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IRAN NEWS

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Enemies Not Even Dream Of Waging War With Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami said that the country's defense power has reached a point where the enemies do not let themselves even dream of waging war with Iran.

In the ceremony of the introduction of the new head of IRGC's Tharallah Headquarters on Sunday, Major General Hossein Salami stressed the growth of Iran's defense power and said Iran military might create a condition that enemies abandon propaganda of waging war against Iran with intention of earning a political status.

"Military war against us is no more desirable to the enemies, and the reason lies in our preparedness, defense power, and credibility of this power," General Salami said.

"Also the history and experience of the world about the credibility of this power deters enemies from choosing this strategy, however, this will not lead to our negligence," he added.

Major General Salami said that Iran's Islamic Revolution is growing and expanding in geography and depth while its principles and concepts are influencing the humankind, IRGC's first-in-command said.

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President Slams U.S. Inhumane Sanctions Against Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - President Hassan Rouhani yesterday said that inhumane sanctions against the Islamic country together with the COVID-19 crisis have created difficulties for Iran in currency exchange as well as the import sector.

The 145th session of the government's economic headquarters was held on Sunday morning, chaired by President Rouhani, where the country's most important economic issues were discussed.

Referring to the need to understand Iran's difficult conditions and the limitations originating from U.S. sanctions, including on oil exports, the president said, "As a result of these sanctions, currency transfers have been difficult and on the other hand the conditions caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus has also hampered imports, including the closure of some borders."

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Majlis Demands Halt to Implementation of Additional Protocol



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian lawmakers have, in a statement, called for a halt to the implementation of the Additional Protocol considering the failure of other JCPOA parties to implement their commitments.

Reading out the statement on Sunday, a member of the Parliament's Presiding Board lambasted Europe for not having a constructive approach vis-à-vis the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The European pressure policy to, what they call, preserve the JCPOA shows the three European countries, namely Britain, France and Germany, have, since the beginning, not pursued an approach which has been constructive and aimed at respecting the Iranian nation's rights, and have had the idea that the JCPOA is a tool to pressure Iran into submitting to their unwarranted demands," said Ali Karimi Firoozjaee. "The parliament is asking the respectful government to stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol and make supervisions offline," read the statement.

The statement highlighted that the Europeans are contradictory when it comes to putting their words into practice.

"Unfortunately, the full contradiction between the words and deeds of these European countries, which, on the one hand, are supporting the illegal [IAEA] resolution against the Iranian nation, and on the other hand, claim to be abiding by the JCPOA and trying to preserve it, shows they have once again fallen into the trap of the U.S. and Israel, and, aligning themselves with their efforts to implement the failed maximum-pressure policy against Iran, have dealt yet another blow to international multilateralism," said the statement. It expressed hope the International Atomic Energy Agency would correct its inappropriate and dangerous approach when it comes to dealing with Iran.

Meanwhile Majlis Speaker said holding negotiations with the United States is absolutely forbidden. Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf said Tehran is not against diplomacy and talks, but believes talks with Washington would be "detrimental."

"And negotiations with European countries should be held with maximum distrust," he said.

"By heeding the U.S. calls to promote the (anti-Iran) resolution on Friday, the Europeans showed that they are nothing short of the U.S. when it comes to bearing grudge against Iran," he added.

"The Europeans should know that the U.S. failed to advance its bullying tactics by resorting to the knee-on-the-neck policy, and today, it is using Europe as a medium to achieve its goals," he added.

Today, those supporting the anti-Iran resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "are to blame for the tension in Iran-IAEA relations," he said.

He noted the resolution was passed due to lobbying by Washington and Tel Aviv as well as machinations by the European countries against Iran.

He said many of the countries voting for the resolution were under heavy U.S. pressure.

He said the Zionist circles which are behind these machinations keep dreaming that they can sow discord within the ranks of the Iranian nation and Islamic Establishment. The speaker said they believe they can exert pressure on Iran and find a way to hold Iran to ransom by passing such resolutions.

"I'm announcing loud and clear that today, the officials of the Islamic Establishment see eye to eye on the fact that the U.S. and Zionist regime [of Israel] are not able to achieve any of their objectives at regional and international levels, and the IAEA will not be allowed to violate legal frameworks, whatsoever," he said.

Qalibaf underscored Iran has cooperated generously with the IAEA within the framework of international regulations and its national interests, but often received growing enmity and was held to ransom more than before.

UNHCR Hails Iran as Generous Host of Afghan Refugees

NEW YORK (IRNA) - The UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch said on Saturday that the Islamic Republic of Iran has remained a generous host for Afghan refugees over the last four decades.

He added that Some 1 million registered Afghan refugees are still living in the country. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, supports the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in sustaining inclusive and progressive policies towards refugees and facilitate solutions, including voluntary repatriation.

UNHCR also continues to advocate for international solidarity and support for Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, he said.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, facing the epicenter of the outbreak in South-West Asia, has facilitated exemplary inclusion of Afghans on its territory, Baloch said. Earlier, Baloch had said that UNHCR welcomes Iran's recent confirmation that COVID-19 related tests and treatment are free of charge for all individuals, including for refugees. Additionally, the country's Universal Public Health Insurance has been automatically extended for refugees as well as Iranian nationals—ensuring uninterrupted access to healthcare for all refugees.

He further noted that Pakistan and Iran, which host some 90 percent of the world's 2.7 million Afghan refugees is experiencing immense strain on their health systems and economies. Lockdown measures and a sharp downturn in economic activity have left many Afghan refugees confronted with an inability to meet even their most basic needs.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Not Pulling out of JCPOA Was a Mistake

The day when I was writing one of my articles "The Kids We Sent to the Warfront," I was foreseeing today, yesterday and tomorrow that three European countries would scratch President Hassan Rouhani and his negotiating team from Muhammad Javad Zarif to Seyed Abbas Araqchi and the likes in their faces to please the U.S. and to laugh boisterously at all Iranian nation who sent beguiled children to the war with experienced Satans.

The resolution which was approved against Iran by the Board of Governors of IAEA on Thursday is a resolution which was drafted by three European countries and it was undoubtedly for pleasing the U.S. and especially the White House. President Rouhani and his negotiating team have been waiting hopefully that perhaps Europeans would stop alignment with the U.S. and in fact to get along with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which not only had any profit for Iran but also had losses and ultimately it did not happen.

Tolerance of childish game of INSTEX was so humiliating but Iranian nation showed lenience to it. Now it is sound and clear for all that Europeans with this decision put the final nail in the coffin of the JCPOA.

Iranian nation for almost eight years has been tolerating a liberal government which thought Europeans have not left it alone and today it became much clear that Europe and the U.S. are both two sides of a coin, and relying hope on any side of it is a strategic mistake.

All have realized what has been stipulated in the content of the IAEA's resolution. It has once and again called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA in implementing its NPT Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol and satisfy the IAEA's requests without further delay. It happens while the agency itself has not observed any of its obligations regarding it and ignore them with full rudeness.

That what will be President Rouhani's reaction against European troika's hypocrisy is something that we should wait and see but any wise man in any government who sees this humiliating and rude behavior, which is something beyond breaching the promise and discrediting the JCPOA, should reduce the ties with these three countries to the lowest level and take legal action against them. Call for emergency meeting of Non-Alignment Movement members for revealing the role of European troika's hypocrisy can be the next action. See Page 7

COVID-19 Kills 116 More Iranians

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Sunday that some 116 more Iranians have died of coronavirus (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 9,623.

She went on to say that 163,591 people out of a total of 204,952 infected with the deadly virus have recovered.

The official pointed out that 2,368 new infected cases have been detected since yesterday (Saturday).

The Iranian official noted that 2,887 cases are in critical condition.

The outbreak of dangerous coronavirus (COVID-19) has been affecting the world for a number of months requiring a collective campaign of the international community to thwart the threat posed to humanity by the pandemic.

Meanwhile yesterday Health Minister said while many were seeking to destroy Iran through sanctions amid Coronavirus outbreak, in less than two months the country's knowledge-based companies were turned to be producers rather than importers countering sanctions. See Page 7

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Iran to Export Insulin Glargine Pen

TEHRAN (IP) - Head of the Public Relations and Information Center of the Ministry of Health said that Iran produces Insulin Glargine pen for the first time in line with the realization of the resistive economy.

