

Iranian Lawmakers Yesterday Once Again Rejected the Bill on Dividing the Industries, Mine and Trade Ministry and Forming an Independent Ministry of Commerce

IRAN NEWS

Head of Iran's Health Ministry's Public Relations Office Said on Sunday That Some 51 More Iranians Died of Coronavirus Over the Past 24 Hours and Death Toll Reached 6,640

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IRGC Planning To Place Satellite In Geostationary Orbit

TEHRAN (MNA) – A high-ranking commander in the IRGC says that the force is planning to put satellites into an orbit of 36,000 kilometers which is also known as geostationary orbit.

“We have plans to improve orbit altitudes and reach 36,000km above the earth with the help of our scientists in the IRGC and Defense Ministry,” Second Brigadier General Ali Jafarabadi, commander of IRGC Aerospace Force’ space division, said in an interview on Sunday.

The altitude that the commander refers to is known as geostationary orbit or geosynchronous equatorial orbit (GEO). At a distance of 36,000 km, the orbiting time is 24 hours, corresponding to the Earth’s rotation time. At this distance, a satellite above the Equator will be stationary in relation to the Earth.

“GEO is important because it is being specially used for communications satellites,” he said, describing the altitude as ‘very strategic’.

“Placing satellites in this orbit will have revenues for the country while also being a tool to maintain the country’s assets in space such as locations on GEO.”

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Swiss Humanitarian Channel Neutralized By U.S. Policies

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran-Switzerland Joint Chamber of Commerce President, Sharif Nezam-Mafi told ILNA that the Trump administration uses Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA) as one of its propaganda tools.

The Iranian official said “The United States claims to have set up a humanitarian channel, but in practice does not allow it to be used.”

Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA) is a payment mechanism aimed at enabling the basic goods to be delivered to Iran.

The aim of the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement is to ensure that exporters and trading companies in the food, pharmaceutical, and medical sectors based in Switzerland have a secure payment channel with a Swiss bank through which payments for their exports to Iran are guaranteed.

He added that this channel is like the “Piggy bank”; when the United States does not allow money to be transferred to this channel, it is clear that this process is not practical.

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Leader: West Doesn't Want Its Virus Failures to Be Seen



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei says the United States and the Europeans do not want their failures in fighting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to be seen.

He made the remarks in a video call to a meeting of the National Headquarters for Managing and Fighting the Coronavirus in Tehran on Sunday.

“The West and those supporting the West do not want this failure to be seen, but it is necessary to examine and articulate the dimensions of this inability,” the Leader said.

“The coronavirus spread in the United States and Europe later than other countries. It means that these countries had the opportunity to prepare themselves in the face of the virus, but they couldn’t as it was required,” Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

“The high number of infections and deaths in the United States and some European countries and various problems the people have in these countries, including unemployment, prove their inabilities,” he added.

The Leader also pointed out that the West’s social philosophy proved to be a total failure in tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that social philosophy in the Western world is primarily driven by materialism and money.

“That is why they ignored the elderly, the sick, the underprivileged and the socially underdeveloped during the corona crisis. Because [people belonging to] these social groups are incapable of earning money and contributing to materialism. The result was that many lost their lives in elderly care homes – a further proof of the defeat of the West’s social philosophy.”

The Leader also highlighted the failure of ethics and how it was manifested in Western communities in recent times. He recalled how panicked shoppers raided store shelves in those countries, noting, “Despite all their claims, the West failed in this respect as well.”

Meanwhile earlier President Hassan Rouhani said that today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is very proud of controlling and combatting the disease compared to other countries.

Addressing the meeting of National Headquarters for Managing and Fighting the Coronavirus, President Rouhani, Ministers of Health and Interior, and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Force presented reports to the Leader in the session.

The President gave a report on the current state of the outbreak of coronavirus in the country and the measures taken to control and stop the spread of the virus and services provided to patients in this regard, appreciating the hard work of doctors and medical staff and other sectors working in this regard saying, “Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is very proud in controlling and combatting the disease compared to other countries.”

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SHTA Not Enough for Meeting Iran's Needs

NEW YORK (IP) - Iran’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations said Switzerland’s humanitarian channel known as Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA) is insufficient to meet Iran’s needs.

Speaking on Saturday evening at the International Webinar of “U.S., Sanctions, COVID-19, A Global Threat”, Majid Takht-Ravanchi referred to the SHTA and considered the channel insufficient to meet Iran’s needs, adding: “The U.S. Treasury Department’s requirement to issue licenses to companies applying for the channel is so strict that it is difficult to trade in this way.”

The Iranian diplomat referred to the continuation of four decades of inhumane U.S. sanctions against Iran and explained the devastating effects of these sanctions on Iran’s fight against coronavirus.

He said all humanity is on a united front in the fight against coronavirus, adding that any restriction on the ability of countries to do so would undermine global efforts to contain the disease.

Noting that Iran has had one of the largest outbreaks of the coronavirus, Iran’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations said the US unilateral sanctions have weakened efforts to fight the disease, adding that sanctions, like the fifth column of the enemy in the middle of the war, will hurt countries.

Rejecting claims by U.S. officials that human and medical exchanges were exempt from sanctions, he said it was “practically impossible” to do so.

Takht-Ravanchi also referred to the widespread economic and human losses of coronavirus in Iran and other countries and called on the immediate lifting of all banking, insurance, transportation, medical, industrial, export, import, and other sanctions to help the affected countries.

The webinar was delivered by the Ambassadors of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba, Zimbabwe, and Nicaragua to the United Nations and held by the NGO “Sanctions are Deadly” via video conferencing.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The West Means Double Standard

Defining the current condition, which is dominating the political, social and cultural structure in the West, is like a coin which completely manifests two fully opposite and contradictory sides. We do not forget that during the assassination of martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the White House, by using media as its tool, was trying to show that the assassination was a masterpiece but even the Americans reacted to this puppet show by staging some protests and there were also some fair analyses on the event. So these approaches and taking stands have targeted the hypocrisy of the Western governments like the U.S. that today people in the world consider the U.S.’s leadership policy as ‘double standard and even do not recognize it.

For a realistic analysis of a variable philosophy in the current condition of the West either the U.S. or Europe and some of their satellite states who trample down all criteria if they feel it is necessary, it does not need to go far. Just have a look at the JCPOA. A government approves and accepts its obligations and another government ignores all its predecessor’s obligations and beats the drum of distrust in the world. This is just those contradictory standards or better to say double standards.

I remember well that in my articles in the past, I had used the word “double standard” because when I say double standard, you are better to translate it into hypocrisy and duplicity because diplomats use the expression of double standard for not applying it for duplicity. Otherwise in a simple and understandable language for all, today the West and comparatively the East, which believe the end justifies any means, are administered based on Machiavellianism methods.

One of many clear examples which verify my view is that Western countries’ policies are based on magnifying defects and weaknesses in other countries like Iran by trying to show other countries are insecure and by creating rift among governments and nations, while this Coronavirus pandemic has made public the huge gap between people, statesmen and the rich people. Let’s have a look at the U.S. elections. How presidential contenders have significantly disclosed about President Trump and the White House in recent days? It apparently shows that double standard has been defined everywhere but in the U.S., it has been defined more. The U.S. approach to its own people is not a criterion for my view, but it has the same double standard approach towards other nations and countries.

For example, let’s take Iran as a criterion. Iranian people in facing with the structure of programs of news TV channels like BBC and VOA are seeing clearly that these media outlets have defined their own policies to form the mindset of people against their governments but they have never been honest to their own people and are not, either. Let’s have a look at some conducted polls. How much is really the amount of public trust to the administering structures in Europe and the U.S.? One can clearly realize it and it needs no complicated or documented analysis.

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Iran Forex Reserves in Appropriate Condition

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati on Sunday stated that the most important monetary policy is to curb inflation, said that despite the decrease in oil revenues under the influence of oppressive sanctions and a sharp decline in oil prices, the situation of the country’s foreign exchange bank reserves is appropriate and unprecedented in the country’s history.

He made these remarks in a meeting themed ‘Banking system and Surge in Iran’s Production’.

“These achievements have been achieved through the efforts of the banking system and due to the correct policy of the central bank, and if the banking system is supported, we will see greater achievements in the future,” Hemmati added.

Regarding the credit policies of the Central Bank of Iran, the Chairman of the Monetary and Credit Council emphasized that special attention has been paid to the issue of production based on this policy.

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Iranian Border Guards Help Turkmenistan Quell Fire

GONBAD-E KAVOOS (IRNA) - Iranian border guards in the northern province of Golestan helped Turkmenistan contain the fire in its pastures and farms.

Commander of Atrak Border Regiment of Golestan Colonel Mohammad-Reza Saravani told IRNA about the news on Sunday.

The fire started on Saturday on the border point between Iran and Turkmenistan, the colonel said. Soon after the announcement of the start of the fire, the Iranian border guard forces went to help the neighboring country contain it, he added.

President Offers Congratulations To New Iraqi PM

TEHRAN (IFP)- President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani has congratulated Mustafa al-Kadhimi on taking office as the prime minister of Iraq, expressing hope for the enhancement of ties between Tehran and Baghdad in various fields.



