

Deputy Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Says Iranian Banks And Their Subsidiaries Are Going To Sell One Quadrillion Rials (about \$23.8 billion) Worth of Properties and Shares in Current Year

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Lawmakers Approved the Double-Urgency of a Motion Which, If Eventually Endorsed, Will Oblige The Iranian Government to Take Certain Measures Against Hostile Measures of the Israeli Regime

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2

DOMESTIC

Great Iranian Nation Wins Scene of Battle Against COVID-19

> SEE PAGE 2



2

DOMESTIC

ICC Suggests Package On Reducing Negative Impacts of COVID-19

> SEE PAGE 2



4

INTERNATIONAL

Putin Lifts Russia's Stay-at-Home Orders as Cases Soar

> SEE PAGE 4



8

SPORTS

Premier League Presses On With Project Restart

> SEE PAGE 8



U.S. Urged to Let Iranian Hostages Go

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry spokesman has urged the US to stop acting callously and release the Iranian "hostages" jailed in America and other parts of the world upon Washington's request.

Abbas Mousavi made the remarks on Monday in reaction to remarks made by U.S. Acting Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Ken Cuccinelli, who claimed the Iranian side has not seriously pursued the release of its inmates in the US despite Washington's efforts to send them back.

"Stop talking rubbish!" the Iranian spokesman tweeted, reacting to Cuccinelli's comments.

"Since September 2018, [Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad] Zarif has put 'universal prisoners swap' on the table, urged Washington to act responsibly about the Iranian HOSTAGES in the US and elsewhere," Mousavi added.

"Your regime has reacted callously and risked their lives. The world is watching your action, not your word. Let our citizens go!" he went on to say.

A few hours earlier, Foreign Minister Zarif said he had announced in New York some 1.5 years ago that the "Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to swap all Iranian prisoners, who are in jail in the US or other countries under the US pressure, with all American prisoners... but the Americans gave no response."

Iran's foreign minister says he is ready to negotiate a prisoner swap deal with the US, and he has the authority to do so.

Promoting Non-Oil Export, Sole Way to Boost Domestic Production

TEHRAN (MNA) - President Eshaq Jahangiri said that promotion of export of non-oil commodities in the country is the sole way of booming domestic production.

He made the remarks in a meeting of reviewing strategies for more activating economic ties with the neighboring countries and supporting exporters.

Turning to the export of non-oil commodities in the country, he said, "exporting non-oil goods has always been of great importance to the country."

"If we are seeking a surge in production, we have to focus on exporting non-oil goods," Jahangiri emphasized.

To boom domestic production, the country should eye international markets for the supply of domestic products, he said, adding, "the domestic market is a limited market and supplying domestic products at the international markets is one of the requirements for materializing objectives of surge in production."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jahangiri pointed to the report of the Central Bank of Iran on needing \$35 billion worth of foreign exchange resources for importing basic goods and raw materials into the current year [started March 21, 2020], and added, "with the unprecedented reduction of oil price in the global level, the country should concentrate on exporting non-oil commodities."

He went on to say that 15 neighboring states and countries such as China and India as well as Eurasian economic Union's member states should be taken into consideration as Iran's most important target markets.

He called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and concerned organizations to strengthen economic diplomacy and focus on export markets with the aim of promoting export of non-oil commodities to these countries.

Iran, Pakistan Weigh Plans To Step Up Border Security



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Highest-ranking military commanders from Iran and Pakistan have discussed ways to enhance security at the common border and prevent terrorist attacks.

In a telephone conversation on Monday evening, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri and Chief of the Army Staff of Pakistan General Qamar Javed Bajwa talked about the plans to intensify security along the common border.

The top Iranian commander stressed in the conversation that it is necessary for the two Muslim neighbours to broaden security measures along the common border to prevent the law-breaking terrorist groups and the common enemies of the two nations from disrupting security at the border.

Major General Baqeri also hailed the growing trend in the brotherly ties between the armed forces of Iran and Pakistan, expressing the Islamic Republic's readiness to promote "defense-economic cooperation" with the neighboring state.

The top commander also called on the Pakistani Army officials to take decisive action for the release of three Iranian border guards who have been held hostage by the so-called Jaish-ul-Adl terrorist group.

For his part, General Qamar Javed Bajwa gave a brief report on Pakistan's measures to construct barriers along the common border with Iran.

He also called for closer military interaction with Iran and the exchange of experts to ensure and maintain the border security and prevent the terrorist activities that upset security at the border areas.

Pakistan and Iran share over 900km-long border, which is infested with criminal gangs, militants and drug traffickers. Terrorist groups operating along the border have in the past carried out several attacks. Therefore, border security has for long remained a major irritant in bilateral ties. The terrorist groups based near the border have existed because of deep mistrust between the two countries.

The two neighbors have, however, over the past few years cooperated extensively in improving border security by undertaking several measures, including deployment of additional troops.

Gen Bajwa had in his maiden visit to Iran in 2017 as the army chief called the Pakistan-Iran border the "border of peace and friendship" and vowed closer cooperation with Tehran to ensure security in the region.

Pakistan and Iran had during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Tehran in April last year agreed to the setting up of a joint rapid reaction force for curbing activities of terrorist groups along the porous border.

In April 2019, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan agreed to set up a joint rapid reaction unit along the common border to combat terrorism.

Iranian military forces along the southeastern border areas are frequently attacked by terrorist groups coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

War Thrust Back Yemen Development 21 Years

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) says a Saudi-led military campaign underway against Yemen has pushed back the country's development more than two decades, and is now complicating the war-torn nation's efforts to rein in the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

In a tweet on Tuesday, the UNDP stated that not only has the Saudi-led war hindered Yemen's development but it also has brought catastrophic consequences for the war-ravaged country amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The UN body called for immediate action to assist the Yemenis in acquiring basic survival needs such as food and health supplies amid their battle against the disease (COVID-19).

According to the latest figures, 56 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Yemen, nine of whom have died and one person has recovered thus far. On Monday, Yemen's emergency coronavirus committee declared Aden - which has served as the seat of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's former regime during the Saudi military aggression - an infested city.

In recent months, the port city has been torn by rivalry between Saudi-allied forces loyal to Hadi and separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates, Riyadh's key coalition partner in the bloody war on Yemen.

The coronavirus infects more people in Yemen, which has also been gripped by other diseases, amid five years of Saudi aggression. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned a humanitarian disaster will result from the spread of the COVID-19 due to Yemen's crippled health infrastructure and its potential failure to address the situation.

The Saudi regime and its allies launched the military campaign against Yemen in 2015 to reinstall the ex-Hadi regime.

More than half of Yemen's hospitals and clinics have been destroyed or closed during the war by the Saudi-led coalition, which is supported militarily by the UK, US and other Western nations.

At least 80% of the 28 million-strong population is also reliant on aid to survive in what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Nights of Decree Vitalize Our Souls

We are now in the holy month of Ramadan, and the outbreak of Coronavirus has deprived us, Muslims, of religious gatherings till the layali al-Qadr (Nights of Decree). The Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters, upon the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's recommendation, released restrictions for gatherings in mosques, provided that all sanitary protocols are observed, for marking layali al-Qadr to pray God and to seek help from Imam Mahdi (AS) for the better in the year ahead.

Essentially in the holy month of Ramadan and according to what has been cited in the Holy Quran, there is a night which is called "Qadr" and according to the Holy Quran, it is of the best nights of the year. According to reliable quotations from the grandees and scholars of the religion, five nights of Ramadan Ramadan could be nights of decree which are 17th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th of the month.

But they have put emphasis more on nights of 19, 21 and 23 of the month and there are some quotations from the sixth Imam of Shiites, Imam Ja'far Sadq (AS), who has paid more emphasis on 23rd of Ramadan as the Night of Decree. There are some narratives from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) where he has said the Night of Decree will remain with ummah till the Resurrection. The meaning of those narratives is that the Night of Decree is something more than sending down of the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran has been sent down on the Night of Decree but there is something else lying in this night. What is it? Those, who marking this night and believe it, ask what has descended from the Heaven?

Some Muslim scholars and grandees of Shia link fully the meaning of the Night of Decree to the fasting in Ramadan. So we realize that first, fasting prepares the one who fasts in order that he could remove the curtain from his wisdom for better and comprehensive seeing, thinking and learning more than the days that he eats more. Secondly, fasting makes the man feel the pains of other people and it makes his feeling more sensitive and expanded. Thirdly, fasting creates some kind of preparedness and sustainability in man because he stands against temptations and hardships and consequently his patience grows and patience has deep relation with fasting.

The Holy Quran in verse 153 of the Cow Chapter says, "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer," and meaning of patience in ahadith (collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)) is the very fasting. _____ See Page 7

Iran's COVID-19 Infections Surpass 110,000

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokesman has confirmed 1,481 new cases of infection with the novel coronavirus, increasing the total number of cases to 110,767.

According to Kianoush Jahanpour, 48 people have died of the virus in the past 24 hours, raising the overall death toll to 6,733.

The spokesman said during the past 24 hours, no one died in 14 Iranian provinces, and only one person died in five provinces. So far, he said, 88,357 patients have recovered from the disease, and been discharged from hospital.

Speaking in his daily briefing in Tuesday, Jahanpour added that 615,477 COVID-19 tests have been taken so far.

Meanwhile Head of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Biglari said although there is not enough information about the identity of coronavirus in the world, effective steps have been taken in plasma therapy in Iran.

Answering the questions about the effect of plasma therapy on the treatment of COVID-19 patients, Biglari pointed that "This program has begun with joint efforts of Health ministry and Blood Transfusion Organization and we need to wait to release the results.

