

The Governor-General of Sistan and Baluchestan Province Said That the Monday Attack of Jeish ul-Adl Terrorist Group on the Vehicles of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Left No Casualty

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Tuesday That Some 147 More Iranians Have Died From Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing the Total Deaths to 10,817

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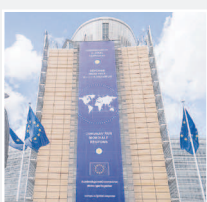


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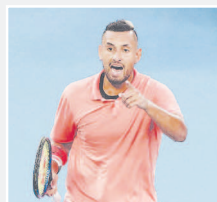


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Iran Close to Develop COVID-19 Vaccine

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian Minister of Health has said that the Iranian Corona vaccine has successfully tested its animal models and many Iranian scientists have taken quick steps to develop the COVID-19 vaccine.

At the opening ceremony of the Second Pharmex Exhibition, the Iranian Minister of Health Saeed Namaki, said: "Last year was a glorious year for our country and despite all hardships imposed on us due to cruel and inhumane sanctions, our colleagues in the Ministry worked hard in the pharmaceutical industry to provide the needs of the people."

"Although COVID-19 was a disaster, it taught great lessons. In 60 days, we became the exporter of health and sanitary products. In addition, we have learned that the whole world must be together and it must be noted that the countries around the world cannot operate isolated to combat Coronavirus. The world can be united in vaccine development and drug production," he said.

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U.S. Alone in Anti-Iran Stance at UNSC

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's ambassador to the UN says the U.S. has been isolated by other members of the UN Security Council with regards to its demand that an arms embargo on Iran be extended.

Majid Takht-e Ravanchi says Washington's position on UNSC Resolution 2231 has been different from those of other countries in all UN Security Council meetings held to review the implementation of the resolution.

"In those meetings, the U.S. was the only country to criticize the JCPOA and have a position on Resolution 2231 different from those of other UNSC members," he said.

He said the U.S. is likely to adopt the same position in the upcoming meeting of the Security Council on July 1, 2020 to discuss the resolution. He said the U.S. was one of the countries which initiated the resolution, but now is violating it.

"It seems the same thing goes for the meeting to be held on Tuesday, which will once again show to the international community what approach the US has adopted on a resolution one of whose supporters was Washington itself. The US was one of the initiators of Resolution 2231. And now, the U.S. is a country which is violating this resolution," he said.

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VP Urges Exporters to Return Forex Into National Economy



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri yesterday urged the exporters to return forex earned from exports to the national economy.

Speaking at a ceremony marking the national Industry, Mine and Trade Day, Jahangiri felicitated the day, adding that the country is experiencing one of its toughest and critical era as it is challenging with the U.S. unilateral and cruel sanctions and the outbreak of Coronavirus.

He further said Americans thought they could make Iran economy collapse but the government changed its policies based on the condition and a wise politician should adopt policies to fit with conditions and the plots.

Jahangiri noted that currently, Iran's policy is to resist against the pressures and to find mechanism to decrease pressure on the people.

He added that the 12th government under President Hassan Rouhani has created some 3.5 million jobs.

Pointing out that protecting the health of people and their livelihood is a top priority of the government, Jahangiri said that the government makes every effort to maintain the existing jobs during these tough times.

He said the Coronavirus has affected all economic, social, political and cultural sectors worldwide but Iranians have resisted against it proudly and will continue resistance.

He noted that foreign policy is determinant in the industrial and economic policies.

Jahangiri also called exporters as the soldiers of the economic war front line as they are involved in fighting against the Americans and should be praised. He said need of forex is one of the pressures during the sanctions and coronavirus era, and provision of forex for the country while the pressures of sanctions on oil exports is high and it is on the shoulder of exporters.

He said the country expects exporters to return their forex earned through exports into the national economy.

He reiterated that industry sector shone during the Coronavirus pandemic era as the producers did miracle in four months by multiplying the products.

Jahangiri said the government has created 500,000 jobs per year despite restricted sources. He further said Iran is a rich country with abundant wealth and it is among ten countries in terms of its metal mines.

Meanwhile in a Monday evening meeting with members of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Jahangiri said the U.S. government had plans for economic collapse of Iran through harsh and targeted sanctions, but the plot has ended in total failure.

"By the grace of God and with resistance from the great Iranian nation and the determination of all officials and the private sector, the American objective resulted in failure," the vice president added.

While the outbreak of coronavirus has dealt a heavy blow to the world's major and large economies, the pandemic, coupled with the sanctions, has harmed Iran's economy as well, Jahangiri noted, saying the Iranian economy has been able to withstand the pressures and is going to overcome the problems. "What is important is that all of us would try to help the country get through such difficult stage with success," he noted.

The vice president also praised the Iranian private sector, exporters and importers for serving the country's economy, saying the administration is doing its utmost to support and empower the private sector.

Lebanon Warns Israel Over Dangerous Gas Exploration Bid

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - President Michel Aoun has warned Israel against its "extremely dangerous" bid to explore oil and gas on Lebanon's maritime border, parts of which are claimed by the regime, saying the Arab country will not allow any violation of its territorial waters.

Aoun's warning came a day after Israel approved a license for oil and gas exploration in "Block 72," located close to the Block 9 gas fields, where Beirut is set to begin explorations for natural gas and oil soon.

"Block 72" sits along the disputed 860-kilometer line of waters that separate the Lebanese from Israeli-held territories.

"This will complicate the situation further as Lebanon will not allow any violations of its internationally-recognized territorial waters, especially in the Exclusive Economic Zone where Block 9 — which will be explored by Lebanon within a month — is located," Aoun said Monday.

The Lebanese president further called for the country's Supreme Defense Council to meet on Tuesday to discuss the development at the southern border.

Lebanese lawmaker Kassem Hachem described the Israeli decision as "piracy" and a "declaration of war" on Lebanon, calling for action at "all levels" to "put an end to these aggressive intentions on our homeland."

Israel relies heavily on gas and has long been developing a number of offshore gas deposits in the Mediterranean Sea.

Reportedly, Israel had been avoiding granting licenses for the exploration of Block 72, fearing it could lead to a new conflict with Lebanon.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Al-Kadhimi Should Not Make a Misstep

Media outlets had reported that Iraqi Government has ordered its forces to remove the posters and banners of martyrs of resistance and sacrifice from the streets and public places. Another news claimed that some commanders of Hashd Al-Shaabi were raided and Iraq Government's decision was blamed for this raid.

I wish this decision had just been for saving the lives of the commanders from the planned U.S. drone attacks and if it is so, this act should be appreciated and if this decision of Iraq Government was just based on following the Great Satan's policy, it has been totally wrong and the government should strongly avoid from taking any action and measure influenced by arrogant Western and Arab sources.

According to the Iraqi news website New Al-Alam, some of high-ranking commanders and officials of Iraqi resistance groups had received intelligence and information some ten days before the raid that the U.S. Army and its drones were preparing to launch a massive attack on the positions of these groups or arrests of the leaders of Iraq Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). So for security reason and as a precautionary measure, they relocated their offices and residences to another places.

The Iraqi website claims that one week before the raid operation, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi had ordered Iraqi security forces to be on alert for confronting with the planned attacks of unknown groups on the government offices and military bases. Before the launch of the raid even Iraqi President Barham Salih, according to some informed sources, had reportedly moved from his residence at al-Sindbad Palace complex which is located near the place which was to be attacked while at the same time the prime minister was accusing Kataib Hezbollah which was illogical and unimaginable.

Meanwhile Middle East News website quoted some Iraqi media sources as saying that Iraqi security forces' Friday morning operation and their raid at the headquarters of Kataib Hezbollah which is a branch of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) kindled considerable controversies and behind the scenes.

According to the official communique of Iraqi Joint Operations Command, the Counterterrorism Service (CTS) launched the raid and arrests of the group's members on a charge of launching rocket attacks at the buildings and some Iraq Army bases (where the American forces are deployed). But it seems dimension of this operation is beyond just the launch of rocket attacks at the U.S. bases. On the other hand, some official and almost valid documents which have been published in some Iraqi sources show apparently the Iraqi prime minister's orders regarding the operation, and it is noticeable.

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Admin of Anti-Iran Website Gets Death Penalty

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Judiciary has sentenced Rouhollah Zam, the administrator of Amad News, a counterrevolutionary website, to death after he was convicted of corruption on earth.

Judiciary spokesman Gholam-Hossein Esmaeili announced on Tuesday that the investigations into Zam's case had been finalized, and that he had been found guilty of corruption on earth, among other crimes.

"The court has considered 13 counts of charges together as instances of corruption on earth, and therefore passed the death sentence," he said.

"Regarding several other charges, he has been sentenced to life in prison, but the ruling is not final and can be appealed at the Supreme Court," the official added.

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U.S. Punishes Law-Abiding States for Not Violating UNSCR

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message referred to U.S.' violation of Iran nuclear deal, saying U.S. punishes law-abiding states for not violating UNSC resolutions.

"The U.S. isn't merely violating JCPOA and bullying others to do so, too. It also has dishonor of being first in UN history to punish law-abiding countries for NOT violating a Security Council res," Zarif wrote on his Twitter account on Monday.

