

**Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Described His U.S. Counterpart's Statements as Wrong, Saying That The U.S. Has No Right to Initiate Anything Under Resolution 2231**

# IRAN NEWS

**Head of Iran's Health Ministry Public Relations Office Kianoush Jahanpour Said Yesterday That 72 More Iranians Died From Coronavirus Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing the Total Deaths to 8,291**

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2

## DOMESTIC

**Ties With All Neighbors of Great Importance to Iran**



> SEE PAGE 2

3

## DOMESTIC

**Sanctions Are "No Problem" for Turkey's Imports of Iran Gas**



> SEE PAGE 3

4

## INTERNATIONAL

**Calm Prevails at Protests in Washington And Other Cities**



> SEE PAGE 4

8

## SPORTS

**Djokovic Worried By U.S. Open Health Restrictions**



> SEE PAGE 8

## U.S., Israel Behind 2017 Terrorist Attack on Majlis

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker believes the terrorist attack on the country's parliament three years ago was a manifestation of the enemies' evil plots against the nation.

Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf claimed on Sunday "it is proven that U.S. and Israeli spy agencies were behind that attack." He said they even had plans to commit massacre in the Iranian capital.

"They had plans to commit mass killings on Tehran streets if they could," he said.

The top parliamentarian said if it weren't for the bravery and sacrifices of the military and security forces, the enemies would commit whatever crime they could against Iranian people.

That incident was a symbol of what sinister dreams the enemy had orchestrated against the Iranian people, he said, adding, "if it were not for the struggle of soldiers and guardians of unity, terrorist groups would spare no effort to commit crime and attack against Iranian people."

See Page 7

## Gov't Committed To Combatting Absolute Poverty

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani says his government has been committed to combatting absolute poverty and will continue to do so.

President Rouhani said based on figures and statistics, the 11th and 12th governments have been successful in this field.

He said his administration has adhered to its commitment to fight against absolute poverty, and the policy-making must be based on this.

Although the promise to fight absolute poverty was made at a time when the severe sanctions of recent years had not yet been imposed on the country and his government had not faced the economic damage of corona, the administration has kept its words.

"These promises have been fulfilled to a great extent, and God willing, other measures will be taken till the end of the government's term so that we can be proud of our promises," he highlighted during an economic meeting of the cabinet.

Rouhani emphasized the government has focused on four areas in order to reduce absolute poverty.

See Page 7

## Pandemic Damaged Country's GDP by 15%



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand has said that Corona's disease had damaged the country's GDP by 15 percent.

Speaking in the Majlis open session and referring to the sanctions on the country's oil exports in a public session of the parliament, Dejjasand admitted that the virus pandemic has damaged the GDP of the country by 15 percent.

He went on to say, "Even if oil exports are done without sanctions and problems, we will still not have access to all incomes, so this year we must experience a non-oil budget and rely on tax revenue."

Emphasizing on avoiding borrowing from the central bank, he said, "We have a comprehensive plan not to resort to the option. Borrowing from the central bank is harmful. The capital market has matured today and can meet needs."

Dejjasand noted that the country's economic growth last year was negative, including oil, and that stimulus policy should be applied to improve economic conditions.

He also said that the ministry is working on drawing up a bill for attracting investments of overseas Iranians.

He claimed Iran's foreign trade is in good condition and positive despite all enemies' sabotages, and non-oil exports were according the schedule last year.

Dejjasand reiterated that Iran's foreign traded faced the least effect of enemies' mischiefs while they had targeted the country's foreign trade.

He noted that since this year has been named as year of Surge in Production, all are assigned to focus on pick-up and surge in production, adding that national economy is facing threats and problems and in this condition, the country should take advantage of its production capacities properly.

He admitted that in the past eight years, the growth in investment has been negative and it is concerning and for this reason the government is working on a bill for attracting investment especially from Iranians abroad.

Dejjasand reiterated that enemies are working hard to bring Iran's economy down and all should work together to disappoint them by boosting production.

## OPEC Agrees to Extend Output Cuts by One Month

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Members of The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have agreed to extend a deal on reduction of output provided that non-OPEC producers would comply with their share of the cuts, according to Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh.

Zanganeh said on Saturday after the 179th OPEC meeting which was held via video conference that members of the oil producing cartel had unanimously agreed to extend cuts by nearly 10 million barrels per day (bpd) by one more month. "It was agreed that output reduction deal of 9.7 million bpd would be conditioned on the cooperation of 10 non-OPEC countries," said Zanganeh, according to remarks covered by the official IRNA news agency.

OPEC and non-OPEC countries, a grouping known as OPEC+, agreed in April to substantially reduce production to help ease a supply glut in the market that had been caused by the spread of the new coronavirus pandemic and exacerbated by a dispute between Saudi Arabia and Russia on the size of cuts.

Sources said on Saturday that the one-month extension to the output cuts would gain the approval of OPEC+ members in a meeting planned for later in the day. Meanwhile, Zanganeh said that a main debate in the Saturday meeting of OPEC was about Iraq's lack of commitment to production cuts.

He said OPEC members agreed to allow Iraq to implement more cuts in the upcoming months to comply with the quota set for the Arab country. Iran, whose sale of oil has been affected by the American sanctions, is exempt from OPEC+ output cuts along Venezuela and Libya.

The 13-member cartel and its allies, notably Russia, decided to extend by a month deep May and June cuts agreed in April to boost prices, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said in a statement.

Prices had plummeted owing to falling demand as countries around the world imposed strict lockdowns to stop the spread of the new coronavirus. "All participating countries... agreed the option of extending the first phase of the production adjustments pertaining in May and June by one further month," the OPEC statement said.

Under the terms of the April agreement, OPEC and the so-called OPEC+ pledged to cut output by 9.7 million barrels per day (bpd) from May 1 until the end of June.

The cuts were then to be gradually eased from July, to 7.7 million bpd until December. Algerian Oil Minister Mohamed Arkab, who currently holds OPEC's rotating presidency, told AFP that the agreed cut for July was 9.6 mbpd, just slightly below the 9.7 mbpd for May and June. Oil ministers from key producers will meet monthly to assess the agreement, he added.

## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



### Ayatollah Khamenei's

## Leadership Turns 32 Years Old

The late Imam Khomeini, may God bless him, in a narrative had read that after him someone who has a problem in his right hand would lead the Islamic Revolution, but he had never revealed this to anyone. Only when dignified Martyr Seyed Abbas al-Musawi, the then leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah who had come to Tehran to meet the late Imam and had a visit to his house, recounted the sign and content of this narration to Imam Khomeini's son, Seyed Ahmad Khomeini. Seyed Ahmad, in return, told Seyed Abbas that he had noticed when he talked about the wound resulted by the bomb blast at Abuzar Mosque on the right hand of Ayatollah Khamenei who was then the President, the late Imam (R) suddenly knelt down to pray God for long time.

In fact the late Imam knew well that God Himself would pave the way for his successor to lead the Islamic Revolution after him. This happened while in 1989 and after the demise of the late Imam Khomeini and in the Experts Assembly session, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei was unwilling to accept the leadership but Almighty God in the Holy Quran has promised that it is impossible to refuse it.

Ayatollah Khamenei in the past 31 years has sailed smartly, wisely and bravely the ship of the Islamic Revolution safely whose calculation is unbelievable for enemies. The sixth Imam of Shiites Imam Sadeq (A), on his uncle Hazrat Abulfazl who was martyred in the battle of Karbala, says, "My uncle had good vision and he understood the truths and decided well." And now Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has the same characteristics of Hazrat Abulfazl (A) and he is very insightful and has deep understanding of issues. He is persistent in his praying and for this reason God is always with him and He does not stop guiding him. Especially regarding his cognition and identifying enemies and taking stands against the infidels, Americans and Europeans, all notice his capability and sometimes what he sees and warns takes place two years later. And the reason he has succeeded in saving and developing this movement till this stage with such proud and glory with his strategic thoughts and eventually civilization-making is this point.

The late Imam Khomeini told the nation, "Support Velayat-e Faqih (leadership) and your country will not hurt." This remark of Imam Khomeini after his demise was carved in the souls of majority of Iranian people and they actually accepted the late Imam Khomeini's recommendation whole-heartedly. This has strengthened Velayat-e Faqih and its successes.

