

Domestic Production of Various Supplies by Iranian Knowledge-Based Companies for the Battle With COVID-19 Has Obviated the Need For the Import of the Medical Goods, A Vice President Announced

IRAN NEWS

Gov't Spokesman Stressed the Need for a Comprehensive Review Of the Consequences of Corona, Saying That People After Corona Are No Longer the Same as Before

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2

DOMESTIC

World No Longer Tolerates U.S. Bullying



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

Unilateralism a Lethal Poison for Int'l Community



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Threatens to Permanently Cut off U.S. Funding to WHO



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Federer Is the Best But Djokovic Tougher for Nadal



> SEE PAGE 8

Iran Urges Foreign Forces to Leave Syria

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations says the U.S. must end its illegal occupation of Syria and stop shielding terrorist groups under the mask of fighting terrorism.

Majid Takht Ravanchi made the remarks in a Monday address to a virtual meeting of United Nations Security Council dubbed "Middle East: Syria - Political".

"Sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria must be fully respected by all, and accordingly, all foreign forces whose presence is not permitted by the Syrian Government must leave the Syrian territory," the Iranian diplomat said.

"In this regard, the living example is the occupation of certain parts of Syria by the US forces who continue to support and shield terrorist groups under the mask of combatting terrorism," he went on to say.

He further rejected any separatist agendas as well as "any and all attempts to create new realities on the ground, including through illegitimate self-rule initiatives."

Takht Ravanchi slammed the "illegal" occupation of Syria's Golan Heights by Israel, and said the recognition by the U.S. of its annexation to Israel is null and void.

See Page 7

"Down With Israel" On Quds Day to Tremble Body of Zionists

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Judiciary Spokesman Gholam-Hossein Esmaili told reporters that this year, on the International Quds Day, the curse and the slogan of death to Israel will tremble the body Israel as a 'child-killer regime'.

Speaking in his weekly press conference, he said, "This year, on the International Quds Day, the curse and the slogan of Down with Israel will tremble the body of Israel as a 'child-killer regime'."

Referring to the Quds Day, said on his weekly press conference: "This year despite the outbreak of Coronavirus, in International Quds Day, our curse and shout of down with Israel, shake the body of child-killer regime."

He also said a special anti-corruption court in Iran has sentenced a couple to death on money laundering and other charges.

The couple - Najva Lasheidai and her husband Vahid Behzadi - are said to have smuggled hard currency and laundered \$200 million, said Esmaili.

See Page 7

U.S. Inhumane Sanctions Cause Suffering for People



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health minister says unilateral sanctions imposed on the country by the administration of US President Donald Trump are inhumane and cause suffering and pain for people.

Addressing the 73rd World Health Assembly through video-conference on Monday, Saeed Namaki said, "Any measure or policy, which would prevent cooperation among governments in the health sector, is irresponsible and inhumane."

"There is no doubt that unilateral sanctions constitute an obstacle and are an inhumane measure, which brings about suffering and pain [for people]," the Iranian minister said, adding, "The United States must be held to account for the severe sanctions that have put the lives of Iranian people in jeopardy."

He hailed the leading role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in supporting the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasized that the body deserves to be supported, not punished and criticized by certain countries.

Trump has claimed that the WHO had failed to disclose or respond to "credible" information in December that suggested the virus could be spread through human-to-human transmission.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian minister stressed the importance of boosting global solidarity and cooperation to contain the coronavirus pandemic, saying it is necessary that all countries have access to medicines and vaccine at an appropriate time and price.

He added that Iran has succeeded in decreasing the coronavirus death toll due to its extensive measures in the public health sector based on the approach that calls for the involvement of "the whole government and the whole society."

The Iranian minister noted that some 78 million people have been screened for the coronavirus in the country in the first phase with the help of the strong infrastructure of Iran's primary health care (PHC) system while over 22 million high-risk people have also been screened so far in the second phase.

Iran increased its laboratory capacities in outpatient clinics with the main focus being on screening the patients, social distancing, and timely treatment, and in doing this, the country gradually reopened businesses in order to prevent more harm to the country's economy, he explained.

Meanwhile yesterday Head of Public Relations and Information Center of the Ministry of Health announced that in the last 24 hours, no patient infected with COVID-19 has died in 10 provinces.

Kianoush Jahanpour yesterday presented the latest statistics regarding the coronavirus.

He said, "According to the reports by laboratories across the country from yesterday to May 19, 2,111 new patients with COVID-19 were diagnosed in which the total number of infected people reaches 124,603."

Among those number of people infected, 97,173 patients have recovered and have been discharged so far, Jahanpour added.

The Spokesman said, "Unfortunately, in the past 24 hours, 62 COVID-19 patients have lost their lives which is the least number during the last two months."

"Overall 7,119 people have lost their lives in the country to date," the health official said.

He stated, "2,698 patients are in a critical condition."

"So far, 716,176 COVID-19 diagnosis tests have been conducted in the country," according to the spokesman. In the last 24 hours, no patient infected with COVID-19 has died in 10 provinces and one case has been reported in 6 provinces. The situation in Khuzestan is still red, but other provinces are relatively stable.

Iran Attends Quadripartite Talks on Afghanistan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Diplomats from Iran, Russia, China, and Pakistan discussed the situation in Afghanistan in an online conference.

In the four-party video conference on Monday, the Iranian, Pakistani, Chinese and Russian special representatives for Afghanistan talked about the current conditions and the process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

They issued a joint communiqué reflecting the results of the negotiations, the full text of which is as follows: The special representatives of the four countries for Afghanistan affairs:

1. Affirm their respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial unity of Afghanistan and for the decision of that country's people on determining the course of the future developments;
2. Welcome the agreement between the leaders of the two main political factions and hope that the major upheaval would expedite the launch of intra-Afghan negotiations;
3. Support the process of peace and reconciliation under the ownership and guidance of Afghanistan, and believe that inclusive intra-Afghan negotiations will be the only way for national reconciliation and an immediate end to the prolonged disputes;
4. Call on all ethnic groups and parties in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, to seize the opportunities to act to set the stage for the immediate start of intra-Afghan negotiations;

See Page 7

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Confidence Vote for Al-Kadhimi, The Ground for Bolstering the Links

As it was predicted, Iraq parliament on May 7 and after six months of uncertainty finally approved the Prime Minister-designate Prime Minister Mostafa Al-Khadhimi and his picks for cabinet members. This big success, which was achieved through prudence of Iraqi political parties and after hurdles and unpleasant challenges, is auspicious for Iraqi people and some neighboring countries too, but not for few countries.

Saudis are angry at this approval, Turkey is in agony due to restoration of the stability and peace in Kurdistan and Iran and Syria are happy with this achievement. Before voting in the parliament, Parliament Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi had emphasized that Al-Kadhimi would face problems for getting vote of confidence but he ultimately would get vote of confidence. In a press conference, Al-Halbousi had elaborated that Al-Kadhimi would have a government with 20 ministers but there were some differences over the fates of two ministers. As it had been predicted, during voting the session predictions came true. Security and economy are two major challenges ahead of al-Kadhimi and his cabinet. 206 to 260 Iraqi parliament lawmakers participated in voting process and they cast their votes of confidence. Hence, Iraq has started a new stride towards stability and peace.

Lawmakers voted for Khalid Battal al-Najm as planning minister. They also voted for Hassan Mohammed Abbas Salman as health minister, for Nazineen Mohammad Wassaw as construction and housing minister, for Majid Mahdi Hantoush as electricity minister, for Adil Hashush Jabir Jassim as labor and social affairs minister, for Arkam Shihab Ahmed Kadhim as telecommunications minister, for Adnan Dirjal as youth and sport minister, for Manhal Aziz Mahmoud as industry and minerals minister, for Ali Hameed Mukhlif as education minister, for Nasir Hussein Bander Hamad as transport minister, for General Othman Ali Farhood Musheer Al Ghanimi as interior minister and for Ali Allawi as finance minister.

In the past, finance ministry was in control of Iraqi Kurds but this time they were content to take the control of the foreign ministry. Representative of Basra in the parliament tried to impose their nominees for ministries of oil and transport even they resorted to some threats.

See Page 7

U.S.-Iran Tensions Going to Get Worse

TEHRAN (ILNA) - International sanctions against Iran are related mainly to the Iranian nuclear program. European countries do not apply to humanitarian and health assistance, a Belgian diplomat told ILNA.

The ex- European Union's Special Representative to the Middle East peace process Marc Otte said in an exclusive that European countries have put in place a system to bypass American secondary sanctions, while at the same time trying to convince the US to give up its opposition to the JCPOA and related sanctions.

"European sanctions do not apply to the delivery of humanitarian and medical supplies," he added.

Answering to question about how much aid Tehran can get under U.S. sanctions, Marc Otte said that first of all; let me express my sympathy to the Iranian people suffering from the pandemic, on top of other problems due to the international and domestic context. When it comes to the impact of the virus, all humans are in the same boat, although I will admit that some suffer more than others all over the place.

"I agree sanctions limit the availability of financial means. But Iran has competent doctors and nurses. If those means were dedicated to fighting the virus, the health situation would improve," the Belgian diplomat said.