See Page 7

State Printing Office of Iran (SPOI)

Tender of purchasing 800rolls self-adhesive tape 30mm width (300 mm diameter) and 500rolls self-adhesive tape 40mm width(300 mm diameter)

Tender NO : 2099001065000010

رجوع به صفحه ۴

م.الف: ۳۹۲

UNICEF Delivers Flood Relief Cargo to Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has delivered a 32-ton cargo of flood relief equipment to Iran to help the country overcome challenges by heavy precipitations.

Deputy Minister of Energy for International Affairs Mohammad Ali Farahnakian said on Tuesday that the cargo, consisting of different types of submersible pumps, will be used to counter the challenges created by floods in different parts of the country, including Khuzestan and Golestan provinces that are highly endangered by heavy precipitations.

He said following the flash floods in March-April 2019 across the world, UNICEF collected \$3.134 million to help governments ensure the safety of their citizens.

Great Iranian Nation Wins Scene of Battle Against COVID-19

TEHRAN (MNA) – The great nation of Islamic Iran was the victor of scene in the fight against the novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

Speaking in a get-together meeting in the presence of activists in the fight against COVID-19 in the provinces of East and West Azarbaijan on Monday, Rouhani said, “following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, the noble nation of the country especially medical staff came to the scene with their utmost power and brought about an honor for the country in the fight against coronavirus pandemic.”

According to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, this honor, self-sacrifice of doctors and medical staff must be gone down in the history of the Islamic Revolution, he emphasized.

Turning to the discriminatory approaches taken against human beings in many claimant countries in the field of coronavirus, President Rouhani added, “unlike discriminatory behaviors of many countries, Islamic Republic of Iran was the victor of the scene in all fields and managed to offer quality medical services to coronavirus patients.”



Elsewhere in his remarks, President Rouhani pointed to the key role of knowledge-based companies in the field of battling COVID-19, and added, “not only knowledge-based companies could meet the domestic demands in the process of battling the novel coronavirus, but also they embarked on exporting corona diagnostic kits to other countries.”

Despite widespread effort and competition in the global arena, it is hoped that Islamic Republic of Iran will make good progress in the field of treatment and production of corona vaccine.”

Iran Should Prioritize Economic Cooperation in Iraq

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICC), Ali Shariati told ILNA on Tuesday that Iran’s priority in ties with Iraq must be the growth in bilateral trade.

Speaking to ILNA news agency, the Iranian official said “In the situation that the harsh U.S. economic sanctions have caused many problems to curtail business for Iranian exporters, economic cooperation should have our priority in Iraq along with the political and military balance.”

Commenting on the causes of the unrest in Iraq, the member of ICC Ali Shariati added that in recent months Iraqi people have taken to the streets against corruption and unemployment; but in between, campaigns have been launched against Turkish goods and, more broadly, against Iranian goods.

He stressed that Turkey has no choice but to encourage exports to Iraq due to declining tourism revenues and that’s why Ankara is looking to take over the Iraqi market.

“Iraq is an oil-rich country with a strategic position so for most countries its political future is important, and each has its own effect on this unrest,” he said.

Referring to the formation of a new government in Iraq, he stated that Baghdad has a long way to go to form a powerful government, and the United States is trying to divide Iraq into five states in order to achieve its goals.

The member of ICC pointed that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has invited Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to visit the Kingdom, adding that the invitation shows that it is very important for Saudi Arabia to be present in Iraq and not to be left behind by the regional powers.

According to reports, the volume of annual bilateral trade between Iran and Iraq stands at around USD 12 billion.

Zarif Urges U.S. to Revise Its Behavior

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif said that world has reached the conclusion that Washington may violate its agreement at any minute and the current U.S. administration should change its behavior and stop looking for excuses.

Regarding some claims about negotiations with the U.S., Zarif said that there are no negotiations and that the Americans have shown that one cannot trust their negotiations and their results.

Commenting Zarif on compensating the UK for

hurting valuable objects in their embassy in an attack in 2011, he said international law has regulations in this respect, and Iran has announced that guarding foreign embassies is among its responsibility.

He added all the officials of the state agreed on that, the two sides should negotiate about its details but no measures have been taken by either side.

Earlier an Iranian parliamentarian had said that Tehran is supposed to pay 27 billion tomans to London for the attack on the UK embassy.

Iran Hosts Afghans With Best Facilities

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that Iran is hosting over three million Afghans and it has entertained them with the best facilities over the past 40 years.

He made the remarks in response to questions and media hypes over drowning of a number of Afghan nationals in the joint border river.

Providing jobs, free education, free health facilities and many other facilities that are widely available to Afghan guests are indicative of Iran’s good hospitality, he added.

From the first hours some reports were published in various media about the issue, the relevant institutions put a quick and accurate investigation of the incident on the agenda, he said, noting that since the issue was related to the lives of human beings, especially the citizens of the brotherly and neighboring country, Afghanistan, the issue was dealt with double sensitivity and an attempt was also made to take all the aspects of the incident into account at the earliest.

Accordingly, all relevant institutions, including the political and border departments in Foreign Ministry, the police, the Interior Ministry, the Intelligence Ministry and General Staff of the Armed Forces, were mobilized to obtain a comprehensive assessment and clarify the facts, Mousavi said.

He further noted that according to confirmed reports received from the border guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there has been no such incident at that time, nor have there been any clashes between the Iranian forces and Afghan nationals.

However, due to respect for the demands of the friendly and neighborly government of Afghanistan and despite full confidence in the report of the Iranian border guards, all relevant agencies were ordered to carefully and comprehensively review the issue.

The results of additional investigations by other agencies also confirm the border guard’s report and completely reject the occurrence of the incident as well as alleged involvement.

Funeral Held for Iranian Forces Martyred in Naval Exercise

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – People in Iran’s southeastern city of Konarak attended the funeral of 19 Navy servicemen who were martyred during a naval exercise off the coasts of Jask and Chabahar.

The funeral procession was held on Tuesday morning in compliance with the health protocols to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Attended by ranking military commanders and government officials, the funeral began from a military area under control of the Navy in Konarak in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

The 19 Navy servicemen were martyred in an accident involving ‘Konarak’ light logistical vessel on Sunday evening, May 10, when a number of the Navy vessels were carrying a naval exercise off the coasts of Jask and Chabahar.

Fifteen Navy forces have been also wounded in the incident.

Industry Ministry Removed Amid Car Price Hikes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Hassan Rouhani has sacked his minister for industries and trade amid soaring car prices in the country and after a government bid to restore a separate department for trade failed in the Iranian parliament.

Rouhani issued an order on Monday naming Hossein Modarres Khiabani as the new caretaker head of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade (MIMT), thereby removing Reza Rahmani from the post.

Rouhani’s office did not provide any reason for sacking Rahmani, a former parliament lawmaker who held the MIMT portfolio for the past 19 months.

Rahmani had been facing criticism over his inability to contain rising car prices in the market. Some basic models of cars produced inside Iran saw a price hike of nearly 30 percent over the past week.

Reports in the local media suggested that Rahmani’s sacking had been in the offing for several weeks and that the Iranian president was waiting for a decision in the parliament to allow establishment of an independent ministry for trade.

However, the parliament on Sunday rejected the government motion to restore the ministry of trade years after it was merged with ministry of industries and mining.

Modarres Khiabani, the caretaker MIMT minister, was a deputy minister under Rahmani and has served in various posts in the ministry for the past 17 years.

During his time in office, Rahmani oversaw a deep change in Iran’s mining sector as the country moved to expand its exports of various metals to compensate for the income losses caused by the American sanctions on oil exports.

Turkey Denies Receiving Coronavirus Test Kits From Iran

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish diplomatic sources on Monday refuted a claim by Iran’s foreign minister that his country had sent 40,000 domestically produced coronavirus test kits to Turkey.

“The Parsis of India—Zoroastrians whose ancestors long ago emigrated to India—have remained ever faithful in their love for Iran. Grateful for their #Covid19 package for Iranians. We also sent 40,000 advanced Iran-made test kits to #Germany, #Turkey and others,” Javad Zarif said Friday on Twitter.

The sources, however, said that no test kits have arrived in Turkey from Iran.

They stressed that the information in question is not correct.

The number of active coronavirus cases in Turkey has dropped to 40,150, the country’s health minister said Monday.

JCPOA Goes Down in History

TEHRAN (MNA) – Expediency Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei said that Iran’s nuclear deal, known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [JCPOA] has gone down in history.

He made the remarks on Mon. on the occasion of the second anniversary the US pullout from JCPOA and said, “Failure of JCPOA is the failure of an idea in administering and running the country in several governments.”

Turning to the anniversary of U.S. withdrawal from a landmark nuclear deal inked between Iran and six world’s major powers [5+1 Group] in mid-July 2015, he added, “with the U.S. pullout from this important international deal, the noble nation of Islamic Iran became aware of their future for more than 10 years in order to know which path to take and what to do.”

Two years ago on May 18, 2018, President Trump pulled U.S. out of Iran’s nuclear deal, JCPOA, and imposed the toughest ever sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran in Nov, he said, adding, “this is while that Islamic Republic of Iran has fully lived up to all its commitments under JCPOA.”

