

An Official in the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Says the Ministry Is Working on Paving the Ground for Joining of Some 100 Production Companies to the Stock Market

IRAN NEWS

An Official in the Health Ministry Says Smoking Hookah Has Drastically Increased Among Girls, Aged Between 15 to 18, and It Inflicts a Serious Damage on the Health of the Country

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2

DOMESTIC

Talks With U.S.
"Shameful, Fruitless"



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

Iran Foreign Trade Touches \$9.3b In 2 Months



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

Curfews and Clashes as U.S. Race Protests Spread



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Tennis Fans Freak Out Over Nadal Retirement Scare



> SEE PAGE 8

Foreign Humanitarian Aids to Iran Red Crescent Total 7m

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN The total humanitarian aid to Iran's Red Crescent Society was \$7m mainly from China and out of the mentioned 112 shipments, 70 shipments were sent from China, Chief of the Iranian's Red Crescent Society Karim Hemmati said.

On the sideline of a panel on Coronavirus controlling opportunities assessment which was held at the Interior Ministry, Hemmati in an exclusive interview with Iran Press about the role of this organization to control and contain the virus during the epidemic said: "Iran's Red Crescent Society has trained online many volunteers by giving them a license on how to act and behave during the epidemic."

He also added the organization has screened 21 million out of which 14,000 were diagnosed with COVID-19 sent to caring centers.

The factories have increased sanitizers, masks, and protective shields during the outbreak under the supervision of the Red Crescent Society reiterated Hemmati.

See Page 7

Australia After Ways To Develop Trade Ties With Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN The Australian Ambassador to Tehran paid an official visit to Iran's Stock Exchange in Tehran saying that her country of origin is very interested in developing trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran Press/Iran news: At the ceremony which was held at stock exchange building on Sunday, the symbolic bell of the stock exchange transactions was rung by the Australian Ambassador to Tehran "Lindal Sachs", in the presence of the CEO of the Stock Exchange of Iran "Ali Sahraei", and a group of reporters.

The Australian Ambassador to Tehran answering to Iran Press question about the level of cooperation between Iran and Australia said: "Australia is very keen on developing relationships with many countries around the world and we look at ways to continue trade relationships with Iran."

The top diplomat added that we have cooperation in pharmaceutical, healthcare, mining, and agriculture as well. Australian Trade Development Organization is looking at ways that we can develop cooperation between Australian and Iranian businesses, Sachs concluded.

Russian \$5b Loan to Fund Iran's Major Railway Project



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Energy Reza Ardakanian says a loan of \$5 billion that Russia has agreed to give Tehran will be used to fund a major railway project in eastern Iran.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to the eastern province of South Khorasan on Saturday, Ardakanian said a major railroad project linking the cities of Zahedan and Birjand will be funded by a \$5 billion loan provided by the Russian Federation.

He said Iran has ratified plans to set up the railroad project, has notified Russia of its decision, and is making arrangements with the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia to carry out the project.

Citing a Friday telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart about the plan, Ardakanian expressed hope that the railroad project would reach acceptable stages in the coming months and within the remaining year of the current Iranian administration's term.

The minister also highlighted the abundant opportunities for energy projects in South Khorasan Province, saying the country's only and largest coal-fired power plant, located in the city of Tabas, is moving rapidly to come into operation.

The major coal-fired power station is going to play a significant role in exploiting the potential of the province's mines and in creating employment, he noted.

Ardakanian also unveiled plans to generate some 30,000 megawatts of wind power as a reliable source of renewable energy in collaboration with neighboring Afghanistan.

"Good preliminary negotiations have been held (with Afghanistan), and I hope we could immediately put the plans for cooperation into practice given the situation after formation of a new government in Afghanistan," the energy minister added.

Iran has a great capacity for solar and wind energies, he noted, saying the construction of renewable energy power plants will dramatically reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and water and reduce emissions.

There are three power plants with generating capacity of 18 megawatts (MW) in South Khorasan, the minister added, hoping that the coming into operation of a new wind farm in Sarbisheh would allow the province to export electricity.

Implementation of Sarbisheh 50 MW wind power plant project with an investment of more than 70 million Euros began with the presence of the minister.

The capacity of Siahoo reserve dam is 17 million cubic meters, for which 800 billion Rials have been spent.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



World Economy to Become More Challenging

2020 has been the hotbed of events which has made political and economic predictions more complicated in some countries. World's tackling and reacting to the poverty, resulted from economic incapability and providing livelihood for majority of people on the earth because of the Coronavirus pandemic and social distancing, has essentially been hidden and unimaginable.

The capitalist countries which are run based on the liberalism school either politically or economically have shown more misery comparing to other countries in terms of tackling with poverty and unemployment. The U.S. which is proud to lead the world in having capitalist system has stuck in a disastrous condition that the lines of its hungry people are miles-long, and according to a saying, it is just the beginning.

A poll conducted by Reuters from 250 economists worldwide indicates that Coronavirus-related economic recession is deeper than previously predicted. One of the respondent was Ethan Harris, head of global economics research at BofA, who said, "In many ways the outlook for the global economy resembles an obstacle course. In the first step, the economy falls into a big hole, starting in China in Q1, most of the rest of the world in Q2 and extending into Q3 in some emerging markets." He continues, "The second step is trying to reopen the economy without re-igniting the disease. The third step is dealing with the lagged impact of confidence on durable goods spending, the risks of a premature maxing out of fiscal and monetary stimulus, and a trade and tech war waiting in the wings."

Almost three-quarters of economists, participating in the poll taken by Reuters, said the recovery would be either U-shaped, with a prolonged trough, or like a tick mark where the speed of the recovery is not as quick as the drop-off.

Only 15 respondents predicted a strong, V-shaped recovery. The others said it would be W-shaped, where a vigorous rebound results in another sharp slump, or L-shaped where the economy flatlines after the downturn.

The world economy is now forecast to shrink 3.2% this year, compared to a 2.0% contraction predicted in the April 23 Reuters poll and -1.2% forecast in an April 3 poll.

See Page 7

Coronavirus Diagnosis Tests Closing to 1m in Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN Iranian Health Ministry spokesman said so far, 935,894 COVID-19 diagnosis tests have been conducted in the country.

Head of Public Relations and Information Center of the Health Ministry announced that so far, 151,466 people in the country have been infected with the coronavirus, and 118,848 of total infected people have recovered.

Kianoush Jahanpour yesterday and during his daily news conference said, "From yesterday to May 31 in the country, 2,516 new patients with COVID-19 were diagnosed and the number of patients with this disease reached 151,466."

"Among the new patients, 511 were hospitalized and 2,005 were in contact with patients who were diagnosed," the spokesman added.

Fortunately, 118,848 patients have recovered and have been discharged so far, Jahanpour stated.

The Spokesman said, "Unfortunately, in the past 24 hours, 63 COVID-19 patients have lost their lives, so 7,797 people have lost their lives in the country to the date."

He stated, "2,527 patients are in a critical condition."

So far, 935,894 COVID-19 diagnosis tests have been conducted in the country," the Health Ministry spokesman said.

The provinces of Isfahan, East and West Azerbaijan, Lorestan, Kermanshah, Hormozgan, and Sistan, and Baluchestan are on the alert condition, Jahanpour said.



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021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

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U.S. Decline Accelerated in Int'l Arena

TEHRAN (MNA) – Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council [SNSC] Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani said that the decline of the United States has been accelerated in the international arena.

In his twitter account, Shamkhani wrote, "the hollow boastings of U.S. Trump administration's team are taken after at the condition that the U.S. decline has been accelerated significantly."

Successive failures of the United States from the 'Axis of Resistance, escalation of conflicts of the U.S. with the international community abroad, disabled and incompetent economy and unemployment, catastrophic healthcare system, restriction of media and deep social-security crises inside the country are 'undeniable evidences', Shamkhani wrote.

Talks With U.S. "Shameful, Fruitless"

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Newly appointed Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf noted that talks and compromise with the United States are harmful to the country.

"The 11th Parliament considers anti-arrogance approach as both an ideological doctrine and as a strategic interest. Negotiations and compromise with the United States, as the axis of global arrogance, are considered fruitless and harmful," he said while addressing the open session of the Parliament on Sunday. This was his first address in the Parliament after the election as speaker on Thursday.

"Our strategy in dealing with terrorist America is to complete the chain of revenge for the blood of Martyr Soleimani," he said, adding that "The work, which began with the unprecedented attack on Ain al-Asad base and continued with the defeat of the US's fake grandeur in its inability to respond to the Islamic Republic's measure, will be completed with the expulsion of the US terrorist forces from the region."

He stressed that this parliament believes ties with foreign countries should be focused on neighbors and major powers that have remained alongside Iran



during hard days. "The 11th Parliament supports the expansion of ties with the international community but considers trusting governments that have a dark history as a strategic mistake."

A look at the 41-year history of the Islamic Republic and its current position indicates that despite some weaknesses, the Revolution has managed to take its first step in a strong manner, Qalibaf said.

