

Deputy Head of Arvand Free Zone For Investment, and Business Development Affairs Said That Negotiations Are Underway Between Iran and Iraq Over Reopening the Shalamchah Trade Border

Iran's Trade With Turkey Stood at \$645.44m During the First Quarter Of 2020 to Register a Decrease of 70.03% Compared With Bilateral Exchanges in the Corresponding Period of the Previous Year

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2

DOMESTIC

Iran Refutes U.S. Baseless Claims About Trade Ties With Venezuela
> SEE PAGE 2



3

DOMESTIC

Mashhad Municipality's Financial and Economic Achievements "Unique"
> SEE PAGE 3



4

INTERNATIONAL

N. Korea's Kim Makes First Appearance in Nearly Three Weeks
> SEE PAGE 4



8

SPORTS

Premier League Re-States Commitment To Finish Season
> SEE PAGE 8



Zarif Blasts Pompeo For Anti-Iran Remarks

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message on Saturday said while the United States has been the top military spender and arms seller in the world, its secretary of state Mike Pompeo is worried about Iran.

"The U.S. has long been the world's top - Military spender - Arms seller - War initiator & instigator - Conflict profiteer," Zarif wrote on his Twitter account.

"Yet @SecPompeo is apparently so worried about Iran—a huge US arms customer till 1979—that he's pouring weapons all over the globe," he added.

Earlier, Zarif in a message advised U.S. President Donald Trump that it is people who rule the world not the beautiful arms. Meanwhile yesterday, Government Spokesman Ali Rabiee said Iran has sent a clear message to the U.S. that extension of a UN arms embargo will draw a harsh response from the Islamic Republic.

Rabiee decried the U.S.' push for extending the arms embargo against Iran under a plan to again become a participant of the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying the White House must realize that international treaties are not toys.

See Page 7

80% Iranian Patients Recovered From Coronavirus

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Public Relations and Information Center of the Health Ministry announced that so far 77,350 infected patients out of 96,448 people in total recovered which show 80 percent recovery.

Kianoush Jahanpour yesterday on the latest data about on the deadly coronavirus in the country and the deaths caused by the virus said, "According to the definitive laboratory findings and from yesterday to May 2 in the country, 802 new patients with COVID-19 were diagnosed in the country and the number of patients with this disease reached 96,448."

Fortunately, 77,350 patients have recovered and have been discharged so far, Jahanpour added.

The head of the Ministry of Public Relations Center said, "Unfortunately, in the past 24 hours, 65 COVID-19 patients have lost their lives, and 6,156 people have lost their lives in the country to date."

He stated, "2787 patients are in a critical condition."

So far, 484,541 COVID-19 diagnosis tests have been conducted in the country.

See Page 7

Any Move of Americans in Persian Gulf Closely Monitored



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian military commander says Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is closely monitoring the movements of U.S. troops in the region.

Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said Rriday the Iranian military is keeping a close watch on the Persian Gulf.

"Today, we (the IRGC) are following the Americans like a falcon in the entire Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and anywhere that the Americans are present, and our brothers in the Army are monitoring them in the Sea of Oman, too," said Admiral Tangsiri, the commander of the IRGC's Naval Force.

"The Islamic Republic [of Iran]'s forces in the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf are monitoring all movements of the Americans," he said.

The top commander said there is no way, but for the Americans to leave the region.

"We see a bright prospect for the Persian Gulf region. If we say the Americans should leave the region, it is because their departure will rid the region of problems and security will return to the Persian Gulf," he noted.

"The Americans are seeking to foment tension and fuel the fire in the region," he said.

"They brought insecurity to anywhere they went to; so, the presence of the U.S. and transregional countries has brought insecurity to the Persian Gulf, a region which used to be calm and nations lived there in peace and harmony," he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said U.S. President Donald Trump and the U.S. system are playing a blame game at this juncture given that the country is facing internal problems.

"This blame game in the Persian Gulf is a justification for their illegitimate presence, but the nations in the region have been awakened and their initial departure from Iraq will take place and, God willing, the same trend will begin in other countries as well," the commander said.

"It has been forty years that their presence is not acceptable to people, and we believe collective security is the only way to ensure stability in the region, and we announce that the Islamic Republic of Iran has no intention of challenging anybody," he said.

He said the Americans are seeking to regain the face they have lost in the region. He also touched upon Iran's downing of an American drone that had trespassed into Iranian airspace as well as Iran striking a US base in Iraq in revenge for the U.S. assassination of top Iranian commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

"As I said, in addition to this, they are also gripped by internal problems, and that's why they need to play blame games," he said.

"You should know that since the Persian Gulf region is our home, we are not seeking to set off fire in our own home, but we cannot accept that our fishing launches are searched by U.S. forces and US choppers fly over our oil rigs and we cannot accept that they violate our rights," he said.

The top commander also referred to the recent confrontation between the IRGC's speedboats and American warships in the Persian Gulf.

"They had entered the territory of our exercises while it has already been announced that drills were being conducted in that territory. By making such moves, they are seeking insecurity and that is why they were ordered to leave," he said.

"A few years ago, what happened when a US warship targeted a vessel belonging to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), killing two Indians? The Americans are not observing shipping rules; why should they reserve the right to conduct military war games whenever they want?" said the commander.

"The Americans are on the decline and collapsing from within, but they keep trying to show off their hollow grandeur to the oppressed people in the region," he added.

Daesh Attack Kills 10 Hashd al-Sha'abi Forces in Iraq

TEHRAN (PressTV) - At least 10 Iraqi fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, have been killed in an attack by the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in Iraq's Salahuddin Province.

The coordinated assault which took place in the cities of Mekeeshfa and Balad, led to clashes between PMU forces and the Daesh terrorists on several fronts, the paramilitary group said on Saturday.

The PMU further said its fighters have now taken control of the situation, adding the Iraqi government has also sent reinforcements to supplement efforts and prepare for a possible retaliatory attack. Iraq's Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi has paid tribute to families of those who were killed, according to a statement circulated by Iraqi media.

"With great sadness, we received news of the martyrdom of a group of heroes from among the Hashd al-Sha'abi who died defending their homeland in the face of ISIL (Daesh) attacks in the Mekeeshfah and Balad areas north of Baghdad," the statement said.

The PMU was formed by popular volunteer forces in 2014 after the Daesh terror group launched a campaign of bloodshed and destruction against Iraq.

See Page 7

Iran Can Export Coronavirus Equipment

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Vice-president for science and technology said on Saturday that knowledge enterprises have produced a lot of equipment necessary for the treating coronavirus, and Iran can export it in fall that the second wave of the disease will hit the country.

Sourena Sattari said knowledge enterprises have done a great deal in producing medical equipment during the coronavirus outbreak.

The Iranian vice-president for science and technology said that they made the ICU and the CCU equipment, CT-scan machines, coronavirus diagnostic kits, disinfectants, and 6 million masks a day.

He added that if the Ministry of Health issues the permit to export the equipment, Iran can do it.

He also hailed the new approach of Azad University in which it tries to use create startups and become an entrepreneur.

The Islamic Azad University (IAU) is a private university system in Iran, which is one of the largest comprehensive systems of academic education in the world.

See Page 7

U.S. Plan to Say Still a Party to JCPOA "a Joke"

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran's ambassador to the UN says US officials' calls for an extension of an arms embargo on Tehran lack legal standing in international law, noting that the request will be "certainly" turned down at the Security Council.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Friday after Washington drafted a resolution to indefinitely prolong the embargo — which is to be lifted later this year under UN Security Council's Resolution 2231 that enshrined the 2015 landmark nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The world's countries "will not accept to be a partner in the Americans' very ugly measure that runs against international law."

"The fact that the United States wants to say that it is a member of the JCPOA and use the path of Resolution 2231 is similar to a joke."

The UN arms embargo on Iran — in place since 2006/2007- will be lifted in October 2020 — five years after the JCPOA took effect.

See Page 7

U.S. Imposes New Sanctions on Iran Amid Coronavirus Crisis

WASHINGTON (Dispatches)- The United States has slapped new sanctions on Iran despite claims of its readiness to help the Islamic Republic in its fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In a statement released on Friday, the US Treasury Department blacklisted dual Iranian and Iraqi national Amir Dianat, also known as Ameer Abdulazeez Jaafar Almhaje, and his company Taif Mining Services LLC.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) claimed that Dianat is involved in what it called efforts by the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to "generate revenue and smuggle weapons abroad."

In addition to the blacklisting, the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia filed criminal charges against Dianat and one of his business associates, Iranian Kamran Lajmire, for alleged violations of sanctions and money laundering laws.

It also filed a related action alleging that "approximately \$12 million is subject to forfeiture as funds involved in these crimes and as assets of a foreign terrorist organization."

See Page 7



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Iran Drug Production Exceeds 23% Growth Last Year

TEHRAN (MNA) – Statistics of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade showed that 48.2 billion human drugs were produced in the country last year [from March 21, 2019 to March 20, 2020], registering a 23.7 percent growth as compared to the same period of last year.

In the same period, 604,500 tons of detergents were produced in the country, showing a 5.1 percent decline as compared to a year earlier, the ministry added.

