

Iran's Short Animation "Am I a Wolf"
Directed by Amir-Houshang Moein
Received Its 13th International
Award from Monstra
International Film Festival, Portugal

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj
Masjedi Congratulated the Iraqi
Government and Nation on the
Anniversary of the Liberation of Mosul
From ISIL Terrorists' Occupation

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Tehran-Beijing Cooperation To Disrupt World Order Sought by U.S.

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian official says the United States has misgivings over Sino-Iranian ties as the relationship can disrupt the order that the United States is seeking.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the chief of staff of the Iranian president, said the Tehran-Beijing cooperation plan has been criticized overseas.

"This [cooperation] document, whose full text has not been released yet, has immediately come under fire abroad, and they make inappropriate comments about it, which shows they are concerned over this agreement," said Vaezi on state TV.

He said if the agreement contains commitments on both sides, then it must go through the Parliament for approval, but if it does not contain any commitments, the document will be discussed at a Cabinet meeting before being sent to Parliament which will see if the document accords with the Constitution.

He said the text of the 18-page document will be released only after it is signed. "If we reach an agreement, the text will definitely be released, but it depends on what the outcome of talks with the other side will be about the agreement and its release. If there is confidentiality, then we will make another decision," he said. **See Page 7**

Over 220,000 Covid-19 Patients Recovered in Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The spokeswoman for the Ministry of Health, Sima Sadat Lari yesterday in her presser said, so far, 257,303 people in the country have definitely been infected with the coronavirus, and 219,993 of total infected people have recovered and discharged so far.

Sima Sadat Lari said on Sunday about the latest data on the coronavirus in the country and the deaths caused by the virus, "According to the definitive laboratory findings and from yesterday to July 12 in the country, 2,186 new patients with COVID-19 were diagnosed in the country and the number of patients with this disease reached 257,303."

1,499 of the new patients were hospitalized.

The Spokeswoman said, "Unfortunately, in the past 24 hours, 194 COVID-19 patients have lost their lives, and 12,829 people have lost their lives in the country to date."

The official stated, "3,359 patients are in intensive care units." **See Page 7**

Leader: U.S. Most Evil of All Enemies



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Islamic Revolution Leader has denounced the United States as the most evil and hideous of all enemies. Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei urged officials to maintain their unity and solidarity, and stand up to the vast enemy front with one voice.

"The enemy's front is mobilizing all its political, economic and propaganda power today to bring the strong Iranian nation to its knees," said Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

"Under such circumstances, and despite difference of opinion inside the country, we should join hands against the nonsense-talking enemy in unison," he added in a videoconference with members of the new Parliament.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei likened to an "illness" the numerous economic problems that Iran is facing. "Due to its strong stamina and defense power, the country undoubtedly has what it takes to tackle this illness," he said.

"By the enemies' own admission, they have been unable to achieve their anti-Iran objectives despite the most severe sanctions and pressure imposed on Iran," he noted.

The Leader also expressed regret over a surge in the coronavirus outbreak in the country, urging all to abide by health protocols, especially wearing masks.

Speaking to Majlis members through videoconference, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that disputes will upset people. We must all speak with one voice against the enemy.

He called the 11th Majlis "a manifestation of hope and expectation of the people" and referred to the "strong strength and financial capacities" and "Spiritual abilities and faith of the nation and noted that we believe that all existing problems can be solved, and that parliament must make a significant impact by prioritizing issues, avoiding trivial matters, and working sincerely for the people in resolving problems.

Expressing deep regret over the deep resurgence of Corona, the Leader urged everyone to fully comply with health guidelines, adding that by expanding the cooperative movement to the needy, people help the poor and needy families.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution called the presence of an acceptable percentage of the people in the parliamentary elections despite the difficult economic conditions and disappointing propaganda of the enemies as an indication of the hope and expectation of the nation to solve problems and advised the members of parliament to regard to this important achievement.

He called the 11th parliament one of the strongest and most revolutionary assemblies after the revolution, adding that the presence of "motivated, faithful, resilient, capable, educated and efficient youth" along with a number of revolutionary managers with executive records, as well as a number of the experienced individuals with parliamentary records, has turned the 11th into a very good and hopeful parliament. **See Page 7**

Iran Can't Be Stopped in Nuclear Bid

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - A former Mossad chief, who ran the agency under three Israeli prime ministers, admits that Iran's nuclear program cannot be stopped, expressing confidently that the Islamic Republic is determined to advance its atomic work.