"I will present Iran's case to the Council @ abt noon ET, Tues," he added.

Tehran Raps Riyadh, Manama for Backing U.S. Anti-Iran Stance

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has lashed out at certain regional countries for supporting the U.S. demand that the United Nations extend its arms embargo on the Islamic Republic.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi's criticism came in reaction to unfounded accusations and interventionist remarks by officials of some countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

"It is very surprising that countries such as Saudi Arabia, which, themselves, are a source of terrorism and extremism and have fueled instability in the region by supporting terrorist groups like al-Qaeda for years, are levelling groundless accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which, with its responsible behavior, has rid the region of terrorist groups," said the spokesman.

He touched upon the U.S. sending a representative on a tour of the region to win regional countries' backing for Washington's demand that the UN arms embargo on Iran be extended.

Mousavi said the countries supporting the U.S. stance are "those that have, for more than five years, been killing thousands of people, including Yemeni women and children."



"It is time that these countries gave up injudicious remarks and blind obedience to the U.S., which is the symbol of oppression and injustice in the world, and came to realize that security cannot be ensured with obedience to the United States," he noted.

"The only way to establish stability and security in the region is to change hostile behavior and turn to regional cooperation," Mousavi added.

On Monday, the U.S. and Bahrain, in a joint statement, issued a joint statement, calling for the renewal of an arms embargo on Iran. In their joint statement, Washington and Manama claimed Iran has disrupted the stability and security of Bahrain by supplying weapons to terrorists.

The U.S. and Bahrain also called on the UN Security Council to extend an arms embargo on Iran which will expire in October, 2020 based on the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

The United States has been trying hard to have the arms embargo on Iran extended.

Rouhani Urges Facilitating Digital Economy Promotion in Stock Markets

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday called on the Minister of Economy Farhad Dejpasand to pave the grounds for companies active in the area of the digital economy to get listed on the stock market.

Speaking during a session of the government economic headquarters, the president said that a special market should be possibly formed for listing science-based companies, as well as those companies active in the area of the digital economy.

President Rouhani said that the pandemic time should be seen as an opportunity to develop electronic government.

He urged the related organizations to help remove the obstacles in the way of expanding virtual businesses and make the necessary planning to boost businesses which have grown during the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country.

President Rouhani assigned the Minister of Economy to examine a proposal by ITC Minister Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi which calls for defining a tax credit package instead of tax exemption for startups.

German Envoys Signals End of His Tenure in Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) - Michael Klor-Berchold pointed to the ending of his tenure in Iran as the ambassador of Germany.

In a tweet on Tuesday, German envoy wrote in both Persian and English that "After 4 years in Iran it is time to say good bye."

He also posted an undated photo of himself sitting behind the wheel of a blue pickup truck in Iran.

In early June, Deutsche Welle reported that Klor-Berchold would resign earlier than scheduled to become the head of the economic department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He has been the German Ambassador to Iran since 2016 and was originally scheduled to complete his mission till the end of 2020. His behavior was the source of some controversies during his time in Iran.

Iran Strongly Condemns Terrorist Attack in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan on Monday strongly condemned a terrorist attack on Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi which resulted in killing of five innocent people.

Ambassador Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini in his tweet said defeated in all fields by valorous army of Pakistan, moribund terrorists resorted to new targeting to show their "hypothetical" strength.

"We categorically condemn their attack on stock exchange and hope that Pakistan will get rid of terrorist residuals," he said.

In Karachi, Pakistan Rangers and Police foiled a terrorist attack on the building of Pakistan Stock Exchange and killed four terrorists. Five persons, including a police officer and security guards, were also killed and many others, including a police officer were injured.

Terrorist group Baloch Liberation Army has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Iran Embassy Advises U.S. Envoy to Prevent Bullying

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Embassy in Beirut in a message described claims made by U.S. ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy C. Shea as bullying and advised her to avoid them.

In its message, the Iranian Embassy said she has no right to promote gossip about other countries.

Earlier speaking to Arab media Al-Hadath, Dorothy C. Shea claimed that Lebanese Hezbollah secretary-general

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is threatening the stability of Lebanon and Hezbollah impedes solving the economic crisis in Lebanon.

She also has threatened that the U.S. may sanction Lebanese groups and tribes which are supporters of Hezbollah.

In the wake of her remarks, Judge Mohamad Mazeh in the southern city of Tyre in a decree prevented U.S. diplomat from having interview with Lebanese media.

Iran, Biggest Enemy of Regional Terrorist Groups

TEHRAN (IP)- Iran's Government spokesman Ali Rabiei stated that Iran is the biggest enemy of terrorist groups and extremism in the region.

Iran's government spokesman, Rabiei stated that the U.S. government is no more in legal nor behavioral position to talk about terrorism.

In response to a question on the U.S. accusing Iran of violating human rights, Rabiei said Iran halts and counters terrorism and its spread in the world, and to fight terrorism, Iran paid heavy prices.

No organization has allowed the U.S. to talk or discuss terrorism, the world

witnesses not only the U.S. does not counter the terrorism but also it is a terrorist. It assassinated Lieutenant General Qasem Solimani, he added.

He said "in John Bolton's diaries, Trump confesses on how the U.S. pressurizes Iranians officials and victimizes the Iranian nation to give up. Exerting pressure is U.S. policy."

Expanding terrorism is part of the U.S. double-standard policy, highlighted the spokesman adding that U.S. terrorism caused many regional people to lost their lives and be homeless, he pointed.

Iran's Special Envoy Holds Talks With Taliban in Doha

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' special envoy for Afghanistan has held talks with leaders of the Taliban's political office in Qatar.

The Iranian special envoy, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian, travelled to Qatar to hold a meeting with the leaders of the Taliban's political office about foreign interference in Afghanistan and other issues going on in Iran's eastern neighbor.

The Iranian and the Taliban officials discussed a range of issues in the meeting in Doha, including de-escalation of violence in Afghanistan, the launch of intra-Afghan negotiations without interference from the foreign forces, the US in particular, as well as the common interests of Iran and Afghanistan.

In a statement in May, Iran's Foreign Ministry expressed readiness to help boost negotiations between the Afghan parties over political issues, saying Tehran is ready to assist Kabul in the process of intra-Afghan political talks and continued alliance of Afghan groups, including the Taliban.

Last week, caretaker of Afghan Foreign Ministry Hanif Atmar paid a visit to Tehran with a high-ranking delegation and issued a joint statement with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, defining the road for cooperation between the two Muslim neighbors and emphasizing the need to reduce violence in Afghanistan with the purpose of building trust and creating a positive atmosphere in order to launch the intra-Afghan negotiations.

Europe Believe U.S. Not Able to Snap Back

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Ambassador to Britain Hamid Baiedinejad said in his latest tweet released on Monday night that the European Troika believes that the United States is not legally able to snap back against Iran.

According to a tweet by Baiedinejad, Director-General for Political Affairs and Security of the French Foreign Ministry Philippe Errera in the ECFR20 Virtual Annual Council meeting has said that based on what France, Britain, and Germany have declared in their recent statement, the European Troika would never back the U.S. offer for snapping back against Iran.

Iran's top diplomat added in another tweet that Pompeo repetitively has threatened that if the UN Security Council does not support an extension of the arms embargo against Iran, they would then offer the request for snapping back. "The three EU countries believe that U.S. is not legally capable of adhering to such action to resume international sanctions against Iran."

No Problem Supplying Basic Commodities

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Interior said that the country has no problems supplying basic commodities, and the amount of import and supply meet the country's needs and in some cases, there are even more than needed.

Addressing the reporters on the sidelines of 52nd session of Iran's Economic Information and Advertisement Headquarters on Monday, Abdol-Reza Rahmani-Fazli referred to the increase in prices in the field of goods and housing, saying that regarding the price monitoring, the supply chain of goods is to be monitored to control the price hikes and this monitoring will be implemented on the distribution of goods in the micro and macro scales.

The Minister of Interior added that the government has plans to support tenants and support the construction of housing, which will help reduce housing prices.

Regarding the government's guaranteed price for wheat, he said: "This year, we have a 10% increase in the guaranteed price for wheat, and there is no problem in this regard."

The 52nd session of Iran's Economic Information and Advertisement Headquarters was held on Monday, June 29, 2020, at the Interior Ministry building in Tehran with the attendance of the Minister of Interior Abdol-Reza Rahmani-Fazli and other corresponding officials.

We Can Make Enemies Suffer More Serial Defeats



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - In the face of sanctions, we have defeated the global arrogance led by the United States, said Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami, noting, "Today, when they are facing major problems, we can make them suffer more serial failures."

Welcoming the efforts of the country's medical staff to fight the Coronavirus, Major General Salami said: "In a situation where the enemies of Iran thought we would succumb to the coronavirus, the efforts of the health care staff marked a golden record for Islamic Iran."

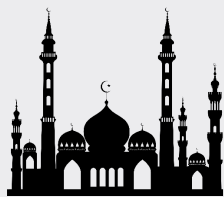
Referring to the inefficiency of the health system of many European and developed countries in the fight against Corona, the IRGC Commander said: "In Iran, the healthcare staff went beyond their medical commitment."