In addition, domestic factories succeeded in producing 36,600 tons of pesticides, recording a 37.2 percent growth as compared to the same period of last year.

Iran Refutes U.S. Baseless Claims About Trade Ties With Venezuela

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry has dismissed “baseless” allegations made by an American diplomat about the Islamic Republic’s trade ties with Venezuela, saying such claims are aimed at creating obstacles in the way of the South American country’s plans in the oil sector amid the cruel U.S. sanctions.

Elliott Abrams, the envoy who leads U.S. efforts to topple Venezuela’s leftist leader Nicolas Maduro, claimed on Thursday that cash-strapped Venezuela is paying Iran in gold to rebuild its troubled oil industry and denounced growing cooperation between Tehran and Caracas.

Speaking at the Hudson Institute, a conservative Washington think tank, Abrams added that Iran has been sending “more and more planes” to Venezuela, including this week.

“Our guess is that they are being paid in gold. Those planes that are coming in from Iran that are bringing things for the oil industry are returning with the payments for those things: gold,” he said.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Friday said such baseless



claims aim to prepare the ground for the U.S. administration to exert more pressure on the Venezuelan government and to obstruct and interfere in trade relations between Iran and Venezuela.

“The US administration failed to implement its policies in Venezuela, including economic sanctions, military threat and recently the formation of a transitional council, due to resistance of the country’s [Venezuelan] government and nation,” he said.

It “is now leveling such accusations in a bid to obstruct the Venezuelan government’s plan to reconstruct the country’s oil refineries and produce oil products such as petrol that is currently in short supply due to the cruel U.S. sanctions,” the Iranian spokesperson added.

Iran Ready to Share Corona Experiences with Regional States

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Islamic Republic of Iran has expressed readiness to share its experiences in dealing with the coronavirus with regional countries.

In separate messages to the defense ministers and chiefs of staff of the regional countries’ armed forces, Iran’s Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri announced the readiness of the Islamic republic to transfer its experience in combating the coronavirus.

In his messages to the defense ministers and chiefs of staff of Iraq, Azerbaijan Republic, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Syria and Lebanon, the Iranian top commander referred to the success of the Islamic Republic of Iran in countering the outbreak of the coronavirus.

He also touched upon the widespread role of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the fight against this dangerous virus.

“The Iranian Armed Forces are ready to exchange and transfer the experiences gained to the officials of friendly and brotherly countries,” stressed Baqeri.

He also warned that failure in handling the disease wisely can accelerate the spread of COVID-19 and jeopardize the health of a nation.

“The successful performance of Iran in controlling this virus can help other Muslim nations and friendly and neighboring countries,” continued General Baqeri.

President Praises Central Bank’s Efforts to Meet Basic Demands

TEHRAN (IFP)- President Hassan Rouhani has praised the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for its efforts to meet the domestic demands and provide the necessary funding amid the severe international conditions caused by the coronavirus.

In a telephone conversation with the governor of the Central Bank of Iran on Friday, President Rouhani was briefed on the latest measures and developments in the process of providing foreign currency financing for the basic and necessary commodities in Iran.

The president was also informed about the details of the Central Bank’s efforts to repatriate foreign currency earned from exports, the CBI’s use of various resources at its disposal, and the bank’s strategies to supply the basic and necessary products that the country needs.

President Rouhani also commended the CBI for satisfying the necessary domestic demands under the difficult international conditions according to the plans formulated by the administration.

For his part, CBI Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati expounded on the process of his organization’s activities for open market operation in the money and capital markets.

The latest report by the Central Bank of Iran shows that the monthly fluctuation in the producer price index, which is a leading indicator, has fortunately stood at minus 0.8 in the month of Farvardin (March 20 – April 19) after more than a year, Hemmati added.

Kazakhstan Bans Import of Cement

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN – Director of Office of European and American Countries of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization says Kazakhstan government has slapped ban on imports of cement and Iran’s representative as well as its embassy are pursuing to settle the issue.

Speaking to ILNA, Mr. Behrouz Hasan Olfat said that according to the reports from Iran’s consulate in Octavo, Kazakhstan’s industry ministry slapped ban on imports of cement on April 9 and according to this decision, some certain types of cement are not allowed to be imported into the country for six months.

He added that the ban came into effect as of April 27, adding that some certain types of cement like clinker, Portland, alumina and hydraulic have faced bans.

Iran’s Consul General in Aktau Mr Habibollah Malakoutifar said that since Kazakhstan is the major destination for Iran’s cement export, Iranian activists and factories involved in cement industry will face problems and the consulate has been in touch with Kazakh officials to solve the problem.

He added that cement is one of Iran’s major exports to Kazakhstan via Aktau Port and called for a collective decision and solution for this woe.

He reiterated that Kazakhs are very serious and they do not let Iranian vessels carrying cement to offload their cargos.

Malakoutifar said that officials in Aktau say that they cannot change the decision and it is what has been decided by the government.

It seems the decision was made because Kazakhstan domestic cement production has increased and at the same time demands for constructions and need for imports have declined.

Iran Eyes Resumption of Border Exchanges With Neighboring States

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian president says border exchanges and transportation of commodities with neighboring countries should be resumed while observing health protocols.

In a phone conversation with Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami, President Hassan Rouhani referred to his recent talks with some heads of state, including those of neighboring countries, saying they welcomed the resumption of border exchanges and the transportation of goods.

President Rouhani ordered the minister to promptly adopt the necessary measures for the resumption of border exchanges in full compliance with health protocols.

During the phone conversation, the president was briefed on the latest situation of transport in the country during the implementation of the smart social distancing plan. President Rouhani also stressed the need to draw up creative plans with regards to the smart social distancing plan in the transport domain.

“The social distancing plan as recommended by the health ministry should make it obligatory to use face masks in such a way that it both allays people’s concerns and at the same time stem the spread of the disease,” said the president.

President Rouhani further underscored the need to finish unfinished plans and projects in the country despite the current tough economic conditions caused by the United States’ unfair sanctions as well as the consequences of the coronavirus outbreak.

“The necessary measures should be adopted to finish projects which are more than 80 percent complete as soon as possible,” he added.

Elsewhere in the phone conversation, the president underlined the necessity of providing basic goods needed by the general public, and appreciated efforts made in that regard.

He said work should continue to clear basic commodities form the customs and ports. The roads and urban development minister, for his part, presented a comprehensive report on the trend of the implementation of projects run by the ministry. He also briefed the president on a national plan to provide housing for those who have no homes of their own.

The minister also touched upon measures adopted to renovate the rail transport fleet in the country and produce locomotives and train carriages.



SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

PERMIT NO : 1399.465



CALL FOR PUBLIC TENDER (FIRST/SECOND PUBLIS) ONE STAGES RETENDER

Subject of Tender:

| Tender No. | Description |
|--------------|--|
| FP/12-99/009 | P/F “ MCCOY “ CLINCHER-GRITFACE & INSERT COATING |
| FP/12-99/010 | P/F “CORE” FULL BORE DRILL STEM TEST TOOLS |

Tender descriptions:

| The Tender holder | Registration No. through national electronic tendering system | Tender No. /Indent No. | Estimated value (Rial/Euro) |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| National Iranian Drilling Company | 3,234,347 | Tender No. :FP/12-99/009 Indent No.:08-22-9845174 | 14,018,300,000 |
| | 3,234,350 | Tender No. :FP/12-98/010 Indent No.:08-22-9845080 | 18,541,650,000 |

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

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

Purchasing & Submitting

| Tender Document Distribution by Company | The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof (16 MAY 2020) | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | Distribution Place | Hall No.:113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148660 Room No. 431, 4th floor ,Oil central building No.8,Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran – Iran | |
| Documents Receiving Method | Submitting Method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of “NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund” issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents. | |
| | Closing date | • 35 Days after the last time of Purchasing. | |
| Tender Guarantee | Address | Hall No. 107, 1st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569 | |

| Value of guarantee | 701,000,000 Rial / 4.869 Euro | Regarding Tender No | FP/12-99/009 |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------------|--------------|
| | 928,000,000 Rial / 6.445 Euro | Regarding Tender No | FP/12-99/010 |
| Type of guarantee | Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of “NIDC saving account” by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran. | | |
| Duration of credit & quotation | Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration. | | |

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)

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Joint Meeting of Group 12 and EGFI Held

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Member companies of Group 12 and Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) had a joint video-conference meeting to review the latest developments regarding the future of exports.

During this meeting, the CEO of Export Guarantee Fund of Iran Ms. Afrouz Bahrami highlighted the approach and policies of the fund towards the real benefitters which are exporters, banks and investors.

Relating the exporters, he detailed the services of the fund for exporters like insurance for covering risk any fluctuation in the forex rate and bank guarantees. On the banks, she said the fund will offer any necessary guarantees both based on national currency or foreign currencies and on the investors, she said the fund will provide insurance on covering political risk and investment on exports.

During the meeting, officials of 12 companies which form the Group 12 expressed their views and discussed ways for interactions in order to boost exports. The CEO of Esfahan Steel Company (ESC) Mr. Mansour Yazdizadeh briefed the participants on the performance of the company in recent years in interaction and cooperation with the EGFI and put on table some suggestions regarding services of the fund especially on insurance coverage of exports and risks.

