticism over his handling of the pandemic. Washington is the biggest contributor to the WHO but Trump is freezing funding, alleging that the organization mismanaged and covered up the spread the virus.

Tedros said the presence of embedded US government secondees working at the WHO headquarters in Geneva meant there was nothing being concealed from Washington.

The WHO said there were 15 staff from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the US health protection agency, detailed specifically to work with the organization on its COVID-19 response.

"Having CDC staff means there is nothing hidden from the US, from day one. Because these are Americans working with us. It just comes naturally and they tell what they are doing," said Tedros. "WHO is open. We don't hide anything. Not only for CDC, them sending messages, or others -- we want all countries to get the same message immediately because that helps countries to prepare well and to prepare quickly."

The U.S. State Department has said the WHO was too late in sounding the alarm over COVID-19 and is overly deferential to China. It questioned why it did not pursue a lead from Taiwan flagged up on December 31 about reports of atypical pneumonia in Wuhan.

Debate has raged over the significance of Taiwan's email, which informed the WHO of the reports from Wuhan, and of at least seven patients being isolated -- something that would not be necessary for a non-infectious disease.

The United States said Thursday it was "deeply disturbed that Taiwan's information was withheld from the global health community, as reflected in the WHO's January 14, 2020 statement that there was no indication of human-to-human transmission".

But Tedros insisted that the WHO was already aware of reports emanating from Wuhan -- and said Taiwan's email was only seeking further information. "One thing that has to be clear is the first email was not from Taiwan. Many other countries were already asking for clarification. The first report came from Wuhan," said Tedros. "Taiwan didn't report any human-to-human transmission," he stressed.

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said the email made no reference to anything beyond what had already been reported in news media.

"Clusters of atypical pneumonia are not uncommon. There are millions of cases of atypical pneumonia around the world in any given year," he explained.

Ryan said that the WHO tweeted the existence of the event in Wuhan on January 4, and on January 5 provided "detailed information on the epidemic" which all countries could access.

Tedros also urged leaders not to exploit the pandemic for their own political capital. "Don't use this virus as an opportunity to fight against each other or score political points," he said. "It's like playing with fire. It's the political problem that may fuel further this pandemic."

## EU Hopes for Tangible Progress In Brexit Talks by June

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union's chief Brexit negotiator said after the first day of renewed talks with Britain that the bloc is aiming for "tangible progress" by June on the shape of a new relationship before London severs its ties with the bloc at the end of the year.

Negotiations on sealing a new trade deal between Britain and the 27 EU member states had been on hold for weeks as the coronavirus pandemic drove Europe into a virtual lockdown.

Resuming on Monday, talks will stretch through the week before another round is due to start on May 11. "We must advance across all areas: It is our objective to make tangible progress by June," EU negotiator Michel Barnier said after a videoconference with his UK counterpart, David Frost, on Monday.

The two sides are at odds over the scale of their future trade ties, fair competition provisions, fisheries, security and other fields, with London seeking a much looser relationship than the bloc says is needed to limit disruptions.



## Puts Missile Showdown on Hold

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkey's plans to switch on its new Russian missile defence systems have been delayed by the coronavirus outbreak but it does not intend to reverse a decision which has raised the threat of U.S. sanctions, a senior Turkish official said.

Tensions between NATO allies Turkey and the United States over the S-400 air defence systems had looked set to reach a showdown in April, when President Tayyip Erdogan and the government had said they would be activated.

But the coronavirus outbreak has focused Turkish efforts on combating the pandemic and ring-fencing an economy which only just pulled out of recession last year. In recent weeks Erdogan and his government have not raised the S-400 issue publicly. "There is no going back on the decision to activate the S-400s (but) due to COVID-19 ... the plan for them to be ready in April will be delayed," the senior official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

It could be several months before the Russian system is activated, the official said, adding some technical issues remained to be overcome.

The Turkish Defence Ministry declined to comment.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said Washington had not changed its position. "We continue to object strenuously to Turkey's purchase of the S-400 air defense system, and are deeply concerned with reports that Turkey is continuing its efforts to bring the S-400 into operation," she said in an emailed statement to Reuters. The United States says the S-400s, which Moscow delivered to Turkey last July, are incompatible with NATO defences and would jeopardise U.S. F35 stealth jets which Turkey planned to buy.

Their acquisition by Turkey means Ankara could face U.S. sanctions under legislation designed to punish countries which buy defence equipment from Russia.

"We continue to stress at the highest levels that the S-400 transaction is the subject of ongoing CAATSA sanctions deliberations and it remains a major obstacle in the bilateral relationship and at NATO. We are confident that President Erdogan and his senior officials understand our position," Ortagus said. She referred to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

## Italy's Current Virus Cases Fall for First Time

ROME (AFP) - Italy reported its first drop on Monday in the number of people currently suffering from the novel coronavirus since it recorded its first infection in February.

Those receiving intensive care treatment also fell to the lowest level in a month as Europe's hardest-hit country began to see the first direct health benefits of its economically devastating lockdown.