Speaking on the launch of the insulin production line on Sunday, Kianoush Jahanpour expressed hope that many countries will purchase Iranian-made pen insulin with high quality and appropriate price.

As the medicine in which the most currency was allocated to it for import, and with regard to the constant need for diabetes, Insulins are strategic and highly applicable products, he highlighted.

Jahangiri Downplays IAEA Resolution Impact on Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri on Saturday blasted IAEA Board of Governors' anti-Iran resolution, saying that the resolution will not have serious impact on the country's situation.

Addressing a meeting of Energy Ministry's senior officials late on Saturday, he reiterated that the resolution does not play a decisive role, and our country, which has endured the most severe pressures of sanctions in various dimensions of energy, trade, transportation and banking, does not attach any value to it.

He further noted that the western states have a strange insistence on making the psychological climate unsafe for the Iranian nation. They want 'to keep the psychological burden of sanctions alive all the time' to somehow worry the people, investors and producers of the country.

True that Iran faces hard and complicated situation, but it has not reached deadlock, and it will leave behind the conditions with the grace of God, Jahangiri said.

Referring to the spread of coronavirus as a global epidemic as well as its unknown aspects even after lapse of months since its outbreak, China's involvement as the country of the origin of the disease for the second time with the virus and the



continuation of its negative consequences in all countries shows that the impacts of the disease are beyond what was thought and many countries face its consequences.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jahangiri emphasized that electricity and water are the main prerequisites for development, saying, "If we want to accelerate development in the country, the two sectors should lead others so that development will take place."

Jahangiri also said that after many months, no scientist in the world gets a method to cure the Coronavirus, even big powers like China, the U.S., or Europe.

"The threats, dangers, and sanctions must turn into opportunities," he said.

"We must not let enemies succeed in making Iranians hopeless and distressed," he stressed.

On June 19, the representatives of the 35-nation Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency passed a controversial resolution to push for intrusive inspections of two nuclear sites in Iran.

Sixth Iranian Ship Carrying Food to Venezuela

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to Venezuela, Hojjatullah Soltani announced that the sixth Iranian ship is approaching Venezuela and it is carrying foodstuff.

In an interview with Al-Mayadin News Network on Saturday, Iran's ambassador to Venezuela, Hojjatullah Soltani, announced that the sixth Iranian ship is approaching Venezuela and the ship is carrying foodstuff.

On May 17, the sixth Iranian ship left the port of Shahid Rajaei in southern Iran for Venezuela.

Since April, Iran has sent five tankers carrying a total of about 1.5 million barrels of gasoline to Venezuela in support of the Venezuelan government and people, which are under economic siege by Washington.

Iran has sent five petrol tankers to Venezuela to end gas shortages in the South American country.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro praised the Islamic Republic of Iran's support for the Venezuelan government and people on Twitter after the move and said: "Venezuela is not alone, and it has brave friends who stand by it."

Iran Set to Have 18 Home-Grown Satellites by Yearend

TEHRAN (IRNA) - With an increase in Iran's space sector, the country is expected to have 18 domestically-made satellites by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), Iran's ITC Minister Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi said on Sunday.

Azari Jahromi made the remarks during an open session of Parliament to inform the parliamentarians on the latest measures of the Ministry of ITC.

He said that his ministry is focused on two plans: the national information network and the civil space program.

Iran had made only three satellites by March 2014, while the country's domestically-made satellites were added to seven ones by March 2018, the minister said.

He predicted that the country will have 18 satellites by March 2021.

Int'l Bodies Warned Over Lack of Support for Fight Against Drugs

TEHRAN (MNA) - An official with Iran Drug Control Headquarters said on Sunday that despite the fact that Iran is the leading country in the fight against illicit drugs, international organizations have failed to support this fight.

"Negligence of international organizations and European countries will make Iran decrease its activities in [drug] transit sector," said Naser Aslani, deputy head of Iran Drug Control Headquarters in international affairs.

"What disaster do you think will happen in Europe if Iran overlooks trafficking of 30 tons morphine and 23 tons heroin?" he framed.

Iran broke the record of drug confiscation last year with seizing 950 tons of different illicit drugs, he said.

Today, Afghanistan police only seize some 200-300 tons of drugs despite the fact that it is the source of consignments, Aslani said, adding, "This shows that Iran is a victim of drugs."

More than 76% of drugs last year have been discovered through intelligence operation which has decreased financial and human costs, the official noted.

International organizations have not helped Iran with the anti-narcotics operations under the pretext of sanctions, he lamented, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran is fighting against drugs

inside the country as well as its transit.

"Based on our religious beliefs, we consider no different between Iranian youth and European youth and we see protecting these people as our duty," he said.

Tehran Voices Concern Over Missile Test by France

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Saturday voiced concern over a test of a nuclear ballistic missile by France, terming it inconsistent with the country's commitments.

The Iranian diplomat described the launch of a new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of carrying several nuclear warheads called M51 by the French Navy completely incompatible with Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and France's commitment to nuclear disarmament treaty.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the French government should not overlook its international obligations enshrined in Article 6 of the NPT and the NPT Review Conferences, he noted.

He urged Paris to fully comply with its international obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament.

He termed the nuclear weapons as a threat to international peace and security and said that testing such weapons would weaken the NPT.

On June 12, the French Ministry of Armed Forces announced on the launch of an M51 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), a Triomphant-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, from Le Téméraire.

Iran Criticizes EU's Silence Against Suppression of Protests in U.S.

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi late on Saturday criticized the EU for its "deafening silence against barbaric suppression" of the people in the U.S.

"While the U.S. regime is denying the right of breath to its own people & brutally suppressing the peaceful protests, the 'deafening silence' of the so-called champions of the human rights in Europe & beyond, demonstrates, once again, their insincerity, hypocrisy & double standards," Mousavi wrote in his Twitter account on Saturday.

George Floyd was a black American citizen who recently died under pressure from the knee of a white police officer.

Following his death, widespread protests against racism engulfed the whole US and some other countries in the world.

Sanctions Are Meaningless To Tehran and Damascus

TEHRAN (IP) - Sanctions have no meaning for Tehran and Damascus, and the two countries will continue their economic cooperation with more motivation, the Special Assistant to the Speaker of Iran's Parliament for International Affairs said.

On the sidelines of the commemoration ceremony of Ramadan Abdollah, the Special Aide to the Speaker of Iran's Parliament in International Affairs, Hossein Amirabdollahian in an exclusive interview with Iran Press elaborated on the recent sanctions that were imposed on Syria as well as the level of cooperation between two countries.

Referring to the "Caesar Act", he said that the U.S. has tried to collapse the political system in Syria with various military and security methods since 2011, but they did not succeed.

Today, they have resorted to the "Caesar Act" and have focused on political sanctions against Syria out of their desperation, he added.

As the Islamic Republic of Iran has shown previously, it can avoid sanctions in Venezuela, which is near to the U.S. geographically, it can also avoid sanctions between Iran and Syria, and counts them meaningless, the official concluded.

Palestine Keen on Boosting Parliamentary Cooperation With Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Palestinian National Council Speaker (PNC) Salim Zanoun on Saturday hoped that coordination and cooperation between the Palestinian and Iranian parliaments would increase to ensure the interests of both nations.

In a congratulatory message to Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, he added, "Me and My colleagues in PNC are happy to express warmest congratulations to you on your election as Majlis speaker of the brotherly country of Iran."

"We hope to continue coordination and cooperation between the two parliaments with the aim of serving the interests of the two brotherly nations, and appreciate the principled stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in supporting Palestine, the first issue of Muslims, and end of Israel's oppressive occupation, return of the displaced to their homeland and formation of an independent Palestinian state in the Palestinian national territory, with Beit ul-Moqaddas as its capital," he said.



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The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial)
National Iranian Drilling Company	6,028,994	Tender No.: FP/17-98/176-2 Indent No.: 43-22-9404148004	44,177,651,410

- Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	
	Based on minimum scoring (50 Points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.

- Purchasing & Submitting

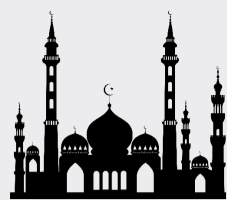
Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.	
	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN, Mr. Sangbahram / Mis. Naderi, 061-34148656 -06134148615
	Submitting Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. • Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
	Closing date	• 14 Days after the last time of Purchasing.
Documents Receiving Method	Address	Hall No. 107, 1st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:49

1. Closer and closer to mankind comes their Reckoning:
yet they heed not and they turn away.
2. Never comes (aught) to them of a renewed Message from their Lord,
but they listen to it as in jest,-
Surah 21. The Prophets (1 - 2)

Iran Pursue Joint Investment With Qatar

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran-Qatar Joint Chamber says despite good relations between Iran and Qatar, their trade is not in a satisfactory level, adding that Iranians should go after joint investment with Qataris if they want to boost the trade.