Major General Salami stated, "Throughout history, the conquerors of small peaks have never been admired, but the conquerors of the high peaks have always been and are worthy of admiration and honor. We are building a great foundation for the new Islamic civilization."

Emphasizing that Iran is not a small country, the IRGC commander said, "We want to say new words, and present new patterns when civilizations derived from liberal schools failed to create successful models for human happiness."

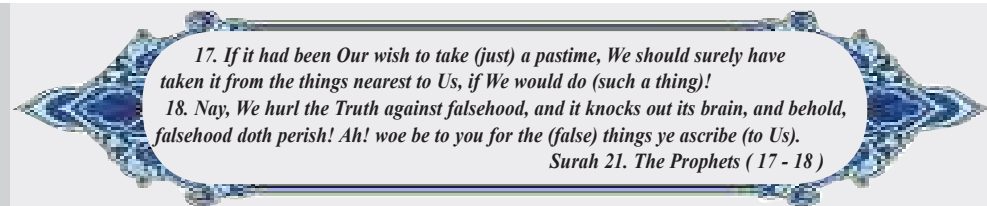
"We have no choice but to become stronger. Today we have access to new knowledge and many of the world's latest technologies," he underscored.

Stating that today the global atmosphere is the atmosphere of psychological operations against us, he pointed to the valuable achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran against the huge volume of enemy psychological operations and specified: "In the face of sanctions and the problems that the enemies have created for us, we have defeated the global arrogance led by the United States."



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:08
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:07
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:52



Iran Carpet Exports Experiencing the Worst Condition

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The Caretaker of Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade says due to the sanctions, Iran's carpet export is experiencing its worst condition as the revenue in this sector has slumped to from \$2b to \$60m.

Speaking in the ceremony of signing agreement for constructing 800 kilometers of railroad, Hossein Modarres Khiabani said the ministry has an expanded plan for increasing the steel production capacity as the country exported 57m tons of different steel products and increasing the amount of exports needs boosting transportation sector.

He said steel ingot export will increase from 28m tons to 42m tons and today 26m tons of different types of steel products will be added to the list of exports.

Modarres Khiabani added that one of the important factors in export of steel is the logistic and transportation, adding that today the project for construction of 800 kilometers of railroad between Bafq and Sangan which is launched is an important event in the cargo transportation field and the project will definitely help provision of raw material in the country and at the same time it will help exports.

He emphasized the share of rail transportation from the total transportation in the country is extremely low, adding that rail transportation for transfer of cargo and passengers should be boosted. He further said that transportation of basic goods has improved from 10 percent two years ago to 25 percent but it is still unacceptable.

Modarres Khiabani reiterated that production without developing infrastructures and logistic as well as growth in transportation sector is impossible.

He pointed to the capacities of mines in the country, adding that Iran's mineral reserves are estimated at 53b tons as the ministry has issued license for exploiting 700m tons but only 500m tons have been exploited.



He noted that while Iran accounts for one percent of world population, its mineral reserves are 2 percent and mines are the only major option for replacement for oil revenues.

Modarres Khiabani added that the burden of oil sanctions is currently on the shoulder of mines sector, adding that if Iran's economy is single-product, it only belongs to the mine sector.

He said undoubtedly shipment of 500m tons of minerals through road transportation is impossible and rail transport should also enter the scene.

He once again reiterated that in industry ministry, there is nothing more important than domestic production, expressing satisfaction that a dairy producing company exports products worth \$600m.

On the condition of carpet exports, he said unfortunately due to sanctions, the carpet export experiences the worst condition as the revenues of this sector from export has fallen from \$2b to \$60m.

Modarres Khiabani reiterated that the ministry only believes in imports of three types of goods and they should be raw material, basic goods and parts which are not produced domestically. Later during the ceremony marking the national industry and mine day, he said today industry accounts for 23 percent of jobs in the country and 76 percent of the total non-oil exports.

He further said that statistics show that the trade in the country is returning to the pre-Coronavirus era.

ESCO Investing in Developing Fooladshahr Wastewater Treatment Plant



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – The CEO of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company says by Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO)'s 210b-toman investment, the company can develop the wastewater network and improve Fooladshahr Wastewater Plant.

Eng. Hashem Amini pointed to the agreement between Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company (IPWWC) and ESCO for investment, saying that with ESCO's investment it was decided to operationalize the project for developing Fooladshahr and Imanshahr wastewater networks as well as boosting and developing Fooladshahr Wastewater Plant which is aimed at transfer of treated water to ESCO by 2022.

He went on to say that with ESCO's 210b-toman investment, 95 kilometers of wastewater network in Imanshahr and Fooladshahr will be carried out and the development phase of Fooladshahr water treatment will be put on the agenda.

He noted that after the completion of the project, the treated water from Fooladshahr Wastewater Plant will be transferred to ESCO for a period of 20 years, adding that during this period, 125m cubic meters of treated water will be supplied to ESCO to meet its water demand.

Amini added that this project will be carried out in line with protecting environment, and by the way, ESCO's water supply from Zayandehroud River will reduce.

He further said with investment of ESCO, the 100,000-people module of Fooladshahr Wastewater Plant is under construction which has progressed by 50 percent physically and it is expected the project of treated wastewater transfer from this treatment water plant to ESCO will kickstart in 2022.

He added that implementation of the third module of the plant is to be put on the agenda very soon.

Amini said that currently, the average treated water production of Fooladshahr Wastewater Plant is 170 liters per second and some 100 liters of it is supplied to municipality for irrigation of green space.

IKAC Free Zone Organization to Be Established



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the High Council of Free and Special Economic Zones on establishing the Imam Khomeini Airport Free Zone Organization aimed at economic prosperity.

The MoU was signed by the Secretary of Iran's High Council of Free and Special Economic Zones Morteza Bank and the Roads and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami.

This memorandum is aimed at realizing and implementing the policies and priorities of the government in order to achieve economic prosperity in the Imam Khomeini Airport City and create maximum synergy and coordination between the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones.

Becoming the hub of freight transport and the second hub of passenger transport in the region are among the goals of the MoU. In December 2019, Eslami appointed Mohammad Mahdi Karbalaee as the new managing director of the Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC).

The minister instructed Karbalaee to take measures for improving the airport city's structure, executive management, and operational processes to comply with international standards.

Eslami also said that IKAC's newly-established free trade zone is an opportunity for the country's new technology-based companies to increase their exports. "Located next to the capital, this free trade zone can become a powerful driving force for the country's economic development," he said.

Imam Khomeini International Airport, with an area of nearly 14,000 hectares, is one of the biggest airports in the world.

All airports in the world and IKAC are in a difficult situation due to the outbreak of COVID-9 and revenues have considerably decreased.

Iran-China Collaboration Has No Effect on INSTEX

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran and China Cooperation have no effect on the prosperity of INSTEX," a former Iranian Ambassador to China said.

Mohammad Hossein Malaek said that this agreement was proposed during the 2015 visit of President Xi Jinping to Iran, to expand cooperation between the two countries in the framework of the new Silk Road project.

"But because Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) was signed at that time, Iran had other alternatives, such as cooperation with Europe, so the offer failed to materialize."

He added that after Trump's inauguration, Iran again decided to have long-term cooperation with China to enhance the unity of the two countries and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif presented it to Chinese authorities during his visit to Beijing.

Answering to the question about what is the range of cooperation between China and Iran under this agreement, Malaek said "Naturally, our economic power is in the oil and gas industry, so it is not unreasonable to expect this game to take place in this area, so the focus is on the energy sector."

"Of course, this agreement cannot be a stimulus for Europe for the prosperity of the INSTEX, and the

Europeans are well aware of Iran's economic power," Iran's former ambassador confirmed.

Iran's former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says, "The Iranian nation will not recognize a new secret 25-year agreement between Iran and China," and warned that any contract signed with a foreign country without the people knowing about it will be void.

President Hassan Rouhani said at the meeting that the primary purpose of this plan is to promote bilateral strategic cooperation at regional and international levels using a win-win approach.

"This plan prepares the ground for Iran-China collaboration in key projects and infrastructural development, including the great Belt and Road Initiative. It is an opportunity to attract investment in different economic sectors such as industry, tourism, information technology, and communications," he said.

Belt and Road is a global development strategy promoted by the Chinese government.

However, Mohammad Javad Zarif told reporters in Tehran last week that "there is no contract," and that he simply is going to talk about bilateral cooperation with China.

Public Relations Guiding Social Assets of Organizations, Protecting Intellectual Properties

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Khorasan Steel Company hosted the gathering of public relations managers of all executive organs of the town of Neishabour where Friday Prayer Leader and governor of the town were present.

In the gathering which was held due to initiative of the governor of Neishabour and in cooperation with the public relations of Khorasan Steel Complex Company, managers and representatives of public relations offices of executive organs exchanged their views on the challenges on way of their duties as public relations.

