

Referring to the Recent U.S. Sanctions Against Iran, Deputy Foreign Minister for the Economic Diplomacy Affairs Gholamreza Ansari said, "The U.S. Sanctions Are Not New and Cannot Stop us"

IRAN NEWS

Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi Said That The Navy Is Standing With Authority Against All the Conspiracies of the Enemy And Is Not Afraid of Any Threat

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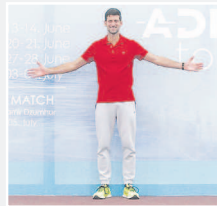


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President Blasts U.S. "Kneel on the Neck" Policy

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani has called on the four permanent members of the UN Security Council, particularly Russia and China, to stand against a U.S. plot to extend an arms embargo against Iran, stressing that Tehran will boost its defense power regardless of the U.S. attempts.

Addressing a weekly cabinet session on Wednesday, President Rouhani lashed out at the US for its attempts to maintain an arms embargo on Iran which is going to terminate in October according to the 2015 nuclear deal.

"In the coming weeks, as Iran will reach a stage in the month of Mehr (October) when, according to the Resolution 2231, all arms embargos against Iran will be terminated, the Americans are angry and irritated about such important and major day for the history of defense in Iran from now. They are drafting a resolution, they want to propose it in the (UN) Security Council," the president said.

"We expect the four permanent members (of the UNSC) to stand against such plot for the sake of the world's interests, for the sake of world stability, for the sake of the interests that the region and the world have taken into account in the nuclear deal," President Rouhani stressed.

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Health Official Stresses Observing Health Protocols in Tehran

TEHRAN (IP) -Deputy Head of Department of Work and Environment Health at Iran's Health Ministry said that statistics in the last week has raised warnings about the coronavirus condition in Tehran.

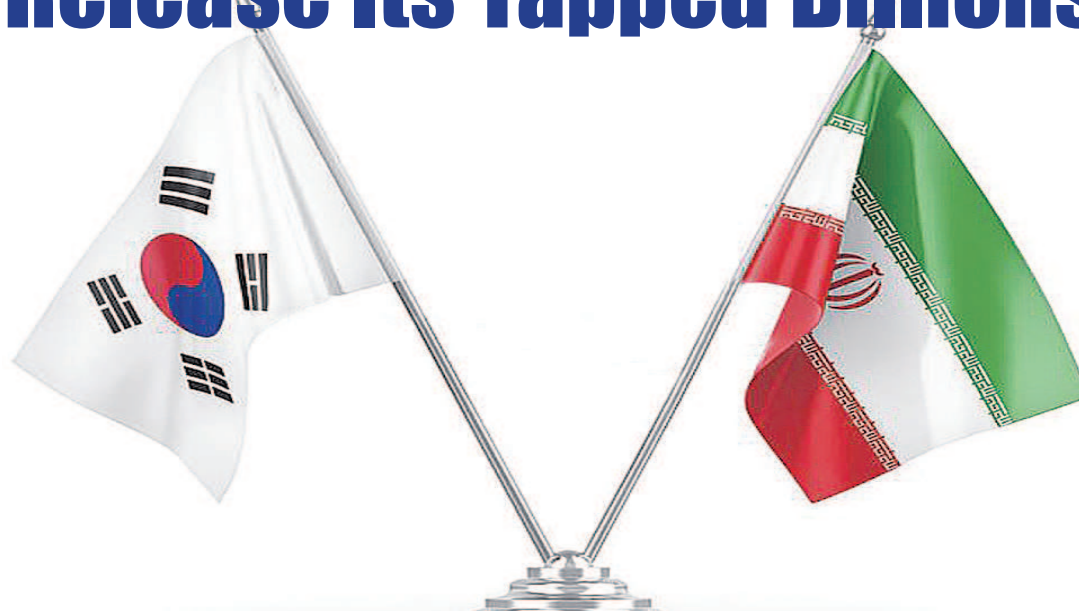
Mohsen Farhadi said yesterday, "In the last two weeks, the average observing of health protocols by people has decreased to 22/66% in Iran and this number is 10/54% in Tehran which worries us, while the average of observing health protocols was 77/57% across the country."

Farhadi added,"Two important approvals in National Taskforce for Fighting Coronavirus have been passed, the first one was that all executive organizations plan to live with coronavirus and schedule all their operational programs based on this fact. The second approval was intensifying health protocols and social distancing in the business and industry environment."

Farhadi also referred to other approvals that were passed in National Taskforce for Fighting Coronavirus, saying that based on these approvals, travel agencies resume their activities within the next three days and cinemas and theaters will open on June 21.

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Tehran Pushes Seoul to Release Its Tapped Billions



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran is escalating its pressure on South Korea to release billions of dollars of oil-export revenue, arguing that Seoul is buckling to pressure from its U.S. ally and illegally withholding funds needed to counter the Middle East's worst coronavirus outbreak.

Abdolnaser Hemmati, the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, said the actions of banks in South Korea were preventing Iran from using the money to buy foods and medicines, trade that's exempt from U.S. sanctions.

"It is appalling to see that Korean banks have conveniently neglected their obligations, common international financial agreements, and decided to play politics and follow illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions," Hemmati said in a written response to questions. Iran could launch legal action to gain access to the funds, he said, without naming the lenders in question.

Hemmati also didn't elaborate on the course of action that Iran may take. After sanctions were lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran the following year managed to unlock over \$6.4 billion of oil payments trapped in Indian accounts, using European banks as a clearing agent. The central bank has also filed lawsuits in Europe against financial companies that have withheld its money on the basis of court orders issued in the U.S.

Hemmati declined to say whether he had received an update from the IMF on the loan application. He said Iran is "weathering" the impact of the virus and even expects to see "moderate" economic growth by the end of the year.

Returning to South Korea, he said the two countries have been working on a special trade vehicle, similar to that established with the European Union, which would allow Iran to complete humanitarian transactions using the money locked in Korean banks.

The U.S., which abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal two years ago, has sought to "stonewall" the plan, according to Hemmati. President Donald Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran aims to force its leaders into renegotiating the nuclear accord and ending their support for Hezbollah and Iraqi militias.

The EU mechanism -- known as Instex -- provides European companies with a trading vehicle to sell goods and services to Iran without using dollars, routing transactions through U.S. banks, or moving money across the Iranian border. But its impact has been limited due to companies' fears over the reach of American penalties.

"Should Korean banks not adhere to their international agreements with us, we reserve our rights to take legal actions under international laws," Hemmati said.

Russia, China Build Case at U.N. to Protect Iran From U.S. Sanctions Threat

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Russia and China have started making the case at the United Nations against Washington's claim that it can trigger a return of all sanctions on Iran at the Security Council, with Moscow invoking a 50-year-old international legal opinion to argue against the move.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the Chinese government's top diplomat, Wang Yi, both wrote to the 15-member council and U.N. chief Antonio Guterres as the United States threatens to spark a so-called sanctions snapback under the Iran nuclear deal, even though Washington quit the accord in 2018. Lavrov wrote in the May 27 letter, made public this week, that the United States was being "ridiculous and irresponsible."

"This is absolutely unacceptable and serves only to recall the famous English proverb about having one's cake and eating it," Lavrov wrote.

Washington has threatened to trigger a return of U.N. sanctions on Iran if the Security Council does not extend an arms embargo due to expire in October under Tehran's deal with world powers to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Kelly Craft said last week that a draft resolution on the embargo would be circulated soon.

Council veto-powers Russia and China have already signaled they are against reimposing an arms embargo on Iran. If they block the U.S.-drafted resolution, then Washington will have to follow through on its sanctions snapback threat.

"The United States, no longer a participant to the JCPOA (nuclear deal) after walking away from it, has no right to demand the Security Council invoke a snapback," Wang wrote in his June 7 letter.

The 2015 Iran nuclear deal, enshrined in a U.N. resolution, allows for return of sanctions on Iran, including the arms embargo, if Iran violates the deal. U.S. President Donald Trump quit the deal in 2018, branding the accord from Barack Obama's presidency as "the worst deal ever."

Lavrov cited a 1971 International Court of Justice opinion, which found that a fundamental principle governing international relationships was that "a party which disowns or does not fulfill its own obligations cannot be recognized as retaining the rights which it claims to derive from the relationship."



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Iran Complains to IAEA About U.S. Unlawful Behaviors

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the international organizations in Vienna sent a letter to the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency warning against the illegal and delinquent behavior of the United States toward its international obligations in the field of nuclear cooperation.

Kazem Gharibabadi stressed in the letter that the US actions violate the provisions of Articles 2 and 3 of the IAEA Statute, Article 4 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the General Conference of the IAEA and the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Stating that Iran has the right to take compensatory measures against these conditions, he called on the IAEA members to act responsibly to respond appropriately to these illegal US actions.

Iran's Permanent Representative also called on the Director-General of the IAEA to reflect US actions which contradict its commitments in the organization's reports on the implementation of IAEA-related documents.

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Pakistan's Mango Exports to Iran Seriously Jeopardized

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Pakistan's lucrative mango exports to Iran have been seriously jeopardized this year mainly due to negligence and inefficiency on part of relevant officials of the ministry of commerce and customs, exporters said.

It is feared that this year only around 800 tons of mango will be exported to Iran against the estimated 15,000 tons export under normal circumstances.