ICC Suggests Package On Reducing Negative Impacts of COVID-19



IRANN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce (ICC) said it has presented its suggested package to the heads of three branches of the power on how to reduce the negative impacts of the outbreak of the Coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

Head of ICC Mr. Bahman Abdollahi said that the chamber has prepared a suggested package on reducing the negative impacts of the COVID-19 on the economy of the cooperatives sector in six field of insurance and social welfare, taxation, banking sector, field of support of production, field of services and e-commerce and field of smart systems field, and field of management of imports and exports especially regarding basic items and the suggested package has been sent to the offices of the President, Majlis Speaker and Judiciary Chief.

He also pointed to the shocks resulted by the Coronavirus crisis, adding that the shock resulted from the virus will lead to shocks in supply and demands, too. He noted that the production has reduced and at the same time provision of raw material has faced problems.

Abdollahi noted that the shock in supply will lead to the shock in demand, adding that closure of businesses will lead to cutting labor force and drop in earnings of households and consequently decline in demand.

He said lack of confidence over the future makes the household to save its money and to postpone purchased of unnecessary goods and this will increase the fall in demand. Hence, it is expected the economic recession resulted by the sanctions and forex shocks to be intensified and it is necessary the government to support both households and businesses, he added.

Abdollahi further said that since the government is facing financial problems because of drop in its revenues and rise in health costs because of the outbreak of the virus, it is important that it takes its supportive policies in a way that they boost demands in the country in order to prevent unemployment and decrease in the earnings of the households.

He then detailed the proposed package of the ICC and its recommendations for six fields.

A report on the formation of a modern piece

Car Lighting in The Style of Modern Industry

Manufacturers need to have technical knowledge of production and production technology if they want to upgrade and expand any segment or product in the automotive industry. Of course, in this regard, some technologies are known to mean imported equipment. But the real meaning of technology is to have the ability to design and build a production line to create freedom of action in increasing or decreasing the process of products or to change them according to customer needs. This issue may have received less attention in the Iranian industrial sector, but there are some manufacturers who, in addition to implementing the policy of domestic parts manufacturing, also manufacture line technology according to the needs of the domestic automotive industry. One of the largest and most modern manufacturers of car headlights in the country is the Modern Industry Research Group. At the beginning, the company of Modern Industry Research Group was put into operation on a land area of 30,000 square meters and in an indoor space of 17,000 square meters, including production halls, formwork, laboratory and warehouse with a nominal capacity of 3.5 million lights per year. In 2018, due to sanctions, this completely private company was forced to change its name from the modern car headlight industry to the current name, but with the policies of Engineer Ali Changi, CEO, the company succeeded in developing infrastructure and consequently establishing two more sites to produce lights. And its middle parts became in Markazi and Tehran provinces. This led to a doubling of the company's capacity.

Production of 20,000 pieces per day is the achievement of the Modern Industry Research Group

Using modern technical knowledge of the organization and relying on its specialized human resources, the Modern Industry Research Group has been one of the first manufacturers of spare parts for Iranian automakers last year with the production of more than 20,000 units per day. Mass production of three new products for Iran, Khodro Khodro The level of technology has made foreign manufacturers. Also, due to the development of the company's activities in the field of brake pad production, antifreeze fluid and the side mirror of the car, significant entrepreneurship was achieved, which in turn has been an effective step in creating jobs and creating new job opportunities. He knew over 4,000 people. The company aims to leverage production, increase its production by maintaining and upgrading quality, technical capabilities in the field of design and production of lights and prioritize employee health in the safest production and welfare conditions to increase to 30% to be another big step. He took part in the construction of Iran.

Collaboration with Iran Khodro and Saipa

At present, this company has been able to have continuous cooperation with its two production factories in Shahriar and Ashtian city with two companies, Iran Khodro and Saipa. At present, this company is one of the main suppliers of car lights in Iran with the production of 6 million main lights and side mirrors. Among the company's products are the Dena and Denapuls headlights, which have been the only manufacturers of the 206 headlight for 15 years. With this background, it currently supplies the 207 car family light.

The new generation of lights is another achievement of the Modern Industry Research Group

The company designs and manufactures a variety of car headlights (front, rear end, fog lights and side lights) as well as car mirrors and is currently one of the main suppliers of automakers such as Iran, Khodro and Saipa, as well as the spare parts market and a significant share of its products abroad. It exports from the country. The 206's rear hazard lights, headlights, taillights and Peugeot 207 headlights are some of the company's new products that have just reached mass production.

Modern equipment serves modern industry

Using the investments made, the Modern Industry Research Group has equipped the machines and up-to-date facilities of the relevant industry, so that it now has the complete technology of manufacturing and producing new generation lights. The technical and quality control laboratories of this company have been approved by the National Standard Organization of Iran and as a partner laboratory, it has continuous cooperation with the Standard Organization. The most important equipment and facilities available in this company include automatic equipment and devices for HARD COATING lens coverage, automatic reflector equipment and devices, all kinds of plastic injection machines and peripherals in sizes 80 to 1100 tons, vacuum plating machines for injection and metallized coatings, all kinds of devices. BMC press, robotic lines for assembling all kinds of car headlights, polymer raw material compounding, packing machine production machines, production and assembly lines for all types of car bearings, all kinds of metalworking and molding machines and tools (milling, CNC), quality control laboratory on earth Performance tests for performance and durability, physical and chemical environments, and metering and color testing devices for all types of car headlights.

Ask the modern industry for the most sophisticated car headlights

In recent years, it can be said with certainty that the design and production of Dena and Dena Plus family headlights is one of the most complex headlight production projects in the country's auto parts industry, all done by the Modern Industry Research Group with private sector investment. On the other hand, all products of this company have E-Mark standard from foreign institutes and laboratories and national standard of Iran and currently have IATF 16949, ISO9001 in the quality management system in the automotive industry.

Conversation with the CEO of the Modern Industry Research Group: Iranian light for "Citroen" in France

According to car industry experts, domestic car headlights have three main problems: First, they are not properly sealed due to the lack of proper adhesive, as most car headlights are imported, and this has been challenged by sanctions, but The next issue is related to car washers, which many of the manufactured or imported washers in the country are not of good quality at the moment; the final issue is the inability to close the car headlights after installing the lamp. We spoke with Ali Changi, CEO of the Modern Industry Research



Group, which has been the sole manufacturer of the Peugeot 206 for 20 years and currently supplies the Peugeot 207. According to Ali Changi, there are no problems with the car's headlights because the company has been working hard since the beginning to identify and analyze the problems of this basic part, so that the final product can reach the consumer without the slightest problem. The CEO of the Modern Industry Research Group believes that the embargo on the import of suitable adhesives and the lack of quality washers have led to the launch of a vacuum cleaner unit within the company and two key issues in adhesives to assemble parts. In addition to improving the quality of lights, this sector has also created jobs.

Explain the history of the company and what is your share of car lamp production in the domestic market?

The Modern Car Lighting Industries Group was established in 1991 and is now called the "Modern Industry Research Group" in the field of production of various types of car headlights. With the start of the parts manufacturing industry in the 1970s, we upgraded our products, which were summarized in motorcycle, truck, east, etc., to numerous passenger cars. At present, our company supplies 80% of Iran-Khodro's lights and 100% of Isaco's products, and recently we have been able to monopolize the lights of Dena and Denapuls cars. I have to remind you that our company supplies zero to one hundred Dena car headlights and in general more than 50% of the domestic car headlights, and we are the largest manufacturer of headlights in Iran. We currently have 30 dealerships across the country and produce 4 to 5 million lights a year. Despite numerous sanctions, our company is working at a good capacity, and we have been able to localize some of the products, which has deepened the quality of the company's parts and raw materials.



Given the amount of production and supply, your company has the capacity to work with other car manufacturers, why don't you enter into a partnership with these companies?

Certainly, our company has a high ability and capacity to produce other companies' lights, and the only reason for not entering this type of product is that it is not economically justified. Some companies have low circulation and this has caused the design and production of parts of these companies for our company is not economically justified, but certainly we have no problem in terms of design, production and infrastructure, production and supply of parts of the country's automobile companies.

What tests are done to design and produce lights in the country, and why do some of the lights produced by colleagues face the problem of flooding?

Most of the available tests are performed by software; for example, light testing is performed by the "Speus" software, but in design we use simulation software. At present, the headlights are made of plastic and are made of industrial and super-industrial polymers, and if the accuracy of the temperature control is not done enough, the components of the headlights will become water. Most of this experiment is available in the company, which is approved by the country's standard organization, but to test some lights, especially LED lights, we have to send the product abroad, which costs an average of fifty thousand

dollars, so the flooding of some lights due to lack of Proper design, use of substandard raw materials, carelessness in installation and assembly. It should not be forgotten that the lamp is made of 60 separate parts that need to be installed and assembled correctly, and it is interesting to say that the lamp is currently the most complex part of the car and the biggest changes in car parts since the car's production are electrical and lighting.

In the nineties, the car's headlights were glass, so why has plastic replaced glass? And do the light standards of your lights comply with global standards?

One of the reasons for the superiority of plastic lights over glass lamps is the complexity of its design; the glass, while not flexible in design, is heavy and cannot be installed in new lights. At the same time, the lighting standards are announced by the United Nations, and the presence of the word E inside it means compliance with international car standards, which of course exists in all our products. In the meantime, it may be necessary to mention that in general, car headlights in the world have proven to have standard components, but unfortunately in our country, some people try to change the shape of car headlights or make it sporty in simple language. In general, there are no lights in the country as sports lights, and the police must deal with all those who change their lights. Everyone should know that manipulating the shape of the lights makes the safety problem difficult, and these problems are very serious.

Currently, the two problems of steam clogging and water entering the light bulb are the biggest complaints of buyers, what is the reason for these issues? Have you thought of a way to solve this problem?