President Rouhani also wished the incoming Iraqi prime minister health and success.

Kadhimi took office after the Iraqi parliament approved a new government on Wednesday following nearly six months of political wrangling.

The parliament approved 15 ministers out of a prospective 22-seat cabinet in a vote of confidence. Five candidates were rejected while voting on two ministers was postponed, leaving seven ministries still empty, including the key oil and foreign affairs positions.

Two previous nominees for the role of prime minister – Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi and Adnan al-Zurfi – had failed to secure enough support among cabinet ministers.

In a congratulatory message on Sunday, President Rouhani expressed hope that the bilateral relations between Iran and Iraq would grow during Prime Minister Kadhimi's tenure "by the grace of God and reliance on the teachings of Islam, considering the age-old and historic relations between the two neighboring and Muslim countries, and with the support and efforts" from the new Iraqi premier and his government.

The Iranian president hoped for the promotion and deepening of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq in all fields in such a way that would serve the mutual interests of the two nations and establish peace and stability in the region.

Launch of Iranian Satellite Marks Enemies' Intelligence Defeat



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The enemies of the Islamic Republic, the US in particular, have suffered a big intelligence defeat following the recent successful launch of an Iranian satellite into orbit, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said.

Speaking at a military gathering in Tehran, Major General Baqeri said the IRGC's success to launch a multipurpose satellite into the orbit is an outstanding example of smart planning with reliable scientific and technical backings.

The launch of homegrown Noor satellite amid the outbreak of the novel coronavirus shows that while the Iranian Armed Forces are playing a role in the battle with COVID-19, they have not neglected the strategy of boosting the country's power, the general added.

Major General Baqeri also hailed the satellite launch as a prelude to a shift in the balance of power in favor of the Iranian nation. The great and historical achievement of Iran marked a big "intelligence defeat and scandal" for the enemies of Iran, particularly for the terrorist regime of the United States, the commander noted.

The IRGC successfully put Noor (light) into orbit on April 22. The homegrown satellite was launched with a three-stage satellite carrier, dubbed Qassed (messenger), from a launch pad in Dasht-e Kavir, a large desert in central Iran.

The satellite has been placed into an orbit 425 kilometers above the Earth.

Milak Border Terminal Is Active Under Sanitary Protocols

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - Road Maintenance and Transportation authority of Sistan and Balouchestan Province said on Sunday that Milak border terminal was active despite the coronavirus pandemic, but all sanitary protocols were imposed.

Teymur Baqeri said that the normal passenger traffic from the terminal on Iran-Afghanistan has been prohibited and only the citizens of the two countries are allowed to return to their home state.

However, the goods transportation is allowed, Baqeri said, adding that in Farvardin month (March 20-April 19) 80,027 tons of goods, mostly including cement, vegetable, gasoline, diesel fuel, and food, were exported to Afghanistan from Milak border terminal.

1503 tons of goods have been transported from Afghanistan to Chabahar port through the terminal in Farvardin month, showing a 400 percent increase compared to the same period last year, according to the official.

He also said that the Mirjaveh border crossing has been closed since late February due to coronavirus outbreak, but the officials were in talks with Pakistani counterparts to secure transportation of goods.

Iran Ready to Swap Prisoners With U.S. Without Preconditions

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran is ready for a full prisoner exchange with the United States, the government spokesman Ali Rabieei said.

"We are ready to exchange Iranian and American prisoners and we are prepared to discuss this issue but Americans have not responded yet," he added.

"We are worried about the safety and health of Iranians in jail ... We hold America responsible for Iranians' safety amid the new coronavirus outbreak," Rabieei confirmed.

In a rare act of cooperation between two longtime foes, the United States and Iran swapped prisoners in 2019 - American graduate student Xiyue Wang, detained for three years on spying charges, and imprisoned Iranian stem-cell researcher Massoud Soleimani, accused of sanction violations.

Tehran and Washington have grown more hostile towards each other since 2018 when President Donald Trump exited Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with major powers and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran that have crippled its economy.

"There is no need for a third country to mediate between Iran and America for the prisoner exchange," Rabieei said. Three Iranian officials told Reuters last week that a prisoner swap between the two countries is in the works. Michael White, a US Navy veteran who has been detained in Iran since 2018, is a likely candidate to be swapped. He was released from prison in mid-March on medical furlough but remains in Iran.

The United States is set to deport Iranian professor Sirous Asgari, who was acquitted of stealing trade secrets, once he receives medical clearance to leave, the US and Iranian officials said on Tuesday.

Iranian Diplomat, Ansarullah Spokesperson Discuss Yemen Crisis

TEHRAN (IF)- Foreign Ministry's Senior Aide for Political Affairs discussed with Ansarullah Spokesman the latest developments in Yemen as well as the way out of Yemen's crisis.

Speaking at a video conference with the chairman of the Yemeni National Salvation Government's negotiating team and spokesman for the Ansarullah movement Mohammad Abdulsalam late Saturday, Ali-Asghar Khaji described the solution to the political crisis based on the cessation of war, complete lifting of Yemen's air, sea and land siege and resumption of the Yemeni- Yemeni Dialogue.

Abdulsalam, for his part, thanked Iran for its

humanitarian assistance and political and spiritual support to the Yemeni people, stressing the readiness of the National Salvation Government to reach a fair political agreement, and explained the latest political developments in Yemen to the Iranian side.

In a telephone conversation with Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin on April 29, the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Senior Aide for Political Affairs also spoke about the latest developments in Yemen.

Thousands of Yemenis have died in Saudi Arabia's invasion of Yemen since 2015, and according to the United Nations, the famine in this country has become the biggest humanitarian catastrophe in the world.

IRGC Fighter Jets Equipped With New Air-to-Surface Missiles

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force has apparently armed its Sukhoi Su-22 fighter-bombers with a new air-to-surface missile.

The newly released footage from a visit that Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei had paid to an exhibition of the IRGC Aerospace Force achievements back in May 2014 suggests that the IRGC has furnished its Sukhoi Su-22 warplanes with a new air-to-surface missile.

The IRGC has not provided details of the new missile, but it appears to be an advanced air-launched version of the Fajr-4 guided rocket, Fars News Agency reports.

Fajr-4 is a 333-mm caliber rocket that has been upgraded in the guided versions by getting maneuvering fins. Iran has already manufactured the Fajr-4 and Fajr-4CL versions of the rocket.

Iran-Iraq Trade Exchange Underway

BAGHDAD (IRNA) – Iran's commercial attaché in Erbil said that trade exchange between Iran and Iraq are still underway in northern borders by observing health protocols.

Speaking to a local Kurdish TV channel, Javad Karimi said Tamarchin, Bashmaq and Parvizkhan borders have resumed activities by observing health protocols.

In the wake of coronavirus outbreak and the critical conditions on February 21, trade and customs activities were suspended, he added.

Referring to the importance of continuing trade activities and the need to basic items, he said Iranian and Kurdish officials prevented half of trade activities.

Karimi noted that health protocols are all based on WHO regulations and Customs union standards.

Iranian official said there is no concern with regard to disinfecting trade consignments in markets and customs and all staff are equipped with health equipment.

He went on to say that no suspected cases have so far been reported at border areas and customs.

He also expressed the hope for resumption of customs activities in south and center of Iraq.

Iran, Nakhchivan Examine Trade Cooperation

BAKU (IRNA)- Iran and Nakhchivan studied avenues for boosting trade cooperation between the two sides via a virtual meeting on Sunday.

During the meeting, the parties shared their views and voiced their suggestions for advancing cooperation.

Iran's Consul General in Nakhichevan Ahmad Hosseini expressed the hope that after examining the proposals, the necessary efforts will be made to implement the negotiations.

Iran Accounts for 1% Share of World's \$4b Turnover of Halal Food

TEHRAN, May 09 (MNA) – An official at the Ministry of Agriculture said that Islamic Republic of Iran accounted for one percent share of world's \$4 billion turnover of halal food.

Of total more than \$4,000 billion financial turnover of halal food in the world, less than one percent of which belongs to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Payman Falsafi pointed to the halal food industry in the country and added, "halal food industry has a special place in our lives and has been intertwined with our lifestyle."

"Halal Food" has a great influence in transcendence of soul and body of human being, he said, adding, "halal food is highly demanded and welcomed even in the countries where Muslims are in minority."

About 250 'halal' brands are used in the world, indicating that the product is basically produced according to the 'halal' standard rules and regulations, he stressed.

In Iran, there is one 'halal' logo which is presented by the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI) to producers.

Under the law, various stages should be followed up in order to get a 'halal' logo and in this way, priority will be given to the protein and meat products, he added.

In this regard, a bylaw was approved at Iranian Parliament in 2008 entitled 'Sharia Supervision on Slaughter and Fishing', Falsafi underscored.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the protein and meat products in the country and added, "all protein and meat products in the country are 'halal' which are produced under the strict supervision."

Of total more than \$4,000 financial turnover of 'halal' products in the world, one percent of which is earmarked to the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said, adding, "however, some countries have been investing on 'halal' industry for about 35 years in an organized manner and with a clear investment structure. In other words, these countries accounted for 35% of financial turnover of 'halal' trade to themselves."