It is learnt that mango consignments are being stuck on the Pakistan-Iran border for the last four days owing to sheer negligence and ill-planning on part of the relevant authorities. Such a situation, if allowed to persist, will deny Pakistan its regular mango export target this year.

Talking to Business Recorder, a leading mango exporter, Babar Durrani, who is also the chief executive officer of the Durrani Group of Companies, said that the Pakistan-Iran border had been completely sealed last month as part of the lockdown measures against the spread of the coronavirus.

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Tehran, Yerevan Discuss Expansion of Customs, Trade Ties

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Head of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum discussed expansion of trade and customs relations during a meeting, via video conference, with an Armenian delegation comprised of senior officials from various sectors.

As reported by the TPO, the Armenian side of the meeting included deputies from the economy, and territorial administration and infrastructure ministries, Armenian ambassador to Tehran, and a representative from Customs Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

In the video conference meeting, which was the second such meeting in the past 30 days, Zadboum mentioned the upward trend of the two countries' trade in the current year and said: "Despite the coronavirus outbreak, the trade between Iran and Armenia has increased by up to 30 percent over the past two months compared to the same period last year."

Equipping and modernizing road infrastructure, crossings, laboratories, quarantine centers, and cold storages on the Iran-Armenia borders, as well as establishing special banking relations similar to those with Russia, implementing bartering agreements, and the maximum use of Armenia's position and capacities for developing trade with Eurasia, were among the strategies Zadboum offered in the meeting for boosting bilateral trade.

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Iran Not to Give In to Repeated U.S. Sanctions

TEHRAN (IP) - Reacting to new U.S. sanctions against Iranian shipping companies and tankers, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that Iran will not give in to the sanctions and pressure."

Recently, the United States expanded sanctions on Iran's shipping industry, blacklisting the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and its Shanghai-based subsidiary, E-Sail Shipping Company Ltd, along with more than 100 ships and tankers.

Iran Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi added that the U.S. once sanctioned the entire Iranian nation and then, in the midst of these sanctions, sanctioned Iranian citizens or officials double.

Caspian Sea States Urged To Be Politically Determined to Save It

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Department of Environment chief Isa Kalantari expressed hope on Tuesday that countries surrounding Caspian Sea have sufficient political determination to save the sea and ecosystem.

Speaking in a conference with environment ministers and chiefs from five Caspian Sea states, Kalantari said that Iran has bitter experience in the Persian Gulf since the countries in that region lack enough political resolve to protect its environment.

He emphasized that Iran is hurt the most from Caspian Sea contaminations since it has been placed on the southern coast of the sea and the pollution produced by other states moves southward.

He hoped that an active secretariat would establish and a multilateral agreement would be reached in the sixth meeting of officials in Baku, Azerbaijan, as the problems of the sea couldn't be solved with bilateral agreements.

Urging his counterparts not to waste time, he recommended that a 10-year plan be approved in the Baku meeting regarding environmental issues of the Caspian Sea.

Environment ministries from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan who also participated in the conference emphasized the importance of The Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea known



as the Tehran Convention adopted in 2003 among Caspian Sea states.

Kalantari and environment officials from other countries surrounding the sea asked for a secretariat of the Tehran Convention to be established as soon as possible to follow up the agreements reached to protect the sea.

Also present in the conference was the head of the European office of United Nations Environment Program Bruno Pozzi mentioned the 20-year effort by the office to elevate coordination among stakeholders and introduce protocols and frameworks for protecting the Caspian Sea.

He urged the countries to make their effort to improve the Tehran Convention in order to have more achievements.

Enemies Seek to Damage Iran, Afghanistan Relations

TEHRAN (ILNA) - An official in Iran's Interior Ministry said that the death of Afghan nationals on the border between Afghanistan and Iran has nothing to do with Iran's border guards.

The head of the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs, Mahdi Mahmoudi said that the enemies seek to create tension between Iran and Afghanistan.

Referring to the rumors about the torture and drowning of a number of Afghan citizens in a shared border river (Harirod River) in Afghan territory by the border forces, he added "Although there are fundamental doubts about the accuracy of this claims and certainly, this incident has nothing to do with Iran's border guards."

Iran has extensive evidence that the incident has not happened on its borders. According to Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi, the confirmed reports received from the border guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran show that such an incident has not occurred on the mentioned date and location.

"According to the investigation, the citizens may have tried to enter the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran and drowned when they are crossing the difficult points of the river," he confirmed.

Mahdi Mahmoudi pointed to the other incident involving Afghan citizens and adding that In the Yazd incident, some people have again committed human trafficking in violation of the law and the police, who reportedly shot at the vehicle after it failed to stop at a checkpoint.

The head of the Bureau for Aliens & Foreign Immigrants' Affairs also said "During the outbreak of coronavirus, 563 Afghan students studied medicine in various fields in the country."

Afghan Ambassador to Tehran Abdolghafor Lival has said that Iran-Afghanistan ties are important for both sides and a car crash incident should not deteriorate the two neighboring countries' historical relations.

In the car crash, three people were killed and eight others were injured when the car collided with the guardrail.

Abdolghafor Lival, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's ambassador to Tehran has visited those who injured in the Yazd car crash in hospital.

Iran Blast West for Suspending Its Duties Regarding Anti-Narcotics Operation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Western states on the pretext of sanctions have decreased or suspended some of their duties in line with anti-narcotic operations; meanwhile, Iran remained determined to fight against drug trafficking.

Such suspension could not drain Iran's will to combat drug smuggling activities, Director General of International Relations Office of Drug Control Headquarters Amir Abbas Lotfi said.

On the pretext of the US anti-Iran sanctions, Western countries have not fulfilled some of their duties, one of which has been financial support for anti-drug operations, Lotfi said.

He added that Iran has put on the agenda effective campaign against drug trafficking networks.

Elaborating on Iran's remarkable counter-narcotics operations, the official said that most of the officials at the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have over and over described Iran as forerunner of global fight against narcotics trafficking.

Over 70 percent of the world's illegal drugs are being seized annually by Iran, Lotfi said, referring to seizure of 950 tons of different types of drugs by the Iranian forces in the past year which has been a record in the country's counter narcotics campaign.

The official noted that Iran spent a lot of money to carry out operations against illicit drug traffickers and



lost 3,880 of its security and military officers in armed struggle while 12,500 other officers were maimed.

Although Iran has spent more than hundreds dollars for closure of its eastern borders and is considered as one of the main partners for UNODC, Western states have made the least cooperation on securing fund for fighting drug traffickers.

As the Iranian official says, drug trafficking is a global problem which needs global cooperation to be solved.

Since two decades ago, Iran has started cooperation with United Nations to counter narcotics moves, Lotfi underlined.

He further talked of Tehran-based office of Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan plan that acts an executive pillar to counter illicit drug activities.

Also about Iran's good regional cooperation in anti-drug activities, Lotfi said such cooperation has turned the country into a model for others.

Meanwhile, sanctions and unilateral bans on Iran have created obstacles to the country's international cooperation, he added.

Expressing regret over UN financial dependence on Western countries, Lotfi called for not taking political stance on countering narcotics activities.

Serbia Eager to Boost Long-Standing Friendly Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – Speaker of National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia Maja Gojkovic congratulated Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on his election as Iran's parliament speaker, stressing the need for promoting friendly relations between the two countries.

In a message on Tuesday, Maja Gojkovic expressed hope that the friendly relations of Iran and Serbia will be further developed during the mission of Ghalibaf.

Given the strong potential of Serbia-Iran parliamentary cooperation and the increasing role of the parliamentary system in the world, the parliaments will play a crucial role in promoting bilateral ties, she said.

Indonesian Ambassador Bids Farewell to Zarif



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Indonesian Ambassador to Iran Octavino Alimudin bid farewell to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif at the end of his mission.

Alimudin met with Zarif on Tuesday afternoon.

Speaking to IRNA on the importance of Iran for Indonesia, Alimudin said that Indonesia honors commitment to implement the agreements already signed with Iran to reinforce relations.

He also referred to opening 'Indonesia Corner' in the University of Islamic Denominations on March 10 and also in Ferdowsi University of Mashad, saying "we will contact the universities and will bring many scholars here".

Iran Ready for Talks on Ukrainian Jetliner's Flight Recorder, Compensation

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian diplomat has expressed readiness for talks with the Ukrainian officials at any time and any place about the outstanding issues surrounding the January 8 downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane near Tehran, including the black boxes and compensation for the families of victims.

Ukraine's Ambassador to Tehran Sergei Burdylak held a meeting with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand on Tuesday.

In the meeting, the two diplomats discussed the January downing of a Ukrainian jetliner near Tehran and the latest developments relating to the incident from various aspects.

In the gathering, the Iranian deputy Foreign Minister emphasized that he is prepared to hold talks with the Ukrainian officials at any time and any place to be determined by Ukrainians at the earliest possible moment in order to immediately resolve the issues about the black boxes of the plane, paying families of the victims compensation, and the other issues relating to the tragic incident.

In turn, the Ambassador of Ukraine welcomed the proposal from the Iranian diplomat, saying he will immediately relay the idea to the relevant Ukrainian authorities and will later inform the Iranian side about the results.

Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752) was a scheduled international passenger flight from Tehran to Kiev operated by Ukraine International Airlines (UIA). On 8 January 2020, the Boeing 737-800 operating the route was shot down shortly after take-off from Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport. All the 176 passengers and crew were killed.