"The Islamic Establishment is continuing its path stronger than before and, as a major regional power, has been turned into an influential player in the international arena."

A look at the intensity of animosity of dominating countries against Iran, with all their media, economic, political, and intelligence tools, proves that the Islamic Revolution has been an important 'pattern' against capitalism, he added.

World Human Rights Bodies Urged Not to Be Silent Toward Floyd's Murder

TEHRAN (IP) - The Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights said that the world human rights organizations should react toward the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black American who died after being pinned down by a white US police officer.

Ali Baqeri-Kani said on Saturday night that according to the statistics some 3 American citizens are killed by the police on a daily basis.

Referring to the fact that 60 percent of those who have lost their lives due to COVID-19 in Chicago have been black people, the official noted that the most important reason behind the black people's death toll in



the US is the racist structure which has been institutionalized in all ruling bodies of the country.

Iran's senior human rights official went on to say that now it has been revealed to the world that the US threat is not just limited and it is not the mere result of U.S. officials' adventurism but rather it is the institutionalized intellectual foundation within U.S. ruling system.

He also highlighted that the spread of such an intellectual foundation should be stopped.

The death of George Floyd, an African-American man, occurred in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020. It has caused a lot of unrest in American cities.

Zarif Calls on World to Act Against Racism

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message while referring to the recent protests against Trump administration said that the world should not hesitate to wage a war against racism and racist regimes.

The remarks by the Iranian foreign minister came in reaction to the increasing protests in the US against the wave of Racism, especially against the black community, in that country.

"Some don't think #BlackLivesMatter. To those of us who do: it is long overdue for the entire world to wage war against racism. Time for a #WorldAgainstRacism," Zarif wrote on his Twitter account late on Saturday.

"The U.S. government is squandering its citizen's resources, whether its adventurism in Asia, Africa or Latin America, its support for countless dictators, or its ambitions for wastefully expanding its nuclear arms program, it will only add to the suffering of the people of America. As I have said before, it should surprise no one that protests continue in America," the Iranian foreign minister added.

He pointed out that the American people are demanding their leaders share the country's wealth and respond to their legitimate needs.

"We condemn the government's same futile tactics of suppression, imprisonment of protestors, and the denial of Americans' frustrations," Zarif further added.

The Iranian foreign minister asserted that the "people of America are tired of the Racism, corruption, injustice, and incompetence from their leaders." "The world hears their voice."

Military Choppers Deployed to Put Out Zagros Wildlife

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Airborne Division of the Iranian Army Ground Force as well as the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have deployed their helicopters to help extinguish a wildfire in the country's south-west.

The choppers were deployed upon the urgent order of President Hassan Rouhani, according to the head of the

Defense Ministry's Crisis Management Department.

During the past week, the Army and IRGC had sent seven helicopters to extinguish the wildfire burning the woodlands of Khuzestan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad provinces, Javad Mostafaei said.

Despite several days of efforts to put out the wildfire, the woodlands located on the foothills of Zagros Mountain Chain are still burning.

Iran Deploys Military Choppers to Put Out Zagros Wildlife 1A top Natural Resources official at Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province says 50 hectares of the forests and meadows of the region have been destroyed by the wildfire so far.

"It is not possible to deploy forces to contain the fire because of the impassability of the steep slopes where the woodlands are located," the official said.

Earlier, the head of the Forestry Organization of Iran had noted that helicopters were not sent to extinguish the fires as the organization owes 300 billion rials (about \$2 million) to its own Ministry of Defence. However, Mostafaei announced that the Planning and Budget Organization has undertaken to pay back half of the debt to the armed forces so that the choppers are deployed to the region.

The deployment of choppers came after President Rouhani spoke over the phone with the Defense Minister and the environmental protection organization chief about controlling the wildfires.

Jahangiri Calls for Granting Residency for Foreign Investors



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - First vice president said that the obstacles to granting residency for foreign depositors and investors should be removed immediately.

Eshaq Jahangiri, in a meeting to review how to grant a 5-year residence permit to foreign investors and depositors in Iran, which was held under his chairmanship said that the conditions for granting residency in Iran should be competitive in comparison to other neighboring countries and attractive to foreign investors.

Jahangiri called on the Interior Ministry to review the issue in the relevant committee with the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the Central Bank and other relevant agencies, and to offer suggestions for facilitating accommodation for foreign investors.

In this meeting, a report was presented on the procedure for granting 5 years of residence to foreign depositors in Iran and the existing obstacles such as investment of \$ 250,000, the impossibility of owning property, and the difficulties facing foreign nationals for applying for residency in Iran were discussed.

Minister Suggests Up to 225 Killed In November Protests

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Interior minister has suggested that up to 225 people were killed in November protests sparked by a petrol price hike.

"Sad things happened. About 40 or 45 people, meaning around 20 percent of those killed, were shot with non-standard issue weapons and martyred," said Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli.

"No armed confrontation with the people happened... but when they attack a police station, they have to be confronted," ISNA quoted him as saying.

According to the government, between 200 and 225 people were killed in the violence.

The minister said the petrol price hike had been "just an excuse" for creating chaos as foes had wanted a "civil war" in Iran.

He also defended the internet blackout, saying that the MEK, monarchists, and the Daesh group were "giving military training through the internet".

Iranian Powerful Air Force Ready to Deter Threats

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh said on Sunday that the force is a powerful one poised to respond and foil any probable foreign threats.

"Iranian Air Force is equipped with modern technology and has a big hand in designing, manufacturing, optimizing, and upgrading equipment," he told reporters on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of the Air Force museum.

The Iranian commander referred to the manufacturing of homegrown 'Yasin' and 'Kosar' jet trainers in the past two recent years, noting that the Air Force is still on the same track to manufacture modern equipment.

In late October 2019, Yasin training jet was unveiled with ranking military officials, including Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami, in attendance. Yasin is 12 meters long, four meters high and five and a half tons of cargo weight under operational take-off conditions and can fly up to 12 km. It is equipped with a 7,000-pound turbo-jet powered jet engine, which is the world's leading jet fighter engine.

Iran, Turkmenistan to Reopen Borders Next Week

MASHHAD (IRNA)- Following gradual easing restrictions due to the global outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Iran and Turkmenistan have agreed to reopen borders next week (on June 10), according to Iranian ambassador to Ashgabat.

Gholamabbas Arbab Kholes said that the rail and road borders between the two countries will be reopened while fully observing health protocols.

He said that Iran and Turkmenistan had previously agreed to reopen borders on June 1, but the date was then postponed to June 10 for disinfecting operations to protect road and railway transportation.

The ambassador noted that the decision to reopen borders was made on Saturday by a joint working group thorough video conference.

He also said that in a ministerial meeting among Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as negotiations between heads of railway companies of the three countries, they agreed to reopen borders while installing sanitizing tunnels at both sides of the borders and fully observing health protocols.

Iran Urges U.S. to Stop Intimidating Protesters

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's Foreign Ministry called on the U.S. government to stop intimidating anti-brutality protesters in the country and instead listen to its people and change its "bankrupt" policies.

"Failed to keep its promise of stopping wasting money on foreign adventurism & embattled in a COVID19 crisis of its own making, US regime now employs army, 'vicious dogs & ominous weapons' to intimidate protesters. Instead, US should listen to its people & change its bankrupt policies," the ministry said in a tweet on Sunday.

In the name of God

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



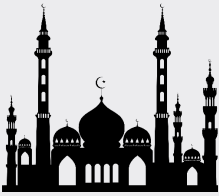
Notice of International General Two-stage Tender No. 9801728R1

It is hereby respectfully notified that Esfahan Steel Company intends to purchase 34 items Fireclay Bricks in accordance with the required technical specifications and conditions through international general two-stage tender No.9801728R1. Accordingly, the prospective bidders specialized and experienced in the said area may visit Esfahan Steel Co.'s website at www.esfahansteel.ir to get tender documents not later than 23.05.2020 and submit their bids to the following address not later than Saturday, 06.06.2020

Confidential Secretariat of ESCO's Security Department, at the main entrance gate next to Melli Bank, Esfahan Steel Company, 45th km of Zobahan-Shahrekd Highway, Isfahan, Iran, Telephone No. 0098-31-5257-2017.

It is evident that this letter is only for notification purpose.

Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.



PRAYER TIME

Noon (Zohr)

Evening (Maghreb)

Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

Tomorrow's Sunrise

13:02

20:35

04:05

05:49

50. And We have distributed the (water) amongst them, in order that they may celebrate (our) praises, but most men are averse (to aught) but (rank) ingratitude.

51. Had it been Our Will, We could have sent a warner to every centre of population.

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (50 - 51)

Iran Foreign Trade Touches \$9.3b In 2 Months

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration Rouhollah Latifi says Iran's foreign trade exceeded \$9b in value and 21m tons in weight in the first two months of the current year.

Speaking on the country's foreign trade in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year, Latifi said that the country exported 21m tons of goods worth \$9.341b in the first two months.

He added that the figure is comprised of 14.5m tons of exports and 6.5m tons of imports. Latifi noted that the value of exports in this period stood at \$4.3b and imports stood at \$5.41m.