Iran to Export Coronavirus Diagnostic Kits

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The head of international relations of Iran's vice-president for science and technology office said on Sunday that samples of Iranian-made coronavirus diagnostic kits have been sent to some countries and if approved by those countries, they will be exported.

According to Iran's vice-president for science and technology office, some knowledge enterprises started to work on the kits and now midway through the fight on the virus, Iran is able to meet the domestic needs and also export the kits.

Mehdi Ghalenoiei said one country to test Iranian kits is Pakistan that has given them to one of its best medical centers to be tested. Two kinds of kits, i.e. IGG and IGM, have been sent to Pakistan.

He said Iranian kits have also been sent to the Philippines, adding, "India, Nigeria, and Armenia have also requested to buy the kits but due to the limitation on borders and airports, it has become difficult to send samples."

Qatar, Georgia, and Syria will be added to the target countries soon, he said, adding that Iran is trying to encourage Turkey to buy the kits as well.

Last week, 40,000 serological test kits to Germany.

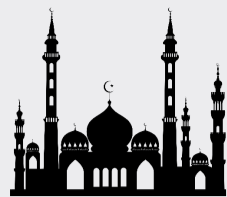
Plasma Injection Declined Patients' Admittance in ICU

TEHRAN (IP) - Head of Iran's Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) noted that when Plasma injected to the patients, they will recover without admittance in ICU.

Peyman Eshqi in a live video presser on Sunday in response to Iran Press question on the importance of the Plasma-therapy on COVID-19 for infected individuals and what is the status of studies on the recovered ones via plasma therapy, said, "Plasma-therapy has a hundred years' history and is extracted from diseases like "N1-H1", SARS, and MERS with significant results."

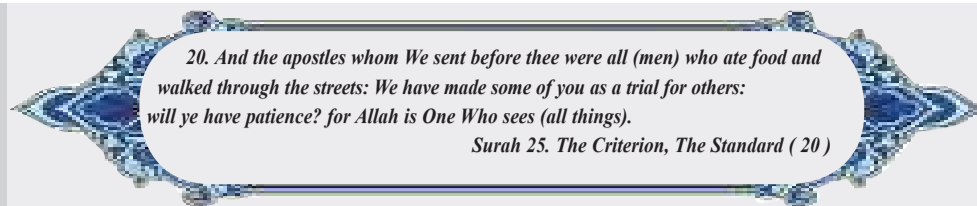
The official highlighted, "China has been the first country to apply the Plasma -therapy then Iran commenced it which each medical method to cure the disease must be done on both patient and healthy individual to get and evaluate the better and thorough result and in particular for this virus which has been labeled the pandemic of the century."

Head of IBTO underlined that the sooner the plasma is injected to the patients, the sooner they will recover and even would not let them admitted in ICU.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:00
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:19
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:23
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:01



Some Iranian Port Operators Suffer Cyberattacks

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Roads and Transportation and Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) says some of Iran's port operators have come under cyberattacks whose sources were abroad.

Speaking in a press conference and responding for recent halt in container operations of Rajae Port, Mohammad Rastad said that some port operations in the country have come under cyberattack whose sources were abroad. He went on to say that but the officials could manage it and no ship faced delay in loading or unloading and everything is now normal.

He further said that since the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the country, loading and unloading in the ports have not come to a halt and since March 20 and beginning of the new year, ports in the country have had 19m times of loading and unloading which shows 35.8 percent decrease comparing to the same period last year, and expressed hope everything would become normal and national trade can compensate this lag very soon.

Rastad added that since the beginning of 2020, world economy has been affected by the virus and marine transportation is not an exception, either, because it is part of global economy.

He said the global order for building vessels and ship has nosedived, adding that the order for building ship has fallen by 71 percent.

He further said the price of renting a ship was once \$35,000 per day but because of the pandemic, the price has slumped to even lower than \$5,000 in the first quarter of the year.



Rastad reiterated that the pandemic had the most negative impact on marine tourism than marine trade and all marine voyages have almost halted in the country.

He said despite observing all sanitary protocols, the number of marine passengers in the country has decreased by 97 percent this year.

On the amount of basic goods in the ports, he said some 4.154m tons of basic goods are currently in the ports, of which over 3m tons are at Imam Khomeini Port.

Rastad added that currently 25 ship have berthed at ports while they are unloading their cargos which weigh around 588,782 tons and 23 more ship are waiting to berth whose cargo weighs some 1.7m tons.

He further said corn, wheat, barley, soya, oil seed and rice are of the major commodities in the ports.

He stated the total government and non-government investment in the national commercial ports till the end of last year was around 158,000b rials as the most investment has been at Imam Khomeini Port.

Majlis Imposes Fines on Taking Currency Out of Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian Parliament passed a law on Sunday according to which the plans to take foreign currency out of the country may be subject to forfeiture and will result in financial penalties.

In an open session of the Parliament on Sunday, the Iranian MPs ratified a measure as part of revision of the law on the fight against smuggling of commodities and currency.

According to the new law, bringing currency into Iran will entail a fine of up to double the equivalent amount of rials.

Moreover, if a person takes or tries to take currency out of Iran, he or she will have to pay a fine two to four times the equivalent amount of rials.

Chadormalu Co. Sets First Record of New Year



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company set the first record for the new Iranian calendar year by producing 3887 tons of steel ingots in its steel and reduction plants in the first month of the year.

The endeavors of the staff in the exploitation lines of the steel plant of Chadormalu Company paid off by registering a record for production, as the steel and direct reduction units of the company produced 3887 tons of steel ingots in the first month of the new year.

The company set the record through 23 smelt castings in one day with export quality ingots. It was the first time such an amount of production happened in the company in just 23 smelt casting.

This success is another golden leaf in the history of the company which happened in the year of surge in production.

It is noteworthy to say that Chadormalu's Steel Plant came on stream in 2018 and it produces over 1.3m tons of steel ingots annually in international standards.

South Pars Phases 17, 18 Flare Gas Waste Down 50%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN –Gas flaring at the Iranian South Pars gas field's phases 17 and 18 of development has been reduced by 50 percent, according to the managing director of the field's seventh refinery.

According to Hassan Asaadi, the refinery's first off-gas compressor has been installed and other compressors are going to be installed in near future.

The official noted that the installation of the second compressor is going to reduce the phases' flare gas waste very significantly. By optimizing the acid gas enrichment unit of phase 17, we were able to completely recover the acidic gases of four gas trains and eliminate acidic gas flaring in the mentioned trains, Asaadi explained.

The collected enriched gas will be processed in a sulfur recovery unit, he added.

Back in August 2019, Hamid Chitchian, a former minister who currently advises the government on energy issues, said the country had major projects planned to prevent flare gas waste.



Talks Underway to Reopen Shalamcheh Trade Border

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Officials of the Iranian Arvand Free Trade Zone Organization and the Iraqi city of Basra late on Saturday shared views on removing restrictions on exchange of goods between the two countries and reopening of Shalamcheh commercial border.

In a meeting with the Iraqi Basra delegation, deputy head of investment and business development of Arvand Free Trade Zone Organization said that following spread of coronavirus, Shalamcheh trade border was closed on March 7, 2020, and export of goods from this border crossing were stopped.

Seyed Ali Mousavi added that during this period, the goods needed by Iraq were exported via sea and through the port of Khorramshahr.

In order to reopen Shalamcheh trade border, implementation of health protocols such as the establishment of disinfection facilities and sanitizing this border for the movement of machinery and manpower are emphasized, and necessary coordination with relevant authorities have already been made, as Shalamcheh trade border will soon resume economic activities, he said.

During the meeting, the Iraqi side also highlighted the significance of friendly economic relations, urging enhancement of economic and political ties between the two countries.

Arvand Free Trade Zone with an area of 37,400 hectares in the northwest of Persian Gulf includes Abadan, Khorramshahr, and Minoshahr (Minoo Island) is located at the confluence of the two rivers Arvand and Karun in Khuzestan province.

This region located near Iraq and Kuwait is of special importance thanks to its suitable capacities such as road, rail, sea, and air transportation.

Reducing Water Consumption Is of Major Developmental Projects of ESCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Director of water supply department of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) says one of the major developmental projects of the company has been lowering the water consumption and the company has achieved success in recent years.



Mehrdad Esmaeli said steel production relies on water and water consumption, and Esfahan Steel Company due to its proximity to Zayandehroud River has taken advantage of its water but in recent years and due to constant droughts, the company has taken measures to reduce its water consumption by defining and implementing different projects and without any negative impact on its production rise.

He said the first drought in Isfahan happened in Iranian calendar year 1379 (2000), adding that ESCO is one of industries whose existence depends on water and with the start of droughts, the company began defining and drawing up plans to reduce its water consumption and reliance on river's water.

He added that in 2000, the company used some 32m cm of water but it trimmed down to 14m cm in 1397 (2018), adding that the company, by implementing several projects and increasing its production by 60 percent every year, could reduce its water consumption by 20 percent every year comparing to the preceding year.

He reiterated that reduction in water consumption is one of important developmental projects of the company, adding that using the treated wastewater in the plant and installing multi-potable and industrial water pumps have been crucial in the fall in water consumption. Esmaeli added that cooling power in ESCO plant is one of the places which uses huge amount of water, adding that the company reduced the number of the towers from 200 to 10 through renovation and reforming the structure of the plant.