See Page 7

## Transporting Medicines, Medical Equipment Subject to U.S. Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Head of Iran's Food and Drug Administration (IFDA) Mohammad Reza Shانهsaz said that transportation of medicines and medical equipment are subject to the U.S. sanctions.

Although the demagogic slogans by the U.S. government say that medicine and medical equipment are not subject to sanctions, transportation of medicines and medical equipment is practically subject to the U.S. sanctions, the issue of which has created many problems for the country, according to Shانهsaz. He made the remarks on Saturday in a meeting with senior managers of IFDA, Minister of Roads and Urban Development and executives of the ministry.

"Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has shouldered a heavy responsibility regarding the US sanctions against Iran. Preventing the transportation of medicines and health-based items such as medicine and medical equipment has been one of the main tools of sanctions imposed by enemies against the Iranian people."

Following the spread of the novel coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19, in the country, enemies imposed tough sanctions against the country and hampered Iran's access to the medical supplies in the fight against the pandemic, he emphasized.

See Page 7



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# President Congratulates Sweden National Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday sent a congratulatory message to the King of Sweden Carl Gustaf XVI on the occasion of that country's National Day.

President Rouhani expressed the hope that the two sides would witness the development of peace and stability.

The Iranian president also wished prosperity and success for the people of Sweden.

## Ties With All Neighbors of Great Importance to Iran

**TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani says Tehran attaches great significance to ties with its neighbors and is after establishing good and close relations with them.**

Rouhani noted that such relations can only be achieved when the borders are secure.

He went on to say that Tehran's relationship with 13 of its 15 neighbors is good while some of them are really close, friendly and brotherly.

However, he said there are one or two countries in the south that, unfortunately, have distanced themselves from the people of Iran.

"We have not been the initiator of such division. They were the initiator of this detachment. We are always after having good and close ties with our neighbors," he said during a meeting of the National Headquarters to Fight against Coronavirus.

Rouhani added the Islamic Republic exports water and electricity to its neighbors, but we also have to import water and electricity from some of them because of the natural conditions.

"The source of some rivers of Iran are in the neighboring countries while the source of some rivers in the neighboring countries are located in Iran. Therefore, we have a natural process of import and export," said Iran's president.

Rouhani added that Iran exports natural gas to Turkey and Iraq and is ready to



export it to Pakistan and India and Oman as well.

He said many steps have been taken in this regard and some agreements have been sealed.

He also talked about the Islamic Republic's electricity export to neighboring countries saying Tehran has close relationship with Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and different countries.

"We import electricity from these countries and export our electricity. One of the goals of the yesterday visit of our energy minister to Iraq was to boost this relation and make it stable. Yesterday, we signed an agreement to export electricity to Iraq for the next two years," underlined Rouhani.

## Iran Education Startups Significantly Grow

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Educational startups have significantly grown during the Coronavirus outbreak, Iran's Vice President for Science and Technology said.

"In fact, all the businesses were confused during the Coronavirus outbreak but the educational field was quite busy," Iran's Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari said.

Sattari noted that the use of cyberspace in education should have happened 10 years ago, but with the spread of the virus, there was an opportunity to develop the infrastructure of E-education.

Vice President added that the Social Network of Students (Shad in Persian), which was developed by Iran's Education Ministry, is a positive step in the development of E-education.

Sattari noted that the Ministry of Education, with 1.5 million staff and 15 million students, has a wide range of dimensions.

"These vast dimensions are a good economic opportunity for educational startups."

He expressed hope that the educational startups will be further expanded.

Sattari pointed to the educational justice through the cyberspace.

"The E-education will provide the same content to students both living in rural areas and the best schools in Tehran," he said praising the justice made by the E-education system.

# Trump's Talks Offer Not Worth Consideration

TEHRAN (MNA) – An official with the Armed Forces Chief of Staff noted that the history of President Trump's behavior proves his dishonesty.

"Our problem with U.S. leaders is their behavior as they always act against building trust," Second Brigadier General Rasoul Sanaeirad, deputy head of the Ideological-Political Bureau at the office of the Leader. "With his withdrawal from the JCPOA, Trump also increased this distrust between the Iranian nation and American officials."

Pointing to the history of Trump administration's withdrawal from international accords in the past few years, he added that one should be vigilant towards talks offer by the U.S. President who is being under criticism for its internal and international performance and has an uncertain future.

The remarks come as the 'excited' Trump thanked Iran for the release of Michael White in a tweet, adding "Don't wait until after U.S. Election to make the Big deal. I'm going to win. You'll make a better deal now!"

U.S. President seeks to take advantage of negotiation with Iran as a tool, Sanaeirad said. "Trump talks about these issues to help him in the upcoming presidential election while dishonesty is evident in his tone; because of this and according to earlier behaviors of Trump, it seems that his message is not worth consideration."

The late founder of Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini also had noted that we don't have problem with Americans if they behave properly, however, they have proved seeking to take advantage of situations for their own aims, added the commander.

Now we are hearing from Democrats that they will not return to the JCPOA and want to negotiate with Iran under new conditions, this is while a Democrat president has signed the JCPOA, noted the official.

"Trump is one of the main opponents of the JCPOA, and in addition to the violation of the deal, he ordered the terrorist act of assassinating the global hero of the fight against terrorism; all of these indicate that Mr Trump is not qualified for sending or receiving messages."

## Zarif Offers Condolences On Death of EX-Palestinian Official

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message expressed condolences on the death of former secretary-general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement Ramadan Abdullah Shallah.

In his message Zarif described Ramadan Abdullah Shallah as a nationalist fighter in Palestine who spent his life in a difficult struggle with Israeli occupiers.

Shallah was born in Gaza and got Phd in economics from the UK.

Despite dangers and threats, he succeeded in liberating Palestine from yoke of Zionist occupiers.

Being aware of developments in the region and the world, he made significant efforts for reinforcing unity among Palestinian groups and people, Zarif said.

He was interested in Iran's progress as supporter of oppressed Palestinians.

According to Lebanese media 'Al-Manar', Abdullah Shallah was succumbed to illness.

## Tehran-Minsk Discuss Students' Affairs

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

MINSK - Iranian ambassador to Belarus discussed Iranian students' issues with the president of Belarus Medical University.

Nearly 800 Iranian students are studying at Belarus' universities, mainly in medical courses.

After Corona's outbreak, the situation of Iranian students living in Belarus has become more complicated, with officials are trying to solve these problems.

Reminding Coronavirus outbreak, Saeed Yari, Iranian ambassador to Belarus in a phone conversation with Anatoly Sikorski, head of Belarus Medical State University discussed the online final exam and other related issues.

Highlighting to hold students' exams in all fields and courses, the President of the Belarusian State Medical University also said all measurements to safeguard students' health has been taken and there is no need to worry.

Sikorski added the efforts have been made to speed up the process of students' graduation certificates due time. 207

## Tehran Ready to Send Blackbox To Qualified Companies

TEHRAN (IP) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs elaborated on the Ukrainian plane crash saying that Iran would be ready to send the black boxes to the companies capable of reading black box.

Mohsen Baharvand explained on Saturday that Iran is engaged in bilateral talks with Ukraine as the country that owns the aircraft.

"The senior official said that Iran would ready to negotiate with other countries, including Canada and the rest of the world, on two issues, one is to deliver and read black boxes that complete and finalize the information, and to present the reasons to the International Civil Aviation Organization (IKAO) so that there would be no ambiguity in this regard," added the official.

"According to our research in Iran and Ukraine, and in many countries, because the aircraft is a new type of aircraft, it is not possible to read these black boxes, and we may decide to do so in any way, directly or indirectly," Baharvand noted.

"We provide contracts to companies that are capable of doing so, such as French companies or other companies," he stated.



**SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT**

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## CALL FOR PUBLIC TENDER

(FIRST/SECOND PUBLISHER) ONE STAGES TENDER

Subject of Tender:

Tender No.	Description
FP/11-99/019-2	Swivel Joints, Chiksan Steel
FP/11-99/020-2	Hammer Plug Valve 1 & 2 CWP
FP/11-99/021	Steel Hose Assy 2" Union

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,373,941	Tender No. :FP/11-99/19-2 Indent No.:01-22-9846011	43,680,000,000 (Rial)
	3,373,942	Tender No.: FP/11-99/020-2 Indent No.:01-22-9846012	5,814,000,000 (Rial)
	3,373,943	Tender No. :FP/11-99/021 Indent No.:01-22-9846018	36,000,000,000 (Rial)

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

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

Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof	
Distribution Place	Hall No:113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN – Tel : 061 34148601 Room No. 431, 4th floor, Oil central building No.8, Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran – Iran Tel: 021-66700249	
Submitting Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491( Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank.</li> <li>Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.</li> </ul>	
Closing date	• 35 Days after the last time of Purchasing.	
Documents Receiving Method	Address: Hall No. 107, 1st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569	

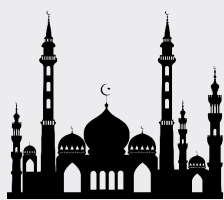
Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	2,184,000,000 Rial / 16,411 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/11-99/019-2
	291,000,000 Rial / 2,146 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/11-99/020-2
	1,800,000,000 Rial / 12,128 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/11-99/021
Type of guarantee	Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 ( Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.		
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.		

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## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:39
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:48

59. He Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between, in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of Authority): Allah Most Gracious: ask thou, then, about Him of any acquainted (with such things).  
Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard ( 59 )

## Sanctions Are “No Problem” for Turkey’s Imports of Iran Gas

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Dispatching Director Mehdi Jamshidi Dana says sanctions are not problems for Turkey to import Iran’s gas because Turkey has received the U.S. waiver for gas import from Iran.**

Speaking to ILNA, Jamshidi Dana elaborated the latest development on Iran-Turkey gas deal and repair of the gas pipeline which has been exploded in March.

He said that since the explosion has happened in Turkey, the country is responsible to fix it but Turkey is delaying because of the current condition and drop in consumption ,and it has resorted to the force-majeure clause in the agreement with Iran.

Jamshidi Dana reiterated that Iran has rejected the force-majeure clause because it believes Turkey is resorting to the clause in order to escape fines. He added that for years Turkey has decreased its gas imports due to the beginning of heat but the country decreases its gas imports in a way not to be fined because according to the take-or-pay agreement, Turkey is obliged to get at least certain amount of gas stipulated in the agreement or else it should pay its price.

He further said that Turkey has diverse energy basket in the country and it receives natural gas via pipeline and LNG by vessels and it is natural that the country uses different sources according to its economic condition.



Jamshidi Dana noted that the outbreak of Coronavirus was another reason to slow down Turkey’s effort to fix the exploded gas pipeline.

He reiterated that so far, Turkey has been committed to its contract obligations, adding that it is logical that Turkey uses cheaper gas because of slump in its revenues in tourism industry.

On renewing contract with Turkey for gas exports, he pointed to the start of negotiations, adding that the talks are moving slowly for renewal of the contract which will expire in 2025. He further said the company’s studies show that imports of gas from Iran have advantages for Turkey, noting that he does now know the future of the new contract but undoubtedly, Turkey cannot snub importing gas from Iran.

Jamshidi reiterated that Iran is after a win-win contract with Turkey and all options are under study in NIGC.

## Foreign Trade Stood At \$ 85b Last Year

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Director General of Iranian Customs Office says Iran’s foreign trade stood at \$85b over the past Iranian year.

Speaking in the Majlis open session, Mehdi Mirsharafi said that the country’s foreign trade last year hit \$85b despite dreams of ill-wishers of the country.

He said exported 135 million tons of goods and 35 million tons of imports.

Regarding customs measures in support of production, trade facilitation and health promotion, he said: “In the discussion of import, more than 80% of imported goods were intermediate goods, production line machinery, and raw materials, and if we provide facilities for their import, to reduce prices. We helped the producing sector.”

He noted that Customs Office has been one of the pioneer bodies in the country in terms of e-services and electrifying its services.

Mirsharafi noted that one of the threats in way of foreign trade is abundant laws and regulations as 25 organizations have different regulations and there are several decision-making bodies which are considered as major threats in way of foreign trade. He also pointed to the lack of proper infrastructure as other threat for foreign trade.

## Iran Stops Using Rial in Exchanges With Afghanistan

TEHRAN (ILNA) - The head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce announced that rials (Iranian currency) are no longer used in Iran-Afghanistan exchanges.”

the Iranian official Seyed Hossein Salimi said that most Afghan businessmen keen to use the Iranian rial in their transactions with Iran but according to the recent Central Bank law, the dollar has been replaced in these transactions.

Referring to the reopening of the border between two countries, the head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce added “The border crossings with Afghanistan have reopened and trade exchanges between the two neighbors have returned to normal after a hiatus in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.”

“Our effort is to make up for the almost 10 percent drop



in trade with Afghanistan in recent months,” he confirmed.

Salimi noted that visas are issued for drivers of Iranian trucks to enter Afghanistan and there is no problem for traffic.

Answering to question about the Arian bank, he said “As far as I know, there is no problem in this regard any more but the Arian bank has not yet begun its operations.” Adding that even Afghanistan Banks start their operating in Chabahar depends on this subject.

He pointed to recent Political disputes between the two countries and added “Political differences cannot affect our exports to Afghanistan.”

According to reports, Most of Iran’s exports to Afghanistan are consumer goods and food, and the annual trade volume between the two countries is about \$ 3 billion.

## UAE, China, Iraq Major Destinations for Iran Exports

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Parliament Research Center [IPRC] said that the three countries [including the United Arab Emirates [UAE], China and Iraq] accounted for about 54 percent share of Iran’s total value of non-oil goods in 2018.

There is a relatively strong focus on Iran’s export target markets in such a way that the aforementioned three countries accounted for about 54 percent of country’s total exports share value of non-oil goods, Head of Iranian Parliament Research Center Mohammad Ghasemi added.

According to IPRC, about 42 percent of Iran’s imports from 2018 to 2011 have been made from the three countries of China, UAE and South Korea while over 70 percent of products has been imported from 10 countries in the same period.

## New Power Plant Launched in Asaluyeh

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - Iran has launched a first phase of a major power plant in the country’s main hub for producing natural gas.

In an order issued via video conference on Thursday, President Hassan Rouhani opened the steam unit of the combined-cycle power plant in Asaluyeh, located south of Iran on the coasts of the Persian Gulf.

The facility would feed 160 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Iran’s national power grid and the total capacity of the power plant would reach 480 MW once all units come on line.

The power plant has been designed and launched by MAPNA, Iran’s largest energy construction company which also owns the facility.

The IRNA report said the steam unit of the power plant is the first in Iran that enjoys a fully home-made distributed control system (DCS).

MAPNA has been behind many construction and renovation schemes in Iranian electricity factories in previous years, including the launch of steam units in the so-called

combined-cycle facilities where the steam is raised through using the exhaust heat from the gas-fired combustion turbines.

The company has used 150 contractors for construction of Asaluyeh power plant, a process that started in 2016 and created 800 permanent jobs and led to indirect employment for 1,500 people.



## Tehran, Brasilia Discuss Ways of Boosting Agricultural Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Iranian Ambassador to Brazil Hossein Gharibi and Brazilian Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply Tereza Cristina discussed ways to develop cooperation in agriculture and livestock fields.

During the webinar which was held on Saturday, Gharibi referred to the status of agricultural products trade in bilateral relations and underlined Iran’s interest in paving the way for long-term economic relations through a comprehensive framework and sustainable and balanced cooperation.

Meanwhile, Tereza Cristina described Iran and Brazil as two friends with a long-standing background of cooperation. She also expressed readiness for having a trip to Tehran in the post-COVID19 era.

The trade of agricultural products includes most of the bilateral economic relations between Iran and Brazil.

These products consist of corn, soy, press cake, meat, and sugar.

## Iran Petrochemicals Output Capacity Increases

TEHJRAN (IRNA) - Implementation of four petrochemical projects at a cost of 103 million dollars will add 107,000 tons of petrochemicals output capacity, managing director of Iranian Investment Petrochemical Group Co (IIPGC) announced on Sunday.

