

Government Has Ordered a Substantial Reduction in Tariffs Imposed on Imports of Rice Amid Price Hikes in the Local Market That Came Following a Decision Earlier This Month to Stop Subsidizing Rice Imports

IRAN NEWS

Influx of Heavy Dust From Pakistan Into Zahedan, the Capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province in Southeastern Iran, Has Reduced the City's Visibility Since Wednesday Morning

VOL. XXVI, No. 6983 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

THURSDAY JULY 2, 2020 - TIR 12, 1399

2 DOMESTIC

Qalibaf Pens Letter To Heads of Int'l Assemblies On Israeli Occupation

 > SEE PAGE 2

3 DOMESTIC

Tehran, Canberra After Revival of Economic Ties

 > SEE PAGE 3

Over 230,000 Iranian Infected By Novel Coronavirus
 IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokeswoman has confirmed 2,549 new cases of infection with the novel coronavirus, increasing the total number of cases to 230,211.

In a press briefing on Wednesday, Sima-Sadat Lari said 141 people have died of the virus in the past 24 hours, bringing the overall fatalities to 10,958.

She further noted that 191,487 patients have so far recovered from the disease, and been discharged from hospital.

See Page 7

Tehran to Support Damascus With Greater Vigor



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Condemning any sanctions against nations in the world, especially Syria, President Rouhani stressed Iran will continue to support the Syrian government and people with greater vigor.

"I believe that the Astana process, as the only successful process in helping to resolve the Syrian

crisis peacefully, has made great strides, and maintaining and developing it is the duty of the three friendly and neighboring countries as guarantors of this process," said Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in the virtual meeting on Astana Process on Wednesday.

"At the outset, I would like to emphasize the fundamental and unchangeable principles of our common ground on Syria, namely the need to preserve territorial integrity, national sovereignty, the independence of Syria, and determination the fate of Syria only through the Syrian-Syrian talks without foreign interference," he added.

"Today we are holding this summit while the world is facing a problem called corona, and the Syrian people are no exception," Rouhani noted.

"While the coronavirus outbreak has created widespread economic and health problems in the country and Syria needs humanitarian assistance, especially medical and pharmaceutical facilities, the United States has imposed new unilateral and inhuman sanctions [Caesar sanctions] to put pressure on the Syrian people aiming at achieving its illegitimate political aspirations," he added.

Iranian President stressed, "This action by the United States is a kind of economic terrorism that violates human rights and the sovereignty of nations."

"Condemning any sanctions against nations in the world, especially Syria, Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes that it will continue to support the Syrian government and people with greater vigor," Rouhani said.

"These illegitimate and inhumane actions of the U.S. regime will not disrupt the will of the friendly and allied countries of Syria, and the United States cannot achieve its goals through the tools of economic pressure and punishment," he mentioned.

President Rouhani went on to say, "The issue of internally displaced persons and Syrian refugees is also a very important issue. We and the international community must help return of the displaced to their homes, which is both a humanitarian issue and help return of peace, stability and trust among the Syrian people."

"Any conditioning of humanitarian aid to achieve political goals will disrupt this process," he added, saying, "Today, more than nine years have passed from the beginning of the Syrian crisis, and the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the only solution to the Syrian crisis is political. Military solution will not help this crisis."

"As guarantor countries of the Astana process, we have always supported the Syrian-Syrian talks in the framework of the agreements reached in the Astana process, and we stress the determination to fight ISIL and al-Qaeda and other similar groups throughout the region, including Syria," the President highlighted.

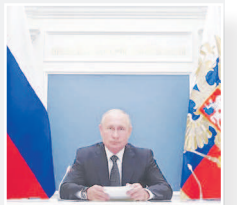
"Here, I want to appreciate the role of all martyrs in the fight against terrorism, especially Lt. Gen. Qasem Soleimani who was assassinated by the US falsely claiming that is fighting against terrorism," Rouhani said.

Meanwhile Russian President Vladimir Putin said more crucial steps are being taken towards normalizing the situation in Syria through the tripartite meeting by Russia, Iran, and Turkey.

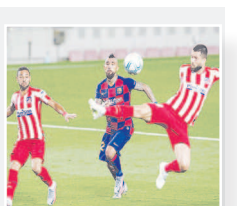
Putin said that the trilateral summit meetings had reduced the level of violence in Syria.

See Page 7

4 INTERNATIONAL

Russians Set to Back Reforms Allowing Putin To Stay in Power

 > SEE PAGE 4

8 SPORT

Barca Title Bid on Rocks As Atletico Upstage Messi's 700th Goal

 > SEE PAGE 8

U.S. Suffered Two Defeats In Recent Weeks

TEHR (IP) - President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday in the cabinet session said that the United States has suffered two defeats against Iran in recent weeks.

During the cabinet session, President Rouhani stated, "yesterday we witnessed the political defeat of the United States against Iran in the UNSC. The United States has suffered two defeats in recent weeks; One was the draft resolution against Iran, and the other is that all 14 members of the Security Council yesterday supported the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)."

The President noted that "The Islamic Republic of Iran will immediately return to its obligations whenever the other parties are ready to fulfill their obligations in the UN Security Council. If the Americans want to strike a political blow to JCPOA, Iran will not tolerate it and will show its decisive action in this regard." President Rouhani said that the Americans may say that they have made achievements by putting pressure on Iran, but they have legally, politically, and morally failed many times.

See Page 7

U.S. an Outlaw Bully That UN Shouldn't Surrender to

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tells the UN Security Council (UNSC) that the United States is an "outlaw bully" that the world body should not surrender to, warning that giving in to Washington's pressure threatens to restore the "law of the jungle."

Zarif was addressing a virtual UNSC meeting on Tuesday surrounding Washington's push to have the Council extend an arms embargo against Iran that will expire in October under a historic nuclear accord endorsed by the council's Resolution 2231.

"The international community in general, and the United Nations Security Council, in particular, are facing an important decision," he said.

"Do we maintain respect for the rule of law or do we return to the law of the jungle by surrendering to the whims of an outlaw bully?" the top diplomat asked.

See Page 7

Halkbank to Seek Removal of U.S. Judge In Iran Sanctions Case

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Halkbank will ask the U.S. judge overseeing a criminal case accusing it of helping Iran evade American sanctions to recuse himself, a lawyer for the Turkish bank said on Tuesday.

The lawyer, Robert Cary, notified U.S. District Judge Richard Berman of Halkbank's intention at a hearing, without providing a reason. Berman set a July 14 deadline for a formal request.

Halkbank and its lawyers declined to comment. U.S. prosecutors have accused Halkbank and bank executives of using money servicers and front companies in Iran, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to evade sanctions.

They said improper transactions included letting revenue from oil and gas sales be spent on gold, and facilitating sham food and medicine purchases. Halkbank pleaded not guilty on March 31 to bank fraud, money laundering and four conspiracy charges.

See Page 7



MIDHCO



Sirjan Iranian Steel Co.

Congratulations on Industry and Mining Day



- Extraction and exploitation of iron ore mines assigned by Imidro
- Production of iron ore concentrate with a capacity of 4 million tons in Sirjan Complex
- Production of iron ore pellets with a capacity of 2.5 million tons in Sirjan Complex
- Production of sponge iron with a capacity of 1 million tons in Bardsir complex
- Production of steel ingots with a capacity of 1 million tons in Bardsir complex

www.sisco.midhco.com

AEOI Chief to Brief MPs On Iran Nuclear Activities

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi will go to the Parliament to discuss nuclear-related issues on Sunday (July 5).

Spokesman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Abolfazl Amouei said that Salehi will attend the Commission's session to deliver a report on the latest activities and developments on his respective organization.

He added that Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will also attend the Parliament's open session on Sunday to discuss the latest affairs regarding the foreign diplomacy with the lawmakers.