See Page 7



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154 Iranian Nationals Back Home From Ukraine

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Some other 154 Iranians who had encountered severe restrictions in returning home in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic will be returned to their motherland, Iran's ambassador to Kiev, Manouchehr Moradi said on Tuesday.

He added on his Twitter account that the second group of Iranian expatriates living in Ukraine returned to their homeland tonight (Tuesday).

The first group of Iranian students and compatriots living in Ukraine, including 130 people, had returned to the country on May 10.

World No Longer Tolerates U.S. Bullying

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top security official says the United States has failed to muster support even from its own allies in its attempts to renew a UN arms embargo against the Islamic Republic, stressing that the world community no longer tolerates Washington's "bullying."

In a post on his Twitter account on Tuesday, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani hit out at Washington for attempting to extend the embargo that is legally bound to expire under Tehran's 2015 nuclear agreement with major world states.

"America's fruitless attempt to keep the arms embargo on Iran in place has been met with firm reactions from China and Russia and baffled Washington's [own] allies," Shamkhani tweeted.

"It has been years that the world, inspired by free-spirited and resilient nations, no longer tolerates bullying," he added. "This path will lead to nothing but the collapse of unilateralism."

Crushing Response Awaits Aggressors



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Defense Minister says the Islamic Republic will give a crushing answer to any aggressor when it comes to defending its national security.

Speaking in a meeting with the Iranian Parliament's Commission on National Security and Foreign Policy on Monday, Brigadier General Amir Hatami made a reference to Iran's missile attack on Ain al-Assad military base in Iraq, which houses US forces, after the American military assassinated Iran's top general, Qassem Soleimani, and his companions earlier this year.

Lieutenant General Soleimani, who headed the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Quds Force, was martyred alongside fellow Iraqi commander, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), known as Hashed al-Sha'abi in Arabic, and some others in a terrorist drone strike that targeted their vehicle at the Baghdad International Airport on January 3.

Both commanders were admired by Muslim nations for eliminating the US-sponsored Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

Soon after General Soleimani's assassination, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Washington was to face a "harsh revenge" for the atrocity. On January 8, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) unleashed volleys of ballistic missiles at the airbase of Ain al-Assad in Anbar Province. The Leader later described the retaliatory strikes as "only a slap."

Noting that Iran's attack shattered the United States' false pretense of grandeur in the region and the world, the Iranian Defense Minister said, "Through this firmness of resolve in acting timely against the common front of the [global] arrogance and hegemonic system, Iran proved that it will give rapid, categorical and crushing response to any aggressor in defense of its national interests and security."

Pointing to Iran's defense achievements in the field of ground, air, naval, electronic and aerospace warfare, and especially the missile achievements that have always been a thorn in the side of its enemies, Hatami said, "The Defense Ministry achieved major growth in this field in terms of quality and quantity during the first two years of this administration."

Expressing the significant progress Iran has made in the field of air defense, the minister pointed to the unveiling and operationalisation of various short, medium and long-range air defense systems — Bavar-373 and Khordad-15 — and said, "Relying on these completely indigenous achievements, we have managed to secure the Iranian sky more than ever before."

Hatami went on to say that the enmity of the hegemonic system has always been obvious to us, and the Armed Forces, relying on indigenous know-how, have during the four decades of the glorious Islamic Revolution made the most of their capacities and been able to turn threats into opportunities.



Over the last month, Washington has stepped up calls for the extension of the UN arms embargo on Iran that will expire in October under UN Security Council resolution 2231, which endorsed the landmark Iran nuclear deal in 2015.

Washington has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

Tehran, however, has firmly rejected Washington's bid as the US is no longer a party to the nuclear deal ever since it withdrew from the multilateral agreement in 2018.

China and Russia, which are both signatories to the JCPOA, have also echoed Tehran's stance on Washington's scheme.

Iran Support of Syria to Continue to the Very End

TEHRAN (IP) - The Special Assistant to the Speaker of Iran's parliament for International Affairs has said that Iran's support of Syria will be continued to the complete failure of terrorism.

Hossein Amir Abdullahian in a meeting with the Syrian Ambassador to Tehran Adnan Hassan Mahmoud on Tuesday, referred to the long history of relations between the two countries, said that Iran and Syria have always enjoyed the great and strategic ties.

Referring to the importance of parliamentary cooperation of Iran and Syria, Amir Abdullahian stressed that the expansion of parliamentary communications plays an effective role in developing joint cooperation and the parliamentary diplomacy of the two sides which help the realization of peace and security in the region.

Iran's senior official also highlighted the importance of Tehran-Damascus economic cooperation saying the tourism and pilgrimage tourism would be operationalized when the



COVID-19 restrictions end.

Talking about the strategic cooperation among Iran, Russia, and Syria Amir Abdullahian elaborated that Tehran, Moscow-Damascus would continue their strategic cooperation and fighting against the enemies' outrageous

economic sanctions would be considered as the provisions of the trilateral cooperation.

For his part, Adnan Hassan Mahmoud called the ties between the two countries as the strategic one saying the Syrian government and the Syrian people appreciate Iran's effective supports.

The Syrian Ambassador also commemorated the memory of Lt. Gen Qasem Soleimani's efforts as the IRGC commander of Quds Force saying the failure of the US and its allies in the military and political arenas now is underway in the form of economic war as well as the pressure on the Syrians.

The Syrian top diplomat concluded that the country would turn out as the winner.

Coronavirus Still Major Issue of Iran, World

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi said that coronavirus is still main issue of Iran and the entire world.

He wrote in a tweet that the danger is still lurking, let's be together.

Seemingly, some imagine that coronavirus has come to an end and they have initiated national and internal disputes, he said.

Relative successes in fighting coronavirus are outcome of consensus and convergence of the sovereignty and the people. Salehi made the remarks in reference to anti-Government overture by the newly-elected MPs under the auspices of the Guardian Council.

Salehi cautioned the anti-Government camp against disproportionate propaganda against management of the state, saying that radical measures against the Government will be detrimental to the entire governing system at the current critical period.

President Issues Regulations of "General Soleimani World Award"

TEHRAN (MNA) - President Hassan Rouhani has issued the regulations for the implementation of "General Soleimani World Award" in commemoration of the Iranian anti-terror commander, who was martyred by the U.S. terrorists in January.

The order is based on a resolution by Iran's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

The award has been formulated and approved in order to promote and preserve high human and Islamic values in the fields of struggle, self-sacrifice, and resistance against the global arrogance front and to honor and protect the strives and sacrifices of Major General Qassem Soleimani.

The General Soleimani World Award will be granted at two levels and in proportion to the geographical

scope and effectiveness of self-sacrifice, with the titles of "General Soleimani Supreme Award" and "General Soleimani Award" biannually.

The award is also granted in the main category of "struggle and resistance" and six sub-fields of "people and society", "culture and art", "politics", "education and research", "media" and "sports" to qualified candidates according to the decision of specialized committees.

A 19-member council will be responsible for the award's policy-making. The council includes Iran's Foreign Minister, the Sports and Youth Minister, the head of the Radio and Television Organization, and representatives of Lebanese Hezbollah, Palestine's Hamas, the Islamic Jihad movement, and the Yemeni Ansarullah.

Iran, Yemen Review Political Regional Developments

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Senior Iranian and Yemeni officials held a telephone conversation on the latest political developments in Yemen.

The conversation was held between Iran's Senior Assistant to Foreign Minister in Special Political Affairs Ali-Asghar Khaji and spokesman for Yemen's Ansarullah Movement and the chief negotiator of the National Salvation Government Mohammed Abdul-Salam.

During the talks, the two sides criticized continuation of presence of the foreign forces in Yemen and unjust blockade imposed on that country. Further, the two discussed the coronavirus pandemic and stressed the need to help send humanitarian aid to Yemen and provide the Yemeni people with medicine as soon as possible.

United Nations has already warned of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen due to COVID-19.

Forex Prices Will Be Restored to Normal Levels

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati says he is sure foreign currency prices will return to normal levels despite growing economic pressure on the country and a pandemic that has deeply affected the markets.

Iran's rial closed at 175,000 against the US dollar on Monday, according to websites monitoring currency prices and reports from the unofficial market in downtown Tehran.

The marks a deep plunge for a national currency that had remained largely stable since hitting historic lows in the summer of 2018. The rial started to lose ground in March when the Iranian government announced lockdown measures to contain the new coronavirus disease.

Hemmati said a recent slump in the international oil markets has also affected foreign currency prices in Iran.

He said, however, that current situation in the forex market is not worse than what the country saw in August and September of 2018. The CBI governor vowed that the rial would gain the lost value to return to prices seen before the pandemic.

"As I said before the situation is difficult, but the trend is one of improving which can be managed and stability can be restored (to the markets)," said Hemmati in a post published on his Instagram page.

Iran has been under a series of tough economic sanctions imposed by the United States since November 2018 when the American administration withdrew from a nuclear deal signed between Tehran and world powers.

Tehran Seeks Peaceful Ties with Neighbors

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali said the Islamic Republic is interested in forging "good" and "peaceful" relations with its neighbors.