The civil protection service said 108,237 people were either being treated in hospital or were recovering at home after testing positive -- 20 fewer than the total reported on Sunday.

"For the first time, we have seen a new positive development: the number of currently positive has declined," civil protection service chief Angelo Borrelli told reporters.

"The number in intensive care is the lowest it has been in a month," he added.

The Mediterranean sea's death toll still rose by 454 to 24,114 -- second only to the United States.

However, the figures are widely regarded as benchmarks rather than actual tallies -- most Italian doctors believe the numbers of deaths and infections are far higher than those officially reported.

Those who died at home or in care facilities are not included and some of the hardest-hit regions have only been testing the most sick patients.

Some experts believe the true extent of the damage caused by the pandemic will be revealed in the number of excess deaths registered in the past few months.

In northern Italy, where the outbreak first exploded, some provinces have seen their usual number of deaths over a single month increase by a factor of four or five even when the official virus tolls were relatively small.

But the decline in the number of current official cases still marks an important data point in Italy's calculation of what restrictions to lift and which to extend when the current lockdown expires on May 4.

The economic and psychological toll of Italy's six-week lockdown has also been hard to quantify.

An estimate released over the weekend said half of Italy's official workforce of 23 million have sought government aid because they were either furloughed or unemployed. Scientists are reportedly pushing the government to conduct psychological tests on a sample of the population to determine how long people can stay confined to their homes.



## Poland's Junior Ruling Party Seeks Election Delay

WARSAW (Reuters) - Politicians from Poland's ruling alliance and the opposition began talks on Monday on delaying next month's presidential election due to the coronavirus pandemic, amid deep divisions that could deprive the conservative government of its majority.

The ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) is keen to hold the election on schedule on May 10 because President Andrzej Duda, its ally, is projected to win, though a majority of Poles also now back a delay in the vote due to fears over the coronavirus.

But its junior governing partner, Jaroslaw Gowin's Accord, whose support PiS needs to govern, wants to delay the election by two years, on condition that Duda would then stand down. This option would require constitutional change, and therefore the support of the main opposition party, Civic Platform (PO).

PO leader Borys Budka said on Monday he believed an election could not be held safely in Poland before May 2021.

"I believe we can build a (parliamentary) majority for this," he told reporters before going into talks with Gowin.

After the first round of talks on Monday, Budka said he was optimistic about finding "common ground", but Gowin struck a more cautious note.

"It is good that we are holding talks, but we are far from reaching a consensus," Gowin told news conference, adding that further talks with the opposition were planned. Poland reported 545 new coronavirus infections on Sunday, the biggest daily rise to date. On Monday the total number of infections stood at 9,593, including 380 deaths, in the country of 38 million.

PiS, which was not represented at Monday's talks between PO and Accord, has proposed holding the election by postal ballot, though even its own supporters are now mostly opposed to a May vote. Also, a postal union chief said some 30% of postal workers were on sick leave, raising doubts about the plan's feasibility.

PiS has said it would consider postponing the election by just a few weeks but also, in an apparent gesture to Accord, it has proposed legislation to change the constitution that would allow Duda's term to be extended by two years.







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## British Finance Minister Rejects 100% Guarantee for Small Business Loans

LONDON (Reuters) - British finance minister Rishi Sunak said on Tuesday that he was still not persuaded that the government should offer a 100% guarantee to banks which lend to small businesses hit by the coronavirus.

The Bank of England has said a 100% guarantee would speed up the issuance of loans

to small firms facing a cashflow crisis, by removing the need for banks to conduct credit checks for the 20% of lending they must underwrite under the current scheme.

Sunak said banks had approved 12,000 loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, up from just over 6,000 as of April 14.



## IMF May Need Exceptional Measures To Facilitate Pandemic Response

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The IMF may need to step outside its comfort zone and consider "exceptional measures" to help countries deal with the coronavirus pandemic and mitigate its economic impact, Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said.

Georgieva, in a blog published on the International Monetary Fund's website, said the Fund had already taken extraordinary steps to free up resources, especially for emerging markets and developing economies that have seen an outflow of \$100 billion in recent months - the highest on record.

But more resources might be needed if market pressures continued to mount, and lending - even on easy terms - was not always the best solution, given already high debt burdens faced by many countries, she said. "The IMF, like our member countries, may need to venture even further outside our comfort zone to consider whether exceptional measures might be needed in this exceptional crisis," she said, suggesting solutions could include increased collaboration with other international institutions and the private sector.

Georgieva gave no details, but her remarks come after a joint IMF-World Bank paper published on Friday said a broader group of countries - beyond the 77 poorest countries that have already been promised a suspension in debt payments on official bilateral loans - may need debt relief.

Georgieva also revived her call for a possible allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), its currency, a step that has been opposed by the United States. An SDR allocation is akin to a central bank "printing" new money. The IMF last forecast the global economy would contract by 3% in 2020 due to the pandemic, marking the steepest downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

"We stand ready to deploy our full lending capacity and to mobilize all layers of the global financial safety net, including whether the use of SDRs could be more helpful, Georgieva wrote in the blog. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin last week rejected an SDR allocation, arguing that 70% of the funds created through an SDR allocation would go to G20 countries, most of whom did not need it, while only 3% would go to low-income countries.