Rasoul Ashrafzadeh made the announcement at a press conference.

Financial resources have been provided, Ashrafzadeh said adding that the projects will bring job opportunities and be implemented in less-developed areas.

As the official stated, the four projects will be implemented in Sonqor in western province of Kermanshah, Mahshahr in southwestern province of Khuzestan, Lordegan in southwestern province of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari and Orumiye in northwestern province of West Azarbaijan.

Also, those projects will not only lead to development of complementary industries, but also prevent from imports of chemical and petrochemical products, he concluded.

According to a report released in late May on Iran’s petrochemical activities, 55 petrochemical companies active in Iran produced 31 million tons of products in the past Iranian year ended on March 20.

## Armenia’s Lori Eyes Facilitating Ties With Iran’s Mazandaran

SARI (IRNA) - Governor of Lori City in Armenia Andrey Ghukasyan announced that the city is ready to pave the way for businessmen from Iranian province of Mazandaran to do economic activities.

Speaking in a video conference with Mazandaran governor, Ghukasyan said Lori is ready to fulfill Iranian and Armenian businessmen’s demands in line with reinforcing economic ties.

Armenian official vowed for facilitating and accelerating clearance of customs goods for Iranian businessmen.

Investment in Mazandaran is an opportunity for Armenian businessmen, he noted. He also underlined Mazandaran’s good infrastructures in trade and tourism fields.

We will spare no efforts for satisfying Mazandaran businessmen, Ghukasyan reiterated.

He went on to say that Mazandaran enjoys good garden, food, and dairy products which can fulfil considerable part of Armenian provinces’ needs.

He referred to signing MoU between Mazandaran and Lori, saying we are committed to implementing these MoUs.

The MoU was signed last year aiming to develop economic interactions between Lori and Mazandaran.



## Sixth Refinery of S. Pars to Undergo Repair



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - The CEO of the Sixth South Pars Refinery says the overhaul of the refinery due to begin in October will help stabilize gas output in Assaluyeh.

Ahmad Valipour said in an interview with IRNA on Sunday that repair of the sixth refinery has been envisaged to be completed in 2021 to upgrade the strategic indicators in the fields of production, environment and management.

Referring to the refinery’s plans for major repairs, he said: Physical assets will be overhauled at the sixth refinery in October this year, and other important activities will get underway during this period.

“This planning has been worked out in such a way that the sixth refinery will not have major repairs in 2021 and we will see an improvement in the accessibility and operational efficiency of the refinery in the near future.”

The South Pars/North Dome field is a natural-gas condensate field located in the Persian Gulf. It is by far the world’s largest natural gas field.



## Egypt Announces New Plan to End War in Libya

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Egypt's president Saturday announced a unilateral initiative to end the civil war in neighboring Libya, a plan accepted by the commander of the eastern forces that have suffered heavy losses in recent weeks.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi told a news conference in Cairo that his initiative includes a cease-fire starting Monday and is meant to pave the way for elections in oil-rich Libya.

He warned against continuing to look for a military solution to the country's crisis.

"There can be no stability in Libya unless peaceful means to the crisis are found that include the unity and integrity of the national institutions," el-Sisi said. "The initiative could be a new start in Libya."



## Israelis Protest Netanyahu's Annexation Plan

TEL AVIV (Reuters) - Several thousand Israelis demonstrated on Saturday against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to extend sovereignty over parts of the occupied West Bank, de-facto annexation of land that the Palestinians seek for a state.

Protesting in face masks and keeping their distance from each other under coronavirus restrictions, they gathered under the banner "No to annexation, no to occupation, yes to peace and democracy". Some waved Palestinian flags.

The protest was organized by left-wing groups and did not appear to be the start of a popular mass movement. Around half of Israelis support annexation, according to a recent opinion poll.



## Calm Prevails at Protests in Washington and Other Cities



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Tens of thousands of demonstrators amassed in Washington and other U.S. cities on Saturday demanding an end to racism and brutality by law enforcement, as protests sparked by George Floyd's fatal encounter with Minneapolis police stretched into a 12th day.

A Lincoln Memorial rally and march to the White House marked the largest outpouring yet of protests nationwide since video footage emerged showing Floyd, an unarmed black man in handcuffs, lying face down and struggling to breathe as a white police officer knelt on his neck. Demonstrators rallied on Saturday in numerous urban centers - among them New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Boston and Miami - as well as in small, rural communities across the country. "It feels like I get to be a part of history and a part of the group of people who are trying to change the world for everyone," said Jamilah Muahyman, a Washington resident participating in the demonstration near the White House.

One of the more surprising Black Lives Matter protests was a gathering of 150 to 200 people in the east Texas town of Vidor, notorious for its long associations with the Ku Klux Klan. Floyd's May 25 death has sparked a storm of outrage and civil unrest in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. The spontaneous wave of protests has thrust the highly charged issue of racial justice back to the forefront of the political agenda five months before the Nov. 3 U.S. presidential election.

Saturday's protests took on a relaxed tone compared with the more angry though mostly peaceful demonstrations of recent days. The week began with sporadic episodes of arson, looting and vandalism that authorities and activists have blamed largely on outside instigators and criminal elements. Authorities have at times resorted to heavy-handed tactics as they sought to enforce curfews in some cities, including New York and Washington, where baton-swinging police in riot gear dispersed otherwise orderly crowds.

Those clashes have only reinforced the focus of the protests into a broader movement seeking far-reaching reforms of the criminal justice system and its treatment of racial minorities.

"I'm just hoping that we really get some change from what's going on. People have been kneeling and protesting and begging for a long time, and enough is enough," said Kartrina Fernandez, 42, a protester near the front of the White House. "We can't take much more."

The intensity of protests over the past week began to ebb on Wednesday after prosecutors in Minneapolis had arrested all four police officers implicated in Floyd's death. Derek Chauvin, the white officer seen pinning Floyd's neck to the ground for nearly nine minutes as Floyd repeatedly groaned, "please, I can't breathe," was charged with second-degree murder.

But Saturday marked the largest demonstration over Floyd's killing to date.

Crowds numbering in the tens of thousands converged on the nation's capital, despite health risks still posed by the coronavirus, though official estimates of the turnout were unavailable.

A large throng of demonstrators marching past George Washington University Hospital, several blocks from the White House, chanted "Hands up, Don't shoot!" "We march for hope, not for hate," and "I can't breathe."

The rallies in Washington, as elsewhere, were notable for drawing racially mixed crowds.

## Dozens Wounded in Protests in Beirut

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Protesters poured into the streets of the Lebanese capital Saturday to decry the collapse of the economy, as clashes erupted between supporters and opponents of the Shiite group Hezbollah.

Hundreds filled the streets in and around the protest hub of Martyrs Square in the centre of Beirut, with skirmishes also between protesters and security forces, who fired tear gas.

Forty-eight were wounded in the violence, 11 of whom were hospitalized, while the rest were treated at the scene, the Lebanese Red Cross said.

It was the first major anti-government rally attracting demonstrators from across the country since authorities relaxed a lockdown imposed in mid-March to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

"We came on the streets to demand our rights, call for medical care, education, jobs and the basic rights that human beings need to stay alive," said 21-year-old student Christina.

Many protesters wore face-masks as part of hygiene measures imposed to fight the pandemic, which has severely exacerbated an economic crisis, the worst since the debt-burdened country's 1975-1990 civil war. But Saturday's protest turned violent as supporters of Hezbollah clashed with some demonstrators calling on the group to disarm.

Hezbollah is the only group to have kept its weapons since the end of the Lebanese civil war, deeply dividing Lebanon along political lines. "Weapons should be only in the hands of the army," said Sana, a 57-year-old female

protester from Nabatiyeh, a city in southern Lebanon, a Hezbollah stronghold.

Soldiers formed a human chain separating the two sides after supporters and opponents of Hezbollah threw stones at each other, an AFP photographer said.

Supporters of Hezbollah, which is also represented in the government and parliament, chanted: "Shiite, Shiite."