He noted that the company now uses hybrid towers whose water consumption is 30 percent lower than cooling towers.

He further said that one of the new approaches of the company is to use treated wastewater and it now uses treated wastewater of Zarin Shahr and Foolad Shahr counties, and the company is to buy treated wastewater of Najafabad county and its suburb counties, too.

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(FIRST/SECOND PUBLISH) ONE STAGES TENDER

Tender No.	Description
FP/05-99/011	P/F:OIL WELL DRAWWORKS
FP/05-98/073	P/F:NATIONAL DRAWWORKS
FP/05-98/158	P/F: DRAWWORKS
FP/05-98/136	P/F:GEO-DATA MUD LOGGING UNIT
FP/05-98/159	P/F:CAMERON B.O.P

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No./Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,234,267	Tender No.: FP/05-99/011 Indent No.: 08-22-9745145	3,516,320,000
	3,234,261	Tender No.: FP/05-98/073 Indent No.: 08-22-9845030	6,056,000,000
	3,234,251	Tender No.: FP/05-98/158 Indent No.: 08-22-9845116	4,296,000,000
	3,234,255	Tender No.: FP/05-98/136 Indent No.: 08-22-9845124	4,000,000,000
	3,234,246	Tender No.: FP/05-98/159 Indent No.: 08-22-9845157	28,650,000,000

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 corporations/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.
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Purchasing & Submitting

The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof

Tender Document Distribution by Company	Distribution Place
	Hall No.:113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148659 -06134148615 Room No. 431, 4th floor, Oil central building No.8, Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran – Iran
	Submitting Method
	• Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 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.

Documents Receiving Method	Closing date
	• 35 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

Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	Regarding Tender No
176,000,000 Rial / 1,195 Euro	Regarding Tender No FP/05-99/011
310,000,000 Rial / 6,554 Euro	Regarding Tender No FP/05-98/073
215,000,000 Rial / 1,808 Euro	Regarding Tender No FP/05-98/158
200,000,000 Rial / 1,687 Euro	Regarding Tender No FP/05-98/136
1,433,000,000 Rial / 12,45 Euro	Regarding Tender No FP/05-98/159

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.
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Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.
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(Foreign Procurement Dept.)

More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr

Brazil Tops 10,000 Deaths From COVID-19

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Brazil, the hardest-hit Latin American country in the coronavirus pandemic, has surpassed 10,000 deaths, according to figures released Saturday by the Ministry of Health.

While Brazil's numbers are high -- 10,627 deaths and 155,939 confirmed cases -- scientists think the real figures could be 15 or even 20 times worse, given the country's inability to carry out widespread testing.

Congress and the Supreme Court decreed an official mourning period of three days and lawmakers asked Brazilians to follow health authorities' recommendations to reduce infection rates while the country prepares for "a safe and definitive return back to normal."



Britain to Quarantine Travelers for 14 Days

LONDON (Reuters) - The British government has told airlines it will introduce a 14-day quarantine period for most people arriving from abroad to try to avoid a second peak of the coronavirus pandemic, an association representing the airlines said on Saturday.

Airlines UK, which represents British Airways, Easyjet and other British airlines, said the move required "a credible exit plan" and should be reviewed weekly. Airport operators said it could have a "devastating" impact on the aviation industry and the broader economy.



Venezuela Troops Seize Abandoned Colombian Combat Boats, Weapons



CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela's military said it seized three abandoned Colombian light combat vessels that soldiers found on Saturday while patrolling the Orinoco river, several days after the government accused its neighbour of aiding a failed invasion.

The boats were equipped with machine guns and ammunition but had no crew, the defence ministry said in a statement, adding they were discovered as part of a nationwide operation to guarantee Venezuela's "freedom and sovereignty".

Colombia's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request to comment. President Nicolas Maduro on Wednesday accused Colombian President Ivan Duque of enabling the operation, which Duque denied.

Venezuela charged two former U.S. soldiers with "terrorism" and "conspiracy" for allegedly taking part in a failed armed incursion aimed at toppling Maduro.

Luke Alexander Denman and Airan Berry were among 31 people captured by the Venezuelan military, which said it thwarted an attempted invasion by mercenaries in the early hours of May 3.

Prosecutor General Tarek William Saab said on Friday they had been charged with "terrorism, conspiracy, illicit trafficking of weapons of war and [criminal] association", and could face 25-30 years in prison.

Several attackers were reportedly killed in the ill-fated incursion.

Saab said Venezuela requested an international arrest warrant for the capture of Jordan Goudreau, a former US Army veteran who leads a Florida-based company that says it offers paid strategic security services. Goudreau said in media interviews he organised the operation in Venezuela.

Maduro has accused U.S. President Donald Trump of being directly behind the invasion, which came at a time of high tension between Washington and Caracas, and Saab said on Friday the Venezuelans involved would be tried for "conspiracy with a foreign government".

Trump rejected the accusation, telling Fox News on Friday: "If I wanted to go into Venezuela, I wouldn't make a secret about it."

"I'd go in and they would do nothing about it. They would roll over. I wouldn't send a small little group. No, no, no. It would be called an army," he said. "It would be called an invasion."

Venezuela announced on Monday it arrested the two former U.S. special forces soldiers and on Wednesday Maduro, who showed the pair's passports on state television, said they would be tried.

Obama Calls Trump's Handling of Pandemic a Chaotic Disaster

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Former president Barack Obama has launched a scathing attack on Donald Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, calling it an "absolute chaotic disaster."

In a leaked web call Friday night with former members of his administration, Obama also said the Justice Department's decision to drop charges against Michael Flynn, the former Trump national security adviser who pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI in the Russia probe, endangers the rule of law in the US.

In the audio, first obtained by Yahoo News, Obama urges former staffers to join him in rallying behind Joe Biden as he prepares to take on Trump in the November presidential election. The United States by far leads the world in the number of coronavirus infections, at nearly 1.3 million, and deaths, with more than 77,000. Trump has been criticized as essentially abdicating any leadership role in guiding the country through one of its worst crises in a century, leaving states on their own to grapple with the pandemic and even bid against each other to obtain critical medical equipment on the open market or abroad.

Zero Turnout as Poland Holds Bizarre Ghost Election

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Poland's election day Sunday will be one for the history books as polling stations remain closed and turnout will clock in at zero due to a political crisis set off by the coronavirus pandemic.

The EU member of 38 million people has found itself in the bizarre "Twilight Zone" predicament in which the presidential ballot is formally neither postponed nor cancelled, because the government and opposition were unable to agree on a constitutional and safe solution. "We're in a fog of legal absurdity," Warsaw-based political scientist Stanislaw Moeck told AFP, echoing the widespread head-scratching and concern.

The government "should have declared a natural disaster to lawfully postpone the election" under the constitution.

The right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party has explained away its refusal to do so by saying Poland's coronavirus situation is not severe enough to warrant the move.

The party has also implied that were it to declare a natural disaster, multinational corporations present in Poland would claim huge sums in compensation that the state would be hard-pressed to pay.

But the liberal opposition and many observers also see another rationale for why the government was set on the May 10 date, despite opinion surveys showing that three out of four Poles wanted a deferral.

The opposition, which has long called for a delay over concerns that a free, fair and safe election is impossible under lockdown, believes the PiS wants the ballot held as soon as possible so that its ally and incumbent Andrzej Duda wins.

The president is the current frontrunner and could secure a second term in the first round with 50 percent of the vote, but his support would likely drop once the economic effects of the pandemic are felt.

Last month, the PiS-controlled parliament passed a law stating the election would be held by postal vote only in a bid to quiet health concerns while maintaining the date. But the opposition-controlled senate sat on the legislation for weeks before rejecting it, leaving the government no time to organise the election.



Iraq's New Gov't Reaches Out to October Protesters

BAGHDAD (AFP) - Iraq's new government promised Saturday to release demonstrators arrested during mass protests that erupted in October and pledged justice and compensation to relatives of over 550 people killed during that unrest.

The announcement was made in a televised address following Prime Minister Mustafa Kadhemi's first cabinet meeting.

Kadhemi, who with 15 of his proposed 22 ministers won the confidence of Parliament on Wednesday evening, promised "the truth about everything that happened" during the months-long protests.

He vowed to "hold to account all those who shed Iraqi blood".

Kadhemi was Iraq's spy chief when the protests broke out and the address to the nation comes as calls spread on social media for renewed demonstrations on Sunday.

The government of his predecessor Adel Abdel Mahdi had since October repeatedly said it could not find the "unidentified gunmen" who fired on protesters who took to the streets to demand the overhaul of the political system.

At the start of the protests that would become the largest and bloodiest social movement in Iraq's recent history, many demonstrators carried portraits of General Abdulwahab al-Saadi -- a highly popular figure in the military campaign to dislodge the Islamic State from Mosul in 2017. He had been dismissed by Abdel Mahdi in September.

Kadhemi on Saturday reinstated the general as the head of counter-terrorism, putting him back in charge of units created and armed by the Americans.

The new Iraqi premier has long been seen as Washington's man in Baghdad, but he has also forged close ties with America's arch-foe Iran.