He admitted that the exports in terms of weight in the second month grew by 71 percent and 60 percent in terms in value. He admitted that the country exported 9.176m tons of goods worth \$2.648b in the second month.

He also pointed to the volume of imports in the same period, adding that only 3.879m tons of goods worth \$3.11b imported which shows 53 percent growth in weight and 61 percent in value.

Latifi added that five countries were the major export destinations for Iranian goods, adding that China with \$1.19b topped the list of Iran's export destinations in the first two months which accounts for 27 percent of Iran's total exports. Iraq with \$1.1b, the UAE with \$682m, Afghanistan with \$341m and Turkey with \$144m are the other top destinations for Iran's exports.



He also noted that China is the major importer to Iran with \$1.234b while the UAE with \$1.078b, Turkey with \$535m, Russia with \$356m and India with \$335m are the other major exporters to Iran.

Latifi also pointed to 70 percent decline in trade between Iran and Turkey between January and April, saying Iran exported \$289.1 million worth of goods to Turkey during the four months, indicating an 86.05% decline year-on-year.

Imports stood at \$430.43 million, down 45.72% YOY, he added.

Bilateral trade in April amounted to \$74.55 million, going down by 89.54% compared to April 2019. Exports to Turkey accounted for \$19.45 million of the figure, down 96.1% YOY, while Turkey's exports to Iran stood at \$55.1 million, down by 74.19% YOY.

Bazargan border crossing, located in northwest Iran, recently reopened following negotiations among Iranian and Turkish authorities after Turkish authorities closed it to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

According to Latifi, 60 Iranian trucks per day have been allowed to transfer goods to Turkey from Iran as per new agreements as of May 5.

Razi border-crossing is Iran's sole rail connection with Turkey. Prior to the opening of Bazargan, all trades were carried out via this gate.

Tehran, Kabul to Link Rail Networks This Year

TEHRAN (ILNA) - The Deputy Ministry of Roads and Urban Development Kheirollah Khademi told that Iran's rail network will be connected to Afghanistan this year.

Speaking to ILNA news agency, the Iranian official said "By the end of next year, seven rail projects will be put into operation in our country."

"Construction of the Iranian section of the Khaf-Herat railway is our next goal and with this railway, for the first time, Iran will be connected to Afghanistan," he added.

He went on to say that Khaf-Herat railway project, as long as 136 km, which connects the rail network of the country of Afghanistan, will come on stream by the end of the Iranian year.

Khaf-Herat is part of Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

Although the Afghan side of the project has not yet been implemented, Sputnik announced that Afghanistan has been in talks with Italian companies to build the fourth section of the railway, and Afghans appear to be more determined to commence their part of the project this year.

Iran-Turkey Rail Trade Hits 6,300 Wagons in Current Year

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's trade volume with neighboring Turkey since the beginning of the current year [started March 21, 2020] up to May 30 hit 6,300 wagons of goods.

Spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration [IRICA] Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi made the remarks and put Iran's share of goods export and import to neighboring Turkey at 3,072 and 3,228 wagons respectively.

Bazargan land border has been closed by Turkey towards Iranian trucks carrying goods to this country since Feb. 21, he said, adding, "in this period, transit trucks of other countries have exported some 6,692 tons of goods and commodities to Turkey via road."

He added, "Razi customs is the only rail route for exchange of goods between the two countries of Iran and Turkey and it is hoped that the two countries will witness the reopening of air and land borders within the next days after telephone talks made between Iranian and Turkish presidents."

Iran to Export COVID-19 Instant Saliva Test Kits



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – An Iranian knowledge-based company is going to export a homegrown test kit that allows rapid detection of the novel coronavirus in saliva within 55 minutes.

Researchers at the Iranian company, affiliated with Amirkabir University of Technology, have developed the advanced test kit using a real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) system to detect COVID-19 in saliva.

The CEO of the company says the kit works on the basis of molecular identification of oral fluid for the diagnosis of coronavirus in less than an hour.

The Pasteur Institute of Iran has approved the test kits, and the company is going to mass produce them, Amir Abbas Esmailzadeh said.

The company has received purchase orders from the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Romania, Spain and the UK, and has applied for permission for exports to Europe, he added.

The accuracy of the Iranian test kits is 2.5 to 10 times higher than that of the ones imported from abroad, the CEO added.

Daily Electricity Consumption Exceeds 53 GW



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 53,502 megawatts (53.5 gigawatts) on Saturday to register a new record high according to the data released by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC).

As reported, the country's electricity consumption stood at 42,185 MW on the same date last year, which means the consumption has increased by 11,317 MW.

As the temperature continues to rise in different parts of the country, the electricity consumption is also following the same upward pattern toward an unprecedented summer peak.

Earlier on Saturday, the spokesman for the electricity industry said the average temperature had risen which has led to an increase in the use of cooling devices and an upward trend in electricity consumption.

Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi noted that the upward trend of the temperature is expected to continue into the current week, adding: "Each degree of increase in temperature will add about 1,350 MW to 1,500 MW to the country's electricity consumption."

The country's electricity consumption is expected to even exceed 53,000 MW this week, which is an unprecedented figure, he said.

Gov't Criticized Over Implementing Covid-19 Support Packages

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Members of the industry committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), in a meeting, criticized the inefficiency of the government's support packages against the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak.

Lack of a clear strategy for industrial development, lack of adequate monitoring over the implementation of the support programs, and thus the creation of rent and corruption in the process, were among the issues pointed out by the representatives of the private sector.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal on Sunday, the committee believed that like the previous government programs, the support packages announced by the government during the coronavirus outbreak fell short, especially in other provinces, mainly due to the lack of executive guarantees.

The committee members criticized the performance of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Iranian National Tax Admission Organization and Social Security Organization in dealing with the problems of the industry sector, especially during the pandemic recession, and called for the strict implementation of the resolutions of the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters.

According to Abolfazl Roghani, head of the ICCIMA Industry Committee, after the outbreak of the virus and its direct and indirect impacts on various businesses, the expectations of the private sector from the government were sent to all officials in a 30-item statement.

"Although a significant number of clauses in the statement were discussed at the National Headquarters for Combating Coronavirus, the resolutions did not materialize," he said.

1,660km of New Railroads to Be Inaugurated by Yearend

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN- Kheirollah Khademi, the managing director of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), announced that seven prioritized railway projects with a total length of 1,660 kilometers will be inaugurated by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2022).

The priority is to complete the Chabahar-Zahedan railway, which is fortunately well underway, given that its financial resources have been provided, Khademi told ILNA.

Yazd-Eghlid, Bostanabad-Tabriz, and Khaf-Herat railways are also among the top prioritized projects for the next two years, according to the official.

"Yazd-Eghlid and Khaf-Herat projects with a total length of 66 km, as well as Bostanabad-Tabriz with a length of 44 km will be put into operation by the end of the current calendar year (March 2021)," he said.

Flamingos Back to Urmia Lake

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Director of Ajabshir Department of Environment Hamid Peighami said on Sunday that flamingos have returned to the shores of Gohadloo five years after the revitalization of Urmia Lake.

Peighami said that the approximate population of flamingos in Urmia Lake and Gohadloo beach is around 20,000. Flamingos of the lake is a large species called *Phoenicopterus roseus* (P. roseus) that migrates to the African habitat in winter after laying eggs and hatching in Urmia lake, he further noted.

He pointed out that some of these flamingos also live in other habitats in the country including Khuzestan and shallow coastal swamps that *Artemia* is their food. He added that the level of the lake is now 1.272m and the volume of the water in Urmia Lake is now 5.3 billion cubic meters.

Lake Urmia, located between East and West Azarbaijan provinces, was once the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East. It is habitat to many migratory and indigenous animals, including flamingos, pelicans, egrets and ducks attracting hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

Urmia Lake began shrinking in the mid-2000s due to decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures. According to international statistics, the lake lost about 80% of its waterbed by 2015.

Six 7,000-Year-Old Artifacts Unearthed in Central Iran

KARAJ (IRNA) - The head of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute announced on Sunday that with discovery of six 7,000-year-old pottery vessels over the past few days in Moshe Lan hill, Ismail Abad village on suburbs of Savojbolagh city of Alborz province, the situation of the ancient area will be examined.

The ancient site of Moshe Lan is located in Ismail Abad village on vicinity of Savojbolagh County, Alborz province.

Behrouz Omrani, said in an interview with IRNA on the sidelines of a visit to the historic hill of Moshe Lan on Sunday that after archeology studies, the field was determined by creating 26 speculations about the site in different directions. Pottery and Bone Data from the Fifth Millennium BC. Six complete pottery vessels probably belonging to a fifth millennium burial including base vessels, pottery and pottery jars with red gutter with geometric and animal motifs (goat pattern) in the type It was unique.

He said that following the valuable ancient artifacts were unearthed in the new excavations of the Iranian Cultural Heritage University, it was decided to re-study the area and the historical hill of Moshe Lan, Ismail Abad village.