U.S. Fake Superpower Image Collapsing

TEHRAN (MNA) – The chief commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) referred to the ongoing developments in the United States, saying that the symbols reflecting Washington's fake image of being a superpower are collapsing one after another.



"By the grace of God, we are witnessing the rapid decline of our enemies, especially the United States," Major General Salami said during a military ceremony in Tehran on Wednesday.

He said the scope of the U.S. government's crimes, which was previously hidden to the world, is now revealed, not only to the people around the world but also to the American nation.

"The United States introduced itself with beautiful concepts, but the painful realities of American society that were hidden under such fake concepts are now being revealed," he said, adding, "We can see that the American nation is now burning the U.S. flag which rendered Washington's fake image to the world."

Saying that "Today, the face of the U.S. government is like a broken dirty face," the General added that when wisdom is not connected to power, the hatred will finally increase and burst out.

Salami also referred to the recent shipment of fuel to Venezuela despite the US threats, saying, "We are preparing to defend a living revolution that is breaking the backs of its enemies."

"We have exercised authority. The greatest exercise of our authority was to impose the will and moving our ships in the high seas from the Persian Gulf to Venezuela."

"Today, the Iranian nation is going through the peak of authority and dignity, and they are capable of tackling all challenges with their strong will and faith," he concluded.

Population Growth Slowing Down

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Growth rate of Iran's population is less than one percent, while the statistics show that number of marriages in the country has reduced by 40 percent, Majlis lawmaker Hossein Bankipour said.

The MP said that slowdown in growth of population is a serious problem that needs to be given proper attention.

Speaking about the concerning statistics over the rise of the divorce rate and drop in number of marriages, he said it is necessary to form a special committee to handle the problem.

"We are seeking to implement various measures in regards to population growth, that include a plan to take another look at some of the ideas that weren't implemented before," said Bankipour.

The official has indicated that the government has recently approved to limit subsidizing newly formed families.

"The committee would review the bills and plans, to make sure they don't go against the families, otherwise we will block the bill from going further," said Bankipour.

Friendship Between Iran' Army and IRGC Is Deep

TEHRAN (IP) - Commander of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh has emphasized that the friendship and intimacy between the Army and the IRGC are deep.

On the anniversary of the operation that was launched as a response to the martyrdom of Ali Sayad Shirazi, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh stated that the performance of the IRGC was not different in the revenge operations that were held after the martyrdom of Ali Sayad Shirazi and the martyrdom of Qasem Soleimani.

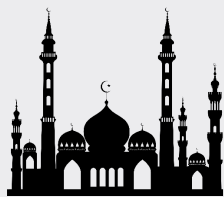
The revenge operation for the martyrdom of Ali Sayad Shirazi was extremely important for the IRGC, he added.

Ali Sayad Shirazi was the chief-of-staff of the Iranian Armed Forces during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.

He was assassinated in 1999 by the terrorist Mujahedin group (MKO).

Shortly after the terrorist attack, the IRGC targeted the MKO base in Iraq by dozens of missiles.

The MKO is supported by the Western countries, especially the United States and France.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:04
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:41
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:01
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:47

63. And the servants of ((Allah)) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!";
64. Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing;
Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (63 - 64)

Iran Power Industry Needs \$1.2b of Forex Annually

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian says Iran's power industry needs some \$1.2b of forex annually that some of the amount is offset through export of electricity to the neighboring states.

Speaking in the open session of Majlis yesterday, Ardakanian said Iraq is the most important neighboring country of Iran where Iran's electricity is exported to and it provides some part of forex needed by Iran's power industry.

He added that the total debts of the ministry is 45,000b toman while the company demands the same amount of money from the government, hence Majlis should find proper solution for this problem.

On the output of thermal power stations of the country, he said studies show that the output of Iran's thermal power stations are a little better than the average universal rate of 37.3 percent.

He further said, "Today, Iran is ranked fourth in power plant capacity, and I promise that by the end of the twelfth government we will have reached a capacity of 830 MW in the field of renewable energy."

Ardakanian also referred to the situation of water, electricity and gas consumption in the country, saying: "Although the population of our country has increased by about two-thirds over the last four decades, thanks to the efforts of the authorities, the access of citizens to electricity are higher than the global average, and in the past four



decades, however, despite the country's population being only 36 million, many people did not have access to electricity."

"Iran's access to electricity is about 100 percent, while this figure is estimated 96 percent for other countries. Since Iranian calendar year 1392, about 16,000 MW has been added to the country's electricity capacity, and we hope that this figure will reach 20,000 MW and more by the end of the 12th government," Ardakanian noted.

He also admitted that the country is expecting one of the warmest summers in front of itself in terms of electricity supply and urged people to manage their consumptions.

Ardakanian reiterated that in the past 17 years, the country has continued electricity supply without major outage or collapse while in the world, the average rate for the collapse of electricity network is 10 years and even in the developed countries, electricity network is collapsed every 15 or 16 years.

He expressed hope that this summer and with cooperation of people in efficient consumption, there would be no major outage in the country.

"Mes Clubs" Source of Pride in National Sport

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Senior Advisor to the CEO of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) Mr. Heydar Zeighami watched the friendly match between Mes Rafsanjan and Pars Jonoubi Jam clubs at the Bank Melli Stadium which ended in a 2-2 draw.



On the sidelines of the match, Mr. Zeighami met the players of Mes Rafsanjan Club and during the meeting he emphasized that the CEO of company Dr. Ardeshir Saad Mohammadi would definitely support the sport clubs of the company and their players, as they are considered as the source of pride for the national sport.

He noted that under empathy and collective endeavor of players and technical team staff, they have witnessed brilliant results, and achievements of the clubs which have led to the pride of the sport community of the country and esteemed people of Kerman Province.

He expressed hope that this year concurrent with the surge in production in the copper industry, the company would witness a surge in the professional and public sport activities and on the whole in its social responsibility, and sport clubs of the company in different fields would have colorful and effective presence in different sports fields in national level.

Ali Pourmohammad and Farshad Salarvand scored for Mes Club against Pars Jonoubi Jam. Rafsanjan-based Mes (copper) Rafsanjan Football Club and other Mes sport clubs are owned by NICICO. Mes Rafsanjan soccer club is currently leading the first division standings due to its emphatic and brilliant results.

Fishery Exports to EU Resumes



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN- Iran's Veterinary Organization announced that the country has resumed exports of fishery products to the European Union (EU) member states.

As announced by the Iranian Agriculture Ministry, despite the U.S. sanctions that have created many problems for the export of fishery products, through the efforts made by the veterinary organization, the country succeeded to obtain again the license to export aquaculture and fishery products to the member states of the European Union.

Iran's fishery output reached 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has announced.

Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The official noted that the output, which was more than the projected amount, was achieved through the help of research sectors as well as the ground laid by the private sector.

Referring to the high quality of Iran's fishery products, the head of IFO said that these products were sold easily in the export markets.

In mid-January, the official had also said that new export destinations have welcomed Iran's high-quality fishery products in the past Iranian calendar year.

New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have opened up for Iranian fishery products in the current year, Khoun-Mirzaei said.

"Based on the negotiations and agreements signed between Iran and China by the minister of agriculture, the Chinese fishery market has been opened to Iranian products. The Eurasian nations and South Korean markets have also welcomed Iranian fishery products and have the potential for exports," the official explained.

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Iran's Agricultural Parks Company (APC) Ali Ashraf Mansouri has recently announced that some 1,500 hectares of fishery parks are planned to be inaugurated in the country in the current year.

CIS Market Golden Opportunity for Iranian Products

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The chairman of the Iran-Russia joint chamber of commerce highlighted the ideal opportunities that the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) provides for Iranian products.

Hadi Tizhoosh Taban said the CIS market presents a golden opportunity to advertise and sell products made in Iran.

Calling for efforts to fulfill the economic goal of the current Iranian year for a "surge in production", he said an oil-free economy and economic development require the production of commodities with the purpose of exports.

The CIS is a regional intergovernmental organization of nine members, plus two founding non-member, post-Soviet republics in Eurasia. It was formed following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The CIS has an estimated population of around 240 million.

Iran Celebrates World Handicrafts Day

TEHRAN (IFP) - June 10 marks the World Handicrafts Day, an occasion commemorating the creative works of hard-working men and women all over the globe.

In Iran, more than three million artisans, craftsmen and craftswomen are engaged in some 300 fields of traditional art and handicrafts making. Last year, Iran generated \$281 million in revenue from the handicrafts industry, which accounted for a considerable share of the country's non-oil exports.

The handicrafts industry has been receiving growing attention in many countries in recent years.

Following the Second World War, many developed and industrial countries began to grow fond of the handicrafts and traditional art of the nations with ancient civilizations.



The first edition of an international conference on handicrafts was held in New York on June 10, 1964, attended by government officials, university professors, artisans and craftspersons from over 40 countries.

There are a large number of artisans working on handicrafts in Iran, particularly in the city of Shiraz. Improvement of the handicrafts industry requires bigger investment. A good and wise investment in the handicrafts industry could resolve many economic problems of the country. The major traditional arts in Iran include carpet weaving, vitreous enamel, toreutics, Khatam art (Persian technique of inlaying), interior decoration with mirrors, kilim (Persian rug) weaving, ceramic tile art, woodturning, and ornament making.

Limitations for Foreign Flights to Be Lifted

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of the Civil Aviation Organization Ali Abedzadeh said that in the wake of signing health agreements between countries on preventing coronavirus, limitations for the foreign flight will be removed.