On Saturday evening, there was an exchange of gunfire between residents of a Sunni district, a stronghold of the former prime minister Saad Hariri, and a nearby Shiite neighborhood, a stronghold of the Amal party, a security source said.

Soldiers moved in to restore order, said the state-run news agency ANI. There were clashes too in the northern city of Tripoli, an AFP correspondent there reported.

Security forces fired tear gas near a street leading into the parliament building behind Martyrs Square, after some demonstrators pelted them with stones and ransacked shops. Some protesters set fire to garbage bins as riot police advanced towards them.



## Iraq Parliament Approves Last 7 Members of New Gov't

BAGHDAD (AFP) - Iraq's parliament Saturday gave its vote of confidence to seven cabinet ministers, including the key oil and foreign affairs posts, completing the 22-member government of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi.

Ihsan Ismaeel, the former head of the Basra Oil Company (BOC), was appointed minister of oil of OPEC's second-largest producing country.

He will inherit a challenging portfolio, as Iraq is struggling to cope with a collapse in crude prices and a decision by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to cut production.

Low revenues have been catastrophic for Iraq, which relies on oil sales to fund more than 90 percent of its budget.

Fuad Hussein, who served as finance minister in the previous government, returns to the cabinet but this time to head the ministry of foreign affairs.

A Kurdish veteran politician known to be close to Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani, Hussein is the only member of the old government to join the new line-up.

He will take up his post just days before the launch of a strategic dialogue between Iraq and the United States, which has complained of Baghdad's close ties to its neighbour, Iran.

MPs also approved Kadhemi's picks for ministers of trade, agriculture, culture, justice and migration.

"My cabinet is now complete with today's vote. This is vital in implementing our program and delivering on our commitments to our people -- who are waiting for actions, not words," Kadhemi said in a tweet on Saturday.

Last month, the 329-member parliament had approved 15 ministers, ending months of deadlock over the premiership after the resignation in December of former premier Adel Abdel Mahdi.

## Mali Vows to Investigate After Army Accused of Deadly Village Attack

BAMAKO (AFP) - Mali on Saturday pledged to investigate claims that the army killed dozens of civilians in its conflict-riven centre, as complaints about the military's conduct in the West African nation escalate.

Some 30 people were killed and a village burnt in the region, officials said, but it was unclear who was behind the latest violence.

Friday's attack targeted a Fulani village named Binedama in the volatile Mopti region, said Aly Barry, an official from Tabital Pulaaku, a Fulani association.

The group released a statement later on Saturday saying that 29 people had died and called for an independent probe led by the United Nations.

Two other local officials confirmed the attack to AFP, but gave a lower death toll of 26, adding that the

village was torched and its chief killed.

An elected official from the area, who also declined to be named, said that "men dressed in Malian army fatigues" had carried out the raid.

He added that they had burned down buildings and killed the village chief.

The strike comes at a time of mounting insecurity in Mali, rising popular discontent with the government, and increasing reports of abuses committed by the country's armed forces.

As is common with many attacks in volatile and remote Sahel regions, it was not immediately clear who the perpetrators were. No group has yet claimed responsibility.

Tabital Pulaaku, however, accused Malian soldiers of being responsible but AFP was unable to independently confirm this claim.



## Merkel Allies Criticize Trump Decision to Cut U.S. Troops in Germany

BERLIN (Reuters) - Senior lawmakers from German Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling conservative bloc on Saturday criticized President Donald Trump's decision to order the U.S. military to remove 9,500 troops from Germany.

The move would reduce U.S. troops numbers in Germany to 25,000, from 34,500. "The plans once again show that the Trump administration is neglecting an elementary leadership task: the involvement of alliance partners in decision-making processes," Johann Wadephul, foreign policy spokesman for the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, told Reuters.

All NATO partners benefited from the cohesion of the alliance, and only Russia and China gain from discord, Wadephul said, adding: "This should be given more attention in Washington".

Wadephul also spoke of a "further wake-up call" to Europeans to position themselves better in terms of security policy.

The German Foreign Ministry declined to comment.

Andreas Nick, like Wadephul a member of the parliamentary foreign relations committee, told Deutsche Welle the indications were that "that the decision was not a technical but a purely politically motivated decision".

A U.S. official, who did not want to be identified, said on Friday the move was the result of months of work by the top U.S. military officer, General Mark Milley, and had nothing to do with tensions between Trump and Merkel, who thwarted Trump's plan to host a G7 meeting this month.

The withdrawal, first reported by the Wall Street Journal, is the latest twist in relations between Berlin and Washington, which have often been strained during Trump's presidency. Trump has pressed Germany to raise defence spending and accused Berlin of being a "captive" of Russia due to its energy reliance.







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## Volkswagen Considering More Cost Cuts to Cope With Downturn

BERLIN (Reuters) - Volkswagen is considering more cost cuts to help cope with the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, a spokesman for the German automaker said on Saturday.

The issue was recently discussed at an internal event, the spokesman said, when asked about a report in industry magazine Automobilwoche.

"There were general deliberations about what further cost measures could be taken to respond to the pandemic," the spokesman told Reuters. "There are no concrete decisions yet."



## OIC's Economic Share at \$6.6 Trillion

LONDON (Dispatches) - The average overall GDP growth of OIC member countries is expected to reach 2.7 percent.

The share of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), in the global economy shrank last year, accounting for 8 per cent or \$6.6 trillion of global economy which is estimated at \$86.6 trillion, according to International Islamic Trade Finance Corp (ITFC).

The share of OIC member states in world trade accounted for 9.22 percent in 2018, a stagnation with the 9.29 per cent recorded in 2016, but a decrease if compared with the 11 percent of world trade reached in 2014. The top 10 countries - which includes Malaysia, Turkey, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Qatar, Egypt and Kuwait - pitched in \$2.4 trillion, or 72.7 percent, of member countries' world trade.

In terms of trade in services, the UAE leads followed by Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Turkey, Indonesia, Qatar, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco and Iran. These countries accounted for 80 per cent of the total trade of OIC countries.

The average overall GDP growth of OIC member countries is expected to reach 2.7 per cent in 2019, lower than the 3.4 per cent growth in 2018, said ITFC, a member of Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

Dr Bandar Hajjar, president of IsDB Group, said with only 10 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a need to shift away from conventional development approaches.

"We need to move from aid to empowerment by creating a conducive environment to foster social and economic development in the member countries. Financing is only one aspect of a holistic approach that should also include capacity development, institution building, and investment climate improvement," added Dr Hajjar.

The ITFC study found that the volume of intra-OIC trade reached in 2018 had a value of \$763.4 billion compared to \$644.3 billion in the previous year, an increase of 18 per cent. OIC member countries are on track for the 25 per cent threshold of intra-OIC trade targeted by 2025. About 28 countries reached the target and the share of intra-OIC trade in the total trade of member states went from 18.69 per cent in 2016 to 21.22 per cent in 2018.

Arshad Khan, co-founder and CEO of Arabian Bourse, says out of 57 OIC member states, 10 countries account for over 74.6 per cent of the intra-OIC trade while GCC countries accounted for over 47 per cent of that total, followed by Asia (24 per cent), the Middle East (20 per cent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (5 per cent).

He stressed that there is a need to increase the trade flows by decreasing both tariff and non-tariff barriers in OIC countries.

"Ensuring seamless customs clearances through digitization, single-window clearance for foreign trade, efficient logistics services at ports and removing technical barriers, establishment of free trade areas and adherence to the guiding principles of investment facilitation shall further enable OIC countries to work towards achieving the goals of the OIC-2025 10-year Plan of Action that aims to increase the share of intra-OIC trade to 25 per cent," he said.

In addition, OIC countries could focus on regional free trade agreements which would increase employment opportunities as well in the member states.

"In the times when international trade agreements may get re-written, more emphasis can be given for increasing the trade possibilities between the OIC countries. This indicates a huge potential for growth in intra-OIC trade flows that accounted for only 3.3 per cent of the OIC member states' GDP in the year 2017," added Khan.

## Johnson Offers To Accept EU Tariffs On Some Goods



LONDON (Reuters) - Prime Minister Boris Johnson is willing to accept European Union tariffs on some UK goods in an attempt to win a trade deal and break the deadlock in talks with the EU, the Daily Mail reported.