Speaking to Khabar Online, Mr. Adnan Mousa Pour said that Iran's ties with Qatar have always been good through the history and because of this amicable relation, Iran can take advantage to boost its trade with this country.

He admitted that trade with Qatar is not in a satisfactory condition but Iranians can improve it to compensate for their passiveness in the past.

He reiterated that the problem is that Iranians have performed weakly in trade with most countries in the world like Russia. He further said if Iran has done better in trade with Iraq is because of having joint borders and their trade has been traditional but Iran can act better in trade with Iraq in high level. Mousa Pour said Qataris have a very special characteristic in the world as they are good investors and Iran should take advantage of this capacity and good ties with Qatar for joint projects.

He said he believes Iran's economic diplomacy is weak and this does not only limit to Qatar, adding that in most countries, the priority of Iran is not economic and it has always been busy with some problems. He reiterated that if the country focuses on economy and becomes a dealer, it will be to the benefit of the country.

He also criticized the government and current existing regulations which discouraged exporters as most of exporters have stopped working.

Mousa Pour said that sudden changes in the laws and regulations have forced most of Iranian exporters to stop working for now. He further said repeated changes in laws and regulations about the forex is another woe for the exporters, adding this may lead to the slump in Iran's exports in most countries.



He added that the reason behind the decline in exports is that exporters do not feel safe in their jobs. He criticized the current forex regulation which has affected exporters seriously.

Mousa Pour added that the regulations have unintentionally restricted exporters and for this reason we witness some agro products in the country are not exported and they are distributed for free to the public.

He reiterated that despite some claims, almost 95 percent of the forex resulted from the exports return to the country.

He said some people think that if oil revenue is cut from the budget, all attentions will be shifted to exports but it does not mean that exports will be strengthened.

Mousa Pour reiterated as long as the regulations are not amended, one cannot expect exports to boost.

He also admitted that the outbreak of the Coronavirus has also affected the economy and especially the exports.

He also rejected this assumption that devaluation of national currency will boost exports, saying that it is correct till the moment the domestic cost and price does not soar and if it happens, the devaluation has no impact in boosting exports.

He also criticized the current fluctuation in the forex market, saying that it causes an obstacle in way of an exporter for a long-term contract with his foreign counterpart.

Iran Launches Large Container Ship Liner to Kuwait

BUSHEHR (IRNA) - Iran launched a new container ship liner from the southern Iranian port city of Bushehr, a local official said on Sunday.

Korshid Gazderazi, the head of Bushehr Chamber of Commerce, the container ship liner has been allocated for export of fruits and vegetables.

He said that the container ship operating between Iran and Kuwait is capable to load some 150 containers, 25 of which are refrigerator containers.

The container ship can be even replaced with a larger cargo ship if deemed necessary, the official said.

He said that Iran is mulling launching a container ship liner between Bushehr and Qatar as well.

Accelerating Implementation of Wastewater Installation in Baharestan

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The CEO of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company in his public meeting emphasized implementing the wastewater installation in the Janbazan Site in the town of Baharestan, adding that in the shortest time, the company will provide the necessary infrastructures for sustainable transfer of drinking water for residents in the Janbazan site.

Eng. Hashem Amini pointed to the setting up of the infrastructure for carrying out the wastewater system in the Janbazan site in the town of Baharestan, saying that according to the law, Omran Shahr Baharestan Company is in charge of implementing infrastructures in order that residents of this site can enjoy wastewater system services.

Amini added that Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company as a supervisory body does not charge any money from the residents of the site for its supervision or designing the project of wastewater installations in order to accelerate the implementation of the project in Janbazan.

He said that to help people enjoy the wastewater system installation services in the Janbazan site, Omran Shahr Company of Baharestan should speed up its activities.

Amini further said his company is determined to offer favorable and sustainable services to its subscribers in any condition.

On issuing subscription for the applicants for wastewater services, he said that the company has no problem to give wastewater subscription to the applicants provided that their units have no technical problems.

He added that the company is ready to offer services to those who are not in good condition through long installment.

Iran Exports \$17b Worth Of Goods Through Free Economic Zones



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Some \$17 billion worth of commodities were exported from Iran's free trade zones and special economic zones in the one year to March 2020.

Around \$5 billion worth of goods produced in free and special economic zones were also sent to the mainland over the same period.

"Last year (the year ending March 2020), only \$5 billion worth of commodities were imported into free and special economic zones," added Morteza Banak, an advisor to President Hassan Rouhani and the secretary of the Supreme Council for Free and Special Economic Zones. He said around 186 thousand jobs have been created in free and special economic zones over the past seven years.

"Implementing and inaugurating delayed projects is one of the programs for free and special zones, and we hope these projects will be put into service by year's end," he said.

The official said more than 300 development projects are scheduled to come on line in free and special economic zones by March 2021, which could create between 40,000 to 45,000 jobs.

"Since last year, we began to establish infrastructure for production activities which could increase output and investment, especial domestic investment," he said. The official underlined the private sector has made around Rls.100 billion together with \$200 million of investment in free zones, adding the figure is expected to rise by 50% this year.

Turkey's Standing in Gas Pipeline Games

TEHRAN (ILNA) - A senior expert in the field of energy Morteza Behroozifar told "Turkey does not want to be a transit route for Iranian gas."

The energy expert referred to reduce gas consumption in Turkey and said that Turkey's main energy policy is only to buy gas from Iran and re-export it.

"Turkey's policy is to introduce itself as a regional gas trade hub, it means that Ankara wants to buy gas from neighboring countries and re-export it to European countries."

"By launching smart game between Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia, Turkey is looking to pay a better price for gas," he added.

Turkey will be able to avail of cheaper natural gas through the new TurkStream pipeline that will begin operating in the coming month, Professor Salih Yilmaz, president of Ankara based think-tank institute of Russian studies (RUSEN) told Anadolu Agency.

Behroozifar confirmed that maybe that's why the exploded pipeline is not repaired up to now.

Natural gas exports from Iran to Turkey were halted in March after an explosion and fire at a pipeline just inside the Turkish border.

Iran is Turkey's second-biggest supplier of natural gas after Russia. The Turkish state gas importer Botas imports up to 9.6 Bcm/year of Iranian gas via the pipeline under a 25-year contract, which runs to July 2026.

Agricultural Sector Boosts Economic Growth in Sanctions Period

TEHRAN (MNA) – Minister of Agriculture said that agricultural sector increased economic growth of the country in sanctions period.

Speaking in today's open session of the Parliament, Kazem Khavazi stated that the agricultural sector showed that it can increase the country's economic growth 'positively' and also can spur the country's resilience against sanctions.

While briefing on a report about the measures taken by his ministry, he reiterated, "agricultural sector is one of the sectors that has been 'effective and influential' in the fields of production, employment and sustainability of the environment greatly."

The agricultural sector accounts for eight percent of



gross domestic national [GNP] which is estimated at over \$40 billion, he said, adding, "if posterior and anterior portions of agricultural sector's share are considered, the added growth of gross national product [GNP] will hit 32.5 percent at large."

He pointed to the sanctions imposed against the country over the past years and added, "although country's oil revenues were decreased in sanctions period, agricultural sector showed that it can increase economic growth of the country optimally."

Sustainable presence of producers in the production cycle, increase of revenues and making country's food balance 'positive' are of the most important policy in the agricultural sector, minister of agriculture highlighted.

Iran-Azerbaijan Friendship Bridge to Turn Khoda Afarin Into Exports Hub

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Friendship Bridge between Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Azerbaijan will turn Khoda Afarin city into the exports hub in the country.

Chief Executive of Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization Mohsen Nariman in a meeting with councilors of Khoda Afarin city on Sat. said that construction of Iran-Azerbaijan Friendship Bridge, in addition to activating Khoda Afarin Customs, will pave suitable way for the promotion of exports and prosperity of the region.