Colombia Will Not Ease Quarantine in Capital

BOGOTA (Reuters) - Colombia issued new measures to control the spread of the novel coronavirus in three of its most affected cities on Saturday, including the capital Bogota, as the rest of the country prepares for quarantine rules to start lifting.

The Andean country has reported more than 28,200 cases of the coronavirus and 890 deaths.

Latin America's fourth-largest economy has been battered by the double shock of measures to slow the virus and a slump in oil prices. Colombia began a nationwide quarantine in late March to control the spread of COVID-19. On Thursday, the government extended the lockdown until July 1, but eased some restrictions.



Russia Plans Coronavirus Vaccine Clinical Trials

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian scientists plan to start clinical trials within two weeks on a vaccine to combat the novel coronavirus, the health minister was quoted as saying on Saturday as authorities approved the country's first anti-COVID-19 drug.

Russia has the world's third-highest toll of coronavirus infections after the United States and Brazil, and Kremlin officials have said the nation's researchers are working on almost 50 different vaccine projects.

"The tests are under way and we plan to start clinical trials in the next two weeks," Health Minister Mikhail Murashko was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency. He said volunteers had been selected to take part in the trials.



Curfews and Clashes as U.S. Race Protests Spread



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Clashes broke out and major cities imposed curfews as America began another night of unrest Saturday with angry demonstrators ignoring warnings from President Donald Trump that his government would stop violent protests over police brutality "cold."

Los Angeles, Atlanta and Philadelphia were among several cities to order people to stay indoors after thousands took to streets nationwide to protest the death of an African American man during an arrest in Minneapolis on Monday.

George Floyd, who died after a police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes, has become a fresh symbol of police brutality against blacks and sparked civil unrest not seen in the United States for years.

In Los Angeles, officers fired rubber bullets and swung batons during a testy standoff with demonstrators who set fire to a police car. Police and protesters also clashed in Chicago and New York, where several arrests were made.

Trump blamed the extreme left for the violence, including widespread looting and arson in Minneapolis, saying rioters were dishonoring the memory of Floyd. "We cannot and must not allow a small group of criminals and vandals to wreck our cities and lay waste to our communities," the president said.

"My administration will stop mob violence. And we'll stop it cold," he added, accusing the loose-knit militant anti-fascist network Antifa of orchestrating the violence. His late afternoon comments came as crowds began marching through streets in Minneapolis, New York, Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia and other cities, chanting slogans such as "Black Lives Matter" and "I can't breathe," which Floyd was heard saying repeatedly before he died.

A peaceful protest took place in Toronto as the demonstrations spread beyond America's border. LA announced a curfew from 8:00 pm (0300 GMT) until 5:30 am Sunday while Atlanta's was set for 09:00 pm to sunrise. A similar nighttime curfew was implemented in Louisville, Kentucky.

Authorities in Minneapolis braced for a fifth night of protests over what African American leaders called "systemic" mistreatment by law enforcement.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz called up more national guard troops Saturday and warned they would "decimate" rioters after Friday night's violence in the northern state overwhelmed law enforcement. Walz said he was mobilizing the state's entire 13,000-strong National Guard to deal with rioters who have looted shops and set fires in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

Thousands who defied the first night of curfew overwhelmed the police and troops who had been deployed.

All major freeways leading into Minneapolis were shut down Saturday night with military helicopters taking to the skies over the area as the state braced for more rioting, arsons and looting.

People congregated peacefully on Minneapolis streets Saturday afternoon, chanting Floyd's name and carrying brooms to help clean up the scores of shops ransacked in the violence of the previous nights. Some placed flowers in front of the shop where Floyd was arrested on Monday, before his death in the hands of police was recorded in a horrifying cellphone video since seen around the world.

"Our community has stepped up, there are more people cleaning the streets than looting," said Nicole Crust, 41, owner of a beauty salon that was broken into. Crust echoed officials who said the worst violence was from outsiders, but added a key theme of the protests: "Police brutality must stop." Walz warned that protesters staying out Saturday past the 8 pm curfew faced "a dangerous situation."

Afghan Reporter Killed As Gov't Ready for Taliban Dialogue

KABUL (AFP) - A roadside bomb killed a television journalist in Kabul on Saturday, soon after a top Afghan official appointed to lead peace talks with the Taliban said his team was ready for the long-delayed dialogue.

The insurgents denied responsibility for the blast, which targeted a minibus carrying 15 employees of private television channel Khurshid TV. The explosion, which claimed the lives of a reporter and a driver, punctuated an overall reduction in violence that has followed on from a three-day ceasefire the Taliban instigated May 24.

Just hours before the blast, Afghanistan's former chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, who has been appointed to head talks with the Taliban, said his team was positioned to start dialogue.

Abdullah credited the general lull in violence for setting the tone for discussions.

"The ceasefire, a reduction in violence and the exchange of prisoners have all paved the way for a good beginning," Abdullah said at his first press conference since taking on the role.

"The negotiating team is ready to begin the talks at any moment," he said.

However, he insisted on a fresh ceasefire during the talks.

No group claimed responsibility for Saturday's bombing in central Kabul. Khurshid TV's news director Jawed



Farhad confirmed the attack, which left the station's white minibus with extensive damage to its front end.

"The target of the blast was the vehicle of Khurshid private TV," the interior ministry said in a statement. It was the second such attack targeting Khurshid employees in less than a year.

In August 2019, two passers-by were killed when a "sticky bomb" -- a type of homemade explosive attached to vehicles with magnets -- struck a similar Khurshid TV van in an unclaimed attack. Afghanistan is one of the world's deadliest places for journalists, who face many risks covering the country's long conflict and who have sometimes been targeted for doing their job.

In a statement, the government said it condemned Saturday's "heinous" attack. Afghanistan's truce ended Tuesday night but violence since then has stayed relatively low, though government security forces have suffered some attacks that authorities blamed on the Taliban.

Trump Postpones G7 Summit

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump has announced that he would postpone the Group of Seven summit that he wanted to hold in late June and expand the list of countries invited to include Australia, Russia, South Korea and India.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One during his return to Washington from Cape Canaveral in Florida, Trump said the G7 in its current format is a "very outdated group of countries".

"I'm postponing it because I don't feel that as a G7 it properly represents what's going on in the world," Trump said.

The decision is a dramatic pivot for Trump, who had sought to host the group of major industrialized countries in Washington as a demonstration that the United States was returning to normal after the coronavirus epidemic, which has killed more than 103,000 Americans to date.

The G7 is made up of the U.S., Italy, Japan, Canada, France, Germany, the UK, as well as the European Union.

Earlier, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that she has declined Trump's invitation to attend the G7 summit in person, while the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread around the world.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who hosted the 2018 summit, had also said that any in-person gathering would have to prioritize safety, while a French presidential official said President Emmanuel Macron, last year's host,

was "willing to go to Camp David if the health conditions allow".

European Council head Charles Michel, meanwhile, said through a spokesman that he would attend "if health conditions allow".

Global Coronavirus Cases Surpass 6m

LONDON (Reuters) - Global coronavirus cases surpassed 6 million on Saturday, according to a Reuters tally, as Latin America reported a grim milestone of 50,000 deaths from the disease.

Countries such as Brazil, Chile and Mexico are struggling to stem the spread of the virus, which initially peaked in China in February before large-scale outbreaks followed in Europe and the United States.

The COVID-19 respiratory illness has claimed more than 367,000 lives worldwide, though the true number is thought to be higher as testing is still limited and many countries do not include fatalities outside of hospitals.

The first 41 cases of coronavirus were confirmed in Wuhan, China, on Jan. 10 and it took the world until April 1 to reach its first million cases. Since then, about 1 million new cases are reported every two weeks, according to a Reuters tally.

The pandemic has claimed more than 367,000 lives worldwide, though the true number is believed to be higher because testing is still limited and many countries do not include fatalities outside of hospitals.

Despite the continued increase in cases, many countries are opening schools and workplaces following weeks of unprecedented lockdowns that have stemmed the spread of the disease - but also hammered economies and thrown millions out of work.

Russia Denies Claim That Libyan Banknotes Seized in Malta Are Counterfeit

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Libyan currency worth over \$1 billion which was printed in Moscow and seized by Malta is not counterfeit, Russia's foreign ministry said on Saturday in response to U.S. claims.

The U.S. State Department said on Friday that it "commends" the seizure of \$1.1 billion of "counterfeit Libyan currency" by Malta.

The banknotes were printed by Goznak, the Russian state-owned company, and ordered by an "illegitimate parallel entity", the department said, in an apparent reference to Libya's eastern commander Khalifa Haftar.

"The Central Bank of Libya headquartered in Tripoli is Libya's only legitimate central bank. The influx of counterfeit, Russian-printed Libyan currency in recent years has exacerbated Libya's economic challenges," the State Department statement said.

"This incident once again highlights the need for Russia to cease its malign and destabilizing actions in Libya," it added.

Russia's foreign ministry on Saturday said Libya has two central banks, one in the capital Tripoli and another in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, as the country is de-facto governed by two centres of power.

