

Culture and Islamic Guidance
Minister Said That Imam Khomeini
Thought About and Established
An Independent and Stable
System That Had No Fear of the
Bipolar World in the Cold War Era

IRAN NEWS

Venezuelan President Nicolas
Maduro Said He Would Visit Iran
Shortly to Sign Cooperation
Agreements in Energy and Other
Sectors, After Iran Sent Five Fuel
Tankers to Venezuela

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Central Bank Urged To Unblock Assets In Foreign Banks

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has praised the efforts of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) to release part of the country's forex resources blocked in foreign banks.

Speaking with Governor of the Central Bank Abdolnasser Hemmati, Rouhani urged the CBI to continue following up on the release of Iran's frozen assets.

The president also stressed the need for more cooperation of the country's exporters with the Central Bank to provide the required foreign currency for the country's import.

Hemmati said the Central Bank is pressing ahead with its efforts to secure the release of Iranian assets blocked in other countries.

He also said the CBI is to auction treasury bonds to fund the budget deficit through market liquidity this week.

Under U.S. pressure, billions of dollars of Iran's oil money and other funds are held up in several countries at a time when they are urgently needed in the country's fight against the novel coronavirus which has killed over 8,000 Iranians so far.

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Indian Basmati Rice Consignments Stuck at Iranian Ports

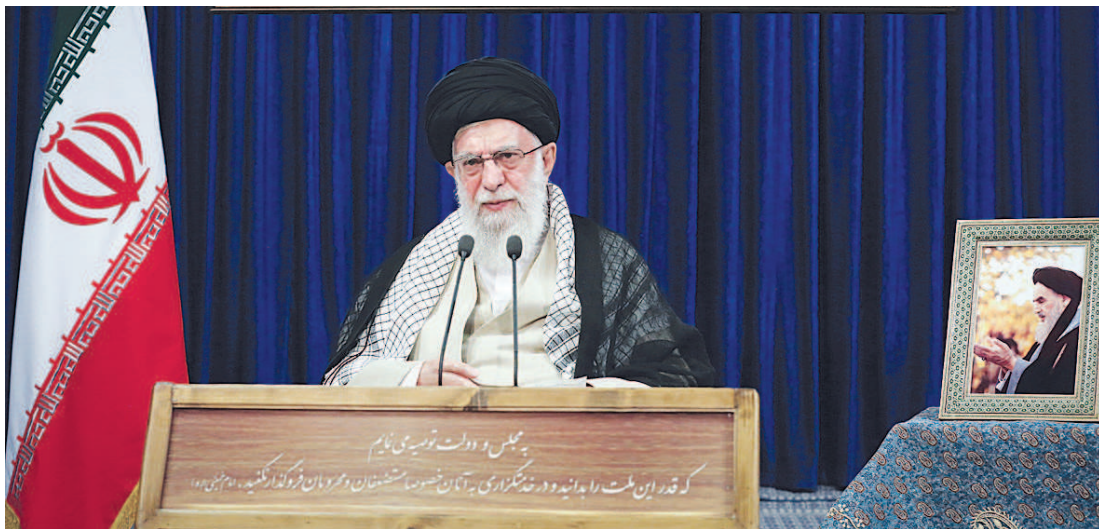
NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's basmati rice consignments worth Rs 1,700 crore are stuck at Iranian ports because of issues with the country's central bank, prompting exporters to seek government help to ensure steady payments from Tehran.

Basmati rice consignments worth Rs 1,700 crore are stuck at Iranian ports because of issues with the country's central bank, prompting exporters to seek government help to ensure steady payments from Tehran. Exporters said the Iranian central bank was not issuing currency allocations to local rice buyers, leading to delays in unloading. Iran is the largest importer of Indian basmati rice, buying around 34% of the rice variety shipped out of India.

"Over 2.5 lakh ton of basmati rice valued at Rs 1,700 crore is held up in the Iranian ports since the past few months," said Vinod Kaul, executive director of All India Rice Exporters Association. "We have requested the Indian government intervention in evolving a safe payment mechanism for Iran to resolve the current situation and prevent any future recurrence."

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Brutality Against Black People Shows Nature of U.S. Gov't



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei says what's happening in the United States today reveals the real nature of the American government.

In a televised address, the Leader referred to the chaotic situation in America following the murder of George Floyd by the U.S. police, saying, "A police officer putting his knee on a black man's neck and pushing it to death shows the nature of the American government."

"What is being witnessed in U.S. cities today is a result of realities that had always been kept concealed. However, today these have been revealed leading to the disgrace of the U.S. government," he added.

"The crime committed against this black man is the same thing the U.S. government has been doing against all the world. They have done the same in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Vietnam, and many other countries of the world. This is the U.S. government's nature and character that is being exposed today."

"The people's slogan of #ICantBreathe can be heard in the massive protests throughout the U.S. It also represents the heartfelt words of all nations against which the US has committed many atrocities," the Leader went on to say.

"The U.S. government has been disgraced due to its behavior. The corona outbreak started in the U.S. later than in other countries, they benefitted from other nations' experience, and they could have prepared, but they failed to manage Corona properly due to the corruption of their government," he added.

Meanwhile he commemorated the founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini on the 31st anniversary of his passing, saying the late leader shattered the presumed invincibility of superpowers.

Ayatollah Khamenei paid homage to the late revolutionary leader and recounted his legacy. Decades after his departure, Imam Khomeini "is still alive among us, and should remain alive among us."

The Leader recalled how Imam Khomeini also transformed the people's attitude towards the so-called superpowers and their presumed invincibility to the point that the then U.S. rulers acknowledged that the Imam had "humiliated" them.

"At that time, no one assumed that anything could be done contrary to what the U.S. willed. Imam Khomeini proved that superpowers are not invincible. We witnessed what happened to the Soviet Union. And today we are watching the U.S. and see what is transpiring there," Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding Imam Khomeini taught the masses how these big powers can be overcome.

The Leader underlined the Imam's spirit of "seeking and encouraging change," calling him a "true leader."

From a young age, Imam Khomeini would advise in favor of "rising up in the path of God," Ayatollah Khamenei noted, and reminisced how the late leader would invoke "spiritual revolution" among people through his speeches.

Imam Khomeini thus managed to eventually bring about "change across the whole Iranian nation," and prompted the people to abandon the spirit of lethargy and capitulation in the face of oppression, the Leader stated.

Imam Khomeini also caused the nation to abandon its feelings of self-deprecation and consider itself entitled to self-esteem, and extended the nation's attitude towards religion beyond a simply personal matter, Ayatollah Khamenei remarked.

The revolutionary leader kept up his efforts at inducing change even after the Islamic Revolution, the Leader said. The revolutionary attitude is still alive today, said the Leader, citing the country's scientific and defensive achievements and noting that Iran has attained the "deterrent status" thanks to its defense power.

The Leader then underlined the importance of continued pursuance of change as a means of betterment, and proceeded to name some instances of desired change in various arenas.

As one desired prospect in the field of economy, the Leader cited potential severance of dependence on oil revenues.

Across the social sphere, the Leader sternly warned against allowing the population's median age to rise.

Russia Defends Iran Satellite Launch Against U.S. Opposition

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Russia is defending Iran's right to launch a satellite, dismissing U.S. claims that Tehran was defying the U.N. resolution endorsing the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six major powers by sending it into space.

Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, said that "the ongoing attempts of the United States side to deprive Iran of the right to reap the benefits of peaceful space technology under false pretexts are a cause for serious concern and profound regret." He dismissed as "misleading" U.S. accusations that the April 22 satellite launch carried out by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps went against the 2015 resolution, which calls on Iran not to undertake any ballistic missile-related activities capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

"Iran has never possessed nuclear weapons, nor does it possess these weapons now, nor, we expect, will it ever possess them in the future," Nebenzia said in a letter to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council circulated Thursday.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The U.S. in Disarray; Iran Blamed

The intrinsic brutality of the FBI and the U.S. police against the blacks is nothing new, but that American people have a nationwide reaction to this violence is definitely full of novelties which can be analyzed. Almost during the past week after the U.S. police's crime against a black man which led to his savage murder, almost 80 percent of Americans, either the Black and the White, poured into the streets and burned the U.S. flag and set some cities on fire.

Minneapolis was the main venue which sparked the start of the protests. Murder of one black man by a white policeman could have just been a spark at the powder keg that discrimination and capitalism, hand in hand, have caused such a condition. During the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the real poverty of American people was exposed where people did not have even any saving for buying a meal and they had to stand in miles-long lines for a meal, and with those long-lines they showed us how the true face of the U.S. and the country's false claim of being the cradle of liberty is exposed and disgraced.

The most important thing during this incident in the U.S. was that the country gave in against Iranian people. U.S. President Donald Trump used the same accusation against Iran when the exposed shah in 1978 and 1979 used to label Iranians and calling Iranian protesters as communists or leftists. Protesters gathering in front of the White House chanted songs and slogans inspired by Imam Hossein (A) and Imam Khomeini's school, and during their protests, they chanted the name of Iran's Supreme Leader which had enraged the U.S. officials.