Qalibaf Pens Letter to Heads of Int'l Assemblies On Israeli Occupation



TEHRAN (MNA) – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf penned letters to the heads and secretary generals 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 António Guterres, Gabriela Cuevas Barron President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], Mohammad Qureshi 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) Yousef Al-Othaimeen, Qalibaf put special emphasis on the firm position of Iranian Parliament to immediately stop the Zionist regime's occupation, provocative, illegal measures and violating international peace and security as well as supporting

inalienable right of the oppressed Palestinian people.

He stated, "based on the fundamental principles of the human rights and goals and principles stipulated in the UN Charter, effective and practical steps should be taken to immediately stop the hostile and expansionist policies of the Zionist regime."

Zionist regime's illegal measures are in clear-cut violation of international rules which contradicts the documents approved by the United Nations especially Resolution 2234 of the UNSC, Iranian Parliament speaker reiterated.

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 United Nations Security Council have reiterated support for Iran nuclear deal and the UNSC resolution 2231.

"Today, #UNSC members reiterated, again, their support for #JCPOA and UNSCR 2231," Takht Ravanchi wrote in his Twitter account on Wednesday.

"Their speeches proved that they do NOT support the US' move to extend arms embargo on Iran as it violates 2231," he added.

"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 Mohsen Rezaei said that the U.S. failure in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is a sign of this country's decline.

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

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

U.S. appeal to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran fell flat at the United Nations Security Council, where Russia and China rejected it outright and close allies of the United States were ambivalent.

Gov't Condolences With Families of Tehran Clinic Blast Victims



TEHRAN (IFP) - Government spokesman Ali Rabiei has expressed condolences to the families of those killed in an explosion at a clinic in Tehran.

Rabiei emphasized that those wounded in the incident should be cared for and treated well.

"Relief, rescue and medical treatment personnel, including those of the Fire Department, emergency centers and the Red Crescent Society immediately began to save the victims and stop the spread of the fire from the very early minutes of the accident," he said.

"Since the early minutes after the news of the explosion broke and dimensions of the accident began to come to light, Cabinet members had been following up on the relief work," he said.

"Senior managers at the health ministry, the Tehran Governor General's Office and the Tehran municipality as well as other relief and military personnel arrived at the scene immediately and monitored the relief work," the spokesman added.

He said an investigation is underway into the cause of the tragic accident, and details of the incident will be announced accordingly.

He noted relief operations are still underway and efforts are being made to prevent any further casualties.

At least 19 people were killed and 14 others injured in an explosion at a medical clinic in the north of Iranian capital, Tehran, on Tuesday.

Officials say the blast was likely to have been caused by a gas leak in the facility. A full assessment of the extent of the damage is yet to be announced.

6 Solar Plants to Open as Iran Expands Renewable Portfolio

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Six new solar plants will come online in Fars province in southern Iran today, marking another watershed in the country's path to a decarbonized energy system and expanding its renewable portfolio.

President Hassan Rouhani and Energy Minister Reza Ardekanian will oversee the commissioning of the plants, including the 10-megawatt Kourdeh project in Larestan, via a video conference, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

"These industrial power projects, which have entered the operation phase mainly with foreign investment, beside promising utilization of clean energy, suggest the ineffectiveness of the pressures caused by oppressive sanctions against our country," the news agency said.

Kourdeh is the biggest of the plants, built by a private developer with 11 million euros of investment.

"With the operation of this power plant, an annual release of 13,712 tonnes of environmental pollutants will be avoided, and 4,272 cubic meters of water will be saved a year," the Fars province's deputy governor Jalil Hosseini told IRNA.

The other plants will become operational in Shiraz, Eqlid, Lamerd and Nayriz. They will collectively add 33 megawatts of new capacity to Iran's national grid.

They will also raise overall renewable energy capacity in Fars province to 58.6 megawatts, Hosseini told IRNA. He said permits have been issued to set up 17 more solar plants with capacities ranging from one to 25 megawatts in the province.

Renewable energy is booming in Iran, but new US sanctions under President Donald Trump have disrupted some of Tehran's expansion plans.

Before Trump reimposed sanctions on Iran in May 2018, the Islamic Republic expected its installed renewable capacity to grow at least sevenfold over the next five years.

Norway's Saga Energy cancelled a \$2.9 billion deal to install 2,380 megawatts (MW) in renewable capacity in the oil-producing country.

British firm Quercus had signed a deal to help build the world's sixth-largest solar farm in central Iran, investing over half a billion euros, but it abandoned the project in fear of the US sanctions.

Tehran-Baghdad Ties to Remain "at Peak"

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Former Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Hassan Danaeifar believes that Iran and Iraq can keep their relations at the peak as the two neighboring nations enjoy long borders with numerous crossings.

Also religious and ethnic commonalities guarantee Iranian-Iraqi relations, Danaeifar told IRNA in a recently-held interview.

At the interview, Danaeifar talked about the prospect of Tehran-Baghdad cooperation.

About the possible visit of new Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kazemi to Iran, the former diplomat said al-Kazemi as a politician is well aware of the importance of ties between his country and Iran.

Danaeifar further highlighted the issue of joint investment as an effective way to deepen bilateral economic cooperation in the post-coronavirus era.

The official expressed hope that the worth of trade exchange between the two countries will annually reach 20 billion dollars. About the claim that Iraq is Iran's sole window to the global markets, the ex-diplomat said although Iraq is an important door to world markets, it is not the only one for Iran.

Despite conditions that may create obstacles to bilateral ties, Iran is willing to widen cooperation with Iraq, he added, stressing that Tehran will remain the most important partner for Baghdad.

At the present time, Iraq is the biggest destination for Iranian products, and it is predicted that the volume of Iran's exports to the neighboring state will increase after re-opening of all borders which had been closed as pre-emptive measure to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, he noted.

That notion that Iraq is Iran's only window to global markets is a wrong claim that is promoted by American officials, he underlined.

Elsewhere, he spoke about Iran's economic relations with Syria, saying that Tehran-Damascus ties are strong and cordial.

As he noted, private sectors can play a leading role in deepening bilateral cooperation.

About the situation in Syria which has been suffering from unrest since nine years ago, the ex-diplomat said any change in Syria should be made without the foreigners' interference.

Asked to comment on many problems Saudi Arabia has created in many regional countries including in Syria, Yemen and Iraq, the official said Riyadh is facing contraction. Referring to readiness already expressed by Iran to hold talks with Saudi Arabia, the official said Riyadh cannot move towards the issue because Washington does not let it do so.

Coronavirus in Iran to Linger at Least Until Year's End

TEHRAN (IFP) - President of Iran Hassan Rouhani has cautioned all people to observe the health protocols to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, saying the country will be grappling with COVID-19 until at least the end of the current Iranian year.

Speaking at a Tuesday meeting of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, President Rouhani said the coronavirus outbreak is by no means over and the country will have to struggle with the pandemic until at least the year's end, which falls in March 2021.

"Watchfulness and observance of the health principles must still be on the agenda of everybody, and attending the unnecessary gatherings must be avoided," the president emphasized.

President Rouhani also highlighted the administration's efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic over the past five months, adding, "Despite all efforts and the very good measures that have been taken in the fight against the disease and for the

treatment of the patients, we still witness an increase in the number of infections in a number of cities because the coronavirus is unknown."

The president then warned that gatherings and ceremonies have been the major factor in a new wave of the coronavirus outbreak in Iran, stressing that using face masks would greatly reduce the risk of spread of the disease.

Pointing to the administration's plans to produce masks with low prices, President Rouhani said wearing masks in indoor places and public gatherings will be obligatory as of July 5, 2020. "We'll keep to the path in the fight against the coronavirus and are still determined to extend restrictions in certain centers and places whose reopening is not necessary," President Rouhani noted.