SDRs USDXDR=R, based on dollars, euro, yen, sterling and yuan, are the IMF's official unit of exchange. Member countries hold them at the Fund in proportion to their shareholdings. Reuters last week reported that the United States, the IMF's dominant shareholder, is blocking an allocation because it would give new avenues of funding for Iran and China.

Mnuchin has called for advanced economies to contribute instead to IMF facilities that provide funds to the poorest countries, and said the U.S. government was exploring such a contribution, although he gave no details.

In her blog, Georgieva lauded the generosity of Britain, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore and China in boosting the resources available in the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, which helps the IMF's poorest members by providing grants to cover their debt service payments to the IMF.

She also recognized Japan, France, Britain, Canada and Australia for pledges to expand the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust to \$11.7 billion, taking the Fund to about 70% of its \$17 billion goal.

## Fitch Solutions Slashes Indonesia's Economic Growth Projection Due to Pandemic

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Fitch Solutions has downgraded Indonesia's economic growth projection to 2.8 percent, down from its initial projection of 4.2 percent, as consumption and investment growth are expected to slow amid weakening global economic expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While the government and the central bank have made aggressive moves to stimulate the economy, we believe that these efforts will not be enough to offset the devastating effects the COVID-19 pandemic will have on employment and public health," researchers at the Fitch Solutions country risk and industry research wrote in a research note dated April 17.

They projected Indonesia's private consumption to slow to 1.2 percent in 2020 from 5 percent in 2019 due to mounting



unemployment. As many as 2.8 million people have lost their jobs as of Monday last week, according to data from the Manpower Ministry and the Workers Social Security Agency (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan). More than half were furloughed and placed on paid or unpaid leave.

"We also expect capital formation to slow to just 1.5 percent in 2020 after posting a growth of 4.5 percent in 2019," Fitch said, adding that this would mainly be driven by severe delays that large scale infrastructure projects were likely to face amid the crisis.

The government expects the country's economy to grow 2.3 percent this year, which would be the lowest rate in 21 years, in a baseline scenario and even contract 0.4 percent in the worst-case scenario. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest projection expected Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP) growth to reach 0.5 percent this year while the global economy was projected to contract by 3 percent.

## Merkel Open to Bigger EU Budget, Bonds to Finance Post-Crisis Recovery

BERLIN (Reuters) - German Chancellor Angela Merkel signalled readiness on Monday to finance economic recovery in Europe from the coronavirus pandemic through a bigger European Union budget and the issuance of joint debt via the European Commission.

Asked if she backed proposals to help fellow EU countries hardest hit by the pandemic such as Italy and Spain via the EU budget and the issuance of EU bonds, Merkel said an EU treaty article already allowed such action and that it was used to finance a European short-time work scheme.

"I can imagine such instruments further down the line,"

Merkel told a news conference, adding: "More generally I would like to say that Germany not only wants to act in solidarity, but that it will act in solidarity."

Merkel insisted that this act of solidarity would have to happen within the rules of existing European treaties, but repeated her mantra that Germany's well-being depended on the well-being of its European partners.

"Of course it must be kept in mind that all countries, all member states of the European Union got into this situation through no fault on their own. This is a pandemic," Merkel said.

So this crisis was not a result of national failures in fiscal policy or other homegrown decisions, the conservative leader of Europe's biggest and most affluent economy added.

Merkel said that the next EU budget would look very different and bigger than that which was discussed before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

She even suggested that Germany was open to amendments to EU treaties if that would expedite measures to restore economies, but she warned that such a process would take too much time.

"One can discuss new treaties but this would take two or three years to find solutions," Merkel said.

"We'll need quick answers to address this pandemic and Germany will participate in answers of solidarity that go beyond the 500 billion euros that we already have," she said in reference to the volume of an aid package agreed by European finance ministers earlier this month.



## China's Fiscal Revenue Tumbles 26% in March

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's fiscal revenue tumbled 26.1% in March from a year earlier, officials said on Monday, extending the previous month's slump as the coronavirus pandemic ravaged the economy. The massive hit to receipts is expected to increase the government's reliance on

borrowing to fund the stimulus needed to prop up collapsing economic growth. Fiscal revenues fell 14.3% in the first quarter from a year earlier to 4.598 trillion yuan (\$649.75 billion), Liu Jinyun, an official at the finance ministry said, attributing the decline to the coronavirus outbreak and tax relief offered. He expected the revenue to fall in the second quarter.

"Affected by the development of epidemic at home and abroad, fiscal revenues are still declining in the second quarter, but the pace of fiscal revenue decline will gradually moderate," Liu told a briefing. Some local governments are struggling to maintain basic operations and pay wages, although central government efforts to step up payments to regional authorities could relieve some of this pressure, finance ministry officials said. Data on Friday showed China's economy contracted for the first time on record in the first quarter as the coronavirus shut down factories and shopping malls. Fiscal expenditures for the January-March period fell 5.7% from a year earlier to 5.528 trillion yuan.