"So, that's not the dinars which are counterfeit, but America's statements," the ministry said.

It added that Goznak had sent the Libyan banknotes to the central bank's address in Tobruk under the terms of a contract signed in 2015.

In a separate statement, the Russian company said the cargo was seized by customs officials in Malta when it was on its way to Libya in September 2019 in "breach of all norms of the international law".

A parallel central bank in eastern Libya stepped up deliveries of new banknotes from Russia last year, before and after Haftar launched a military offensive to capture Tripoli, according to Russian customs data.

The data obtained by Reuters showed nearly 4.5 billion Libyan dinars (more than \$3 billion) was dispatched in four shipments between February and June 2019.

EU Urges Trump to Reconsider Ending Relationship With WHO



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union on Saturday urged President Donald Trump to rethink his decision to terminate the U.S. relationship with the World Health Organization as spiking infection rates in India and elsewhere reinforced that the pandemic is far from contained.

Trump on Friday charged that the WHO didn't respond adequately to the pandemic and accused the U.N. agency of being under China's "total control."

The U.S. is the largest source of financial support for the WHO, and its exit is expected to significantly weaken the organization. Trump said the U.S. would be "redirecting" the money to "other worldwide and deserving urgent global public health needs," without providing specifics. The head of the EU's executive arm urged Trump to reconsider. "The WHO needs to continue being able to lead the international response to pandemics, current and future," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "For this, the participation and support of all is required and very much needed."

The WHO wouldn't comment on the announcement but South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize called it an "unfortunate" turn of events. "Certainly, when faced with a serious pandemic, you want all nations in the world to be particularly focused ... on one common enemy," he told reporters.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called Trump's decision the "wrong signal at the wrong time." He said Berlin would have "intensive discussions" with Washington to try to convince the U.S. government to reconsider. "The number of people infected worldwide is increasing and the crisis is spreading," Maas told Germany's Funke media group. "We can't tear down the dike in the middle of the flood and build a new one."

In China, where the virus outbreak began, only four new confirmed cases were reported Saturday, all brought from outside the country, and no new deaths. Just 63 people remained in treatment.

After judging the situation there now safe, a chartered flight carrying 200 German managers back to their jobs landed in Tianjin, a port city east of Beijing. A flight carrying another 200 was due in Shanghai on Thursday.



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S, J, & pkg
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

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Singapore Secures About S\$13b In Investment Commitments

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has in the first four months of this year secured about S\$13 billion in investment commitments for the “next few years”, Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing said.

This “very good performance” means Singapore has exceeded the S\$8 billion to S\$10 billion which had been

projected for the whole of 2020.

These investments, in sectors including electronics and infocomm, will generate “a few thousand jobs” for workers in Singapore in the coming years, Mr Chan told reporters during a media briefing on Saturday (May 30).

Companies such as chipmaker Micron and life sciences firm Thermo Fisher Scientific are adding jobs, he said.



Malaysia's Economy Can Bounce Back In 2021

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - In line with the reopening of the economy which saw nearly 70 per cent of the workforce returning to work in various sectors, Malaysia has the capacity that is set to spur an economic recovery in 2021, Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz said.

“We must rise again and record a positive Gross Domestic Product growth as opposed to the negative GDP forecast for this year in line with the global economic growth,” he said in an exclusive interview for a Bernama TV documentary on “Malaysians United Against Covid-19”. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had forecast a three per cent contraction in the global economy for this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he noted, adding that Malaysia's economy, like those of other countries, would be affected.

Recently, IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva was reported as saying the global contraction might be even worse than the three per cent forecast it made last month.

Tengku Zafrul said that to weather the economic downturn due to the pandemic, the government was implementing the 6R approach — Resolve, Resilience, Restart, Recovery, Revitalise and Reform.

The first phase, Resolve, refers to the government's resolve to curb the deadly virus by imposing the movement control order (MCO) effective March 18. The MCO was announced at a time when the country's Covid-19 graph was showing a high number of new cases and urgent measures were required to flatten the curve.

The second R, Resilience, refers to building resilience through the RM250 billion Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package unveiled on March 27 and the additional RM10 billion allocation announced on April 6. The focus, Tengku Zafrul said, was on the affected people as well as the micro and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

“The third R, Restart, was the move to reopen or recharge the economy in stages, while the fourth R, Recovery, is the country's present recovery phase. “We are currently formulating a short-term economic recovery plan, to be announced in early June,” he said.

Yesterday, Tengku Zafrul elaborated to reporters that the upcoming plan would see some of the measures introduced earlier being extended, as well as several new initiatives being introduced to boost the economy. For the fifth phase, Revitalise, the minister told Bernama that a plan focusing on the medium term would be announced in either October or November this year.

Finally, Reform involves planning for the long term to reform the structure of the country's economy. “This will focus on the 12 Malaysia Plan, which will be unveiled in January 2021,” he said.

In a bid to stimulate the economy, the government has established a Special Prihatin Grant (GKP) amounting to RM2.1 billion. Tengku Zafrul said more than 640,000 micro enterprises had applied for the GKP during the registration period from May 1 to May 15.

“We are in the process of sifting through the applications. Each successful applicant will receive (a one-off financial assistance of) RM3,000 from the government. The grant is aimed at helping the micro SMEs in terms of cash flow and they do not have to repay the money,” he said. He cautioned against being complacent during the pandemic. “As long as we do not have a vaccine, we need to follow the standard operating procedures set by the government. I am confident we can function well amid the new normal,” he said.

Sweden Sees Economic Growth in 1st Quarter

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - CNBC reports that Sweden, which avoided a hardline lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, saw its economy grow in the first quarter.

The Swedish economy expanded at a far superior rate than many of its European counterparts over the first three months of the year, data published Friday showed, following the government's decision not to impose a full lockdown to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

The Nordic country's statistics office reported gross domestic product (GDP), the broadest measure of economic health, grew at an annual rate of 0.4% in the first quarter.

Sweden's GDP increased by 0.1% in the first quarter, when seasonally adjusted and compared to the final three months of 2019. The median forecasters in a Reuters poll of economists had expected to see a 0.6% contraction on a quarterly basis.

The results are presumably a surprise to many. Both critics and supporters of Sweden's “lighter touch” policy have pointed out though its fatality rate is better than many of its European neighbors—France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and the UK—the Swedes were nonetheless expected to see an economic contraction in the first quarter.

A Reuters poll of economists had projected a 0.6% contraction in the first quarter, and annual projections were much worse. As recently as April 30, Sweden's central bank, the Riksbank, was predicting an economic contraction between 6.9 and 9.7 percent for 2020. The National Institute for Economic Research (NIER), meanwhile, said it believed Sweden's economy would shrink by 7 percent.

To be sure, there is a long way to go. Sweden may yet see a decline in GDP in the second quarter and beyond. However, the data show a stark contrast between the Swedes and nations that initiated hardline lockdowns.

France has already officially entered a recession, seeing a 5.8 percent GDP drop in the first quarter after shrinking 0.1 percent in the final quarter of 2019. The U.S. saw a contraction of 5 percent in the first quarter. Italy's economy tumbled 4.7 percent. Spain's economy collapsed by 5.2 percent.

The consequences of these economic contractions will be devastating, of course. But what is perhaps most noteworthy is the chorus of voices suggesting the devastation may have been unnecessary. This month, the director of Norway's public health agency, Camilla Stoltenberg, gave an interview in which she said the lockdowns were not necessary to curb the spread of COVID-19.

India's Economic Growth Dips Drastically

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's economy grew by 4.2% in the fiscal year that ended in March, down from 6.1% the previous year, the government said on Friday, and is likely to contract this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The growth dipped to 3.1% in January-March, the last quarter of the fiscal year, as the country began feeling the effect of the pandemic, the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation said.

It said in a statement that the estimate may be revised as more data is gathered from businesses affected by a nationwide lockdown imposed on March 25 that is currently scheduled to end on Sunday. The government has not yet said whether it will be extended.

The main opposition Congress party said that 4.2% economic growth in 2019-2020 was the lowest in the last 11 years.

There was no indication of any government action to spur demand and “instead it was pushing the country into deep debt through lofty claims of stimulus package to counter COVID-19,” said Gourav Vallabh, a party spokesman.

Last week, India's central bank cut its key interest rate to 4% in an attempt to counter the blow to the economy from the pandemic and the lockdown meant to contain it.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das forecast that the economy will contract in fiscal 2020-2021. He did not give a specific figure. Some private economists expect it to contract by as much as 5%.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government recently announced a 20 trillion rupee (\$266 billion) package to support the economy.

Millions of workers have fled cities after losing their jobs when authorities imposed the lockdown. The package included income tax cuts, liquidity injections for cash-strapped companies and government-backed bank loans. It also said it would bar foreign companies from competing in bidding for government contracts of up to \$26 million to promote self-reliance and protectionist policies.

Japanese Economy in Extremely Severe Situation

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The government released its monthly economic report for May, describing the Japanese economy as “worsening rapidly in an extremely severe situation” due to the spread of the novel coronavirus.