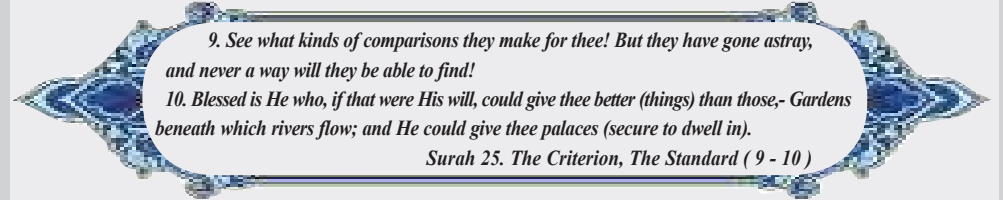
Ms. Bahrami, for his part, emphasized that ESC has been one of the pioneers in interaction with the fund and underscored removing all current problems and promised to solve them.

Meanwhile head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) summed up the meeting by calling for more interactions between steel and mineral companies with the fund. The Group 12 is comprised of 12 major steel and mineral companies like ESC, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Khouzestan Steel Company and IRALCO.



PRAYER TIME

| | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| ■ Noon (Zohr) | 13:01 |
| ■ Evening (Maghreb) | 20:12 |
| ■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr) | 04:34 |
| ■ Tomorrow's Sunrise | 06:08 |



Gov't Allocates \$10b to Compensate Industry Losses During Corona Outbreak

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade says the government has allocated a great amount of money to help the industries which are damaged by the spread of the coronavirus.

Reza Rahmani said nearly 10 billion dollars have been allocated to be given to compensate the industry losses of these guilds.

He added that several guilds suffered the most damage during the corona pandemic, and of course the government will help them through this aid package.

"Of course, the effects of coronavirus on the global economy have shown themselves, and different countries have registered 144 new procedures for post-corona conditions. We are also after compensating corona's losses in the country."

Speaking in a meeting in East Azarbaijan province, Rahmani noted "We have set the management of imports and development of non-oil exports as one of the main targets of the ministry for increasing production after defeating the coronavirus."

He went on to say that any goods that are now produced domestically and meet the needs of the country with the appropriate quality are subject to the import ban.

Referring to the measures taken to produce corona-related health items, the industry minister said there existed some problems in the production of masks in the country, but in the shortest



possible time, the problems were resolved and the daily production of 200,000 masks in various industrial sectors, guilds and workshops reached more than 5 million.

"The cruel sanctions against our country have been imposed in such a way that they force us to sell raw materials for export, while the import of some unnecessary goods is free," he stressed.

Rahmani noted that production in the mining and industrial sectors has increased. He added that last year, production of the selected industrial products increased by at least three-fourth, and in the mining sector, with the exception of aluminum, all mineral products such as copper and steel have grown while food, clothing and home appliances production has also increased.

IME Experiences Growth in Weekly Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - While 787,778 MT of commodities worth over \$904m were traded last week on the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) as the IME's trading volume and value experienced growth of 53 and 50 percent, respectively.



According to the report from IME International Affairs and PR, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 292,527 MT of various products worth close to \$555m were traded.

On this trading floor, 280,019 MT of steel, 6,130 MT of copper, 20 MT of zinc, 1,000 MT of coke, 5,220 MT of aluminum, 18 MT of precious metal concentrates, 120 MT of molybdenum concentrates as well as 2 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 495,251 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$360m were traded.

On this trading floor, 147,002 MT of bitumen, 200,150 MT of VB feed stock, 72,800 MT of polymer products, 42,500 MT of lube cut oil, 29,312 MT of chemical products, 400 MT of insulation, 2,242 MT of base oil, 600 MT of slaps waxes, as well as 245 MT of sulfur were traded.

Mashhad Municipality's Financial and Economic Achievements "Unique"

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Chairman of City Council of Mashhad says the economic and financial achievements of Mashhad Municipality have been unique in this term and its revenues grew by 120 percent in 1398, last Iranian calendar year, which was around 13,390b tomans.

Speaking at a video-press conference on the occasion of City Councils Week yesterday, Mr. Mohammad Reza Heydari said that Mashhad Municipality had a brilliant performance in terms of financial matters last year and it could materialize earning cash revenues as schedule. He said that the city's cash revenues grew by 156 percent in year 1397 and it enjoyed 120 percent growth in 1398 (last Iranian calendar year) which is a unique record in the history of performance of municipalities in the country.

He added that this achievement shows the endeavors of all bodies in the municipality and city council, adding that some of the cash revenues have been materialized through collecting the debts or bartering the debts of the municipality.

Heydari noted that this achievement indicates that the city has enough dynamism and capability to provide its costs while today, one of the major concerns and challenges of municipalities in the country is in the financial field.

He reiterated that the achievement comes at the time when most municipalities in the country had faced problem in paying salaries of their forces while Mashhad Municipality granted one-million-toman bonuses to its workers and staff after the approval of the city council.

Heydari further said that when the economic section of the municipality is strong, it will give this opportunity to the municipality for offering more financial supports to its staff.

He said in 1396, the municipality only materialized 82 percent of its economic budget and in 1398 it hit 90 percent, adding that if the city can convince the Planning and Budget Organization, the figure will hit 120 percent in 1398.

Heydari also said that the council earmarked special supportive budget for the Coronavirus era and the budget worth 27b tomans which will be spent for providing food packages for the staff.

He reiterated that the life and progress of the city all relies directly on the economic power of the municipality and urges all organs and institutions to help the municipality to materialize its goals which is to develop the city.



Trusting Youths Bears Fruit In World Super Refinery



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Persian Gulf Star Oil Company as the biggest and youngest refinery of gas condensates in the world, by implementing the bases of resistance economy and trusting its experienced experts, registered another golden leaf in the national refining industry.

Managers of the company, by implementing the Supreme Leader's recommendations in trusting the young and revolutionary forces and implementing his recommendations in his statement on the Second Step of the Revolution, trusted the innovative projects of Eng. Kourosh Rezaee and could save the refinery's production operation during the outbreak of the Coronavirus.

Rezaee had presented his projects to the management of the company for manufacturing a machine for disinfecting the environment as well as making a smart gate for disinfecting and the projects were welcomed by the managers of the company.

The projects could resolve the problems and amended the weaknesses for disinfecting the areas in the refinery.

Such innovations are result of trusting the young talents in the country like Eng. Rezaee and it is indebted to the jihadi approach of managers of the super refinery of Persian Gulf Star as the refinery is symbol of resistance economy.

No Coronavirus-infected person in the refinery has been reported yet and it is because of Mr. Rezaee's innovation.

Eng. Rezaee, born in 1991, is one of the young forces of Persian Gulf Star Refinery who won the silver medal in the world innovation competition in 2008. He is a graduate from Tehran University.

First VP Visits Production Line In Kerman Motor Company

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – First Vice-President during his visit to Arge Jadid Special Economic Zone paid a visit to Kerman Motor Company.



According to reports, Mr. Eshaq Jahangiri during his visit to Arge Jadid Special Economic Zone also paid a visit to Kerman Motor Company in the town of Bam and toured the auto and part making plants of the company.

During the visit, Mayor of Bam, the manager of Arge Jadid Special Economic zone and the CEO of Kerman Auto-Making Group accompanied Mr. Jahangiri during his touring the company.

He visited five affiliate companies of Kerman Motor like Arg Net, Arman Electric, Arman Motor Arg, Powertrain and finally the production line of Kerman Motor Company and got acquainted with the activities of the companies and their challenges ahead.

At the end of his visit, he unveiled the first Hyundai Accent car which was manufactured by the company as 25 percent of the car is indigenous.

Felicitations Message on Labor Day

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – On the occasion of May 1 and Labor Day, the CEO of Hormuzgan Steel Company issued a felicitations message.

Mr. Farzad Arzani in his messaged congratulated the day to all workers and especially to the company's workers.

He said it is good opportunity to thank the hard-working layer of the society who plays a key role in pushing the country towards growth and boom.

In his message, Mr. Arzani reiterated that undoubtedly, recent achievements and records in Hormuzgan Steel Company are indebted to hard-working and jihadi workers of the company who did not stop working in the hardest time especially since the outbreak of the coronavirus as they produced products last month more than the nominal production capacity.

He expressed hope in this year which has been named Year of Surge in Production by the Supreme Leader, the company would achieve another success in production. He then wished the staff of the company and their families happiness and success.



SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

PERMIT NO : 1399.501



CALL FOR PUBLIC TENDER

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Subject of Tender: **CASING PIPE 9-5/8"**

• Tender descriptions:

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|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| National Iranian Drilling Company | 3234543 | PFP/AZD/99/001 48-22-9822018 | 363,645,000,000 |

• Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

| Method | Based on minimum scoring (50) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms. |
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• Purchasing & Submitting

| Tender Document Distribution by Company | The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth days thereof. | |
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| | Distribution Place | A) Hall No.316, 3th floor, Foreign Procurement Dept.(DRILLING PROJECTS), National Iranian Drilling Company, After Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: 061341468222 B) jomhour street , yaghma alley nioc 8th building floor no : 04 room no 428 -tehran -iran . Tel: 02166700249 |
| | Submitting Method | • Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. Of Iran Central Bank. • Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents. |
| Documents Receiving Method | Closing date | • 14 Days after the last time of Purchasing. |
| | Address | Hall NO.107,1st floor,Tender committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569 |

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| Type of guarantee | ✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran. |
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Chile Police Arrest dozens At Santiago May Day Protest

SANTIAGO (AFP) - Chilean police on Friday arrested dozens of people, including press photographers, when they broke up a May Day demonstration in the capital Santiago.

Demonstrators had gathered in the city's Plaza Italia in defiance of a government prohibition on public gatherings of more than 50 people as part of measures against the coronavirus.

Security forces quickly moved in to break up the protest, arresting 57 people. Among those detained were cameramen and photographers from international media, including an AFP photographer. They were later released without charge.



White House Blocks Fauci From Testifying to Congress

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Top U.S. health official Anthony Fauci will not testify next week to a congressional committee examining the Trump administration's response to the coronavirus pandemic, the White House said on Friday, calling it "counterproductive" to have individuals involved in the response testify.

The White House issued an emailed statement after a spokesman for the House of Representatives committee holding the hearing said the panel had been informed by Trump administration officials that Fauci had been blocked from testifying.



N. Korea's Kim Makes First Appearance in Nearly Three Weeks



SEOUL (AFP) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has made his first public appearance since speculation about his health began last month, cutting the ribbon at the opening of a fertilizer factory, KCNA reported Saturday.

Kim attended the event on Friday in Sunchon, near the capital Pyongyang, after nearly three weeks of swirling rumours that the leader of the nuclear-armed nation was seriously ill or possibly dead.

The North Korean leader had not made a public appearance since presiding over a Workers' Party politburo meeting on April 11, and the following day state media reported that he had inspected fighter jets.

At Friday's event, "all the participants broke into thunderous cheers of 'hurrah!'" when Kim appeared, the Korean Central news agency reported.

He inspected the facility and was "briefed about the production processes," the report said.

Kim "said with deep emotion" that his grandfather Kim Il Sung and father Kim Jong Il "would be greatly pleased if they heard the news that the modern phosphatic fertilizer factory has been built," it added.

Also in attendance were other senior officials, including his sister and close adviser, Kim Yo Jong. Photos from the ceremony were not immediately released.

Conjecture over Kim's health had grown since his conspicuous no-show at April 15 celebrations for the birthday of his grandfather, the North's founder -- the most important day in the country's political calendar.

His absence unleashed a series of unconfirmed reports over his condition, triggering global fears over the North's nuclear arsenal -- and who would succeed Kim were he unable to lead.

A top security advisor to South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said less than a week ago that Kim was "alive and well," downplaying rumors that he was ill or incapacitated.

The advisor, Moon Chung-in, told CNN that Kim had been staying in Wonsan -- a resort town in the east of North Korea -- since April 13, adding: "No suspicious movements have so far been detected."

Daily NK, an online media outlet run mostly by North Korean defectors, reported that Kim was undergoing treatment after a cardiovascular procedure last month.

Citing an unidentified source inside the country, it said Kim -- who is in his mid-30s -- had needed urgent treatment due to heavy smoking, obesity and fatigue.

Soon afterwards, CNN reported that Washington was "monitoring intelligence" that Kim was in "grave danger" after undergoing surgery, quoting an anonymous US official.

Canada Bans Assault Weapons After Deadliest Shooting

OTTAWA (AFP) - Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced an immediate ban on military-grade assault weapons in response to the country's deadliest-ever mass shooting, a rampage that left 22 people dead last month.

"These weapons were designed for one purpose, and one purpose only: to kill the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time," Trudeau told a news briefing. He said his government has approved a decree banning the sale, purchase, use, transport and import of 1,500 models of military-grade assault weapons and their variants.

"There is no use, and no place for such weapons in Canada," Trudeau said.

The killing spree began on the night of April 18 in Nova Scotia and led to a 13-hour manhunt for the shooter, who was eventually shot dead by police. Authorities have said the assailant -- identified as 51-year-old dentist Gabriel Wortman -- was wearing a police uniform, driving a mock police car, and had several guns with him including at least one assault-style weapon.

"For many families, including indigenous people, firearms are part of traditions passed down through generations, and the vast majority of gun owners use them safely, responsibly, and in accordance with the law, whether it be for work, sports shooting, for collecting or for hunting," Trudeau said.

"But you don't need an AR-15 to bring down a deer," he added. Mass shootings are less common in Canada than in the United States "but the heartbreaking truth is, they're happening more often than they once did," the prime minister said.

"Events like the recent tragedy in Nova Scotia, the attack in 2017 at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Quebec and the massacre that took place in 1989 at Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal should never have happened," he continued.

On January 29, 2017, a man known for his far-right, nationalist sympathies opened fire on worshippers praying at the Quebec City mosque, killing six people and seriously injuring several others.



French Life Will Not Be Normal After May 11

PARIS (Reuters) - President Emmanuel Macron warned on Friday that ending the national lockdown on May 11 would be only a first step for France to pull out of the coronavirus crisis, for which his handling faces mounting criticism.

Traditional Labour Day protests that usually draw thousands of demonstrators to the streets were cancelled this year due to the virus outbreak that has killed over 24,500 people across France.

"May 11 will not be the passage to normal life. There will be a recovery that will need to be organised," Macron said in a speech at the presidential palace after a meeting with horticulturists. "There will be several phases and May 11 will be one of them."

Unions organised online activities, asked people to bang pans and put out banners on balconies to mark labour day. Police disbanded a small protest in central Paris.

It was in stark contrast to this time last year when tens of thousands of labour union and "yellow vest" protesters were on the streets across France demonstrating against Macron's policies. The protests were marred when dozens of masked and hooded anarchists clashed with riot police.

Macron, in a message on his Twitter account, lauded the traditional parades and French workers, urging unity and solidarity during these tough times.

"There is a strong desire to once again find the joyful, although sometimes bickering May 1, which makes our nation. My dear compatriots, we will find them, those happy May 1sts!" But highlighting the rocky path ahead, union officials and far-right opposition leader Marine Le Pen were quick to underscore their concerns amid the crisis.

"Even if today we are confined, our demands are not," Yves Veyrier, head of the Force Ouvriere union, told France Inter radio. Le Pen pressed ahead with her party's annual May 1 tradition of honouring mediaeval heroine Joan of Arc by laying a wreath at the golden statue of the 15th century warrior in central Paris, despite the lockdown.

"I've never said I had doubts about the confinement. I just said that complete confinement was the solution when we failed to prevent the epidemic," Le Pen, wearing a mask, told reporters.

Britain Hits Coronavirus Testing Target as Death Toll Leaps Again

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain has hit its target of carrying out 100,000 COVID-19 tests a day, health minister Matt Hancock said on Friday, stressing that the program was crucial to helping ease a national lockdown.

Hancock also announced that the British death toll had risen by 739 to 27,510 deaths - just below that of Italy which was one of the first and worst-hit European states.

Hancock set the target of reaching 100,000 tests by the end of April after being criticised for moving too slowly on mass testing compared to other countries like Germany.

Since then, the government has increased the number of drive-through testing sites, begun sending out home tests and has rapidly expanded the number of people eligible to apply for a test.

At a news conference on Friday, Hancock said 122,347 tests were conducted in the 24 hours to 0800 GMT.

"This unprecedented expansion in British testing capability is an incredible achievement," he said. "Testing is crucial to suppress the virus ... It helps remove the worry. It helps keep people safe, and it will help us to unlock the lockdown." Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday that Britain had passed through the

coronavirus peak, and promised to set out next week how the country will start returning to normal life.

Nearly six weeks into the most stringent restrictions on daily life in Britain's peacetime history, Hancock was asked whether people could plan family gatherings and holidays for late summer.

"It's still too early to say and I'm really sorry to have to give that answer, but it is," he replied.

A mass testing program to gauge the spread of the virus through the population is seen as key to any easing of the social distancing measures that have all but shut down the economy and forced millions to stay at home.

The number of tests carried out has increased rapidly in recent days, and has risen from levels of around 10,000 per day in early April.

But political opponents immediately accused Hancock of manipulating the data.

Testing program coordinator John Newton said that home testing and some other testing kits were being included in the number of tests completed at the point they were sent out, not when they were analysed. These accounted for around 40,000 of the latest total.



Conte Apologizes to Italians As Lockdown Nears End

ROME (Dispatches) - Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte apologized to Italians on Friday for their economic hardships and promised a brighter future once the lockdown lifts.

Italy will begin to emerge from the world's longest coronavirus shutdown on Monday and see whether two months of containment were enough to avoid a new contagion wave.

The Mediterranean country's death toll has officially reached 27,967 -- second only to the United States -- but its daily infection rates are back down to levels last seen in early March.

The length of Italy's lockdown means its economy is on course to contract more sharply than the eurozone's average.