Abedzadeh referred to the U.S. heavy pressures on restricting the presentation of technical and operational information to Iranian airlines.

This is while Iranian experts reached good achievements in repairing the engine of the plane, he added.

Boeing and Airbus do not repair Iranian planes' parts, Abedzadeh said, adding that "we can design these parts well".

He noted the coordination has been made with the manufacturer of the plane.

Foreign airlines are now waiting for signing health protocols to transfer passengers based on special health and medical protocols.

5.4% Growth in Foreign Investment in Industry Sector

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade said on Wednesday that the Ministry examined foreign investment proposals and approved \$ 417.3 million foreign investment in industrial, mineral and commercial sector by Foreign Investment Board since the beginning of Iranian new year (started on March 23) to May 23.

According to Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade, this amount of investment is related to 18 projects/units, which also shows a growth of 28.6% in comparison with last year.

According to IRNA, the industry sector with 14 projects with a volume of 416.2 million dollars, the mining sector with two projects with a volume of 680 thousand dollars and the trade sector with two projects with a volume of 500 thousand dollars, respectively, account for the largest volume of foreign investments in April and May.

The largest investments will be carried out in five provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Tehran province, Alborz, Isfahan and Kordestan provinces, respectively, from five countries: Germany, Austria, the UAE, China and Italy.

Length of Iran's Highways Reaches Over 18,000km

TEHRAN (IP) - During the open session of parliament, Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami said that the length of the country's highways has reached 18,485 kilometers, while at the beginning of the Islamic revolution, it was 35 kilometers.



Eslami, in yesterday's Majlis open session stated that the length of the country's freeways is 2470 km, saying, at the beginning of the Islamic revolution, the length of the country's freeways was 76 kilometers, and now the length of the country's highways has reached 18,485 kilometers, while at the beginning of the Islamic revolution, the figure was 35 kilometers.

The Minister of Roads and Urban Development stressed that the total cargo transported by train at the beginning of the revolution was 7 million tons, which has now reached 47 million tons and the port capacity has increased from 19 million tons to 246 tons per year.

According to Eslami, sanctions did the most damage to our aviation sector, but with the development of the fleet, we have been able to keep 140 passenger planes active and transport 30 million passengers.

Iranian Export of Anti-Coronavirus Products on Rise

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian export of anti-coronavirus products which started being made just a few days after its outbreak in late February is on rise due to requests from different countries.

Iranian knowledge-based companies export indigenous coronavirus test kits, face masks, serology test kits and ventilators, the main apparatus on demand worldwide for fighting COVID-19.

On May 19, Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari stated that Iran has received orders from eight states demanding Iranian indigenous coronavirus test kits. As Sattari said, Iran, today, has the capacity of producing one million of serology kits a day and 1.5 million of PCR test kits in a month, and some of those products are delivered to Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the rest are exported.

In a related development, Director of Health Technology Development Office in Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education Hossein Vatanpour told IRNA on Wednesday (June 10) that Iran is witnessing growth in exports of its anti-coronavirus products. Vatanpour said effective efforts have also been taken by the Iranian researchers to produce coronavirus vaccine.

The deadly coronavirus radiating from Wuhan, China, in December 2019 has affected near 6,830,000 people across the world and killed over 397,000 people; while in Iran the number of the dead is more than 8,400.

Second Etihad Plane From UAE Lands in Israel

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - UAE carrier Etihad Airways sent its second flight to Israel in less than a month Tuesday, carrying medical aid to help the Palestinians tackle the coronavirus pandemic, witnesses and officials said.

Jordan and Egypt aside, Arab countries have no official diplomatic ties with Israel, but Persian Gulf Arab nations have had ever more publicly warm ties with Israel of late, partly over shared rivalry with Iran.

In mid-May, the United Arab Emirates flew its first publicly announced flight to Israel, also an Etihad flight carrying coronavirus aid for the Palestinians.



Venezuelan 12-Month Inflation at 3,600% in May

CARACAS (AFP) - Venezuelan inflation over the last 12 months to May was 3,684 percent, the opposition-controlled National Assembly said on Tuesday.

In a statement, the legislative body said total inflation in May was 15 percent, compared with 80 percent in April.

Since the start of the year, prices have risen by more than 400 percent, but year-on-year inflation has actually come down from 4,210 percent in April.

"It's not a regression," said legislator Rafael Guzman, a member of the finance commission, blaming the numbers on "the fall in consumption" due to the coronavirus pandemic.



U.S., Russia to Resume Nuclear Talks



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Russia confirmed Tuesday that it would open talks with the United States this month on extending a major nuclear disarmament treaty but warned that U.S. insistence on including China could scuttle efforts.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov will meet in Vienna on June 22 with US envoy Marshall Billingslea to start negotiations on New START, which expires in February.

President Donald Trump has walked out on a number of international agreements but voiced a general interest in preserving New START, which obliged the United States and Russia to halve their inventories of strategic nuclear missile launchers.

But the Trump administration says that a successor to New START, a Cold War legacy negotiated under Barack Obama, should bring in China -- whose nuclear arsenal is growing but remains significantly smaller than those of Russia and the United States.

"My answer to a direct question on whether or not we think it would be possible to bring China to the table would be a flat and straightforward no," Ryabkov told the Council on Foreign Relations by videoconference from Moscow.

"Now it depends on the U.S. -- if the US believes it's worth continuing this dialogue with Russia or, for the U.S. point of view, the Chinese participation is an absolute imperative that precludes (the) U.S. from continuing a meaningful and forward-looking dialogue with Russia on arms control," he said.

Ryabkov indicated that Russia did not oppose the US invitation to China -- an international ally of Moscow despite a complicated historical relationship -- but said Beijing had to agree.

In turn, Ryabkov said that U.S. allies Britain and France, also nuclear powers with much smaller arsenals, should join the talks.

"The logic is a very simple one -- the more we come down in numbers, the higher is the price for every single warhead payload and we cannot simply ignore capabilities of some others."

Ryabkov described the U.S. willingness to start negotiations as "good news" but said: "The ball is on the American part of the court."

"We need to hear loudly and clearly what this administration wants, how it believes it would be possible to do something positive and not just to dismantle one arms control treaty or arrangement after another."

Trump last month pulled out of the Open Skies Treaty, which allowed Russia, the United States and 32 other nations to conduct a number of surveillance flights over one another's territory at short notice.

He earlier pulled out of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a key agreement from the Cold War.

Billingslea, in a speech last month at the Hudson Institute, said Trump was "not interested in agreements simply for agreements' sake."

He accused China of erecting a "Great Wall of Secrecy" about its nuclear weapons and accused Beijing of flaunting its growing arsenal "to intimidate the United States and our friends and allies."

"This is irresponsible, dangerous behavior. If China seeks to be a great power -- and we know it has that self-image -- it needs to behave like one," he said.

UN Chief Wants More Agile Mission in Lebanon

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, criticized by the United States and Israel, needs to be "more agile and mobile," UN chief Antonio Guterres said in a report published Tuesday ahead of the mission's renewal in August.

"Standard armoured personnel carriers are not entirely suitable for crowded areas, narrow streets and mountainous terrain," Guterres said.

With lighter transport vehicles, troops would have fewer restrictions on their movement, he said.

He also called for "better situational awareness" for UNIFIL.

Lebanon and Israel are still technically at war, and UNIFIL usually patrols the border between the two.

Set up in 1978, UNIFIL was beefed up after a months-long war in 2006 and tasked with guaranteeing a ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from a demilitarized zone on the border.



EU Says Needs More Cash to Fight Chinese Disinformation

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The EU's diplomatic chief on Tuesday called for more resources to fight disinformation from China, warning that Europe needed to stop being naive in its dealings with Beijing.

EU foreign affairs high representative Josep Borrell, speaking after video talks with the Chinese foreign minister, told European countries they needed to back up their preaching on disinformation with money.

He said Chinese minister Wang Yi had rebuffed his concerns about Beijing's clampdown on freedoms in Hong Kong, reiterating the communist government's lines about boosting security in the financial hub.

Coronavirus has fanned the flames of a geopolitical information war, with the West accusing Beijing and Moscow of promoting false or misleading narratives about the pandemic which began in China late last year.

On Wednesday, Borrell and EU vice-president for values and transparency Vera Jourova were to issue a statement on a strategy to counter disinformation inspired by the coronavirus epidemic.

"Foreign actors and certain third countries, in particular Russia and China, have engaged in targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns around COVID-19," it says.

A copy of the statement seen by AFP accuses Moscow and Beijing of "seeking to undermine democratic debate and exacerbate social polarisation, and improve their own image in the COVID-19 context."

The EU operates a small task force with a website analysing and debunking misleading stories, but it is primarily focused on disinformation emanating from Russia.

"For sure we have to allocate more resources in the fight against disinformation," Borrell told reporters.

"I think we have to work more on that and not only fighting disinformation, trying to counterattack the fakes but to present a positive narrative."

UNIFIL can have up to 10,000 troops on the ground, monitoring the truce and helping Lebanese troops secure the borders.

Guterres said the changes could come from "replacing some heavy infantry functions used for day-to-day activities with reconnaissance functions" using smaller "high-mobility light tactical vehicles and reconnaissance vehicles with improved monitoring capacity," he noted. The shift "would result in a force sufficiently protected but with a lighter footprint, geared towards better situational awareness," he said.