Iran has seen a new surge in coronavirus cases in recent days. On Monday, Iran recorded its highest death toll from COVID-19 within a 24-hour period with 162 deaths.

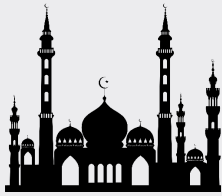
Five COVID-19 Human Vaccines to Be Unveiled

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Vice President for Science and Technology, Sorena Sattari announced that two human vaccines for treating the novel coronavirus are ready to be unveiled and three other ones will be ready by the end of the current year (March 2021).

Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari made the remarks on Tuesday, over Iran's current status in producing COVID-19 vaccines.

Sattari announced that today we have inked three contracts with knowledge-based firms and three contracts with research institutes in the field of COVID-19 vaccines and hopefully we have achieved some significant improvement.

He went on to announce that two human vaccines are ready to unveil and the 3 other ones will be ready to do so by the end of the year.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:08
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:07
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:53

19. To Him belong all (creatures) in the heavens and on earth:
Even those who are in His (very) Presence are not too proud to serve Him,
nor are they (ever) weary (of His service):
20. They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever flag or intermit.
Surah 21. The Prophets (19 - 20)

Tehran, Canberra After Revival of Economic Ties

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Australia's Ambassador to Tehran Ms. Lyndall 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.

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 reiterated currently a big community of Iranian businessmen 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, Mr. Khansari, for his part, expressed TCCIMA's specialized committees' interest in consultation with Australian foreign trade experts and sharing capacities for economic cooperation between both states.



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 Australian Embassy in Tehran for removing the hurdles.

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

Meanwhile TCCIMA's Deputy for International Affairs Hesameddin 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 Holmesglan as both sides will cooperate on short term courses in different fields like human resources, management and economy.

Turkey's Export of Grain, Legumes to Iran Slumping

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Export of grain and legumes from Turkey to Iran significantly decreased by 70.48 percent from January through May 2020 compared to the same period of 2019, having made up \$22.7 million, Turkey's Ministry of Trade said.

According to the ministry, Turkey's export of grain and legumes to Iran slumped by 94.24 percent in May 2020 compared to the same month of 2019 and amounted to \$876,000.

Turkey's export of grains and legumes to international markets from January through May 2020 increased by 0.1 percent compared to the same period of 2019, having made up \$2.9 billion.

This amount accounted for 4.7 percent of the country's total export for the reporting period.

In May this year, Turkey exported grains and legumes worth \$500.2 million to world markets, which is 15.3 percent less compared to the same month of 2019 (5 percent of the country's total export).

During the last 12 months (from May 2019 through May 2020), Turkey exported the grain and legumes in the amount of nearly \$6.8 billion.

Turkey's export of legumes and grains to the international markets exceeded \$7.7 billion in the first four months of 2020, which is 2.9 percent more compared to the same period of 2019.

In April 2020, Turkey exported legumes and grains worth \$1.7 billion, which is 5.9 percent less compared to April 2019.

Iran to Launch \$11.5b Petchem Projects by March 2021

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The deputy minister of petroleum for petrochemical affairs said a total of \$11.5 billion worth projects would be launched in Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year to March 20, 2021.



Speaking on Tuesday, Behzad Mohammadi said the projects would add 25 million tons to the country's annual production capacity and bring it to 90 million tons per year. He described the current calendar year as the golden year for the petrochemical industry, saying 17 projects were planned to come online in the year with 11.5 billion dollars of investment.

The deputy minister of oil informed that considering 17 projects that are planned to come online in the current year, using 11.5 billion dollars of investments, this year would be a golden year for the Iranian petrochemical industry. Mohammadi said a total of \$11.5 billion worth projects would be launched in Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

He added that the projects would add 25 million tons to the country's annual production capacity and bring it to 90 million tons per year.

He described the current calendar year as the golden year for the petrochemical industry, saying 17 projects were planned to come online in the year with 11.5 billion dollars of investment.

The first of these projects was Miandoab Petrochemical Project which came on stream last week.

Petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the petrochemical export is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Iran has been highly developing this sector over the recent years as the development of the giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units.

Also, the U.S. sanctioning Iran's oil exports has encouraged more development of the petrochemical industry to boost exports from this sector.

The country has also been developing the industry's downstream sector in order to promote the production of products with more added-value.

In this regard construction of petrochemical parks, petro-refineries alongside the development of the country's current petrochemical complexes is highly pursued by the oil ministry and especially the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

Afghanistan Bank to Open a Branch in Chabahar Port

TEHRAN (ILNA) - The head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce told that the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has approved Afghanistan's Ghazanfar Bank to open a branch in southeastern Chabahar Port.

The Iranian official Hossein Salimi said "The Afghan bank requested the establishment of a branch in Chabahar to facilitate trade between Iran and Afghanistan."

He pointed that the Iranian government has agreed to set up a branch of the foreign bank in Sistan and Baluchestan province; adding "we have some problems in transferring currency and trade with Afghanistan, and the establishment of this branch would be a great help to the trade exchanges between the two countries."

"Iran can act as a financial channel," he added. The head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce confirmed that India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran would have a stronger trade relationship through this bank.

"Fortunately, the port of Chabahar is exempted from the U.S. sanctions, and with the prosperity of the port, Afghan traders have become very active in this region."

According to Salimi, the bank would provide service to both Iranian and Afghan companies which are active in bilateral trade between the two nations.

Ghazanfar Bank started off its operation from Kabul, Afghanistan, and is offering key financial services both under conventional and Islamic. Ghazanfar Bank, a full-fledged licensed commercial bank, commenced its operations in March 2009. The Share Holders of the Bank belongs to one of the leading business groups of Afghanistan.

Railway to Connect Iran, Afghanistan Within Months

TEHRAN (MNA) Iranian minister of road Mohammad Eslami announced on Tuesday that Iran and Afghanistan are to get connected through railway within the next few months.

The minister described that the Khaf-Herat railway project will connect the railways of Iran and Afghanistan together.

Completing this section is aimed at accelerating the development of economic relations between the two countries, he added.

Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian previously informed that the third section of the

Khaf-Herat railway project which connects the rail networks of Iran and Afghanistan will come on stream in the third quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22-December 20).

Khaf-Herat is part of the Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

The 132-km project is divided into three major sections, 77 kilometers of which is inside Iranian territory and 62 kilometers is in Afghanistan territory.

Genaveh-Kuwait Container Shipping Line Launched

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of Genaveh Ports and Maritime Department Davood Bahadori on Wed. revealed the launch of Genaveh-Kuwait container shipping line.

A refrigerated container shipping line between Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait started its activity with forwarding the first shipment of agricultural food products via this port.

He made the remarks in an interview with IRNA on Wed. and added, "the first consignment of this shipping line, as weigh as 160 tons including various types of food products, fresh fruits and vegetables, was loaded by Landing Craft "Arabakhtar" and exported to the destination country within the framework of eight refrigerated containers."

This ship has the capacity of transporting eight refrigerated containers, with a total capacity of 497 tons, which is active in the field of export of agricultural and livestock products, he highlighted.

Considering the policies adopted in the field of activity of all affiliated ports and use of facilities and infrastructures created in them, necessary planning was made for launching a containerized line between Genaveh Port and Kuwait, Bahadori added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the export of goods via this port and added, "export of goods via this port can lead to the lower costs for exporters due to the short distance of 140 miles to Kuwait."

Bahadori referred to the important strategic and geographical location of this coastal city and added, "proper access roads to the city, current location of the port, proper and appropriate equipment, support of governor and city officials and also customs cooperation are of the salient advantages of the city that has encouraged traders and merchants to do trade and business activity in this port."