Half the workforce is relying on state support and the same number told a poll published in the Corriere della Sera daily on Friday that they were afraid of losing their job.

Conte admitted his government was late to pay out more than 50 billion euros (\$55 billion) assigned to struggling families and businesses.

"There have been and continue to be some delays in the payments," Conte wrote on Facebook.

"I apologized on behalf of the government and assure you that we will continue to press for the payments and financing to be completed as soon as possible."

The Italian government expects the economy to shrink by about eight percent this year -- slightly less than the 9.1 percent projected by the International Monetary Fund.

But Conte warned on Thursday that the drop could reach 10 percent if the virus begins to spread again and further containment measures are needed.

The health ministry is developing a set of criteria to determine when to sound the alarm about a returning virus threat.

These include whether contagion rates were putting an unbearable burden on hospitals and if regions had enough tests and other means to track cases.

Conte's government is reportedly only considering reimposing local lockdowns rather than a national one should infection rates edge back up.

The disease has been especially damaging to Italy because it primarily spread across three regions that account for 45 percent of its total economic output.





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J, balcony
marble fl
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S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

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Turkey's Annual Inflation to Fall in April

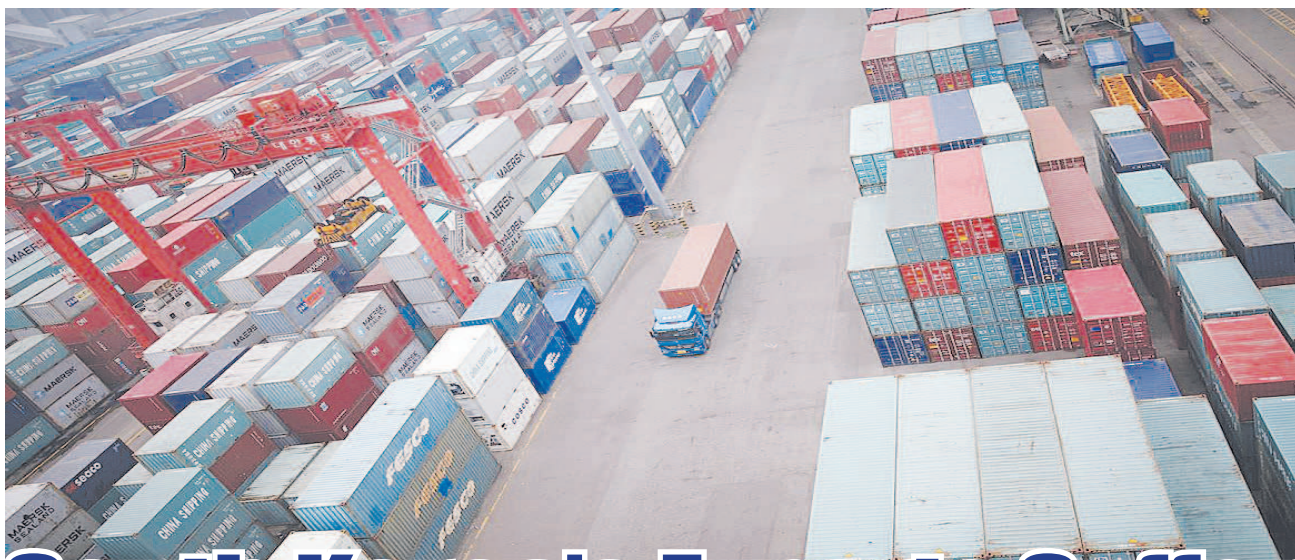
ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's annual inflation rate is predicted to drop to 10.79% in April, said a panel of economists.

The 19 economists polled by Anadolu Agency predicted a fall from March's yearly rate of 11.86%.

The consumer price index survey ranged between 0.17% at its lowest and 1.4% at its highest -- an average 0.72% monthly increase.

Year-end inflation is forecast at 9.03%, an average taken from estimates ranging between 7.10% and 10.50%.

The Turkish Statistical Institute is due to release the official inflation figures on May 4.



South Korea's Exports Suffer Worst Slump in 11 Years

SEOUL (Reuters) - The coronavirus crisis sent South Korean exports plunging in April at their sharpest pace since the global financial crisis, signaling a bleak outlook for international trade as the pandemic paralyses the world economy and shatters demand.

Exports dived 24.3% year-on-year in April, trade ministry data showed on Friday, the worst contraction since May 2009 but slightly slower than a 25.4% fall tipped in a Reuters survey. It slid 0.7% in the previous month. The average exports per working day, excluding the calendar effect, however, tumbled 17.4%, far worse than a 6.9% fall seen in March.

South Korea, Asia's fourth-largest economy, is considered a bellwether for world trade and is the first among major exporting economies to release data on shipments.

The grim numbers underline the sweeping impact of the pandemic and points to a rough period for international trade as factories struggle amid collapsing global demand. On Thursday, factory surveys for China, the world's biggest exporter, showed plummeting export orders.

"May will be extremely difficult for South Korea's exports. We could potentially see the dip in shipments bottoming out in May should the U.S. and Europe begin to normalise their economies," said Park Sang-hyun, Chief Economist at Hi Investment & Securities.

"I cautiously expect exports to fall at a slower rate from June, especially on more stimulus from China and as oil prices recover, which should help boost Korea's petrochemical products."

A breakdown of the trade data showed overseas sales of the country's top income earner semiconductors tumbled 14.9%, while those of oil products, car components and wireless devices plummeted 56.8%, 49.6% and 33.4%, respectively.

By destination, shipments to the biggest trading partner China fell 17.9%, even as factories there resumed operations, while those to the United States and the European Union also slumped 13.5% and 12.8% each.

Imports dropped 15.9% in April, reversing a 0.3% gain in the previous month and pushing the trade balance into a \$0.95 billion deficit, its first trade gap since January 2012.

More than 3.21 million people have been infected across the world, according to a Reuters tally, with nationwide infections in South Korea surpassing 10,700.

The virus pushed the South Korea's economy into its biggest contraction since 2008 in the first quarter, while the business outlook slumped to the worst on record.

Spanish GDP to Contract 9.2% in 2020

MADRID (Reuters) - Spain's gross domestic product (GDP) will contract 9.2% in 2020, surpassing the fall during the country's Great Recession of 2008-2013, Economy Minister Nadia Calvino said on Friday, as the coronavirus pandemic wrought havoc on the economy.

GDP is expected to recover in 2021 and expand 6.8%, Calvino said. The economy minister said she expected an "asymmetric V-shape recovery, with the deepest decrease in the second quarter and then a strong and gradual recovery in the second half of the year."

"Despite uncertainty, the government preferred to make forecasts more pessimistic and more prudent, which is more responsible when doing that kind of forecasts", Calvino told a news conference.

Spanish government expectations are worse than IMF predictions but aligned with recent Bank of Spain projections for 2020.

Despite the pessimistic tone of the forecasts, Calvino anticipated a recovery in the employment market in April, specially in the construction and agricultural sectors.

In the last two weeks of March, almost 900,000 jobs were lost.

On Feb. 11, prior to the imposition of a nationwide lockdown to counter the pandemic, Calvino had forecast 2020 GDP growth at 1.6% in the previous budget draft sent to Brussels to meet the EU fiscal schedule. April 30 was the last day for EU members to send an updated version of that budgetary plan.

Spain's current budget is an extension of the 2018 bill, approved by previous conservative leader, Mariano Rajoy. The political fragmentation in Spain - which has seen four elections in four years - makes it extremely difficult to pass a new budget.

The government also revised the 2020 deficit forecast to 10.34% and a 2020 debt to GDP ratio at 115.5%. This compared to a deficit goal of 1.8% of GDP given in February. "This is the widest deficit since 2012 when Spain reached 10.7%," Budget Minister Maria Jesus Montero said during the same news conference.

Montero stressed his commitment to EU fiscal rules.

"This government is aware that after this shock it has to start a process of fiscal consolidation that will allow it to close the gap".

COVID-19 to Cause Record Emissions Fall in 2020

PARIS (AFP) - COVID-19 is expected to cause global energy emissions to fall a record eight percent this year due to an unprecedented drop in demand for coal, oil and gas, the International Energy Agency said.

The IEA's Global Energy Review was based on an analysis of electricity demand over more than 100 days, during which much of the world has entered lockdown in a bid to control the pandemic.

It predicted that global energy demand would fall six percent in 2020 -- seven times more than during the 2008 financial crisis and the biggest year-on-year drop since World War II.

This would be the equivalent of losing the entire energy demand of India, the world's third-largest power consumer, the IEA said.

Advanced economies are set to see the biggest declines, with demand in the United States down nine percent and an 11-percent fall in the European Union likely.

"This is a historic shock to the entire energy world," said IEA executive director Fatih Birol.

"The plunge in demand for nearly all major fuels is staggering, especially for coal, oil and gas." With consumption falling, the IEA said it had noticed a "major shift" to low-carbon sources of power, such as wind and solar, which are set to make up 40 percent of global electricity generation -- six percentage points more than coal.

Coal and natural gas "are finding themselves increasingly squeezed between low overall power demand and increasing output from renewables," the report said.