That could mean more troops working in observation and surveillance missions and a reduction in the number of battalions in the zone of operations, he said. The UN head said he wanted to see construction of observation posts and for UN troops to have modern technology to collect and analyze data and improve their communications.

As well as the video surveillance and sensors already deployed, Guterres called for thermal-imaging cameras, hi-tech binoculars and drones which could bolster surveillance capacity, in particular on the Blue Line separating Lebanon from Israel.

New York Lawmakers Vote to Scrap Police Discipline Secrecy Law

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - New York lawmakers voted on Tuesday to repeal a decades-old law that shields police officers' disciplinary records from the public. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has said he will sign the bill into law amid nationwide protests against police brutality.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo tweeted that he will sign the bill into law this week amid nationwide protests against police brutality.

The Legislature just voted to repeal 50-A and I will sign it into law this week. The countless voices for reform united and were heard.

The bill is part of a package of police reform measures advanced by the Democratic-controlled Assembly and Senate in Albany this week as protests gripped the nation following the death of George Floyd, a black man, as a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck.

On Monday, the legislature voted to ban the use by police of chokeholds. The practice had come under intense condemnation when an African-American man, Eric Garner, died after a white New York City police officer used a chokehold on him during a 2014 arrest.

Advocates for police accountability have long been pushing for the repeal of the contentious section of New York's Civil Rights Law, 50-a, that prevented disclosure to the public of disciplinary records of police officers.

"The legislation that will be passed over the coming days will help stop bad actors and send a clear message that brutality, racism, and unjustified killings will not be tolerated," New York Senate majority leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said in a statement.

"The message has been sent very clearly to police officers by our elected officials: We don't like you," Richard Wells, president of the statewide union the Police Conference of New York, told reporters. "We don't respect you. We will not support you. We want you to go away."

He said the repeal of 50-A would enable criminal defense attorneys to cite old complaints against an officer in court to undermine the officer's testimony.

The New York City Council was also considering a bill to criminalize the use of chokeholds, which has widespread support among lawmakers but is opposed in its current form by the mayor.



Brazil Resumes Publishing Virus Toll, Criticizes WHO

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Brazil's government resumed publishing the country's total death toll from the coronavirus pandemic Tuesday, after facing accusations of trying to hide the magnitude of its raging health crisis.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's government had stopped publishing the total number of deaths from the new coronavirus Friday, saying it was adopting a new methodology and would only report the number of deaths recorded in the past 24 hours in its daily bulletin.

That drew accusations of foul play from a long list of high-profile critics, as well as a ruling from Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes on Monday that the government must return to the old format.

The health ministry did so Tuesday, indicating the death toll had risen by 1,272, to a total of 38,406 people killed by the virus -- the third-highest toll in the world, after the United States and Britain.

The ministry said the total number of confirmed infections had risen to 739,503, the second-highest caseload in the world, after the U.S.

Experts say under-testing means the real numbers in the country of 212 million people are probably much higher.

The health ministry did not immediately respond to questions from AFP on why it returned to the old format and its plans for the future.

Bolsonaro, who famously compared the virus to a "little flu," has railed against the consensus response to the pandemic, saying stay-at-home measures are needlessly wrecking the economy. He threatened Friday to quit the World Health Organization over "ideological bias" -- criticism echoed Tuesday by his foreign minister, Ernesto Araujo.

"The WHO lacks independence, transparency and coherence. The foreign ministry is following its role with great concern," Araujo said.

"We need to look into it. Is it a matter of political influence, is it a matter of non-state actors influencing the WHO?"





Zaferanieh Apt (\$3000)
350sq.m, 4bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
pkg, & F.F

Shanon (adviser)

Niavaran Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
pkg, & yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

Sa'adat abad
150sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, & F.F
(\$1600)

Farmanieh Apt
240sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, gym, F.F
(\$2500)

Elahieh Bldg
4storey, 15bdrs
enough pkg lots
(\$7000)

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Emirates Lays Off Thousands Of Pilots, Cabin Crew

DUBAI (Reuters) - Emirates, one of the world's biggest long-haul airlines, laid off hundreds of pilots and thousands of cabin crew on Tuesday as it manages a cash crunch caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and more job cuts are planned, five company sources said.

Aviation is one of the industries worst hit by the fallout from the virus outbreak, with airlines forced to lay off staff

and seek government bailouts.

More redundancies were expected at Emirates this week including both Airbus (AIR.PA) A380 and Boeing BA.B 777 pilots, the sources said on the condition of anonymity.

The workforce of 4,300 pilots and nearly 22,000 cabin crew could shrink by almost a third from its pre-coronavirus levels, three of the sources said.



2019 Fossil Fuel Subsidies Nearly \$500b

PARIS (AFP) - Climate crisis notwithstanding, governments subsidized fossil fuels in 2019 to the tune of nearly half-a-trillion dollars, two intergovernmental agencies have jointly reported.

Subsidies for fossil fuel consumption alone declined \$120 billion, or 27 percent, compared to 2018 due mainly to lower oil and gas prices, according to International Energy Agency (IEA) figures.

Governments that heavily support the use of oil and gas include Iran, Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Indonesia, Egypt, India and Venezuela.

At the same time, subsidies for fossil fuel production -- in the form of cash, tax breaks and other credits -- increased across 44 rich and emerging economies in 2019 by 38 percent to \$55 billion, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported.

Combined subsidies for both consumption and production last year totalled \$478 billion in 77 economies, an 18 percent drop compared to the year before, the IEA and OECD said in a joint statement, released at the end of last week.

"The fiscal burden of subsidies means that fewer resources can be potentially devoted to other public funding, be it for clean-energy research, innovation or to strengthen social safety nets," Nathalie Girouard, head of the OECD's environmental performance and information division, told AFP.

Burning oil, gas and coal -- which account for more than 80 percent of global primary energy use -- is the main source of the greenhouse gases that drive global warming.

Governments have long recognised the need to stop propping up fossil fuel production and use.

As early as 2009, G20 nations responsible for 80 percent of CO2 emissions pledged to gradually eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.

So far, however, they have failed to deliver on that promise.

"I am saddened to see some backsliding on efforts to phase out fossil fuel support," OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said in a statement. "Subsidizing fossil fuels is an inefficient use of public money and serves to worsen greenhouse emissions and air pollution."

Business leaders have also flagged the need to stop bankrolling the production and use of oil, gas and their derivatives.

In December, 631 institutional investors managing more than \$37 trillion in assets endorsed the Paris climate treaty goal of capping global warming at two degrees Celsius and called on governments to "phase out fossil fuel subsidies by set deadlines".

With oil, gas and coal prices dropping through the floor due to COVID lockdowns in the first part of 2020, governments need to support the energy needs of their least advantaged citizens while channelling the money freed up into a greener economy, said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol.

"Today's low fossil fuel prices offer countries a golden opportunity to phase out consumption subsidies," he said.

"It is essential to avoid market distortions that favour polluting and inefficient technologies."

Burning fossil fuels causes some 4.5 million premature deaths each year, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

"Many subsidies are poorly targeted, disproportionately benefiting wealthier segments of the population that use much more of the subsidized fuel," IEA energy analysts Wataru Matsumura and Zakia Adam wrote in a blog last year.

"Such untargeted subsidy policies encourage wasteful consumption, pushing up emissions and straining government budgets."

Airlines Heading for \$84b Loss This Year

PARIS (Reuters) - Airlines are set to lose \$84 billion (£66.5 billion) as the coronavirus pandemic reduces revenue by half to mark the worst year in the sector's history, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecast on Tuesday.

With most of the world's airliners currently parked, IATA said revenue would likely fall to \$419 billion from \$838 billion last year.

"Every day of this year will add \$230 million to industry losses," IATA Director General Alexandre de Juniac said.

The average loss amounts to almost \$38 per passenger flown.

In 2021, IATA warned losses could hit \$100 billion as traffic struggles to recover and airlines slash fares to win business.

"Airlines will still be financially fragile in 2021," De Juniac said, predicting "even more intense" competition.

"That will translate into strong incentives for travellers to take to the skies again," he added.

IATA forecast a rise in 2021 revenue to \$598 billion.

Airlines are counting the cost of weeks of lost business, a debt pile swollen by bailouts and a diminished demand outlook. Passenger numbers are seen falling to 2.25 billion this year before rising to 3.38 billion in 2021, still more than 25% below 2019 levels.

Yields, a proxy for fares, are seen falling 18% this year, contributing to a \$241 billion decline in passenger revenue.

Cargo, a relatively small share of the overall business, brought some relief as mass plane groundings drove price increases expected to top 30%, IATA said, helping revenue to a near-record \$111 billion.

Even in markets where COVID-19 infection rates have fallen sharply, airlines still face a patchwork of travel restrictions and wary consumers.

A 14-day quarantine for arriving passengers introduced by Britain this week has prompted an angry response and legal threats from the travel industry amid reports that it may be loosened in favour of "air corridors" to some destinations.



Japan Wants Manufacturing Back From China

TOKYO (Reuters) - When Japanese firm Iris Ohyama agreed in April to begin producing much-needed face masks in Japan, it marked a win for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who wants to bring manufacturing back from China.

Spooked by coronavirus-induced factory shutdowns in China, Abe's government has earmarked \$2 billion to help companies shift production home. The policy, part of a massive stimulus package to cope with the pandemic, has even been termed by some bureaucrats as a matter of national security. "We have become dependent on China," Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters last week. "We need to make supply chains more robust and diverse, broadening our supply sources and increasing domestic production."