So this made the U.S. state TV channels accuse Iran of having hands in recent protests in the country. That why and how the U.S. officials accused Iran of having a hand in recent American people's protests against racism and investment is questionable and interesting.

During the five-decade Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West, the ground had never been paved for such a dissatisfaction and explosion in the U.S. to press people to pour into streets to stage protests against the U.S. ruling system so that the official voice of the U.S. had to blame the Kremlin for such unrests. But the Islamic Revolution of Iran has confused Trump and the other U.S. statesmen in the White House so that today the world is witnessing a reality which is emerging 41 years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and it is the result of strength and smartness of Muslim people and life-giving spirit of Islam inspired by the call of Imam Khomeini (R).

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U.S. Sanctions Four Shipping Firms for Transporting Venezuelan oil

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Venezuelan foreign minister warned that U.S. moves to inhibit crude exports would complicate food and medicine imports.

The United States Treasury Department said it had sanctioned four shipping firms for transporting Venezuelan oil, the latest escalation in Washington's effort to depose socialist President Nicolas Maduro by cutting off the OPEC nation's crude exports.

Marshall Islands-based Afranav Maritime Ltd, Adamant Maritime Ltd and Sanibel Shiptrade Ltd, as well as Greece-based Seacomber Ltd, all own tankers that lifted Venezuelan oil between February and April of this year, the Treasury Department said.

"These companies are transporting oil that was effectively stolen from the Venezuelan people," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement. In response, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said in a tweet that Pompeo had a "criminal obsession" with Venezuela and that the U.S. moves to inhibit crude exports would complicate food and medicine imports.

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Iranian Cargo Vessel Behbahan Sinks in Iraqi Waters

TEHRAN (IFP)- An Iranian cargo ship en route from the southern Iranian port of Khorramshahr to Iraq's Umm Qasr Port capsized and sank in the Iraqi waters.

Behbahan vessel sank in the early hours of Friday north of Persian Gulf and in the southeast of Umm Qasr Port, Iraq's only deep water port.

Khorramshahr Ports and Maritime Administration announced on Friday that the cargo vessel was carrying construction materials when it capsized.

Iranian officials say there were seven crew members onboard, of whom one has died and four have been rescued. Two people including an Indian national are still unaccounted for and the rescue teams are searching the area. The Islamic Republic is now consulting with Iraq to send a team of marine experts to the scene.

The cause of the incident is under investigation and will be announced later, Iranian authorities at Khorramshahr Ports and Maritime Administration say.

Trump Uses Bible to Justify Violence Against Americans

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has deplored his U.S. counterpart's recent Bible photo-op outside a church amid angry anti-racism protests in American cities, saying Donald Trump is resorting to the Christianity's holy book to justify ordering "murders and crimes" against the American people.

In remarks on Thursday, Rouhani said the U.S. has been experiencing the "worst days in its political and social history" amid angry protests over U.S. police brutality, which erupted after the death of an unarmed African-American man at hands of a white Minnesota policeman last week.

The protests have been met with a heavy-handed police crackdown. The anger has also spilled onto other countries, sparking similar anti-racism protests in several cities around the world.

Rouhani said under such circumstances, "we have witnessed that black people and those who reject the White House's mindset are being subjected to massive suppression."

"It is shameful that the U.S. president reaches for The Bible [to justify] issuing an order for murders and crimes against American citizens," Rouhani said.

He was referring to Trump's photo stunt on Monday, when U.S. police drove back peaceful protesters near the White House so the U.S. president could walk to the



nearby St. John's Church and pose briefly with a Bible.

Declaring himself "your president of law and order," Trump vowed on the same day to return order to American streets using the military if the protests continue.

The Iranian president further said The Bible is a holy book that invites to peace and kindness. The Bible, he added, is the holy book of an Abrahamic religion and such a move angers the followers of all other such religions, who respect Jesus Christ and The Bible.

"The rulers in the White House have turned the current situation into one of the worst eras in America's history," he added.

Rouhani expressed sympathy with the "American people and those who are protesting in the streets," saying, "We condemn the White House which is issuing orders to commit these crimes."

Iran Thanks Switzerland for Facilitating Prisoner Swap Deal With U.S.

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry spokesman has praised Switzerland's role in facilitating what seems to be a prisoner exchange between Iran and the United States, in which American Navy veteran Michael Ray White and Iranian doctor Majid Taheri were freed.

"Mr. Michael White, who had been sentenced to prison in Iran for security crimes and in a lawsuit brought by private plaintiffs, was released after satisfying the plaintiffs in respect to the cause of action while being granted Islamic mercy for his other crimes," Seyed Abbas Mousavi said in a statement.

"He was released from jail given the time served and in respect of human rights considerations, and left Iran on Thursday," the spokesman added.

"After the coronavirus outbreak, upon the general directive of the Iranian Judiciary Chief, White was granted furlough, but as long as he had no relatives in Iran, he was handed over to the Embassy of Switzerland, which protects the US interests in Iran, upon the embassy's request," Mousavi noted.

"As he had some symptoms of the virus, he was under full medical supervision and treatment during this time, and after making sure that his coronavirus test was negative, the freedom verdict was implemented," he added.

"Simultaneous with White's release, Majid Taheri, an Iranian scientist who had been imprisoned in the United States for false reasons, was released from prison as per the court ruling," Mousavi added.

Mousavi finally appreciated the close cooperation of the Judiciary, the Intelligence Ministry, and the Secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council as well as the Swiss Embassy in Tehran who prepared the grounds for the release of Mr White and Doctor Taheri.

Expansion of U.S., EU Bans on Syria Unlawful, Inhumane

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned the expansion of EU and U.S. sanctions against Syria, calling it an inhumane tool that seriously endangers human rights.

The European Union's move to renew its sanctions against Syria and the United States' introduction of new financial bans against the Arab country are unlawful and inhumane, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday.

"Most of the negative consequences and harms of such sanctions will be borne by the ordinary people and citizens of Syria," the spokesman noted, describing sanction as an inhumane tool that directly and seriously jeopardizes human rights.

Mousavi expressed Tehran's solidarity with the "resilient" nation and government of Syria, and called for the removal of all anti-human sanctions against Damascus "so that the Syrians can meet their basic needs and repair the damages caused by Western-backed terrorist attacks against the country's

infrastructure with the help of the international community."

His comments came shortly after the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control issued the Syria Sanctions Regulations, which implement a 2019 executive order authorizing asset freezing measures and travel bans against Syrian individuals and entities.

On Wednesday, Syria lambasted the United States for practicing "economic terrorism", saying the US new financial sanctions will intensify the sufferings of the Syrian people.

"The Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns the imposition of further sanctions on it by the US administration through the so-called Caesar Act. The sanctions are based on a bunch of lies and fabricated claims by parties hostile to the Syrian nation. This falls within the framework of their declared war that uses various methods, including terrorism, economic blockade, political pressure and smear campaign," an unnamed source with the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates said.

Italy Committed To Developing Ties With Iran



TEHRAN (IRNA)- Italian Ambassador to Iran Giuseppe Perrone in a video that was released on the occasion of the 74th anniversary of the establishment of Italy underlined his commitment to promoting relations with Iran.

Referring to damages imposed on Iran and Italy by coronavirus, he assured that by resisting and relying on sacrifice spirit both countries will not only overcome this challenge but also become stronger than ever.

He also reminded deep and long-standing relations between Iran and Italy, saying both sides have ancient civilizations and a great background of interactions.

Perrone said Italy is one of Iran's partners in commercial and economic fields, adding that both sides are now developing cultural, art, and scientific relations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Italian diplomat pointed to civil art project which gathers Iranian and Italian artists to present their works on the outer wall of Iranian ambassador residence.

Thanks to the outbreak of coronavirus, Italian cinema week which was supposed to be held in Tehran, Kish and Shiraz was postponed, he noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Giuseppe Perrone expressed his empathy with Iranians and thanked them for their hospitality and kindness.

Judiciary Chief Calls for Prosecuting U.S. for Human Rights Abuses

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Amid a global outcry over the brutal death of a black man at the hands of U.S. police, Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi says the United States must face prosecution at international courts for "systematic racism" and violations of basic human rights.

In remarks, Raeisi slammed the shocking U.S. police brutality that led to the death of George Floyd earlier this month, saying the tragedy "laid bare America unmasked."

The 46-year-old unarmed black man lost his life in police custody on a Minnesota street after a white officer knelt on his neck for nearly 9 minutes.

Iran says the U.S. has developed an overly strong habit of lecturing other countries despite its own well-documented abuse record. Raeisi further said the U.S., which claims to be a defender of human rights "should in fact be prosecuted at international courts" as a violator of basic human rights and for racial discrimination.

"It's not just about the color of skin; it's about systematic racism in the U.S.," said Raeisi.

He also criticized the so-called human rights advocates for keeping silent on Washington's abuses of even the most basic human rights, calling on the international community to take action against such arrogant policies.