He pointed to the use of all existing capacities and potentials for realizing objectives of the current year's motto entitled 'surge in production' and added, "all-out unity,

cooperation and empathy between people and officials for activating Khoda Afarin Customs is the issue that is of paramount importance and can play a significant role in realizing objectives of surge in production."

Attracting domestic and foreign investors as well as supporting them should be put a top agenda in order to bring about prosperity and create new employment opportunities in the region, he emphasized.

As large as 56,000 ha land area, Aras Free Zone is located at 130km northwest of Tabriz and shares borders with the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan.

Non-Stop Gas Supply to MSC During Whole Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – The CEO of Isfahan Province Gas Company Mr. Seyed Mostafa Alavi says the gas supply to Mobarakeh Steel Company will continue non-stop during the whole year.

During his visit to Mobarakeh Steel Company, Mr. Alavi expressed his satisfaction for the visit of the giant steel-making company, adding that the technology and grandeur of this company and its production of certain products which are needed by the national industries like auto-making or home-appliance is source of pride for any Iranian.

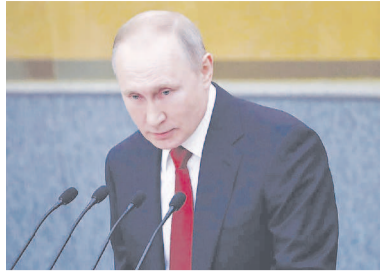
He added that Isfahan Province Gas Company is proud that it is the gas provider for this mammoth industrial complex, noting some part of the supplied gas in Mobarakeh Steel Company is consumed as the raw material and some part of it is used in the heating system or other parts of the complex.

Alavi reiterated that the company does its best to have non-stop gas supply to MSC during the whole year, admitting that during the cold season, the company is forced to reduce its gas supply to the company.

He emphasized that the company tries to provide MSC with its needed energy as it is considered as one of the most valuable and important customers of the gas company and source of pride for the country.

Alavi noted that his colleagues in the company will do their best to supply needed amount of gas to MSC in order to help this giant company to continue its production without any stop.

Putin Concerned About Arrangements With U.S.



MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian President Vladimir Putin is concerned about how much he can trust arrangements with U.S. President Donald Trump amid protests in the United States, the Interfax news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on Saturday.

U.S. and Russian envoys are due to discuss "mutually agreed topics related to the future of arms control" in Austria next week, the U.S. State Department has said.

Referring to Trump, Peskov said Putin needs to understand that "agreements with his political counterpart can be trusted".

Greece Extends Lockdown At Migrant Camps



ATHENS (AFP) - Greece announced on Saturday another extension of the coronavirus lockdown on its teeming migrant camps, hours after some 2,000 people protested in central Athens to mark World Refugee Day and denounce the government's treatment of migrants.

The migration ministry said confinement for residents of reception and identification centres across the country would be extended to July 5. It was due to have ended on Monday.

Greece was quick to introduce strict confinement measures on migrant camps on March 21 and imposed a more general lockdown on March 23.

Trump Knocks Protests, Defends Pandemic Response



TULSA (Reuters) - President Donald Trump, addressing a less-than-full arena for his first political rally in months, criticized anti-racism protests and defended his handling of the coronavirus on Saturday in an effort to reinvigorate his re-election campaign.

The president, who revels in large crowds and had predicted his first rally in months would be epic, complained that the media had discouraged attendees from coming and cited bad behavior from protesters outside but did not specifically acknowledge the fact that many seats in the 19,000-seat BOK Center arena were empty.

Trump sought to use the event to bring momentum back to his campaign after coming under fire for his responses to the coronavirus and to the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died in the custody of Minneapolis police.

The smaller-than-expected crowd robbed him, at least for now, of the ability to highlight enthusiasm for his candidacy as an advantage over his expected Democratic challenger, former Vice President Joe Biden, who has eschewed large campaign events.

Trump has brushed aside criticism for his decision to hold his first rally since March 2 in Tulsa, the site of the country's bloodiest outbreaks of racist violence against Black Americans some 100 years ago. The president, who has encouraged a militaristic response to the demonstrations nationwide while taking criticism for not showing more empathy for the plight of Black Americans, criticized some of the protests.

"The unhinged left-wing mob is trying to vandalize our history, desecrate our monuments - our beautiful monuments - tear down our statues and punish, cancel and persecute anyone who does not conform to their demands for absolute and total control. We're not conforming," Trump said.

The Republican president is trailing Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, in polls ahead of the November election. Biden has hammered Trump for his response to the pandemic.

Trump defended his response, saying that more testing had led to identifying more cases, seemingly to his chagrin. "When you do testing to that extent, you're going to find more cases," he said. "So, I said to my people, 'Slow the testing down, please.'" A White House official said he was "obviously kidding" with that remark.

Hours before the rally, Trump's campaign announced six members of its advance team had tested positive for COVID-19. Only a handful of attendees wore masks inside the arena.

Oklahoma has reported a surge in new COVID-19 infections in recent days, and the state's department of health warned that attendees face an increased risk of catching the virus.

"I'm not concerned about it. I think it's mostly a hoax," said attendee Will Williams, 46, about the coronavirus, questioning why Democrats were not more concerned about people who die from drug overdoses. Williams did not wear a mask.

The president, unusually, suggested that his own speech to the partially empty arena was not his best.

"So far tonight, I'm average," Trump said.

Trump often feeds off the energy of big groups, something he has not been able to do since the pandemic paused his rallies.

"I've never seen anything like it. You are warriors. Thank you," Trump told the crowd, filled with people wearing red t-shirts, the

Serbian Head to Polls in Europe's First Post-Lockdown Election



BELGRADE (Reuters) - Serbians went to polls on Sunday to elect a new parliament in Europe's first national election since coronavirus lockdowns took effect some three months ago, with the ruling conservatives seen winning a comfortable majority.

Polling stations will be equipped with face masks and hand sanitisers for the use of the country's 5.5 million voters, many of whom are expected to skip voting - partly due to fears of becoming infected.

Turnout could also be hit by the boycott campaign of some opposition parties, who say the vote will not be free or fair due to President Aleksandar Vucic's firm grip over the media.

According to the latest opinion polls, Vucic's conservative Serbian Peoples' Party (SNS) is set to garner about 50% of the vote, boosted by widespread public approval over the government's handling of the pandemic.

Vucic's coalition partner, the Socialist Party, is expected to come second with about 10%, while an opposition centre-right party led by Aleksandar Sapic, the mayor of a Belgrade municipality, is tipped to come third.

Vucic himself is not up for re-election, but the opposition parties that are boycotting the poll accuse him of using his position as president to promote his party.

Serbia, which has a population of 7.2 million, has so far reported 12,803 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 260 deaths. It was among the first European countries to start opening its borders on May 22 and all lockdown curbs have since been lifted.

Still, persistent health concerns will keep some voters at home, especially among higher-risk groups.

"A number of voters above 65 will not vote because they are afraid they could get infected," Bojan Klacar, executive director of the CESID pollster told Reuters.

Voters largely back efforts by Vucic's ruling coalition to push for Serbian membership of the European Union while maintaining strong ties with Russia and China.

But the future government will face increasing EU and U.S. pressure to recognise the independence of Serbia's former province of Kosovo, a move seen as key for regional stability.

India, China Accuse Each Other of Violating de Facto Border

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India and China on Saturday traded accusations that the other had violated their shared de facto border, an area that this week became the site of their deadliest clash in half a century.

Fighting on the two countries' Himalayan frontier on Monday killed at least 20 Indian soldiers and injured more than 70. China has not released any casualty figures for its troops. While Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to downplay the clash on Friday, his government a day later blamed China for seeking to erect structures "just across the Line of Actual Control", as the demarcation is known, and refusing India's request to stop.

India will not allow any unilateral changes to the disputed border, it said in a statement. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian accused Indian troops of a "deliberate provocation" in the tense Himalayan area.

In a series of tweets, Zhao said the Galwan Valley was on the Chinese side of the line and that Indians had since April unilaterally built roads, bridges and other facilities in the region.

The Indian troops "crossed the Line of Actual Control" and attacked Chinese officers and soldiers who were there for negotiation, triggering "fierce physical conflicts", Zhao said.

India's foreign ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava denied any violation of the Line of Actual Control by India, and said the claims by the Chinese side were "not acceptable".

"We do not accept the contention that India was unilaterally changing the status quo. On the contrary, we were maintaining it," Srivastava said. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo criticised China for escalating border tensions with India.