Japanese production of masks, for which domestic demand has skyrocketed, makes sense. But Iris Ohyama, which until this month had only made face masks in China, is so far the only large firm known to be taking advantage of the subsidies.

Many other Japanese firms say shifting output back home is simply impractical and uneconomical. They need to be physically present in China because much of what they are making is ultimately for the Chinese consumer, and to meet the demands of 'just-in-time' production which prioritises short delivery times for efficient manufacturing.

"The parts we make are so big that we need to be near our customers to control our costs," said Chikara Haruta, a spokesman at Yorozu Corp (7294.T), which makes suspension and other auto components. Its plant in Wuhan, China is located just seven kilometres from a Honda Motor Co Ltd (7267.T) assembly factory. For Japan's car makers, reliance on Chinese suppliers in the world's biggest auto market is also just good business.

"Even if we wanted to, it would be difficult to lower our exposure to China-made parts," an executive at a Japanese automaker told Reuters, declining to be identified as he was not authorised to speak to media.

He added that over the past decade, Chinese suppliers had upped their game and now provide a vast range of quality, low-cost parts. Toyota Motor Corp, Nissan Motor Co Ltd and Honda also have at least three R&D centers each in China, and their suppliers are following suit.

"Where the software is developed dictates where the hardware is developed and made," said an official at a Japanese parts supplier, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The new government incentive is misguided if it only focuses on bringing manufacturing back, while overlooking R&D functions."

Japanese politicians have increasingly fretted over Japan's dependence on China as a production hub.

Global Use of Euro Stabilizes Near Historic Lows



FRANKFURT (Reuters) - The global use of the euro was broadly stable last year after a steady decline in the aftermath of the bloc's debt crisis but hopes for increased demand failed to materialize, a European Central Bank (ECB) report indicated on Tuesday.

Launched over 20 years ago, the euro has always played second fiddle to the U.S. dollar, even as the European Commission has made it a goal to boost its global role, in part to reduce the bloc's reliance on the greenback during a period of growing global trade tensions.

The euro zone's financial architecture remains incomplete, however, as it lacks a common safe asset or a deposit insurance scheme, its bank sector is fragmented and the capital markets union is unfinished.

The euro accounted for 20.5% of global foreign exchange reserves at the end of last year, up from 20.3% a year earlier, while its share in outstanding international debt securities declined to 22.1% from 22.4%, the ECB said in an annual assessment on the currency.

In international deposits outside the bloc, the euro's role remained broadly unchanged while its share in outstanding international loans rose one percentage point.

"The recent COVID-19 pandemic underlines the urgency of these policies and reform efforts, which are paramount to raising the attractiveness of the euro globally," ECB President Christine Lagarde said.

Much like the euro, the dollar has also lost market share over the past decade to other currencies, such as the Japanese yen and the British pound, but the two still account for over 80% of global foreign exchange reserves.

"The share of the US dollar, the leading global reserve currency, declined further to a two-decade low, suggesting that the trend towards gradual diversification of global reserve portfolios continued," the ECB said.

U.S. Economy Entered Recession in February

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The U.S. economy ended its longest expansion in history in February and entered recession as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the private economics research group that acts as the arbiter for determining U.S. business cycles said.

The Business Cycle Dating Committee of the National Bureau of Economic Research said in a statement its members "concluded that the unprecedented magnitude of the decline in employment and production, and its broad reach across the entire economy, warrants the designation of this episode as a recession, even if it turns out to be briefer than earlier contractions."

The designation was expected, but notable for its speed, coming a mere four months after the recession began. The committee has typically waited longer before making a recession call in order to be sure. When the economy started declining in late 2007, for example, the group did not pinpoint the start of the recession until a year later.

But the depth and speed of this collapse left little doubt.

"In deciding whether to identify a recession, the committee weighs the depth of the contraction, its duration, and whether economic activity declined broadly across the economy. ... The committee recognizes that the pandemic and the public health response have resulted in a downturn with different characteristics and dynamics than prior recessions," the committee said in a statement.

U.S. gross domestic product fell at a 5.0% annualized rate in the first three months of the year. The outcome for the April to June period is expected to show an even worse annualized decline of perhaps 20% or more. The unemployment rate rose from a record low of 3.5% in February, hitting 14.7% in April and 13.3% last month.

But growth may well recover from there, possibly making the current downturn not only among the sharpest but also among the shortest on record.

Since World War Two recessions have lasted from six to 18 months, nothing close to the 43-month downturn of the Great Depression that began in 1929.

Though the data that began to accumulate in March rival some of the statistics from the Depression era, economists expect growth to resume this summer and likely continue unless the virus resurges.

"It could very well be that this is the beginning of the trough," Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist for the National Retail Federation, said in an economic outlook seminar organized by the National Association for Business Economics. But "there are so many moving parts," he said. "If we have a reoccurrence of the pandemic and it comes on stronger, there is the potential of another dip" in economic growth.

UK, Japan Aim for Free Trade Deal This Year

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain will begin negotiating a post-Brexit trade agreement with Japan on Tuesday which the government said both sides hoped would enter into force by the end of this year.

After decades outsourcing its trade policy to the European Union, Britain is embarking on

negotiating free trade deals with countries around the world, and last month launched formal negotiations with the United States.

Trade deals typically take years to complete. Britain is also hoping to reach a trade agreement with the EU by the end of the year.

Talks will be held via video conference and will be kicked off by British trade minister Liz Truss and Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi on Tuesday.

"This deal will provide more opportunities for businesses and individuals across every region and nation of the UK and help boost our economies following the unprecedented economic challenges posed by coronavirus," Truss said in a statement.

Britain said it aimed to reach a deal which builds on Japan's existing agreement with the EU, going further by including areas such as digital trade.

Japan was Britain's fourth-biggest non-EU trading partner in 2019, with total trade between the two countries of 31.4 billion pounds, according to government statistics.

Britain hopes ultimately to join the 11-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and sees trade talks with Japan as a step towards that end.

Britain said around 100 negotiators would be involved on its side, with talks led by Graham Zebede, a former British ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo, and overseen by Britain's Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser Crawford Falconer.

Be Ashamed of Crying Wolf Over Detention of an Iranian

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a tweet on Wednesday, Iran’s Ambassador to UK Hamid Baeidinjad lashed out at United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom Woody Johnson for his latest remarks urging the release of the detained Iranian citizen Morad Tahbaz by the Islamic Republic.

“#USAmbUK should be ashamed of himself crying wolf over detention of an Iranian, while his compatriot’s chanting #BlackLivesMatters are brutally suppressed at home,” the Iranian ambassador wrote. “Can’t he see from window 10,000s Londoners asking U.S. Gov’t to stop violence against innocents/respect human rights?”



EU Seeks Tougher Checks on Foreign Buying of European Firms

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The Europe Union will seek tougher checks on foreign state-owned or state-backed companies buying European firms to prevent the use of unfair subsidies, the EU antitrust chief said on Tuesday, the latest move to increase protection.

The bloc’s protectionist trend has accelerated as it strives to create European industrial champions and because of concerns wealthy foreigners might swoop on companies whose value has been reduced by the coronavirus crisis.

Margrethe Vestager said in an interview foreign companies use subsidies without the European Union’s knowledge or checks.

“There is a high risk that they will fragment the single market or un-level the playing field,” she said.

Vestager will next week present a proposal, known as the white paper on foreign subsidies, to tighten checks.

EU governments and the European Parliament will subsequently specify which EU interests could be harmed by foreign subsidies.

European companies with foreign state-backed shareholders could be investigated, she said, citing an old case of a tyre maker bought by a Chinese company, which was able to appear more competitive than rival European bidders because of its state subsidies, although this was never proved.

“I think it’s only appropriate that we also do our best when they (European companies) are met with unfair competition even in Europe because competitors here may have access to foreign subsidies,” Vestager said.

Vestager, who has approved EU state aid totalling more than 2 trillion euros to coronavirus-hit companies in the last two months, said carefully-monitored EU



support differed from subsidies used by foreign companies.

“We know what is going on. We also know that it’s temporary in character, this is what characterises these many different issues,” she said.

“We know they are needed and the decisions we take minimise the risks of fragmentation of the single market and none of that is the case for foreign subsidies.”

More Than 820m Hungry People in World Despite Enough Food for All

TEHRAN (UNIC) - United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his remarks during the launch of Policy Brief on Food Security in New York on Tuesday, June 9, 2020, said that despite enough food in the world to feed 7.8 billion people, more than 820 million people are hungry.

The full text of his remarks reads:

There is more than enough food in the world to feed a population of 7.8 billion people. But, today, more than 820 million people are hungry. And some 144 million children under the age of 5 are stunted – more than one in five children worldwide.

Our food systems are failing, and the Covid-19 pandemic is making things worse. Unless immediate action is taken, it is increasingly clear that there is an impending global food emergency that could have long term impacts on hundreds of millions of children and adults.

This year, some 49 million extra people may fall into extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The number of people who are acutely food or nutrition insecure will rapidly expand. Every percentage point drop in global Gross Domestic Product means an additional 0.7 million stunted children.

Even in countries with abundant food, we see risks of disruptions in the food supply chain. We need to act now to avoid the worst impacts of our efforts to control the pandemic. Today I am launching a Policy Brief on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition.

It has three clear findings.

First, we must mobilize to save lives and livelihoods, focusing attention where the risk is most acute.