Once coronavirus restrictions are removed in Kuwait, Genaveh will be turned into one of the export ports in Bushehr province and country, he stressed.

Tehran to Hold 12th Virtual Int'l Forum on Islamic Capital Market

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Securities and Exchange Organization of Iran (SEO) is to hold the 12th Virtual International Forum on Islamic Capital Market on September 14-15, 2020.

The SEO has organized this event for 11 years in a row with the support of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI).

Given the outbreak of Coronavirus and for the safety measures of all respected participants, the SEO has decided to hold this Forum online for the first time.

The theme of this Forum is "A Panacea for Emerging Issues". The main topics of the International Forum on Islamic Capital Market ICM are as follow:

Fintech and Islamic Capital Market, ESG & SRI in Islamic Capital Market, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Innovation, Regulatory Issues, and Efficient Sovereign Sukuk Issuance Models.

The ICM has already gained its momentum over a decade of its history, therefore, a number of internationally well-known associations and universities have sponsored this event, including International Research Center for Islamic Economics and Finance (IRCIEF) of Malaysia, Istanbul Zaim University (IZM) of Turkey, Association of Islamic Finance Professionals (AIFP) of Kazakhstan, Islamic Finance News (IFN), as "media partner"; The Imam Sadiq University of Iran and Iranian Association of Islamic Finance.

TSE's Main Index Surpasses 1.6m Points

TEHRAN (MNA) – The benchmark of Tehran Stocks Exchange, TEDPIX, added 53,000 points, reaching 1,600,000 points on Wednesday.

By the present moment, more than 3.94 billion shares at the value of 5.612 trillion rials (\$29.5 million) have been exchanged in 602,000 deals.

Persian Gulf Chemical industry company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and National Iranian Copper Industry Company were the main role players pushing up the index on Wednesday.

IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), improved 391 points to 16,908 by the time.

As reported, 959 million shares worth 2.172 trillion rials (\$11.43 million) were exchanged in 305,000 deals in the OTC market.

On Tuesday, TEDPIX gained 64,000 points to 1,546,850 on Tuesday, breaking above the psychological 1.5 million points.

Brazil Education Minister Resigns Over CV "Lies"

BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazil's education minister resigned Tuesday only five days after he was appointed, amid accusations that he lied over his academic record.

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

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



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 government's top infectious disease expert warned on Tuesday, although he was "cautiously optimistic" a vaccine would be available early next year.

California, Texas and Arizona have emerged as new epicenters of the pandemic, each reporting record increases in Covid-19 cases, adding to pressure on scores of potential vaccines being rushed into trials.

"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."



Russians Set to Back Reforms Allowing Putin to Stay in Power



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.

The Kremlin pulled out all the stops to encourage turnout, with polls extended over nearly a week, the last day of voting declared a national holiday and prizes -- including apartments and cars -- on offer to voters.

Initially planned for April 22, the vote was postponed by the coronavirus pandemic but rescheduled after Putin said the epidemic had peaked and officials began reporting lower numbers of new cases.

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 and cement Russian values in the face of pernicious Western influences.

"We are voting for the country... we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren," he said Tuesday in a final appeal to voters.

"We can ensure stability, security, prosperity and a decent life only through development, only together and by ourselves."

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

"There are a lot of problems in our country. And the amendments, they will help solve them, not completely but in part," Moscow subway worker Vladimir Bodrov said after voting last week.

"And for me, for my children and for my granddaughter, I think that this is a big plus."

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.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said Monday the vote was a "foregone conclusion" aimed at "the extension of (Putin's) rule for what effectively is his natural life."

Divided, weakened by years of political repression and with little access to state-controlled media, Putin's opponents have failed to mount a serious "no" campaign. Restrictions on mass gatherings imposed by the coronavirus have also prevented demonstrations.

Protesters Hit 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 of a power-sharing deal between military leaders, who ousted Bashir, and the protest movement.

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 at least seven people were killed.



Bolton, Democrats Urge Russia Sanctions If Bounty Reports Are True

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democrats and a leading Republican hawk on Tuesday called for U.S. President Donald Trump to consider imposing new economic sanctions on Russia if a reported Russian effort to pay the Taliban to kill U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan was confirmed.

Trump has been under pressure over a New York Times report on Friday that a Russian military intelligence unit had offered bounties for U.S. and allied soldiers and later reported that he received a written briefing on the matter in February.

After Trump initially said he was not briefed on the matter, the White House said Trump was not "personally" briefed but did not address whether he had received a written report, read it, and why he had not responded more aggressively if so.

The shifting statements have generated controversy among his fellow Republicans as well as Democrats and the suggestion

that Trump may have ignored or not known about a threat to U.S. troops could 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.

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

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden called Trump's handling of the matter a "dereliction of duty." And John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser, told Reuters if the allegations were true it was "tantamount to an attack on Americans directly."

"That requires a very serious response," he said. "It could 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."

Trump Approves Cutting 9,500 Troops in Germany

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Donald Trump has approved a plan to slash the US military presence in Germany by 9,500 troops, the Defense Department said Tuesday.

Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said the move, which has sparked concerns in Berlin and in the NATO alliance, is to redeploy the troops and will "enhance Russian deterrence, strengthen NATO, (and) reassure allies," as well as improving US strategic flexibility.

The move will cut the current troop level in Germany from about 34,500 to 25,000, Trump's stated goal. Hoffmann gave no details on when the reductions would happen or whether the troops would be redeployed to another NATO country.

He said the Pentagon will brief Congress on the plan "in the coming weeks" and then consult allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization "on the way forward."

Pentagon officials say that if the reduction takes place, some of the troops could be sent to former Eastern Bloc countries -- some on a permanent basis but most in short-term rotations -- to send a message to Moscow.

Worries about possible Russian expansionism surged in NATO countries after Moscow sent troops in 2014 to seize the Crimea region from Ukraine.

While Polish leader Andrzej Duda visited Washington last week, Trump said some of the US troops could go to Poland. "Some will be coming home and some will be going to other places. Poland would be one of those other places," he said.

Trump said earlier this month he was cutting troops due to unhappiness with Germany. On June 15, two weeks after Chancellor Angela Merkel said she would not attend a Trump-planned G7 summit because of the coronavirus pandemic, Trump complained Berlin is not spending enough on its own defense and treats the United States "badly" on trade.

"We're negotiating with them on that, but right now I'm not satisfied with the deal they want to make. They've cost the United States hundreds of billions of dollars over the years on trade, so we get hurt on trade and we get hurt on NATO."

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 offering any evidence.

The home-grown Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for Monday's 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 "complicity in acts of terrorism against Pakistan".

New Delhi said it rejected those "absurd comments".

"Pakistan cannot shift the blame on India for its domestic problems," an Indian foreign ministry spokesman said.

Khan has come under increasing pressure over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and a weak economy.

The former cricket star also drew criticism last week after he said former Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had been "martyred".

Opponents have long accused Khan of being overly sympathetic to the militants, with rivals once dubbing him "Taliban Khan".

Pakistan and India have been at loggerheads since independence from Britain in 1947, primarily over the Muslim-majority Kashmir region that is claimed by both countries.



Shanon
(adviser)

Elahieh Apt (\$2400)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Vanak Villa (\$4500)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Apt (\$2700)
Zaferanieh
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
L.balcony, J
marble floor
Fully Furn

Jordan Apt (\$1400)
150sq.m, 2bdrs, pkg, F.F

Darrous Apt (\$1800)
170sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Cell: +989121907875
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
Fax : 88506474

bldg (\$10000)
Kamranieh
5stoery, 20bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
J, L.balcony
brand new
Semi Furn



Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

IRAN

NEWS

PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS

ADVERTISING

TEL: 44253448-50
FAX: 44253234
ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM

Air France Plans to Cut 6,500 Jobs by 2022

PARIS (Reuters) - Air France aims to present a plan to trade unions to cut just over 6,500 jobs over the next two years, three sources familiar with the matter said on Tuesday, as the airline grapples with the coronavirus crisis. France's flagship airline, part of the Air France-KLM group, is cutting capacity and exiting loss-making domestic routes as the pandemic hits international travel. On top of the 6,500 staff cuts - roughly representing just under 15% of employees such as pilots, ground staff and flight attendants - an additional 1,000 layoffs would be made at Air France's "HOP!" airline, one of the three sources said.



