Stay tuned for more updates and analysis on Middle Eastern politics, economics, and culture. Keep checking back for the latest news from Iran and around the world.
UNSC Members Reiterate Support for JCPOA

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi in a message said members of the just the United Nations Council have reiterated for support for Iran nuclear deal and the UNSC resolution 2231.

"These member states reiterated again, their support for JCPOA and UNSCR 2231," Takht Ravanchi wrote in his message on Wednesday.

"Their speeches proved that they do NOT support the US 'move to extend arms embargo on Iran as it violates international law, and its commitment to the 2015 nuclear agreement,'" he reiterated.

"U.S. should withdraw its ill-fated draft immediately; before it is rebuffed yet again," Iranian diplomat noted.

U.S. Failure in UNSC Sign of Country's Decline

TEHRAN (MNA) – Referring to the meeting of UNSC on Tuesday, Secretary of Expediency Council Mahmoud Vaezi said that the world has experienced a sign of the United States' decline.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Rezaei wrote, "The failure of the United States in the UN Security Council is not only because of Trump's irrationality, but also because of the decline of the United States."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Security Council (UNSC) was held on Tuesday virtually mull over the periodical report of the UN secretary-general on the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known as UNSCR 2231.

U.S. appeal to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran fell flat at the United Nations Security Council. It seems that the US has been rejected outright and close allies of the United States were ambivalent.

World Sees U.S. As Unreliable

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iran's Presidential Office Mahmoud Vaezi says that the world has arrived at a conclusion that the United States is unreliable.

Vaezi made the remarks through a Twitter post on Tuesday.

U.S. unilateralism and its doctrine of withdrawal from international (multilateral) agreements have not only weakened international deals but also challenged the global architecture.

UN Security Council held an online session on Tuesday afternoon to review the latest situation of Implementation of Resolution 2231 and the secretary-general's report on the issue.

At the session, all permanent and non-permanent members, except the U.S., gave conditional support for the recent U.S. move to extend Iran arms embargo.

A number of countries/alleged U.S. enemies, including Russia, France, China, and Germany.

United Nations is another member of the deal as it is the party that is directly affected by U.S. sanctions.

Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, said in a UN session that “the 2015 agreement – which the Council endorsed through resolution 2231 – remains crucial to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and to regional and international security,” according to the UN website.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf penned letters to the heads of international institutions and forums and called on them to adopt decisive steps in confronting and halting Israeli regime's illegal measures.

In separate messages sent to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Gabriela Cuevas Barron President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mohammad Iniquez Nia Secretary General of Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Head of Asian Parliamentary Assembly Mohammad-Reza Majidi and Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the Iranian Parliamentarian urged the UN Secretary-General to call upon the international community, particularly the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, to immediately stop the Zionist regime’s occupation, provocative, illegal measures and violating international peace and security as well as supporting

UAE to Send Support to Dubai's Fire Victim

Dubai has welcomed a tender from EK-UK for medical equipment for the Dubai Civil Defense to support the fire victims. Dubai Civil Defense Director General Majid Al Mansoori said that the tender will be submitted in the near future.

Veer to the UAE has said that the tender will benefit from the latest medical equipment and technology to support the victims.

The statement added that the tender will be submitted in the next week and it will be conducted on a competitive basis.

The statement also added that the tender will be issued in accordance with the requirements of the Dubai Civil Defense and the Dubai Health Authority.

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During the meeting, Ms. Sachs called for strengthening bilateral economic cooperation and finding common solutions for getting past of sanctions hurdles. She then said currently some Australian companies are involved in cooperation in Iran, adding that the relation between both states in mineral, mineral industries and high level education are sustainable and announced her country’s readiness for opening the way for trade relations in new fields of cooperation.

She added that Australian Trade Office opened in Tehran despite sanctions and it continues its activities. She also pointed to the capabilities of Iranian entrepreneurs residing in Australia for improving the level of relations between both states.

Sachs referred specially to a high amount of Iranian farmers and merchants in Australia are ready to restore economic relations with Iranian enterprises in Iran through their offices in the region and the Persian Gulf states.

Meanwhile TCCIMA’s Deputy for International Affairs Hemesmedd Hallaj, for his part in the meeting, pointed to the beginning of TCCIMA’s cooperation with some Australian educational institutes for boosting the capabilities of managers, adding that soon a memorandum of understanding will be signed between TCCIMA’s institute for training and developing human resources with Australian institute Holmesgen as both sides will cooperate on short term courses in different fields like human resources, management and economy.