It kept unchanged its assessment for April, which said the economy was “getting worse” for the first time in 10 years and 11 months, since May 2009, when the U.S. investment

bank Lehman Brothers collapsed.

By category, exports were revised downward for the second straight month. The decline reflected a drop in overseas demand due to lockdowns mainly in Europe and the United States.

The employment situation was revised downward for the third straight month. The number of active job openings in May fell 26% from a year earlier, widening the loss from April's 21%.

The government maintained its view of private consumption, industrial production and corporate profits being severe.

As for imports, the government revised its assessment upward for the first time since December 2017, noting that imports have been leveling off recently, although effects of the virus outbreak remain. The government believes that the resumption of economic activities in China has restored distribution functions.

As for overseas economies, the report said the situation continues to deteriorate rapidly and is extremely severe. The report maintained the view that economies in the United States and the eurozone are in an extremely severe situation, while lowering its assessment for emerging economies.

Following the government's lifting of the state of emergency imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus outbreak, economic activity across the country has been gradually resuming. However, the report concludes that “an extremely severe situation is expected to remain due to the influence of the infectious disease for the time being.”

At a press conference on Thursday, Yasutoshi Nishimura, the minister in charge of economic revitalization, said, “It is necessary to watch carefully while recognizing the risks of a second and third possible outbreak.”

Small Signs of Life Return to U.S. Economy

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - An increase in traffic and a fall in panic purchases at the supermarket are among the signs that Americans are taking their first cautious steps back to normality after coronavirus flatlined the economy.

There is still a long way to go after months of lockdown. But the low for the “two-month recession” probably occurred in April, says Douglas Porter, chief economist at BMO Financial Group.

Nearly every state has begun to reopen, even though the number of cases continues to rise in some.

And while a second wave is possible, consumers are feeling more confident than they were in mid-March if panic buying is any guide.

Purchases of toilet paper and disinfectants have declined 63 and 83 per cent, respectively, according to data from Nielsen.

Sales of pantry items such as soup, pasta and frozen pizza have also started to return to pre-peak levels. One exception to the trend is hand sanitiser purchases, which remain elevated.

Retailers were among the hardest hit by the pandemic as stores shut across the country and online delivery systems struggled to keep up with demand. But visits to retailers have begun to increase as stores reopen. The fastest recoveries have been to clothing and accessories stores which recovered 607 per cent since their April 12 low. Entertainment and hobby retailers were a close second, according to data from Unacast.

Southern states such as Alabama and Mississippi, as well as those in the Midwest such as South Dakota, saw the biggest increases in visits to retailers in May.

The Gulf region's beach visits over Memorial day weekend were 71 per cent higher than a year ago, boosting states like Alabama and Louisiana.

Jobs that involve the least contact with others are also early indicators of activity.

An index of contact-intensity from the St Louis Fed ranked industries such as logging, securities trading and subsections of manufacturing as the least contact-intensive.

Indeed, the New York Stock Exchange in Manhattan reopened its doors to traders after an extended shutdown, and business activity in the Texas Manufacturing Outlook Survey increased 34 per cent from April to May, though it remained negative.

Americans are hitting the road again, too. Truck traffic was down only 5 per cent from this time last year, compared with being down 13 per cent at the end of April, according to data from MS2.

Car sales were up 24 per cent on average from the second week in May to the third, according to fourways. The seven-day average for total flights picked up more than 50 per cent from its low in mid-April, according to Flightradar24.

Turkey's Economy Grows 4.5% in Q1



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's economy grew 4.5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2020, the country's statistical authority announced.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices amounted to 1.07 trillion Turkish liras (\$176.1 billion) in the January-March period. “Seasonally and calendar adjusted GDP increased by 0.6 percent compared with the previous quarter,” the institute said.

The figure showed that the Turkish economy was less affected by the coronavirus compared to other big economies while it came at worse than analysts' expectations.

A group of 16 economists surveyed by Anadolu Agency on Wednesday had projected the Turkish economy to expand 5.2 percent in the first quarter of this year.

Economists' forecasts hovered between 4.4 percent — the lowest estimate — and 5.8 percent.

The economists also predicted that Turkey's annual GDP in 2020 would narrow 1.5 percent on average.

Erol Gurcan, an economist at Gedik Investment, said the main driver of year-on-year growth was domestic consumption (household and public expenditures) whereas the investments and net exports handed negative contributions.

The negative impact of the virus was limited on the data as the first Covid-19 case was confirmed in Turkey in the late first quarter, he said, adding that leading indicators for the second quarter signal a significant slowdown in economic activity.

“Although high frequency data during the loosening in social distancing measurements starts to provide some recovery signs, we should state that these kinds of signs could be meaningful if they are sustained,” he stressed.

TurkStat said in light of the activities constituting gross domestic product, the value added increased 3 percent in the agricultural sector and 6.2 percent in the industry sector in the first quarter, while dropped 1.5 percent in the construction sector.

Two Iranian Docs Win At TAC Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Two Iranian documentaries, ‘Hafez und Goethe’ and ‘Vars’, have won awards at the 17th Archaeology Channel International Film Festival (TAC) in the U.S.

‘Hafez and Goethe’ by Farshad Fereshteh-Hekmat received two honorable mentions in Animation and Special Effects and Cinematography categories, as well as the Best Music award at the US event. This documentary explores the impacts of

Hafez and Goethe, two of the most prominent poets of all time. “Hafez and Goethe” takes a closer look at how Hafez, a Persian poet writing in the 14th century, came to have a strong impact and influence on Goethe, a German poet writing in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Hafez’s influence is best explored through Goethe’s invaluable collection of poems called “West-Eastern Divan.” This collection can be seen as an early example of the blending of Western and Eastern cultures in art.



India Will Set an Example in Economic Revival

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India will set an example in economic revival before the world just like it has outperformed many developed countries in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

“In the economic domain, through their strength, 130 crore Indians can not only surprise the world but also inspire it,” said Modi in a letter to the country on Friday, on the first anniversary of his second term in office.

“While on one hand are powers with great economic resources and state-of-the-art healthcare systems, on the other hand, is our country besieged with problems amidst a vast population and limited resources. Many feared that India will become a problem for the world when coronavirus hits India. But today, through sheer confidence and resilience, you have transformed the way the world looks at us. You have proven that the collective strength and potential of Indians is unparalleled compared even to the powerful and prosperous countries of the world,” the PM wrote.

Modi said there is also a debate on how the economies of various countries, including India’s, will recover.

“However, given the way India has surprised the world with its unity and resolve in the fight against coronavirus, there is a firm belief that we will also set an example in economic revival,” Modi wrote.

The PM acknowledged that some people have undergone “tremendous” suffering due to the crisis, but urged all to ensure these “inconveniences” don’t turn into a bigger disaster.

“In a crisis of this magnitude, it can certainly not be claimed that no one suffered any inconvenience or discomfort. Our laborers, migrant workers, artisans and craftsmen in small-scale industries, hawkers and such fellow countrymen have undergone tremendous suffering. However, we have to take care to ensure that



inconveniences that we are facing do not turn into disasters,” the PM said.

Further, the PM asked all citizens to stand united in firm resolve. “We must always remember that the present and future of 130 crore people will never be dictated by an adversity. We will decide our present and our future.”

As Lockdown 4.0 draws to a close in the next 48 hours, Modi underscored the importance of following all rules and guidelines. “We have displayed patience so far and we should continue to do so... We have to move forward based on our own abilities, in our own way... the recent Rs 20 lakh crore package given for Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is a major step in this direction.”

Shopping Malls Reopen In Ukraine Capital



KIEV (AFP) - Shopping malls opened in the Ukrainian capital Kiev on Saturday as the ex-Soviet country gradually eases lockdown restrictions.

The reopening of malls, complete with strict social distancing protocols, is the latest in a series of measures to relax the confinement orders as President Volodymyr Zelensky bids to stimulate the economy.

Ukraine re-opened outdoor cafés, beauty salons, dental clinics and parks earlier this month. The subway re-opened on Monday.

Mall customers are required to observe social distancing and wear masks and gloves to protect themselves and others against the virus.

“I’m happy to be back,” Maryna, an 18-year-old in skinny jeans, told AFP at a shopping centre in eastern Kiev.

The mall’s food court and cinema that she used to frequent with her friends are still closed, however.

A guard armed with a non-contact digital thermometer stands at the mall’s entrance while a sign warns customers to wear a mask.

The anti-virus restrictions introduced in mid-March had made Maryna feel “trapped”, said the youngster, declining to give her last name.

“We love this place, we used to come here on weekends to do some shopping, to spend time in the food court and go to the movies,” added Maryna, who arrived at the mall with two friends.

The country on Saturday reported 23,204 coronavirus cases and 696 deaths, adding that more than 9,000 people had recovered.

UK Helps Employers With Slow Phase-in of Job Shield Costs

LONDON (Reuters) - British finance minister Rishi Sunak offered fresh help to employers hammered by the coronavirus shutdown on Friday in the form of a gradual phase-in of contributions by them to the government’s hugely expensive wage subsidy scheme.