Shabtai Shavit, Mossad chief from 1989 through 1996, made the remarks to The Times of Israel in a June 2 interview that the daily published on Wednesday. In the interview, the 80-year-old was asked about a book he has written under the title Head of Mossad -- published in Hebrew in 2018 -- where he has admitted Iran cannot be stopped in its nuclear bid.

"So the worst-case scenario is that the Iranians won't give up on their decision, their determination..." Shavit said of the Islamic Republic's resolve to retain and advance its nuclear activities.

He, however, alleged that the Iranian nuclear energy program had a military aspect to it, something that Israel and its biggest ally, the United States, have never ceased to claim.

This is while, as per a fatwa (religious decree) by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei banning nuclear arms, Iran has never sought and will never seek such non-conventional weapons.

The U.S. and Israel's bid targeting Iran comes while the former is the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons, and the latter is widely known to be the only possessor of nuclear arms in the Middle East with hundreds of atomic warheads. Tel Aviv also refuses to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a monument to global peace and security that the Islamic Republic is a signatory to. The former spy chief's remarks concerning Iran's nuclear program and its considering access to peaceful nuclear energy to be an "absolute right" were most recently underlined by Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). The ex-Israeli minister of military affairs figure says Netanyahu should gag an unnamed official leaking to the press Tel Aviv's alleged role in an incident at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.

The Tel Aviv regime has, nevertheless, carried out many atrocities in the past to try to come in the way of Tehran's peaceful nuclear work. In 2010, Stuxnet, a cyber weapon widely believed to be made by the US and Israel, hit Natanz, in the first publicly known example of a virus being used to attack industrial machinery. Tehran later developed an indigenous firewall, securing its sensitive industrial facilities against Stuxnet.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



U.S. Economy's Tire Blown

That the U.S. in the seventh month of the year, July, is in which part of its capability to hold the presidential election and also four months later in November whether it is prepared for holding the election or not is completely ambiguous and unlikely. Day by day the number of protesting people increases. People bring down statues, and people and the American burn the flag of this country and in other words they convey this message to the world that the U.S. is no longer the U.S. How can they recognize the election as a symbol of democracy in the country? This democracy has been set up by the people whose statues are thrown into the sea.

Today someone is in charge of power in the U.S. who seems he is mentally in bizarre condition and considers exercising violence against the nation as a loophole in handling the crisis. It is interesting to say his former National Security Advisor John has started his book "The Room Where It Happened" with this claim, "I cannot offer a comprehensive theory of the Trump Administration's transformation because none is possible. Washington's conventional wisdom on Trump's trajectory, however, is wrong. This received truth, attractive to the intellectually lazy, is that Trump was always bizarre, but in his first fifteen months, uncertain in his new place, and held in check by an "axis of adults (it means by PAC, Political action committee which pools campaign contributions from members and donates those funds to campaigns for or against candidates, ballot initiatives, or legislation)," he hesitated to act. As time passed, however, Trump became more certain of himself, the axis of adults departed, things fell apart, and Trump was surrounded only by "yes men."

This kind of management is carried out while the Coronavirus makes the condition more complicated in the world. Over 12 million people have contracted the virus and it has created a hell out of it where people in the world are even ready starve two or three days in order to survive but the process of unleashed spread of the virus still goes on.

Reuters a couple of days ago reported that over 11,74m people in the world have been affected by the virus and over 540,000 people have lost their lives. Among the countries suffering the most fatality rate, the U.S. topped the list with over 132,000 deaths. Brazil with over 65,000, UK with over 44,000, Italy with over 34,000 and Mexico with over 31,000 deaths trailed the U.S. in the rankings. **See Page 7**

279 Shipments of Oil Products Loaded Under Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Managing Director of Hormozgan PMO announced that despite the US sanctions, 279 shipments of oil products and hydrocarbons have been loaded at the Persian Gulf Oil Port as of March 20 to be exported to the world.

According to Director General of Ports and Maritime Department of Hormozgan Province Allah-Morad Afifipour, as of the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), 279 shipments of oil products and hydrocarbons have been loaded at the Persian Gulf Oil Port, in the southern Iranian port of Shahid Rajaei, to be exported to different parts of the world.

Underlining that this is a proof to the futility of the US sanctions, Afifipour said loading and unloading oil products has witnessed a 2.79 percent increase year-on-year.

He also informed that as of June 21 to July 5, 331 ships have loaded and unloaded their cargoes of condensates, crude oil, hydrocarbons, oil products, and Methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) at Persian Gulf Oil Port.