He emphasized that the current economic relations between Iran and Australia can be improved even during the sanctions era and both sides need to identify and execute the ways of facilitating relations, stipulating that TCCIMA is ready to identify the grounds for joint cooperation between enterprises of both states in the sectors which have potentials and to take major steps on course of improving ties by sharing these opportunities and solutions with the Iranian Embassy in Tehran for removing the obstacles.

Khansari added that both sides can cooperate in the fields like educational, agricultural, environment and mineral industries and announced readiness of the chamber for an all-out cooperation with Australian Embassy in line with reviving ties.

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THURSDAY JULY 2, 2020

TEHRAN – Australia's Ambassador to Tehran Ms. Lyndal Sachs met Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Masoud Khansari and during the meeting she called for resolving problems in way of boosting economic bilateral ties.

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Protesters Fill Sudan Streets to Demand Long-Awaited Reforms

KHARTOUM (AFP) - Tens of thousands of Sudanese protesters flocked to the streets Tuesday calling for reforms and demanding justice for those killed in anti-government demonstrations that ousted president Omar Al-Bashir last year.

The protests in several cities and the capital Khartoum went ahead with security forces deployed in force and despite a tight curfew since April designed to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. "Our demands are peace and justice. We call for economic reform and appointment of civilian governors to states," said a protester in Burri, east of Khartoum. "This march is to put the revolution back on course." Bashir was ousted by the military in April 2019 following months-long mass protests against his 30-year rule, in an uprising triggered by economic hardship.

Many on Tuesday chanted the catchphrase of anti-Bashir protests: "Freedom, peace and justice." Protesters rallied in areas across the country, including in the capital's twin city of Omdurman, with security forces later in the day firing tear gas to prevent protesters from crossing the bridge linking it to Khartoum.

Demonstrations also took place in parts of the war-ravaged Darfur region of western Sudan, where protesters called for Bashir and others accused of war crimes in the region's conflict to be tried at the International Criminal Court. Sudan has since August been led by a civilian-majority administration presiding over a three-year transitional period.

The post-Bashir administration has vowed to tackle the country's daunting economic woes, largely blamed on the former regime's policies, and forge peace with rebel groups.

The country's political transition came on the back a power-sharing deal between military leaders, who ousted Bashir, and a civilian-led council.

The agreement was preceded by months of military control, with Tuesday's protests taking place a year after demonstrations calling for the end of military rule, during which seven people were killed.

Pakistan PM Blames India For Stock Exchange Attack

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday blamed India for a deadly attack on the stock exchange in Karachi, saying there was "no doubt" who was responsible.

"Our security forces fought and thwarted a huge tragedy which was planned by our neighbouring country India," Khan told parliament, without revealing any details.

The home-grown Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack, in which three security guards and a policeman were killed - as well as the four assailants.

The BLA said it was targeting "Pakistan's economy", as well as "Chinese economic interests in Balochistan".

"This plan, we have no doubt, was perpetrated by India," Khan told parliament. "Pakistan has long blamed India for funding the Balochistan separatist movement and other groups.

India, meanwhile, accuses Pakistan of supporting militants in the contested Kashmir region and elsewhere.

India did not directly respond to Khan's comments, which came after the Pakistan foreign ministry Monday accused India of "decapitation in acts of terrorism against Pakistan".

New U.S. Cases of Covid-19 Could Double to 100,000 Per Day

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - New U.S. coronavirus cases could more than double to 100,000 per day if the current surge spirals further out of control, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said.

"Clearly we are not in total control right now," Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told a U.S. Senate committee. "I am very concerned because it could get very bad."

The shipment of vaccines has generated controversy among fellow Republicans as well as Democrats and the suggestion that Trump may have ignored or not known about a threat to U.S. troops to damage him as he seeks re-election on Nov. 3.

House of Representatives Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, a Democrat, said Trump should be looking to impose costs on Moscow.

If considered, what sanctions are appropriate to further deter Russia's malign activities," he told reporters after a briefing for House Democrats at the White House.

While Trump's former national security adviser, told Reuters if the allegations were true they were "tantamount to an attack on Americans directly."

"That requires a very serious response," he said. "It will well be asymmetric economic sanctions." The White House has sought to play down reports in the Times and the Washington Post that it knew of accusations that Russia paid the Taliban bounties to kill U.S. and coalition troops but had not briefed Trump or acted on the information.