Another Iranian Jailed in U.S. to Return Home

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN- Iran has confirmed media reports that the United States has released an Iranian physician after spending over a year in jail, while calling on Washington to release all other Iranian citizens taken "hostage".

Dr. Majid Taheri, an Iranian scientist who had been imprisoned in the U.S. on false charges, has been released from jail, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a statement on Thursday night.

Taheri, said to be a longtime resident of Florida, spent 16 months in prison for allegedly violating US sanctions on Iran.

Mousavi also said that U.S. citizen Michael White, who had been sentenced to prison in Iran for "security crimes" and in a lawsuit brought by "private plaintiffs", was released after satisfying the plaintiffs in respect to the cause of action while being granted

"Islamic mercy for his other crimes."

"He was released from jail given the time served and in respect of human rights considerations, and left Iran on Thursday," the Iranian Foreign Ministry official added.

Mousavi said the U.S. navy veteran, who had been detained in 2018, was on medical furlough in the Swiss embassy before being allowed to leave Iran.

U.S. President Donald Trump also said on Twitter that White would be "home with his family in America very soon."

Reuters quoted Taheri's lawyer as saying that he was allowed to return to Iran "as part of an agreement between Iran and the United States that included American citizen Michael White's release."

Meanwhile, in a tweet on Thursday night, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called on the United States to release all Iranian citizens.

Coronavirus Death Toll Rises to 8,134

TEHRAN (IFP) - Health Ministry spokesman says 63 patients have died of the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours, increasing the overall fatalities to 8,134.

Speaking in his Friday press briefing, Kianoush Jahanpour said 13 Iranian provinces recorded zero fatalities since Thursday noon, and 5 provinces recorded only one death in the one-day period.

The spokesman also confirmed 2,886 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of cases to 167,156.

He said 129,741 patients have so far recovered from the disease, and been discharged from hospitals across the country.

2,573 patients are also in severe conditions of the disease, he added.

So far, Jahanpour noted, 1,040,289 COVID-19 tests have been taken in Iran.

Turkey to Reopen Key Border Crossing

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Turkey will see their main trade gate reopen this week after more than three months of closure due to the new coronavirus pandemic.

Turkish Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan said that Ankara will order a reopening of the Gurbulak border gate, known on the Iranian side of the border as Bazargan, to help boost trade between the two neighbors.

The long-awaited measure comes more than a week after Iranian and Turkish presidents discussed the reopening of air and land borders between the two countries now that the pandemic has slowed down.

Iran has been the worst affected country in West Asia by COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

However, the rate of infection in the country has declined over the past weeks to help the government ease lockdown measures that came into force in early March.

The pandemic-related closure of borders between Iran and Turkey has caused a decline of up to 70 percent in trade between the two in the first quarter this year.

Border closures have caused trade between Iran and Turkey to decline significantly.

Iran sees trade with Turkey as key in efforts to confront U.S. sanctions that have sought to undermine Tehran's oil exports. Petrochemical products account for a major share of Iran's exports to Turkey although U.S. bans have made it difficult to settle payments between businesses in the two countries.

Iran, UAE Resume Maritime Trade

TEHRAN (MNA) - The ports affairs director of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Ravanbakhsh Behzadian said that Iran and UAE have resumed maritime trade.

He made the announcement on Thursday, saying that maritime trade between Iran and the UAE has been halted since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.

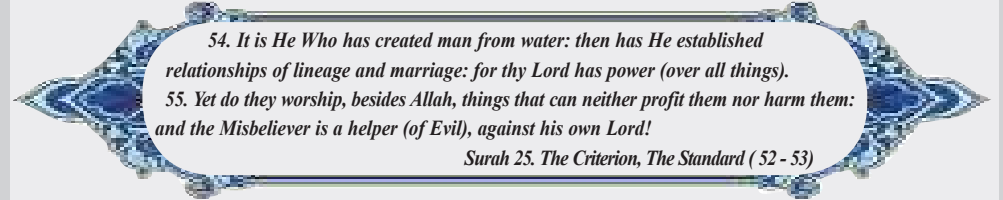
According to the new health guidelines and protocols, these business communications have resumed between two countries, he added.

Of course, according to the UAE ports, the import of fruit from Iran should only be done with refrigerated containers, which is not possible in our traditional launches, Behzadian said.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:38
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:03
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:48



Iran to Export Electricity to Iraq for Two More Years

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian says the country will continue to export electricity to Iraq for two more years in defiance of the U.S. sanctions.

Ardakanian made the remarks during a visit to the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, where he met Iraqi electricity minister.

The Iranian official also noted that Iraq has settled half of the money it owes to Iran for the electricity imports so far, and the settlement of the other half is being processed.

In turn, Iraqi Electricity Minister Majed Hantoush said in his meeting with Ardakanian that Baghdad's debts to Iran for electricity imports from the country have been put on the agenda and the issue is being dealt with by the Iraqi finance ministry. He thanked Iran for exporting 1,200 megawatts of electricity to Iraq.

The minister noted this amount of electricity imports is very important in the summer season.

Baghdad hopes Iran's electricity exports to the country will not decrease this summer, he said, expressing gratitude to the Islamic Republic for meeting Iraq's demand for electricity.

The Iranian minister, for his part, said Iran has vowed to help Iraq improve its electricity sector.



"Around one and a half years ago, an agreement was signed with Iraqi officials during a trip to Iraq, and we promised that the Iraqi electricity industry will get to a desirable state in a three-year plan," he said.

"In this regard, and with regards to Iraq's interests, no other country would have offered Iraq the proposals that we did," he said.

"These proposals include creating the potential for manpower, reconstructing its installations, reducing losses and offering engineering services," said Iran's electricity minister.

"Last year, despite problems, including supplying natural gas to power plants, we tried hard to meet Iraq's demand for electricity and fulfill our duty with regards to serving the Iraqi nation in the best way possible,"

"This year, our situation is very different, and early heat as well as the coronavirus outbreak has led to a rise in power consumption in Iran, and electricity consumption in the country has registered an unprecedented increase compared to that of last year, and we have a tough situation ahead of us this year," the Iranian minister said.

\$417m Foreign Investment in industry, Mine Sectors Approved

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Provincial departments of Industries and Mines and Trade have approved foreign investment in 18 plans worth \$417 million in the current Iranian year (started on March 20) with partnership of foreigners.

Foreign investment companies from Germany, Austria, UAE, China and Italy have entered into contracts with their Iranian partners to carry out different investment projects in Sistan Baluchestan, Tehran, Alborz, Isfahan, Kurdistan provinces.

From among 18 registered companies, six of them enjoyed 100% foreign investment, nine others in joint venture and three more enjoyed BOT.

According to statistics, the volume of investment included industry field with 14 projects worth \$416.2m, mine sector with two projects worth \$680,000 and trade field with two projects worth \$500,000.

The foreign investment in this period mostly consisted of chemicals, oil derivatives and nuclear fuels.

Investors from Afghanistan with five plans, Germany, China, the Netherlands and UAE with two plans and Austria, Italy, Azerbaijan, Turkey and New Zealand with one plan ranked 1st to 3rd respectively.

KSC Working on Biggest Integrated City TV in Province



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The operation for construction of the structure of the biggest city TV of Khorasan Razavi Province kicked off in Neishabour with efforts and investment of Khorasan Steel Complex.

According to reports, the project for preparing the structure and foundation for launching the biggest integrated LED display, known as city TV, was inaugurated last Saturday in Neishabour in presence of governor of the city, chairman of the city, representative of the city to Majlis, mayor and the CEO of Khorasan Steel Complex.

Addressing the ceremony, the CEO of Khorasan Steel Complex said that the installation of this city TV is in line with interaction of the company with urban management of the city and it is one of the actions of the company in line with equipping and upgrading the urban look of the city.

Kasra Ghafouri said that Khorasan Steel Company, in line with its social responsibility obligations and by using the latest technology and equipment and with a goal for the public enlightenment about the role of huge steel industry in industrial, construction and economic development, has decided to launch this LED display in the region.

He reiterated that if the installation of the city TV becomes successful, the second city TV will be launched in another part of the city by this company.

Ghafouri also pointed to the construction of linear park of Neishabour which was launched last year with the cost about 20b rials, adding that the city TV is one of the most standard and advanced ones. The company spent some 17b rials and it will take 60 days the project to come on stream, he noted.

He also pointed to the company's plans for some tourism, cultural and sport projects in the near future, adding that Khorasan Steel Complex will welcome any top and valuable project which is deserved by people of Neishabour.

Iran Forex Reserves "Satisfactory"

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati said that the CBI forex reserves are satisfactory and at a very good level.



Hemmati made the remarks in an open session of Parliament which reviewed the country's major economic indicators.

The sanctions imposed on Iran over the past two years were smart and unprecedented, he said. "The US administration used all the means to deprive us of its revenues."

They were seeking economic collapse of the country, but, thank God, they failed to achieve their ominous goal, Hemmati said.

Noting that economic indicators are not separate from political trends and international pressures, the CBI chief said that two years ago, many thought that, in the most optimistic way, Iran would face hyperinflation and unprecedented forex rates while it did not happen.