"We are not engaging in expansionism. We want to have good and peaceful relations with all our neighbors," Jalali told Russian media on Monday, TASS reported.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said the U.S. and Israel are cultivating anti-Iran sentiment and are trying to get the Iranian issue to the foreground in the Middle East agenda, while the significance of the Palestinian-Israeli crisis is knowingly downplayed by them.

"Regretfully, we see that in today's world the Americans, Israel as well as certain Arab countries are making efforts to remove the Palestinian issue from the primary agenda of the Muslim world, making it a marginal issue. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the Palestinian issue is of priority for the Islamic world," the ambassador explained.

Jalali noted that Iran sees as its duty to back the Palestinian people who ask for support in the settlement of the conflict with Israel.

The envoy also described the so-called 'deal of the century' proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump as "absolutely inhumane" towards the Palestinian people.

Iran Sends Pharmaceutical, Health Items to Kyrgyzstan

MASHHAD (IP) - The Deputy Governor of Khorasan Razavi province for Economic Affairs Coordination announced the sending of consignments of pharmaceutical and health items to Kyrgyzstan.

Ali Rasoulzadeh said on Tuesday that the humanitarian items included 58 cartons of various medicines, 220 cartons of various health and protective products such as N95 masks, three-layer masks, and gowns. One-piece insulation, shield, surgical gloves, as well as 79 cartons of hand rub.

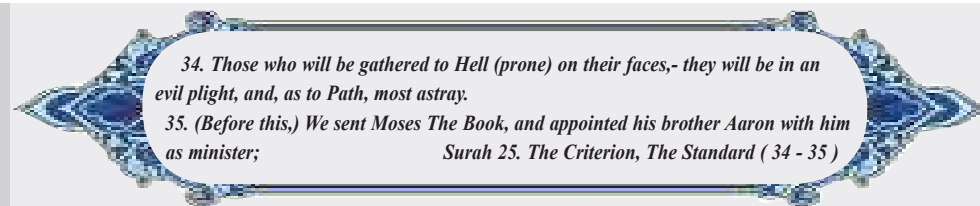
According to the report, the Kyrgyz Minister of Transportation and the Deputy Minister of Health in Bishkek received the items after they were sent from Iran.

Earlier, a consignment of anti-Corona health items was sent to Tajikistan from Khorasan Razavi province in northeastern Iran.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:00
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:26
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:14
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:54



Unilateralism a Lethal Poison for Int'l Community

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations deplored the U.S. government's unilateral policies, saying such approaches have dragged the international community to multiple crises and challenges.

"The United States' unilateral policies spew a lethal poison to the international community and aggravate the complexity of the world's current situation," Kamal Kharrazi said while addressing the third annual session of Leaders For Peace, an NGO which works to heighten public opinion and leaders' awareness of the risks of regional and international armed conflicts.

"The current inefficiency in multilateralism emanates from the extravagance and hegemonic tendencies of the U.S. government, which seeks to impose its hegemony and unilateralism on others," he added.

Kharrazi then said it is imperative to form a "new world multilateralism" system and "new world unity" through which all nations, especially the southern countries, have a voice, and therefore, the new players will have a share in the international arena.

Referring to the novel coronavirus, which has been sweeping across the world in the past months, the official said, "The effective control and confrontation of this disease entail global solidarity and cooperation with the World Health Organization."

"In this regard, the WHO chief, as well as the leaders of many countries, have called for the halt of conflicts and sanctions on countries, such as Iran, which have faced severe challenges in supplying medical needs in the fight against the coronavirus," Kharrazi added.

He underlined the need to prevent the political interference of major powers in international bodies, such as the WHO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, saying that when the international institutions are influenced by these arrogant powers, other countries lose their trust in those institutions.

"The IMF, for example, has not yet responded to a request for a loan from Iran to



counter COVID-19," he added.

Kharrazi reiterated that "through a new multilateral world system, the big power's approach toward other countries should change and all should be treated equally."

The third annual conference of Leaders of Peace, chaired by former French prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, through a video conference on Monday. The session was attended 37 major political figures from world countries.

Iran Is Ready to Resume Gas Export to Turkey

TEHRAN (ILNA) - The director of dispatching at the National Iranian Gas Company told that Iran to resume gas exports to Turkey as soon as possible.

The Iranian official Mehdi Jamshidi-dana said "Iran's gas exports to Turkey were suspended due to a pipeline explosion."

He added that Turkey is repairing the pipelines importing gas from Iran on its soil and we will resume gas exports whenever we are notified that the pipeline repairing has been completed.

Iran sells about 10 billion cubic meters of gas a year to Turkey under a 25-year supply deal signed in 1996. This pipeline has been hit by terrorist attacks since the 1990s.

The explosion occurred near the Gurbulak border gate with Iran in Agri province, which is near the joint Bazargan border. Later, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) claimed responsibility for the attack.

MSC Equipped With Advanced Camera System

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Mobarakeh Steel Company designed and installed priority cameras in different places of the company and its plants which were carried out successfully by the side projects and logistics department of the company.

Mohammad Hossein Safavi Poor, expert in side projects and logistics, who was in charge of the project said in order to control all activities and process in different units and sections of Mobarakeh Steel Company, the company decided to equip all areas with cameras in March 2018.

He added that after paving the ground and equipping the areas with different types of fixed, dome and speed dome cameras, some new cameras were added to the system in February 2020.

Safavi Poor noted that the project cost over 130b rials and modern equipment and technologies were employed for installing the camera systems with the latest software capabilities.

He added that the speed domes used in the project are full HD with resolution quality of 1080p and with capability of HDR as well as supporting the protocol ONVIF.

Safavi reiterated that the cameras enjoy night vision option and reducing the noise. He said since the company is big and the number of places to be installed with cameras was vast, the cameras were only installed in Mobarakeh Steel Company, Saba Steel Complex and Ferdous Cultural and Sport Complex.

He reiterated that by implementing this project, a big and constructive step has been taken in creating infrastructure for visual monitoring of the production process in the group.

Safavi Poor hailed the support of the management, staff and managers of different parts of the company for implementing the project.

New CEO of IDRO Introduced

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The introduction ceremony for new CEO of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) was held and Mr. Amir Bayat officially began his job.



Addressing the ceremony, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki pointed to the history and role of IDRO in the industrial development in the country and called for reviving the key role of IDRO in the modern scenes of development and management.

Meanwhile Bayat, the new CEO of IDRO, who replaced Mohammad Ali, said that balanced industrial development in the country, based on studies and weighing potentials especially in the deprived areas, will be of the major new and essential approaches of the organization.

He also noted that new approach to the tasks of the leading and developmental organization in the era of the fourth industrial revolution is the prerequisite of efficient performance of these organizations.

He added that another approach of IDRO during his management will be to focus on developing management issues. Bayat reiterated that attention to the markets and competitiveness is the condition for survival of all industrial projects and plans, and the state-run sectors are inevitably obliged to have these characteristics.

On Monday, the caretaker of Industry, Mine and Trade Ministry Mr. Modarres Khiabani in a decree appointed Mr. Bayat as the new CEO of IDRO.

Surge in Production Relies on Accelerating Developmental Projects

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) in meeting with his deputies and operators of developmental projects of the company said that economic future of any company ties to its developments, and since development is the base for surge in the production, it should not be stopped in any condition.



Dr. Ardeshtir Saad Mohammadi pointed to the good mineral copper reserves in the country which has provided good opportunities for development of copper industry in the country, adding that to materialize surge in production, it is necessary to revise the approach towards contractors by identifying strong and capable ones and using the capacities of the private sector more than ever which will reveal the value of NICICO's presence in the private sector.

He added that this will create competition climate and the productivity, and speed of affairs will increase. Saad Mohammadi reiterated that Iran's copper industry has great capacities for job creation and increase of production as it can have major share of national economy and to this end, it is necessary to implement developmental projects and defining new development projects based on the economic study.

He warned that alternative industry can be a warning to most of mineral industries in order that they could use their resources better and expand their developmental projects for more earnings for the country.

South Star Broker Co. Can Improve KSC's Position

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The meeting of South Star Broker Company (SSBC)'s board of directors convened in the presence of the CEO of Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) Mr. Ali Mohammadi where the board presented a report of the performance of the company in the past year and of future plans.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Mohammadi said that South Star Broker Company can improve the position of Khuzestan Steel Company to a level higher than its current level, adding that brokerages are actually good agents and lawyers for expansion of activities of companies and this may only happen by an experienced skillful and trustable staff and company. He further said South Star Broker Company with strong and skillful staff especially skillful board of directors can be a strong consultant for KSC.

He urged SSBC to have more active presence beside KSC in order to employ the potentials of company for improving the performance. On marketing the code of Khuzestan Steel Company in the stock market, Mohammadi said that due to boom in the stock market, the code of the company has enjoyed good growth in the market, adding that so far another company had been in charge of marketing and promoting of Khuzestan Steel Company's code and from now on SSBC due to its brilliant performance will be in charge of marketing the code of KSC in the market.