"The PLA (China's People's Liberation Army) has escalated border tensions - we see it today in India... and we watch as it militarizes the South China Sea and illegally claims more territory there," Pompeo said in at the virtual Copenhagen Democracy Summit.

Egypt Warns of Direct Intervention in Libya

CAIRO (AFP) - Egypt's president warned Saturday that advances by Turkey-backed Libyan forces on the Libyan city of Sirte could prompt an Egyptian military intervention in the neighbouring country in support of Cairo's ally Khalifa Haftar.

Meanwhile, Ankara has urged forces led by the eastern-based Haftar to withdraw from the strategic city for a ceasefire agreement to be reached.

The UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli has made major military gains against Haftar's forces recently thanks to increased support from its backer Turkey.

The key city of Sirte, which lies some 450 kilometres (280 miles) east of the capital, is under the control of Haftar's forces, who last year launched a recently aborted attempt to seize control of western Libya.

In a televised address, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said Sirte is a "red line" for Egypt, citing the need to protect its porous border as grounds for "direct intervention" in Libya.

"If the Libyan people asked us to intervene, it is a signal to the world that Egypt and Libya share ... common interests, security and stability," Sisi said on Saturday.

The GNA denounced Sisi's warning, saying any intervention would be a threat to Libya's security.

"We strongly reject what was said by al-Sisi and consider it a continuation of the war on the Libyan people, interference in Libyan affairs and a dangerous threat to national security," said Mohammed Amari Zayed, a member of the GNA's presidential council.

"There can be no 'red line' within our borders. We reject any bid aimed at dividing the Libyan people or their territory... (and) we categorically reject any bid to impose guardianship on Libya," he added.

Turkey also vowed to continue supporting the GNA's push for Sirte and demanded the evacuation of Haftar's forces from the city for a "sustainable ceasefire."

Libya has been torn by violence, drawing in tribal militias, jihadists and mercenaries since the 2011 toppling and killing of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a Western-backed uprising.

The oil-rich country is split between rival administrations in the east and west, with the conflict recently attracting increasing foreign involvement.

Besides Egypt, Russia and the United Arab Emirates back Haftar, while the GNA is supported by Turkey and Qatar.



Pompeo Accuses U.N. Body of Hypocrisy



WASHINGTON (AFP) - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Saturday a UN Human Rights Council vote condemning racism amounted to hypocrisy.

Pompeo defended the recent discussion on race relations in America as a sign of a healthy democracy, and said the council should focus on what he called systemic racial disparities in member countries such as Cuba and China.

"The council's decision to vote yesterday on a resolution focusing on policing and race in the US marks a new low," Pompeo said in a statement.

The council took the vote after a debate prompted by protests in the US triggered by the death at police hands of African American George Floyd.

However, a specific mention of racism and police brutality in the US was removed.

This sparked outrage from rights groups, which accused Washington and its allies of lobbying heavily to revise the text -- a charge to which the U.S. mission in Geneva declined to respond.

The United States, which had complained of being singled out in the initial text, withdrew from the council in 2018 and was not present on Friday.

In his statement Saturday, titled "On the Hypocrisy of UN Human Rights Council," Pompeo said discussion in the U.S. about race following the death of Floyd "is a sign of our democracy's strength and maturity."

"If the Council were serious about protecting human rights, there are plenty of legitimate needs for its attention, such as the systemic racial disparities in places like Cuba, China and Iran," he said.

"If the Council were honest, it would recognize the strengths of American democracy and urge authoritarian regimes around the world to model American democracy and to hold their nations to the same high standards of accountability and transparency that we Americans apply to ourselves," Pompeo added.

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KLM to Increase Flights in July, August

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - KLM, the Dutch subsidiary of Air France-KLM, is planning to ramp up the number of passenger flights it operates in July and again in August as travel restrictions linked to the global coronavirus outbreak ease, it said on Saturday.

In a statement, KLM said it would operate 6,900 passenger flights in July and 13,100 in August, including some intercontinental lines. That compares with around 22,000 flights per month in the summer months of 2019.

This month 3,000 KLM flights are scheduled to depart from Amsterdam, around 20%-30% of the usual number.



Poorest Countries to Save \$12b in 2020 Debt Relief

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The world's poorest countries could save over \$12 billion owed to sovereign and other creditors this year through their participation in a debt-relief program, with Angola alone saving some \$3.4 billion, according to estimates published Friday in a new database from the World Bank.

The savings under the COVID-19-linked Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) will be short-term, since the initiative only provides for suspension of debt payments through the end of the year. It postpones those payments until a later date but does not cancel them outright.

The second-largest saver among eligible DSSI countries would be Pakistan, with \$2.4 billion, followed by Kenya with \$802 million, according to the data here

In terms of savings compared with gross domestic product, Bhutan would reap the most benefits from the plan with 7.3% of GDP savings, followed by Angola at 3.7% and Djibouti at 2.5%.

Besides each country's estimated savings, the database includes details on debt owed to multilaterals like the International Monetary Fund as well as on official and non-official bilateral debt disbursed and debt service due per year.

IMF and World Bank officials have warned that the COVID-19 pandemic will hit developing and emerging markets particularly hard given high levels of debt, sharp drops in oil and other commodity prices and insufficient healthcare systems.

The DSSI is backed by the G-20, the World Bank, the IMF and the Paris Club of sovereign lenders. The database provides a new level of transparency about debts and creditors, including China, which has become one of the largest creditors in Africa and elsewhere over the past two decades.

The Jubilee Debt campaign has estimated the cancellation of poor countries' debt payments, including to private creditors, would free over \$25 billion for the countries this year, or \$50 billion if extended through 2021.

The United Nations, many African countries and civil society groups have called for the debt relief to be extended for two years to allow countries to recover more fully from the economic shock of the pandemic.

UAE, U.S. Reaffirm Desire to Expand Engagement in Trade, Commerce

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates and the United States held their seventh Economic Policy Dialogue via videoconference.

The dialogue was co-chaired by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's Assistant Minister for Economic and Trade Affairs, Abdunnasser Alshaali, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, Peter Haas.

The UAE Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef Al Otaiba, U.S. Ambassador to the UAE John Rakolta; and U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Kelley Currie were also in attendance.

During the discussions, both countries reaffirmed their desire to expand engagement and pursue new economic, trade, investment, and commercial opportunities.

Despite the challenges presented by the current global health situation, both sides applauded the convening of the event and emphasized their shared commitment to maintaining open and regular communication.

The two delegations confirmed that the UAE-US economic relationship remains close and constructive. They noted that non-oil bilateral trade between the UAE and the United States has grown consistently in recent years, with the UAE constituting the United States' largest export market in the Middle East and North African region for the 11th consecutive year.

Both sides highlighted the mutual benefits of this relationship, with UAE trade and investment supporting more than 116,000 American jobs. It was also noted that the United States held a \$15.6 billion trade surplus with the UAE in 2019, its third largest globally, thus underscoring the UAE's position as a vital economic partner.



During the meeting, delegates from both countries discussed efforts to increase bilateral trade. The United States underlined its appreciation for the considerable progress the UAE continues to make in implementing open economic and investment policies and its ongoing efforts to strengthen regional economic prosperity.

Turning to broader commercial interaction, the UAE raised concerns about steel and aluminum tariffs and thanked the United States for the constructive bilateral dialogue that continues to take place on the newly expanded requirements relating to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

Czech PM Slams EU Interference Over Subsidy Misuse

PRAGUE (AFP) - Billionaire Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis on Saturday accused the European Parliament of "interference" after it pressed for mechanisms to stop the misuse of EU subsidies.

Babis is suspected of a clash of interest as the owner of the Agrofert food, chemicals and media holding receiving EU subsidies, and a politician deciding on where the subsidies will end up.

The fourth wealthiest Czech, Babis transferred Agrofert to trust funds in 2017 but data shows he still rakes in profits from the group.

On Friday, European lawmakers called on the European Commission to introduce measures to prevent conflict of interest.

Babis said European lawmakers "incited steps concerning specific criminal proceedings on Czech territory without specific knowledge or evidence."

"I think this can be perceived as proof of political and media pressure on the Czech judiciary and interference in internal affairs," Babis said in a statement published by the CTK news agency.

Babis is also facing police charges over EU subsidy fraud linked to a farm near Prague which he had allegedly taken out of Agrofert to make it eligible for a subsidy for smaller companies.