Iran used to have some \$107 billion of oil revenues a year nine years ago while last year the figure fell to less than 20% of those figures, the official said.

Noting that Iran's imports, which stood at \$78 billion a year nine years ago, declined to \$42 billion last year, Hemmati said: "this can be both a threat and an opportunity: It is a threat as it creates an inflation shock and it is an opportunity as we can focus on national production and reduce reliance on oil revenues."

He said that statistics released by CBI at the end of the past year showed that all the economic growth indicators had become positive.

The official expressed hope that with the recent economic revival, the country will reach the goal of "surge in production" urged by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Industry Ministry Targeting to Export \$10.5b Worth of Minerals

TEHRAN (MNA) - Caretaker of the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Hossein Modaress Khiabani said that his ministry has targeted exporting \$10.5 billion worth of minerals in the current Iranian calendar year [started March 21, 2020].

Speaking in a meeting with members of the Board of Directors of Iranian Mine House on Wed., he expounded on the mineral policies taken in the Ministry of Industry in the current year named after 'surge in production' and added, "moving towards producing added-value products and strengthening exports in total steel chain are the main policy of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade in the current year."

A major part of 200 operational projects which would be inaugurated by 2021 is related to the mining and mineral sector, he said, adding, "a considerable portion of these projects would be put into operation by the yearend."

Despite tough sanctions imposed against the country, huge development projects are being launched in this sector, he emphasized. Activating small-scale and inactive mines in the country is one of the main policies taken by the Ministry of Industry in the mining and mineral sector.

Iran is home to 5,600 active mines which 400 million tons of minerals on average are extracted from annually, and about 60 to 65 percent of the extracted minerals is related to the construction materials, caretaker of the Ministry of Industry highlighted.

PPC's Performance Highlighted

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Pars Petrochemical Company (PPC), one of the affiliate companies of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company, and the final unit of National Petrochemical Company has good trade in the capital market despite six percent flotation in its share price.

PPC is producer of ethane, propane, butane, pentane-plus, styrene monomer and toluene benzene gases. The nominal production capacity of the company is 4249,000 tons per annum. The sales of products of the company are done in two forms of trade on mercantile exchange or trade with long term contract out of the mercantile exchange.

PPS distributes its products both in the domestic market and in the international market. The major feedstock of the company is natural gas. It also uses products like ethylene and benzene. The company produces its products like liquefied petroleum Gas (LPG) and styrene monomer through its three production units.

According to the country's 2025 Outlook plan, the LPG production in the country should touch 24m tons and petrochemical companies based on their



production plans and they do their best to comply with the outlook plan, and Pars Petrochemical Company accounted for 39 percent of the total LPG production last year and ranked second among the petrochemical companies in the country. The company is the major producer of styrene monomer by producing 86 percent of the total styrene monomer production in the country. The monthly production of the company this year almost equaled to almost the average products last year.

The company has started some projects to reform its production units since years ago and it is expected most of projects to come on stream by the yearend.

PPC by implementing developmental plans will remove hurdles in way of production and it will push its production to the nominal capacity of the company.

Despite the economic recession and slump in the price of petrochemical products, the company has retained its condition stable and it has offered the shares of Arya Sasol in the stock market. PPC owns 50 percent of stakes of Arya Sasol.

The company had good performance in the stock market and distributed good dividend to its share-holders last year.

Pasteur, Royan Hold Virtual Workshop on COVID-19 Testing Experiences

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - During a virtual workshop organized by MSTF Laboratory Network on June 1, the practical experiences and challenges of Coronavirus PCR and serology-based testing were examined.

MSTF Laboratory Network, established by Mustafa Science and Technology Foundation, held an online workshop during which, Kayhan Azadmanesh and Mehdi Totonchi made presentations on two of the major methods of COVID-19 testing and Iran's experience of conducting them.

Kayhan Azadmanesh, professor of Virology Department and head of Rapid Response Team for Infectious Diseases at Pasteur Institute of Iran, shared the experiences of establishing network of COVID-19 testing in Iran.

After giving a brief introduction of Iran and elaborating on the role of Ministry of Health and Medical Education, he stated that "each medical university is responsible for people's health in Iran.



We have 65 universities regarding this matter."

He then explained about the 'strategic framework for strengthening health laboratory services,' provided by WHO.

Meanwhile Mehdi Totonchi, head of Coronavirus Laboratory and associate professor in Genetics Department, Royan Institute, as the second presenter, first elaborated on the history of human Coronaviruses.

He said that in 1966 it was first detected, but did not have serious symptoms. In 2002 SARS-CoV emerged, and in 2012 MERS-CoV was detected.

He then talked about the genome characterization of SARS-CoV-2, and said it has 79% similarity to SARS-CoV, and 50% to MERS-CoV.

Discussing the natural evolution of the h-CoV-19 virus, he asserted that it has undergone mutations throughout the time.

MSTF Laboratory Network was established by Mustafa Science and Technology Foundation in order to share laboratory infrastructures among Islamic countries.

Belarus Leader Names New Prime Minister

MINSK (Reuters) - Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko named a former diplomat who had been overseeing the defence industry as prime minister on Thursday, two months before a presidential election which poses his biggest political challenge in years.

Roman Golovchenko, who was previously head of the state military-industrial committee, replaces Sergei Rumas, who was dismissed with his entire government on Wednesday after less than two years in office.

The appointment of a man with experience in the defence sector is intended to consolidate power and signals Lukashenko's readiness to get tough if necessary to hold on to power, political analysts said.



Venezuelan Opposition Leader Guaido at French Embassy

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido is at the French Embassy in Caracas, the South American country's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said Thursday.

The news came three days after President Nicolas Maduro hinted that his rival was "in hiding" at a diplomatic location. "We cannot enter the premises of any country's embassy whatsoever, in this case Spain or France," Arreaza said, adding that that meant an arrest by force "is not possible."

He made the comments when asked about the presence of Leopoldo Lopez, another leading opposition figure, at the Spanish ambassador's residence, and about Guaido at the French Embassy.



Protesters Take to NYC Streets After Curfew



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Protesters stayed on the streets of New York City after curfew for another day Thursday, spurred by the death of George Floyd.

Actions by the protesters included gathering at Brooklyn's Cadman Plaza, the site where police used batons against demonstrators who were out past the city-imposed curfew a night earlier.

Protesters continued past the 8 p.m. curfew Thursday, even after Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio sought to deflect criticism over harsh tactics from police enforcing it.

Thousands of protesters were out after curfew, and so were police.

At some locations, officials watched, but didn't immediately move in. At other spots, they made orderly arrests without the batons and riot gear, like a night earlier. Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms walked with protesters in downtown Atlanta on Thursday and told the crowd through a megaphone that "there is something better on the other side of this."

"We are in the midst of a movement in this country," she said. "But it's going to be incumbent upon all of us to be able to get together and articulate more than our anger. We got to be able to articulate what we want as our solutions."

The mayor's appearance came on the seventh straight night of protests in the city following the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota. Police Chief Erika Shields also attended the protest.

When the first night of protests on Friday turned violent, an impassioned Bottoms held a news conference and urged the protesters to go home, saying those who were looting and vandalizing businesses were disgracing the city and Floyd's life.

She told the crowd on Thursday that they "matter" to her, and before she left, she encouraged them to get tested for COVID-19.

Meanwhile protests in the nation's capital over George Floyd's death broke up before dark Thursday as a heavy rain began to fall.

The law enforcement presence at the Lincoln Memorial, where protesters gathered, was much smaller than it had been near the White House during the previous nights' demonstrations.

Tomora Wright, 29, of Washington, said her parents were concerned that she was coming down to protest but she wasn't worried. "I know that my people are peaceful and I'm not scared to be around people who believe in the same thing, the same cause. I definitely felt the need to come down here and protest in solidarity."

She wants to see the killers of George Floyd brought to justice but also reopening of past cases such as Sandra Bland in Texas. "These are unimaginable times."

India, Australia Strengthen Defense Ties

NEW DELHI (AFP) - India and Australia strengthened defense ties Thursday, including sealing a pact to boost military logistics support and maritime cooperation, as both nations experience heightened tensions with regional superpower China.

In a virtual summit held online as the coronavirus pandemic restricts international travel, the two leaders signed a Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement as they hailed an upgrade of their strategic partnership. "India is committed to further intensifying comprehensive relations with Australia," India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in opening remarks.

"This is important not only for our two nations, but is also needed for the Indo-Pacific region as well as for the world."

His Australian counterpart Scott Morrison added that "in a time like this, we want to deal very much with friends and trusted partners". The foreign and defense ministers will now meet at least biannually to discuss strategic issues, the two nations said in a joint statement. Other agreements on education, mining, and defense science and technology



Police Pepper Spray Hong Kongers Defying Ban to Mark Tiananmen

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Police pepper-sprayed some Hong Kong protesters on Thursday who defied a ban to stage candlelight rallies in memory of China's 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy protests, accusing Beijing of stifling their freedoms too.