Natural gas demand is set to fall five percent in 2020 after a decade of uninterrupted growth.

Following a 2018 peak, coal-fired power generation is set to fall more than 10 percent this year.

Overall, energy-related carbon emissions are set to fall by almost eight percent, reaching their lowest level since 2010.

If this plays out this would be by far the largest annual decrease on record, more than six times larger than the 2009 fall precipitated by the global financial crisis.

The United Nations says CO2 emissions must fall by 7.6 percent annually through to 2030 in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.6 Fahrenheit), the most ambitious temperature cap of the Paris climate accord.

Until COVID-19 struck, emissions had been rising year on year.

Reacting to the IEA's report, Richard Black, Director of the Britain-based Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit, said how the global economy recovered in the long term from the pandemic would be key for the climate.

"In recent weeks there have been robust promises from national leaders and calls from businesses for post-coronavirus stimulus packages to accelerate the clean energy transition," Black said.

"If these pledges come good... then the crisis could come to be seen as a genuine turning point for world energy markets."

COVID AND WOMEN

By UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

Early signs are that the COVID-19 virus poses a greater direct health risk to men, and particularly older men. But the pandemic is exposing and exploiting inequalities of all kinds, including gender inequality. In the long term, its impact on women's health, rights and freedoms could harm us all.

Women are already suffering the deadly impact of lockdowns and quarantines. These restrictions are essential -- but they increase the risk of violence towards women trapped with abusive partners. Recent weeks have seen an alarming global surge in domestic violence; the largest support organization in the UK reported a 700 percent increase in calls. At the same time, support services for women at risk face cuts and closures.

This was the background to my recent appeal for peace in homes around the world. Since then, more than 143 governments have committed to supporting women and girls at risk of violence during the pandemic. Every country can take action by moving services online, expanding domestic violence shelters and designating them as essential, and increasing support to frontline organizations. The United Nations' partnership with the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative [link], is working with governments in more than 25 countries on these and similar measures, and stands ready to expand its support.

But the threat to women's rights and freedoms posed by COVID-19 goes far beyond physical violence. The deep economic downturn accompanying the pandemic is likely to have a distinctly female face.

The unfair and unequal treatment of working women is one reason why I went into politics. In the late 1960s, as a student volunteer doing social work in poor areas of Lisbon, I saw women in very difficult situations, doing menial jobs and carrying the weight of their extended families. I knew this had to change -- and I have seen important change in my lifetime.

But decades later, COVID-19 threatens to bring back these conditions and worse, for many women around the world.

Women are disproportionately represented in poorly paid jobs without benefits, as domestic workers, casual labourers, street vendors, and in small-scale services like hairdressing. The International Labour Organization estimates that nearly 200 million jobs will be lost in the next three months alone -- many of them in exactly these sectors.

And just as they are losing their paid employment, many women face a huge increase in care work due to school closures, overwhelmed health systems, and the increased needs of older people.

And let's not forget the girls who have had their education cut short. In some villages in Sierra Leone, school enrolment rates for teenage girls fell from 50 to 34 percent after the Ebola epidemic,



with lifelong implications for their wellbeing and that of their communities and societies.

Many men, too, are facing job losses and conflicting demands. But even at the best of times, women do three times as much domestic work as men. That means they are more likely to be called on to look after children if businesses open while schools remain closed, delaying their return to the paid labour force.

Entrenched inequality also means that while women make up seventy percent of healthcare workers, they are vastly outnumbered by men in healthcare management, and comprise just one in every ten political leaders worldwide -- which harms us all. We need women at the table when decisions are taken on this pandemic, to prevent worst-case scenarios like a second spike in infections, labour shortages, and even social unrest.

Women in insecure jobs urgently need basic social protections, from health insurance to paid sick leave, childcare, income protection and unemployment benefits. Looking ahead, measures to stimulate the economy, like cash transfers, credits, loans and bailouts, must be targeted at women -- whether they are working full-time in the formal economy, as part-time or seasonal workers in the informal economy, or as entrepreneurs and business owners.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clearer than ever that women's unpaid domestic labour is subsidizing both public services and private profits. This work must be included in economic metrics and decision-making. We will all gain from working arrangements that recognize people's caring responsibilities, and from inclusive economic models that value work in the home.

This pandemic is not only challenging global health systems, but our commitment to equality and human dignity.

With women's interests and rights front and centre, we can get through this pandemic faster, and build more equal and resilient communities and societies that benefit everyone.

ECB Ready to Reload as Unprecedented Slump Hits



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - With the coronavirus pandemic set to inflict an "unprecedented" peacetime slump on the eurozone economy, European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde said the institution's trillion-euro response could be expanded and prolonged into 2021.

The ECB's Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP), launched last month, "might be extended further than the end of 2020" depending on "the length of the crisis", Lagarde told reporters in a telephone press conference.

The former IMF chief and French finance minister also reiterated her longstanding plea for governments to flank the ECB's easy-money policies with fiscal policy, saying "an ambitious and coordinated fiscal stance is critical".

"The euro area is facing an economic contraction of a magnitude and speed that are unprecedented in peacetime," Lagarde said.

ECB economists expect output in the 19-nation currency club to shrink by "five to 12 percent" this year, she added, saying the size of the contraction will depend on the duration of the confinement measures aimed at curbing the outbreak and the policy responses.

"As containment measures are gradually lifted, these scenarios foresee a recovery in economic activity although its speed and scale remain highly uncertain," Lagarde said.

The grim tone came after Eurostat figures on Thursday showed that the locked-down eurozone economy was estimated to have shrunk by 3.8 percent in the first quarter.

Further highlighting how much damage the pandemic has already done to the global economy, Germany announced that its jobless total soared to 2.6 million in April from 2.3 million the month before and France confirmed that it had plunged into recession.

Lagarde said a "sharp downturn in economic activity in April suggests that the impact is likely to be even more severe in the second quarter," with output possibly shrinking 15 percent.

"In the last six weeks, the ECB has been very successful in stopping panic on financial markets and stabilising banks," economist Marcel Fratzscher of the Berlin-based DIW think-tank commented.

"Unfortunately the ECB's success has taken the pressure off politicians to swiftly implement the necessary European solutions" on the fiscal side, Fratzscher added.

Iranian Director Wins Sydney Film Festival Award

TEHRAN (IRNA) - “Pain is Mine”, a documentary by an Iranian/Australian film director- Farshid Akhlaqi- won award from Sydney Film Festival held in Australia. Pain is Mine, produced in 2018, narrates the story of a woman who had been addicted to pain-killer drugs. Films in the Sydney Film Festival have not been screened for public due to the deadly coronavirus pandemic which has killed about 340,000 across the world since its outbreak in December 2019. Jury members were the sole participants in the festival.



Bollywood Mourns Another Star as Rishi Kapoor Dies at 67

MUMBAI (AFP) - Bollywood mourned a second loss in as many days as celebrated actor Rishi Kapoor, whose career spanned half a century, died Thursday aged 67 after a prolonged struggle with cancer.

His death came as a severe blow to the Hindi movie industry and film lovers, who were already reeling from the passing Wednesday of Irfan Khan, one of the country’s most feted actors, aged 53.

“Our dear Rishi Kapoor passed away peacefully... today after a two-year battle with leukemia,” his family said in a statement. Fellow actor Amitabh Bachchan was among the first to mourn his death, tweeting: “I am destroyed”.

Born September 4, 1952, into the prolific Kapoor dynasty -- which has produced four generations of actors including his son, Ranbir -- he made his debut in the 1970’s epic “Mera Naam Joker” (“My Name is Joker”).

He received India’s National Award for best child actor for his performance in the film, which his father Raj produced, directed and starred in.

But it was his later persona as a romantic lead that won him legions of fans, who flocked to cinemas to see him sing, dance and charm his way into their hearts in films such as the 1973 superhit “Bobby”, and the 1977 comedy “Amar Akbar Anthony”.

As Kapoor grew older, the romantic roles ceased, allowing him the opportunity to display greater versatility. He terrified audiences as a human trafficker in 2012’s “Agneepath” (“Path of Fire”) and won applause for his portrayal of a cantankerous porn-watching grandfather in 2016’s “Kapoor & Sons”.



After being diagnosed with cancer in 2018 he sought treatment in New York, but was looking to resume work shortly with plans to film a remake of the 2015 Hollywood film “The Intern”.

He was forced to return to hospital this month, where, his family said, “the doctors and medical staff... said he kept them entertained to the last”.

Indian Mechanic Invents Social Distancing Motorbike



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - An Indian school drop-out has built a motorbike with a one-metre gap between the rider and the passenger to drive home the importance of social distancing in the coronavirus pandemic.

Partha Saha, 39, bought an old bike from a scrap dealer, removed the engine and cut the machine in two before affixing a rod slightly longer than a metre (3.2 feet) to connect the wheels.

“Now I can ride with my eight-year-old daughter while maintaining a safe distance,” he told AFP from Agartala in the northeastern state of Tripura.

Like other countries, the Indian government has imposed a nationwide lockdown and urged citizens to practise social distancing to curb the spread of the virus.

As of Thursday, India had reported 33,050 cases of COVID-19, with 1,074 deaths.