OPEC Oil Output Sinks as Saudi Deepens Cuts and Others Cut More

LONDON (Reuters) - OPEC oil output hit the lowest in two decades in June as Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab members made larger cuts, a Reuters survey found, pushing group compliance in a supply reduction pact above 100% despite incomplete adherence by Iraq and Nigeria.

The 13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries pumped 22.62 million barrels per day (bpd) on average in June, the survey found, down 1.92 million bpd from May's revised figure.

OPEC and its allies in April agreed to a record output cut to offset a slump in demand caused by the coronavirus crisis. An easing of lockdowns and lower supply have helped prices climb above \$40 from April's 21-year low of below \$16 a barrel.

"Demand is expected to pick up in the second half of the year and there is a general consensus that the OPEC+ group will live up to expectations and will achieve high compliance in June and July," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM.

OPEC, Russia and other producers, a group known as OPEC+, agreed to cuts of 9.7 million bpd, or 10% of global output, from May 1. OPEC's share, to be made by 10 members from October 2018 levels in the case of most countries, is 6.084 million bpd.

So far in June, they delivered 6.523 million bpd of the pledged reduction, equal to 107% compliance, the survey found. Compliance in May was revised up to 77%.

June's output would be the lowest by OPEC since at least 2000, excluding membership changes since then, Reuters survey records show. PRODN-TOTAL

The biggest drop in supply came from Saudi Arabia, which pumped 7.55 million bpd in June, almost 1 million bpd below its OPEC+ quota, and the lowest for the kingdom since 2002 according to Reuters surveys PRODN-SA.

The United Arab Emirates and Kuwait also delivered extra voluntary cuts, sources in the survey said.

OPEC supply also fell because Iraq and Nigeria, which were compliance laggards in May and in previous OPEC+ deals, made bigger cutbacks in June.

Iraq reduced exports from the south and north of the country, lifting its compliance to 62%, although its adherence remained lower than that of Persian Gulf Arab OPEC members, while Nigeria boosted its compliance to 72%.

Iranian and Libyan supply held steady in June and Venezuelan output dropped further. All three are exempt from voluntary cuts because of U.S. sanctions or internal issues limiting output.

Venezuela, contending with both U.S. sanctions and a long-term decline in output, posted another drop in exports in June.

Oil output in Libya has plunged since January due to a blockade of ports and fields by groups loyal to eastern-based commander Khalifa Haftar. Talks are under way to enable a restart.

Stronger Trade for Malaysia in Months Ahead

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia's trade surplus is above RM10 billion for the fourth time this year, after registering a double-digit growth of 14.7 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM10.41 billion in May.

The country's total trade during the month was, however, down 27.8 per cent y-o-y to RM114.96 billion.

But economists believe the trade performance should improve in the remaining months of the year as global economy started to gradually reopen in May.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali said the RM10.41 billion was the highest trade surplus for the month of May since May 2008.

Nevertheless, Azmin said the overall performance was similar in other regional countries, which recorded lower trade growth due to the Covid-19 pandemic that continued to slow economic activities globally.

Exports totalled RM62.69 billion to contract by 25.5 per cent, while imports decreased 30.4 per cent to RM52.27 billion.

Compared to April, the total trade, exports and imports slipped 13.7 per cent, 3.2 per cent and 23.6 per cent respectively. Malaysia's trade during the first five months of 2020 declined 8.7 per cent to RM688.57 billion compared to the corresponding period of 2019.

Exports fell 9.7 per cent to RM366.16 billion and imports eased 7.5 per cent to RM322.41 billion.

The trade surplus for the five months stood at RM43.75 billion, a drop of 23 per cent from the same period of 2019.

Azmin said exports of rubber products especially rubber gloves registered a double-digit growth for two consecutive months, increasing 20.5 per cent or RM461 million in May 2020.

This was underpinned by growing demand of rubber gloves which benefitted from the pandemic, despite the decline in exports of manufactured goods by 23.5 per cent y-o-y to RM54.21 billion.

Bank Islam chief economist Dr. Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid is bullish about better trade numbers in the coming months. "We could see flash Composite Purchasing Managers Index for the United States, Eurozone, United Kingdom and Japan in June has been going up to 46.8 points. Thus sequentially, we could be seeing positive growth," he told the New Straits Times.



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, sparking an angry response from an industry that had called for reduced import quotas to head off a potential glut of inflows.

The EU put in place safeguard measures 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 the 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 current quotas were not being fully used.

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

"This is the worst crisis we have seen in decades and... this may risk thousands of jobs," Luis Colunga, deputy general secretary of IndustriAll Europe trade union, said.

EU steel demand has dropped by around 50% since March, forcing many furnaces to temporarily close, the statement said.

"The tariff-free import quota has been further raised. Objectively, this makes no sense," said Axel Eggert, director general of producers group Eurofer.

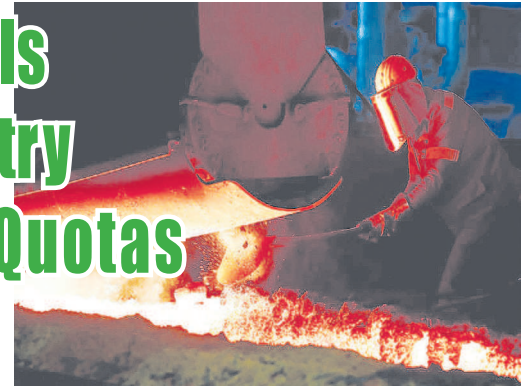
Under the safeguards, quotas for 26 grades of steel, including stainless, were set in 2018 at the average of imports in 2015-2017 plus 5%. Imports beyond the quotas are subject to a 25% duty.

The EU said on Tuesday quotas would go up during the 12 months from July 1 by 3%, the same increase as last year.

As of May 15, some 9 million tons or 29% of the quotas for the previous 12 months had not been used, the EU filing said.

To guard against a surge of imports, the EU said it was changing to a quarterly system from the current annual allocation and imposed some restrictions on individual countries.

Eurofer members include top global producer ArcelorMittal, Tata Steel, ThyssenKrupp and Salzgitter.



Italy to Hike 2020 Budget Deficit to Around 11.6% of GDP

ROME (Reuters) - Italy will raise its 2020 budget deficit to around 11.6% of gross domestic product from the current 10.4% goal, a senior government official told Reuters, as Rome readies new measures to soften the impact of the coronavirus crisis.

A new spending package of 20 billion euros (\$22.41 billion) will be approved in July, the source said, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The Treasury declined to comment.

The government began the year with a deficit target of 2.2%, after the 1.6% recorded in 2019 which was the lowest in 12 years.

Those plans have been upended by the virus outbreak which has pushed the euro zone's third largest economy into a deep recession, with most forecasters expecting gross domestic product to contract by at least 9%.

The new spending package will supplement the income of workers temporarily laid off and support local authorities whose tax revenues were hit by the lockdown, the source said.

The extra borrowing will also make up a revenue shortfall stemming from a cut in the pension contributions that must be paid by companies on behalf of new hires.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has said some of the financing for the overall stimulus will come from the EU's lending scheme, known as "SURE", to mitigate unemployment risks among member states hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

A second source said the government will also probably finance incentives for people to buy low-emission cars. Ahead of the upcoming package, Rome has so far pledged up to 180 billion euros of economic help for families and firms, including state guarantees on banking loans, but much less is likely to be actually spent.