Kadhemi also called on parliament to adopt a new electoral law needed for early elections that had been promised by his predecessor.

The new government had presented itself as a "transitional" cabinet on Wednesday evening.

It rescinded a decision taken by the outgoing government just before it stepped down that blocked all state spending, including civil servants' salaries and pension payments -- relied on by one in five Iraqis.



Putin Urges Unity as He Presides Over Slimmed Down Victory Day

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin told Russians on Saturday they are invincible when they stand together as he presided over celebrations of victory in World War Two that were slimmed down because of the coronavirus outbreak.

His speech, beamed to the nation, sent a message of unity as the Kremlin tries to contain the coronavirus - and Putin tries to keep his ratings high - after Russia passed Germany and France to register the fifth-highest number of cases globally.

Victory Day, which marks the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in 1945, is one of Russia's most revered public events and provides Putin with a platform to promote the patriotism that is a cornerstone of his popular support.

But the coronavirus outbreak forced him to postpone the main highlight, a huge annual parade on Moscow's Red Square that showcases Moscow's most sophisticated military hardware. In his first public appearance for weeks, a sombre-looking Putin settled for a more low-key remembrance ceremony, but made clear he still planned to hold the usual parade to mark the 75th anniversary of the Soviet victory when the time was right.

"Our veterans fought for life and against death, and we will always try to live up to their spirit of unanimity and resilience," Putin said after laying a bouquet of red roses at the Eternal Flame war memorial near the Kremlin.

"We are united by our shared memory, hopes and aspirations, as well as a sense of shared responsibility for the present and the future. We know and strongly believe that when we stand together, we are invincible." Guards from the Kremlin Regiment marched past after Putin, who was clad in a black rain coat, had spoken and a military band played the Russian national anthem.

Overhead, 75 military planes and helicopters, including advanced Sukhoi Su-57 stealth fighters, flew over central Moscow despite cloudy skies, with one group of jets leaving a trail in the sky in the colours of the Russian flag.

In the absence of the usual ground parade, state television broadcast a replay of last year's Red Square event. Similar fly-pasts were held in other Russian cities and fireworks were let off across the country once darkness fell.

Putin, 67, has in previous years basked in national pride, watching Russian tanks rumble across the square with world leaders by his side. But a recent poll gave him his lowest approval rating in more than two decades, albeit a still high 59%, and Russia's economy is slipping into a deep downturn.



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L.balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Darrou Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p, S
J, L.balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Parsian

Apts in the market
Farmanieh (\$2000) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F
Zaferanieh (\$3000) 300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F
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Germany Needs Another Extra Budget To Cushion Coronavirus Impact

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany will have to work on another supplementary budget to help the state's social security system cushion the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief budget lawmaker said on Saturday.

Eckhardt Rehberg told RND media group in an interview that federal and state governments were likely to get about 100 billion euros less in tax revenues this year than previously

estimated due to the effects of the coronavirus crisis.

"If the five years to 2024 are summed up, there will probably be a minus in the middle three-digit billion euro range," Rehberg said, adding that the federal government therefore had to work on another supplementary budget.

"I see little scope for large and permanent tax cuts," Rehberg said, adding that he was also against cash incentives for consumers to buy a new car.



IMF Chief Downbeat on Global Economic Forecast, Warns Against Protectionism

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The head of the International Monetary Fund on Friday signaled a possible downward revision of global economic forecasts, and warned the United States and China against rekindling a trade war that could weaken a recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Kristalina Georgieva, the IMF's managing director, told an online event hosted by the European University Institute that recent economic data for many countries was coming in below the fund's already pessimistic forecast for a 3% contraction in 2020.

"With no immediate medical solutions, more adverse scenarios might unfortunately materialize for some economies," Georgieva said. "It is the unknown about the behavior of this virus that is clouding the horizon for projections."

The IMF's April projection for a 3% contraction the global economy would mark the steepest downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The IMF forecast a partial rebound would follow in 2021, but warned that outcomes could be far worse, depending on the course of the pandemic.

The U.S. economy - the largest in the world - has been particularly hard hit by widespread shutdowns aimed at containing the spread of the virus. U.S. government data on Friday showed the unemployment rate surging to 14.7% last month. The White House said joblessness could hit 20% in May.

President Donald Trump has threatened to punish China for its handling of the virus by imposing new tariffs, and on Friday suggested he could end a Phase 1 U.S.-China trade deal.

Top U.S. and Chinese trade officials on Friday said they would press ahead with implementing the initial trade deal, but some observers say China's promised purchases of U.S. goods are running far behind the pace needed to meet the first-year goal of a \$77 billion (62 billion pounds) increase over 2017 levels.

On Friday, Georgieva warned that a retreat into protectionism could weaken the prospects for a global recovery at a critical juncture.

Asked how concerned she was that rising U.S.-China tensions could jeopardize the global economy, Georgieva said, "It is hugely important for us to resist what may be a natural tendency to retreat behind our borders."

Reigniting world trade was critical to ensuring a global economic recovery, she said. "Otherwise," she said, "costs go up, incomes go down, and we will be in a less secure world."

Georgieva said the IMF had already provided emergency funding to 50 of the 103 countries that had requested aid. Poor countries remained at high risk given a sharp drop in remittances and falling commodity prices, even if mortality rates from the virus were lower than in some richer countries.

The IMF's chief economist, Gita Gopinath, told an event hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations on Thursday that the situation had worsened since March when the IMF projected that emerging markets and developing countries would need \$2.5 trillion in external financing to manage the health and economic crisis.

"This crisis is likely to last longer," she said. "And so the needs will go up, even above that number."

Indian Economy to Be in Deep Freeze

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Moody's Investors Service said India's economy will not grow in the current financial year because of the "deep shock" triggered by the coronavirus outbreak and cautioned against downside risks to growth from a further extension of the lockdown.

Moody's expects a bounce-back to 6.6% growth in FY22, assuming a gradual pick-up in economic activity and demand in the second half.

The rating company had predicted 2.5% growth for India in FY21 in March.

It reaffirmed India's Baa2 rating with a negative outlook, indicating a credit upgrade was unlikely in the near term, as it estimated a fiscal slippage of up to two percentage points to 5.5% of GDP against the budgeted 3.5%.

The economic jolt from the coronavirus outbreak will weigh significantly on growth until at least the second half of 2020, Moody's said in a ratings update released on Friday.

"The shock will exacerbate an already material slowdown in economic growth," it said, adding that economic expansion will remain significantly lower than in the past.

Chief economic advisor Krishnamurthy Subramanian told ET earlier this week that India could grow 2% in FY21. Moody's said "prolonged financial stress among rural households, weak job creation and, more recently, a credit crunch among nonbank financial institutions have increased the probability of a more entrenched weakening" but added that government support should reduce the depth and duration of India's growth slowdown.

It said the government's Rs 1.7 lakh crore stimulus package is "modest compared with support packages implemented in many other countries, particularly given the breadth of India's nationwide lockdown measures." "We expect the government will announce additional measures in the future," it said, adding that steps to support the economy should help to reduce the depth and duration of the growth slowdown.

Moody's expects the fiscal deficit for the Centre and the states combined to widen to 10% of GDP in this financial year.



Turkey to Inject \$3b Into Struggling State Banks

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey is planning to inject around 20 billion liras (\$2.8 billion) of new capital into three state banks over the coming days as the country's economic indicators continue to worsen during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report by Reuters.

Two banking sources, who requested anonymity, told Reuters on Friday that the funds will be transferred to the state-owned Ziraat Bank, Halkbank, and Vakıfbank.

"We expect [the] necessary regulation to be announced and published next week to increase the capital of state banks," one of the sources said. "The capital increase will be around the 5 billion to 7.5 billion lira level for each state bank, totalling about 20 billion liras."

Turkish banks are under increased pressure to lend as the fallout from COVID-19 is expected to tip Turkey's economy into its second recession in less than two years.

Turkey's infection and death rate from COVID-19 has continued to fall with Turkey's Health Minister Fahrettin Koca announcing on Saturday on Twitter that 50 people had died from the disease in the previous 24 hours, taking Turkey's death toll from the coronavirus to 3,739.

The new infections since Friday evening bring the country's total to 137,115, dropping Turkey's rank in case numbers down to ninth in the world for COVID-19 contagion.

A 48-hour weekend curfew has been imposed in 24 Turkish provinces, including in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir.

The Turkish government plans to gradually loosen restrictions it has imposed over the past weeks to tackle COVID-19, with shopping malls, barber shops, and hair salons set to reopen on Monday.

Turkey on Saturday confirmed 50 deaths and 1,546 cases linked to the deadly novel coronavirus, as the country's health minister highlighted the decreasing number of COVID-19 intensive care patients.

Almost 90,000 patients have recovered from the coronavirus, Fahrettin Koca said in his daily update on Twitter, adding that Turkey is registering a decreasing daily number in deaths and new infections.

The latest figures bring Turkey's official death toll to 3,739. The new infections since Friday evening bring the country's total to 137,115, dropping Turkey's rank in case numbers down to ninth in the world for COVID-19 contagion.

The interior minister of Turkey has asked that citizens remain indoors for a few hours on Sunday, when Turkey begins a rotation system allowing over-65s outside.