Britain's chief negotiator, David Frost, had made a new offer, the newspaper said, citing sources.

According to the offer, the UK would accept tariffs on a small number of goods in return for the European Union dropping its demand that Britain continue to follow EU rules.

EU and British negotiators said on Friday they had made very little progress in their latest round of talks about a Brexit free trade agreement, with just weeks left to extend a year-end deadline to reach a deal.

A threat made earlier to walk away from trade talks this month if no progress were made has been relaxed due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak, the Daily Mail said.

"We are not up for a long negotiation over the next months well into the autumn where nobody knows what is going to happen. October is too late for us to conclude this", a UK source was quoted by the paper as saying.

The idea of imposing tariffs was not immediately welcomed by Brussels, according to the Daily Mail.

Britain left the EU in January. Their relationship is now governed by a transition arrangement that keeps previous rules in place while they negotiate new terms.

## U.S., S. Korea Agree to Continue Talks on Economic Initiative Against China

WASHINGTON (Yonhap) -- Senior U.S. and South Korean officials agreed to continue discussions on the Economic Prosperity Network, the State Department said Friday, referring to a U.S. initiative to shift global supply chains away from China.

In a phone call, Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, spoke with South Korean Second Vice Foreign Minister Lee Tae-ho about a range of economic issues, including COVID-19, an upcoming Group of Seven summit that South Korea has been invited to, and the Economic Prosperity Network, the department said in comments sent to Yonhap News Agency.

It described the EPN as "an initiative to unite countries, companies, and civil society groups around the world on a foundation of trust."



Krach has spearheaded the project amid an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry over issues ranging from trade and accountability for the coronavirus to civil liberties in Hong Kong.

The EPN is seen as a campaign to isolate China from global supply chains, posing a possible challenge to South Korea's efforts to maintain good relations with both its ally, Washington, and its largest trading partner, Beijing.

"Both sides agreed to continue consultations on the Economic Prosperity Network and other issues as they prepare for the 5th U.S.-ROK Senior Economic Dialogue, to be held in the second half of the year," the department said, referring to South Korea by its official name, the Republic of Korea.

## U.S. Development Bank to Invest \$350m in India

KOLKATA (Dispatches) - The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is looking to invest \$350 million in India to support multiple projects in the country's financial services sector, health infrastructure, renewable energy and food security space.

DFC, known as America's development bank, has approved loans worth \$142 million for ReNew Power and \$50 million for Sitara Solar Energy to build and operate solar power plants in Rajasthan, \$50 million for Northern Arc to scale up lending to businesses that expand access to water, sanitation, and food or advance women's economic empowerment, besides committing to invest in several other projects.

These are part of DFC's \$1 billion commitment

approved by its board to firms engaged in developmental works across in Africa, Latin America and other emerging markets. The investments mark one of the largest tranches approved during a board meeting, DFC said.

"The projects have a particular focus on development impact, with nearly 60 % of investments in low- and lower middle-income countries," DFC said in a statement from Washington, adding that the investments are aimed at supporting financial services for women, small businesses, and other underserved groups at a time when capital is in desperate need.

Asian countries need to focus on public private partnerships to support infrastructure: Asian Development Bank

## IMF Agrees on \$5.2b for Egypt as Virus Threatens Economy



CAIRO (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund said Friday it has reached an agreement with authorities in Egypt to allocate \$5.2 billion to help the country cope with the economic fallout of the coronavirus outbreak.

"This will safeguard the gains achieved by Egypt over the past three years and put the country on strong footing for sustained recovery," said Uma Ramakrishnan, the IMF's chief of mission for Egypt. The agreement, which must go to the executive board for final approval, comes on top of a \$2.77 billion IMF loan approved to Egypt last month.

Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country, emerged last year from an ambitious reform program designed to overhaul its ailing economy.

As part of a \$12 billion bailout from the IMF in 2016, the government introduced a tough diet of austerity measures, hiking up prices, slashing key subsidies and imposing a value-added tax. The steps proved painful for poor and middle class Egyptians, but won President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi praise from western backers and bankers.

Now, the dire financial consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak threaten to reverse the country's progress, a worrisome prospect for el-Sissi. Even before the pandemic, one in three Egyptians lived below the poverty line, according to government figures.

The economic lockdown has undercut the state's critical sources of currency: revenue from tourism to the country's ancient wonders, which account for 12% of the gross domestic product, remittances from workers abroad, foreign investment and shipping fees from the Suez Canal. The Central Bank said that Egypt's foreign reserves fell by some \$8 billion over the course of March and April.

## Malaysia to Double Deficit To Fund Stimulus

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia aims to borrow its way out of an economic slump brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, and the finance minister told Reuters it will nearly double its fiscal deficit this year while keeping open the option of raising the public debt ceiling.

South-east Asia's third-biggest economy has announced incentives worth RM295 billion (\$96.32 billion) to soften the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with the government vowing to directly inject RM45 billion of that into the economy, mostly raised through domestic borrowings.

Finance Minister Tengku Zafrul Aziz told Reuters the fiscal deficit would rise to around 6 per cent of annual economic output this year because of the stimulus, and that a direct fiscal injection of RM10 billion announced on Friday would be raised through domestic borrowing.

"There is only so much monetary policy can do," Tengku Zafrul said in an interview in his office. "So you need fiscal policy to come into play, as long as you have the discipline and the commitment in the longer term to go back to where you should be in terms of the deficit."

Tengku Zafrul, who was chief executive of lender CIMB Group before joining the three-month-old government, said the goal was to narrow the fiscal deficit back down to less than 4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) over the next three years or so. It was 3.2 per cent last year.



# Zamaninia Appointed as Iran's New OPEC Governor

TEHRAN - Iranian Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading Amir-Hossein Zamaninia was officially appointed on Saturday as Iran's OPEC governor, replacing Hossein Kazempour Ardebili who died in mid-May.

The decision was made during the 179th meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) conference which was held on Saturday via video conference, Shana reported.

Zamaninia was named Iran's ad-hoc OPEC governor back in May following Kazempour decease.



# Fitch Affirms Uzbek City of Tashkent's at 'BB-'

LONDON (Dispatches) - Fitch Ratings has affirmed the Uzbek City of Tashkent's Long-Term Foreign- and Local-Currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) at 'BB-' with Stable Outlooks. A full list of rating actions is below.

The affirmation reflects the city's 'Weaker' risk profile that is counterbalanced by a 'aa' debt sustainability assessment under Fitch's rating case. The IDRs are notched down once from their assessment between tiers of the city's Standalone Credit Profile (SCP) of 'bb' due to weak reporting and transparency practices that lag behind international standards. This lead to Tashkent's IDRs being in line with the Uzbek sovereign IDRs (BB-/Stable).

Fitch assesses Tashkent's risk profile as 'Weaker'. This reflects a 'Weaker' assessment for all six key risk factors of the city.

Uzbek subnationals' revenue sources are unstable following an extensive tax and budgetary reform in the republic for the past four years. The composition of taxes collected by the city and their allocation between tiers of government are subject to constant change. Taxes are the important source of the city budget and on average contributed 63% of total revenue in 2015-2018, before falling to 42% in 2019. On the contrary transfers from the central budget have gradually increased to 45% of total revenue in 2019 from 12% in 2014.

Ongoing changes to national fiscal regulation resulting in low revenue predictability and high dependence on a weak central government for a material portion of city's revenue drive the 'Weaker' revenue robustness assessment.

Fitch assesses Tashkent's ability to generate additional revenue in response to possible economic downturns as limited due to a highly centralised budgetary system in the country, despite it being under reform. Fiscal autonomy is controlled by the central government, which sets all tax rates and determines the amount of tax revenue allocated between government tiers. Tashkent's revenue structure is dominated by the city's allocated share of national taxes and inter-governmental transfers that together accounted for 95% in 2019.

Affordability for additional taxation is also limited by the low disposable income



of the population (average monthly salary in Tashkent was about USD370 in 2018). Fitch views inter-governmental transfers as largely discretionary since the national budgetary framework does not yet have an established revenue equalisation system. This results in the 'Weaker' assessment of revenue adjustability.