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 growth, the Bank of Spain said on Tuesday.

One of the nations most affected by the coronavirus, Spain is heading for its worst economic performance on record in 2020, with a contraction of 9%-11.6%, as forecast by the central bank.

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

The report echoed last week's comments by bank Governor Pablo Hernandez de Cos stressing the importance of reforms while also predicting some recovery later this year.

However, his institution is also warning of a potentially even sharper contraction this year of 15.1% in a worst-case scenario with a new wave of coronavirus infections.

In those circumstances, the Bank of Spain said on Tuesday the debt-to-GDP ratio could rise up to 126.7% in 2020 and hover around 130% in 2021 and 2022, while the deficit would go up to 14% this year from 2.8% in 2019.

De Cos said in Tuesday's report that it was important for the European Recovery Fund to have the potential to expand.

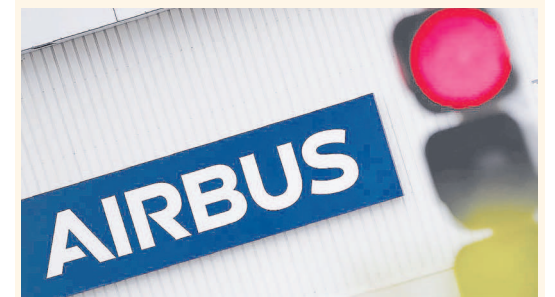
EU leaders agreed earlier in June that urgent action was needed to help their coronavirus-hit economies, but remain divided over the Franco-German proposal for grants to be made available to severely-affected states like Spain and Italy.

Oscar Arce, the Bank of Spain's director general for economics, told a news briefing that the recovery fund should be approved soon "with an agile design so that the money reaches the countries in greatest need as quickly as possible."

He also advised the Spanish government to tap the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) if conditions were more favourable than those of the market.

"It is time to do the math and if it adds up and it is better to tap the ESM, there it is," Arce said, adding that it was a mistake to stigmatise access to European resources.

Airbus to Cut 15,000 Jobs To Survive Coronavirus Crisis



TOULOUSE (Reuters) - Airbus on Tuesday unveiled plans to shed around 15,000 jobs including 900 already earmarked in Germany, saying its future was at stake after the coronavirus pandemic rocked the air travel industry.

Europe's biggest aerospace group said it would cut some 5,000 posts in France, 5,100 in Germany, 900 in Spain, 1,700 in the UK and 1,300 elsewhere for a core total of 14,000.

Additionally, the company has already agreed to cut 900 jobs at its Premium AEROTECH unit in Germany.

The move is subject to talks with unions which immediately renewed pledges to oppose compulsory redundancies. Airbus has refused to rule them out as it seeks voluntary departures, early retirements and long-term partial employment schemes. Airbus said it wanted a deal on the job cuts by 2021.

"It's going to be a mighty battle to save jobs," said Francoise Vallin of the CFE-CGC union.

A French finance ministry official said the government expected Airbus to use instruments it had made available to reduce job cut numbers. On June 3, Reuters reported that Airbus's reduced production targets pointed on paper to cuts of 14,000 full-time posts.

Earlier on Tuesday, French union sources predicted a headline figure of 15,000 and pledged to fight compulsory cuts.

Airbus has a 135,000-strong workforce, heavily populated by veterans of its original A320 development. About 37% of staff are due to retire this decade.

The hardleft Force Ouvriere union and others said they would oppose any mandatory cuts.

Exceptional secrecy had surrounded the politically sensitive restructuring affecting jobs in Britain, France, Germany and Spain, the company's key backers in a fierce contest with U.S. rival Boeing (BA.N) for orders and industrial clout.

Airbus is expected to juggle its response to the industry's worst crisis with pressure to keep cuts to a minimum after France and Germany announced plans to support aerospace.

Iran Bids for Hosting Rights of Asian Cup 2027

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran will compete with India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan for hosting right of the Asian Cup 2027, the Asian Football Federation (AFC) revealed.

“The AFC will now work with each Bidding Member Association on the delivery of the necessary bidding

documentation in accordance with the bidding process and will announce the host for the 19th edition of the AFC Asian Cup in 2021,” said the AFC in a statement late on Tuesday.

AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa thanked the five-member associations for showcasing their support to the Asian Cup.



EU Reopens Its Borders to 14 Nations But Not to U.S. Tourists

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, and possibly China soon, the bloc announced Tuesday, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S.

As Europe's economies reel from the impact of the coronavirus, southern EU countries like Greece, Italy and Spain are desperate to entice back sun-loving visitors and breathe life into their damaged tourism industries. American tourists make up a big slice of the EU market and the summer holiday season is a key time.

Citizens from the following countries will be allowed into the EU's 27 members and four other nations in Europe's visa-free Schengen travel zone: Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay.

The EU said China is “subject to confirmation of reciprocity,” meaning Beijing should lift all restrictions on European citizens entering China before European countries will allow Chinese citizens back in. Millions of travelers who come from Russia, Brazil and India will miss out.

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 ban, nor are British citizens.

“We are entering a new phase with a targeted opening of our external borders as of tomorrow,” European Council President Charles Michel, who chairs summits of EU national leaders, tweeted. “We have to remain vigilant and keep our most vulnerable safe.”

American tourists made 27 million trips to Europe in 2016 while around 10 million Europeans head 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 flights and hotel bookings. 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 people from Europe's ID check-free travel zone 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, the spread of the virus has generally stabilized across much of continental Europe.

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 last 14 days 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, surveillance, contact tracing and treatment and the general reliability of their virus data.

For tourist sites and stores in Paris that are already feeling the pinch of losing clients from around the world, the decision not to readmit most American travelers is another blow.

In the heart of Paris, on the two small islands in the Seine River that are home to Notre Dame Cathedral and a wealth of tempting boutiques, businesses were already mourning the loss of American visitors during the coronavirus lockdown, and now the summer season that usually attracts teeming crowds is proving eerily quiet since France reopened.

Fitch Cuts Turkey Economic Growth Forecast



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Fitch lowered its economic growth forecast for Turkey for the second time in two months, citing the collapse in the tourism industry.

Turkey's economy is expected to contract by 3.9 percent this year, Fitch said in a report on Monday, cutting its forecast from a previous negative 3 percent. It also reduced its growth predictions for Russia, Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Monday that preliminary economic data for June pointed to a “very strong recovery period”. Turkey would become one of the world's star countries to reshape itself after the pandemic, he said.

The Turkish authorities have flooded the economy with cheap credit from state-run banks as part of measures to stimulate an economic rebound. The central bank has also slashed interest rates to 8.25 percent from 24 percent in less than a year to support the government's economic growth goals.

Fitch said Turkey's economy was among those displaying a recovery from a slump in activity - pointing to the surge in credit. But it said its assumptions for growth in emerging markets and elsewhere were based on continuing restrictions on travel, leisure and business activities, and sustained voluntary social distancing.

“The risk of the virus resurging and prompting renewed nationwide lockdowns - or a massive escalation in voluntary social distancing behaviour - is very high,” Fitch said. The downside scenario would be based on a major setback in the global health crisis, resulting in GDP failing to return to pre-virus levels until the middle of the decade, it said.

Turkey is seeking to re-open its tourism industry, which earned a record \$34.5 billion in 2019. But European countries are keeping travel warnings on the country in place. Those nations include Germany, which supplied the second most visitors last year. In Russia, which ranked first, cases of the coronavirus remain elevated.

Erdoğan warned earlier this month that Turks should continue to observe social distancing rules to contain COVID-19 after official data showed an uptick in new cases. The government has reintroduced some weekend lockdowns in several regions, including the largest cities of Istanbul and Ankara, in an effort to prevent a second wave of the infection.