That means designating food and nutrition services as essential while implementing appropriate protections for food workers. It means preserving critical humanitarian food, livelihood and nutrition assistance to vulnerable groups.

And it means positioning food in food-crisis countries to reinforce and scale up social protection systems.

Countries need to scale up support for food processing, transport and local food markets, and they must keep trade corridors open to ensure the continuous functioning of food systems. And they must ensure that relief and stimulus packages reach the most vulnerable, including meeting the liquidity needs of small-scale food producers and rural businesses.

Second, we must strengthen social protection systems for nutrition. Countries need to safeguard access to safe, nutritious foods, particularly for young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older people and other at-risk groups. And they need to adapt and expand social protection schemes to benefit nutritionally at-risk groups.

This includes supporting children who no longer have access to school meals.

Third, we must invest in the future.

We have an opportunity to build a more inclusive and sustainable world. Let us build food systems that better address the needs of food producers and workers.

Let us provide more inclusive access to healthy and nutritious food so we can eradicate hunger.

And let us rebalance the relationship between food systems and the natural environment by transforming them to work better with nature and for the climate.

We cannot forget that food systems contribute up to 29 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions, including 44 per cent of methane, and are having a negative impact on biodiversity. If we do these things and more, as indicated by the brief we are launching today, we can avoid some of the worst impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition – and we can do so in a way that supports the green transition that we need to make.

China to Cut Teapot Refining Capacity as Plans for Mega Complex

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - China’s oil hub Shandong has embarked on a plan to shut down capacity of half a million barrels per day shared among small, independent refiners to make way for a giant complex that should spur economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

Reuters exclusively reported last week that China, the world’s largest oil consumer after the United States, was going ahead with the \$20 billion Yulong Petrochemical complex.

The planned 400,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) refinery and 3 million tonne-per-year ethylene plant in Yantai, Shandong, the country’s hub for independent refineries, sometimes referred to as teapot refineries, had long failed to get approval as China struggled with excess refining capacity.

The drop in demand because of coronavirus lockdowns, as well as expectations climate concerns will reduce conventional motor fuel use, is likely to increase over-supply in the near term.

But state approval was granted last week for a new mega refining complex, weighted towards petrochemical production whose demand is expected to be relatively robust.

That has prompted Shandong to accelerate a plan dating from 2018 to close 500,000 bpd in capacity over the next two-to-three years, Shandong-based industry officials and consultancies said.

That amounts to 20% of Shandong’s capacity, made up of more than 60 small plants.

The Shandong government, which has yet to make public any details of the restructuring, did not respond to Reuters’ requests for comment.

Wang Zhao, senior analyst with consultancy Sublime Information Group, said Shandong will first target plants of less than 60,000 bpd, especially those with financial losses, out of about a dozen that have shown interest in compensation.

“The government is dead serious about restructuring, but its execution hinges on how smoothly the relevant parties reach a deal on compensation,” said Wang, who is based in Shandong’s Zibo city.

The first closures would include Binyang Ranhua,



Zhonghai Jingxi Chemical, Yuhuang Chemical and Jinshi Asphalt, with combined crude distillation capacity of just over 200,000 bpd, Wang said. A separate Shandong oil source, who asked not to be named, shared the view.

The semi-official China Chemical News reported last week the Shandong government has asked

creditors of the targeted plants, mostly state-run banks, to stop chasing debt repayments and urged compensation to be prioritised for relocating workers and investing in new projects.

Jinshi Asphalt, a bitumen-producing unit with capacity to refine 20,000 bpd of crude, based in Binzhou, northern Shandong, is expected to start closing imminently.

“We’ve received the first payment as compensation to shut down our crude oil unit,” a manager, who declined to be named because of company policy, told Reuters. “Dismantling will start soon.”

He did not specify the amount of compensation.

Shandong sources said the government had proposed last year a fee of 800 yuan for each tonne of capacity, taking the total expense to 20 billion yuan (\$2.82 billion) for closing 500,000-bpd.

Binyang Ranhua, also based in Binzhou, has agreed to dismantle its 88,000 bpd unit, and will channel the funding into new chemical units, a plant executive said.

Of the others expected to be among the first to close, Zhonghai Jingxi Chemical declined to comment and Yuhuang Chemical could not be reached for comment.

Some refiners are reluctant to shut capacity.

“We were all legal entities when we started, and our plant is running well. Why should we close down?” said an executive with a refiner based in Dongying on Shandong’s northern coast.

Shandong in any case is expected to proceed with caution.

“The main preoccupation for local authorities is likely to be employment and tax revenue, so protecting these through the consolidation process will be the top priority,” Michal Meidan, director of the China Energy Programme at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, said.

Pakistan’s Mango...

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He said that now the border crossing was open, but exports were being allowed on three days only - Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays - and that too for a limited time period - from 10am to 3pm.

The time allotted for mango export is too short since empty trucks could not reach from the Iranian side to carry mangoes owing to the traffic related to the trade of other commodities. The consignments of mangoes stuck on the Pakistan-Iran border could rot, causing irreparable damage to mango exporters and to the economy of the country.

According to Babar Durrani, each year around 15,000 tons of mangoes are exported to Iran, roughly 20 per cent of the annual Pakistani mango exports.

He said that reserving just three days for import and export of any commodity was too short especially when it was a perishable farm produce.

Such a sorry state of affairs has been damaging trade between the two countries especially causing harm to the exports of Pakistani products.

He appealed to the prime minister, officials of the ministry of commerce, the Federal Board of Revenue and Customs to resolve the issue at the earliest.

Durrani said that the total value of the mango consignments stuck on the Pakistan-Iran border was Rs400 million.

He said that the stakeholders related to the entire supply chain of mango exports down to the level of growers would incur irreparable losses this year if the export of these consignments was not allowed smoothly.

This should not be the case as these people, especially the farmers, have already been facing serious economic hardships this year due to the persisting lockdown measures in the country, he said.

President Blasts U.S...

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“We expect our two friend countries in particular, namely Russia and China, to stand against such plot,” he added.

“As all various plots that the US has hatched against us until now have ended in failure, we are confident that it will not achieve success in this plot either. And we will do our utmost to boost our defense capability. The Americans must realize that Iran’s defense capabilities will increase under all circumstances, be it under difficult conditions or under sanctions, whether or not they propose a resolution, they do something or not, or they harm the resolution 2231,” the president stated.

President Rouhani also denounced the US for its bully-style policies, noting, “We have known since the past that the policy of the US is the policy of ‘kneeling on neck’. They (Americans) have been always like this throughout history. They have pressed their knee on the neck of every oppressed person they have found in order to kill him. This is their policy, not the policy of a single cop in a single city. This is basically the U.S. policy.”

“But the great Iranian nation broke that knee. They (Americans) wanted to do the same in 2018. They brought the knee close to the throat of the (Iranian) nation. But our dear nation smashed their knee with the giant sledgehammer of national unity and solidarity. Now they (Americans) have no knee anymore to put pressure on the Iranian nation. This is their policy, they are again after conspiracy,” he stated.

“In the recent years when we were under difficult conditions caused by sanctions, we designed the best air defense systems, and hit a US drone with the very same system. We shot down the US drone with the Iranian system,” the president emphasized. “Therefore, we will be enhancing our defense power. On economy, our people should know that we will be doing our utmost to reduce pressures on people,” he concluded.

Health Official...

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According to the latest statistics, 175,927 people in the country have been infected with the coronavirus so far, and 138,457 of total infected people have recovered.

Meanwhile Health Ministry Spokeswoman announced that so far, nearly 178,000 people in the country have been infected with the coronavirus, and more than 140,000 of total infected people have recovered.

Speaking about the latest data on the coronavirus in the country and its death toll on Wednesday, Sima Sadat Lari said, “According to the definitive laboratory findings and from yesterday to June 10 in the country, 2,011 new patients with COVID-19 were diagnosed and the number of patients with this disease reached to 177,938.”

811 of new patients were hospitalized, she added. Fortunately, 140,590 patients have recovered and have been discharged so far, Lari said.

The Spokeswoman stated, “Unfortunately, in the past 24 hours, 81 COVID-19 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total deaths to 8,506.”

So far, around 1,151,032 COVID-19 diagnosis tests have been conducted in the country, the Health Ministry spokeswoman said. According to the spokeswoman, Khuzestan Province is still in a critical situation and the situation of 6 other provinces is alarming.

Sima Sadat Lari was appointed as the spokeswoman for the Ministry of Health on Tuesday. She replaced Kianoosh Jahanpour, a former spokesman for the Ministry.

Iran Complains...

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Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement, Iran’s arms embargo must be lifted on October 20, 2020, after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report confirmed that Iran’s nuclear program was peaceful.

On May 8, 2018, US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from JCPOA by violating Washington’s obligations under this agreement and announced the return of nuclear sanctions against Iran.

Tehran, Yerevan...

FROM PAGE 1

The official further noted that supporting the expansion of the relations between the two countries’ private sectors and especially the chambers of commerce, establishing joint industrial settlements near the borders to develop new markets in third countries, increasing customs working hours, and facilitating truck traffic are also among the issues that need to be addressed in order to improve trade relations.

The Armenian side also expressed their appreciation for TPO’s constructive efforts and stressed the above-mentioned issues to be explored by a working group recently formed for this purpose to find practical solutions.