Scuffles broke out briefly in the working-class Mong Kok area where hundreds had gathered and some demonstrators tried to set up roadblocks with metal barriers, prompting officers to use spray to disperse them, according to Reuters witnesses.

It was the first time there had been unrest during the annual Tiananmen vigil in Hong Kong, which police had prohibited this year citing the coronavirus crisis. Several protesters were arrested, police said.

Earlier, a few thousand people joined a peaceful main rally in Victoria Park, many wearing masks and chanting slogans such as "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our time" and "Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong."

"We are just remembering those who died on June 4, the students who were killed. What have we done wrong? For 30 years we have come here peacefully and reasonably, once it's over it's 'sayonara' (goodbye)," said Kitty, a 70-year-old housewife. The anniversary has struck an especially sensitive nerve in the former British-ruled city this year after China's move last month to impose national security legislation and the passage of a bill outlawing disrespect of China's national anthem.

It also comes as Chinese media and some Beijing officials voice support for protests in the United States against police brutality.

In Beijing, security around Tiananmen Square, a popular tourist attraction in the heart of the city, appeared to be tightened, with more police visible than on ordinary days.

June 4 commemorations are banned in mainland China.

Protesters take part in a candlelight vigil to mark the 31st anniversary of the crackdown of pro-democracy protests at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in

1989, after police rejects a mass annual vigil on public health grounds, at Victoria Park, in Hong Kong, China June 4, 2020. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu

Pompeo Presses Nations to Fund IS Fight

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday urged allies to step up funding to defeat the Islamic State movement despite a budget crunch after the devastation of the coronavirus pandemic.

The United States and Italy led a meeting of 31 nations on fighting the extremists, held virtually due to precautions to stop the virus.

A U.S. raid last year killed the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, shortly after President Donald Trump declared the group that once ruled vast swathes of Syria and Iraq had been defeated on the battlefield.

"That said, our fight against ISIS continues, and will for the foreseeable future. We cannot rest," Pompeo told the conference.

"We must continue to root out ISIS cells and networks and provide stabilization assistance to liberated areas in Iraq and Syria," he said.

"It's true that the pandemic is putting enormous pressure on all of our budgets, but we urge your nations to pledge toward our goal of more than \$700 million for 2020," he said.

Pompeo said that the United States was committed to \$100 million to support Iraq, whose new prime minister, Mustafa Kadhemi, has been welcomed by Washington.

The Islamic State group at its height carried out grisly mass executions and enslaved non-Muslims as it inspired attacks around the West.

Even as the extremists' presence has dwindled in its former stronghold, alarm has grown over the Islamic State group's influence in West Africa and Afghanistan.

The United States blamed the Islamic State group for a horrific attack last month at a maternity hospital in Kabul, saying the militants wanted to scuttle a nascent peace process between Afghanistan and the Kabul government.



Libya's Unity Gov't Claims Full Control of Tripoli

TRIPOLI (AFP) - Libya's UN-recognised unity government said Thursday that it was back in full control of the capital and its suburbs after more than a year of fighting off an offensive by eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar.

"Our heroic forces have full control of Greater Tripoli right up to the city limits," Mohamed Gnonou, spokesman for the forces of the Government of National Accord (GNA), said in a Facebook post.

The announcement came after GNA forces retook the capital's civilian airport on Wednesday, more than a year after losing it in Haftar's initial drive on the capital.

The airport, in Tripoli's southern outskirts, had been disused since 2014 when it was heavily damaged in fighting between rival militias.

"Our forces are continuing their advance, chasing the terrorist militias from the walls of Tripoli," said the GNA's deputy defence minister Salah Namrush.

"Some of their commanders are fleeing towards Bani Walid airport," in the interior 170 kilometres (110 miles) southeast of the capital, he added on Facebook.

Footage of GNA troops manning positions held until recently by Haftar's fighters was widely circulated on Libyan television channels and social media. The fighting for the capital had killed hundreds and forced around 200,000 people to flee.

GNA forces, boosted by Turkish drones and air defences, have made a string of gains from Haftar's forces in recent months.

Haftar is supported by neighbouring Egypt and the United Arab Emirates as well as Russia.

The United Nations has urged outside powers to respect a deal reached at a January conference in Berlin, ending foreign meddling and upholding a much-violated arms embargo. While a January truce brokered by Turkey and Russia has been repeatedly violated, the UN said talks on a ceasefire resumed Wednesday, welcoming it as a "positive" first step.



Shanon
(adviser)

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J, balcony
marble fl
fireplace
pkg, & F.F

Farmanieh Villa (\$7000)
2000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
Sauna, J, pkg
green yard
balcony, & F.F

Elahieh Apt (\$2400)
230sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Apt (\$2000)
Mahmoodieh
160sq.m, 2bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F

Darrous Villa (\$2500)
700sq.m, 5bdrs, S/p, & yard

Jordan Apt (\$1400)
130sq.m, 2bdrs, F.F

Zaferanieh bldg (\$8000)
5storey, 15bdrs, & pkgs

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New U.S. Restrictions on 33 Chinese Firms, Institutions Take Effect Today

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S Commerce Department said on Wednesday that new restrictions on 33 Chinese firms and institutions it announced last month will take effect today.

The agency has added the companies and institutions to an economic blacklist, accusing them of helping China spy on its minority Muslim Uighur population in Xinjiang or because of alleged ties to weapons of mass destruction and China's military.

China's foreign ministry said last month it deplored and firmly opposed U.S. sanctions over Xinjiang, calling it a purely internal affair for China.



Weak Demand Pushing Oil, Gas Toward Terminal Decline

LONDON (Dispatches) - Falling fossil fuel demand coupled with mounting risk for investors could slash the value of oil, gas and coal reserves by two thirds, sending shock waves through the global economy, energy analysts warned Thursday.

The value of projected profits for the sector could also fall by two thirds, according to a report from Carbon Tracker, a non-profit financial think tank focused on aligning capital markets with climate policy. Competition from clean technologies along with government policies to achieve climate targets and energy security are pushing the fossil fuel industry toward "terminal decline", the study concluded.

"Terminal decline starts when demand peaks," lead author Kingsmill Bond, Carbon Tracker's new energy strategist, told AFP.

"Global coal demand, for example, peaked in 2013 and has never recovered to that level." Before the coronavirus outbreak, many analysts predicted global demand for oil and gas would peak in the mid-2020s, while the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecast a plateau towards the end of the decade for oil. But the economic meltdown triggered by pandemic lockdowns across the world starting in March could accelerate that process. "We may now have seen peak fossil fuel demand as a whole," said Bond, who worked for 25 years in equity research.

"When a cyclical shock hits a sector already facing structural decline, it brings forward the peak in demand." The IEA foresees an eight percent drop in fossil fuel demand in 2020 due to the pandemic.

"Nobody knows how much the recovery will be in 2021," said Bond. "But if the recovery is half, and if the fossil fuel industry returns to a growth rate of one percent, it will take until 2025 to get back to 2019 levels."

"By then, renewable energy technologies will be large enough to supply all the growth in energy demand."

In 2019, renewable power -- mainly solar and wind -- already accounted for 72 percent of all expansion in the electricity sector, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) reported last month. When a challenger technology takes all the growth, the incumbent -- by definition -- enters into terminal decline, experience in other sectors has shown. That threshold is typically crossed when the challenger has five percent of market share.

Renewables already account for about a quarter of electricity generation, but -- not counting hydro, which has less potential for expansion -- only about four percent of global primary energy consumption. "Now is the time to plan an orderly wind-down of fossil fuel assets and manage the impact of the global economy rather than try to sustain the unsustainable," Bond said.

Shell's first dividend cut since World War II, Repsol's write-off of nearly five billion euros (\$5.6 billion) last year, and a wave of bankruptcies in the US shale oil sector all point to possible structural change.

And yet oil and gas companies are forecasting growth in demand for their products. Indeed, the fossil fuel system as a whole has been investing about \$5 trillion annually on new supply and demand infrastructure for several years running. The size of the fossil fuel economy -- about \$10 trillion in supply infrastructure, and \$22 trillion in demand infrastructure -- means its rapid decline could pose a threat to financial stability, the report concluded.

"Companies across the fossil fuel system are worth \$18 trillion in listed equity, making up a quarter of the total value of global equity markets," it said.

In 2018, the World Bank valued future profits from oil, gas and coal -- cast over a roughly 50-year period -- at \$39 trillion. Carbon Tracker calculated that if demand falls by two percent a year -- in line with the Paris Agreement goal of capping global warming below two degrees Celsius -- those future profits would collapse by nearly two-thirds to \$14 trillion.

Producers projecting a return to business-as-usual, by contrast, are banking on profits in excess of \$100 trillion, the report found.

A collapse of future profits would be especially threatening to petro-states whose economies rely on oil export income. The world's biggest oil and gas earners are Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq and Iran.

Those most vulnerable to instability include Venezuela, Ecuador, Libya, Algeria, Nigeria and Angola, the report said.