Sileyman Soyly has requested that citizens in 57 provinces stay confined to their homes between 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sunday, when the over 65 will be permitted outdoors for leisurely purposes for the first time in weeks, Karar newspaper said.

Turkey's top religious body, Diyanet, has cancelled a recent policy for mosques to re-open their doors to citizens above the age of 65, following backlash over the decision.

Brazil Auto Production Crumbles in April, Down 99%

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Auto production in Brazil crumpled in April under the weight of the coronavirus crisis, falling a catastrophic 99 percent, the carmakers' association said.

Only 1,847 vehicles were produced in the country's 65 auto factories, as compared with 189,958 made in March, the association said in a statement.

In April a year ago, automakers in Brazil produced 267,562 vehicles.

Last month's paltry total was the smallest for a full month since 1957, the group said.

April was the first full month that Brazil was under anti-virus lockdown measures designed to curb the spread of the contagion.

Brazil is the epicenter of the outbreak in Latin America, with more than 145,000 cases and nearly 10,000 deaths.

But auto production in Brazil had already suffered in previous months, as the global pandemic paralyzed the world economy and the country started taking precautions.

From January through April, a total of 587,739 vehicles left the factories of the 26 automakers operating in Brazil, against 965,408 in the same period last year -- a 39 percent drop.

"The major drop in production came along with an equally dramatic fall in sales in both the domestic market and exports," the association said.

Exports dropped 79.3 percent year-on-year in April, with only 7,212 vehicles leaving the country.

On Thursday, Brazil's Economy Minister Paulo Guedes warned that Latin America's biggest economy could face "economic collapse" in a month's time, with food shortages and "social disorder."



Thailand Consumer Confidence Index Lowest in Nearly 22 Years

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - The consumer confidence index in April was the lowest in nearly 22 months due to the impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Thanavath Phonvichai, president of the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, said the index in April was at 47.2, the lowest in 21 years and 7 months since October 1998 when the university started its surveys on consumers' confidence.

Consumers were concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impacts on the Thai economy including unemployment, he said.

The index fell in all categories and most categories showed continuous declines for 14 months, Mr Thanavath said.

"The Thai economy has entered its technical recession. It will contract for three quarters consecutively and will grow 1-2% in the fourth quarter thanks to the restart of businesses and the government's economic rehabilitation and stimulation measures worth 400 billion baht," he said.

"Money will obviously enter the economic system in early August and the Thai economy in 2020 will decline slower at 3.5-5.5% instead of 8.8% as earlier anticipated."

According to Mr Thanavath, normally about 600 billion baht was circulated in the economic system on a monthly basis. Lockdown measures reduce the amount by half. If more businesses are unlocked on May 17, the circulated money will rise by nearly 200 billion baht a month.

"That will stop the Thai economy from declining or let it bottom out. The Thai economy will pick up noticeably approximately in the second quarter of 2021," he said.

APEC Trade Ministers Commit to Mitigating Covid-19 Economic Impact



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) ministers responsible for trade (MRTs) have issued a statement calling for APEC economies to hasten the fight against Covid-19 while undertaking the necessary steps to remedy the health and economic impact of the pandemic.

The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), which led the process of consensus-building among the 21-member grouping, said APEC trade ministers had underlined the importance of ensuring a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment to safeguard the region's economy.

The trade ministers also called on the economies to ensure that global supply chains and trading links remain open in order to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the lives and livelihoods of the people.

"They expressed concerns with regard to the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable developing economies and acknowledged the need to implement certain emergency measures to effectively address the challenges presented by the crisis.

"They concurred that there is a need to place a specific emphasis on providing timely and affordable access to essential healthcare services, particularly for members of society that are more vulnerable to the pandemic," MITI said in a statement today.

The call by the APEC MRTs was a clear demonstration of the region's collective commitment to responding decisively to the pandemic and navigating the Asia-Pacific towards a path of economic recovery.

"The ministers also urged member economies to act swiftly and put in place measures to keep their markets open and ensure that the flow of essential goods, services and people remain uninterrupted.

Iranian Selected Member of Jury Of U.S. Free Speech Film Festival

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian writer, director and editor was elected as member of the Jury of the seventh edition of the U.S. Free Speech Film Festival. International Free Speech Film Festival 2020 selected Hooman Naderi Iranian writer, director, and

editor, as member of the Jury of the film festival. Naderi, PhD student in art research at the Azad University of Isfahan, author and director of the short film "I am Zalem" and author, director and editor of the research documentary "From Siavash's Mourning to Taziye".



More Than 1,000 Queue for Food in Rich Geneva

GENEVA (Reuters) - More than 1,000 people queued up on Saturday to get free food parcels in Geneva, underscoring the impact of the coronavirus epidemic on the working poor and undocumented immigrants even in wealthy Switzerland.

The line of people stretched for more than 1 km (half a mile) outside an ice rink where volunteers were handing out around 1,500 parcels to people who started queuing as early as 5 a.m.

"At the end of the month, my pockets are empty. We have to pay the bills, the insurance, everything," said Ingrid Beral, a Geneva resident from Nicaragua who works part-time. "This is great, because there is food for a week, a week of relief... I don't know for next week."

In a nation of nearly 8.6 million, 660,000 people in Switzerland were poor in 2018, charity Caritas says, particularly single parents and those with a low level of education unable to find work after losing a job.

More than 1.1 million people were at risk of poverty, which means they have less than 60% of the median income, which was 6,538 Swiss francs (5,429.19 pounds) for a full-time job in 2018.

Swiss bank UBS has calculated that Geneva is the second-most expensive global city for a family of three to live in, behind only Zurich. While average incomes are also high, that helps little for people struggling to make ends meet.

"I think a lot people are aware of this, but it is different to see this with your own eyes," said Silvana Matromatteo, head of the aid group Geneva Solidarity Caravan.

"We had people in tears who said 'It is not possible that it is happening in my country'. But it is here and maybe the COVID-19 brought everything out and this is good, because we will be able to take measures to support all these workers, because they are workers above all."

Patrick Wieland, chief of mission for the Doctors Without Borders group, said a survey last week showed just over half the food recipients interviewed were undocumented,



while others had attained legal status, were Swiss or were seeking asylum.

Just over 3% had been tested positive for COVID-19, three times the overall rate in Geneva, which he attributed to poor and overcrowded housing.

"In Geneva, one of the richest cities in the world, there have always been people living precariously, especially all the people who work as housekeepers, in agriculture, on construction sites or in hotels, and they found themselves overnight without a job because of COVID-19," he said.

One illegal immigrant who called himself Fernando said he lost his restaurant job during the crisis and had no pay. "I'm very grateful to receive this help and if the situation changes for me, I am committing to do the same thing that they are doing for me," he said.

Oil Producers May Ditch Old FPSO Offshore Projects In This Downturn



LONDON (Oil Price) - The swift oil price crash caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will reduce the combined free cash flow of FPSO fields, which have produced above three quarters of their original resources at just \$2.20 per barrel this year. This is a jaw-dropping decline from 2019's \$11.10 per barrel, a Rystad Energy impact analysis reveals. We also estimate that 40% of the 96 assets which have produced more than 75% of their original resources will end 2020 with a negative cash flow. Given our base case oil price outlook, with prices recovering next year and into 2022, free cash flow will climb back to 2019 levels. However, as these mature fields see production stagnate, free cash flow will quickly return to a decline, ultimately threatening the profitability of many FPSO assets.

"A concern arising for operators is whether the profitability of producing fields will degrade to such an extent that prematurely shutting down ageing fields will prove to be the most rational decision," says Aleksander Erstad, a Rystad Energy energy service analyst.

Field economics alone are causing headaches for many FPSO operators, but other challenges might also compound the problems.

Unplanned production shut-ins on FPSOs due to Covid-19 outbreaks have already occurred, and continue to be a risk that could seriously harm both the health of individuals and the field's profitability. Some FPSOs are also the target of supply cuts, a factor which could add to other woes and result in several late producing FPSOs being shut down for good.

Fields utilizing leased FPSOs are in the worst position, with around 70% of late producing assets estimated to have net present values below zero. This puts not only operators in an uncomfortable position, but also FPSO suppliers, who are faced with two possible outcomes - none of which are favorable.

FPSO contracts can be renegotiated for a lower day-rate in order to bring lease opex down, thereby improving the field's net present value (NPV). Or, in the worst case, lease contracts can be terminated early.

Current dire market conditions mean that upcoming FPSO sanctioning is at a minimum, and few opportunities remain for FPSO suppliers to find new work and redeploy their vessels. This essentially forces suppliers to accept a day-rate reduction in order to keep their vessels working.

The NPV for late producing fields with leased FPSOs is currently estimated at -\$2.90 per remaining barrel, while the overall figure for all FPSOs stands at \$3 per remaining barrel. Although positive overall, our analysis of the 96 FPSO fields that have already produced more than 75% of their original resources shows that 30%-40% of those are estimated to have negative NPV.