Mohammadi further said that Khuzestan Steel Company with its affiliate companies is to strengthen the financial power of SSBC in order that it could enter the market powerfully.



Tejarat Bank Marks Privatization Anniversary

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Tejarat Bank of Iran in a message felicitated the anniversary of privatization of the bank.

Mr. Reza Dolatabadi in his message on the occasion of May 17, the anniversary of privatization of the bank, expressed hope the bank would meet the demands of its clients with better services.

He said the bank in compliance with the Article 44 of the Constitutions on privatization, the bank offered its shares in the market to be privatized which was welcomed by the people.

Dolatabadi added that in the past 11 years that the bank has acted as a private bank, it has been welcomed by the clients and shareholders. He admitted that although in recent years and because of the sanctions the bank has not been able to meet the demands of its shareholders favorably, their faithfulness and humbleness has encouraged the management and staff of the bank to work harder.

He added that while the bank is stepping into its fifth decade of its activities in Iran's national banking system and its 11th year of its privatization, it is an honor for the bank to say that it has become a profit-making bank and it will have much too say in upcoming days.



PERMIT NO : 1399.884



IRANIAN OFFSHORE OLI COMPANY (P.J.S)
INTERNATION TO PUBLIC TENDER (PRE- QUALIFICATION)

TENDER NO : 015/99/OT

Chartering of one Diving Vessel to Provide services in operating field of IOOC

Iranian offshore oil company (IOOC) intends to open Pre-Qualification for above tender with the following conditions:

Scope of work: Chartering of one Diving Vessel

Location : IOOC Oli Fields in Persian Gulf

Performance Period: 2 Years

Other Item Shall be Considered:

1: Ability of submission Bid Bond as in the amount of Iranian Rial 16,374,250,000 for Iranian Bidders of Euro 104,344.00 for foreign Bidders.

2: Ability of submission 10% of total contract price value as performance guarantee in case of winning according to company's procedure.

3: Proposals should be submitted with no condition, incomplete, ambiguous or adverse of package specification in deadline.

4: Company shall reserve the right to accept or reject any or all of proposals or parts(s) there of according to tender law.

5: The validity of the submitted financial proposals shall be 3 months from the opening of financial envelopes Date and extendable for one further period.

6: for invitation to above tenders, it is necessary to achieve the determinate minimum score in the pre-qualification.

Bidders who have ability and are willing to participate in the pre-qualification are requested to submit a written request to contract Department, within one Week from second Announcement by representative and collect the pre-qualification forms.

Closing Date for submission of the pre-qualification documents shall be up to 14 days after the deadline of collecting pre-qualification documents. Place and time of submission and opening of proposals will be stated in Tender Documents.

Address for willing to participate and submission pre-qualification Documents:

5th Floor, #12, Touraj St, Khakzad st, Vali-e-Asr Ave., after Balal Mosque, before Modarres Crossroad, Tehran, Iran. Tel: +9821-23942510

Note: Additional information is available at IOOC website address: www.iooc.co.ir on the day of second Announcement.

IRANIAN OFFSHORE OLI COMPANY PUBLIC RELATIONS

Half of Chile Senate, Four Ministers in Quarantine

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - Around half of Chile's 50-member senate and four ministers have been placed in quarantine after coming into contact with at least three colleagues infected with the novel coronavirus, officials said Monday, as jobless protesters in a poor area of Santiago clashed with police to demand food aid.

Finance Minister Ignacio Briones and Chief of Staff Felipe Ward both wrote on Twitter that they had tested negative for the virus but were in quarantine until a second test is conducted. Briones said he was tested on Friday, due to his "regular contact with" infected senator Jorge Pizarro on the Senate finance committee, and has since begun "preventative quarantine."



Trump Threatens to Permanently Cut off U.S. Funding to WHO



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump threatened to permanently freeze U.S. funding to the World Health Organization unless "substantive improvements" were made within the next 30 days.

Washington suspended funding to the WHO in mid-April, accusing it of being too close to Beijing and covering up and mismanaging the coronavirus pandemic. On Monday, Trump tweeted images of a letter he sent to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, saying the letter was "self-explanatory."

In the letter, Trump lists what he says are examples of the WHO's shortcomings in managing the pandemic, including ignoring early reports of the emergence of the virus, and being too close to China.

"It is clear the repeated missteps by you and your organization in responding to the pandemic have been extremely costly for the world. The only way forward for the World Health Organization is if it can actually demonstrate independence from China," Trump said in the letter.

"If the World Health Organization does not commit to major substantive improvements within the next 30 days, I will make my temporary freeze of United States funding to the World Health Organization permanent and reconsider our membership in the organization," he said.

Trump's threat came after the World Health Organization said it would launch an independent review of its response to the coronavirus pandemic.

U.S. President Donald Trump has branded the global body a "puppet of China". Washington is locked in an increasingly bitter spat with Beijing over the new coronavirus pandemic and has also taken aim at the WHO, which on Monday kicked off its first ever virtual assembly.

A resolution tabled by the European Union called for an "impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation" of the international response to the pandemic, which has so far infected nearly 4.8 million people and killed more than 317,000.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged there had been shortcomings and told the virtual assembly he welcomed calls for a review.

"I will initiate an independent evaluation at the earliest appropriate moment to review experience gained and lessons learned, and to make recommendations to improve national and global pandemic preparedness and response," he said.

"But one thing is abundantly clear. The world must never be the same.

"We do not need a review to tell us that we must all do everything in our power to ensure this never happens again," Tedros said.

A wide range of country leaders and health ministers hailed the WHO's efforts but U.S. health secretary Alex Azar said its "failure" to obtain and provide vital information on COVID-19 had cost lives.

"We must be frank about one of the primary reasons this outbreak spun out of control: there was a failure by this organization to obtain the information that the world needed, and that failure cost many lives," Azar said in a video address to the WHO's main annual meeting.

India, Bangladesh Order Evacuation Of Millions Ahead of Cyclone

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India and Bangladesh have begun evacuating more than two million people as a cyclone barrelled towards their coasts, with officials racing to ready shelters amid fears of coronavirus contagion in cramped facilities.

Indian forecasters said Cyclone Amphan had reached winds of up to 240 kilometres (145 miles) per hour with gusts of 265 kph over the Bay of Bengal late on Monday, ahead of the expected landfall on Wednesday (today).

Amphan is expected to weaken before it hits India's eastern states and Bangladesh's south and southwestern coasts, but still pack winds of up to 200 kph, said India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) chief SN



Bomb Kills Six, Wounds Four in Pakistan



QUETTA (AFP) - Six paramilitary soldiers were killed and four wounded in Pakistan's restive southwestern province of Balochistan in a roadside bomb attack on their vehicle, officials said early Tuesday.

The incident happened in the hilly areas of Bolan district, some 80 kilometres (50 miles) southeast of the provincial capital Quetta late on Monday.

"Six Frontier Corps personnel were killed in a roadside bomb blast while four others received injuries and have been sent to hospital," Deputy Commissioner Bolan Murad Kasi told AFP.

The bomb hit the vehicle during a routine patrol, he added.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but Baluch separatists demanding greater autonomy have been waging an insurgency for years while the province is also riven by sectarian strife and Islamist violence.

Six soldiers were killed in a similar roadside bomb blast earlier this month. The incident was later claimed by the Balochistan Liberation Army, a Baloch separatist group.

Mineral-rich Balochistan, bordering Afghanistan and Iran, is the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, but its roughly seven million inhabitants have long complained they do not receive a fair share of its gas and mineral wealth.

China is investing in the area under a \$54-billion project known as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), upgrading infrastructure, power and transport links between its far-western Xinjiang region and Pakistan's Gwadar port.

Thousands of paramilitary troops carry out security checks and help police in maintaining law and order in restive parts of Pakistan.

Coronavirus From Moderna Appears Safe

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Moderna Inc's experimental COVID-19 vaccine, the first to be tested in the United States, produced protective antibodies in a small group of healthy volunteers, according to very early data released by the biotech company on Monday.

The data comes from eight people who took part in a 45-subject safety trial that kicked off in March. The Moderna vaccine is one of more than 100 under development intended to protect against the novel coronavirus that has infected more than 4.7 million people globally and killed over 317,000.

Overall, the study showed the vaccine was safe and all study participants produced antibodies against the virus.

An analysis of the response in the eight individuals showed that those who received a 100 microgram dose and people who received a 25 microgram dose had levels of protective antibodies to fend of the virus that exceeded those found in the blood of people who recovered from COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus.

The news, issued in a release by the U.S. biotechnology company, lifted shares of Moderna by 20%.

Moderna launched a \$1.34 billion share offering at an offer price of \$76 per share late Monday. The company had earlier said it plans to sell \$1.25 billion in common stock to raise money for vaccine development and manufacturing.

"These are significant findings but it is a Phase 1 clinical trial that only included eight people. It was designed for safety, not for efficacy," said Dr Amesh Adalja, in infectious disease expert at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security who was not involved in the study.

The very early data offers a glimmer of hope for a vaccine among the most advanced in development.