Bolsonaro's Black Marauder Resigns Over CV "Lies"

BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazil's education minister resigned Tuesday over his academic record.

Carlos Alberto Decotelli handed in his resignation to Bolsonaro in Brasilia, said a spokesman, Paulo Roberto, capping several days of controversy.

Decotelli is the first black person to be appointed to the government of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro.

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MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russians were set to approve constitutional reforms on Wednesday denounced by critics as a manoeuvre to allow President Vladimir Putin to stay in the Kremlin for life.

\"The changes were passed weeks ago by Russia's parliament and copies of the new constitution are already on sale in bookshops, but Putin pushed ahead with a nationwide vote that ends Wednesday to confer legitimacy on his plans.\"

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\"Russia was set to approve constitutional reforms on Wednesday denounced by critics as a manoeuvre to allow President Vladimir Putin to stay in the Kremlin for life.\"

The vote is set to take place on Wednesday and the constitutional amendments were approved by the Russian parliament in April. The amendments include guarantees for Putin to extend his rule.

\"There is little doubt the reforms -- which include patriotic and populist measures like guaranteed minimum pensions and an effective ban on gay marriage -- will be approved.\"

A state-run exit poll of more than 163,000 voters this week showed 76 percent in favor. Results are expected to be announced after the last polling stations close.

\"Putin says the changes are needed to ensure stability, security, prosperity and a decent life only through development, only together by ourselves.\"

\"But critics say the reforms are a cover for Putin to extend his rule after nearly 20 years in power.\"

Chief opposition campaigner Alexei Navalny said Putin, 67, wants to make himself "president for life" and has called for a boycott.

\"A non-elected president in Russia is an illusion,\" he said. "The opposition will not participate in the vote.\"

\"There are a lot of problems in our country. And the amendments, they will help solve them, not completely.\"

\"Putin is aware of that.\"

\"Many Russians, especially those who remember the chaos and economic turmoil of the 1990s, agree.\"

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**OPEC Oil Output Slumps as Saudi Deepens Cuts and Iraq Laggards in June**

LONDON (Reuters) - OPEC oil output hit the lowest in two decades in June as Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab members cut deeper to counter low prices hit by a surge in demand caused by the coronavirus crisis. An easing adherence by Iraq and Nigeria.

Oil exports fell to 9.5 million barrels per day (bpd) in June, down from 10.6 million bpd in May, Reuters survey records show. PRODN-TOTAL

**Spain Needs Economic Reforms to Avoid Chronic Debt**

MADRID (Reuters) - Spain’s tourism-dependent economy needs profound structural reforms to avoid “chronic” levels of public debt that could hinder long-term limiting output, the Bank of Spain said on Tuesday.

One of the nations most affected by the coronavirus, Spain has suffered last year for its wort economic performance on record in 2020, with a contraction of 9%-11%, as forecast by the central bank.

In a theoretical scenario where no structural fiscal effort would be made by the authorities in the next ten years, the ratio of public debt to GDP would increase above 100% at the end of 2030," the central bank said in its 2019 annual report.

A second source said the government will probably finance incentives for people to buy low-emission cars.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has said his government will announce plans to boost the energy industry.

**EU Rejects Calls By Steel Industry To Cut Import Quotas**

LONDON (Reuters) - The European Union made only modest changes to its measures to protect the steel sector on Tuesday, a day after An angry response from an industry that had called for reduced import quotas to head off a potential glut of steel into Europe.

The EU put in place safeguards in 2018 to guard against shipments redirected to Europe after Washington’s imposition of 25% steel tariffs closed the U.S. market to many exporters.

A filing in an EU’s official journal on Tuesday acknowledged the industry had been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, but said there was no need for drastic changes partly because many members were not being fully functional.

An angry joint statement by producers and a trade union called for an emergency meeting with EU policymakers.

**Airbus to Cut 15,000 Jobs To Survive Coronavirus Crisis**

TOULOUSE (Reuters) - Airbus aims to present a plan to trade unions to cut just over 6,500 jobs over the next two years in Europe on Tuesday, where there was some confusion about the outcome.

France’s flagship airline, part of the Air France-KLM group, is cutting capacity and exiting loss-making long-haul routes to navigate a historic travel downturn.