Tax revenue fell 16.4% year-on-year in the March quarter while non-tax revenue increased 0.1%. Revenues from value-added tax fell 23.6%, consumption tax fell 16.4% and corporate tax fell 12.8%. Finance ministry officials said China is studying plans to allow the annual budget deficit to increase as a proportion of gross domestic product but did not give specifics.

## U.S. Economic Growth Will Be Worse Than EU And China

LONDON (Dispatches) - This pandemic has put the U.S. economy in the ICU unit. It's worse than the euro zone. Worse than China's. Nearly all of it was self-inflicted.

Barclays Capital updated their global growth forecasts on Friday and the U.S. got hammered most. In a subheading titled "U.S. Activity Falls Off A Cliff", Barclays points out that U.S. GDP will be worse now than the entire euro zone.

For the year, U.S. economic output could contract by 6.4% while the eurozone economies contract by 5.5%. The U.S. contraction is due primarily to an expected two month long shutdown of the economy, over 22 million people laid off, and untold numbers more who were forced into pay cuts and lost bonuses. Within the Americas, only Peru's economy performs worse, down 6.6% by Barclays' estimate.

March retail sales, released last week, showed the consumer demand destruction beginning towards the end of the first quarter. Overall sales were down 8.7%, with non-essential businesses such as autos, furniture, clothing, recreational goods, bars and restaurants hit particularly hard and declining at a record pace. The lockdowns were just getting started in most of the country then. April and May promise to be even worse.

On the production side, March industrial production declined more than expected, showing that economic weakness is not just in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. Industrial production slid 5.4% on a monthly basis and while that might not look like a big stop, it is the biggest decline since 1945 and 1946, when the U.S. was reorienting production to build military equipment.

The March numbers give industrial production weak momentum heading into April, Barclays economist Mike Gape wrote in a note. The expected decline in U.S. GDP is only surpassed in Europe by Italy at -8.5%. Italy is the worst hit of all, followed by Peru, then Malaysia, then the U.S. if the Barclays forecast pans out.

One of the main reasons for the euro area doing better than the U.S. at this juncture is quarantine measures will be lifted sooner there than here, Barclays insinuates.

The latest data on the coronavirus shows most of Western Europe has hit the peak and are plateauing. Strict quarantine measures designed to flatten the curve have worked, with the bulk of humanity in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Austria hiding out from killer virus at home.

Infection rates are in decline. Hospital pressures are easing from where they were two short weeks ago. So with the infection rate hitting its plateau, national governments are ready to unleash their exit strategies for a gradual return to normalcy. In the U.K., unemployment numbers for March will be the single most important data point this week. Barclays thinks a record 400,000 jobs were lost, and nearly 2 million laid off in the last three weeks.

## Italy Sees Its Virus-Hit Economy Falling 8% in 2020



ROME (Reuters) - Italy's Treasury expects the economy to contract by around 8% this year, two sources close to the matter told Reuters, underscoring the negative impact of the nationwide lockdown imposed to fight the coronavirus outbreak.

The euro zone's third-largest economy should regain ground next year, with GDP rising by 4-4.5%, the sources said, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Estimates are based on an unchanged policy scenario and do not include the positive impact of a stimulus package to be approved later this month, which one of the sources said would be worth more than 70 billion euros (\$76.06 billion).

The government of the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) will update its growth and budget goals this week, probably on Wednesday. The Treasury declined to comment on this story. Last September the government targeted a GDP rise of 0.6% in 2020 and 1% in 2021, but the COVID-19 pandemic looks set to push Italy into its worst recession since World War Two.

Deaths from the infection in Italy rose to more 23,600 on Sunday, the second-highest tally in the world after the United States. Italian authorities have banned until at least May 3 all non-essential businesses including car, clothing and furniture production.

The sources said the economic outlook remained highly uncertain and the Treasury's estimates could possibly be tweaked before they were finalised.

The International Monetary Fund last week forecast Italian GDP would fall 9.1% this year while investment bank Goldman Sachs has forecast a drop of 11.6%.

The deep recession and the extra government borrowing were set to drive Italy's budget deficit close to 10% of national output this year, a senior official told Reuters on Thursday.



## Iran Adapted Its Budget To Zero Oil Income

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri said on Tuesday that Iran adapted its budget to zero oil income, as the world market experienced dramatic falls of the oil prices. Jahangiri made the remarks in a meeting with top officials of Ministry of Roads & Urban Development. Jahangiri said that the United States which possesses 25 percent

of global gross production put futures oil sale at below the price causing financial damages on the other oil exporting countries when they are suffering from heavy burden of coronavirus. He added that the oil exporting countries including Saudi Arabia which believed it was impossible to run the state with oil under \$70 per barrel would face harsh problems now that oil price is under \$20.



## India Partially Eases Lockdown, But Effort Falters

NEW DELHI (AFP) - Absent staff and broken supply chains scuppered efforts by some Indian industries to restart Monday, weeks after the government ordered a nationwide shutdown to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Although the national lockdown has been extended until May 3, officials said certain key sectors could resume operations under strict conditions in a bid to stop the economy from hemorrhaging further.