All domestic production lights have these two weaknesses, and at a certain point in time, our company also faced these two problems. The lack of suitable adhesive for sealing due to sanctions and the lack of transparency of contractors in providing quality washers has caused most car lamp manufacturers to face these two problems. Our company has added a washer section to the set, but another major problem that is beyond our reach is the lack of proper fastening of the chandelier bowl after the lamp is placed. The light that we market as a spare part does not have a lamp, and this is the case all over the world. However, when the buyer puts the lamp in the lamp, he does not close the lid carefully, while the lid has the shape of a sealing gasket, and if it is not placed properly, it will catch steam and water will collect. In general, our products enter the market by testing sealing and adjusting the light, but sometimes the light gets into trouble due to non-compliance with this final point.

In recent days, the price of auto parts has risen sharply. Are you satisfied with the price of your products? How do you rate these prices compared to other countries?

I can definitely say that we produce the cheapest car headlights in the world by modern standards. At present, we deliver the Peugeot 405 headlight to the manufacturer for \$ 2 and 90 cents, which is not produced in China, India or Pakistan with such quality and price. It should be noted that some of the lights that were more valuable experienced a price increase due to exchange rate fluctuations, which does not apply to all products. However, there are some products that did not increase much. As an example, two headlights for the Peugeot 206 are offered at a price of 250,000 Tomans, which, if we calculate it in terms of currency, will cost the customer \$ 18 and 50 cents. While this light with the same quality was offered by Veleo Company, the main manufacturer of Peugeot lights, to the Iranian market and the Iranian manufacturer at a price of \$ 80. The light we produce at the same price and the same quality and standard for the customer is \$ 18.

Are you ready to produce it if there is an order for a new product? As an example, can you produce a 2008 Peugeot or Citroen C3 light?

We are definitely ready for that. We are currently working on the Peugeot 2008 and C3 hazardous lights, and we have even been able to have coherent meetings with Saipa-Citroen and ICAP about new products. These products are based on French standards with the supervision and cooperation of our company. "Our production line technology is a fusion of East and West," said the industrial group's CEO. Eastern technology is owned by Japan and is owned by Quito and Stanley. Western technology also belongs to Europe and the companies of Hela, Bush and Velo. "We were able to design our own production line, which produces 2,400 Peugeot 206 headlights in just one shift," he said. He added: "Among the features of the production line of the modern industrial group, we can mention that it is equipped with a clinker assembly line (clean room) and the existence of furnaces called Anil with a greenhouse of 60 to 70 degrees, which if we want to buy only this greenhouse, They don't sell. But this section in the modern industrial group has reached the construction stage. "We plan to increase production capacity by 40 percent," Changi said, referring to the long-term plan of the modern industrial group. Last year we produced 4.5 million headlights, and this year we are targeting 5.5 million headlights.

Despite the sanctions, we are looking to increase quality

In the end, he said, the International Industry Research Group, despite the international restrictions imposed on the automotive industry, has produced more than 80% of the consumer parts with the best domestic quality and with this capability to build its production line equipment based on the highest technology of foreign parts manufacturers. has done. Also, due to the development of the company's activities in the field of brake pad production, antifreeze fluid and car side mirrors, significant entrepreneurship has been achieved, which in turn has been an effective step in creating jobs and creating new job opportunities. He knew over 4,000 people. In the last word, the company undertakes to increase production by up to 30% in order to jump in production, maintain its products by maintaining and improving quality, technical capabilities acquired in the field of lamp design and production, and prioritizing employee health in the safest production and welfare conditions. Another big one should be removed in the Iranian parts manufacturing industry. To counter the prevalence of coronavirus, the modern industrial group has tested all of its employees in two stages and designed and produced disinfectant gels, masks, masks and automatic spray disinfectants to increase their health.



Hungary to Summon Nordic Diplomats

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Hungary will summon the ambassadors of five Nordic countries on Monday over their countries' criticism of a controversial law that empowers Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to carry out measures by decree against the novel coronavirus.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said on Facebook on Sunday that he would summon the diplomats as Hungary "wanted no pitiful hypocritical tutelage" and reiterated Budapest would go its own way.

The law, which authorises Orban to bypass Parliament indefinitely in measures to contain the virus and mitigate its after-effects, has provoked an international wave of criticism, including from rights groups and the EU Commission.



Britain Would Not Support Israeli West Bank Annexation

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain would not support an Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank as it would make a two-state solution with the Palestinians more difficult to achieve, junior Foreign Office minister James Cleverly said on Monday.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said it is up to Israel whether to annex parts of the West Bank.

But Cleverly told parliament: "Our long-standing position is that we do not support the annexation of parts of the West Bank, and ... doing so could make a sustainable two-state solution harder."



Putin Lifts Russia's Stay-at-Home Orders as Cases Soar



MOSCOW (AFP) - President Vladimir Putin on Monday said stay-at-home orders for most workers in Russia would end this week even as the country registered a record increase in new coronavirus infections.

With more than 220,000 confirmed cases and a steady surge of more than 10,000 new coronavirus cases every day, Russia now ranks fourth in a global tally of total infections after the United States, Spain and Britain.

Despite virus figures that suggest the pandemic in Russia shows no sign of slowing, Putin announced that the country's "non-working" period to slow the pandemic would end on Tuesday.

The Kremlin introduced the measures in late March, saying Russians not working in essential jobs would have to stay at home but still receive their salaries as part of sweeping efforts to contain the virus.

The move brought uncertainty to the economy already grappling with low oil prices, with business owners struggling to pay full salaries to employees while shutting their doors to customers. "Starting from tomorrow, May 12, the national period of non-working days will be over for all sectors of the economy," Putin said during a meeting with officials responsible for the country's virus response.

The president said that Russia's regions, which were given leeway to introduce different anti-virus measures, will be able to keep in place any restrictions necessary to contain the pandemic.

The president's announcement, which was broadcast on state-run television, comes after Russia registered a record number of daily cases with more than 11,000 people testing positive over the last 24 hours.

Officials have said the rise of the daily rate is in part due to aggressively testing, even of those showing no symptoms. The government says it has carried out more than 5.6 million tests.

Health officials Monday said Russia has a total of 221,344 coronavirus infections, with around half of the total cases in the capital.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin last week extended a lockdown in the capital until the end of May and ordered residents to wear masks and gloves on public transport.

Yet Sobyenin has also said that some industries and construction sites can begin work this week.

Putin on Monday said that Russia had used the self-isolation period to prepare its healthcare system, increasing the amount of hospital beds and saving "many thousands of lives".

This "allows us to begin a gradual lifting of restrictions", he said. Russia's reported mortality rate is much lower compared to other European countries hit hard by the pandemic, with 94 new deaths and 2,009 dead from the coronavirus as of Monday.

Yemen Gov't, Southern Separatists Clash Over Zinjibar



ADEN (AFP) - Fighting broke out Monday between government troops and separatists in southern Yemen, officials said, in the first major clash since the Southern Transitional Council declared self-rule over the region.

The two sides fought for control of Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan province, the separatist STC said. Government troops launched an offensive on the outskirts of Zinjibar, some 60 kilometres (35 miles) from the main southern city of Aden, sources from both sides told AFP.

An STC official, Nabil al-Hanachi, told AFP that they managed to "stop the attack and kill many of them", without giving figures.

Video footage showed government armored vehicles on fire, as STC forces celebrated their "victory".

The fighting complicates Yemen's five-year war between the government -- backed by a Saudi-led military coalition -- and Iran-backed Huthi rebels who control much of the north, including the capital Sanaa.

The government and the STC have technically been allies in the long war against the Huthis.

But the separatists in the south, which used to be an independent country, have agitated to break away again -- a campaign that was temporarily put to rest with a power-sharing deal signed in Riyadh last November.

On April 26, however, the STC declared self-rule in southern Yemen, accusing the government of failing to carry out its duties and of "conspiring" against their cause.

Over the past six years, the Yemen conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, and triggered what the UN considers to be the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Europe Emerges From Confinement, But Asia Infections Spike

PARIS (AFP) - Swathes of Europe began the long process of reopening from coronavirus lockdowns on Monday, but a resurgence of infections in China and South Korea offered a sobering reminder of the dangers of a second wave of cases.

The mixed fortunes illustrate the high-wire act governments face across the globe as they try to resuscitate shattered economies while keeping in check a pandemic that has now killed more than 282,000 people and infected over 4.1 million.

As France and Spain embraced new freedoms and Britain plotted a path to normality, the Chinese city of Wuhan where the pandemic was born reported a second day of new cases after a month without a sign of the virus.

And neighboring South Korea announced its highest number of infections for more than a month driven by a cluster in a Seoul nightlife district. With millions out of work and economies badly bruised, governments are desperate to hit the accelerator, but most are choosing a gradual approach as fears about a resurgence of the virus loom large.

In parts of Europe, officials have been emboldened by declining death rates, with France's daily toll dropping to 70 on Sunday -- its lowest since early April -- and Spain's daily fatalities falling below 200.

The French were able to venture outdoors without filling in a permit for the first time in nearly eight weeks on Monday, and some shops reopened their doors.

The wide boulevards of the Champs-Élysées in Paris were once again back to life with cars and shoppers waiting patiently to make purchases, but things were not as before. "It's a little unreal, everyone is wearing masks, it's really strange," said Irina, queuing outside a cosmetics store.

Many Spaniards revelled in being able to visit outdoor terraces and cafes again after months under one of the world's toughest lockdowns, although virus hotspots such as Madrid and Barcelona remain under wraps.