Addressing the meeting, the CEO of Khorasan Steel Company Mr. Kasra Ghafoori pointed to the effective role of the public relations of the company which it had played in reflecting news and events of the complex for enlightenment of the public opinion and the society. He added that managers of public relations are eyes, ears and tongues of organizations and they actually guide and protect the social asset and intellectual properties of an organization.

He noted that the public relations in any organization has a sensitive position and most of the success of an organization depends on the good performance of the public relations.

He also called for employing all capacities of media and virtual space for reflection of performance. He termed public relations forces as the brokers of diplomacy of organizations in presenting real and correct picture of their organizations.

Ghafoori urged all participants in the gathering to improve their knowledge for better performance and expressed the company's readiness for holding training courses for the public relations in the town.

At the end of the gathering, public relations of the town and the public relations of Khorasan Steel Company were honored.



MSC Posts 16.2% Growth In Steel Production in Q1

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The efforts of management and staff of Mobarakeh Steel Company in the first quarter of the current year bore fruit and the company set records in production in iron-making, steel-making, continuous casting and hot and cold rolling as the company's revenues increased by 32 percent in the same period.



The CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company Mr. Hamid Reza Azimian says, "Since the beginning of the year and after the Supreme Leader named it Year of Surge in Production and the slogan was put on the agenda of producers and industrialists, all managers and staff of Mobarakeh Steel Company became determined to materialize the strategy of the Supreme Leader like the previous years and to help the national economy amid the Coronavirus pandemic, sanctions and slump in the oil price."

He then divulged into details of achievements of the company in the first quarter of the year, saying that in the raw steel production, MSC produced 1,896,191 tons of slab that the figure shows 16.2 percent growth comparing to the preceding year (1,631,812 tons).

Pointing to the significance of maximum production of different steel slab products in the country, Azimian said his colleagues at Saba Steel Complex (affiliated company of MSC) performed brilliantly in the first quarter as the production of hot coil grew by 9 % and reached a new record of 370,668 tons. He further said his colleagues in the complex produced 2,441m tons of sponge irons in the same period which shows 4.8 percent growth comparing to the same period last year.

He also pointed to the revenues resulted from the sales of products in the company in the first quarter of the year, adding that the company's revenue in the first quarter grew by 32% comparing to the same period last year and reached 126,000b rials. Azimian reiterated that the company's sales increased by 31 percent in month of Khordad comparing to the same period in the preceding year and touched over 49,000b rials.

He further said in the first quarter, the company produced 1.248m tons of hot products, 364,000 tons of cold products, 74,000 tons of covered products and 236,000 tons of other products and totally it sold 2.022m tons of its products.

Kosovo President Rejects War Crimes Accusations

PRISTINA (Reuters) - Kosovo President Hashim Thaci on Monday rejected an indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and said he would not resign unless a judge confirmed that he would be put on trial.

Last week, a special prosecutor's office dealing with Kosovo's 1998-99 uprising against Serbian rule said it had indicted Thaci, former parliamentary speaker Kadri Veseli and others for murder, enforced disappearances, persecution and torture. The Specialist Chamber was set up in The Hague in 2015 to handle cases of alleged crimes by Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas during the war that led to Kosovo's independence from Serbia a decade later.



Maduro Gives EU Ambassador 72 Hours to Leave Venezuela

CARACAS (AFP) - Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro on Monday gave the head of the European Union mission in Caracas, Isabel Brilhante Pedrosa, 72 hours to leave the country after the bloc announced sanctions against 11 Venezuelan officials.

"Who are they to try to impose themselves with threats?" said Maduro.

"We will sort it out in 72 hours... she will be given a plane to leave, but we will arrange our things with the European Union."

Venezuela's airspace is currently closed to commercial airplanes due to the coronavirus pandemic.



Europeans' Trust in U.S. as World Leader Collapses During Pandemic



LONDON (Dispatches) - The coronavirus crisis has caused a dramatic deterioration in the European public perception of the U.S., extensive new polling reveals.

More than 60% of respondents in Germany, France, Spain, Denmark and Portugal said they had lost trust in the United States as a global leader.

A report based on the survey's findings argues that the shock of the pandemic has "traumatised" European citizens, leaving them feeling "alone and vulnerable".

In almost every country surveyed, a majority of people said their perception of the US had deteriorated since the outbreak. Negative attitudes of the US were most marked in Denmark (71%) Portugal (70%), France (68%), Germany (65%) and Spain (64%). In France, 46% and in Germany 42% said their view of the US had worsened "a lot" during the pandemic.

In an analysis of the data, the policy experts Susi Dennison and Pawel Zerka say that trust in the US is "broken" as a result of its handling of the health crisis and that support for the transatlantic alliance has been "hollowed out".

Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, warned in an interview with the Guardian on Friday that the world could no longer take it for granted that America still aspires to be a global leader. The survey suggests that public opinion is already conscious of the shift.

The report states: "Europeans' trust in the US is gone. Many have been appalled by the [US's] chaotic response to Covid-19; the lack of solidarity it showed with Europeans in the 12 March closure of its border to members of the Schengen area; and its lack of leadership in tackling the coronavirus crisis at the global level – or even engagement with the issue (beyond a war of words with the World Health Organization)."

The survey was commissioned by the Berlin-based European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) thinktank and conducted by Datapraxis and YouGov at the end of April and the first week of May, across nine EU countries which together account for two-thirds of the bloc's population.

So low is confidence in the future of the transatlantic partnership that only 2% of respondents in Germany and 3% in France said they would expect US support as Europe rebuilds its damaged economy.

"Europeans have digested the fact that the US is no longer necessarily a friend for Europe in times of need," Dennison said.

The ECFR's analysis suggests the shift in European attitudes transcends hostility to Donald Trump or his administration's poor handling of the virus outbreak in the U.S.

Covid-19 Pandemic Is Not Even Close to Being Over

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The coronavirus pandemic is "not even close to being over", the WHO warned Monday, as the global death toll passed half a million and cases surged in Latin America and the United States.

In another grim milestone, the number of infections recorded worldwide topped 10 million, while some authorities reimposed lockdown measures that have crippled the economies worldwide.

"We all want this to be over. We all want to get on with our lives," World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"But the hard reality is this is not even close to being over," he said, adding that "although many countries have made some progress, globally the pandemic is actually speeding up." The virus emerged at least six months ago in China, where the WHO will send a team next week in the search for its origin, Tedros said.

Covid-19 is still rampaging across the U.S., which has recorded more than 125,000 deaths and 2.5 million cases -- both around a quarter of the global totals.

Israel's Annexation Plans Illegal

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Israel's aim to annex parts of the occupied West Bank is clearly "illegal", the United Nations' human rights chief said on Monday, warning that the consequences could be "disastrous".

Just days before Israel intends to kick-start plans to annex its West Bank settlements and parts of the strategic Jordan Valley, Michelle Bachelet added her voice to the chorus urging Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to drop the proposal.

"Annexation is illegal. Period," the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a statement. "Any annexation. Whether it is 30 percent of the West Bank, or 5 percent," she said, urging Israel to "listen to its own former senior officials and generals, as well as to the multitude of voices around the world, warning it not to proceed along this dangerous path."

International condemnation of the possible Israeli annexations has mounted ahead of July 1, when Israel could take its first steps towards implementing part of a United States-proposed Middle East plan.

But defence minister and alternate prime minister Benny Gantz said Monday that any annexation of West Bank territory must be placed on hold until the coronavirus crisis has been contained.

"Anything unrelated to the battle against the coronavirus will wait until the after the virus," he told a televised meeting with members of his Blue and White party on Monday.

His office later clarified that he was referring specifically to the annexation plan.

The Jerusalem Post, meanwhile, quoted multiple US sources with knowledge of the matter saying that Israel will not go ahead with its plans this week, as those plans have not been finalised.

Khadeeja Bisharat, a Palestinian artist, stands with her daughter Remas in Jordan Valley in the Israeli-occupied West Bank

Macron Slams Turkey's Criminal Role In Libya, Putin's Ambivalence

PARIS (Reuters) - France's president on Monday accused Turkey of massively importing jihadists into Libya, labeling Ankara's intervention "criminal" and he lambasted Russian President Vladimir Putin's ambivalence towards his country's mercenaries operating in the North African state.

Ties between NATO allies France and Turkey have soured in recent weeks over Libya, Northern Syria and drilling in the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey has intervened decisively in recent weeks in Libya, providing air support, weapons and allied fighters from Syria to help the internationally recognised government based in Tripoli repel a year-long assault by eastern military leader Khalifa Haftar.

"I think it's a historic and criminal responsibility for a country which claims to be a NATO member," French President Emmanuel Macron said.

Without providing any evidence on the nature of the fighters, he said Turkey was "massively importing" jihadists from Syria.

Paris has been accused of supporting Haftar politically, having previously given him military assistance to fight Islamist militants. France denies



backing Haftar but has stopped short of rebuking his allies, especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has also been singled out by the United Nations for violating an arms embargo.

Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) is backed by the UAE, Egypt and Russia. In recent weeks, French officials have repeatedly said that Turkey's intervention was encouraging Russia to gain a greater foothold in Libya.