The government has been paying since March 80% of the wages of workers who are temporarily laid off, and who now total 8.4 million, to limit a surge in unemployment.

In August the companies will have to resume pension and social security payments, building up to 10% of wage costs in September and 20% in October, a lesser requirement than reported by media before the announcement.

Sunak also brought forward to July 1 the start of part-time work under the programme, a demand of businesses seeking to rebuild gradually. He extended another multi-billion-pound income scheme for self-employed workers as well.

“Now, as we begin to re-open our country and kickstart our economy, these schemes will adjust to ensure those who are able to work can do so, while remaining amongst the most generous in the world,” he said.

Although common in other European countries, the income support schemes represented a big shift for the traditionally free-market Conservative Party when they were launched in March as the coronavirus crisis swept the world.

Len McCluskey, leader of the Unite trade union, welcomed Friday’s changes but called for more help for the hardest-hit sectors such as aviation and hospitality.

“Without such assistance, and soon, many businesses will simply shut up shop, resulting in the mass unemployment the chancellor has sought to avoid these past two months,” he said.



The cost of the two income programmes was now likely to shoot past 100 billion pounds, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think tank, said, about as much as for the National Health Service over the same March-October period.

Sunak declined to say whether he would bring forward his next budget statement, due in the autumn, to spell out how he will tackle Britain’s surging debt.

One in three private sector employees are covered by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has already cost the state about 15 billion pounds.

It is due to expire at the end of October and Sunak said on Friday it would close for new claims on June 30.

The Bank of England says the scheme could limit a rise in the unemployment rate to about 9%, double its most recent reading but way below an estimated 20% in the United States.

Under the plan, workers are receiving 80% of their wages up to 2,500 pounds a month.

Some employers had warned they would not be able to pay 20% of the wage costs of their furloughed staff from August - as reported by media before Friday’s announcement - raising the risk of a fresh surge in job losses.

The Resolution Foundation, a think tank, said even the limited contributions required from August were likely to lead to significant layoffs in the hospitality sector, in which an estimated 2 million employees are now furloughed.

Sunak said hardship lay ahead for many but the scheme was too expensive to continue indefinitely.

Britain’s borrowing in April alone of over 60 billion pounds was equivalent to almost all of the previous financial year. It looks set to hit a towering 15% of gross domestic product this year. About 2.3 million claims totalling 6.8 billion pounds have been made under the income support scheme for self-employed people which was extended with a second, slightly smaller final grant available from August.

Gibraltar Moves to Protect Its Monkeys Against Coronavirus

MADRID (AFP) - Authorities in Britain’s tiny enclave of Gibraltar, fearful of a coronavirus epidemic among its famous Barbary monkeys, have banned tourists from touching the animals.

The macaques, Europe’s only wild population of monkeys, are a popular tourist attraction, and local folklore has it that Gibraltar would cease to be British if the monkeys were to leave the Rock.

Feeding them is already illegal and punishable by hefty fines.

But now the government has decided to go a step further.

With the arrival of the coronavirus, it “will be taking strict measures to prevent contact with the macaques,” the government said in a statement late Friday.

“This is in order to minimize the risk of their contracting the disease and becoming ill or dying. Primates elsewhere have been known to be susceptible.

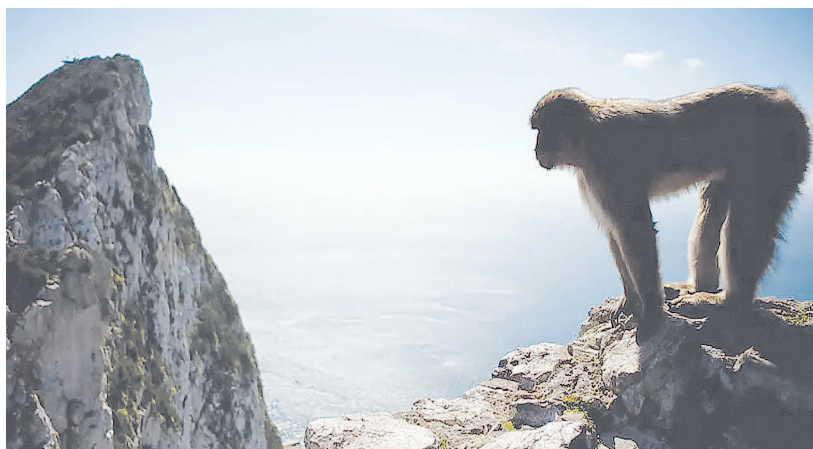
It published a bill “which will make touching or other interference with the natural behavior of macaques an offence except under license for management, research or veterinary purposes.”

With just 161 cases of COVID-19 in a population of 30,000, the impact on Gibraltar has been relatively low, especially in comparison with neighboring Spain, one of Europe’s worst-hit countries.

“Because of the low level of the virus in Gibraltar and of the prompt

lockdown of tourist sites, it is virtually definite that the macaques have not contracted COVID-19,” the government said.

“We have to ensure that this continues to be the case.”



World Economy to...

FROM PAGE 1

No economist polled expected growth in 2020, with forecasts in a -0.3% to -6.7% range. The outlook under a worst-case scenario was -6.0%, with those in a -3.0% to -15.0% range.

This prediction comes as early forecasts for global economic growth tended to range from 2.3% to 3.6% before the pandemic struck. Of course Reuters’ poll shows that the global economy was expected to grow 5.4% next year, according to the latest poll, faster than the 4.5% predicted last month.

Economies’ of India and China are expected to bounce back to grow sooner than other states and Japan with some “ifs” can enjoy comparative growth.

Iran, by balancing its liquidity deficit through selling state properties provided that the money is invested in productive and generative affairs and increasing the volumetric rate of gross domestic production (GDP, can experience below one percent growth rate. The way how to handle the oil sanctions and sales of crude and oil products is very crucial for Iran. Europe and especially Switzerland can take advantage of Iran’s intact market by restoring bilateral banking relation to appease concerns about more recession. And this all relies on the foreign policy in the government in the post-President Rouhani’s era.



Foreign Humanitarian...

FROM PAGE 1

The official went on to say that the Health Ministry’s medicine shortages have also been met.

Over 300,000 food packages distributed among deprived ones, plus 500,000 cancer- patients have received hygienic packages, he said. “Prisons, penitentiaries, parks, and outskirts of the country have been sanitized and disinfected, and 7 million liters of liquid sanitizer distributed also,” Hemmati stated.

In total, 530 billion rial non-cash and 350 billion rials in cash, philanthropic aid have been donated to the Red Crescent Society as the body in charge of collecting the aid, the official highlighted.

Chief of the Iranian Red Crescent Society added 112 international shipments that have entered Iran and distributed among in need. Swiss has sent its 1-million-dollar aid to the country and some parts of Iran’s blockaded money have been unfrozen plus the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) donated 500,000 francs, he stated.

Spain Approves Minimum Income For 2.3m Poorest People



MADRID (Reuters) - Spain’s left-wing coalition government approved on Friday the creation of a minimum income worth 462 euros (\$514) a month for its poorest people, whose financial fragility has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

The scheme targets some 2.3 million people, Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias told a news conference. People aged 23 to 65 with assets of less than 16,614 euros, excluding house and discounted loans, will be eligible for the new scheme.

As a result, average spending on fighting poverty in Spain should rise from just over 0.1% of GDP - one of the lowest levels in Europe - to practically equal the average of 0.4% for OECD peer countries, the government said.

Under the decree approved at a cabinet meeting, the government would pay the monthly stipend and top up existing revenue for people earning less so that they get at least that minimum amount every month, Iglesias said.

The new program will include incentives for finding a formal job, Iglesias said. “We’ll be successful if we are able to help the identified households to transition to a better place in society,” Social Security Minister Jose Luis Escrivá told the same briefing.

The minimum income would increase with the number of family members to a total of up to 1,015 euros per month. The new program aims to reach 850,000 households, or 2.3 million people, and would cost the government about 3 billion euros a year.

Spain has had one of the world’s worst coronavirus outbreaks, with more than 27,000 COVID-19 fatalities. Following the epidemic and the strict lockdown imposed in mid-March, unemployment has skyrocketed and a steep recession is now looming.

Parrott Set to Miss Premier League Restart

LONDON (AFP) - Tottenham striker Troy Parrott is set to miss the restart of the Premier League season after his club said on Saturday that he had surgery to remove his appendix. The 18-year-old, who has made four appearances in all competitions this season, was suffering from appendicitis. "The young striker was found to have early signs of appendicitis after reporting abdominal pain to our medical staff," Tottenham said in a statement. "He will now undergo a period of recovery before commencing rehabilitation and returning to training later in June."

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE	
Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448 Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450 Editorial Board: 44253449 Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395 Advertising Department: Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234 Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com	E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com ISSN 1024-6053 P.O. Box: 15875-8551 Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Bayern Players Accept Salary Cut

BERLIN (AFP) - Bayern Munich players have accepted a salary cut which will last until the "end of the season" to help the Bundesliga champions through the coronavirus crisis, club president Herbert Hainer said on Saturday. In April, the Bayern squad took a 20-percent reduction in salary, but Hainer did not specify how large the cut was this time. "It is very satisfying to see that our team understands the situation and will again give up part of their salary until the end of the season," Hainer told German daily Bild.