They include agriculture, some manufacturing and construction -- industries where shifts can be run and workers isolated, and which employed millions of hard-hit poorer Indians.

The relaxation came as India reported its highest daily increase of infections -- 1,553 new cases for a total of 17,265, and 543 deaths.

A senior railway official in Kolkata told AFP that although a third of staff were told to return Monday, attendance was poor as most employees simply couldn't get to work.

Several factory operators, meanwhile, said they had difficulty resuming operations because so few staff showed up, and supply chains had also been disrupted.

"With no raw material, a ban on transportation, and the non-availability of manpower, I have not been able to operate," said Ritesh Srivastava, who makes homeopathic medicines in Lucknow.

Some smaller factories said they couldn't comply with stringent workplace requirements for returning workers and feared being blamed if staff fell ill.

Others said the lack of demand for their goods made it pointless to restart operations.

Many out of work, meanwhile, said they were struggling to feed themselves and their families.

"We were told that on some sectors will open up, but the reality is different," said cable TV repairman Rohit Sharma in Noida city, near Delhi.

"Now, what can we do? We can earn money only if we are allowed to work."



State and territory borders remain closed across the country, preventing migrant labourers from travelling.

Hundreds of thousands of labourers headed to their home villages when the lockdown was ordered, some walking hundreds of miles and with little money or food.

Those that did not make it have been housed in crowded shelters in the cities, but many want to be allowed to return to their villages.

Authorities in Kerala, praised for its success in tackling the spread of the virus, on Monday rescinded several measures to ease restrictions -- including opening up restaurants -- after criticism from the central government.

Some states and territories, including the national capital New Delhi, chose not to relax their lockdowns, fearing further infections.

## Renewables Agency Charts Path to Zero-Carbon Energy System by 2050



LONDON (Reuters) - Governments could chart a path to a fully decarbonised energy system by the middle of the century and revive economies hit by the coronavirus if they tailor stimulus packages to boost clean energy technologies, according to a report published on Monday.

With governments adopting massive stimulus packages to blunt the shock of the virus, calls are building for a "green recovery". A group of 180 European politicians, companies, lawmakers and campaigners last week urged the EU to align its economic rescue measures with climate goals.

In its inaugural annual Global Renewables Outlook, the Abu Dhabi-based International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) said choices by governments would help decide whether the pandemic served to delay or accelerate a low-carbon transition.

"Governments don't have all the money they need. So they have to prioritize," IRENA director general Francesco La Camera told Reuters.

"The question is where they are going to prioritise. And we have demonstrated that renewables are the best way to produce good jobs, the best way to impact GDP."

Governments have a wide range of options for boosting renewables, La Camera said, from tax credits for consumers who buy solar panels for their homes, to public investments in improving inter-connectivity between national power grids, or redesigning grids to cope with a bigger share of renewable power.

The report lays out various potential pathways for how the world energy system could evolve.

Under current government policies, the world is on track to invest \$95 trillion from 2016-2050 in energy systems -- which would leave carbon dioxide emissions at roughly the same level they are today. That would dash hopes of achieving the temperature goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement to avert catastrophic climate change.

IRENA says policies will need to unlock a total \$110 trillion of investment over the same period to reduce energy-related CO2 emissions to 70% below today's levels by mid-century.

This level of investment would boost global GDP growth by 2.4% by 2050 compared with current plans, and quadruple jobs in the renewable energy sector to 42 million, more than offsetting job losses in the fossil fuel industry, the report found. For the world to achieve a fully decarbonised energy system by mid-century would require total investments of \$130 trillion.

Investments should focus on renewables, energy efficiency and electrification, IRENA said. Funding for green hydrogen, advanced biofuels and clean transportation will be needed to remove the final, hardest-to-cut emissions. IRENA found that each \$1 spent on the energy transition would yield a return of \$3-\$8, by curbing the costs associated with the devastation caused by climate change and the deadly health impacts of air pollution.

## Eurasian Ice Sheet Collapse Raised Seas Eight Meters

PARIS (AFP) - The melting of the Eurasian ice sheet around 14,000 years ago lifted global sea levels by about eight metres, according to new research published Monday that highlights the risks of today's rapid ice cap melt.

Earth's last Glacial Maximum period began around 33,000 years ago, when vast ice sheets covered much of the Northern Hemisphere.

At the time, the Eurasian ice sheet -- which covered much of Scandinavia -- contained approximately three times the amount of frozen water held in the modern-day Greenland ice sheet.

But rapid regional warming saw the ice sheet collapse over a period of just 500 years, according to authors of the study published in Nature Geoscience.

Analysing sediment drill cores from the Norwegian Sea, the team found that the ice sheet's collapse contributed to an event known as Meltwater 1A -- a period that saw as much as 25 metres added to global sea levels between 13,500-14,700 years ago.

Lead author Jo Brendryen from Norway's University of Bergen said the Eurasian ice sheet melt coincided with vast regional temperature swings.