UK Leads Fall in Global Trust in Gov't COVID Responses

LONDON (Reuters) - People across almost all the world's leading rich economies have turned more sceptical about their governments' handling of the coronavirus pandemic with confidence slumping the most in Britain, a survey showed on Thursday.

In May, in the Group of Seven nations as a whole, 48% of respondents approved of how authorities had handled the pandemic, down from 50% in April and 54% in March, the survey published by polling firm Kantar showed.

Britain saw the biggest drop - a sharp fall of 18 points from April to 51% - while in the United States, Canada, Germany, France and Italy, the declines ranged between two and six points. Japan was the only country to show an increase.

Britain's COVID-19 death toll has surpassed 50,000, according to a Reuters tally, making the country one of the worst hit in the world by the pandemic. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has also struggled to contain the fallout from a decision by his top advisor Dominic Cummings

Rosneft Replaces Sanctioned Trading Arm With New One

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's Rosneft, which closed its oil trading arm after sanctions were imposed by U.S. authorities in February, has set up a new Geneva-based trading business, four trading sources familiar with the matter said.

The new business, Energopole SA, will take on the main functions previously carried out by Rosneft Trading of supplying Russian oil giant Rosneft's refineries in Germany and some trading operations in Europe, the traders told Reuters.

"Energopole SA is a 100% subsidiary of Rosneft. The company is involved in commercial dealings in the interest of Rosneft and has no connection to Rosneft Trading SA. It is registered in Switzerland and operates in accordance with applicable law," a Rosneft representative told Reuters.

Rosneft Trading was sanctioned for trading with Venezuela and Swiss-based Energopole does not plan to do any business with the South American country, the sources added.

Rosneft terminated all its operations in Venezuela and has disposed of assets relating to its operations there in order to defend its shareholders, the company has previously said in a statement.

Geneva, a home for many international trading houses, is a popular choice among commercial entities due to its favourable tax regime and legal system.

Energopole, which has just started operations and is still going through clearing process with banks and counterparties, will lift 82,000 tonnes of CPC Blend oil from Rosneft's resource loading on June 13-14, the sources said.

This is likely to be shipped to one of Rosneft's refineries in Germany, they added. Rosneft Trading previously acted as the lifter of Rosneft's share of CPC Blend oil.

U.S. New Weekly Jobless Claims Seen Falling Below 2m

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits likely dropped below 2 million last week for the first time since mid-March, but remains astonishingly high as companies adjust to an environment that has been significantly changed by COVID-19.

Nevertheless, the weekly jobless claims report from the Labor Department on Thursday would suggest the worst is over for the labor market, combined with data on Wednesday that showed a smaller-than-expected drop in private payrolls in May.

Surveys have also shown consumer confidence, manufacturing and services industries stabilizing albeit at low levels in May, indicating the downturn triggered by a near shutdown of the country in mid-March to control the spread of COVID-19 was bottoming. Many businesses had reopened by mid-May.

Economists said the stubbornly high number of unemployment claims comes from a second wave of layoffs as businesses navigate weak demand, as well as some lingering backlogs at state unemployment offices overwhelmed by the flood of applications early in the shutdown.

"Many of the new claims reflect current layoffs, as the corporate sector more broadly begins to adjust to the altered outlook for the year ahead," said Lou Crandall, chief economist of Wrightson ICAP LLC in Jersey City, New Jersey. "Even as the economy begins to reopen, new job losses continue to pile up."

New claims for state unemployment benefits likely totaled a seasonally adjusted 1.8 million for the week ended May 30, down from 2.123 million the prior week, according to a Reuters survey of economists. Claims have declined since hitting a record 6.867 million in late March.

Boeing and pipeline operator Energy Transfer have announced layoffs, while some big retailers like JC Penney and high-end chain Neiman Marcus have filed for bankruptcy. States and local governments, whose budgets have been decimated by the COVID-19 fight, are also cutting jobs.

The government's closely watched employment report for May, scheduled for release on Friday, is likely to show nonfarm payrolls falling by 8 million in May after a record 20.537 million plunge in April, according to a Reuters survey of economists. The unemployment rate is forecast rocketing to 19.8%, a post World War Two record, from 14.7% in April.

The weekly jobless claims report is the most timely data on the economy's health, but it could become difficult to get a clear picture of the labor market in the weeks ahead. Initial claims are recorded when a person submits a first application for unemployment benefits. Once approved they become continuing claims and are reported with a one-week lag.

U.S. Suspends Flights by Chinese Airlines

NEWYORK (Dispatches) - Washington ordered the suspension of all flights by Chinese airlines into and out of the United States after Beijing failed to allow American carriers to resume services to China.

The move adds to a growing friction between the world's two biggest economies amid the coronavirus crisis and in the wake of a two-year trade war that has not been fully resolved.

The U.S. action, which takes effect June 16 but could be implemented sooner if President Donald Trump orders it, applied to seven Chinese civilian carriers, although only four currently are running service to U.S. cities including Air China and China Eastern Airlines, the Department of Transportation (DOT) said.

"U.S. carriers have asked to resume passenger service, beginning June 1st. The Chinese government's failure to approve their requests is a violation of our Air Transport Agreement," the department said in a statement.

U.S. air carriers sharply reduced or suspended service to China amid the COVID-19 pandemic. United and Delta submitted applications at the beginning of May to resume flights but have been unable to receive authorization from Civil Aviation Authority of China (CAAC), the DOT said.

The latest spat between Washington and Beijing centers partially on the CAAC deciding to determine its limit on foreign airlines based on their activity as of March 12.

U.S. carriers had by then suspended all flights due to the pandemic -- meaning their cap was calculated to be zero -- while Chinese-flagged flights continued.

The "arbitrary 'baseline' date... effectively precludes U.S. carriers from reinstating scheduled passenger flights to and from China," the U.S. order says.

The department also said there are indications Chinese airlines are using charter flights to get around the limit of one flight a week to increase their advantage over U.S. carriers. "Our overriding goal is not the perpetuation of this situation, but rather an improved environment wherein the carriers of both parties will be able to exercise fully their bilateral rights," the order said.

In early January 2020, before the pandemic struck, U.S. and Chinese carriers operated approximately 325 weekly flights between the two countries.

Trump has blamed China for the U.S. coronavirus outbreak and blasted the country in a fiery speech last week over a new security law in Hong Kong. China for its part has mocked the U.S. stance on Hong Kong in light of civil rights protests across the U.S. following the police killing in Minneapolis of George Floyd, an unnamed African-American man.

"Racism against ethnic minorities in the U.S. is a chronic disease of American society," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said earlier this week. "The current situation reflects once more the severity of the problems of racism and police violence in the U.S.," he told reporters in Beijing.

Meanwhile China on Thursday said foreign airlines blocked from operating in the country over virus fears would be allowed to resume limited flights, lifting a de facto ban on U.S. carriers, a day after Washington ordered the suspension of all Chinese travel into and out of the U.S.

The apparent decision to step back by Beijing comes as tensions between the world's two superpowers are sent soaring by a series of issues including Donald Trump's accusations over China's handling of the pandemic, Hong Kong and Huawei.

German Coalition Parties Agree 130b Euro Stimulus Package



BERLIN (Reuters) - Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling coalition on Wednesday agreed a bumper stimulus package to speed up Germany's recovery from the coronavirus

Speaking at a news conference after marathon talks that extended well into the night, Merkel said the package would amount to 130 billion euros (\$146 billion) and include lower value-added tax (VAT) to boost consumption.

"The size of the package will amount to 130 billion euros for the years 2020/2021, 120 billion of which will be spent by the federal government," Merkel said. "So we have an economic stimulus package, a package for the future."

The stimulus program follows a 750 billion-euro rescue package agreed in March which encompassed a debt-financed supplementary budget of 156 billion euros.

Germany's measures, which together with liquidity aid and loan guarantees equal more than 30% of its economic output, go substantially beyond any other national emergency programs launched by other euro zone countries.

Merkel said VAT will be reduced from 19% to 16% for six months starting in July 1. A lower VAT rate for hospitality of 7% would be lowered by two points over the same period. The overall cost of the VAT measures amount to 20 billion euros.

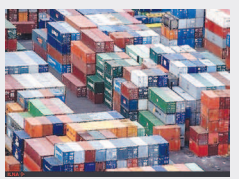


Iran, Serbia Emphasize Boosting Transportation Relations

BELGRADE (IRNA)- Iranian Ambassador to Belgrade Rashid Hassanpour and Serbian Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure Zorana Z. Mihajlović stressed developing cooperation in air and road transportation and infrastructure field.

Z. Mihajlović highlighted developing cooperation with Iran in various fields.

She also praised Iran's principled position with regard to defending Serbian territorial integrity and national sovereignty. She also referred to facilitating cooperation between Iranian and Serbian construction companies.



U.S. Dollar's Shine Fading, But Risk High of Rush to Safe Havens

BENGALURU (Reuters) - A fading of the U.S. dollar's allure will continue as global funding strains ease, but a majority of analysts polled by Reuters said there was a high risk that the U.S.-China trade standoff will renew safe-haven bets in the next six months.