Expenditure sustainability is fragile due to the city's evolving mandates and expenditure composition, limiting expenditure predictability. Spending over the last five years had been volatile, due to high inflation and reallocation of spending responsibilities. Expenditure in real terms has varied from declines of 7%-8% in 2016-2017 to increases of 25% in 2015 and 20% in 2019. In general, spending dynamics follow that of revenue as local government budgets must be balanced and deficit is not allowed under national regulation.

# China Looks to Revive Street Vendor Economy



BEIJING (Dispatches) - Cities across China have been rolling out policies to encourage the return of street vendors, where stall operators and mobile vendors sell food and small commodities on streets and other public spaces.

At least 27 cities have rolled out these policies, according to a tally by China News Service.

Though the State Council technically allows certain street vendors at designated places and during certain time of the day, unregistered street sellers are prohibited due to concerns such as food safety and city beautification. As a result, scenes of hawkers laying out goods in carts or over cloth on the ground have largely disappeared from major cities over recent years.

However, at a press conference during China's recently concluded "two sessions," Chinese Premier Li Keqiang praised the city of Chengdu in west China for creating 100,000 jobs by setting up 36,000 mobile stalls, signaling an encouragement of reviving street vending. During a tour to Shandong province earlier this week, Li visited a local stall, and said that the "stall economy" provides a key source for jobs and demonstrates the vibrancy of China.

A state authority also announced in late May to not include into city assessments street vendors who occupy public spaces, roadside markets, and mobile vendors. The announcement was seen as a way to restore social and economic order and meet people's living needs.

"Street vendor economy has always been a 'gray area' of China's urban economy. It has alleviated the employment pressure to some extent, driven the development of the tertiary industry, as well as invigorated the market and stimulated economic growth," said Ying Xiwen of a think tank under the China Minsheng Bank.

The Chinese economy has been dampened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its GDP contracted 6.8% in the first quarter, a record low in years.

Chengdu was one of the first cities across China to loosen restrictions on street stalls. In mid-March, the city issued measures to allow the operation of street stalls and mobile vendors. Shops and restaurants were also allowed to extend their operating space to outside their stores.

As of May 22, a total of 2,234 new stalls had been set up in Chengdu, 17,748 stores allowed to extend to outside space, and the work resumption rate in restaurants in the downtown area reached 98%, according to Sichuan Daily.

# Japan Household Spending Drops 11.1% in April

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's household spending slumped again in April, falling 11.1 percent from a year earlier, government data showed Friday, as the world's third-largest economy struggled with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The figure released by the internal affairs ministry was largely in line with market expectations of a 12.75 percent drop. It was the seventh straight month of declines since October, when the government hiked a sales tax.

"The new coronavirus is having a serious impact on the economy including spending by individuals," chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters, asked about the government's view on the latest figure.

"We think it is necessary for us to return to regular economic

activities step by step while taking counter-infection measures, as businesses are trying to survive the current situation," added Suga, the top government spokesman.

The April drop was partly attributed to declines in spending on transport and telecommunications, as well as on leisure activities. The latest figures come after official data last month confirmed Japan dived into its first recession since 2015, shrinking by 0.9 percent in the first quarter as it wrestles with the fallout from the coronavirus.

The drop in gross domestic product followed a 1.9 percent decline in the fourth quarter of 2019 as the tax hike and typhoons hit Japan hard -- even before the pandemic shut down much of the economy.



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## Ayatollah Khamenei's Leadership...

FROM PAGE 1

In fact, one should say that Velayat-e Faqih has a basic characteristic whose decisions are based on instructions of Islam, the Holy Quran and hadiths and as the result, no one can infiltrate it. Even those who had tried to infiltrate it or distort it since the era of Imams have not succeeded. In Najaf, the British also once and again had tried hard to influence the late Imam Khomeini's decisions, and his son, the late Seyed Mostafa Khomeini, had repeatedly mentioned it to Imam Khomeini but Imam proceeded the tasks of jurisprudence and leadership of the revolution smartly.



In the Holy Quran verse 25 of Repentance Chapter, God says, "Allah has already given you victory in many regions." It means if you are a believer and try to please God, He will be with you everywhere. Today enemies of Islam and Muslims explicitly acknowledge the capability of the Supreme Leader. We have witnessed the management of the Imam (R) Movement in different eras in the leadership of the Supreme Leader with God's help. Let's compare the issue of the Coronavirus pandemic in Iran with other countries which are said they are the developed countries. They all have given in to the pandemic but Iran with true belief and jihadi actions and with the supervision and guidance of Velayat-e Faqih has acted totally differently. This method has not been possible and will not be possible in any system but the jurisprudence system inspired from Holy Quran and the Prophet traditions.

Regardless of good intention and benevolent measures and smart prudence, Iran has a huge protector that the Supreme Leader has repeatedly emphasized that the country belongs to the nation and has urged the nation to help to administer the country and without any doubt, God will help the country to sail safely out of tourbillons.

Hence, Iran with the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei will not be hit by any storm and Re-Appearance will be materialized very soon.

## U.S., Israel...

FROM PAGE 1

Although a terrorist attack was apparently the cause of the incident, this issue has presently been proven that U.S. and Israeli intelligence services as well as some regional countries were behind the terrorist attack. Qalibaf maintained.

Martyrs of the terrorist attack are the national heroes whose pure blood reminds us all of the value of Jihad against Wahhabi Zionist terrorism, he said, adding, "we convey our greetings to all martyrs and also martyrs of defenders of the holy shrine."

On June 7, 2017, ISIS terrorists carried out two separate, but simultaneous attacks in Tehran. One of the raids targeted the Parliament, and the other struck the Imam Khomeini mausoleum in the south of the capital. Seventeen civilians were killed and 43 wounded in the attacks.

## Gov't Committed...

FROM PAGE 1

"We have increased the monthly pension of households supported by aid institutions, as well as the pension of those supported by the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and the Welfare Organization (the payment to each household has increased 9 times since 2013). Increasing total credits for the implementation of the program and construction of housing for deprived families are among these areas."

The president called the release of Justice Shares one of the effective measures taken by the government to ensure justice is served in the society. "This was an appropriate action that could strengthen the country's economy and people's participation in the country's economic destiny."

President Rouhani further advised that the rights of shareholders should be fully respected in all areas, and that the institutions that manage stocks should be extremely transparent, given the Leader's stated goals and communiqué. The meeting also reviewed and approved assistance to those who have lost their jobs and become unemployed during the implementation of restrictions to control COVID-19.

## Transporting Medicines...

FROM PAGE 1

Elsewhere in his remarks, the deputy minister of health and medical education pointed to the proper cooperation and interaction of the Ministry of Roads with all its might, including airlines and shipping and road transportation companies, and added, "with the constructive talks made between health and roads ministers on various issues, an expert-level meeting was held in the presence of director generals, heads of relevant syndicates and trade unions as well as CEOs of airlines in the field of trade and production of drugs and medical equipment."



## Jordan Pledges \$100m to Social Justice Groups

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Michael Jordan said he is making a record \$100 million donation to groups fighting for racial equality and social justice amid a wave of protests across the United States.

The NBA legend said in a statement his Jordan Brand would distribute the money over 10 years to different organizations in a bid to stamp out “ingrained racism.”

The pledge is believed to be the largest financial contribution to non-profit groups ever made by a figure from the sports world.

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## Messi Returns to Barcelona Training

MADRID (AFP) - Lionel Messi returned to the Camp Nou on Saturday after missing two group training sessions with a slight leg injury, while Luis Suarez is set to be fit for the La Liga restart next week.

Messi trained alone indoors on Wednesday and Friday, but worked on the sidelines of a group session at Barca's home stadium, according to Spanish press.

La Liga leaders Barcelona play their first match since mid-March at Real Mallorca next Saturday.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

MONDAY JUNE 8, 2020

# Djokovic Worried By U.S. Open Health Restrictions

LONDON (Dispatches) - World number one Novak Djokovic described the strict hygiene restrictions under which the U.S. Open is likely to be played as “extreme” and a cap on support teams as “really impossible.”