"Studies of ice cores drilled from the Greenland ice sheet have suggested that the atmosphere above Greenland warmed by up to 14C in a few decades at this time," he told AFP. "We think that this warming was the main driver of the ice sheet collapse."



While Earth is heating everywhere, parts of the world such as the poles are warming far faster than others.

Atmospheric concentrations of planet-warming CO2 were around 240 parts per million at the time, compared with over 415 ppm currently.

The Greenland ice sheet, which contains enough frozen water to lift global sea levels

more than six metres, is currently melting at record rates, losing more than 560 billion tonnes of mass in 2019 alone.

Parts of Greenland and Antarctica are now melting six times faster than they were in 1990.

The study showed that the entire Eurasian ice sheet melted in a matter of a few centuries, adding more than four centimetres to sea levels annually -- around 4.5-7.9 metres in total.

Ice sheets melting or breaking away as global temperatures rise are subject to what climate scientists term temperature "tipping points".

Many researchers fear that the ice sheets in Greenland and West Antarctica will continue to melt even if warming is slowed as carbon emissions are cut.

"Our research support this idea as the marine based sectors of the Eurasian ice sheet abruptly disappeared and did not grow back," said Brendryen.

"Where the exact tipping-points are located, both for the past ice sheets and the current ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica, remain however unknown."

## Iran Calls on Washington to Focus on Coronavirus Crisis in US

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Health Ministry Spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said that the U.S. sanctions have weakened Iran's efforts to fight against the COVID-19 virus, and asked Washington to focus on its coronavirus crisis instead of interfering in other countries' affairs.

Jahanpour made the remarks in an interview with the Arabic-language service of Russia Today. He dismissed the U.S. allegations that Iran has concealed the data on the coronavirus death toll, and called on Washington to deal with the different coronavirus-related crises in different US states.

Jahanpour said that the U.S. sanctions have impeded efforts in Iran to combat against the coronavirus epidemic, and said, "Were Iran not under sanctions, it would help its neighbors to fight against coronavirus by sending medical teams and equipment."

The Iranian health ministry announced on Monday that while the country has identified 1,294 new cases of coronavirus infection, nearly 60,000 patients have recovered so far.

Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki stressed on April 7 effective measures to control coronavirus epidemic, expressing the hope that the disease would be controlled in Iran by late May.

The government also imposed travel restrictions, specially on Iran's North, which is among the red zones. The country has also adopted strict digital health control procedures at airports to spot possible infections.

### German Firm...

FROM PAGE 1

Unconfirmed reports in the media have suggested that the United States has issued certain waivers from its sanctions on Iran to allow countries like India to go on with their investment plans in Chabahar.

It seems companies from Germany and other countries are using the same set of exemptions to become active in Chabahar.

Jamali said the council on free trade zones had issued initial permits needed for a British bank to set up a branch in Chabahar, saying Iran's central bank should give its approval on the issue.

Iran has carried out some massive investments in Chabahar to make it a unique gateway for trade in the region. The country is spending around \$300 million on a railway project to connect the port to Zahedan near the border with Afghanistan.

### U.S. Economy...

FROM PAGE 1

When President Donald Trump took office three years ago, in his worn-in ceremony vowed to protect the U.S. dignity, national honor and to show new U.S. capabilities. In his first speech on January 20, 2017, Trump said, "We will bring back jobs. We will bring back our wealth back to the country." He even further said that he would save the world from the disaster and woe of disease. Trump then said, "A new national pride will stir our souls, lift our sights, and heal our divisions."

But now the Coronavirus has involved the U.S. in its worst crisis since the Great Depression (a decade before the World War II which began in 1929 and lasted in the late 1930' in the U.S. and other countries that one can call it the worst and longest economic crisis in the 20th Century).

The Great Depression began with the sudden collapse in the Wall Street (New York Stock Exchange) in the autumn of 1929 and it has been remembered till now. The coronavirus pandemic has affected all nations on the globe but shortages have not been so clear and visible anywhere in the West like the U.S.

In the late days of February, the U.S. President claimed that his government has was fully controlling the condition but he was ignorant that the number of infected people in the U.S. is reaching one million and hospitals in New York, Detroit and New Orleans can hardly admit flux of patients.

The German weekly in its article continues, "Different from other global crises, this time the U.S. has been eliminated as the pioneer and leading country." Actually the U.S. today is totally busy with its own crisis. In between, Trump feels it is to his benefit to attack the international organizations like World Health Organization which should really coordinate global fight against this crisis. He threatens the WHO that he would cut the U.S. funding because the organization has "made a pig's ear of it."

All these events, even those remained out of the media's eyes, show that the U.S. economy is currently in abeyance more than ever and it is moving towards nowhere and it has paved the ground for the world people to bring their dollars to the market and to change it with other currencies or goods which ultimately will lead to the collapse of dollar. So the result is that tsunami of collapse has begun its countdown and I have a one hundred-dollar note in my pocket that I will change it with yuan.

### Iran Extends...

FROM PAGE 1

He pointed to a recent naval incident between the IRGC's Navy and the US warships in the Persian Gulf and said, "The Americans in this adventurism blocked the way to our vessels in violation of international regulations and even refrained from giving a radio response, but were faced with our forces' strong move."