Most major and emerging market currencies have rallied against the greenback. The U.S. dollar index is down about 5% from a March peak, when panic over the coronavirus pandemic gripped financial markets.

World shares hit three-month highs on Wednesday as monetary and fiscal stimulus have given traders confidence, despite expectations for a slow economic recovery, growing concerns over U.S.-China tensions, U.S. civil unrest and rising coronavirus infections. Those risks usually are a recipe for dollar strength but the June 1-3 poll of over 60 analysts predicted the greenback's losing streak would continue on expectations most major central banks would carry on buying government bonds and other financial assets.

"There is clearly a disconnect between news headlines regarding geopolitics and the economy and what's going on in markets. The markets fear about the global economy has been offset by huge amounts of liquidity and monetary stimulus from central banks," said Jane Foley, head of FX strategy at Rabobank.

"There are a number of bad risks...and the fact that we are in the midst of falling into a very deep downturn that could certainly harm investor sentiment in the coming months. But for now, the liquidity provision of quantitative easing has been like a morphine injection."

A slight majority, 29 of 50 analysts, said in response to an additional question that risks were skewed more to the downside for the dollar over the next six months. In a separate question, more than 70% of 57 analysts said the risk was "high" that the U.S.-China standoff would renew bets in favor of safe-haven currencies over the next six months.



"With the U.S. elections just a few months ahead, the de-escalation of U.S.-China tensions looks unlikely. The challenging domestic contest and the USD overvaluation...lead us to see risks skewed to the downside over the next six months," said Roberto Cobo Garcia, head of G10 FX strategy at BBVA.

International rates to borrow dollars on cross-currency basis swaps, which were extremely high in mid-March, have hit low levels, with the latest euro-dollar three-month swaps rate suggesting it has become more costly to borrow the euro instead.

That was largely driven by broad dollar weakness and on expectations policymakers would support the euro zone's weakest economies with debt purchases.

Davos 2021 to Be Held Under Theme of The Great Reset



ANKARA (Dispatches) - The World Economic Forum announced that the 2021 Davos summit in Switzerland will be held under the theme of the Great Reset.

The 51st annual meeting will gather thousands of young people in more than 400 cities around the world and a virtual hub network will connect them to interact with the leaders in Davos, the WEF said in a statement.

An open house policy will enable all interested citizens to integrate into the dialogue, making the meeting open to everyone.

Next year's twin summit in January will be both in-person and virtual to connect leading global government and business figures in Davos.

"We only have one planet and we know that climate change could be the next global disaster with even more dramatic consequences for humankind," said Klaus Schwab, the founder of WEF.

He added decarbonizing of the economy in the short window is still remaining.

"The Great Reset is a welcome recognition that this human tragedy must be a wake-up call," Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of United Nations, said.

"We must build more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change and the many other global changes we face," he added.

The WEF defined the Great Reset as a "commitment to jointly and urgently build the foundations of an economic and social system for a more fair, sustainable and resilient future."

Global Smartphone Shipments to Fall 12% This Year on Virus Woes

LONDON (Reuters) - Global smartphone shipments will fall nearly 12% to 1.2 billion units in 2020, market research firm IDC said, citing lower consumer spending due to the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only disrupted business supply chains, with major smartphone makers such as Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd flagging financial hits, but also squeezed consumer spending worldwide.

"Nationwide lockdowns and rising unemployment have reduced consumer confidence and reprioritized spending towards essential goods, directly impacting the uptake of smartphones in the short term", said bit.ly/3036tkj Sangeetika Srivastava, senior research analyst with IDC.

Apple, which was forced to shut retail stores in the United States and Europe following the outbreak, introduced discounts on the iPhone 11 in China and released a new low-price SE model to weather



a plunge in global smartphone demand.

Research firm TrendForce said in April it expected global smartphone production to slump a record 16.5% in the June quarter from a year earlier.

That follows a 10% drop in output worldwide in the March quarter, when the outbreak spread and peaked in China before sweeping through Europe and the United States.

However, shipments from China's factories to vendors rose 17% in April from a year earlier, suggesting signs of an early rebound in domestic demand in the world's largest smartphone market.

In China, where the economy has begun to reopen and factories have resumed operations, IDC expects a single-digit decline in this year.

The research firm also expects upcoming 5G deployment to help the recovery of smartphone shipments next year, adding it does not expect growth to return until the first quarter of 2021.

Russia Defends Iran Satellite...

FROM PAGE 1

Since the Iran nuclear deal was adopted in 2015, he said, "Iran has been the most verified state by the International Atomic Energy Agency" and "it is an established fact that Iran does not possess, nor develop, nor test or use ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons."

The Russian ambassador was responding to a letter from U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft to the council president last month saying that "space launch vehicles incorporate technologies that are virtually identical to and interchangeable with those used in ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons."

U.S. Sanctions Four...

FROM PAGE 1

Washington sanctioned Venezuelan state-run oil company Petroleos de Venezuela last January, shortly after the U.S. and dozens of other countries declared Maduro a usurper who rigged his 2018 re-election.

But Maduro remains in power, which some U.S. officials privately say has been a source of frustration for President Donald Trump.

"The illegitimate Maduro regime has enlisted the help of maritime companies and their vessels to continue the exploitation of Venezuela's natural resources for the regime's profit," said Treasury Secretary Steven T Mnuchin in a statement.

"The United States will continue to target those who support this corrupt regime and contribute to the suffering of the Venezuelan people," Mnuchin added.

The Treasury statement also added that the removal of sanctions is available for individuals and entities who take actions "to restore democratic order, refuse to take part in human rights abuses, speak out against abuses committed by the illegitimate Maduro regime, cease involvement in the oil, gold, financial, or defense and security sectors of the Venezuelan economy, or combat corruption" in Venezuela.

"U.S. sanctions need not be permanent; sanctions are intended to bring about a positive change of behavior," the statement said.

Tuesday's sanctions come after Washington in February and March sanctioned two units of Russia's Rosneft, which became the main intermediary of Venezuelan crude in 2019. The units stopped lifting Venezuelan crude in March.

The FBI is also probing several Mexican and European companies that are allegedly involved in trading Venezuelan oil. One of those companies, Libre Abordo, said this week it was bankrupt.

Treasury also designated four tankers owned by the companies as blocked property. Those tankers had been used by Rosneft, Libre Abordo and a related Mexican firm - Schlager Business Group - to transport Venezuelan oil this year, according to PDVSA documents.

The U.S. in Disarray...

FROM PAGE 1

Regardless of the accuracy of this claim that Iran has been involved in recent protests in the U.S. and has played or is playing a role in unmasking the U.S.'s true face both today and yesterday, one should say that this accusation is per se an unreturnable confession of the U.S. officials to Iran's influence and power in the world.

In fact, one should say that Iran without spending a cent in the U.S. and by exporting its thought of anti-oppression has allied the nations and from this angle, the U.S. officials are right to confess Iran's role. But more important than the confession is its effect which tells that where Iran stands in the world power order and how the world has been influenced by Iran's presence and continuation of its revolution.

This is the same Iran that 41 years ago, namely, during the ruling of the unique puppet of the U.S. in the region and before the victory of the Islamic Revolution when its powerful shah (King) used to be exiled by the British Ambassador and its Prime Minister was dismissed from his job just because of presence of an American intelligence officer with dollar-packed bag.

Today, Iran due to its revolutionary thought and move has reached a point where Americans and Zionists by resorting to such false and void claims expose their weakness and emptiness, and of course, realizing Iran's influence. Today, the world has accepted Islamic Iran as a superpower with an ideology based on resistance against the tyranny and hegemony with an intention to materialize the universal justice of Imam Zaman (A). Although they continue their last efforts to stop Iran from being strong economically, Iran without any delay and halt is moving in its direction and it continues imposing its universal doctrine of justice as the leading country.

The good news on awakening of American people is seen in the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution's remarks when he compares the U.S.'s condition with drowning of the Titanic ship is the indication to the hearty relation between the oppressed people of the West with our religious leaders' love and affection to the oppressed people.

Undoubtedly, Islam will save the world from the tyranny and imperialism and this is God's decree and promise which has come in the Holy Quran.

Central Bank...

FROM PAGE 1

Exporters said there was no clarity. "We have not got our money since past two to three months. Now, we hear that consignment lying in Bandar Abbas port in Iran will be cleared and we will get our money, but things are not clear till date," said Jai Kumar Gupta, CEO at Supple Tek Industries, which exports rice to Iran. A Karnal-based exporter said that some exporters were facing the problem of remittances coming from Iran for consignments shipped in the last five months.

Gupta said exports should be allowed only against advance payment or a letter of credit. Satish Goel of Shree Jagdamba Agrico Exports said UCO Bank and IDBI bank would have Rs 5,000-6,000 crore in their rupee accounts, which has especially been created to facilitate the India-Iran trade settlement, so there needs to be another payment mechanism. "We are currently not taking any new order as we are worried about getting timely payment. The situation may improve by the third quarter, if the governments intervene," said Goel.

Indian Basmati Rice...