UK Economy Shows Biggest Drop in 40 Years in Early 2020

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's economy shrank by the most since 1979 in early 2020 as households slashed their spending, according to official data that included the first few days of the coronavirus lockdown.

Gross domestic product dropped by a quarterly 2.2% between January and March, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

That was below the median forecast in a Reuters poll of economists for a fall of 2.0%.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will set out his plan to speed up the British economy's recovery later on Tuesday when he will promise to fast-track 5 billion pounds of infrastructure investment.

Britain's economy may have contracted by 20% in the first half of 2020, the Bank of England said earlier this month as the full effects of the lockdown hammered most sectors in the April-June period. The BoE has said the slump in the economy this year could be the worst in three centuries.



Tuesday's figures - which build on previously released data for the first quarter - showed a surge in household saving as their spending collapsed by the largest amount, in cash terms, since records began in the 1950s.

“The lockdown of most businesses on March 23 meant that households were unable to spend even if they wanted

to,” said Thomas Pugh, UK economist at Capital Economics, adding that it will take the economy until 2022 to regain its pre-crisis level.

The household savings ratio shot up to 8.6% in the first quarter from 6.6% at the end of 2019.

The ONS has previously estimated that Britain's economy shrank by a record 20.4% in April from March but there have been some signs of recovery more recently.

The ONS also said Britain's current account deficit widened by more than expected in the first three months of 2020.

Tehran to Support Damascus...

FROM PAGE 1

He said that Russia agrees with Iran's assessment for the continuation of cooperation in Syria.

He added that the level of violence in Syria has dropped significantly and the activities of ISIS and terrorists in Syria have been reduced.

Referring to Russia intensive cooperation with Turkey regarding the Idlib region, Putin said that we are working together to implement the September 2018 Sochi Agreement and its additional protocol dated March 5, 2020.

He stated that the unilateral sanctions imposed on Syria without the approval of the Security Council have a negative impact on the Syria situation. In fact, these sanctions are illegal.

He pointed out that cooperation among Iran, Russia and Turkey within the framework of the Astana process is stabilizing Syria. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, for his part, said that the Astana peace process will play a role in shaping the future of Syria.

The Turkish diplomat delivered a speech in a joint video conference with his Iranian and Russian counterparts, adding that preserving the political unity of Syria and its territorial integrity, establishing security and peace in the state, and dealing with issues permanently is the highest priority of Turkey regarding Syria.

Halkbank to Seek...

FROM PAGE 1

Berman has overseen several related cases, including the January 2018 conviction of former Halkbank executive Mehmet Hakan Atilla and a guilty plea by Reza Zarrab, a wealthy Turkish-Iranian gold trader who testified against Atilla.

Before pleading guilty, Zarrab unsuccessfully sought Berman's recusal, citing comments by the judge at a 2014 conference in Istanbul. Halkbank's case gained renewed attention in June when John Bolton, a former national security adviser for U.S. President Donald Trump, discussed it in his new memoir.

Bolton said Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan gave Trump a memo saying Halkbank was innocent, and Trump told Erdoğan in 2018 he would intervene and the problem would be “fixed” once prosecutors were replaced.

Former U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman in Manhattan, whose office has overseen the case, was fired on June 20. Last Wednesday, Turkey said Bolton's book contained misleading presentations of Erdoğan's conversations with Trump.

No trial date for Halkbank has been set. Cary requested March 2022, citing the coronavirus pandemic and the “vast majority” of witnesses being overseas.

Over Iranian 230,000...

FROM PAGE 1

According to Lari, 3,081 patients are also in severe conditions of the disease.

The spokesperson said 1,693,242 COVID-19 tests have been taken across the country.

According to the spokeswoman, Kermanshah, Hormozgan, Bushehr, Khuzestan, Khorasan Razavi, Kurdistan, East and West Azarbaijan provinces are considered as red zones.

She also noted that the number of patients hospitalized in Tehran province shows a considerable growth.

U.S. Suffered...

FROM PAGE 1

During today's cabinet session, referring to the anniversary of the U.S. Air Force's targeting of an Iranian Airbus aircraft in Tir 1367 (July 3, 1988), President Rouhani said, “Tomorrow is 12 of Tir; The day our Airbus was shot down by American missiles. This was a huge crime that took place in the history of the country.”

Rouhani added, “The Americans shot down our passenger plane, they say they have made a mistake, but didn't apologize, they say they thought it was an F-14 but it wasn't, and they gave an honor medal to the person who shot down the plane and killed 290 people.”

“This is the path the Americans have followed since then. Suppose they made a mistake, at least they should apologize and condemn the person, they shouldn't have given a medal” Rouhani highlighted.

“We are witnessing the same thing again, and the United Nations was the scene of the U.S. political failure against Iran,” Rouhani said. “In the last three and a half years, when the new U.S. government was in the office, we have been facing illegal actions and anti-human rights abuses against the Islamic Republic.”

U.S. an Outlaw...

FROM PAGE 1

Although it is no longer a party to the deal, Washington has recently launched a campaign to renew the embargo on the sales of conventional weapons to the Islamic Republic that will expire under the accord in October.

To try and rationalize its bid, the U.S. says it is still “named” as a JCPOA partner in the UN Security Council Resolution 2231. Tehran and other JCPOA partners say Washington, due to its unilateral withdrawal, has forfeited all rights to have a say in the agreement.

Zarif warned, “If this council falters again, it will be a generational setback for the cause of multilateralism, and the rule of law.”

He reminded, “We have all, in past years, seen how malign US unilateralism has intensely assaulted international cooperation and international institution,” adding, “Its (the US's) parallel endeavor to supplant international law with US domestic laws has directly undermined global peace and security.”

The foreign minister deplored the “complacency” that has allowed Washington to come this far.

Zarif also noted how Iran continued to observe the JCPOA's provisions even despite the US withdrawal and its European allies' “over-compliance” with Washington's so-called “maximum pressure” campaign against Tehran.

He said the European parties had to ensure Iran's legitimate benefits by fulfilling their JCPOA commitments.

Otherwise “Iran will have no option but to restore a semblance of balance” to retaliate against their non-compliance to their contractual commitments, he added.

He also called for convention of another ministerial meeting of the JCPOA's remaining partners to look at the status quo.

Zarif, meanwhile, wondered how come the UN had come to pick on Iran while “not a single” Council session has been convened to address the US's egregious violations.

He said the report has been adopted by the UN Secretariat under pressure from the U.S. and some others, calling it “a perverse reading of Resolution 2231.”

“This one-sided interpretation by the Secretariat has been repeatedly rejected by three JCPOA participants, China, Russia and Iran, and let me take this opportunity now to thank Russia and China and other members of the Security Council, who have expressed their concern over this,” he added.

“Not surprisingly, the Secretariat simultaneously tried to absolve the Saudi coalition of its well-documented child-killing in Yemen,” the Iranian top diplomat said.

He also underlined how the U.S. has been generously arming the 2015-present Saudi-led war on Yemen.

Zanardi's Condition Still Serious After Latest Operation

ROME (AFP) - Paralympic champion Alex Zanardi remains in a serious condition in an induced coma after the latest round of neurological surgery, doctors said on Tuesday.

Zanardi, a former Formula One driver who had both his legs amputated after a motor racing accident two decades ago, suffered serious head injuries when he lost control of his handbike during a race on a Tuscan road nearly two weeks ago and crashed into an oncoming truck.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard:
(+98) (21) 44253448
Public Relations Tel:
(+98)(21) 44253450
Editorial Board: 44253449
Public Relations Fax:
(+98)(21) 44253395
Advertising Department:
Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
Website:
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:
info@irannewsdaily.com
ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by:Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

2021 Africa Cup of Nations Postponed by a Year Due to Virus

CAIRO (AFP) - Next year's Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon has been postponed until 2022 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Confederation of African Football announced Tuesday in a video conference.