Libya's National Oil Corporation said on Friday Russian mercenaries had entered the Sharara oilfield. A United Nations report in May said Russian private military contractor Wagner Group had up to 1,200 people deployed in Libya.

Macron spoke to Putin on Friday, but stopped short of denouncing Moscow as he has with Ankara. He said the two leaders agreed to work towards a common goal of a ceasefire.

On Monday, Macron said Putin had told him that private contractors did not represent Russia.

"I told him of my very clear condemnation of the actions which are carried out by the Wagner force... he plays on this ambivalence."

China Passes Controversial Hong Kong National Security Law

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's parliament has passed controversial national security legislation for Hong Kong that Beijing says is necessary to deal with issues of terrorism, subversion and foreign interference but critics say will outlaw dissent and destroy the autonomy and freedoms promised when the territory was returned to China in 1997.

The bill was passed unanimously by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress at a three-day meeting that began on Sunday, according to multiple media reports in Hong Kong citing unnamed sources. The draft of the law has not been made public.

At her weekly news conference on Tuesday, Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam declined to comment on the law. The legislation will come into effect when it is gazetted in Hong Kong, and is expected to be in force by July 1, the anniversary of the territory's return to Chinese rule.

Trump Denies Being Told About Russian Bounties to Kill U.S. Troops in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump said on Sunday he was never briefed about the reported Russian efforts to pay bounties to Taliban-linked militants to kill U.S. troops in Afghanistan, blasting a New York Times report on the bounties.

"Nobody briefed or told me, @VP Pence, or Chief of Staff @MarkMeadows about the so-called attacks on our troops in Afghanistan by Russians," Trump tweeted, calling on the newspaper to name its anonymous source. "Everybody is denying it & there have not been many attacks on us."

In a separate tweet late on Sunday, Trump added: "Intel just reported to me that they did not find this info credible, and therefore did not report it to me or @VP."

The Times reported on Friday that U.S. intelligence had concluded that a Russian military intelligence unit linked to assassination attempts in Europe had offered rewards for successful attacks last year on American and coalition soldiers, and that Islamist militants were believed to have collected some bounty money.

The White House and Director of National Intelligence on Saturday denied the report. Russia's foreign ministry also dismissed it.

On Sunday, the newspaper published an additional report saying U.S. intelligence and Special Operations forces in Afghanistan alerted superiors as early as January to the suspected Russian plot to pay bounties, citing officials briefed on the matter.

House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, part of the so-called Gang of Eight lawmakers who receive frequent intelligence briefings, said she was not aware of the assessment and called for Congress to be briefed. Pelosi cited the New York Times' reporting and Trump's denial as more evidence of the president ignoring allegations against Russia to accommodate President Vladimir Putin.

"There is something very wrong here. But this must have an answer," she said on ABC News, adding that Trump has already supported Putin by diminishing U.S. leadership in NATO, reducing U.S. forces in Germany and inviting Russia back into the G8.





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J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

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

Parsian

Farmanieh Apt (\$2200)
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Fereshteh bldg (\$5000)
4storey, 12bdrs, & pkgs

Darrous Apt (\$2000)
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Andarzgoo bldg (\$20000)
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Turkey's Economic Confidence Jumps in June

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's economic confidence index rose sharply to 73.5 in June, the country's statistical authority said on Monday.

The figure jumped 19.1% from 61.7 last month as Turkey relaxed coronavirus-related restrictions, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) data showed.

The month-on-month rise was driven by improvements in the consumer, real sector, services, retail trade, and construction confidence indices.

The construction confidence index surged the most from last month, by 33.1% to 78.



Worst Is Over for Oil And Gas Markets

VIENNA (Dispatches) - According to Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, secretary-general of OPEC, the enormous and unprecedented oil market imbalance facing the industry in April following the COVID-19 pandemic required an unparalleled response from producers

Underlining the importance of the two-year agreement signed in the Declaration of Cooperation (DoC) on 12 April by OPEC and non-OPEC oil producing countries and revalidated earlier this month on 6 June, Barkindo said he was confident that more stability would return to the oil markets in the second half of the year, but more work is needed to draw up existing oil inventories to help rebalance markets.

"As we see countries begin to open up, we will see demand start to come back," Barkindo said. "I remain optimistic but cautious the worst is over and a recovery will be in full swing in the second half of this year, with stocks beginning to be withdrawn. However, what shape the recovery will take, whether a V shape, W or inverted hockey stick, is still uncertain."

"Nevertheless, I am hopeful by the end of this year we will begin to see some further semblance of stability restored to oil markets. Then we will be in a position to move into the next phase of sustaining that stability. Hence the importance of the two-year duration of the historic agreement signed by the OPEC Plus group of countries and non OPEC producers."

Setting out the scale of the "unprecedented demand destruction" suffered by oil markets in April, Barkindo said oil demand had fallen by 20 to 24 mmbbl a day, from a high of 100 mmbbl per day, as economic and societal lockdowns, in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus, ravaged the global economy.

It led to the largest single supply adjustment in history with OPEC and non-OPEC producers adjusting oil output, including from those outside of the DoC, by almost 20 mmbbl a day.

Stressing the criticality to the global economy of restoring stability to oil markets, Barkindo said he had seen projections predicting a contraction of nearly 20 per cent, or US\$1.5 trillion, in energy investments due to market volatility and uncertainty.

"Investors in all sectors of the economy are allergic to uncertainties. Therefore, it is important we restore stability and sustainability to oil markets, not only for producing countries but also for consuming countries. Both know a lack of investment in energy today will sow the seeds of another energy crisis in the medium to long term. That would not be in the interests of the global economy," Barkindo explained.

Turning to the energy transition and the environment, Barkindo said that addressing carbon emissions would remain a central challenge for the post-COVID-19 oil and gas sector. He urged the global community to tackle the twin challenge of climate change and energy poverty and added that in the medium to long term all energy sources would be needed to meet global energy demand.

"There are over 7.5bn people in our world. By 2040 the global population will increase by 1.6bn people. Climate change and energy poverty are two sides of the same coin and only the global community, working together, can tackle this issue," Barkindo concluded.

Austria Increases Incentives to Buy Electric Cars

VIENNA (Reuters) - Austria will boost financial incentives for buying battery-powered cars and bicycles, and triple grants for charging points from July in its efforts to fight global warming, the economy minister said on Monday.

Electric car buyers will get 5,000 euros (\$5,640) in support from Wednesday, up from 3,000 euros, Leonore Gewessler told a news conference.

The increase is the result of a joint effort with the car industry, which will contribute 2,000 euros to the subsidy, she said.

The minister also announced a tripling of support for charging points to 600



euros for home charging stations or intelligent charging cables, and 1,800 euros for charging points in multi-occupancy buildings.

Austria currently has around 5,500 charge points and wants to increase that number as quickly as possible, she said.

Nearly 33,000 electric vehicles (EVs) were registered in Austria by the end of May, just 0.7% of the total number of cars, according to Statistik Austria. Around two thirds of the EVs are commercial vehicles.

Up to 1,200 euros will also be provided to support the purchase of e-bikes, the minister said. Up to 700 euros will be provided by the state and the rest by the distributor.

China's Factory Activity Likely Slowed in June

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's factory activity likely grew for the fourth month June but the pace may be waning, as global demand stayed subdued while a fresh coronavirus outbreak in the Chinese capital and rising worldwide cases threaten to undermine a gradual domestic recovery.

The official manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI), due for release on Tuesday, is expected to ease to 50.4 in June, from 50.6 in May, according to the median forecast of 29 economists polled by Reuters. A reading above 50 indicates an expansion in activity. With travel bans finally lifted in April in Wuhan, the epicentre of the country's coronavirus crisis, China has largely managed to recover from strict lockdowns that had led to weeks of economic paralysis.

Yet export demand has remained weak with infections steadily rising across the world. Some fear a worldwide recession might turn out to be more pronounced than expected in the event a second wave of coronavirus cases force many countries to reimpose strict lockdowns.

Earlier this month a cluster that has steadily grown to more than 200 cases associated with a food market emerged in Beijing, underscoring the ever present economic threat posed by the virus.

"We received a stark reminder this week that the fight against COVID-19 is not over, as new cases globally thrice reached new highs," Morgan Stanley said in a note Monday. The fallout from the global pandemic has left factories in China, and elsewhere, operating below strength amid slack demand.

"China's work resumption has become stable. There is not so much room (for a rebound) compared to the previous months," said Hu Yanhong, a researcher at Yingda Securities.

Just 6% of UK Public Want a Return to Pre-Pandemic Economy

LONDON (Dispatches) - Only 6% of the public want to return to the same type of economy as before the coronavirus pandemic, according to new polling, as trade unions, business groups and religious and civic leaders unite in calling for a fairer financial recovery.

The former head of the civil service Bob Kerslake, the former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the heads of the Trades Union Congress, Confederation of British Industry and the British Chambers of Commerce are among 350 influential figures wanting a "fairer and greener" economic rebuilding, and believe there is no going back to the past.