Brazil Jumps to Third in COVID-19 Cases Worldwide

BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazil has the third-highest number of novel coronavirus cases in the world, according to official figures released Monday, a troubling surge for a country struggling to respond to the pandemic.

With 254,220 confirmed cases, Brazil has now surpassed Britain, Spain and Italy in the past 72 hours on the list of total infections, and is behind only the United States (1.5 million) and Russia (290,000).

Brazil has registered 16,792 COVID-19 deaths, the sixth-highest toll in the world.

But experts say under-testing means the real figures could be 15 times higher or more.

The giant South American country of 210 million people is torn by a political battle over how to respond to the virus.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro compares the virus to a "little flu," condemns the "hysteria"

surrounding it and is urging the country to get back to work to stop an economic crash.

State and local authorities, however, are largely calling on citizens to stay home and practice social distancing -- backed by the Supreme Court, which gave them the final say in the matter.

Bolsonaro is now seeking his third health minister since the pandemic began.

He fired the first after publicly battling over stay-at-home measures, and the second resigned last week after less than a month on the job, reportedly over the president's insistence on widespread use of the controversial and unproven malaria drug chloroquine to treat the disease.

Hospitals in several areas are meanwhile operating close to full capacity, and the hardest-hit cities have begun burying victims in mass graves, even as the number of infections continues to soar.



U.S. to Push Taliban, Afghan Gov't for Peace Talks



KABUL (Dispatches) - A senior United States envoy has left for Doha and Kabul to press Taliban and Afghan government officials to begin peace talks, the U.S. State Department has said.

The U.S. special representative for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, left Washington on Sunday shortly after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah signed a power-sharing deal that could help lead to peace talks to end the country's long-running war.

The three main impediments to the start of intra-Afghan negotiations, which were to begin March 10, have been a rise in violence, the pace of prisoner releases and the failure of Ghani and Abdullah to resolve a power struggle.

While in Doha, Khalilzad will meet with Taliban officials to discuss carrying out a February 29 US-Taliban agreement that called for prisoner releases by both sides and to "press for steps necessary to commence intra-Afghan negotiations, including a significant reduction of violence," the State Department said.

In Kabul, Khalilzad will meet with senior government officials "to explore steps the Afghan government needs to take to make intra-Afghan negotiations begin as soon as possible," it added.

The key provisions of the February 29 agreement, to which the Afghan government was not a party, involved a U.S. commitment to reduce its presence in Afghanistan to 8,600 troops by mid-July and, conditions permitting, to zero by May 2021.

A prisoner exchange was also agreed under the U.S.-Taliban deal. The Taliban wants 5,000 of its prisoners released in one go, a demand the Ghani administration has refused to meet.

So far, Kabul has released about 1,000 Taliban prisoners, while the Taliban claims to have freed 263 government captives.

Earlier on Monday, Taliban warned that intra-Afghan talks could not open until the prisoner swap is completed.

"That which is taking place in Kabul is only a repetition of the past failed experiences," Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman, said on Twitter in what was the group's first reaction to the Ghani-Abdullah deal.

"Afghan sides should focus on real and sincere solution to the issue ... The prisoners' release process should be completed and the intra-Afghan negotiations should start."



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J, balcony
fireplace
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Fereshteh Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Velenjak bldg (\$10000) 5storey, 20bdrs, S/p, pkgs
Farmanieh bldg (\$12000) 6storey, 24bdrs, S/p, pkgs
Darrous bldg (\$8000) 4storey, 15bdrs, S/p, pkgs

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Macron, Merkel Propose 500b Euro Recovery Fund

PARIS (Reuters) - France and Germany agreed on Monday to propose creating a 500 billion euro (\$543 billion) Recovery Fund that would offer grants to European member states and regions hit hardest by the new coronavirus crisis.

In what French President Emmanuel Macron said was a "major step forward", the two countries said they were also proposing to allow the European Commission to borrow

money on financial markets in the European Union's name, while at the same time respecting EU treaties.

France and Germany had struggled to present a united front in the new coronavirus crisis, with France leading a push by mostly southern European countries to convince fiscally conservative countries like Germany to issue joint European debt to help them weather the economic impact.



Ratings Worries Dampen Interest in G20 Debt Relief

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Some of the world's poorest countries are reluctant to seek debt relief under a program backed by the Group of 20 major economies out of concern it could harm their credit ratings and future market access, the head of the International Monetary Fund said.

Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told Reuters she was not pushing countries to seek suspension of debt payments from official bilateral creditors, but wanted them to have the option to free up funds to fight the new coronavirus pandemic.

The G20 in April backed the debt relief proposal championed by Georgieva and World Bank President David Malpass, and a group of private creditors recommend their members participate, but interest has been tepid.

Of 77 countries that are eligible for such debt relief, only 22 have requested forbearance thus far, an IMF spokesman said. It was not immediately clear which countries had applied.

Kenya's finance minister on Friday said his country would not seek a suspension of debt payments because the terms of the deal were too restrictive, and he was concerned about the impact that debt relief might have on Kenya's credit rating.

The program was intended to ease the economic impact of the pandemic on the world's poorest countries, many of which lack good health system and have high debt levels.

However, the terms of the G20 debt relief also limit the amount of non-concessional debt that countries can raise during the suspension period, potentially curbing access to capital markets.

The World Health Organization has warned COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus, could infect between 29 million and 44 million people in Africa this year if it is not contained, meaning already weak healthcare systems could be overwhelmed. Food security is another concern given devastation caused by swarms of locusts in eastern Africa.

But emerging market asset managers working with heavily-indebted African countries have argued that blanket debt relief by private creditors would put African countries' access to capital at risk.

Georgieva said the leaders of some eligible countries had written to her expressing concerns, but did not name any. She said it was a sovereign decision whether countries participated.

"I actually would not urge countries to participate in debt relief initiatives if they think it is in their best interest not to participate," she told Reuters in an interview. "We make it possible, and then countries have to assess the pro and cons of participation. For some countries, the concern is that if they were to go for debt relief, that may impact their credit rating and access to markets."

Georgieva acknowledged there had also been no demand thus far for a new short-term liquidity line set up by the IMF this month. She said was not surprised given that it intended for the best performing countries and only offered 145% of a country's quota with the Fund. Peru and Chile had opted to tap the IMF's precautionary Flexible Credit Line (FCL) instead, she said, giving them access to larger amounts of money, but could segue later to the new short-term instrument. "My interest was to make sure the Fund has everything that can help countries, and it was very clear that we were lacking an instrument that doesn't lock in a big chunk of Fund resources for a long period of time," she said. "Sooner or later there will be usage."

Global Insurance Market Is Well Capitalized in the Face of COVID-19

LONDON (Reuters) - Global insurers are well capitalized to absorb the hit from rising claims and costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, ratings agency AM Best said on Monday, citing a stress test it conducted to gauge the immediate impact of outbreak on insurers' financial strength.

AM Best said most rated insurers and reinsurers performed well in its stress test and their capital levels provided an adequate buffer against a potential shock to their balance sheets.

Sensitivity to the COVID-19 pandemic was greater for life and health insurers with high asset and mortality risks, insurers with material exposures to mortgage loans, carriers operating in domiciles in higher country-risk tiers and companies with smaller capital bases.

Property and casualty insurers in the United States and Canada performed relatively well in the stress test, compared with life, annuity and health insurers.

Most companies in the Asia-Pacific market generally performed well, as did those in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, the test showed.

"Insurers are likely to see a significant hit to earnings in 2020, rather than a material decline in risk-adjusted capitalization," said Mahesh Mistry, senior director, AM Best Rating Services.

"Reputational risk in certain markets may also be a problem, as any legal disputes become more visible to consumers, policyholders, regulators and legislators," he added.

Unlike other disasters, the pandemic has been hitting businesses, individuals and markets throughout the world, all at once. Customers are filing claims across numerous policy types, for workers' compensation to events cancellation to broader commercial liabilities.

The disputes over claims continue just as the United States is about to enter what meteorologists predict will be above-average Atlantic Ocean hurricane season, which could spur similar claims for insurers.



Executives, lawyers and analysts say the cost is sure to be in multiples of prior catastrophes including Hurricane Katrina, the Tōhoku tsunami or the 9/11 attacks. That could be tens of billions to half a trillion dollars or more, depending on how long the pandemic lasts and other variables.

The stress test analysis covered about 1,400 rating units worldwide, and focused on the impact of COVID-19 on underwriting and assets. The procedure for the test included gathering information from companies through a questionnaire.

Questions ranged from the impact of the disease outbreak on operations and financial position, previous pandemic risk stress test scenarios a company may have previously modeled and any adjustments to 2020 financial expectations.

Japan Braces for Worst Postwar Slump

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's economy slipped into recession for the first time in 4-1/2 years in the last quarter, putting the nation on course for its deepest postwar slump as the coronavirus crisis ravages businesses and consumers.

Monday's first-quarter GDP data underlined the broadening impact of the outbreak, with exports plunging the most since the devastating March 2011 earthquake as global lockdowns and supply chain disruptions hit shipments of Japanese goods. Analysts warn of an even bleaker picture for the current quarter as consumption crumbled after the government in April requested citizens to stay home and businesses to close, intensifying the challenge for policymakers battling a once-in-a-century pandemic.