Tennis Fans Freak Out Over Nadal Retirement Scare

MADRID (Dispatches) - Tennis fans couldn't believe what they were seeing on social media when the words "Nadal" and "retirement" began trending on social media. The name synonymous with the Spanish megastar, Rafael Nadal, quickly led many to fear he had decided to hang up the racket and step away from the sport. Ranked No. 2 in the world and with 19 grand slam titles to his name, Nadal's fans were sure he had more to give. After battling injuries for several years, the 33-year-old returned to his unstoppable best in 2019 by claiming the French and US Open titles. Thankfully, however, heartbreak turned to relief as it became clear the tennis great wasn't retiring. But the undefeated racehorse, also named Nadal, was. "Omnggggg. Whew. Saw Nadal trending and mentions of retirement ... Different Nadal," The Athletic's Prim Siripipat wrote. "As a huge fan of both tennis and horse racing, seeing 'Nadal Retirement' trending was not good," Adam Wiener of American news outlet CBS tweeted. The reaction of fans discovering the news was about a horse instead of one of the most beloved tennis players on the tour made for some fun viewing. Nadal the horse injured his ankle after a workout on Thursday, prompting the decision to retire him.

The 3-year-old colt suffered a left front condylar fracture, trainer Bob Baffert told the Associated Press. He had surgery during which two screws were inserted in his ankle at the track's equine hospital.

"He looked good doing it," Baffert said of the workout. "He got back to the barn and you could tell he was a little bit off. We X-rayed his left ankle. He's got the start of a condylar fracture,



a little faint line. There's no damage, it's not displaced." Condylar fractures are a repetitive strain injury that results in a fracture to the cannon bone above the fetlock due to large loads during high-speed workouts, and has proven to be career-ending for Nadal. Nadal also said he is ready to welcome tennis fans to get back on court safely and responsibly after an extended period of COVID-19 lockdown. Not only is the five-time year-end World No. 1 back on court practising at the Rafa Nadal Academy by Movistar, Nadal said in a video released on Thursday that his academy wants local and international players to visit in the coming months. Arancha Gonzalez, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, confirmed that the mandatory 14-day quarantine for people arriving from overseas to Spain is set to end on 1 July. As the 80 full-time academy students who were confined on site during the country's State of Emergency have started practising again, Nadal encouraged tennis players worldwide to explore his hometown while working on their games.

Fognini Has Surgery on Both Ankles

MILAN (AFP) - Italy's Fabio Fognini announced on Saturday he will take advantage of the coronavirus-enforced break from tennis to undergo surgery on both his ankles. "After a medical examination and a long discussion with my team, I decided to have arthroscopy surgery on both ankles," Fognini said on Twitter. "I will undergo surgery in Italy today (Saturday). "I believe it's the right thing to do while the Tour is on this enforced break," continued Fognini, with the season on hold since March, and not set to return before August. The 11th-ranked Fognini, who won the Monte Carlo Masters last year, said he has been suffering with ankle problems for years. "I've been having a problem with my left ankle for three and a half years now, it's an issue I've learned to cope with," he explained. "Then my right ankle started playing up in the last two years as well. "I had hoped that the various problems would go away during my two-month break because of the lockdown, but when I resumed training, they were still there," he said. "I can't wait to be back playing again."

Kane Wants Champions League Berth

LONDON (Dispatches) - Harry Kane believes Tottenham Hotspur will have to win eight of their remaining nine Premier League games if they are to qualify for next season's Champions League. The north London club were seven points adrift of the top four when the coronavirus shut down the season in March. Then it was thought the likes of Kane, Son Heung-min and Steven Bergwijn would miss the rest of the campaign through injury. But the trio, as well as Moussa Sissoko, are all set to be fit in time for the planned restart of June 17, although young striker Troy Parrott will be sidelined after having his appendix removed. Eighth-placed Spurs face crunch matches against Manchester United, Sheffield United, Arsenal and Leicester. Their hopes of Champions League qualification would also be boosted if Manchester City fail in an appeal against a European ban. But Kane wants Spurs to take matters into their own hands. "We have got to finish in the top four, there is no doubt about that," he told the club's website. "We have got a massive game against Man United in the first game and realistically we are going to have to win seven or eight to get into the Champions League."

UEFA Considers All Options for Champions League Format

NYON (Dispatches) - UEFA is studying "all the options" for the format of this season's interrupted Champions League, amid reports on Friday that European football's governing body is considering moving the final from its scheduled venue in Istanbul. The Turkish city was due to host the final this Saturday at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium, but the tournament was suspended in mid-March at the last-16 stage because of the coronavirus pandemic. UEFA still hopes to conclude the competition by the end of August, but with major changes to the format likely and games set to be played behind closed doors.



Brazilian former Ferrari driver Rubens Barrichello in their own entry. Ferrari's current F1 driver Charles Leclerc is teaming up with Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi in a Ferrari 488 GTE while Toro Rosso's Pierre Gasly partners Formula E champion Jean-Eric Vergne in a Veloce Esports team.

Verstappen and Norris Team Up for Virtual Le Mans

LONDON (Reuters) - Formula One rivals Max Verstappen and Lando Norris will be team mates for the virtual 24 Hours of Le Mans on June 13/14, according to the official entry list on Saturday. The Red Bull and McLaren drivers are sharing the Team Redline Oreca 07 LMP2 car for the esports race on the weekend that Le Mans, postponed to Sept. 19/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, would normally take place. Spain's double Formula One champion and two times Le Mans winner Fernando Alonso will join Verstappen and Norris in their own entry. Ferrari's current F1 driver Charles Leclerc is teaming up with Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi in a Ferrari 488 GTE while Toro Rosso's Pierre Gasly partners Formula E champion Jean-Eric Vergne in a Veloce Esports team.

A quarter of the F1 grid — five drivers — will be in the 50-car field, with 10 entries in reserve. Two Indianapolis 500 winners have entered: Colombian Juan Pablo Montoya, and France's reigning champion Simon Pagenaud together for Team Penske. Britain's Jamie Chadwick, inaugural champion of the all-female W Series, will race a Mahle Racing Aston Martin Vantage GTE. There is also an all-female Richard Mille Racing team with Katherine Legge, Tatiana Calderon, Sophia Floersch and Emily Jones. Regular Le Mans manufacturers Toyota, Ferrari, Porsche, Corvette and Aston Martin are represented in what organisers are billing as the world's biggest virtual endurance race. Each four-person team features a mix of professional racers and gamers. They will have to handle conditions similar to the French endurance classic, with variable day and night weather conditions and damaged cars repairable in the pits. No driver will be able to do more than seven hours at the wheel and each will have to do a minimum four hours.

Thiem, Kyrgios to Play July Events

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Dominic Thiem, Nick Kyrgios, Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens will compete in grass and hard-court events in Berlin in July featuring both men's and women's fields. The behind-closed-doors competition will be held on grass at the Steffi Graf Stadium from July 13-15 and then switch to hard court in a hangar at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport from July 17-19. With Wimbledon cancelled for the first time since World War II due to the coronavirus pandemic, this will be the first grass-court tennis of 2020. Six men and six women are set to take part. "I am curious to see where I stand with my tennis," said Germany's Alexander Zverev, who joins Austria's Thiem, the highest ranked at third in the world, and Australia's Kyrgios in the men's event. "I've been practising hard, but it's going to be my first time playing a competitive event in a long time. "It's going to be exciting to play on two different surfaces in seven days." In the women's field, Germany's Julia Goerges and Andrea Petkovic will join Svitolina of Ukraine and Bertens of the Netherlands, who are both in the top 10. There will be no live spectators, electric line-calling will be used instead of judges and the matches will be played over two sets with a possible third as a tie-breaker. The matches will be broadcast with prize money of 200,000 euros (\$222,000) at stake -- 100,000 each for the men's and women's events.



F1 Season To Open In Austria

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Formula One's truncated coronavirus-hit season will finally get underway with the Austrian Grand Prix on July 5, the Austrian government announced on Saturday. The Spielberg circuit has also been given the green light to stage a second race the following weekend. "The two Formula One races on July 5 and 12 at Spielberg will be staged without spectators," announced Austrian Health Minister Rudolf Anschober. He said that the two races had been approved after F1 organisers "had presented a complete and professional plan" to combat the spread of COVID-19. The F1 season was thrown into chaos with the cancellation of the traditional curtain-raising Australian Grand Prix in March only hours before practice was due to begin. Melbourne was one of 10 races either cancelled or postponed, yet F1 boss Chase Carey believes a 15-18 race season is still possible. But Silverstone's hopes of also staging back-to-back races after Austria are in the balance after the British government insisted that all arrivals in the country undergo a two-week quarantine period. Anschober added a caveat to Saturday's statement, insisting the season's belated restart would only go ahead if all the health assurances made by F1 were fulfilled.