Tangsiri noted that the presence of the Americans in the Persian Gulf has led to a large increase in the number of maritime incidents, adding, "Since the arrival of the Americans in the region, 550 oil tankers have been targeted [in various attacks] and regional security has been decreased by 55 percent."

In a statement on Wednesday, the United States Navy claimed that 11 Iranian ships repeatedly came close to its military vessels in "dangerous and harassing approaches" in the Persian Gulf.

Meanwhile a senior Iranian military commander says the name of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is shining on the peaks of national might, dignity and progress. Major General Mohammad Baqeri said the IRGC is helping meet the needs of the Iranian nation on all fronts.

"The IRGC is shining in defense, security and cultural arenas as well as in eliminating poverty and assisting people, said general Baqeri, the chairman of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, in a message on April 21, marking the anniversary of the ratification of the Statute of the IRGC.

General Baqeri congratulated all military and state officials on the anniversary, saying the IRGC has raised the flag of awakening and the campaign against hegemony.

### Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 1

Suri assured to play his due role to address issues of Quetta Chamber of Commerce and foster Pak-Iran border trade.

Meanwhile, Iranian Consul General Rafiee also stressed upon strengthening Pak-Irantrade relations to bring stability in both the countries.

He was addressing the farewell party hosted by Quetta of Chamber of Commerce and Industry in which QCCI members lauded Rafiee's services in Balochistan and said the Iranian consul general utilised his utmost efforts to address issues pestering members of Pak-Iran Chamber of Commerce.





## Lokomotiv Youth Player Dies During Solo Training Session

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Lokomotiv Moscow youth player Innokenty Samokhvalov has died aged 22 after suffering suspected heart failure during a solo training session on Monday, the Russian Premier League club said.

With the club's players quarantined during the coronavirus pandemic, Samokhvalov was training on his own.

"On April 20, defender Innokenty Samokhvalov died. The footballer became ill during an individual training session. Details of the tragedy are being clarified," the club said in a statement.

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## Fognini Wants Wife Pennetta To Make Comeback

ROME (Dispatches) - Italian tennis player Fabio Fognini has revealed he would like wife Flavia Pennetta to follow in the footsteps of another former US Open champion, Kim Clijsters, and make a comeback to the sport after having a child.

Pennetta, 38, retired soon after winning the US Open in 2015, and the couple have two young children, three-year-old Federico, and a daughter Farah born last December.

"I'm trying to get Flavia back in 2021, like Kim Clijsters," Fognini told Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY APRIL 22, 2020

# Nadal Frustrated by Lockdown, Federer Happy With Recovery

MADRID (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal on Monday expressed his frustration that tennis players remain unable to practise due to the coronavirus pandemic, while Roger Federer revealed he was happy with his recovery from knee surgery.

The Spanish government has extended the country's state of alarm until May 9, with the entire population confined to their homes except a small number working in specific sectors, leaving Nadal perplexed as to why he can't train.

"It's true I don't understand very well because we cannot play tennis when many people are going to work and even more so in our sport, where we keep at a large and safe distance and we play on opposite sides of the court," world number two Nadal said during an Instagram Live.

"But I understand that we are in a very critical situation, that the government is dealing with something unprecedented and I also understand that the last thing they think of is who can train and who cannot train.

"I understand the situation and obviously there are many things that are not logical but you have to accept the rules."

Nadal treated tennis fans to an Instagram Live in which he spoke to both Roger Federer and Andy Murray about their experiences during lockdown.

The men's and women's tours have been halted due to the virus, while Wimbledon was cancelled last month for the first time since World War II and Nadal's favourite Grand Slam the French Open was pushed back to September 20.

"I am not playing tennis, I do not have a court at home and I miss it a little," Nadal said.

"I am sticking to my physical routines. From the gym of my academy they were able to bring me some machines when lockdown began so I try to work a little in the morning, a little in the afternoon.

"It is very important to have both the head and the body focused and it is what I am trying to do at all times."

Federer meanwhile gave an update on his right knee after the 20-time major winner decided to undergo surgery in February.

"I've been hitting a bit against a wall, (doing) rehab with the knee," Federer said.

"It's OK, I had a really good first six weeks, then it was a bit slower, now it's getting better again but I have plenty of time.

"There is no stress, no rush. If there is anything positive (about being in lockdown) that's the only thing really. I just want the knee to be good, it doesn't matter when I return."



Meanwhile 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.

"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."

## Son Begins Three-Week Military Service In South Korea



SEOUL (Reuters) - Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min has begun a three-week period of mandatory military service in his native South Korea while the Premier League season is suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, local news agency Yonhap has reported.

Son, who returned to South Korea from London at the end of March, completed two weeks of quarantine and reported to a Marine Corps unit on the island of Jeju earlier on Monday, where he will remain until May 8, the report said here.

The 27-year-old will be exposed to tear gas, go on hikes and receive weapons training during his stint with the marines and is expected to return to London by the end of May, it added.