"It's near certainty the economy suffered an even deeper decline in the current quarter," said Yuichi Kodama, chief economist at Meiji Yasuda Research Institute. "Japan has entered a full-blown recession."

The world's third-largest economy contracted an annualized 3.4% in the first quarter, preliminary official gross domestic product (GDP) data showed, less than a median market forecast for a 4.6% drop.

The slump came on top of an even steeper 7.3% fall in the October-December period, with the consecutive quarters of contraction meeting the technical definition of a recession. Japan last suffered recession in the second half of 2015.

The coronavirus, which first emerged in China late last year, has ravaged the global economy as many nations went into strict lockdowns to curb the outbreak that has so far killed over 310,000 people worldwide. The pandemic has been massively disruptive on supply chains and businesses, particularly in trade-reliant nations such as Japan.

Nissan's Survival Plan for Europe

TOKYO (Reuters) - Nissan Motor Co is working on a plan to scale back its European business, focusing on sport utility and commercial vehicles as well as more effective sharing of products and investments with partner Renault, three sources told Reuters.

The strategy, part of a three-year global turnaround plan due to be unveiled on May 28, would see the Japanese carmaker's plant in Sunderland, northeast England, switch permanently to two daily shifts from three, but become a key hub for SUVs.

It could also see the company's Barcelona factory in Spain close, putting around 3,000 jobs at risk, said the sources with knowledge of the plan, who declined to be named because they are not authorised to speak to the media.

Central to the proposal is a new way of working with alliance partner Renault (RENA.PA) that would see the two companies divide up areas of responsibility, with one becoming the "leader" and the other the "follower" in each.

Renault and Nissan have long struggled to achieve the full potential of their alliance, due in part to tensions over areas of control.

Relations were then strained to almost breaking point in November 2018 when the alliance's long-standing boss, Carlos Ghosn, was arrested in Japan on financial misconduct charges, which he denies.

Nissan's sales and profits have been sliding ever since, and the hammer blow to the global car industry from the coronavirus epidemic has only added to the urgency for the company to come up with a strategy to secure its future. Renault is also working on its own restructuring plan.

The sources said Nissan's plan for Europe was presented to the company's board on Thursday by chief operating officer Ashwani Gupta, who they said was the leading advocate and key architect of the new leader-follower model.

They added many on the board, whose 12 members include Renault Chairman Jean-Dominique Senard, showed support for the plan, without giving details.

Nissan declined to comment. Renault did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Europe has long been a difficult market for automakers due to overcapacity, stiff competition and tight regulations. General Motors quit the region in 2017.

Europe accounts for only about one-tenth of Nissan's global business by volume and has "little prospects for growth and profitability," as one insider put it.

Vulnerable Spain Faces Worse Economic Damage Than Thought

MADRID (Reuters) - Spain's tourism-dependent economy could experience a harsher and longer hit from COVID-19 than initially expected, the Bank of Spain governor said on Monday, warning of tough times ahead for one of the world's worst-affected nations.

Pablo Hernandez de Cos, who also sits on the European Central Bank's governing council, said the Spanish economy was heading for a significant second quarter deterioration after shrinking a record 5.2% in the first. "The length of the shock is likely to be longer than we initially anticipated, and the longer it lasts the more likely it is to cause persistent damage to the economy," De Cos told parliament.

The Bank of Spain had said in April the economy could contract 6.8-12.4% in 2020. But De Cos said a smaller range of 9.5%-12.4% now seemed probable. However, the economy should bounce back in 2021 and grow between 6.1-8.5%, he added. Spain was particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic, he said, as social distancing measures had a bigger impact on the tourism, hospitality, transport and retail sectors, which account for 25% of GDP.

"The return to normality in these sectors is uncertain, but we cannot rule out scenarios in which the persistence of the disturbance is greater," he said, as Spain began to slowly ease a strict lockdown in place since mid-March. The governor called for an extension of temporary liquidity measures to support companies in these worst-affected sectors.

In March, Spain approved state-backed credit lines, mainly for small and mid-sized companies and the self-employed, of up to 100 billion euros (\$108.46 billion).

But banks, which are channelling these funds, and companies have been complaining that loans are not being deployed fast and efficiently enough.

De Cos also called for a broader political agreement from parties in order to adopt a long-term strategy of fiscal consolidation and structural reforms.

"To fully implement this phase will require a political agreement in line with the magnitude of the challenge we face, which is expected to last for several terms of office."

On Saturday, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced its government would seek to extend the coronavirus state of emergency one last time until late June.

The previous extension illustrated the divisive political environment in a country that has just faced four national elections in four years. With the Bank of Spain expecting the country's debt-to-GDP ratio to rise beyond 120% and with a budget deficit of up to 11% in 2020 in the worst-case scenario, De Cos said public debt control should take the centre stage once the pandemic and its economic effects are dealt with.

China Will Deepen Economic Reforms as Growth Slows



BEIJING (Reuters) - China will open up more sectors to private firms and reduce direct government interference in microeconomic activities, the official Xinhua News Agency said on Monday, as Beijing seeks to accelerate economic reforms as growth slows.

China will create a new regulation and control mechanism that prioritises fiscal, monetary and employment policies, pushes forward market-based interest rate reform and increases two-way fluctuations of the yuan currency, said Xinhua, citing a wide-ranging document detailing Beijing's guidelines on boosting the country's socialist market economy.

China's economy shrank 6.8% in the first quarter of 2020 from a year earlier, as the novel coronavirus spread from the central city of Wuhan where it emerged late last year, and the government has said economic conditions remain challenging.

The country's leaders promised sweeping reforms at a key party meeting in late 2013 but implementation has been slow, frustrating some foreign companies while some local private firms have complained about being treated unfairly compared with state-owned firms.

Beijing will also draw up a new round of medium- and long-term national plans for scientific development, according to the document, which added that state capitals would be encouraged to invest in areas critical to the country's economy, science and technology, defence and security sectors.

China will also liberalise domestic natural gas pricing at an appropriate time and advance earlier pledges that promise equal access to oil and gas infrastructure. It currently regulates wholesale gas prices by setting city-gate prices. The country is in the middle of launching a planned national oil and gas pipeline group which was announced in December, 2019.

The document also said legislation of a property tax would be pushed forward steadily.

Renewable Energy Capacity Increases Four-Fold in 5 Years

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's installed capacity of renewable energies has increased four-fold over the past five years, according to Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri.

Haeri made the remarks during a ceremony on Tuesday in which the new head of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization was introduced. He said that Iran's installed capacity of renewable energies used to be 200MW in March 2015 which grew to 800MW in March 2020. Underlining the significance of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization, Haeri said that power generation from renewable energy sources complements energy efficiency.



UN Chief Calls Out Countries Who Ignored WHO on Covid-19

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The planet is paying a heavy price for countries ignoring the recommendations of the World Health Organization to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, UN chief Antonio Guterres told a virtual meeting of the WHO's World Health Assembly on Monday.

"Different countries have followed different, sometimes contradictory strategies and we are all paying a heavy price," the secretary-general told the WHO gathering.

Speaking after Guterres, the head of the WHO said he would initiate an independent evaluation of its handling of the coronavirus pandemic at the "earliest appropriate moment" and vowed transparency and accountability.

"We all have lessons to learn from the pandemic. Every country and every organisation must examine its response and learn from its experience. WHO is committed to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the assembly.

Tedros thanked early high-level speakers for their "strong support for WHO at this critical time" and said that the review must encompass responsibility of "all actors in good faith".

U.S. President Donald Trump has fiercely questioned the WHO's performance during the pandemic and led international criticism of China's handling of the early stages of the crisis.

Tedros, who has always promised a post-pandemic review, said it would come "at the earliest appropriate moment" and provide recommendations for future preparedness.

"The risk remains high and we have a long road to travel," Tedros added, saying preliminary tests in some countries showed that at most 20% of populations had contracted the disease but most places that less than 10 per cent.

A resolution drafted by the European Union called for an independent evaluation of the WHO's performance and appeared to have won consensus backing among the health body's 194 states.

Beijing has previously opposed calls for a review of the origin and spread of the coronavirus, but Chinese leader Xi Jinping signalled his country would be amenable to an impartial evaluation of the global response once the pandemic is brought under control.

"This work needs a scientific and professional attitude, and needs to be led by the WHO. And the principles of objectivity and fairness need to be upheld," Xi told the meeting via video.

Calling the pandemic the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War Two, Xi said: "All along we have acted with openness and transparency and responsibility."



A draft of the EU resolution made no mention of China.

WHO and most experts say the virus is believed to have emerged in a market selling wildlife in the central city of Wuhan late last year. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said this month there is "a significant amount of evidence" the virus came from a laboratory in Wuhan, a charge China rejects.

A draft text of the EU resolution urges Tedros to initiate an "impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation" of the response to Covid-19 under the WHO "at the earliest appropriate moment".

Diplomats said the United States, which suspended its funding of the WHO during the crisis, was unlikely to block a consensus backing the resolution.