EU lawmakers also criticised Babis for hate speech targeting a European Parliament delegation which visited Prague in February and which he allegedly refused to meet.

At that time, Babis labelled as "deranged" European lawmaker Monica Hohlmeier, who led the mission of the parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control.

He also called two Czech members of the mission "informers and traitors".

Babis said Friday's parliamentary resolution was inspired by "Czech MEPs who do their best to harm the Czech Republic in Brussels."

Babis leads a minority government comprising his centrist populist ANO movement and the leftwing Social Democrats, which leans on tacit support from the far-left Communists.



"Catastrophic" Debt, Unemployment Predicted in France Due to Covid-19

PARIS (Dispatches) - France's unemployment insurance agency says its expenses for 2020 are expected to increase by 43 percent by the end of the year, with thousands more people adding their names to the jobless list due to the economic crisis brought on by the coronavirus.

Unédic's expenses could increase by 17.7 billion euros in 2020, while earnings from social contributions paid by companies will have gone down by 16 percent compared to 2019, to around 33 billion.

Unédic says it has forecast the loss of some 900,000 jobs in France by the end of the year which corresponds to an extra 630,000 people on the unemployment benefits payroll.

In a statement released on Thursday, Unédic forecast its deficit to reach 25.7 billion euros by the end of the year, taking into consideration the economic context defined by the Covid-19 crisis.

It attributed the debt of 63.1 billion to the government's partial unemployment mechanism, whereby the government subsidised salaries during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Unédic is funding a third of the partial unemployment mechanism, the rest is financed by the state.

The debt had already gone from 36.8 billion euros at the end of 2019 to 42.6 billion euros by 23 April, at the height of the lockdown period, in place since mid-March.

In 2020, the expenses for unemployment are expected to reach an estimated 59 billion overall, an increase of 43 percent compared to 2019.

The CGT union says the 900,000 job losses across the country is "catastrophic".

Joblessness Reaches Great Depression Levels in Australia

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Official statistics released this week reveal that the real level of unemployment rose to 24.5 percent in May—as high as the 1930s Great Depression—and soared even higher among young workers. Nearly 230,000 jobs were eliminated during the month, taking the total to almost one million in two months—the fastest job destruction in the history of capitalism in Australia.

Although some jobs returned in late May in retail and hospitality, many of these

one million jobs will be lost forever, with the world economy plunging into its deepest and most protracted crash since the 1930s.

Moreover, the jobs that do survive will be subjected to severe cuts to wages and conditions as the ruling class exploits the COVID-19 pandemic to restructure employment relations with the help of the trade unions.

Overall, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) headline jobless rate jumped to 7.1 percent, or 927,600 workers. That rise from 6.4 percent still hides the true situation. Nearly 623,000 people dropped out of the workforce altogether in April and May. They stopped looking for work because of the sheer scale of the contraction.

The ABS noted that its official unemployment rate would be around 11.3 percent, or about 1.55 million workers, if everyone who lost their job in the past two months was still seeking work.

Even that figure is massively distorted by the government's JobKeeper wage subsidy scheme, currently estimated to cover 3.3 million workers. They are not counted as unemployed even if they are working zero hours, while being paid a meagre \$750 a week. If they were included, the jobless rate would be 24.5 percent, or nearly five million workers.

Once JobKeeper ends in September, the immense social crisis produced by this collapse will intensify because many employers will axe the jobs that have been artificially kept on their books. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government has made plain its intention to scrap JobKeeper then, regardless of the human impact.

Even according to the ABS, the combined unemployment and underemployment rates rose to a record high of 20.2 percent in May. In other words, around one in five workers, or 2.3 million people, had either lost their job or had reduced hours by May.

Malaysia's Debt-Juggle Continues



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Wellian Wiranto, OCBC Bank economist, expects Malaysia's debt-to-GDP ratio to tick up above 55%, and inch closer to 56% of GDP by year-end.

AS a country that has faced budget deficits for over two decades amid efforts to turn surplus, Malaysia has consistently relied on borrowings to finance its revenue shortfalls.

About two years after the former Pakatan Harapan government raised the alarm on the country's "RM1 trillion" debt dilemma, concerns on Malaysia's elevated debt levels has yet to come to an end.

The reliance on debt has become more pronounced in 2020 as the government introduced four economic stimulus packages all in just five months, with an unprecedented cumulative value of RM295bil.

About RM45bil or slightly over 15% of the stimulus packages will come from the government's direct injection. Of the amount, RM35bil will be financed through debt, as mentioned earlier by Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz.

Economists who spoke to StarBizWeek agree that Malaysia's self-imposed domestic debt limit of 55% to the gross domestic product (GDP) will be breached as a result of the increased borrowings.

Wellian Wiranto, OCBC Bank economist, expects the country's debt-to-GDP ratio to tick up above 55%, and inch closer to 56% of GDP by year-end.

"With that possibility, the government might have to ask the parliament for approval in amending or suspending the 55% statutory cap on the debt-to-GDP ratio," he says.

AmBank Group chief economist and member of the Economic Action Council secretariat Anthony Dass says the debt-to-GDP ratio could hit around 57% to 59%.

This is on the basis that the country's budget deficit to GDP is projected to hover around 5.8% to 6.0% in 2020, as compared to 3.2% predicted during the tabling of Budget 2020 last year.

Meanwhile, Socio-Economic Research Centre executive director Lee Heng Guie points out that the debt-to-GDP ratio has already exceeded the 55% limit as at end-March 2020.

He says the federal government direct debt stood at RM823.8bil or 58.8% of GDP as at end-March 2020. Including the contingent and other liabilities, the country's total debt level has reached RM1.104 trillion or 78.8% of GDP, according to him.

Iran Plans to Produce 3m Tons Of Propylene in One Year

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran has planned to accelerate the implementation of petrochemical projects which will lead to an increase the capacity of production of propylene- colorless gas- to three million tons in a year, an official at Ministry of Petroleum said on Sunday.

Deputy Petroleum Minister in petrochemical affairs Behzad Mohammadi made the remarks according to a report by the National Petrochemical Company. Based on planning, the country's needs to propylene will be met soon and the shortage of this petrochemical product will be tackled, Mohammadi said.



Global Economic Recession Will Be Deep, But Won't Last for Long

DUBAI (Dispatches) - While investors and market spectators brace for the deepest global recession since World War II, there is reason for hope as economists now see the economic impasse ending in record time as well.

The COVID-19 contagion and the subsequent stringent lockdown measures that followed have evidently thrown the world economy in turmoil. Even as countries reopen, economists have been warning how the globe is currently undergoing its deepest global recession in a couple of decades short of a century.

In the coming second quarter, global gross domestic product – the broadest measure of economic growth – has widely been expected to plunge, bogged down by the top economies.

However, the view now among economists is that growth may not stay constricted for as long as one previously thought and the predicted deep recession may be over much sooner than you think!

“The deepest global recession in 75 years will also likely be the shortest on record,” revealed Nariman Behraves and Sara Johnson, global economists at IHS Markit.

“All signs point to the second-quarter real GDP plunge in the US and European economies being one for the records, with double-digit quarter-on-quarter declines in the United States, Eurozone, and United Kingdom,” IHS Markit, which publishes widely watched surveys of business and economic activity, noted in a report.

However, the economists said that while these downturns will still be the worst since the end of World War II, they anticipate that growth will return in the third quarter in the US and European economies.

For 2020 as whole, real GDP is projected to fall 8.1 per cent in the US, 8.7 per cent in the Eurozone, and 12.2 per cent in the UK, according to economic surveys conducted by IHS Markit.

The survey further indicated that Mainland China's record first-quarter nosedive was followed by a second-quarter rebound and that will lead to an annual growth of 0.5 per cent.

“All this means that global real GDP is projected to decrease 6 per cent in 2020, more than three times the 1.7 per cent contraction in 2009 during the Global Financial Crisis,” the economists added in a collaborative note.

The figures come a few weeks after the World Bank estimated that GDP worldwide will contract 5.2 per cent in 2020. In comparison, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated in April that the global economy would contract 3 per cent this year.

“Ironically (and mercifully) the recessions triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the developed economies are likely to have been short,” the IHS Markit economists explained.

The recession was widely viewed to have lasted two months in the United States and Eurozone – March and April – and three months in the United Kingdom, which extended into the month of May as well. For the U.S. economy, this would be the shortest recession on record, the survey showed, with the prior record for the shortest



recession being the six-month-long downturn in 1980.