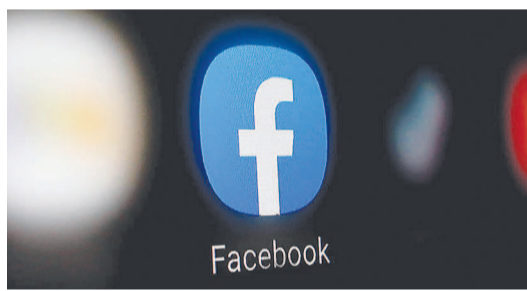
EU Beef Up Fake News Pledge Involving Google, Facebook, Twitter

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union should strengthen a voluntary pledge, to which Facebook Inc, Alphabet Inc's Google and Twitter Inc signed up to combat fake news, with sanctions to make it a more effective tool, a study done for the European Commission said.

The three U.S. tech giants, together with Mozilla and trade bodies representing the advertising industry, agreed in October 2018 on a self-regulatory code of practice to tackle disinformation in a bid to stave off heavy-handed legislation.

The EU executive has acknowledged the companies' efforts via regular reports but also urged them to do more. Last year, it commissioned a study to look in to the matter.

The study said the code should continue as a basis for further action but noted some shortcomings.



Key among these are the code's self-regulatory nature, the lack of uniformity of implementation and the lack of clarity around its scope and some of the key concepts, the study conducted by consultancy Valdani, Vicari and Associates (VVA) said.

It recommended giving some teeth to the code to ensure compliance. "The European Commission should consider proposals for co-regulation within which appropriate enforcement mechanisms, sanctions and redress mechanisms should be established," the study said.

Tech lobbying group EDiMA said the code should not be abandoned.

"The outcomes of the code of practice have shown that it is an effective way to address the spread of online disinformation and fake news," Director General Siada El Ramly said.

Greece Remembers Anti-Austerity Riot Victims

ATHENS (AFP) - Greece on Saturday marked the tenth anniversary of a deadly firebomb attack on a bank during anti-austerity riots, as a coronavirus lockdown raised fears of another recession.

On May 5, 2010 a protest against debt-laden Greece's first loan agreement with international creditors saw a firebomb lobbed at the Marfin bank in central Athens, leading to the death of three bank workers, including a pregnant woman.

Three bank officials received manslaughter sentences but the culprits were never caught.

The attack came just three days after the socialist government of George Papandreou signed the first of three eventual bailouts with the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF that would total 350 billion euros. In the years that followed, a quarter of Greek national output would be wiped out in wage and pension cuts and tax hikes demanded by the creditors.

Leader...

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the extensive measures taken since the formation of the National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus in the form of eight committees and 80 meetings over the past 80 days, Rouhani said, "In the process of combatting this disease, one of the beauties, which was seen in a few countries, was the presence and efforts of everyone, including the IRIB, the armed forces, the ministries, the public and non-governmental organizations, as well as all people, the NGOs and donors."

The President said that since April 13 after the peak of the disease, the death toll in the country has reduced to 2-digit figures from 3 digits before, saying, "In fighting coronavirus, we did not let a situation of life or bread happen in our country, despite the case in many countries, including the United States."

"We took into account both the health of the people and bread and the economy in a very wise way," said Rouhani.

He continued to talk about lifting of some restrictions from April 11 in some provinces, adding, "From April 18, shops in Tehran whose activities were very low-risk or medium-risk reopened, and next week, we might reopen some others very carefully based on the daily figures of the Ministry of Health."

"Despite the pressure of sanctions, a lot of work has been done, and all the figures, including those of the infected, the recovered and the dead, are acceptable, and now we can be exporters in a lot of equipment and medical supplies," the president said.

Rouhani referred to the division of the country into three regions of red, yellow, white or low-risk, and stated that today 158 cities around the country are among the white or low-risk areas, adding, "In these zones, activities, including in mosques, are taking place with observing health protocols, and today we decided to reopen schools next week only for students who want to go and ask their problems from their dear teachers, and of course it is not mandatory, and we have made special decisions for universities."

Enumerating the economic problems caused by coronavirus and the government's efforts to alleviate these problems, the president said, "It was very important to cover the costs of unemployment and health care, and because we did not have the resources to do so, with Your Excellency's consent, one billion euros was allocated for this purpose, 30 percent of which was paid and the rest will be paid, and this was a very important task of ours."

Rouhani referred to Justice Shares and said, "A great deal of work was done by Your Excellency and that was the agreement with the release of Justice Shares, among others, which I believe is the best help given to the deprived in these critical conditions."

Rouhani also appreciated the measures taken by the Central Bank and said, "All economic measures taken, including 75-trillion-toman loans, have been the main task of the Central Bank."

The West Means...

FROM PAGE 1

If today an independent organization conducts a genuine worldwide poll, it will be clearly determined that how world people believe that in dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. has not told the truth and it still tries to



hide its weaknesses from eyes of the world. How can one deny American and British people's disbeliefs about the released statistics on the Coronavirus casualties? How can one ignore released contradictory opinions regarding the protection of the federative system in the U.S.? To which aspect of management in the damaged countries could we attribute unemployment statistics and economic decline of the West and slump in the oil price?

Yellow vests in France will not be forgettable. "99% Vs 1%" movement in the U.S. is indelible while it is today is run underground due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus and hunger but it will erupt like a volcano.

Regarding what I said, one can consider democracy as a media deceit and if someone or more people do their best to list the contradictions of democracy, we will see that even the claim of liberalism is nothing more than a mere lie.

Pro civilization philosophies in the world have not ever had the grounds for happiness of human being without comprehensive cognition of the human creation. Human nature by itself is metaphysicist and since he is not guided properly, he resorts to superstitious theories. If we do not trace freedom of thought in the framework of media exaggeration, the truths will be discovered.

Coronavirus today comparatively has portrayed the condition for living in panic and stress, and if the number of infected Coronavirus patients surpasses 10 million, it will dissolve the remained sediment of the inflicted Westerns in itself.

We Shiites under the shelter of hope to Re-Appearance have immunized ourselves from these distortions. We hope others would think of such a loophole more than ever and find out the genuine and noble pro-civilization institution in human creation.

IRGC...

FROM PAGE 1

The remarks come as the force successfully launched Iran's first military into the orbit 425 kilometers above Earth's surface on April 22, using the domestically-made three-stage Qassed-1 launcher.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jafarabadi said that almost all of the members of the team behind recent satellite launch are young. "Almost all members of designing, manufacturing, and controlling teams are young; I firmly announce that 90% of these individuals are below 30 years old and that all experts that had direct role in the project have completed their education in domestic universities."

Swiss...

FROM PAGE 1

Sharif Nezam-Mafi confirmed that the world's largest agribusiness companies in the world are also present in SHTA channel; They can help Iran to provide 20 million tons of grain that it needs but it depends on the transfer of money to the account.

Referring to the upcoming 2020 American presidential elections, the Iranian expert said "If Joe Biden -now the presumptive Democratic nominee- wins the election, the channel could be more prosperous."

Iran Forex...

FROM PAGE 1

He said that the Central Bank of Iran has taken effective steps such as granting facilities to propulsion companies, small- and medium-sized enterprises and Knowledge-based companies have taken steps to support this sector, and in this regard, special attention has been paid to the financing of enterprises and the production chain.

Hemmati addressed the achievements of the Central Bank's monetary policy and said that the most important monetary policy has been to control inflation and control its trend, and this achievement has been achieved despite the sanctions and the special situation of sales and oil prices."

Conmebol Unhappy With FIFA Over Five Substitutes Change

ZURICH (Dispatches) - FIFA's decision to temporarily allow up to five substitutions per match to help cope with potential fixture congestion was met coolly in South America.

"This change has taken us by surprise, it was not made in consultation with our confederation," Alejandro Dominguez, president of the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL), said on twitter.

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Big Golf Showdown Set for May 24

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The coronavirus relief golf match featuring Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Super Bowl-winning quarterbacks Tom Brady and Peyton Manning will be on May 24 at Medalist Golf Club in Hobe Sound, Florida, WarnerMedia's Turner Sports said.

The sanctioned PGA Tour event, which is being dubbed The Match: Champions for Charity, will begin at 3 pm ET (1900 GMT) and the four golfers will come together to make a charitable donation of \$10 million to benefit COVID-19 relief.

None More Unbeatable Than Djokovic at His Best

LONDON (Reuters) - There is no one more unbeatable in men's tennis than Novak Djokovic when the Serb is at his best, former world number four American Todd Martin has said.

Reigning world number one Djokovic has already established himself as one of the best ever to play the game and the Serb's Grand Slam haul of 17 is just three behind the 20 that Roger Federer has amassed. The Swiss player will be 39 in August.

While Federer is nearing the end of a glittering career, Spanish left-hander Rafa Nadal is just one behind with 19 majors and will be 34 next month. Djokovic is the youngest of the so-called 'Big Three' and will be 33 later in May. The triumvirate have shared the last 13 Grand Slam titles, re-energising the GOAT (greatest of all time) debate.