As doubts grow over whether or not the Grand Slam event can go ahead as scheduled in New York, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak in the United States, Djokovic admitted the demands of organisers could create severe strain.

“Just yesterday I had a telephone conversation with the leaders of world tennis, there were talks about the continuation of the season, mostly about the U.S. Open due in late August, but it is not known whether it will be held,” the 33-year-old Serb told Prva TV television and quoted by Blic online daily.

“The rules that they told us that we would have to respect to be there, to play at all, they are extreme.” Djokovic, champion at the U.S. Open in 2011, 2015 and 2018, described planned limits on player entourages as “really impossible”.

“We would not have access to Manhattan, we would have to sleep in hotels at the airport, to be tested twice or three times per week.

“Also, we could bring one person to the club which is really impossible.

“I mean, you need your coach, then a fitness trainer, then a physiotherapist.

“All their suggestions are really rigorous but I can understand that due to financial reasons, due to already existing contracts, organizers (want the event to be) held. We will see what will happen.”

Djokovic was speaking a day after world number two Rafael Nadal had expressed similar reservations over the U.S. Open, the main draw for which starts on August 31.

Nadal, who won a fourth U.S. Open in



2019, said that if the New York showpiece was being staged this week, he would not play.

“We cannot resume until the situation is completely safe and fair in terms of health in that all players, wherever they come from, can travel and play tournaments in safe conditions,” Nadal told reporters in a video conference call.

“If you told me to play the U.S. Open today, I would say ‘no’.

The tennis tour has been in cold storage since mid-March and will not resume until late July at the earliest.

Wimbledon was cancelled for the first time since World War II, while the French Open has been shifted from May-June to September-October.

Earlier Friday, women's world number one Ashleigh Barty also voiced caution about resuming tennis too soon, saying she needed more information before committing to the US Open.

“It's exciting that tennis is being talked about again and things are moving in the right direction for us to start competing,” she told the Sydney Morning Herald.

“But I'd need to understand all of the information and advice from the WTA and the USTA before making a decision on the US events.”

It is expected that the ATP and WTA will issue an update on the US Open and the rest of the season on Wednesday.

Even if the US Open goes ahead, it will likely be behind closed doors.

## Lloris Glad To Regenerate Amid Pandemic

LONDON (AFP) - Tottenham Hotspur captain Hugo Lloris hopes to return refreshed after seizing the chance to “regenerate” amid a much-interrupted season.

The France goalkeeper had only just come back from four months out of action due to injury when the Premier League season was suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But one consolation for the 33-year-old, who became a father for the second time in September, is that it has allowed him to take a break.

A top-flight professional footballer for some 15 years, a revitalised Lloris is now looking forward to helping Spurs in their push for Champions League football, a quest that begins again when they welcome Manchester United to north London on June 19.

“I think it's been a strange season for every player, all around the world,” Lloris told Tottenham's website.

“In that type of situation you always try to learn from the positives. On my side I just used that time to regenerate.

“After 15 seasons at the highest level, you play every season and you never have time to think and to breathe a little bit.



## FIFA Open to Salary Cap and Transfer Fee Limit Proposals

PARIS (AFP) - FIFA president Gianni Infantino called for discussions over proposals to introduce salary and transfer fee caps to football in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

World football's governing body intends to finalize plans in the coming weeks for a financial relief package following the economic damage caused to the sport by the global health crisis.

FIFA announced in April it would release \$150 million (133 million euros) to its 211 member associations “as the first step of a relief plan”. UEFA shortly afterwards said it had allocated 236.5 million euros to its 55 member federations.

Last month, the German FA and Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge urged industry talks about a salary cap and reforming the transfer system to keep football “credible”.

“On the financial and governance aspects, I also heard some interesting proposals on a wide range of topics,” Infantino wrote in an open letter to FIFA's members.

“From salary caps to transfer fee caps or other taxation mechanisms, to the possible obligation for governing bodies, competition organisers and clubs to build reserves or to contribute to a reserve fund which can be of assistance in hours of need such as now.

“I personally advocate for clearer and stricter financial regulations, imposing full transparency and good governance principles, and not only limiting this to the transfer system, but to the entire football ecosystem.

“FIFA is doing already a lot of work on this area, even if we face some strong vested interests who fight against our plea for a better global governance in our sport.”

A recent study by accounting firm KPMG said the transfer value of players in 10 of Europe's top leagues could plummet by up to 10 billion euros due to the economic crash caused by coronavirus.

The French league, declared over in late April, said it would have to take out a government-guaranteed loan of some 225 million euros to tide over clubs impacted by the loss in income from broadcasters.



# Balotelli Set to Be Released by Brescia

ROME (AFP) - Mario Balotelli's ill-fated stint at hometown club Brescia appears to be coming to an end, with local media reporting Saturday his contract will be terminated after repeated absences from training.

A letter notifying Balotelli of his release was sent to the Italy international by the club's lawyers on Friday, according to Sky Sport, Gazzetta dello Sport and the AGI news agency.

Balotelli has reportedly missed a number of sessions since Serie A teams returned to training at the start of May. Players

initially worked out individually before clearance was given for them to resume team training.

The 29-year-old said this week he had been sick and would send the club medical certificates as proof.

Brescia coach Diego Lopez said on Friday he was “disappointed” with the forward's attitude.

“Mario is training separately because his team-mates have done work that he hasn't,” Lopez told Corriere della Sera.

“The (individual) training sessions were optional, okay. But the group took one road and he took another. On Zoom, during the quarantine, we didn't see him. Even if he says he feels good, he's not at the level of his team-mates.”

Last month, Brescia president said Balotelli's “mind is no longer” with the club, who were bottom of the table and nine points from safety when the season was halted due to the coronavirus pandemic in March.

## Bayern Crush Leverkusen to Stay Firmly on Title Course

BERLIN (Reuters) - Bayern Munich came from a goal down to ease past hosts Bayer Leverkusen 4-2 on Saturday and remain firmly on course to retain the Bundesliga title with four games remaining.

The Bavarians are within touching distance of their eighth consecutive league crown, but Leverkusen's 17-year-old Florian Wirtz stole some of the spotlight at the end, becoming the youngest Bundesliga scorer when he netted in the 89th minute.

Lucas Alario fired the hosts into the lead after 10 minutes as Leverkusen, without the injured Kai Havertz, scored with the first chance of the game.

But Bayern recovered from the early shock and Kingsley Coman curled in the equaliser in the 28th minute before the visitors struck twice in three minutes to turn the game around.

Leon Goretzka completed a sensational passing move in the 42nd minute and Serge Gnabry chipped the ball over keeper Lukas Hradecky on the stroke of halftime. Bundesliga top scorer Robert Lewandowski headed in Thomas Mueller's 20th assist of the season.

Lewandowski took his tally to 30 league goals but is still 10 shy of the all-time league record of 40 set by Gerd Mueller in 1971-72. It was Bayern's ninth straight win but there was also some cheer for Leverkusen despite their setback in the race for a Champions League spot.



## Silverstone Chief Hopes Double Header Creates New F1 Fans

LONDON (AFP) - The managing director of Silverstone hopes the fact the English track is staging two Grand Prix races this season will help lure a new round of fans into Formula One.

The circuit will play host to races on August 2 and August 9 as part of a revised F1 calendar following the coronavirus outbreak.

No Premier League matches are scheduled for those dates and unlike last year, when the British Grand Prix was up against England's Cricket World Cup final triumph at Lord's and the men's singles final at Wimbledon, this year's race may not face the same competition from rival sports events.

Indeed this year's edition was initially moved back a week in July to avoid the Euro 2020 football and Wimbledon finals but would have clashed with the culmination of golf's British Open.

But all those marquee sports fixtures won't take place in 2020 because of COVID-19.

“On the one hand of course you want your sport to dominate the back pages and sometimes the front,” Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle told BBC Radio.

“But equally for the fans that attend the grand prix, we have had some absolutely fantastic afternoons when we have gone over to the main stage and watched the football or the cricket final.

“Making an afternoon of sport is an amazing live event with being able to flick the giant screens over.”