After unprecedented drops to record lows, economic data for all the key economies have bounced back sharply. However, with the exception of China, the indexes are still below 50, the demarcation line between contraction and expansion.

“Thus, while the worst is over, the recovery is likely to be hard slog—even after an anticipated short-term bounce,” the economists cautioned.

“The global index of manufacturing export orders remains deep in contraction territory, suggesting the external demand outlook of China and other Asian export powerhouses is highly challenging.

IHS Markit predicts that global trade will contract at a double-digit rate in 2020.

“Even with the beginnings of a recovery in place, the fallout from this pandemic and the lockdowns can only be described as massive... With millions of businesses shuttered and tens of millions of workers unemployed, the economic and social costs continue to rise and will stay elevated for a long time.”

The economists suggested that this will require continued and additional support from central banks and governments and continued vigilance by health authorities vis-à-vis new waves of the COVID-19 virus. “Otherwise, this deep and brief downturn could turn into something far worse.”

Not Pulling out of...

FROM PAGE 1

With this move, it became clear that Europeans have advanced in their subservience and dependence to the U.S. (of course one should not forget their dirty natures especially the British) and they have stuck in the quagmire of their behavior.



They want Iran to be committed to its obligations while they do not observe any of theirs. These countries are in talks with Iran to remain committed to the JCPOA and not to leave while at the same time they want to extend Iran's arms embargo for six months more.

What problems can Europeans create for Iran but being a tool for exerting more pressure on the country and its nation while they have almost made the trade with Iran one-sided and almost zeroed? The government's hesitation in reducing the level of ties with these countries is like the same mistake of not pulling out of the JCPOA and I wish we could implement the nation's will which is to take a revolutionary stand against them.

Enemies Not Even...

FROM PAGE 1

As the Islamic Revolution is growing, enemies are becoming more afraid and try to turn the life of the Iranian nation into a battlefield, he said, pointing to enemies' soft war against Iran.

General Salami referred to the ongoing protests in the U.S. and stated what is going on in the country has been inspired by the general spirit of the fight against U.S. oppression worldwide.

“Burning U.S. flag is a symbol of showing the spirit of the fight against tyranny and it is now happening in America; this is for sure inspired by the spirit of Jihad against America that has been expanded across the world.”

President...

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the government's measures in the economic field in the difficult conditions of imposing sanctions in the last two years, especially during the outbreak of Coronavirus in the past few months, Rouhani said: “The government's efforts have always been aimed at the maintaining peace and harmony among all active economic public and private sectors.”

He praised the provision of facilities and the development of policies to protect jobs and families affected by restrictions on Corona, adding that the implementation of these programs has been a source of help for people in some difficult situations, although these programs may not compensate for all the damage.

COVID-19 Kills...

FROM PAGE 1

Saeed Namaki said on Sunday that despite imposed sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, the Islamic Republic of Iran acted significantly in medicine production.

Namaki made the remarks in the ceremony of launching the production line of Insulin Glargine pen by Pooyesh Drug Products Company with the presence of the Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari.

Namaki stressed that to realize the slogan of ‘Surge in Production’, the health ministry has managed to reduce the medicine import by up to 25 percent, and increased national production up to 30 percent, to save \$ 600 million.

“With the country's critical condition of the economy, and being under the heaviest sanctions, Iran is self-sufficient in coronavirus-combatting supplies,” he noted.

With regard to coronavirus pandemic, the Iranian top health official stressed that the health ministry's first strategy is to change the lifestyle, promote appropriate nutrition, and decrease diabetes.

He expressed hope the virus is contained by implementing all health protocols, keeping social distance, and added that the health ministry intends to decrease medicine consumption to meet the domestic medical needs along with lowering the death toll due to diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases.

Philippines Among Top 10 Countries Worst for Workers



MANILA (Dispatches) - Due to violations of labor rights, the Philippines is still included in the list of top 10 countries considered as worst for workers, based on the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index for 2020.

The Philippines joins Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Zimbabwe and newcomers Egypt, Honduras and India as the countries that are allegedly not favorable to workers.

The ITUC Global Rights Index depicts the world's worst countries for workers based on the degree of respect for workers' rights by rating 139 countries on a scale from 1 to 5. Workers' rights are absent in countries with the rating 5 and violations occur on an irregular basis in countries with the rating 1.

ITUC is the world's largest trade union federation with 200 million workers in 163 countries through the 332-member national labor federations around the world.

The Global Rights Index was developed, ITUC explained, to increase the visibility and transparency of each country's record on workers' rights.

The ITUC affiliates in the Philippines are the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), Sentro and Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU). According to ITUC general secretary Sharan Burrow, these countries posed “threats to workers, our economies and democracy (that) were endemic in workplaces and countries (even) before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted lives and livelihoods.”

“It is a stark picture of the rights deficits we need to address as we build the new economic model the world needs as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

The ITUC has underscored the prevailing trend to restrict working rights through violations of collective bargaining, withholding the right to strike and excluding workers from unions. Last year, the Philippines was also included in the list, along with Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

Russia's Real GDP to Recover in Mid-2022

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's Ministry of Economic Development has released a fresh forecast for 2019-2022. The ministry said there will be no V-shaped recovery: after a five percent plunge in 2020, real GDP will only recover starting in mid-2022.

The Ministry of Economic Development predicts a GDP growth of 2.8% in 2021 and three percent in 2022.

The Urals price remains below the base budget price of \$42, at which point the Russian budget breaks even. Urals will average \$31.1 per barrel this year, rising to \$35.4 in 2021. Only in 2022 will it return to the breakeven price of \$42.2 when Russia Inc. goes back into profit.

That means the Ministry of Finance will rely on the National Welfare Fund (NWF) to top up budget spending until 2023. Currently there are some nine trillion rubles (\$130bn) of liquid assets in the NWF. With an estimated three-trillion-ruble shortfall in budget revenues forecast for this year, there is therefore enough in the NWF to cover at least another three years of deficits.

The ministry also says the ruble will remain relatively strong over the period. The ruble was trading at an average rate of 64.7 rubles to the dollar in 2019 before the start of the oil price shock and the corona crisis, but it sank to a low of

80 rubles amid the panic that followed. It has since recovered to break below 70 rubles again in the first weeks of June.

The Ministry of Economic Development predicts that the FX RUB/\$ rate will average 72.6 rubles to the dollar this year. After that the rate will go to 74.7 in 2021 and 73.3 in 2022.

Real incomes will decline 3.5% in 2020 after growing for the first time in six years by an average of 2.9% in 2019. But real wage growth will recover next year, up by 3.1% and two percent in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

At the same time, unemployment will remain at an elevated level of 5.7% this year, up from 4.6% in 2019, before diminishing slowly over the next two years to 5.4% and then 4.9%.

The fall in oil prices will also put pressure on the balance of payments, but those will remain positive throughout. Russia ran a \$65 billion trade surplus in 2019 that will fall to a mere nine billion this year, before recovering very slowly to \$10 billion and \$27 billion over the next two years.

The current account is also expected to halve this year to \$45 billion but the Ministry of Economic Development offered no forecast on this number. Opinion is divided amongst analysts on what will happen to the current account.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



PERMIT NO : 1399.1461

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY - AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO: 02-30-9350022

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY (NISOC) INTENDS TO PURCHASE THE FOLLOWING GOODS:

ITEMS	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
20	P/F MASONELAN PRESSURE CONTROLLER REF. MASONELAN REGULATOR CO.	457

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their “INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE” letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to qualitative assessment Form no.1, available at www.nisoc.ir not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for Participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of EURO or 372,490,013 RIAL in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P. NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN

PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg, No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, kouy-e-Fadaian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

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France Allows Up to 5,000 Fans To Watch Sport in Stadiums

PARIS (AFP) - Up to 5,000 spectators will be allowed to attend sports events in stadiums in France when they re-open on July 11, the French government announced on Saturday.
The limit applies to "big events, stadiums and concert halls", the government said, but it may be raised later in the summer.
"A review of the national epidemiological situation will be carried out in mid-July to decide if it is possible to relax (the rules) in the second half of August," it added in a statement.

Nando Parrado Makes Royal Ascot History

LONDON (AFP) - Nando Parrado became the longest priced winner in the history of Royal Ascot on Saturday when he won the Coventry Stakes at 150/1.
The Clive Cox-trained winner -- named after one of the survivors of the 1972 plane crash in the Andes that was the subject of a best-selling book and subsequent film -- powered home under Adam Kirby.
Cox said he had persuaded the owners Marie and Paul McCartan to run him after they had doubts earlier in the week.