But it could "dissociate" itself from sections referring to intellectual property rights for drugs and vaccines, and to continued provision of services for sexual and reproductive health during the pandemic, they said.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said Africa affirms its "full support", but assistance to the continent should include debt relief and help with diagnostics, drugs and medical supplies.

Barbados' prime minister said Caribbean states need a restructuring of debt or a debt moratorium to "provide certainty to both borrower and lender" during the pandemic.

Global Gas Demand to Shrink by 2% This Year

LONDON (Reuters) - Global demand for natural gas is expected to fall by almost 2% this year as commercial and industrial activity is reduced amid coronavirus lockdowns, consultancy Rystad Energy said on Monday.

Global gas demand could total 3,878 billion cubic metres (bcm) in 2020, down from 3,951 bcm last year, the consultancy forecast. Before the coronavirus outbreak, demand was expected to grow to 4,038 bcm.

"2020 will be the first year since 2009 where there will be no growth in consumption. This will be a hard blow for an industry accustomed to yearly growth rates of more than 3%," said Rystad Energy's head of gas and power markets Carlos Torres-Diaz.

However, gas remains competitive to other sources of energy, especially in the power sector where gas use has remained relatively stable in most countries, he added.

Although gas demand in Europe has slumped, demand in the United States remains resilient, mostly as a result of increasing demand from the power sector which has compensated for a drop in other sectors.

Gas demand from the U.S. power sector has averaged 25 billion cubic feet per day (708 million cubic metre per day) over the last two weeks, in line with last year's level.

Natural gas production is estimated at around 4,000 bcm this year based on lower investment activity in the exploration and production industry.

As storage capacity is very full, producers are expected to push volumes into the market.

"This could trigger a demand response to absorb the additional volumes, but this will be very dependent on gas prices remaining competitive to coal," the report said.

Dutch gas prices, the European benchmark, are expected to average \$3.3 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) and Asian spot prices to average \$3.8/MMBtu this year, below the range at which coal-to-gas switching takes place in most countries.

FAO Seeks More Funds to Deal With locusts in Pakistan, Iran

ROME (Dispatches) - After making significant gains in dealing with the upsurge of desert locusts in East Africa and Yemen, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) plans to launch a revised appeal for funding in the coming weeks to generate additional resources for Pakistan and Iran, which are also facing locust infestations.

An appeal from the Rome-based UN agency was launched in January which netted \$130 million. It said that the funding had been largely concentrated on locust control activities, therefore, more support for livelihoods is needed.

"Governments have been working with the FAO to design, monitor and implement control operations," it said, adding that the agency had also been providing pesticides, bio-pesticides, equipment, aircraft and training.

Given the favourable conditions for locust reproduction, the agency called for sustained efforts and more resources for Iran and Pakistan – which are facing locust attacks – and for scaling up efforts in the Sahel region, which risked being affected.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic and other challenges, the FAO said, with its support an estimated 720,000 tonnes of cereal was saved from



the swarms of migratory pests across 10 countries in East Africa and Yemen which was enough to feed 5 million people a year.

"However, more action is still needed to avert a food security crisis as the ongoing rainy season, which benefits farmers and pastoralists, also provides favourable conditions for locusts to breed," agency chief Qu Dongyu stressed.

"Our gains have been significant; but the battle is long and is not yet over", he said. "More people are at risk of losing their livelihoods and worsening food security in the coming months," the FAO director general added.

FAO has released its first progress report on the locust control campaign which began in January and now covers 10 countries: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Yemen.

It was launched to protect crops and livelihoods from what are considered to be the most destructive migratory pests in the world. A single desert locust swarm, which can contain up to 150 million insects per square kilometre, is capable of eating as much food in a day as 35,000 people.

U.S.-Iran Tensions...

FROM PAGE 1

The Director-General of the Egmont Institute refers to recent tension between Tehran and Washington and stated that tensions between the US and Iran are indeed worsening. It is a risk for peace and stability in the region.

"If there could be a bilateral dialogue in the past, there is no reason it could not happen again. Third countries could facilitate. Players in the region have an important role to play, so do the Europeans," he added.

Marc Otte confirmed "One could start with confidence-building and early warning mechanisms in order to build a minimum of trust; and then move on to structural measures to control armaments (conventional or not) and military deployments in the region, including verification procedures, as well as transparency."

Confidence Vote for Al-Kadhimi...

FROM PAGE 1

Iraqi parties like Hekmat led by Seyed Ammar Hakim, Al-Fath Coalition led by Hadi al-Amiri, Strong Iraq led by Parliament Speaker al-Halbousi, Coalition of Kurd Parties led by Barham Salih were the major supporters of Al-Kadhimi's designation but Sadrist Movement as well as Sadiqun Bloc were opposing the Al-Kadhimi government. The opposition of some political parties led to some changes in the cabinet during the voting as lawmakers cast vote of confidence for Adil Hashush Jabir Jassim as labor and social affairs minister, for Khalid Shwani as justice minister and for Haribi Abdullah as agriculture minister to replace Al-Kadhimi's picks.

So what happened in Iraq was official declaration for formation of a new government after recommendation of grand cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to former Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi to resign following full-scale unrests and clashes in the country six months ago which were like a full civil war, instigated by the U.S.

Hours after esteemed grand cleric of Iraqi Shiites' Friday prayer sermon in Karbala, Abdul-Mahdi in a statement announced his readiness to submit his resignation to the parliament. At that time this question was raised what scenarios would be in front of the Iraqi government. In this period, Iraq passed its time with the U.S. military threat and with security shocks, while some candidates for the premiership job who were not considered as national choices wasted much time, but fortunately Iraq parliament finally had an ending well, and today we have a government in our neighborhood that we can talk with them for advancement of regional goals like political and economic co-operations and even a military one, and we should thank God for it.



Iran Urges...

FROM PAGE 1

"Condemning such unlawful irresponsible act, we stress that Golan is and will remain a part and parcel of the Syrian territory," he added.

Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria after the 1967 Six-Day War and later occupied it in a move that has never been recognized by the international community. However, in a highly provocative move on March 25 last year US President Donald Trump signed a proclamation recognizing Israel's "sovereignty" over the Syrian territory.

Damascus strongly condemned the move and called it a "blatant attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Syria.

In his Monday speech, Takht Ravanchi also condemned Israel's aggressions against Syria as a "gross violation of international law and the UN Charter", stressing that the Syrian Government has a sovereign right to decide how and when to exercise its inherent right to individual or collective self-defense.

"Such aggressions must come to an end," he urged.

"Down With Israel..."

FROM PAGE 1

Authorities also confiscated nearly 300 kilograms of gold from the couple and said they had bought 6,700 cars from Saipa, one of top two automakers of the country.

In connection to the Saipa part of the charges, the court separately sentenced lawmakers Fereidoun Ahmadi and Mohammad Azizi to five years in prison each, as well as Mehdi Jamali, a former CEO of Saipa, to seven years in prison.

Both lawmakers represent the city of Zanjan, about 300 kilometres (187 miles) northwest of the capital, Tehran.

Under Iranian law, the couple can appeal the verdicts within 20 days. Their lawyers were not reachable for comment.

Iran Attends...

FROM PAGE 1

5. Support Afghanistan in achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace in the near future (reservation taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran: with respect to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the basic rights of women and the ethnic and religious groups);

6. Are closely monitoring the consequences of the developments that result in the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, and also call on the foreign forces to withdraw in an orderly and responsible manner, in such a way that the situation in Afghanistan would experience a trouble-free transition;

7. Support the release of the prisoners and captives that are held by all warring sides;

8. Hope that the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2513 (2020) could be implemented and observed;

9. Support the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative for a global ceasefire, and call for the declaration of an inclusive ceasefire at the same time across Afghanistan on the basis of an agreement among the parties engaged in the conflict;

10. Express concern about the serious threat of terrorism prevailing in Afghanistan, encourage all parties in Afghanistan to adopt serious measures against al-Qaeda, ISIS, the East Turkestan movement, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, and the other terrorist organizations that run operations against the regional countries, and to fully eradicate the production and trafficking of opiates in that country;

11. Reaffirm support for Afghanistan in tackling the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, and welcome the continuation of humanitarian aids

from the international community for Afghanistan;

12. Emphasize that the process of peace and reconciliation is expected to pave the way for the return and resettlement of the Afghan refugees, and call on the international community to support a scheduled return along with respect and keeping the dignity of Afghan refugees;

13. Agree to maintain their contacts on the issue of Afghanistan and to cooperate in advancing peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The communiqué was issued on May 18, 2020, in Tehran, Islamabad, Beijing and Moscow in the Persian, English, Chinese and Russian languages, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website.

Spanish Clubs Begin Group Training

MADRID (AFP) - Spanish clubs began training in groups of 10 players on Monday, in line with health protocols, as La Liga takes another step towards the planned resumption of the coronavirus-hit season next month.

Barcelona confirmed that their squad was back on the training ground at 9:30am (0730 GMT), with pictures published on their Twitter account showing several players including Gerard Pique and Sergio Busquets taking part in the session.