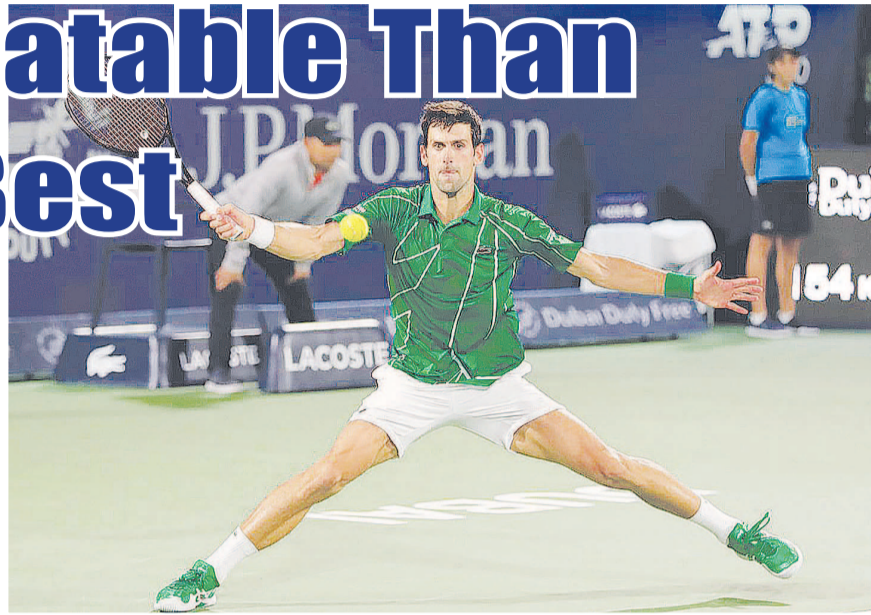
"Roger is the most aesthetically pleasing I have ever seen," Martin, who was part of Djokovic's coaching team briefly in 2009 and 2010, told Tennis365. "He is pleasing with the serve, he is pleasing with the return, offence, defence ... everything he does really looks beautiful.

"For me though, if Novak is right, if Novak is confident and comfortable with his physical status and is really focused, I've never seen anybody more unbeatable. This guy has played the game better than anyone else ever has, in my opinion." Djokovic was in imperious form before the novel coronavirus pandemic brought the circuit to a halt in early March.

He lifted the ATP Cup with Serbia, won an eighth Australian Open title and then completed a fifth triumph at the Dubai Tennis Championships, extending his unbeaten run to 21.

"His athleticism is from another world," said Martin, who reached two Grand Slam finals. "His return of serve is way better than any other returner of serve ever and I mean way better.

"Having worked with him, when he is focused he has that 'I'm going through a brick wall mentality'. Now he is not always focused, but when he is and we have seen this for long stretches, he doesn't have to play great. He is that much of a fighter and thrives on it." The virus forced the cancellation of this year's Wimbledon for the first time since World War Two while the French Open



was pushed back from its May start to September, shortly after the scheduled end of the U.S. Open. Federer, who is currently ranked fourth, last played at the semi-finals of the Australian Open, where he lost to Djokovic, before undergoing keyhole surgery on his knee in February. Martin said Federer was a "natural" and he still expected the Swiss to challenge for Grand Slam titles when the season is able to restart.

"With the Olympics being postponed, I would imagine it will compel him to play another year," Martin said. "Plus, this is no way to end anything. It is really important to Roger, I would imagine, to conclude his career on a bona fide high note.

"Nothing I've seen indicates that physically he is incapable of keeping going. Nothing I've seen has indicated his love for the sport has waned, so I wouldn't be surprised if we see several more years out of him."

Umtiti Suffers Calf Injury In Training



MADRID (Reuters) - Barcelona defender Samuel Umtiti sustained a calf injury on his return to individual training, the Spanish La Liga club said in a statement here on Saturday.

The 26-year-old French center back has struggled with knee and foot problems in the last few seasons and Barca said there was no time frame for his return to training.

Soccer in Spain has been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic since March. La Liga is hoping to start matches again in June, although it has yet to confirm dates for fixtures.

Players will start to train in small groups and progress to full sessions before resuming games.

Barca lead the table with 11 matches remaining and hold a two-point lead over Real Madrid, who are due to begin training on Monday.

Ricciardo Expects a Bit of Chaos When F1 Returns

LONDON (Reuters) - Daniel Ricciardo cannot wait for Formula One to get back to racing in a COVID-19 blighted season, and when it does he reckons the first grand prix could be a recipe for chaos.

The Australian, isolating in Perth since his home race in Melbourne was cancelled in March, has not driven his Renault since the last day of testing in Barcelona at the end of February.

Formula One plans to get going in Austria, pandemic permitting, with two races at the Red Bull Ring from the start of July.

Ricciardo told the BBC on Saturday he expected "some form of chaos, hopefully in a controlled manner" because all the drivers had been out of action, at least on the real racetrack rather than virtual, for so long.

"I am not really referencing cars everywhere. But there is going to be so much rust, a combination of emotion, excitement, eagerness," the 30-year-old said.

"Everyone is going to be ready to go. You are going to get some guys who perform on that level of adrenalin and others who might not. So you're going to get some bold overtakes, some miscalculated ones. You're going to see a bit of everything."

Ricciardo's former boss Christian Horner, whose Red Bull team have won at home in Austria for the past two years with Dutch youngster Max Verstappen, agreed the return could shake things up.

"This is probably the longest time all the drivers have been out of a seat," he told the Guardian newspaper.

"That could be healthy in a way. If we begin again in July, they will all be rusty as hell and there will be some incidents."

Ricciardo, a seven-times race winner with Red Bull, is in the last year of his lucrative Renault contract with his future uncertain.

He has been spending his time on the family farm, a situation he has described as perfect for training with plenty of space and none of the stresses of travelling.

"The icing on the cake on that is we haven't been jumping time zones, or locked in pressurised cabins three days a week up in the air, and the benefit is going to be really nice," he said.

Fernandes, Pogba Can Thrive in United Midfield



nine matches, adding creativity to the team with Pogba out of action due to a foot injury.

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer believes playmaker Bruno Fernandes and record signing Paul Pogba can form a strong midfield partnership when the Premier League season resumes following the COVID-19 disruption.

The 25-year-old Fernandes, who joined United from Sporting Lisbon in January, registered three goals and four assists in

Pogba, restricted to eight appearances in all competitions this season, was primed to return before the campaign was suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak and Solskjaer said the Frenchman and Fernandes can thrive.

"Good players can always play together, so definitely they can... it's a big yes," Solskjaer told Sky Sports.

"I've got Scott (McTominay), Fred, Nemanja (Matic). There are many games coming up. I'm sure we can find a good connection between them. We've been discussing that as a coaching team and we're looking forward to it.

"Of course, Bruno coming in, making the impact he made, it was a boost for everyone, the club, the supporters and players. Getting Paul and Marcus Rashford (back injury) back would be fantastic."

The 20 Premier League clubs have discussed plans to resume training in May followed by a possible return to action in June, provided lockdown restrictions in Britain are eased.

United are fifth in the league with 45 points from 29 games.

F1 Without a Crowd Leaves Hamilton With An Empty Feeling

LONDON (Dispatches) - Six-times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton says the prospect of a home British Grand Prix without spectators leaves him empty inside but he is still raring to get going after months of waiting.

None of the drivers have raced since December, with the season stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there are plans to start up behind closed doors in Austria and then Silverstone in July.

"It gave me a really empty feeling, because the fans really make that race," Hamilton — a record six-times winner on home soil — said in a video interview released on Saturday by his Mercedes team.

"Around the world, the more fans there the more atmosphere you have, that's why you have places like Silverstone and Monza. So it's going to be very empty.

"I don't know how exciting it's going to be for people watching on TV but it's going to be better than nothing," added the Briton, 35.

"For us it's going to be like a test day, probably even worse than a test day in the sense that at a test day there's not a huge amount of people in Barcelona that come to watch but there are still some."

The champion, who has homes in Monaco and the United States and enjoyed a busy lifestyle before the crisis, did not disclose his location. He said he was enjoying the downtime and described himself as a generally quiet, if workaholic, person.



Khan Won't Box Behind Closed Doors

LONDON (Dispatches) - Former world champion Amir Khan has said he won't fight behind closed doors should boxing resume during the coronavirus outbreak.

British officials are looking at July as a possible return date for bouts, albeit these would take place in the first instance without spectators at venues.

"Even though there is big money I wouldn't be able to do it as I need the fan base there," British boxer Khan told the BBC on Saturday. "I've got three kids. I do so much in the sport already and I feel I'd rather be 100 percent sure before I jump back in," explained the 33-year-old.

Twice a light-welterweight world champion after earning an Olympic silver medal as a teenager, Khan won his last bout with a fourth-round victory over Billy Dib in Saudi Arabia in July to take his professional record to 34 wins from 39 fights. Khan has previously made it clear he wants to end his career with a lucrative bout against ring great Manny Pacquiao or in an all-British contest with Kell Brook -- and those fights need a crowd.

"I just feel that for a boxer to walk into an arena and walk into a fight having no fans in an empty stadium it's going to be like walking into a sparring session so I can't really see that working," he added. "It's hard to lift yourself really and get yourself ready for a fight. I can't see the big names doing that unless there's ridiculous money from the TV company on the table. You need the audience there to lift your spirits."

Meanwhile Khan questioned whether the health measures proposed by the British Boxing Board of Control for staging bouts amid the pandemic, including the testing of boxers, who would isolate at designated hotels, and officials wearing masks during bouts, would be enough to stop the spread of the virus.