Arsenal Rocked by Late Brighton Winner

LONDON (AFP) - Arsenal's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League suffered a fatal blow as Neal Maupay fired Brighton to a last-gasp 2-1 win after Gunners keeper Bernd Leno was stretchered off, while Watford snatched a late 1-1 draw against Leicester on Saturday.
In the first full weekend of English top-flight matches since the coronavirus shutdown in March, Arsenal's faint chances of finishing in the top four faded further.
Their cause wasn't helped by the controversial injury to Leno, whose screams echoed round the empty Amex Stadium after he slid awkwardly when he came to collect the ball just inside his own penalty area.

The German seemed to twist his knee and was given oxygen during several minutes of treatment.
Leno appeared frustrated with Brighton forward Maupay, shouting and pointing a finger at him while being stretchered to the tunnel.

Maupay had been the Brighton player challenging Leno for the ball when he fell.
Already hit by injuries to Granit Xhaka and Pablo Mari in their 3-0 defeat at Manchester City on Wednesday, Leno's departure was another blow to Gunners boss Mikel Arteta.
Nicolas Pepe put Arsenal ahead in the 68th minute with a superb strike, the Ivory Coast winger cutting in from the right and curling into the far corner from the edge of the area.
But Arsenal's defensive frailties were exposed seven minutes later when Brighton defender Lewis Dunk stabbed home from close-range after Rob Holding's attempted clearance bounced off him.

Dortmund Win At Leipzig to Guarantee Second Place

LEIPZIG (Reuters) - Erling Haaland scored twice as Borussia Dortmund beat closest challengers RB Leipzig 2-0 away on Saturday to wrap up second place in the Bundesliga.
The Norwegian teenager kept up his sensational scoring run since his January arrival with his double taking his tally to 13 goals in 10 German League starts.

The victory guaranteed Dortmund would finish runners-up behind Bayern Munich for the fifth time in the last eight years as Leipzig, the only team that could catch them, needed at least a point to have a chance of finishing second.

Instead, Dortmund advanced to 69 points while Leipzig stayed in third place on 63 with just one more match to play next Saturday.
However, a berth in next season's Champions League is all but confirmed for Leipzig despite the defeat, after Bayer Leverkusen also lost on Saturday.

Haaland's 30th-minute opener was a club record 83rd league goal of the season for Dortmund and was arguably one of their best of the campaign.

It started with defender Mats Hummels dribbling past several opponents near the halfway line, setting up a run down the flank and pass inside from Julian Brandt.

Seventeen-year-old American debutant Giovanni Reyna then laid off the ball for Haaland to finish. Haaland, 19, added a second on the stroke of fulltime but could easily have scored more were it not for the goalkeeping heroics of Leipzig's Peter Gulasci, who denied him three times at point-blank range.

Mateu Morey also missed when in front of goal early in the second half, after Haaland played him in but Gulasci did enough to put him off his final effort.

It was the final home game for Leipzig's Chelsea-bound striker Timo Werner, but he proved largely anonymous save for a 40th-minute effort from a tight angle that Dortmund keeper Roman Buerki blocked, and he was replaced with 20 minutes left.

There was a late chance for the hosts to equalize but with six minutes left flying fullback Angelino saw his effort blocked by Buerki, leaving Haaland to have the final say.



At a deserted Vicarage Road, Watford's hopes of avoiding relegation looked set to be dented by Ben Chilwell's superb 90th minute strike.

But in a remarkable conclusion, Hornets centre-back Craig Dawson launched himself into an acrobatic effort moments later to claim his first goal for the club.
Watford climbed to 16th place, one point above the relegation zone.

"It is a really strange day. For the players who thrive on atmosphere and emotional attachment it will be difficult to get used to," Watford manager Nigel Pearson said.

Leicester remain third, six points ahead of fourth-placed Chelsea, as they look to secure a spot in next season's Champions League.

Following the trend from the first four matches of the restart this week, a minute's silence was observed for victims of coronavirus.

Teams took a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter cause before kick-off in every match, all of which are being played behind closed doors for the rest of the season.

Lewandowski Breaks Aubameyang's Bundesliga Record

BERLIN (AFP) - Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski on Saturday broke the record previously held by Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang for the most goals scored by a foreigner in a Bundesliga season.
Lewandowski scored twice in the first half against Freiburg to give him 33 league goals in 30 matches this season, having netted a total of 48 times in 41 games in all competitions.

The Poland striker's tally beats the previous record of 31 goals set by Gabon striker Aubameyang in 2016/17 for Borussia Dortmund before he moved to present club Arsenal the following season.

With the Bundesliga season due to end next Saturday, Lewandowski is well short of Gerd Mueller's remarkable all-time record for the most goals in a German league season when he scored 40 in 1971/72.

Bayern are already confirmed as Bundesliga champions for the eighth consecutive season and are on course to repeat their 2013 treble. They face Leverkusen in the German Cup final on July 4 and are among the favourites for the Champions League, which resumes in August with Lewandowski as the top scorer in Europe with 11 goals in six games.



Pique Pessimistic Over Barcelona Title Bid

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Gerard Pique said La Liga's title race is Real Madrid's to lose after Barcelona were held to a goalless draw against Sevilla on Friday.

Barca's first slip-up since returning from the three-month hiatus hands Madrid the chance to regain top spot this weekend.

After their emphatic 3-0 win over Valencia on Thursday, Zinedine Zidane's side will move level on points with the Catalans if they beat Real Sociedad and above them due to their superior record head-to-head.

"Seeing what we've done in the last two rounds, it's going to be very difficult to win this league," said a despondent Pique afterwards.

"From what I've seen, it's very hard to see Real Madrid dropping points."

Sevilla, in third, and Valencia, in eighth, always looked capable of shifting the dynamic at the top of the table, with Madrid capitalising to climb back to the summit for the first time since they beat Barcelona on March 1.

Asked about Pique's analysis, Barcelona coach Quique Setien said: "I think it comes from frustration. I am optimistic. I think it will be tough for anyone to take maximum points."

A valuable point for Sevilla, meanwhile, gives them a five-point cushion over Getafe in fifth, albeit having played a game more. Barca could have few complaints at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan.

Nadal Gives Retirement Hint

MADRID (Dispatches) - Many among fans and insiders - have hypothesized that this long stop due to the pandemic could be an advantage especially for the players with more experience, who have had the time to rest their physique and perhaps extend their career.

Not everyone thinks so. Rafael Nadal, for example, expressed some doubts when speaking from his home in Mallorca. The former World number 1 will try this year to hook the 20 Slam titles of Roger Federer, unable to take the field in 2020 after undergoing a new knee surgery.

The Swiss phenomenon will not return to the court before the start of the 2021 season.

"I think longer stops for the older bodies are tougher than for younger bodies because it's more difficult to get back to 100 per cent," the Spaniard told international journalists via Zoom the day after his 34th birthday. "But at the same time, of course, we have experience too. I have the experience of injuries that I've had in the past, so in some ways we know how to come back. I can't tell you if we will be able to play longer or not - and we will never know.

We will never know what would have happened if this pandemic had not happened. I am in a country where we couldn't go outside the house for two and a half months," Rafael Nadal stated. "I've only been able to practise for the last couple of weeks.



Solskjaer Encouraged by Pogba Performance

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester United's Paul Pogba is desperate to make up for lost time after his long injury absence, manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said after the France midfielder impressed in Friday's 1-1 draw with Tottenham Hotspur.

Pogba, who had not played since Dec. 26 due to an ankle injury, came off the bench in the second half and won a penalty that Bruno Fernandes converted to equalise for United.

The 27-year-old Pogba has been criticised at times for a perceived lack of effort during his United career, but turned in an all-round performance in their first game back since the season was halted in mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is great to see (Pogba) show his qualities and the contribution he made was big in us getting a penalty," Solskjaer said. "He has had horrific injury-hit season and he is desperate to make up for lost time.

"Paul always has a point to prove to himself and to us. He expects a lot from himself and wants to be the best. He trains hard and loves football."

Pogba completed 17 of 18 passes, made two blocks and recovered the ball four times in 34 minutes on the pitch in what was just his ninth appearance of the season.