When the nation extended its lockdown this month until at least May 3, Saha realised the battle against the virus might not be over any time soon.

He used up his meagre savings to make the vehicle, which he plans to use to ferry his daughter to and from school once the restrictions are lifted.

“I didn’t want her to take the school bus as it would be crowded,” said Saha, who works in a TV repair shop.

His new bike runs on battery power and has a top speed of 40 kilometres per hour (25 mph).

It takes three hours to charge the battery, which allows the bike to travel 80 kilometres (50 miles), Saha said.

“The cost of charging it once comes to about 10 rupees (13 cents),” he added.

The mechanic has already tried out his invention on the streets, leaving onlookers stunned at the design and drawing praise from Biplab Kumar Deb, Tripura’s chief minister.

“Necessity is the mother of invention! I congratulate Partha Saha... for making a unique motorcycle to create awareness during COVID-19 pandemic,” Deb tweeted.

Brazil National Debt Jumps to 78.4% of GDP, Nears New Record

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil’s public finances deteriorated in March, figures on Thursday showed, with the government recording a sharp widening of its primary and nominal deficits while the national debt rose sharply towards its highest on record.

The figures are an early indication of the looming hit to the government’s budget as the lockdowns and sudden halt to large swathes of economic activity due to coronavirus boost crisis-fighting spending and dry up tax revenues.

The overall public sector posted a primary budget deficit excluding interest payments of 23.7 billion reais (\$4.3 billion) in March, the central bank said, slightly less than the 24.8 billion reais shortfall forecast in a Reuters poll of economists.

That was the widest primary deficit in over a year. As a share of gross domestic product over the 12 months to March the primary deficit widened to 0.9%.

The nominal deficit, including interest payments, swelled to 79.7 billion reais. According to Refinitiv data, that was the fourth largest in 20 years, only behind three months during the 2015-16 recession.

The national debt rose to 5.76 trillion reais, or 78.4% of gross domestic product, driven by increased gross debt issuance, nominal interest rates and the impact of a weaker currency, the central bank said.

The 1.7 percentage point increase from the previous month marked the biggest rise since at least 2006, according to Refinitiv data, and takes the national debt back up towards last year’s high of 79% of GDP.

Net debt, however, fell to 51.1% of GDP, the lowest since September 2018, in large part due to the real’s 15.6% depreciation against the dollar in the month, the central bank said.

Crude Crash Brings Down Singapore Oil Tycoon

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore tycoon O.K. Lim built up his oil empire from a single-truck outfit through hard work and high-risk gambles, a rags-to-riches tale that made him a legend among crude traders.

But it all came crashing down when oil markets were plunged into unprecedented turmoil by the coronavirus pandemic and revealed the keen poker player appeared to have overplayed his hand.

Lim -- who projected a down-to-earth image but was, according to people who knew him, a “major risk-taker” -- dashed to court seeking protection from creditors for his firm Hin Leong Trading last month. In a bombshell affidavit seen by AFP, Lim revealed the oil trader had “in truth... not been making profits in the last few years” -- despite having officially reported a healthy profit in 2019.

U.S. Imposes...

FROM PAGE 1

According to the complaint, Dianat and Lajmirmir in 2019 conspired to purchase a petroleum tanker in a scheme involving the National Iranian Oil Company, the National Iranian Tanker Company and the IRGC’s Quds Force.

If convicted of the charges, the two men would face a maximum of 20 years imprisonment.

“These defendants purchased a crude oil tanker valued at over \$10 million by illegally using the US financial system, defiantly violating U.S. sanctions,” Assistant Attorney General for National Security John

Demers said in the statement.

Meanwhile, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin claimed that the Iranian government continues to “prioritize the funding of international terrorist organizations over the health and well-being of the Iranian people,” adding, “The United States remains committed to working with financial institutions, non-profit organizations, and international partners to facilitate humanitarian trade and assistance to the Iranian people.”

Iran has been among the countries hardest hit by the coronavirus that first showed up in China in late December 2019 before spreading across the globe. It has recorded 95,646 COVID-19 infection cases and a death toll of 6,091 so far.

U.S. Plan to Say...

FROM PAGE 1

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday that Washington was considering “every possibility” to renew the ban on selling conventional arms to Iran.

“We’re not going to let that happen,” he said, adding that the U.S. administration is urging the three European signatories to the JCPOA “to take action which is within their capacity today.”

“We’ll work with the UN Security Council to extend that prohibition on those arms sales,” he continued.

U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook said on Thursday that Washington had drafted a Security Council resolution on the issue and was “hopeful” the 15-member body will extend the arms embargo on Iran before it expires. However, Russia and China, both parties to the JCPOA, are unlikely to allow that with their veto power.

To circumvent the veto, the US will argue that it legally remains a “participant state” in the nuclear deal only to invoke a “snapback” that would restore the UN sanctions, which had been in place against Iran prior to the JCPOA’s inking. “Therefore, the Americans have nothing to say and lack any legal arguments,” Takht-Ravanchi said, adding that their measure will certainly be dismissed by the UN member states and the Security Council.

“What the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and some other officials said have been rejected and have no legal standing in international law,” he noted.

Zarif...

FROM PAGE 1

On the U.S. state secretary’s proposal for using a mechanism embedded within the JCPOA to make the UN maintain the arms embargo on Tehran, Rabiee told the U.S., “You’re wrong. Other countries are not playthings in your hands, and they do honor international commitments.”

The UN Security Council members and the JCPOA parties are well aware that extension of the arms embargo on Iran will have “dire consequence” not only for the JCPOA but also for regional security and stability, he warned.

“We think we have sent this clear message to the U.S. and others that extension of the arms embargo on Iran contravenes the previous agreements and will draw a harsh reaction from the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Rabiee underlined. “We are confident that the US will not accomplish this objective,” the spokesman stated.

There is no place for such bullying acts in the international arena, he added. “We believe that the JCPOA member states and the permanent members of the Security Council will definitely oppose this American law-breaking.”

80% Iranian Patients...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile yesterday, Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi said that Red, Yellow, and White criteria are defined based on the number of hospitalization and death toll.

In response to a question on based on what criteria Red, Yellow, and White regions are announced and what protocols are required to reopen holy shrines and religious places, deputy health minister Harirchi stated the three regions are defined based on the number of hospitalization and death toll.

“The main focus is on white zones, not provinces, the cities which during fourteen days have less than an individual in a day,” Harirchi added, saying: “The zones in which less than one person hospitalized in less than a day, for a period of 14 days, the reopening in these areas will be done if the National Task Force on Combating Corona approves that.”

“The Mosques, Sports centers, or driver training centers in the white zones will be opened based on developing hygienic protocols, for example, those who do praying at mosques are obliged to take their personal prayer mats with themselves and keeping standard distance, the time is not decent to hold religious speeches,” Harirchi said.

The official elsewhere noted that places where the amount of infections is high labeled as red zones. There are 72 cities and places where the number of infections is moderate, not low or on high, labeled as yellows zones which reach 448 cities.

Referring to developing hygienic protocols Harirchi stated that the colored regions are on the edge, by any negligence even in the white ones we will back to square one.

Iran Can Export...

FROM PAGE 1

He added that knowledge-based companies can benefit from international leasing in addition to domestic leasing of products.

Sattari that developing the export market of knowledge-based companies is one of the measures that can facilitate the jump in the production; therefore, over 4,700 knowledge-based companies, if eligible, can benefit from international leasing.

The export of knowledge-based products is one of the goals that the managers of many of these technology units have spontaneously set as a goal.

These companies have already made significant strides in this area. These successes are valuable and significant as they have been achieved despite sanctions and restrictions. The activation of privately managed export bases is one of the services offered in this regard.

Domestic leasing of knowledge-based products is currently active and covers up to 80% of the contracts.

Based on this, the international leasing plan of knowledge-based products has also been activated.

Knowledge-based companies that can receive the necessary guarantees from the Export Guarantee Fund can benefit from these services.

Daesh...

FROM PAGE 1

The group played a major role pushing back and ultimately defeating the terrorist forces which had taken control of a large swathes of the Arab country.

The Iraqi parliament voted to integrate the PMU into the Iraqi military in 2016, effectively placing the force under the command of the prime minister and granting the group a standing similar to that of other branches of Iraqi security forces.

The combined push, which was reinforced by Iraq’s allies, including Iran, ultimately led to Daesh’s expulsion in late 2017.

Daesh remnants, who conduct sporadic attacks against Iraqi security forces and civilians alike with increasing regularity, attempt to regroup and wage a new era of its reign of terror and destruction in the region.

Attacks by Daesh terrorist group on police checkpoints in northern Iraq have killed two security forces.

Following the United States’ assassination of Iran’s top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and PMU’s deputy commander, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in the capital city of Baghdad, Daesh has intensified its attacks in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the U.S. and Israel have repeatedly attacked the positions of the PMU and its affiliated groups and killed dozens of their members.

The PMU has long rejected Washington’s military presence in the country as an obstacle impeding long-lasting security and stability in Iraq.