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Singapore F1 Can't Be Held Behind Closed Doors

LONDON (Dispatches) - Singapore F1 organizers Monday said it was "not feasible" to hold the race behind closed doors, threatening further problems for the coronavirus-ravaged season.

After 10 races were cancelled or postponed, Formula One bosses are aiming to begin the season with two races in Austria in July, both without fans. Races in other countries are also expected to go ahead in closed venues.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY MAY 20, 2020

Federer Is the Best But Djokovic Tougher for Nadal

MUMBAI (Reuters) - Roger Federer is the best tennis player of the current generation but reigning world number one Novak Djokovic remains the most difficult opponent in Rafa Nadal's career, the Spaniard's uncle and former coach Toni Nadal has said.

The "GOAT" (Greatest of all Time) debate in men's tennis has divided opinion for a decade and remains a hot topic as the trio continue to dominate, having won the last 13 majors.

Federer, who will be 39 in August, is nearing the end of a glittering career and leads the race on 20 Grand Slam singles titles, with Spaniard Nadal close on his heels with 19.

Djokovic is three behind the Swiss with 17 majors and is a year younger than Nadal, who turns 34 next month.

"For me, he (Federer) is a wonderful player. I like to watch Roger Federer a lot," Toni told Eurosport's Players' Cut programme, which features Nadal this week.

"If I wasn't the uncle nor the coach of Rafael, I would want Federer to win all the matches. But at the end, I like how he plays, because he's very elegant but he's very effective too."

"I know Federer is the best ever with I don't know who; maybe Rod Laver or maybe Rafael, he's not too far (behind). But at the moment Federer is the best."

Djokovic looked unstoppable this season before the novel coronavirus pandemic brought the tennis circuit to a halt in early March.



longer for a new Grand Slam champion.

Federer, Nadal and Djokovic have dominated the Grand Slams over the past two decades winning 56 majors between them.

They have been relentless the last few years as you have to go back to the 2016 US Open for the last time someone outside the Big Three won a Grand Slam.

The sport, though, is currently on an enforced break due to the coronavirus pandemic, although both the US Open and rescheduled French Open remain on the calendar.

However, there are doubts over whether or not the US Open due to start on August 31, will go ahead as planned, meaning it is likely to start at Roland Garros.

Medvedev, who finished runner-up to Rafael Nadal at Flushing Meadows last year, admits it will be tough to break the stranglehold of the Big Three if the season restarts in Paris.

Alonso Is Ready to Return in 2021

LONDON (Reuters) - Two-times world champion Fernando Alonso is ready for a Formula One comeback, his long-time adviser and former Renault team boss Flavio Briatore has said amid increasing speculation about a return to Renault.

The 38-year-old Spaniard left Formula One at the end of 2018 but is seen as a possible replacement for Australian Daniel Ricciardo, who is moving to McLaren in 2021.

"Fernando is motivated. A year away from Formula One has done him good. He has detoxed himself and I see him calmer and ready to return," Briatore, who left Renault in 2009 after a race-fixing scandal, told Italy's Gazzetta dello Sport.

Renault are expected to take their time before making any driver announcement, with the 2020 season yet to start due to COVID-19.

Four-times world champion Sebastian Vettel is also available after Ferrari announced the German would be leaving at the end of the year.

Alonso won his titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006 to end seven-times champion Michael Schumacher's long reign.

UEFA Pushes Back Key Meeting to June

PARIS (AFP) - UEFA has postponed a potentially key meeting of its Executive Committee until June 17, European football's governing body said on Monday.

The meeting was initially due to be held on May 27 but has been put back due to concerns surrounding some of the venues for the next European Championship.

UEFA cited "some remaining open points regarding a small number of proposed venues for the rearranged UEFA Euro 2020 next year."

The Euro was pushed back by a year to June and July 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. It was due to be staged in 12 cities across 12 different European nations, but that format could be modified.

"The idea is that we stay in the same cities," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said in an interview with broadcaster beIN Sports last week.

"We have had conversations with nine cities and everything is set. With three cities, we have some issues."

"So we will discuss further, and in principle, we will do it in 12 cities. But if not, we are ready to do it in 10, nine or eight."

The German Bundesliga became the first major European league to return over the weekend and UEFA remains hopeful of wrapping up the current club season in August, thereby liming the delay to the start of next season.

UEFA has been working on a potential scenario which would see domestic leagues being played out before the Champions League and Europa League are completed in August.

"We have a concrete plan of finishing the European season. Of course, this summer we will have to play without spectators at the stadiums," Ceferin told beIN.

He added: "We have an idea but we have to wait for the Executive Committee of UEFA to confirm the dates."

"I can say that the European season will be finished, if everything is as it is now, in August."

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

The Serb has a slight edge on world number two Nadal, having won 29 of their 55 career meetings so far.

"For us it was always more difficult to play against Djokovic," Toni said.

"Because it's not about who of them is better. For us, when we play against Federer, we have a way to beat him. In my mind, before going on court, I know what we have to do."

"When we play against Djokovic, many times we didn't know exactly what we had to do. This is more difficult, for me. I prefer to play against Federer."

Nadal currently trains under former world number one and fellow Mallorcan Carlos Moya after uncle Toni stepped down as his long-time coach at the end of the 2017 season.

Meanwhile rising star Daniil Medvedev believes if the season starts with the French Open, tennis will have to wait

Dortmund Showdown Set To Decide German League

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Thomas Mueller expects Bayern Munich's showdown behind closed doors at closest rivals Borussia Dortmund in a week's time to decide who wins the Bundesliga title.

Goals by Robert Lewandowski and Benjamin Pavard sealed a 2-0 win for Bayern at Union Berlin on Sunday as the German top flight restarted behind closed doors.

The result in Berlin maintained Bayern's four-point lead at the top of the table after the league took a two-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second-placed Dortmund smashed Schalke 4-0 on Saturday with Erling Braut Haaland opening the scoring before Raphael Guerreiro netted either side of a Thorgan Hazard goal. Dortmund host Bayern on May 26 and Mueller expects the potential top-of-the-table clash to be a key factor in determining whether Munich will go on to clinch an eighth straight league crown.

"The match in Dortmund will decide how exciting and close it will be in the next few weeks, that's for sure," said Mueller. Former Dortmund striker Lewandowski netted a first-half penalty for Bayern on Sunday for his 26th league goal this season, taking him one closer to Gerd Mueller's record of 40 in the 1971-1972 season. Aided if the Pole could overtake Mueller's 48-year-old record, Bayern coach Hansi Flick said: "It won't be easy, but he (Lewandowski) has the quality."

"If anyone can do it, he's the one."

In Dortmund, Haaland also continued his phenomenal scoring record with his 10th goal in nine Bundesliga games since arriving from Red Bull Salzburg in January. In total, the lanky 19-year-old Norwegian has now scored 41 goals in 34 games in all competitions in 2019/20.



Celtic Declared Champions as Scottish Season Is Ended

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Celtic were crowned champions for a record-equalling ninth consecutive season as the Scottish Premiership campaign was declared over on Monday.

Neil Lennon's men were 13 points clear at the top of the table when the season was stopped due to the coronavirus pandemic in March with eight games remaining for the majority of clubs.

Second-placed Rangers had a game in hand to try and cut that gap and were due to face Celtic twice more before the end of the season.

"It is, of course, a real shame that we were not able to see out the league in front of our fans. However, no one can deny how deserved this title is," said Celtic chief executive Peter Lawwell.

A ninth consecutive title matches the record set by Celtic's European Cup-winning side of the sixties and seventies and Rangers' dominant team that won nine in a row between 1988 and 1997.

"To be sitting here now as the manager of the nine in a row, and having played a huge part in that, fills me with so much pride," said Lennon, who has been in charge for five of the nine straight titles.

"It feels wonderful and I'm so proud of the players. It's an incredible record and to be part of that is something very special, and I think it's thoroughly deserved as well."

A points-per-game formula for determining final league placings also sees bottom club Hearts relegated unless there is any progress in talks over league reconstruction.



European Season Will Finish in August

PARIS (Reuters) - UEFA has a plan to finish the 2019-20 season by August, including the Champions League and Europa League campaigns, the European soccer governing body's president Aleksander Ceferin has said.

The majority of European league seasons were suspended in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic but a few leagues have announced plans for a restart in the coming weeks.

The French and Dutch top-flight campaigns have been cancelled but the German Bundesliga restarted on Saturday and Ceferin expects at least 80% of national leagues to finish their seasons.

"We have an idea but we have to wait for the executive committee of UEFA to confirm the dates. I can say that the European season will be finished, if everything is as it is now, in August," Ceferin told beIN Sports.

"As things look now, I'm sure... that we can finish the European season and this means UEFA competition. I think the majority of leagues will finish the season. The ones who will not, it's their decision. But they will still have to play qualifiers if they want to participate in the European UEFA competition."

Both the Champions League and Europa League are yet to complete their last-16 matches.

Paris St Germain, who were declared Ligue 1 champions, are looking to play their Champions League games abroad after the French government said professional sports would not be allowed to return before September.