Able-bodied South Korean men must serve about two years in the armed forces, but Son earned an exemption for leading the country to gold at the 2018 Asian Games.

Under the terms of the exemption, he needs to complete basic training and 544 hours of community service over the next 34 months while he remains a professional athlete.

## "Ghost Games" Only Option for Bundesliga Return

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German FA chief Fritz Keller has insisted the Bundesliga could only resume next month behind closed doors, while supporters have questioned the morality of football returning at all during the coronavirus pandemic.

The German Football League (DFL) hopes to get the go-ahead from Angela Merkel's government for the top two tiers to resume next month -- possibly on May 9 or 16.

There are hopes a decision will be made Thursday after the 36 clubs in the first and second divisions meet via video call.

German football was halted on March 13 to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus in Germany, which currently has 141,672 confirmed cases and 4,404 deaths as a result of the pandemic.

"This week, important decisions will be made on how to proceed," Keller told Kicker magazine.

With large public events banned in Germany until August 31, the only viable option for league action to resume next month would be in empty grounds -- dubbed 'ghost games' in German.

"We are very much aware that football without fans lacks its heart," admitted Keller. "From discussions and feedback from fan organisations, I know how much it hurts fans that they cannot support their clubs in the stadium."

The DFL is desperate for the season to be finished by June 30 to secure an instalment of television money, reportedly worth around 300 million euros (\$326 million).

Fritz warns that without that money, "some fans might never be able to attend a game of their club again, because it might soon no longer exist."

However, a nationwide collective of fan groups has voiced harsh criticism of the Bundesliga returning.

"The resumption of football, even in the form of ghost games, is not justifiable," supporters' group Fanszenen Deutschlands said in a statement.

The group says it would be a "sheer mockery of the rest of society" and especially to those in Germany's health system dealing with the pandemic.

## Hamilton Ready to Stick With Mercedes Dream Team



LONDON (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton has hailed Mercedes as his "dream team" as the world champion made it clear he has no plans to leave when his contract expires after the 2020 season.

The British driver was linked with a move to Ferrari after the six-time world title winner revealed in January he had yet to open talks over a new deal with Mercedes.

Ferrari chief executive officer Louis Carey Camilleri said in December that he was "flattered" that Hamilton had agreed to discuss his future in conversations with the team's chairman John Elkann.

But the 35-year-old appeared to end talk of a switch on Monday when he said his future remains with British-based Mercedes.

"There is no dream of another team. I am with my dream team," Hamilton said on Instagram.

"There's not a thing in my way, as I'm not trying to move. I'm with the people who have cared from day one."

Hamilton, who added that Mercedes were "the best team", will have been aware that any opportunity to join Ferrari would be quashed if reports that Sebastian Vettel is moving towards a new contract are confirmed.

Four-time world champion Vettel, like Hamilton, is out of contract at the end of the season, while the German's team-mate Charles Leclerc has a contract with the Italian team until the end of 2024.

Vettel last week said he had made it clear he wanted to stay at Ferrari beyond the end of this season.

## Chile's Jarry Gets 11-Month Doping Ban



LONDON (Reuters) - Players should be wary of using health supplements made in South America, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) said on Monday when banning Chile's Nicolas Jarry for 11 months for an anti-doping violation.

Jarry was provisionally suspended in January after metabolites of two substances on WADA's banned list — SARM LGD-4033 (ligandrol) and the anabolic steroid stanozolol — showed up in a urine sample he gave while playing for Chile at the Davis Cup Finals in Madrid at the end of last year.

After an investigation, the ITF said it accepted the 24-year-old's explanation as to how SARM LGD-4033 and stanozolol entered his system — namely that he had taken "multi-vitamins" made in Brazil that his doctor had recommended because they were supposedly free from banned substances.

Despite clearing him of significant fault or negligence for his violation, the ITF still imposed a sanction, although his period of ineligibility will be back-dated to start on the date of last occurrence of his violation (Dec 16 2019).

He will lose any prize money and ranking points earned at the Davis Cup and subsequent events. Jarry, who reached as high as 38th in the world last July, will be free to resume his career on Nov. 15. He is currently down at 89th.

## Ceferin Said leagues Ready to Play Behind Closed Doors



NYON (Dispatches) - UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said Monday that leagues across Europe were ready to return to action behind closed doors in a bid to limit the damage caused by coronavirus.

Football leagues have been suspended since mid-March due to the pandemic which has claimed more than 100,000 lives throughout the continent. But the head of European football believes that playing would be an important step towards a return to normal life and avoid heavy financial losses for leagues.

"I believe there are options that can allow us to restart cup championships and to complete them," Ceferin said in an interview with Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

"We may have to resume without spectators, but the most important thing, I think, is playing games. "It is early to say that we cannot complete the season. The impact would be terrible for clubs and leagues. Better to play behind closed doors than not at all.

"In such hard times it would bring happiness to people and a certain sense of normality even if the games can only be seen on TV.

"All activities are being organised to start again, everyone needs to find their lives.

"If safety measures are respected and if the authorities give the green light, the training could resume like the rest.