Trippier Charged Over Alleged Breach of Betting Rules

LONDON (AFP) - England international Kieran Trippier has been charged by the English Football Association over allegedly breaching betting rules in July 2019, the month he moved from Tottenham to Atletico Madrid.

The 29-year-old was a star of England's run to the World Cup semi-finals in 2018 and helped Spurs to the Champions League final last season before a reported £20 million (\$25 million) move to Spain.

Trippier has been given until May 18 to respond.

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NBA Tells Teams Don't Test For Virus Without Symptoms

NEW YORK (AFP) - The NBA has advised teams not to arrange coronavirus tests for players and staff not showing symptoms, ESPN reported Friday, saying it was inappropriate with only limited public testing available.

Citing unnamed sources, ESPN said an NBA memo declared that "for the time being, it is not appropriate in the current public health environment to regularly test all players and staff for the coronavirus."

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

SUNDAY MAY 3, 2020

Premier League Re-States Commitment To Finish Season

LONDON (Dispatches) - Premier League clubs reconfirmed their commitment to finish the 2019/20 season subject to coronavirus restrictions being lifted in Britain despite fears expressed by players.

The English top flight faces an eye-watering estimated loss of around £1 billion (\$1.25 billion) if no more football is played due to the global pandemic.

Playing the 92 remaining games behind closed doors would mitigate that loss, avoiding the need to repay hundreds of millions to broadcasters.

But the Premier League faces huge logistical difficulties in its attempts to return to action, with Britain one of the countries worst-hit by COVID-19.

The league and clubs discussed possible steps towards resuming the season at a meeting on Friday.

"The league and clubs are considering the first tentative moves forward and will only return to training and playing with government guidance, under expert medical advice and after consultation with players and managers," the Premier League said in a statement.

"The clubs reconfirmed their commitment to finishing the 2019/20 season, maintaining integrity of the competition and welcomed the government's support."

The British government is due to review a nationwide lockdown on May 7 and Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised on Thursday to provide a "roadmap" towards easing restrictions.

Liverpool are on the brink of their first league title for 30 years with a 25-point lead at the top of the table.



However, players are questioning whether they are being rushed back into action to save the clubs money. "Obviously, the majority of players are scared but above all because they have children, babies and family, they might live with their parents," Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero told Spanish show El Chiringuito TV.

"If we return I am sure everyone will be tense because the minute one person starts to feel ill, it will be 'what's going on there?'"

Players would potentially face weeks away from their families, quarantined in hotels.

"I am hoping that it doesn't come to that scenario," said Brighton striker Glenn Murray.

"That is far-fetched, to spend eight weeks away from your family is quite a big ask."

A large supply of privately sourced tests would be needed for players, coaches and backroom staff. Testing has been a thorny political issue during the pandemic in Britain, with many frontline workers unable to access tests until recently.

"If football was to resume then testing will be key and an extra layer of training will be required," former Chelsea doctor Eva Carneiro told the BBC.

"It only takes one case for all of this to blow up."

Bale Interested In Playing In MLS



MADRID (AFP) - Gareth Bale has said he would be interested in playing in Major League Soccer in America if he leaves Real Madrid.

Bale has not been a regular in Zinedine Zidane's team this season and the 30-year-old almost departed last summer, before a move to Chinese club Jiangsu Suning fell through.

Any MLS club keen to sign Bale would likely have to overcome the huge financial implications of a deal. Bale's Madrid contract ends in 2022 and earns him close to 30 million euros (\$33 million) a year before tax.

"I really like the league," said Bale, speaking to the Hat-Trick podcast presented by the ICC, in an episode released on Thursday.

"I think it's grown so much over the years. When we come over and play them in pre-season, the games are difficult, the standard is getting a lot better. The clubs are improving, the facilities are improving, the stadiums are improving."

"I think it's a league that's on the up and still rising. I think a lot more players want to come over to America now and play. I would definitely be interested in it."

Lyon to Claim Dozens Of Millions in Damages

PARIS (Reuters) - Olympique Lyonnais will seek millions of euros in damages as they face being deprived of European competition for the first time in a quarter of a century following the decision to end the Ligue 1 season, club president Jean-Michel Aulas said.

The French League (LFP) said it was ending the 2019-20 campaign amid the COVID-19 crisis, resulting in Lyon finishing seventh, outside of the positions that would offer a place in European competition for next season. With some teams having played 27 matches and others 28, the LFP drew up the final standings according to a performance index - number of points per game weighed by head-to-head record.

"It's a big loss of opportunity that has a financial value that amounts to dozens of million euros, which will be claimed in damages," Aulas, whose club won the Ligue 1 title from 2002-08 and reached the Champions League's last four in 2010, told local newspaper Le Progres.

Aulas argued the season could have been finished in the form of playoffs behind closed doors in August and that the ranking method was disputable.

"We see that these standings are illogical. I don't want to single out a club more than another but Nice played at home more than us and faced Paris St Germain (PSG) only once while we played them twice," he explained. Reuters has contacted Aulas and Lyon for comment.

Lyon were seventh after 28 games on 40 points, 10 behind third-placed Stade Rennais, who occupy the last European Champions League qualifying spot. PSG were awarded the title with second-placed Olympique de Marseille securing direct access to the Champions League group phase.

"Over the last 10 years, OL (Olympique Lyonnais) caught up at least three times with the second-placed team while lagging more than 10 points behind," said Aulas.

Lyon, who have featured in a European competition every season since 1995-96, are still in this year's Champions League.

They beat Juventus 1-0 in the first leg of their last-16 tie and could still play in the competition next season if they win it this year, should it be completed.

However the Premier League is keen to avoid potential legal challenges over the awarding of much more tightly contested European places, relegation and promotion if the season cannot be completed.

Paris Saint-Germain were declared Ligue 1 champions on Thursday after French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced sport could not resume before September.

The decision to end the season based on average points per game has angered some clubs, most notably Lyon, who have threatened legal action after missing out on a European place.

Key to any restarting of matches in the Premier League is government support. Oliver Dowden, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, struck a positive tone after a meeting with leaders of a number of sports on Friday.

"We just kicked off first of many detailed meetings to plan for a safe return of elite sport behind closed doors when, and only when, it is safe to do so on the basis of expert medical advice," Dowden tweeted.

Djokovic Considered Quitting in 2010

MILAN (Dispatches) - World number one Novak Djokovic has revealed how he considered quitting tennis in 2010 as he struggled against great rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

The 32-year-old was ranked third in the world and had lifted his first Grand Slam at the 2008 Australian Open.

But he was plunged into the depths of despair in 2010 after letting a two-sets lead slip in a French Open quarter-final clash against Austrian Jurgen Melzer. "This defeat was really difficult for me emotionally," the Serb said in an interview with Sky Sports Italia.

"I cried after being knocked out. It was a bad moment, I wanted to quit tennis because I saw everything black."

"I had won in Australia in 2008, I was number three in the world, but I wasn't happy. I knew I could do more, but I lost the more important matches against Federer and Nadal."

The Melzer defeat proved a turning point.

"From that moment on I felt liberated," said Djokovic.

"It took off the pressure, I started playing more aggressively, here was the turning point."

In 2011, Djokovic won three Grand Slams and now has a total of 17 -- three short of Federer's all-time men's record, and two fewer than Nadal.



Beckenbauer Corruption Trial Ends Without Verdict



BERLIN (Dispatches) - German football great Franz Beckenbauer's trial on corruption charges linked to the 2006 World Cup has ended without a verdict after previously being put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The five-year-long trial, held in Switzerland, of 74-year-old Beckenbauer and three other men was suspended because of the health crisis and the statute of limitations has now expired.

Beckenbauer, who headed the organising committee for the 2006 World Cup, had denied the allegations.

FIFA said it was disappointed that the trial would not proceed.

"FIFA is deeply disappointed that the trial related to the FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 will not take place because it has now become time barred," world football's governing body said in a statement.

"The fact that the case has now ended without a result of any kind is very worrying, not only for football but also for the administration of justice in Switzerland."

FIFA said it hoped the "truth" around the payment of 10 million Swiss francs at the centre of the accusations would come to light one day.

"For FIFA this case is certainly not over as we cannot and will not accept that a CHF 10 million payment is made from FIFA accounts without a proper reason."

Australia Topple India in Test Rankings

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Australia moved to the top of the official test rankings on Friday but coach Justin Langer said the toppled India team still remained the benchmark for them.

Australia's rise ended India's stay at the top since October 2016 in the latest update, based on results over the past three years, which removes Virat Kohli and his men's impressive 12-1 win-loss record in the 2016-17 period. Professional cricket remains suspended because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has also clouded the outlook for this year's Twenty20 World Cup in Australia.

"I said in my first conference as coach we will know we are a great team if we can beat India in India and that is certainly a great goal for us," Langer said in a Cricket Australia news release.

"We know they are so tough to beat so only then will we really know we can claim the number one spot."

"The last time we played India here they beat us for the first time in Australia so we will be determined to beat them when they come back."

India, who registered their maiden test series victory in Australia last year, are scheduled to tour Down Under later this year.

Whitewashed 2-0 in their last test series in New Zealand this year, India slipped to third position, behind the Blackcaps, with only two points separating the top three teams.