CAF president Ahmad Ahmad said African football's governing body took the decision as "health was the main priority". African countries have suffered to varying degrees from the pandemic with South Africa the hardest hit among those south of the Sahara, recording more than 144,000 cases, while Egypt has suffered the worst in North Africa with over 66,000 infections.

Barca Title Bid on Rocks As Atletico Upstage Messi's 700th Goal

BARCELONA (Reuters) - 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 Atletico Madrid as a late penalty from Saul Niguez cancelled out Lionel Messi's 700th career goal.

The draw meant the Catalans stayed second in the standings on 70 points and leaders Real Madrid, who have 71, will go four points clear at the top with five games left if they beat Getafe at home on Thursday.

Barca went ahead at an empty Camp Nou in the 11th minute when Atletico striker Diego Costa knocked Messi's delivery from a corner into his own net.

Saul levelled soon after from the spot after the referee ordered a re-take when Costa's initial penalty was saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen who had strayed from his line.

Barcelona then earned a penalty soon after the interval which Argentine Messi coolly 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 real shame and the league title is looking much harder for us with each game," said Barca coach Quique Setien, whose side have drawn three of their six games since the campaign resumed after the coronavirus stoppage.

"Dropping these points in reality pushes us further away from the title but we have to keep on working hard."



The Catalans desperately needed to win after twice throwing away the lead to draw 2-2 with Celta Vigo on Saturday but history repeated itself as Quique Setien's side failed to sparkle against a determined Atletico who are unbeaten since the season resumed.

"It's very hard to try and fight for the title when you drop points two matches in a row but we'll keep going until the end," said Barca midfielder Sergio Busquets.

As well as defending with their usual steel, Diego Simeone's side caused Barca plenty of problems down the wings due to the pace of Yannick Carrasco and their man-of-the-moment Marcos Llorente, who is enjoying a new lease of life as a forward.

Belgian winger Carrasco won both penalties for Atletico, out-foxing Arturo Vidal in the first half and then proving too quick for Nelson Semedo.

Saul had sent Ter Stegen the wrong way to score his first equaliser but the German guessed the right way in their second duel from the spot. The ball, however, squirmed through his hands and crept in off post.

Vidal twice went close, the second time heading wide Jordi Alba's cross, and Thomas Lemar might even have won it for Atletico in injury-time. For Barca, the draw is damaging enough.

Barca coach Setien left former Atletico forward Antoine Griezmann out of his starting team for the second game in a row and turned to the 120-million-euro man in stoppage time, but the Frenchman had barely any time to provide the desired reaction.

Bayern Agree Deal To Sign Sane



BERLIN (AFP) - Bayern Munich have agreed a deal to sign winger Leroy Sane from Manchester City, according to various media reports in Germany and England on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old was reportedly close to signing for Bayern last year before suffering a knee injury.

Sky Sports and the BBC say the two clubs have agreed a fee of £54.8 million (\$59.97 million euros, \$67.36 million), with German daily Bild reporting a fee of "at least 50 million euros".

Bild said Sane will sign a five-year contract at the German champions, with the transfer fee far lower than the 100 million euros mentioned last year.

Sane's contract at Manchester City is due to run out in June, 2021.

Sports magazine Kicker said a deal is "near".

The Germany international made his first Premier League appearance of the season as a substitute against Burnley last week.

He has scored 39 goals in 135 matches in all competitions for City since joining from Bundesliga club Schalke in 2016.

FIFA Bans Former Top Official Kattner for 10 Years

ZURICH (Reuters) - Soccer's world governing body FIFA has banned Markus Kattner, a former leading official in the Zurich organisation, for 10 years and has fined him one million Swiss francs (\$1.06 million) after a probe into bonus payments.

"The adjudicatory chamber of the independent Ethics Committee has found Markus Kattner, former FIFA Deputy Secretary General and Acting Secretary General, guilty of conflicts of interest and having abused his position, in violation of the FIFA Code of Ethics," FIFA said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The investigation into Mr Kattner covered various charges concerning bonus payments in relation to FIFA competitions that were paid to top FIFA management officials (including Mr Kattner), various amendments to and extensions of employment contracts, reimbursement of private legal costs, and Mr Kattner's duties as an official."

FIFA said in June, 2016, that an internal investigation revealed that Kattner, FIFA's former Secretary General Jerome Valcke and the organisation's ex-President Sepp Blatter had received 79 million Swiss francs (\$81 million) in compensation over five years, calling them "massive payouts".

Blatter, who led FIFA from 1998 until 2015, was banned from football for six years in February 2016, while Valcke is banned until 2028.

The 45-year-old Kattner, who holds German and Swiss citizenship, joined FIFA as Director of Finance in 2003 and four years later became Deputy Secretary General.

He became Acting Secretary General in September 2015, after the departure of Valcke, but was then fired in May 2016.

According to the Ethics Committee's final judgement, Kattner argued that the ethics process against him had not been fair and that he did not grant any bonus payments either to himself or to anyone else in the top management.

The official can appeal the FIFA ban to the Court of Arbitration of Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland.



Roma Reach Agreement to Extend Mkhitarian Loan From Arsenal

ROME (Reuters) - AS Roma have reached a "preliminary agreement" to extend midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan's loan deal from Arsenal until the end of next season, the Serie A club said on Tuesday.

Mkhitaryan, 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 Chile 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 Henrikh 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 Micki, who show their desire, professionalism and determination, who represent our club and our fans in the right way."

Roma 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.

Juventus Keep Lazio at Bay With Genoa Stroll

ROME (AFP) - Juventus maintained their four-point lead at the top of Serie A on Tuesday after strolling to a 3-1 win at Genoa that keeps chasers Lazio at bay despite their comeback triumph at Torino.

Three stunning individual goals from Paulo Dybala, Cristiano Ronaldo and Douglas Costa downed relegation-threatened Genoa and kept Maurizio Sarri on course to deliver Juve's ninth straight league title in his first season as coach.

Andrea Pinamonti pulled one back with 14 minutes left for the struggling hosts, who stay just one point above the drop zone and third-from-bottom Lecce, who host Genoa's local rivals Sampdoria on Wednesday.

Pinamonti's strike was the first goal Juve have conceded since losing at Lyon in late February, but it wasn't enough to stop the champions from cruising to their sixth straight league win.

"It was a good team effort and we scored three brilliant goals," said Sarri.

"The team have recovered well after the disappointment of losing the Italian Cup final, it was only a matter of time." The victory at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris showcased the firepower Sarri has at his disposal, with Genoa goalkeeper Mattia Perin making five saves in the goalless first half as Juve pushed early to win the match.



Kyrgios, Becker in War Of Words Over Zverev's Partying Video

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Nick Kyrgios and Boris Becker traded insults on social media on Tuesday following the Australian's criticism of Alexander Zverev after a video appeared to show the German dancing in a crowded club despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Zverev said last week he would self-isolate after playing in Novak Djokovic's ill-fated Adria Tour exhibition tournament in Serbia and Croatia, which had to be abandoned after numerous players tested positive for COVID-19.

Kyrgios on Monday called Zverev, the current men's world number seven, "selfish", prompting a rebuke from commentator and former six-time Grand Slam champion Becker.

"Don't like no #rats! Anybody telling off fellow sportsman/woman is no friend of mine! Look yourself in the mirror and think your better than us... @NickKyrgios," Becker said on Twitter.

Kyrgios was prompt in his reply: "For goodness sake Boris, I'm not competing or trying to throw anyone under the bus. It's a global pandemic and if someone is as idiotic as Alex to do what he has done, I'll call him out for it. Simple."