Their call comes as a YouGov poll shows that 31% of people want to see big changes in the way the economy is run coming out of the

crisis, with a further 28% wanting to see moderate changes and only 6% of people wanting to see no changes.

It also showed 44% of people were pessimistic when they thought about the future of the economy, while only 27% were optimistic. Forty-nine percent thought the crisis had made inequality worse.

Labour peer Lord Kerslake said: "As the country begins to emerge from the crisis, it is becoming clear that people want a better future, not simply to return to where we were before. As with big crises in the past – from wars to the Great Depression – it was universally agreed that there was no going back."

"And so we have to ask deep questions about what kind of society and economy we now want to build. The moment we are in is a challenge to us all: to governments, businesses, civil society and citizens. But it is a challenge to which, together, we can rise and build something better."

The research, commissioned by the New Economics Foundation, was released at the launch of their "Build Back Better" campaign. Other signatories include David Walker, the bishop of Manchester, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the bishop of Dover, senior rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, and the heads of Oxfam, Shelter, Save the Children, the Trussell Trust, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. Frances Morris, director of the Tate Modern, has also signed up in a personal capacity.

The campaign is calling for an economic recovery that provides more funding for the NHS and social care, tackles inequality, creates good jobs, particularly for young people, and reduces the risk of future pandemics and climate emergencies.

Miatta Fahnbulleh, chief executive of the New Economics Foundation, said: "The crisis has revealed a number of harsh truths – that our health and social care services had been under-resourced, and that longstanding inequalities have left too many people vulnerable. But we have seen what can be achieved when we are faced with a crisis – government can spend wisely, at speed and at scale."

Macron Pledges 15-Billion-Euro Green Push After Vote Rout

PARIS (Reuters) - French President Emmanuel Macron promised 15 billion euros (\$16.9 billion) of new funding on Monday to speed up moves to a greener economy, a day after the Greens trounced his party and took control of big cities in local elections.

Macron said he would move faster on environment-friendly policymaking and that he was ready to call a referendum in 2021 on revising the constitution to include climate goals if parliament allowed it. But he stopped short of promising one.

Macron was responding to proposals by a Citizens' Climate Council he set up in response to the "yellow vest" movement that sprang up as a backlash against the cost of living but became a rebellion against him and his pro-business reform agenda.

"The challenge to our climate demands we do more," he told members of the climate council in the Elysee Palace's garden, hoping to burnish his green credentials for the final two years of his presidency.

He made no reference to Sunday's vote, in which his LaRem party failed to win in any big city, leaving Macron, 42, without a local power-base as he eyes a possible bid for a second term as president in 2022.

The Greens won control of cities including Lyon, Bordeaux and Strasbourg, often in alliance with leftist allies, and is a junior partner in the winning Socialist-led alliance in Paris. It could also still emerge victorious in Marseille.

"We were given a real slap in the face, it's really brutal," Bruno Bonnell, a LaRem member of parliament, told Reuters.

Bonnell said Macron should replace Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, who is from the conservative right, adding: "If we get back to doing half-baked right-wing policies, we'll get another drubbing in regional elections".

But another ruling party member told Reuters that Philippe, who won back his old mayoral seat in Le Havre, was "really solid" and should remain prime minister.

Ditching Philippe would help Macron start afresh, but the prime minister's popularity has risen as he calmly guided France through the coronavirus crisis.

Sacking him now could create a potential rival for Macron in 2022. Asked about Philippe's future, a source close to Macron said "continuity" would be the order of the day. "I can't see why we should change the prime minister," a government minister close to Macron said. A government reshuffle is likely next week, after Macron gives it some consideration, another government source said.

Macron supported many measures proposed by the 150-member Citizens' Climate Council, but rejected others that would have clashed with his pro-business agenda.

German Inflation Picks Up in June



BERLIN (Dispatches) - German annual inflation accelerated at low levels in June, preliminary data showed on Monday, but remained well below the European Central Bank's target, providing further justification for stimulus.

German consumer prices, harmonized to make them comparable with inflation data from other European Union countries, rose by 0.8% year-on-year, compared with 0.5% in the previous month, the Federal Statistics Office said.

The reading compared with a Reuters forecast for 0.6%.

On the month, EU-harmonized prices rose 0.7% in June. A Reuters poll had predicted a rise of 0.4%.

The ECB has a target of keeping inflation close to but below 2% for the currency bloc.

ECB President Christine Lagarde said on Friday the euro zone is "probably past" the worst of the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, but the recovery will be uneven.

In Germany, the government hopes its more than 130 billion euro (\$146.68 billion) stimulus package will help bring the economy, Europe's largest, back onto a growth path later this year.

The Ifo institute said last Wednesday German business morale posted its strongest rise in June since records began and the economy should return to growth in the third quarter after the coronavirus pandemic hammered output in the spring.

Police Seize Over 1 Ton of Illicit Drugs

TEHRAN (MNA) – The police forces of Hormozgan Province, south of Iran have confiscated over 1 ton of narcotics in the past 48 hours, said the police commander.

Police Chief of Hormozgan Province Second Brigadier General Gholamreza Jafari announced on Monday that following comprehensive intelligence operations, 1087 kg of various illicit have been confiscated in a joint operation with anti-narcotics police forces of Fars, Kerman, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces.

3 offenders have also been arrested and handed to the judiciary, he added.



Coronavirus Rekindles Global Trade Disputes

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - At the start of the year, U.S.-China tensions were easing after their Phase I trade deal, while Washington, Brussels and Tokyo agreed on new global trading rules to curb subsidies. A relative calm had set in.

Then the new coronavirus struck.

Countries across the world imposed 222 exports curbs on medical supplies and medicines and in some cases food, according to Global Trade Alert, a Swiss monitoring group. For medical products, it was more than 20 times the usual level.

Those curbs are now being lifted, but the pandemic has reinforced protectionist arguments by highlighting how global supply chains can deprive people of essential medical protection and disrupt food supplies, as well as threaten jobs.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he wants to cut ties with China, the European Union is planning barriers to state-backed investment from China and elsewhere and China is demanding declarations that food imports are virus-free.

Former EU trade chief Cecilia Malmstrom said there was a “worrying” tendency towards protectionism in the world and the re-emergence of trade conflicts briefly paused by the health crisis.

“Trade-wise we should be concerned,” she told a seminar on Wednesday.

The World Trade Organization said on Tuesday that global trade in goods was set for a record fall this year and that wider restrictions could see a 2021 rebound falling short.

In the past fortnight, the United States has withdrawn from negotiations with European countries over a tax on digital firms and pledged a “broad reset” of its set of tariffs agreed with World Trade Organization partners.

It has also threatened tariffs on a new range of European products, including fresh olives, bakery items and gin, to maintain pressure in a 16-year dispute over aircraft subsidies.

To some extent, political rhetoric is running ahead of reality: U.S. China trade rose in April after COVID-19-related falls and U.S. officials have said China is committed to buying more U.S. goods in line with the Phase 1 deal.

Chinese leaders and EU chiefs met virtually last Monday, although Brussels told China to make good on its promise to allow greater access for European companies and criticised its actions on the coronavirus and Hong Kong.

China offered deeper cooperation on COVID-19 and urged the EU to relax export controls. On Wednesday, Beijing said it was opening up seven more sectors to foreign investors.

Beijing and Brussels are keeping up contacts with Washington and some progress has been made in limited EU-U.S. talks on food standards and technology cooperation.

Senior EU and U.S. trade officers are holding talks every three weeks, officials say. China’s most senior diplomat Yang Jiechi also met with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Hawaii on Wednesday, although Trump renewed his threat to cut ties with Beijing the next day.

Trade is a bellwether for the cooperation and trust needed to help economies recover, particularly those of smaller countries, said Rohinton Medhora, president of



Canada-based think tank the Centre for International Governance Innovation.

Both China and Europe are bracing for rocky relations in the leadup to the U.S. presidential election, but see some hope if Trump’s Democrat challenger Joe Biden wins.

“Biden as president is the only chance for China-U.S. relations to regain rationality,” said Zhu Feng, dean of the Institute of International Studies at Shanghai’s Fudan University.

But he did not expect relations to change dramatically in the short term. There is broad bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress for being tough on China, and European optimism over more cooperation with Washington is also tempered.

Reinhard Buetikofer, a trade expert of the Greens in the European Parliament, did not envisage a return to the “golden years” of the Clinton or Obama administrations if Biden won.

“I don’t expect Biden to be soft on Europe... The mood has changed to a huge degree, not only in Washington, even more so in the U.S. states,” he said, although he did envisage an approach more tuned to creating alliances.

U.S. figures show a trade deficit with the EU in goods and services of \$109 billion in 2018. Rebalancing the relationship with Europe, including on trade, was a core U.S. national interest, according to Hosuk Lee-Makiyama, director of trade think-tank ECIPE.

“The difference between the current administration, or the next or previous is really more about table manners,” he said.

Sweden’s Largest Pension Fund Swears Off Fossil Fuels



STOCKHOLM (AFP) - Sweden’s largest pension fund, with over \$70 billion under management, said Monday it would sell off assets in fossil fuel industries, as part of a “growing climate awareness”.