On top of the 6,500 staff cuts - roughly just representing under 15% of employees such as pilots, ground staff and flight attendants - an additional 1,000 layoff would be made at Air France’s (“HOP!”) airline, one of the three sources said.
EU Reopens Its Borders to 4 Nations But Not to U.S. Tourists

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, mostly in Europe, starting Wednesday, but not to U.S. tourists, according to the bloc’s leaders. The 31 European countries have agreed to begin lifting restrictions from Wednesday.

The list is to be updated every 14 days, with new countries being added or dropped off depending on whether they are keeping the pandemic under control. Non-EU citizens who are already living in Europe are not included in the travel scheme.

“With a new phase and a targeted opening of our external borders as of tomorrow,” European Council President Charles Michel, who chairs summits of EU leaders, tweeted, “we have to remain vigilant and keep this going.”

American tourists made 27 million trips to Europe in 2016 while around 10 million Europeans headed across the Atlantic each year.

Still, many people both inside and outside of Europe remain wary about traveling in the coronavirus era, given the unpredictability of the pandemic and the possibility of second waves of infection that could affect Europe. Tens of thousands of travelers had a frantic, chaotic scramble in March to get home as the pandemic swept the world and borders slammed shut.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the United States has surged over the past week, and President Donald Trump also suspended the entry of all noncitizens from Europe in a decree in March, making it extremely difficult for the EU to include the U.S. on their safe travel list for now.

In contrast, aside from a recent outbreak tied to a slaughterhouse in western Germany, Europe’s biggest cluster of cases tied to contact of one person has generally stabilized across the continent.

To qualify for the “safe” list, EU headquarters said that countries should have a comparable per capita number of COVID-19 cases to those in the 31 European countries over the past week and have a stable or decreasing trend in the number of infections.

The Europeans are also taking into account those countries’ standards on virus testing, contact tracing and quarantines, and the reliability of their data.

For tourist sites and stores in Paris that are already feeling the pinch of losing clients fromirus infections in the U.S.

It also reduced its growth predictions for Russia, Turkey and Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates.

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Barcelona Title Bid on Rocks As Atlético Upstage Messi’s 700 Goal

Barcelona gave up more ground to Real Madrid in La Liga’s title race on Tuesday after being held to a 2-2 draw at home to third-placed Atlético Madrid as a late penalty from Saul Niguez cancelled out Lionel Messi’s 700th career goal.

The draw, the end of next season, the Serie A club said on Tuesday.

Barça will have to win their final game of the season, at Getafe on Thursday, to have any chance of catching Madrid, who have a 14-point lead. But it will not be easy for Barça, who have not won at Getafe in 11 years.

Saul levelled soon after the start of the second half after the referee ordered a re-take when Costa’s initial penalty was saved by Marc-André ter Stegen who had strayed off his line.

Barcelona then earned a penalty soon after the interval which Argentine Messi cooly converted for a remarkable 700th strike for club and country, only for Saul to strike again from the spot in the 62nd to earn a share of the points.

“It’s a great thing the league title is looking much harder for us with each game,” said Barça coach Quique Setién, whose side have drawn three of their six games since the campaign resumed after the coronavirus shutdown.

“Barça are fifth in the standings with 48 points and on track to qualify for the Europa League. They are nine points behind Atalanta who occupy the fourth and final Champions League spot with 10 games to play.

Roma Reach Agreement to Extend Mkhitaryan Loan From Arsenal

Rome (AFP) - AS Roma have reached a “preliminary agreement” to extend midfielder Henrik Mkhitaryan’s loan deal from Arsenal until the end of next season.

Roma, 31, joined the Italians at the start of the season after a disappointing 18-month spell at Premier League club Arsenal following a swap deal in January 2018 which saw Chelsea forward Alexis Sanchez move to Manchester United.

“I’m very pleased,” Mkhitaryan told Roma’s website. “I’m happy to extend my stay here because I still have things that I haven’t achieved yet that I want to achieve. I’m looking forward to it.”

The Armenia international has scored six goals and provided four assists in all competitions for the Rome club. His loan deal was set to expire on Tuesday.

“We are happy that Henrik has decided to stay with us, and help us continue to grow,” Roma CEO Guido Fienga said.

“The club’s targets have not changed and we always want to have players at our club, like Mkhi, who show their desire, professionalism and determination, who represent our club and our fans in the right way.”

Roma are six points behind the top four, with 49 points and an outside chance to qualify for the Europa League.