PSG Captain Silva Set to Leave

LONDON (Reuters) - Paris St Germain captain Thiago Silva is to leave the Ligue 1 champions after eight years at the club, French media have reported. The Brazilian defender Silva was hoping to remain with PSG for two more years but was informed by the club's sporting director Leonardo that his contract would not be extended beyond the end of the Champions League campaign, L'Equipe reported late on Monday. The 35-year-old joined the French side from AC Milan in 2012 and made over 300 appearances, winning seven league titles, five League Cups and four French Cups.

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Shaqiri to Leave Liverpool

LONDON (Dispatches) - Xherdan Shaqiri plans to leave Liverpool this summer. The Daily Mail says Shaqiri is set to leave, with Newcastle keen on signing the Switzerland international. It's also been revealed Reds fullback Nathaniel Clyne is training on his own and will leave the club when his current deal expires at the end of the month. Meanwhile, it's claimed FSG and Jurgen Klopp are in agreement that Harvey Elliott, Curtis Jones and Takumi Minamino will all be selected ahead of England international Adam Lallana, wary of fielding him against sides who could be interested in signing the midfielder.

Djokovic, Thiem, Tsitsipas in Action

LONDON (Dispatches) - Andrew Georgiou, President, Eurosport and Global Sports Rights and Sports Marketing Solutions, said, "The excitement around live tennis' return has been building and the coming together of the world's best tennis talent this weekend is a chance for fans to see how the preparations of best players in the world are faring ahead of the Grand Slams in August and September."

He added, "Our deep and rich history in telling the stories from tennis that matter, means we are set to continue creating rewarding experiences for fans to enjoy, across any device and any time they choose."

The Adria Tour, supported by the Novak Djokovic Foundation, will feature current world number one Novak Djokovic, Austrian Dominic Thiem (week one), Bulgarian star Grigor Dimitrov and Croatian pair Borna Coric and Marin Cilic. Screened live across Europe, Eurosport has committed to showing the opening two rounds of the series from Belgrade, Serbia (13-14 June) and Zadar, Croatia (20-21 June). Each match played at the event will be best of three sets, with four games in each set.

The brainchild of respected coach Patrick Mouratoglou, the Ultimate Tennis Showdown will seek to revolutionise tennis through a series of innovations, such as the option of coaching time outs and mic'd up coaches, to engage new audiences. Hosted at the Patrick Mouratoglou Academy in the south of France, a string of top players have signed up to take part including Stefanos Tsitsipas, Dominic Thiem

(week two), Alexei Popyrin, Matteo Berrettini, David Goffin and Felix Auger-Aliassime. Matches will last no longer than one hour, divided into 12 minute quarters with a two minute break at each change over. Eurosport will screen the Ultimate Tennis Showdown on a pan-Euro basis (excluding Eurosport Player).

Match schedules for each of the tournaments are still to be confirmed.

During the pause in live sport, Eurosport has kept fans engaged and entertained through a series of new and re-launched formats including the Tennis Legends podcast hosted by Mats Wilander with star guests including Matteo Berrettini and Bianca Andreescu, Players' Cut – an all-encompassing series delving into the professional lives of the greatest names in tennis such as Simona Halep and Rafa Nadal; and You Say We Play, inviting fans to vote for their favourite classic tennis matches from years gone by via Eurosport's digital and social platforms.

Meanwhile Nick Kyrgios said he believes



hiring a coach would be a "waste of money" and "pointless", and doubts whether he will ever win a Grand Slam.

The 25-year-old has made it to the quarter-finals at the Australian Open and Wimbledon, but is largely considered to have under-performed so far in his career considering his powerful game.

Unlike most of the top players in the men's game, he often travels without a full-time coach, and he says that isn't likely to change soon.

"Personally, I think (hiring a coach) is a little bit of a waste of money 'cause I think they get paid way too much," he told comedian and friend Elliot Loney on a podcast.

And, for me, I don't have a goal of winning Grand Slams. I just want to do it my way, have fun with it and just play. So to get a coach for me is pointless because I don't want to waste their time almost. I just don't think a coach is ready - and I'm not going to put them through it too 'cause it would just be a nightmare.

"Where I'm at my career now, it's just too far gone, I think for a coach, 'cause I'm too set in my ways and I just don't like to listen to advice, to be honest."

Madrid Could Host Champions League Final

MADRID (AFP) - The mayor of Madrid has said the city is being considered as a potential host of this year's Champions League final and has given the idea his "total and absolute support".

The fixture was due to be played at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul on May 30 before the Champions League was postponed in March with only half of the last 16 completed.

The final last season between Liverpool and Tottenham was held at Atletico Madrid's Wanda Metropolitano while Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu hosted the 2010 decider between Inter Milan and Bayern Munich.

"I know steps are being taken in this regard and on behalf of the city council, I want to show my total and absolute support for the Champions League final being held in Madrid," Madrid mayor Jose Luis Martinez-Almeida said on Monday night to Spanish television channel Trece.

Spain has been able to bring coronavirus under control in recent weeks and Madrid moved into phase two, the penultimate stage of the government's de-escalation program, on Monday. But overall there have been more than 27,000 deaths caused by coronavirus in the country.

"I think hosting an international event like the Champions League final is very important but especially in these circumstances," Almeida added.

"What it would demonstrate is Madrid's ability to recover in a very short time from the dramatic situation we have been through."

Almeida added that "adequate security conditions exist, we have the infrastructures and public services to host it and it would send a message to the world that Madrid, despite what we have experienced, does not give up and is back."

UEFA is yet to confirm how or if the tournament will continue, with an update expected after the governing body's executive committee meeting on June 17.

Domestic leagues like La Liga in Spain and the Premier League in England are due to finish in July, allowing the possibility for European competitions to resume in August.

Lallana Signs Short-Term Liverpool Extension



LONDON (Reuters) - Liverpool midfielder Adam Lallana has signed a short-term contract extension to stay at Anfield for the remainder of the season, the Premier League club said on Tuesday.

Lallana, 32, was set to leave on a free transfer when his contract expires on June 30 but will now see out the remaining nine matches of the campaign with Jurgen Klopp's side as they aim to secure their first league title since 1990.

The 2019-20 season is set to restart after a lengthy hiatus enforced by the COVID-19 outbreak, with Liverpool facing Everton in their first match back on June 21.

"I am really pleased to have the chance to finish this season – it means a lot to me and my family," England international Lallana told the club's website here

"I feel in my time at Liverpool I've always looked to do the right thing for the team, the manager and the club in every decision I've made.

"I think this one fits into that category as well, so I'm buzzing to be seeing out this campaign and hopefully get to celebrate something memorable with an amazing group of people."

Kante Back in Contact Training



LONDON (AFP) - Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante has returned to contact training ahead of the Premier League's comeback next week, the Blues confirmed on Tuesday.

The French World Cup winner had been allowed to continue training at home when his teammates returned to training last month due to fears over coronavirus.

"N'Golo Kante was back with the main group today at Cobham as training continues to ramp up ahead of the Premier League restart next week," Chelsea said in a statement.

In the latest round of testing on Premier League players and staff there were zero positive cases from 1,195 tests.

Black and ethnic minorities are at greater risk of serious illness if they contract the virus, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Kante experienced a health scare when he collapsed at Chelsea's training ground two years ago. Tests did not reveal any heart concerns but he missed Chelsea's next game as a precaution.

Kante's elder brother Niamh died of a heart attack shortly before the 2018 World Cup.

England Better Placed for Euro Success in 2021

LONDON (AFP) - England manager Gareth Southgate believes a year-long delay to the European Championship could benefit his side as key players will be fit and rising stars will mature.

Euro 2020, which was due to begin on Friday, was moved back 12 months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

England captain Harry Kane and Manchester United striker Marcus Rashford would have been major doubts for the initial dates due to injury.

Rashford, 22, was one of four English players named among the top five most highly valued players in the world by the CIES Football Observatory on Monday.

The others are Raheem Sterling, 25, Trent Alexander-Arnold, 21, and Jadon Sancho, 20. "At one point we were possibly looking at being without Marcus Rashford and Harry Kane, or at the very best both of those not having a lot of football," Southgate told Sky Sports.

"The age of the team you would hope would be better in a year's time but we have to go and prove that on the pitch."

If the tournament remains in the same format across 12 cities in 12 different countries, England would play all of their group games at Wembley and then the semi-final and final there if they get that far.



Russian Cosmonauts Fight Chess Grandmaster to a Draw

MOSCOW (AFP) - Two Russian cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station played chess against an Earth-bound grandmaster on Tuesday, in a celebration of the first such game half a century ago.

Equipped with an electronic chessboard, cosmonauts Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner played in zero gravity against 30-year-old Russian former child prodigy Sergei Karyakin.

The game was broadcast live and ended in a draw after about 15 minutes.

It was organised by the space agency Roscosmos and the Russian Chess Federation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first Space-Earth game of chess played on June 9, 1970.

"It's a huge honour for us not to lose to a grandmaster," Ivanishin said, while Vagner added that US astronauts on the ISS watched the game and gave tips.

Karyakin, who played from Moscow's Museum of Cosmonautics, said he was jittery during the game and could not fall asleep until 4 am on the night before the match. "They played well," he said. "I can say that the human brain functions very well in space, and I have seen this today."

At the age of 12 years and seven months, Karyakin became the world's youngest ever grandmaster.

Ivanishin, Vagner and U.S. astronaut Chris Cassidy arrived on the ISS in April.

On May 31, they were joined by U.S. astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley on the first manned private flight to the ISS.