AP7, a state-run pension fund that manages pensions for more than four million Swedes, said the decision was based on “market analysis and risk estimation”.

“The risk of fossil investing is estimated to increase substantially,” the fund said in a statement.

“The decision to divest from fossil fuel also resonates with a growing climate awareness and demand for sustainable fund investments among AP7’s clients,” it added.

AP7 intends to sell its assets in companies that are “extracting, refining and distributing power from coal, oil and gas for more than five percent of their total production”, a spokesman told AFP.

Affected companies accounted for “way over three percent” of AP7’s assets, and the plan was for divestments to begin immediately in order to reach the goal of “overall carbon neutrality” by 2030.

The fund currently has holdings in oil giant BP, rival Royal Dutch Shell, and US-based Exxon Mobil and Chevron.

AP7 has a total capital of around 670 billion Swedish kronor \$72 billion or 64 billion euros).

In neighbouring Norway, the country’s sovereign wealth fund, the largest in the world, announced in 2019 that it would divest from certain oil companies in order to reduce the country’s exposure to oil, however it excluded major players like Exxon Mobil and Total.

In May, the wealth fund placed 12 new companies on its blacklist, including mining giants such as Switzerland’s Glencore and Britain’s Anglo American - and energy companies such as Germany’s RWE, Australia’s AGL Energy and South Africa’s Sasol, because of their dependence on coal.

Admin of Anti-Iran...

FROM PAGE 1

Amad News was notorious for disseminating incriminating content against the Islamic establishment, insulting the sanctity of Iranian Muslims and publishing fake news in order to drive a wedge between the Iranian people and government.

Zam faced charges of having “committed offenses against the country’s internal and external security” and “espionage for the French intelligence service,” alongside “corruption on earth” as well as insult to “the sanctity of Islam” according to an indictment released in February.

He was arrested in October 2019 by the Intelligence Organization of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards

The meticulous intelligence operation involved outmaneuvering the intelligence services of certain Western countries, especially France, which offered Zam guidance and protection for his operation.

“Intelligence forces had been keeping a watchful eye on Rouhollah Zam’s movements for a long time and he stepped into the intelligence trap set by IRGC some two years ago. Ultimately, we were able to arrest him through cooperation with other intelligence services,” Second Brigadier General Mohammad Tavallaei, a high-ranking IRGC official, said at the time.

Pointing to the U.S. assassination of the late Commander of Qods Force Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Lt. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, Esmaeili emphasized the trail of the convicts contributed the U.S. assassination.

He noted that the court to try the killers of General Soleimani is held wherever is needed, either in the country or Iraq, adding that international bodies’ help is also welcomed in case of need. He appreciated peoples’ trust and contentment of the Judiciary’s performance and said a national consensus is needed to complete the chain of prevention, identification, and elimination of corruption grounds.

U.S. Alone in...

FROM PAGE 1

“Not only does the U.S. breach this resolution, but it is punishing the countries that are enforcing the resolution. Overall, I predict the Tuesday meeting will, once again, show that the U.S. is isolated in its stance,” said the top Iranian diplomat.

He said the UN Security Council meets every six months to discuss the resolution.

“The meeting to be held at the [UN] Security Council on Tuesday is an ordinary meeting held every six months to discuss the UNSC’s Resolution 2231. The UN Security Council meets twice a year to review the manner of the implementation of the resolution,”

He reiterated that no country supported the US in any of the previous meetings.

“The United States was isolated in almost all the three previous meetings which, as I said, are held every six months at the UN Security Council to discuss this subject,” he said.

Lebanon Warns Israel...

FROM PAGE 1

In February 2018, Lebanon said it had signed gas exploration and production contracts for two energy blocks, including Block 9, with a consortium of France’s Total, Italian Eni and Russia’s Novatek oil and gas companies.

The two sides nearly came to blows over Beirut’s offshore oil and gas exploration projects.

Back in December 2017, Beirut had granted licenses to a consortium of three international companies to carry out exploratory drilling in Lebanon’s Block 4 and Block 9 and determine whether they contain oil and gas reserves.

Israeli authorities, who claim sovereignty over Block 9, reacted angrily to the announcement.

In January, Israel signed a deal with Greece and Cyprus to build a pipeline channeling natural gas from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe, despite objections from Turkey.

Israel and Lebanon have further been engaged in a rift over Israel’s occupation of Shebaa Farms, a small strip of land at the intersection of the Lebanese-Syrian border and the Golan Heights.

Al-Kadhimi Should Not Make...

FROM PAGE 1

It has been said that the letter had been written by the Counterterrorism Service (CTS) and signed by Lieutenant General Abdolmir Kamel Abdullah, and in a phone call, Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi had ordered him to launch the operation and to arrest members of Iraqi PMF at 17:00 hrs of June 25 and the prime minister later at 02:00 hrs of June 26 ordered for forming a special committee for investigation.

Some media outlets also after the operation reported strong reactions from the Popular Mobilization Forces to the Prime Minister’s decision and gathering of several vehicles of the PMF around the Green Zone of Baghdad which led to the release of some of the arrested members; and Al-Kadhimi dismissed the commander of the presidential guard in Khizra Region Brigadier Shahab for refraining from stopping arrival of the PMF members to the Khizra region and announced his replacement.

All these reports and information can be interpreted in this way that Iraq Government is changing its stand and moving towards the Americans but the reports about freedom of the detainees can be interpreted differently. Kataib Hezbollah could perhaps have made strategic mistake and could have put Iraq’s security in danger but Iraqi government should have taken a peaceful measure for handling this mistake and it should not have paved the ground for tarnishing the Resistance Front reputation.

Today Iraqi people are indebted to the PMF’s brave fights in eradicating the Daesh forces in Iraq. Who denies the U.S. hatred against these popular forces? It is said that Ali al-Hosseini, one of the senior members of Hashd al-Shaabi has accused Western countries and the Persian Gulf states of doing their best to destroy Hashd al-Shaabi through creating rift and sedition among Iraqis and by disseminating false reports.

He says, “The U.S. and its western allies and the Persian Gulf states hate Hashd al-Shaabi and they are after taking revenge of it because the group has thwarted their plots for dividing Iraq into parts and it has dismantled the Daesh group which has been created, financed and armed by them.”

Al-Hosseini also emphasized that during the past week, an open media war has begun against Hashd al-Shaabi which is aimed at harming it and undermining the blood of the group’s commanders and fighters. He reiterated that they would not succeed in implementing their plot by resorting to these moves, adding that Hashd al-Shaabi is supporter of all layers in the country and it would remain and the U.S, sooner or later, would leave the country.

Anyway, Mostafa Al-Kadhimi should be wary of a sedition which is ahead of Iraqi people in order to save his country from the waves of the U.S. pullout from the region.

Iran Close to Develop...

FROM PAGE 1

“We have taken effective steps to make the vaccine, and many Iranian scientists have taken quick steps to produce the COVID-19 vaccine. Today, we have taken a good step in making the Corona vaccine,” He said, adding: “The Iranian Coronavirus vaccine has successfully tested animal models.”

The minister has said that due to the supports of local productions and avoiding imports, the country could save 600 million Euros in the last Iranian year, which is equivalent to 20% of the hard currency we used. According to Namaki, Iranian companies had a 30% increase in production in the last year.

Namaki went on saying, “Earlier, we export petrochemicals at low prices and import raw materials or pharmaceutical intermediaries at 50 to 100 times. Fortunately, this year, we have taken good steps in this area and will become a major pharmaceutical exporter in the near future. We will supply raw materials and pharmaceutical intermediaries with the cheapest prices and the highest quality in the world’s markets.”

Today and after a 4-month delay, the Pharmax 2020 International Pharmaceutical Industry Exhibition starts at the Olympic Hotel with the participation of the manufacturers and specialists of this industry and with the virtual presence of the Minister of Health, and Medical Education.

In this exhibition, 208 active companies in the pharmaceutical industry present their latest achievements and capabilities.



Pochettino's 19-Year-Old Son Signs New Deal at Tottenham

LONDON (Reuters) - Former Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino's son Maurizio has signed a new contract at the Premier League club, the 19-year-old said in a social media post on Monday.

Winger Maurizio, whose current deal was due to expire on Tuesday, announced the contract extension on Instagram, sharing a photo with his father along with the caption "Looking forwards to the new season." Neither the club nor Maurizio said how long the new deal would last for. However, sports data website transfermarkt said it would last until 2022.

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Zanardi Undergoes Neurosurgery for a Second Time

ROME (Reuters) - Former Formula One driver and Paralympic champion Alex Zanardi, seriously injured in a handbike accident 10 days ago, has undergone neurological surgery for a second time, a hospital statement said on Monday.

The Santa Maria alle Scotte hospital in Siena said that the surgery had lasted around two-and-a-half hours and that Zanardi, who suffered severe head injuries in the accident on June 19, was sedated and intubated in the intensive care unit.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY JULY 1, 2020

No Major Financial Impact From Wimbledon Cancellation

LONDON (Dispatches) - Wimbledon's cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year will have no major financial impact on British tennis, outgoing All England club Chief Executive Richard Lewis has said.