"I really missed this, now you value these little pleasures," said Jesus Vazquez, a 51-year-old builder, as he enjoyed a sandwich and beer in the sunshine outside a bar in the city of Tarragona.

Greek Migrant Hotel Ransacked in Latest Tensions Over Relocations

ATHENS (Dispatches) - When plans were leaked last week to move dozens of asylum seekers from an island camp to a hotel in the northern Greek village of Arnissa, there was a swift and violent response.

Around 250 people burned and looted the empty hotel to prevent the transfer, according to eyewitnesses, in the latest tensions over the relocation of migrants in Greece. "It was really scary. They threw stones, lit fires and ransacked the entire hotel," said a young woman who declined to give her name.

"My father who is old and lives near the hotel hasn't slept for two days because of his fear," she told AFP. The Greek government has promised to transfer more than 2,000 asylum seekers from islands to the mainland to ease pressure on camps. But fed up with shouldering the burden of Europe's snail-paced asylum system, locals have protested against the presence of migrants in their towns.

State Printing Office of Iran (SPOI)
Tender of purchasing 800rolls self-adhesive tape
30mm width (300 mm diameter) and 500rolls self-
adhesive tape 40mm width(300 mm diameter)
Tender NO : 2099001065000010

State printing office of Iran intends to purchase the aforementioned self-adhesive tapes through a public tender. Therefore ,participants in the tender should first receive their tender documents from May. 09-2020 to 12:00 hours on May.14-2020 in the Governmental portal address at : www.setadiran.ir and after register needed documents in mentioned address, physically submit envelopes A,B and C to the secretariat of the company before the end of administrative hour(12:00 PM)on May.30-2020. Tender documents presented after the stated deadline will not be accepted.

The guaranteed amount for participating in the tender is 500/000/000 Rials(2850 EUO) and should be presented in the form of a bank guarantee in envelope A.

All stages of bid , including receiving tender documents ,submitting price proposal of tenders and opening the envelopes ,will be done through the portal of government's electronic procurement system at the following address : www.setadiran.ir.

It is necessary that tenders , if not taken membership previously , should carry out the registration stages in the mentioned website and receive the signed and sealed electronic certificate for participating in the tender. For more information , please contact the governmental portal phone numbers at 41934 ,registration office Tel: 88969737 and 85193768. Envelopes opening date is on Sunday May.31-2020at 10:00 AM in Transactions Commission Room of State Printing Office of Iran.

Meanwhile ,the cost for publishing the advertisement shall be borne by the tender winner.

Address : State Printing Office of Iran, Imam Husein Square, Igbal Lahouri St., Next to Khayyam Park, No: 29, Postal code : 1714744153, Tel : 33349079

م.الف: ۳۹۲

Biden Still Trails Omnipresent Trump



NEW YORK (Dispatches) -

Joe Biden is rapidly scaling up his digital campaign as he scrambles to compete with Donald Trump's formidable online operation, but Democrats say the presidential hopeful must move beyond flat speeches delivered from his basement.

The Democratic Party's presumptive nominee is doubling the size of his digital team -- currently at a reported 25 people -- and his campaign said Monday it is launching a flood-the-zone approach across multiple online platforms.

But with November's election less than six months away and traditional campaigning halted due to the coronavirus pandemic, Biden is in an awkward spot.

While Biden talks into a camera in an empty basement studio in Delaware where he is under stay-at-home orders, Trump is center-stage, acting -- successfully or not -- to address the crisis and reopen the shuttered economy.

The contrast was driven home last week when Biden's virtual rally in Florida was marred by technical glitches.

Some Democratic campaign experts have described Biden's basement tapes as too static and packaged.

Strategists have openly worried that Biden is already dangerously behind Trump on key metrics across platforms including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

The 77-year-old former vice president will need to rapidly adjust to new political realities if he is to compete with a president whose data-mining and voter targeting operations are vast.

The 2020 election is "a battle for the soul of this nation," Biden likes to say.

"But it's also a battle for the soul of the internet. And it's a battle we intend to win," Biden's digital director Rob Flaherty tweeted Saturday as he announced several new hires.

Shanon
(adviser)

Velenjak Apt (\$2500)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Elahieh Villa (\$3000)
1500sq.m
4bdrs, pkg
balcony, & yard
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

(\$2000)
Fereshteh
3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Farmanieh Apts
(\$1800) 200sq.m, 3bdrs
(\$2500) 300sq.m, 4bdrs
Both with S/p, S, J, F.F

(\$5000)
Jordan bldg
4storey, 15bdrs, pkgs

(\$2600)
Darrous Apt
280sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, F.F

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Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
Fax : 88506474

(\$7000)
Sa'adat abad Villa
1000sq.m, 6bdrs, S/p
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Turkey's February Unemployment Falls to 13.6%

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Unemployment in Turkey dropped to 13.6% this February, down 1.1 percentage points from the same month last year, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) announced Monday.

The number of unemployed persons age 15+ slipped by 502,000 year-on-year to 4.23 million by the end of February. On a monthly basis, February's figure also dropped 0.2 percentage points, as unemployment in January stood at 13.8%.

Official data also showed that non-agricultural unemployment fell 1.5 percentage points to 15.4% during the same period.



German Employers Slash Jobs as Coronavirus Lay-Offs Mount

BERLIN (FT) - Almost one in five German companies decided to lay off workers or not to extend fixed-term contracts in April because of the economic impact of the pandemic, in an early indication of how challenging many European companies will find the return to work as lockdowns ease.

Germany's restaurants, hotels and recruitment companies were particularly badly hit, with more than half cutting jobs, according to a survey of 6,500 businesses by the Ifo economics institute in Munich over the first three weeks of April, which was published on Monday.

The data showed even Europe's strongest labour market is being shaken by the crisis, suggesting Germany's attempt to shield workers from the impact of the pandemic with its subsidised short-term leave scheme is unlikely to prevent a sharp rise in unemployment.

"From now on, the [coronavirus] crisis will have an impact on the German labour market," said Klaus Wohlrabe, head of surveys at Ifo.

More than 10m workers in Germany had by last month applied for the Kurzarbeit scheme, in which the government pays about two-thirds of their wages while they are on reduced hours or sent home, a record level of demand for the scheme that equates to more than a fifth of the workforce.

Despite this, the strict lockdown measures introduced to contain the spread of coronavirus left companies in many sectors with no choice but to cut jobs permanently, the Ifo survey found. As well as restaurants, hotels and recruitment companies, job cuts were also reported by more than a third of groups making leather goods and shoes, as well as travel, sports and entertainment companies.

The carmaking sector, which accounts for about a fifth of Germany's manufacturing output and 5 per cent of all jobs, has been hit particularly hard by plant closures, supply chain disruption and plummeting sales. Almost four out of 10 vehicle manufacturers told Ifo they had cut jobs last month, as car production fell 97 per cent.

Germany entered the crisis with almost full employment and a jobless rate of only 5 per cent, one of the lowest in Europe. But economists at Deutsche Bank estimate this will rise as high as 8.5 per cent this year before falling back to 6 per cent next year. If the lockdowns are extended because of a fresh surge in infections, they said it could rise to as high as 13 per cent.

The country's jobless ranks have already expanded by a record 373,000 people between March and April to reach 2.64m. That pushed up the unemployment rate to a three-year high of 5.8 per cent in April. Normally Germany's domestic-focused services sector acts as a buffer to any downturn in the export-focused manufacturing industry. However, Deutsche Bank economists said the services sector was being hit just as hard in this crisis, so it was "not providing a similar buffer for employment".

Some sectors are proving more resilient; 5 per cent or fewer of the surveyed businesses in the pharmaceutical, construction, real estate, information technology, legal and tax advice and gaming and betting said they had cut jobs.

Germany has been steadily lifting its lockdown; many shops and schools at least partially reopened last month while restrictions are set to be lifted on restaurants, hotels and campsites in several regions this month. But some restrictions will stay in place until at least June, while public events are banned until August, and economists estimate economic activity will not rebound before the second half of the year at the earliest.

Planemaker ATR to Cut Output as Coronavirus Hits Demand

PARIS (Reuters) - Franco-Italian turboprop maker ATR on Monday became the latest aircraft manufacturer to prepare for production cuts due to the coronavirus crisis, with its chief executive telling Reuters a decision on the extent would be taken in the coming weeks.

The aircraft manufacturer, co-owned by France-based Airbus (AIR.PA) and Italy's Leonardo (LDOF.MI), saw its deliveries fall last year to 68 aircraft, from 76 in 2018, Stefano Bortoli said. Last year's deliveries were the lowest since 2012 as the aircraft market headed into a downcycle even before the coronavirus crisis, with the traditionally volatile market for nimble short-haul turboprop aircraft already feeling the pain.

ATR sold 79 aircraft in 2019, however, up from 52 in 2018.

ATR dominates the market for 50-70-seat turboprop aircraft which are economic on short flights, but is exposed to the relatively weak credit profiles of many regional airlines compared to larger groups, bankers and leasing firms say.

Bortoli declined to give delivery targets for 2020 but said ATR would follow other aircraft manufacturers in reducing planned production after seeing demand and its own ability to make deliveries hit by the epidemic and widespread lockdowns.

"Of course we are going to reduce; we will see later how much," Bortoli said in an interview.

Data from flight-tracking service Flightradar24.com supplied to Reuters shows a marked drop in the number of ATR test flights since the start of the year, suggesting lower production. Deliveries have been hampered in part by rules restricting the arrival of inspection teams into France, where the company has its final assembly line, Bortoli said. The coronavirus crisis has driven a number of turboprop operators into bankruptcy or administration including ATR user Air Mauritius.