FROM PAGE 1

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Foden Breaks Distancing Rules to Play at Beach

MANCHESTER (Reuters) - Manchester City midfielder Phil Foden has become the latest Premier League player to breach social distancing guidelines amid the COVID-19 pandemic after he was pictured having a kickabout at Formby beach on Merseyside.

British media reported that the 20-year-old played football with members of the public and posed for photographs, with the club set to speak to Foden to remind him of his responsibilities and to strictly follow government guidelines.

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Balakov Agrees Terms To Coach CSKA 1948

SOFIA (Reuters) - Former Bulgaria midfielder Krasimir Balakov has agreed terms to coach CSKA 1948 next season, the Sofia-based club said on Tuesday.

Ex-Sporting Lisbon and VfB Stuttgart playmaker Balakov was a key member of the Bulgaria team who reached the 1994 World Cup semi-finals.

Balakov, who won 92 caps for his country, resigned as Bulgaria's national team coach after racist abuse marred his side's 6-0 defeat by England in a Euro 2020 qualifier in Sofia last October.

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SPORTS

SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2020

Nadal Not to Travel to U.S. Open in Present Circumstances

MADRID (Reuters) - Ordinarily Rafa Nadal would likely be closing in on a 13th French Open title this week. Instead, he is home in Mallorca trying to make sense of a world that feels anything but normal.

Tennis is on hold until at least the start of August because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and while there have been positive noises about the prospects of the U.S. Open taking place, followed by the French Open, Nadal served a dose of reality.

Speaking via Zoom to tennis media, the day after his 34th birthday, Nadal was asked his thoughts of playing at the U.S. Open, of which he is reigning champion.

"If you asked me today if I want to travel today to New York to play a tennis tournament, I will say: no, I will not," the world number two told reporters. "In a couple of months, I don't know. Hopefully yes."

"We need to wait probably until we have more information about how the virus evolves, how the situation's going to be. New York has been one of the places that has been hit most strongly by the virus."

When tennis returns, it will most likely be without fans.

"I hate the idea, honestly. But if that's the only way, why not? That's my position. I don't understand tennis without the energy of the crowd, without the passion a full stadium brings."

While still in the grip of a pandemic, the U.S. is also experiencing outrage and protests over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who died while in police custody.

"I am of course worried to see all these disasters happening on the streets," Nadal said. "Violence and pandemics like this today create a difficult climate, a difficult atmosphere for the world. It's important to stay calm, to respect everyone, to live together in peace."

Weird Playing Without Fans

MUMBAI (Reuters) - Petra Kvitova has 27 career titles but winning an all-Czech exhibition tournament last week was a different experience for her and it felt "weird" to play in the absence of fans, the two-time Wimbledon champion told Reuters.

The Prague tournament was one of the few global exhibition events held after professional tennis was suspended in early March as countries went into lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19.

While it was still a special occasion for the former world number two to lift the trophy at her home tennis club where she had won a WTA event two years back, the feeling was not the same.

"I'm happy with the win for sure but it was a different kind of tournament," said the 30-year-old, who wore the dress she had chosen for the postponed French Open. "Playing without fans was very weird as well."

"We hit some unbelievable winners and nobody was clapping, so it's been really tough. But on the other hand it's nice to have the game-feeling again."

With motivation lacking to practise and train, Kvitova found it tough to mentally prepare for the event. The first match was most difficult as her focus was drawn to the empty stands. It was after reaching the semi-finals that she was able to concentrate more on her game.

But left with no other choice, Kvitova said players would learn to adapt.

"For me it was really different that I couldn't have the towel between the points. It took a while to go for the towels, so I just left it on the bench," she said in an interview.

"For me it was pretty annoying and, of course, the ball boys couldn't hold it for me. And I didn't know we couldn't shake hands after the match. It felt such an ungentlemanlike thing."



While Nadal is missing his Roland Garros stomping ground, he says there are more important things.

"I miss playing the tournaments that I like. At the same time I'm not thinking about that. First we must recover normal life, recover the freedom in terms of be able to enjoy our personal lives, then try to organise our professional lives."

Nadal thinks tennis faces a tough challenge to restart, especially with some regions seeing rising COVID-19 death rates.

"We can't come back until the situation is completely safe and players from every single part (of the world) can travel to the tournaments under safe circumstances to compete," he said.

"From my point of view if we would have a vaccine by December I would say that it wouldn't make any sense to go back to play tennis now, I don't think its worth it to take the risks."

"But if they say we will won't have it until two years, then we need to find ways to go back to some kind of normality because the world and sport can't stop for so long."

Major Talk Was Too Big Too Soon



MUMBAI (Reuters) - Stefanos Tsitsipas set himself the target of claiming a Grand Slam title in 2020 after winning last year's season-ending ATP Finals but the young Greek feels that in hindsight the statement was "too big" and burdened him with extra pressure.

Novak Djokovic, Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer have shared all the Grand Slams between them since Swiss Stan Wawrinka triumphed at the 2016 U.S. Open and Tsitsipas has been marked as one of the few players capable of breaking that stranglehold.

The 21-year-old is ranked number six in the world and had announced he was "really close" to being crowned a Grand Slam champion after his triumph in the ATP Finals, which is contested by the top eight singles players and doubles teams.

"Looking back to that I think this was too big of a statement to be taken seriously. I shouldn't be looking so far so soon," Tsitsipas was quoted as saying by the Tennis Majors website.

"For sure, I want it to come, but I should be talking about stuff like this less often and concentrate on the present."

"I guess I just put too much pressure on myself, aiming so high and I just have to take it step by step, not think too much about the future and be irrational," he added.

Tsitsipas has made some giant strides in his young career and reached the Australian Open semi-finals and the fourth round of the French Open in 2019.

The Greek, who has been tipped by Djokovic as a future world number one, said he would have to learn to wait for his chance.

"I say it every single time like it's the only thing I want to achieve in my life," he said. "For sure it is."

"My theory behind it is that if you think about it too much it might as well never happen, so just relax and enjoy the process."



Bale Unlikely to Make Premier League Return

LONDON (AFP) - Gareth Bale's agent says the Real Madrid forward is unlikely to return to the Premier League because he wants to finish his career at the Bernabeu.

Bale is believed to have a difficult relationship with Real manager Zinedine Zidane and was almost sold to Chinese Super League club Jiangsu Suning last year.

The former Tottenham star has been linked with a move back to the Premier League on several occasions, with Newcastle the latest club to be mentioned as suitors for the Wales international.

But Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett said the 30-year-old would happily remain in Spain.

"He has a very nice lifestyle. I don't see why he doesn't see his career out at Madrid, probably," Barnett told the BBC. "As I've always said, he's quite happy in Madrid. It's his life that he wants to lead. Financially, he will want for nothing the rest of his life, and his children and grandchildren."

Bale has won a host of medals, including four Champions League titles, since joining Real for a then world record £85 million (\$107 million) in 2013. But he has rarely been a regular under Zidane and has been criticised by fans and media in Spain for putting more passion into his golf hobby than his Real career.

Despite that discord, Bale has no plans to demand a move, according to Barnett.

"I have no idea what his value is," he said. "His salary is quite high and also where he wants to go is very important in his life. I can't put a figure on it."

Hamilton Overcome With Rage Over Racial Injustice



LONDON (AFP) - Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton said he is "completely overcome with rage" about racial injustice in the wake of the death of George Floyd.

It is the second time this week that Britain's six-time world champion has spoken angrily about the death of Floyd, an unarmed black man who died on May 25 during an arrest in Minneapolis.

"This past week has been so dark. I have failed to keep hold of my emotions," Hamilton said in a statement posted Tuesday on his social media accounts.

"I have felt so much anger, sadness and disbelief in what my eyes have seen," he continued, after days of protests that have gripped cities across the U.S. prompting curfews and the use of force by law enforcement agencies.

"I am completely overcome with rage at the sight of such blatant disregard for the lives of our people."

Earlier this week Hamilton lashed out at leading figures in his "white-dominated" sport for not speaking out.

"I see those of you who are staying silent, some of you the biggest of stars yet you stay silent in the midst of injustice," he said.

It prompted several top drivers to express outrage and support. On Tuesday Formula One issued its first response.

Asian Football Getting Closer To Return

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) - Asia's Champions League is getting closer to a return but it will have to wait until domestic competitions are back in action, a senior football official told AFP.

Football is gradually resuming around the world after closing down because of the coronavirus, although most leagues are still yet to return.

Asian Football Confederation general secretary Windsor John said: "We are approaching closer to the return of football."

"We have to wait for all the domestic leagues to start first," added John, when asked about the return of the AFC's club tournaments.

The AFC Champions League, Asia's top club competition, and the second-tier AFC Cup have both been on hold since March, along with World Cup and Olympic qualifiers.

Of the 12 countries involved in the Champions League, South Korea is the only league back in action, with four more restarting in June or July and Thailand scheduled for September.

John said the AFC was "still in discussion" about when its competitions will restart, declining to reveal a possible date.

Time is tight for both club tournaments, with the 32-team Champions League needing to complete four rounds of group-stage matches before reaching the knock-out phase.