The grasscourt Grand Slam was scheduled to start on Monday but was cancelled for the first time since World War Two in April.

The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) said its spending plans would not have to be curtailed.

"It won't be severely impacted. If you have to cancel, it's great to have insurance," Lewis, who will step down as the CEO next month, told British media.

"We're still in a very good position, we're financially very stable. British tennis is going to be pretty well protected."

However, Wimbledon would not have similar insurance cover in place next year, he added.

"That's impossible in the current climate," he said. "When I started in 2012, there were some signs that things were not insurable, because of communicable diseases that had taken place, like Sars and swine flu."

"In the immediate aftermath you can't get insurance but fairly soon after that you can start to get insurance again, the market returns. So there won't be insurance next year."

"But just because we've made one claim, it won't affect us in the long term."

The U.S. Open is going ahead as scheduled from the end of August while the French

Open has moved to the end of September from May and Sally Bolton, who will succeed Lewis, said the AELTC would learn all they can from the tournaments.

"We've got the U.S. Open and Roland Garros being staged later this year and we will be looking closely at what they do, working with the constraints they find themselves under and learning what we can," said Bolton.

Meanwhile Australian Nick Kyrgios has hit out at Alexander Zverev after a video appeared to show the German dancing at a crowded club on Sunday despite the world No. 7 pledging last week he would be self-isolating.

The video was posted on Instagram by German designer Philipp Plein and later deleted. There was no indication when the video was taken.

Zverev's team have yet to respond to request for comment.

Zverev, 23, took part in Novak Djokovic's Adria Tour exhibition event in Serbia and Croatia where Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki all tested positive for the novel coronavirus last week.



The German said he and his team had tested negative but would self-isolate and undergo regular testing.

"So I wake up and I see more controversial things happening all over the world," Kyrgios said in an Instagram post. "But one thing that stuck out for me was seeing Sascha Zverev again man, again, again. How selfish can you be?"

Kyrgios previously criticised the organisers of the tournament and hit out at governing bodies for their plans to restart professional tennis during the pandemic.

Djokovic's event saw crowds packed into stands for the opening leg in Belgrade, while players hugged and posed for pictures, attended news conferences together and played basketball during the Croatia event.

Zverev was also pictured along with other players dancing at a club in Serbia during the event.

"If you have the audacity to ... put out a tweet that you made your management write on your behalf saying you're going to self-isolate for 14-days and apologising to ... general public for putting their health at risk, at least have the audacity to stay inside for 14 days," Kyrgios said.

Barcelona Sell Arthur, Buy Pjanic



BARCELONA (Reuters) - Barcelona have reached an agreement to sell Brazil midfielder Arthur Melo to Juventus for a fee of 72 million euros (\$80.98 million) and signed Bosnian Miralem Pjanic from the Italian champions for 60 million, the La Liga side said on Monday.

The 23-year-old, generally known simply as Arthur, will remain at the Camp Nou until the end of the 2019-20 season, which has been extended until August because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, before moving to Turin.

Pjanic, 30, will also move to the Camp Nou at the end of the campaign and sign a four-year contract containing a release clause of 400 million euros, said Barca's statement, adding his transfer fee was worth an additional five million in variables.

Bosnian international Pjanic has been at Juve since 2016, having previously played for AS Roma plus French sides Olympique Lyonnais and Metz.

The transfer helps Barca meet their target of a further 70 million euros in revenues from player sales before June 30, in line with the budget the club's members approved last October which forecast income of 124 million euros from transfers.

Sri Lanka Probes

Allegations 2011

World Cup Final Was Fixed

COLOMBO (AFP) - Sri Lanka has ordered a criminal probe into allegations the 2011 cricket World Cup final was "sold" to India, officials said Monday.

"A criminal investigation has begun," K.D.S. Ruwanchandra, the secretary to the sports ministry, told AFP.

"It is handled by the (police) independent Special Investigation Unit on sports-related offences."

Former sports minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage claimed earlier this month that Sri Lanka sold the match to ensure an Indian victory.

"I feel I can talk about it now. I am not connecting players, but some sections were involved," Aluthgamage said.

The island nation's 1996 World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga has also cast doubt on the result and previously called for an investigation.

Local media reports said former skipper and chief selector for the 2011 finals, Aravinda de Silva, had been summoned for an interview with investigators on Tuesday.

After starting strongly, Sri Lanka lost the final at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium by six wickets.

Sri Lanka batted first and scored 274-6 off 50 overs. They appeared in a commanding position when Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar was out for 18.

But India turned the game dramatically, thanks in part to poor fielding and bowling by Sri Lanka, who were led by Kumar Sangakkara.

Sangakkara had said Aluthgamage should share his allegations with the global governing body the International Cricket Council.

International cricket in Sri Lanka has previously been linked to corruption allegations, including claims of match-fixing ahead of a 2018 Test against England.

Earlier this month, the Sri Lankan cricket board said the ICC was investigating three unnamed ex-players over corruption claims.

Match-fixing was made a criminal offence in November. Offenders face fines of up to 100 million rupees (\$555,000) and up to 10 years' jail.



Buffon, Chiellini Extend Juve Deals Until 2021

ROME (AFP) - Gianluigi Buffon and Giorgio Chiellini have extended their Juventus contracts until 2021, the Serie A leaders announced on Monday.

The new deals, long expected to be confirmed by Juve, mean that former Italy captain Buffon will stay with the Turin-based club beyond his 43rd birthday.

"Bianconeri since the beginning. Bianconeri forever. And to confirm it, in case there is a need, today their contract renewals have become official, for another: 2021!," Juve said in a statement.

Buffon returned to Juve last summer after a disappointing season at Paris Saint-Germain and is the club's all-time record Serie A appearance maker, turning out 479 times in the league since arriving in 2001.

With Juventus he has won the league nine times but his only European trophy came when he won the UEFA Cup with Parma in 1999.

He is Serie A's joint record appearance holder with Paolo Maldini, playing in Italy's top flight 647 times, and also holds the appearance record for his national team, with 176 caps between 1997-2018, winning the 2006 World Cup.

He has made 13 appearances in all competitions this season, with Wojciech Szczesny now Juve's first-choice keeper.

The 35-year-old Chiellini, who succeeded Buffon as Juve and Italy captain, joined the club in 2005 and has since become a stalwart in one of the Turin giants' most successful periods.

Mercedes to Use Black Cars in Stand Against Racism



LONDON (Reuters) - Formula One champions Mercedes unveiled black-liveried cars for the 2020 season on Monday as part of a public pledge to further improve diversity within the team and the world of motorsport.

Mercedes have traditionally raced in silver throughout their time in Formula One but will switch to black and have 'End Racism' emblazoned on the halo of both cars.

The team said the Black Lives Matter movement has "shone a searching light on how much we need new measures and actions in the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination".

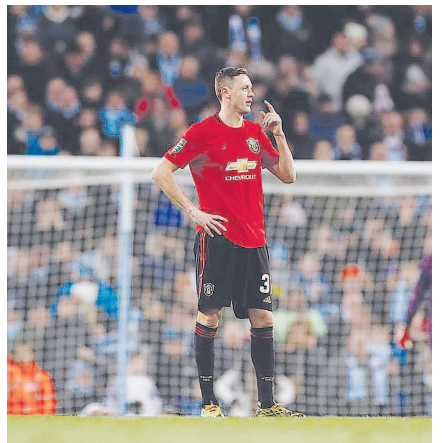
The new livery will make its debut when Britain's world champion Lewis Hamilton and Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas feature in the season-opening Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday.

"Racism and discrimination have no place in our society, our sport or our team: this is a core belief at Mercedes," Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff said in a statement here.

"But having the right beliefs and the right mindset isn't enough if we remain silent."

"We wish to use our voice and our global platform to speak up for respect and equality, and the Silver Arrow will race in black for the entire 2020 season to show our commitment to greater diversity within our team and our sport." Mercedes said only 3% of their workforce identified as belonging to minority ethnic groups, while just 12% are women.

Matic Defends Djokovic After COVID-19 Positives in Adria Tour



LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester United midfielder Nemanja Matic has defended his Serbian compatriot Novak Djokovic for hosting the ill-fated Adria Tour where a number of players, including the world number one, tested positive for COVID-19.

Djokovic was criticised for hosting the tennis tournament amid a pandemic after his coach Goran Ivanisevic and players Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki returned positive tests over the two legs in Serbia and Croatia. Players were seen interacting, embracing each other, playing basketball and partying like they did in pre-COVID-19 days but Matic said they were not required to adhere to any social distancing norms as Serbia had eased restrictions.

"People need to understand that the situation in Serbia was better than here (in England). The country allowed everyone to do whatever they want, everything was open, the shopping centres and the restaurants," Matic told Sky Sports. "So they started to live normal lives because our country was closed for three months completely. You were not allowed to walk on the street, you couldn't leave your home, so it was different (than England)."

While some unofficial tournaments have been played without spectators in the stands, such as the Battle of the Brits exhibition tournament in London, the Adria Tour attracted a capacity crowd in the Serbian capital city of Belgrade.