Bortoli, however, said a new cargo version of the benchmark ATR 72-600 turboprop will go into service as planned later this year with launch customer FedEx. Cargo demand has been rising during the crisis as the grounding of most passenger aircraft removes key capacity for freight usually carried in their cargo holds.

Analysts say regional jets, which compete with turboprops in some markets, are expected to benefit from the reluctance of airlines to take risks on larger planes after the crisis. But Bortoli said he expected turboprops to hold their own as regional economies lead the way out of the crisis. Demand for turboprops has traditionally been tied to regional development.

"The first flows will be domestic flows which includes regional ones... that operate essential services," he said.

Turboprops do best when oil prices are high as they save fuel on short routes, but Bortoli predicted a demand-led slump in oil prices would correct itself as the crisis eases. Industry sources say ATR has declared 'force majeure' on aircraft deliveries, meaning it is at the mercy of events outside its control, and informed airlines that any delays are "excusable," restricting the amount of compensation. Bortoli declined to comment on contractual details.



China April New Bank Loans Fall Less Than Expected

BEIJING (Reuters) - New bank lending in China fell less than expected in April from the previous month while growth of broad money supply quickened, as the central bank ramped up policy support for the coronavirus-ravaged economy.

Further monetary easing steps are also expected as the central bank has pledged to keep liquidity ample and lower borrowing costs, although Beijing is likely to rely on fiscal stimulus to revive growth.

Chinese banks extended 1.7 trillion yuan (\$240.05 billion) in new local-currency loans in April, down from 2.85 trillion yuan in March but higher than the 1.02 trillion yuan a year earlier, according to data released by the People's Bank of China on Monday.

Analysts polled by Reuters had predicted new yuan loans would fall to 1.40 trillion yuan in April. Household loans, mostly mortgages, fell to 666.9 billion yuan in April from 989.1 billion yuan in March, while corporate loans fell to 956.3 billion yuan from 2.05 trillion yuan.

The PBOC has rolled out a raft of easing steps since early February, including cuts in reserve requirements and lending rates and targeted lending support for virus-hit firms.

The first-quarter monetary policy implementation report from the People's Bank of China (PBOC) published on Sunday dropped a vow to refrain from "flood-like" stimulus, suggesting authorities were keen to jump start an economy grappling with its biggest slump in decades.

The report said the central bank will keep growth of broad M2 money supply and social financing in line with and slightly higher than nominal GDP growth.

The M2 measure grew 11.1% in April from a year earlier, central bank data showed, above the 10.2% forecast in the Reuters poll. It rose 10.1% in March. The net new lending figures are highly seasonal, so it makes sense to focus on the year-on-year change in the outstanding amounts to gauge the underlying trend, analysts said.

"After the persistent slowdown in credit growth in recent years, the latest pick-up is a reminder that the PBOC is still capable of engineering faster lending when it wants to," Julian Evans-Pritchard at Capital Economics said in a note.

"The PBOC's latest monetary policy report...suggests that further easing measures are in the pipeline and that credit growth will probably continue to accelerate in the coming months." Outstanding yuan loans grew 13.1% from a year earlier compared with 12.7% in March and analysts expectations for 12.9% growth.

Growth of outstanding total social financing (TSF), a broad measure of credit and liquidity in the economy, quickened to 12% in April from a year earlier and from 11.5% in March. TSF includes off-balance sheet forms of financing that exist outside the conventional bank lending system, such as initial public offerings, loans from trust companies and bond sales.

In April, TSF fell to 3.09 trillion yuan from 5.15 trillion yuan in March. Analysts polled by Reuters had expected April TSF of 2.65 trillion yuan.

UAE Rules Out Any Change in VAT Rate



DUBAI (Dispatches) - The UAE's Ministry of Finance (MoF) ruled out any plan to hike value-added tax (VAT) following Saudi Arabia's announcement of a three-fold increase in VAT on Monday.

VAT was introduced in the UAE on January 1, 2018 at five per cent on several goods and services.

Younis Haji Al Khoori, Undersecretary of MoF, said the focus is to work with all government entities to assess the priorities for the post-Covid-19 stage. Furthermore, the ministry will reorient the financial resources to prepare for the future and continued growth to ensure the security and safety of the communities.

In a surprise move, Riyadh increased VAT rate from five per cent to 15 per cent and also suspended the cost of living allowance to increase revenues with effect from June 1, 2020.

Sources and industry executive privy to the matter said that contrary to the Saudi move, the UAE was mulling dropping VAT temporarily until the situation surrounding Covid-19 is stabilised and the economy returns back on track.

Also, many European and Asian countries are turning to emergency tax breaks to support their economies against the Covid-19 threat. India, China, Finland, South Africa, Bulgaria, the U.S. and the EU have announced some form of relief for their businesses and consumers in taxes to cope with the virus.

"We at the MoF are studying our financial systems to ensure their readiness to manage the next stage and support all vital sectors. We are devising several programmes and projects to enhance our ability to continue the development process and to put people as our top priority. This is essential to build a secure future and achieve the well-being and stability of our society. The UAE has always been keen to take precautionary measures and launch financial initiatives, which protect the national economy and support various business sectors in the country," said Al Khoori.

India Faces Long Road to Get Economic Engine Running

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - When Bharat Gite reopened his aluminium parts factories in India's western city of Pune, he spent days servicing idle machines, sanitising his premises and putting in place social distancing norms for staff.

His bigger problem now is convincing workers to return to their jobs after millions of Indians fled cities for their rural homes when Prime Minister Narendra Modi imposed a nationwide lockdown at the end of March. Gite supplies companies such as General Electric, ABB and Siemens, and he says sales orders have dried up. The two factories run by his Taural India are operating at just a tenth of their capacity and with 30% of labour, he says.

"We haven't heard from customers in the last two months," Gite said by phone from Pune. "It's totally a havoc situation. We don't know what is going to happen." The biggest uncertainty is "how to bring the workforce back", he said. "It will take at least a year for the business to come back on track."

As India begins gradually easing stay-at-home restrictions across the country, Gite's experience shows how reopening the economy isn't going to be a straightforward exercise. On top of the labour shortages and slack demand, businesses are living with the threat they'll be shut down for several weeks if a single infection is detected, forcing them to proceed with caution. That dispels any notion of a quick recovery in an economy facing its first contraction in more than four decades and hundreds of millions of job losses.

"If one person is infected, the whole factory will be closed for 28 days. That is a fear among entrepreneurs," said Chandrakant Salunkhe, president of the SME Chamber of India, which represents small- and mid-sized businesses in the country. "Even if I start my factory now, I'll not get raw material. If I have raw material, I don't have labour, and if I have labour I don't have orders. Supply chain has totally broken down."

Small and mid-sized businesses in India account for about a third of GDP and employ more than 110-million people. It's this sector of the economy that's experiencing the brunt of the jobs and financial pain from the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. India went into a lockdown on March 25, with Modi extending the stringent stay-at-home restrictions twice — first until May 3 and then again until May 17. He began easing curbs last week on the production, sale and transport of goods in areas where virus cases are less severe.

Despite the lockdown, infections have continued to spread. Confirmed cases stand at more than 56,000.

Eight Out of Ten Britons Want Quality of Life Over Economic Growth

LONDON (Dispatches) - The majority of Britons want the Government to prioritize quality of life over economic growth throughout the coronavirus pandemic, a poll has found.

GDP figures from January to the end of March, set to be published this week, are expected to drop significantly following warnings from the Bank of England that they could slump by nearly 30 per cent this year- causing the worst recession for three centuries.

Millions of people in the UK are facing financial worries during the pandemic, with many being placed on the Government's furlough scheme as companies continue to struggle throughout the outbreak.

But despite fear over the economy, eight out of ten people want ministers to focus on the health of the nation over the financial sector during and on the way out of the crisis, according to the survey by YouGov.

A majority of people in the UK want the Government to prioritize health and wellbeing of the nation over economic growth during the coronavirus crisis

And six out of ten Britons say that health and wellbeing should always be favored regardless.

Fran Boait, executive director of Positive Money, which commissioned the research, said: 'It's clear the vast majority of the public think we should worry more about people's health and wellbeing than economic growth.'

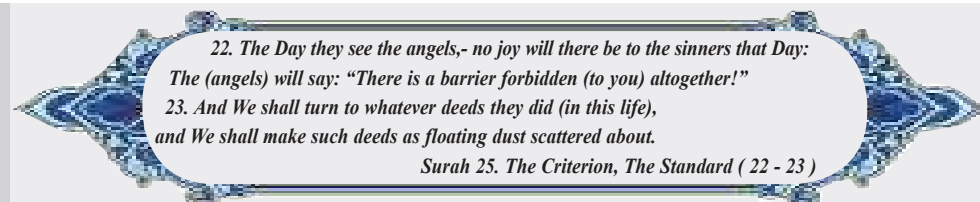
'The government must not be tempted to pursue policies that would boost GDP at the expense of lives, wellbeing and the environment.'

In a grim assessment last week the Bank of England warned that the GDP could fall by 14 per cent this year, in what would be the biggest recession for 300 years, since the Great Frost of 1709 - when temperatures plunged across Europe for months.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:00
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:21
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:21
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:59



Japan Plans to Top Up Trillion-Dollar Stimulus to Help Economy

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan will take additional stimulus measures "swiftly" to combat the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, signalling readiness to compile a second supplementary budget during the current Diet session running through June.

The new package of steps would aim to cushion the blow to the world's third-largest economy, which is on the cusp of deep recession amid a plunge in global demand and a local state of emergency that has been extended through to the end of May.

Abe said the government will consider additional steps such as aid to firms struggling to pay rent, support for students who have lost part-time jobs, and more subsidies to companies hit by slumping sales.

"If we decide that additional steps are needed, we will take bold and timely action," Abe told Parliament on Monday when asked by an opposition legislator whether the government will compile a second extra budget to fund the additional steps.

"It's important to act with speed," he said, adding that the government was ready to compile the second extra budget in time to pass it through the current Diet session ending on June 17.

Abe declined to say what the size of spending could be, saying the decision will depend on how many prefectures will be able to lift state-of-emergency measures now applied nationwide.

In extending the measures to the end of May, the government said it would reassess the situation on May 14 and possibly lift them earlier for some prefectures.

"We will do our utmost to help companies sustain their businesses and protect jobs," Abe said, adding the government will "act swiftly" taking into account proposals made by ruling and opposition legislators.

Japan compiled a record \$1.1 trillion economic stimulus package in April that focused on cash payouts to households and loans to small businesses hurt by the pandemic.

Ruling coalition legislators have ramped up calls for more assistance, as the government's decision to extend the state of emergency heightens risks of more bankruptcies and job losses.

In a sign of the rising demands from politicians, opposition legislator Yuichiro Tamaki urged Abe to deploy fresh spending of 100 trillion yen (\$936bn)



funded by a 100-year "coronavirus" bond.

Many analysts, however, expect any additional spending to be fairly small given Japan's already huge public debt that is twice the size of its economy.

Chotaro Morita, chief bond strategist at SMBC Nikko Securities, expects the size of direct spending funded by a second extra budget to be worth 3-4 trillion yen (\$28.05-\$37.4bn).

"The size of a second extra budget will be smaller than the first one. Even so, additional bond issuance is unavoidable," said Katsutoshi Inadome, senior fixed-income strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

Japan's economy likely shrank for a second consecutive quarter in the first three months of this year, a Reuters poll showed, meeting the definition of a recession, as the pandemic crushed consumption and business activity.

About 15,777 coronavirus infections and 624 deaths have been confirmed in Japan as of Sunday, excluding cases from a cruise ship previously quarantined in Yokohama, according to NHK.

Turkey Reverses Currency Trading Ban on Citigroup, UBS, BNP Paribas



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's banking industry regulator ended a currency trading ban imposed on Citigroup, UBS and BNP Paribas imposed just four days ago.

The BDDK said the three institutions had fulfilled outstanding foreign exchange obligations quickly, according to a letter it sent to banks on Monday, media including Reuters and Bloomberg reported.

A further investigation into the currency market practices of Citigroup, UBS and BNP will continue, the letter said, without providing further details. The banks were accused of not fulfilling obligations to local banks from currency transactions made early last year in the offshore swaps market, state-run Anadolu news agency reported last week.

Turkey imposed the ban shortly after the lira slumped to a record low of 7.269 per dollar. It has long accused foreign banks of manipulating the currency and has sought to starve them of the means to short the lira through a variety of measures.

The regulator "was trying to use a sledgehammer to crack a walnut and had risked lots of collateral damage thru this ban - to foreign institutional investors and local business clearing TRY transactions thru these banks," Tim Ash, senior emerging markets strategist at BlueBay Asset Management in London, said in e-mailed comments.

"Positive that the Turkish regulators listened to lots of representation from the banks and plenty of other players."

While many foreigners have withdrawn capital from Turkey, the central bank and state-run banks have been intervening in the foreign currency market to bolster the lira's value. As a result, the central bank's foreign currency reserves have shrunk by tens of billions of dollars this year, raising concern among investors that it no longer has the ammunition to defend the lira in times of crisis.

The lira rose less than 0.1 percent to 7.076 per dollar after the ban was lifted.

The lira's declines have been exacerbated by interest rate cuts by the central bank. The bank has slashed the benchmark rate to 8.75 percent from 24 percent in July last year. Consumer price inflation is 10.9 percent, meaning real interest rates in Turkey are negative.

The foreign exchange market interventions and rate cuts are examples of unorthodox economic policies followed by the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who believes that higher interest rates are inflationary, confounding conventional economic theory.

Erdoğan has regularly accused Western banks of being part of a so-called "interest rate lobby" intent on shackling Turkey's economy and making it reliant on U.S. and European capital.

Iran-Turkmenistan Border to Reopen Soon

TEHRAN (IFP) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy says following negotiations between Tehran and Ashgabat, the Iran-Turkmenistan border will probably reopen in the next 10 to 20 days.

Gholam-Reza Ansari said Turkmenistan is currently the only neighboring country whose border with Iran is still closed.

He said Turkmenistan is one of the countries that have imposed restrictions due to the coronavirus; however, if the Islamic Republic reassures the other countries that the health issues are being closely monitored, more borders will be reopened.

Speaking at a meeting of Economic Coordination Headquarters, he said some borders are open three or four days a week, but some are open all the week

while some others are open 24 hours a day, such as the Razi-Kapikoy on the Turkish border.

"Some restrictions are applied on weekdays in some borders, but we hope we can open these borders with the observation of health protocols," mentioned Ansari.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ansari addressed the issue of transit, stating that taking into account Iran's geographical location, the country has a golden opportunity for transit.

"Of course, this requires us to provide facilities for foreign drivers to prefer our transit routes," underlined Ansari.

Currently, there are rival routes, he noted, reiterating that if Iran wants to introduce its transit market well, it needs to offer more facilities to make its routes more economical.

Attention to Human Resources and Their Needs Is a Priority for HOSCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Human Resources Vice President of Hormozgan Steel Mr. Keykavus Nedaee believes in the important role of human resources in the productivity of the organization, saying that human resources are considered as the most important assets of any company and attention to it and their needs are of the major priorities of Hormozgan Steel Company.

After visiting the production units of the company and addressing the personnel of the production line, he pointed to the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the country, adding that the disease was a rare and unique event in the country which surprised all organizations and created lots of problems.

Nedaee added that soon personnel's health and prevention of them from being infected by the virus was put on the agenda of the company and the company took some measures after holding weekly meetings by a special committee and approval of the CEO of the company.

He said despite all problems, the company provided some health and hygienic items needed by the staff in fight with the virus.

Nedaee further said that the administrative staff was in lockdown for one month and currently they have been divided into two groups and each group attends the work every other day.

He reiterated that the company has paid the full salaries of its staff. He reiterated that protecting the workforce is the priority of the company.

He said some 4,000 people are working directly in the company and thousands are involved indirectly.



Pakistan Relaxes Restrictions, Small Businesses Open

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan on Monday further relaxed coronavirus restriction to open small markets and shops across the country despite a sharp rise in cases.

According to officials, all the small markets, shops, and allied industries of the construction sector opened today under a federal government announcement last week.

"As per the government decision, all shops and small markets will open from morning to evening for four days a week," Ajmal Khan Wazir, spokesman of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, told Anadolu Agency.

Wazir requested the public to follow standard procedures to prevent the virus' spread.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Imran Khan announced a gradual exit from the nationwide lockdown despite a surging number of coronavirus cases in the country.

Khan said the lockdown has badly hurt laborers, small businessmen, and the general public.

"Our tax revenues dropped 35% while exports also fell due to the lockdown," he said.

However, the government extended the closure of education institutions across the country until July 15.

Nights of Decree...

FROM PAGE 1

So we realize that fasting brings three properties for the human: more understanding, more feeling and more patience. These triple factors are actually tools for human to make decision for forming his future and fate. So the one who fasts has better insight due to his fasting and feels the pains in the society much more, and his patience increases for continuing his path. So this man is the one who can make decision and portray a path for his future and determine his fate in his decisions. And praying and demand from Almighty would help him in this process of improvement.

Imam Musa al-Sadr, the Lebanese leader who has gone missing, may God bless him in interpretation of Ad-Dukhan (the Smoke) Chapter of the Holy Quran which is recited mostly in these days says, "Ha, Meem. By the clear Book, Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night. Indeed, We were to warn [mankind]. On that night is made distinct every precise matter -[Every] matter [proceeding] from Us. Indeed, We were to send [a messenger] As mercy from your Lord. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

Since the word "Dukhan" (smoke) has been mentioned in the chapter, the chapter has been named ad-Dukhan. It is one of the chapters in the Holy Quran which is mostly recited during the Night of Decree. The first six verses of the chapter, which were mentioned above, openly show that the chapter definitely deals with layali al-Qadr (Nights of Decree). So I think it is better to mention some points on this issue which is a complicated one and it is a secret among the Muslims.

This chapter defines the theme and meaning of layali al-Qadr, a meaning which is totally different with the common prevalent meaning because it says, "We have sent the Holy Quran down during a blessed night." And in the Qadr (Power) Chapter and in its first verse, it has been emphasized that the Holy Quran has been sent down during the Night of Decree, "Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree."

So the blessed night is the very Night of Decree when the Holy Quran has been sent down. These verses interpret the meaning of Night of Decree in this way that the Night of Decree is that night of sending down of the Holy Quran and in the Holy Quran, everything has been clearly defined and everything about halal (allowed), haram (forbidden), right and corrupt as well as legal truths have been cleared. By the way, all definitions about mystical values and Divine teachings and meanings have been mentioned.

Hence, month of Ramadan is an educational course which determines the fate of human, and it means his fate of the whole year is set based on the framework which has been designed in the heart and soul of the pious and the degree of piety in him in Ramadan. It means Ramadan is month of education and because of the Nights of Decree when man reaches this educational course, he would evolve.

This evolution lies in the third decade of the month and according to some narrations, the Night of Decree is one of the last days of the third decade of the month. In some narrations have been mentioned that any man has a Night of Decree which differs from other one's and this meaning accords with the concept about the relation between the Night of Decree and fasting.

Iran's COVID-19...

FROM PAGE 1

Biglari went on to say that the number of laboratories which run coronavirus test has increased from 3 to 120, and 15,000 tests can be done on a daily basis.

Referring to two types of Coronavirus diagnosis tests he said that molecular test is valid and reliable although serologic test can show the effect of the virus in the body. "The number of inpatients has lessened, and people need to rely on our health network system," he concluded.

Pasteur Institute of Iran (IPI) was founded in the heart of Iran's capital, Tehran in the 1920s to pave the way for advanced research and to provide innovative programs in basic and applied medical sciences, and production of biopharmaceuticals and diagnostic kits with special emphasis on infectious diseases.



Man City in Barcelona Talks for Semedo

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City are in talks with Barcelona for Nelson Semedo. The Portugal fullback has been transfer-listed by City after new contract talks broke down earlier this year. Sport says City boss Pep Guardiola loves Semedo and that everything is pointing towards a move to the Etihad in the summer. However, it's also claimed that the two clubs are still not close on agreeing a fee. Barca are seeking €30-40m to sell Semedo.

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Trippier Committed To Atletico Madrid

MADRID (Dispatches) - Kieran Trippier has no plans to leave Atletico Madrid this summer. In England, it's been claimed the England fullback is spying a return home, indeed it's suggested Trippier had been house-hunting in the Northwest in preparation for a £20m return to former club Burnley. However, AS says both Trippier and Atletico management are in agreement that he'll continue next season. Indeed, Trippier has spoken to several directors to assure them he is happy in Madrid.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY MAY 13, 2020

Premier League Presses On With Project Restart

LONDON (Dispatches) - Premier League clubs meet on Monday for further talks on "Project Restart" despite growing disquiet among players over safety issues and divisions over proposals on how to end the season.

The English top flight has a huge number of hurdles to clear if it is to follow Germany's Bundesliga, which plans to return from a two-month coronavirus shutdown later this week. A return to training in small groups is seen as the next step and clubs hope to get more guidance from the British government on Monday over when this will be possible after the lockdown in England was eased by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Players, coaches and staff will need to be tested at least twice a week at a significant cost to the clubs, with tests being privately sourced.

Protocols also need to be agreed on what would happen in the event of a positive test, an issue that was brought into sharp focus when Brighton confirmed on Sunday that a third member of their squad had tested positive.

Cases have also been found in squads in Germany, Italy and Spain in recent days, but have been met with different responses.

German second-tier side Dynamo Dresden placed their entire squad into a 14-day quarantine on Saturday after discovering two new cases of the virus.

However, five La Liga players who tested positive have been quarantined at home, while their teammates continue to train in preparation for a return to action.

Players have voiced their concerns at the prospect of being rushed back into training and eventually contact sport at a time when the rest of the public remain encouraged to abide by social-distancing guidelines.

Ibbou Finds Support After Challenging Thiem Over Player Fund

MUMBAI (Reuters) - Algerian Ines Ibbou was hailed as a hero by Venus Williams while her country's president pledged full support after the low-ranked tennis player posted an emotional video to take on world No. 3 Dominic Thiem for his opposition to a player relief fund.

Thiem rejected the notion that top tennis players should chip in to help lower-ranked competitors who are struggling financially due to the pause in tournaments due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

In the video, which runs over nine minutes and was posted on Ibbou's Instagram page, the world number 620 starts with "Dear Dominic" and goes on to talk about the difficulties she has had to endure and the sacrifices she needed to make in her career.

The 21-year-old pleads with Thiem to understand the stark difference in the Austrian's "magical world" and how she had to pursue tennis in the North African country, which she said lacked even basic infrastructure for the sport.

"I cherish the day when I'll be able to afford a gift for my parents. I'm dreaming about this day," said Ibbou, who started playing at the age of six but has only managed to make \$27,825 in tournament earnings so far.

"I'm a lonely lady, travelling the world generally in three-legged trips, always looking for the cheapest tickets."

World number one Novak Djokovic has urged fellow professionals to contribute to a fund set up by the sport's governing bodies to help players affected by a shutdown which began in March and will continue at least until mid-July.

Austrian Thiem said he felt there were sections of society that needed more urgent help than his fellow competitors during the economic crisis caused by the pandemic.

"Do you alternate clay and hard from a week to another like I do," Ibbou questioned Thiem. "Do you finish your tournaments with holes in shoes like I do?"

"Dear Dominic, unlike you, many share my reality. Just a reminder, it's not because of your money that we survived until now. And nobody requested to you anything. The initiative went from generous players who showed instant compassion with a classy touch."

"We are just people too," tweeted Norwich midfielder Todd Cantwell.

A study for the Office for National Statistics, showing black people are nearly twice as likely to die with coronavirus as white people in England and Wales, has also raised concerns.

"There are players who have voiced genuine concerns," Bobby Barnes, deputy chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association told the Times.

"Some of the young black players I've spoken to have read what's in the press and want answers to that. 'Am I more affected in my demographic and if so, why?'"

The Premier League's desire to overcome so many obstacles to complete the campaign is rooted in economic necessity.

Clubs stand to lose an estimated £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) if the season is not finished, but £760 million of that comes from TV contracts that would be satisfied if games were played behind closed doors.



Financial worries are also causing divisions among the 20 top-flight clubs, which could end the chances of a return to action.

A group of clubs near the bottom of the table are fiercely opposed to plans to play the remaining 92 games at neutral venues.

League chiefs believe they will only get the government's green light to restart if the number of venues are limited to reduce the medical, police, security and broadcast personnel required.

"With all these compromises and health risks we are asked to finish a competition that bears no resemblance to the one we started," Watford's chairman and chief executive Scott Duxbury told the club's website.

"So is this fair? Does it have any semblance of sporting integrity? Of course not."

Executives at Brighton, West Ham and Aston Villa have also publicly opposed the neutral venues plan.

The suspicion is they will only back down if there is no relegation this season.

But that could cause even more financial hardship to the league as a whole. Broadcasters are not keen on spending hundreds of millions for a series of glorified friendlies with no fans in the grounds.

English Football League chairman Rick Parry suggested last week that legal action would be launched if promotion were denied to three clubs from the second-tier Championship.



Pique Pessimistic Over Davis Cup Finals

MADRID (Dispatches) - Barcelona football star Gerard Pique said he was "pessimistic" that the Davis Cup Finals, which his company finances, would be held in Madrid this year. Pique's Kosmos investment group has a 25-year deal worth \$3 billion with the International Tennis Federation.

However, he believes that the November 23-29 finals in the Spanish capital could fall victim to the coronavirus.

"There is a lot of uncertainty, we try to be aware of what the government says regarding sports and to whether we can put spectators inside the Caja Magica," Pique told Movistar television.

"I would say I am a bit pessimistic, because a Davis Cup without fans is difficult.

"I think that nobody at the moment has the certainty that we can put fans in or if it will have to be behind closed doors. As the days go by, I suppose we will have a little more clarity."

Spain, one of the worst-affected countries by the pandemic, started a four-phase plan last week to relax the strict confinement rules applied since mid-March.

La Liga Aiming for June 12 Restart

MADRID (Reuters) - La Liga president Javier Tebas has said he hopes Spanish soccer will resume on June 12 after being halted for over three months due to the coronavirus pandemic.

All clubs in Spain's top two divisions began testing players for the virus last week and many including La Liga champions Barcelona started individual training, the second step of the league's four-phase protocol for returning to action.

Real Madrid resume individual training on Monday.

"I'd like to restart on June 12 but we have to be prudent and it's not just up to football, it's also up to society, we all need to focus on complying with measures to protect health," Tebas told Spanish television network Movistar on Sunday.

Tebas confirmed all matches will take place without spectators, as will be the case when Germany's Bundesliga restarts next week, and he said the league was working on ways to add to the atmosphere although he did not give details.

He also said fixtures would be spread out so that there are matches every day.

"Now that we are not going to have fans in the stadiums we are going to have some innovative ideas for broadcasting the games," Tebas added.

"There's going to be football every day once La Liga returns."



Man City Owners Add Ninth Club With Lommel SK Deal

LONDON (AFP) - Manchester City's parent company has added a ninth club to its global portfolio with the purchase of Belgian second-tier side Lommel SK.

It has been reported that Lommel's debts of £1.75 million (\$2.1 million) will be wiped out by the City Football Group (CFG) as part of the deal.

CFG has full or part-ownership of clubs in three European countries, and in four other continents.

In addition to Lommel and Premier League champions Manchester City, they have stakes in New York City FC, Melbourne City, Yokohama F. Marinos, Montevideo City Torque, Girona, Sichuan Jiuniu and Mumbai City.

CFG chief executive Ferran Soriano said the deal would improve the chances of unearthing Belgian talent such as current and former Manchester City stars Kevin De Bruyne and Vincent Kompany.

"We are excited to welcome Lommel SK to City Football Group and to work together with the fans and the city to develop the club," Soriano said in a statement on Monday.

"Belgium is one of Europe's best football countries as demonstrated by the success of the national team and the development of world-class players, some of whom we know very well, like Kevin De Bruyne and Vincent Kompany. This investment is part of our long-term strategy to be present in key football countries, play beautiful football and develop talent."