Afifipour added that by implementation of the planned projects, Shahid Rajaei port's export capacity is scheduled to increase by 30 percent. **See Page 7**



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Iran Has Become Exporter of Modern Medical Equipment

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Health, Treatment and Medical Education Saeed Namaki said that despite the difficulties arising from coronavirus, Iran has been able to become a producer and, of course, exporter of modern medical equipment thanks to the efforts of the educated community of young professors and technologists.

Addressing inaugural ceremony of the 21st Medical Education Conference late on Saturday via videoconference, he said that the first pillar of education is love and a lover teacher will never get tired.

Majlis to Pursue Look to East, Diversifying Trade Partners

TEHRAN (MNA) – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said that having a look to the East and diversifying trade partners of Iran are on the Parliament’s agenda as factors that can solve the country’s economic problems.

In a videoconference with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei yesterday, Qalibaf briefed on the approaches and plans of the 11th Parliament. This was the first meeting of lawmakers with the Leader after the new Parliament began its work in late May.

The Speaker noted that the new Parliament has aimed to become a ‘revolutionary and agile’ institute that would seek to resolve the country’s problems.

With appropriate planning and management, the country can achieve most of the aims described in the 20-year vision plan although just five years remain to the end of this period, he added.

The representative of Tehran in Parliament went on to say that all lawmakers have put on their agenda a ‘popular economy package’ that would transform the country’s economy in favor of people. The package consists of five topics namely reforming the country’s budget structure, renovating the country’s tax system, improving the livelihoods of the low-income groups, improving businesses and creating jobs, and finally, boosting foreign trade and non-oil exports.

Explaining the final topic, he said “Adopting a moderate foreign policy, especially after learning lessons from the failed experience of look to the West, developing respectful interaction with Europe, and building strong strategic relationships with the East, especially with China and Russia, can open various economic channels for



supplying the country’s basic needs and raw materials and exporting domestic products to countries of Southwest, Central, and East Asia, and Indian subcontinent. This is essentially in my and Majlis’ agenda.”

“These measures will result in an improved geopolitical and geostrategic position of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” he said, adding that they “not only can neutralize the enemies’ pressures in the short term but create new power leverages for the Islamic Establishment against pressures while the enemy has openly decided to ramp up its pressure beyond Iran and target the whole Resistance Front with its economic blows.”

“The upgraded version of active resistance must include a cross-border program of resistance economy that would include all actors and countries affected by the tyranny of the Domination System and coordinate their capacities to solve common problems,” Qalibaf added.

He assured the Iranian people that the Parliament will have ‘complete monitoring’ over international agreements to prevent any ‘dependency’ or ‘violation of people’s rights’.

President Says Gov’t Supports Creditable Exporters

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President highlighted on Sunday the role of the private sector in national economy and said the government supports and encourages the creditable exporters.

The Government supports the exporters loyal to the country’s trade policies, President Rouhani said at the government’s economic session this morning.

The Iranian government also supports the companies which make efforts to meet society’s fundamental needs and are in the front line of the fight against the sanctions, the president said.

At his remarks, the president pointed to forex fluctuations resulted from sanctions and coronavirus pandemic and stated that Central Bank of Ira (CBI) with the cooperation of the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade follow policies on controlling the forex market at the highest level of transparency.

In today’s session, Governor of CBI Abdolnasser Hemmati was, too, present to present a report on forex situation and some other economic issues.

Majlis Ratifies Bill on Iran-India Double Taxation Avoidance

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Iranian Parliament on Sunday ratified an agreement between Iran and India to help avoid double taxation and fiscal evasion in bilateral trades.

In an open session of the Parliament on Sunday morning, the lawmakers ratified the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA) and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion.

In February 2018, Iran and India signed the agreement with respect to taxes on income.

The Agreement is said to stimulate the flow of investment, technology and personnel from Iran to India and vice versa, and will prevent double taxation.

The Agreement will also provide for the exchange of information between the two contracting parties as per the latest international standards. It will improve transparency in tax matters and will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.

Earlier this year, Head of National Tax Admission Organization of Iran Omid Ali Parsa stressed the importance of accelerating legal procedures to ratify avoidance of double taxation.

Iran Has No Arms Dependency On Foreign Countries

TEHRAN (MNA) – Deputy Commander of Mostazafin Basij (Volunteer Forces) Organization said that Islamic Republic of Iran has no arms dependency on foreign countries.

Brigadier General Mehdi Kelishadi made the remarks yesterday and said, “today, the country enjoys high capability and potential in manufacturing military arms and weapons and is able to produce all these weapons inside the country, no need to arms dependency on foreign countries.”

He pointed to the U.S. efforts for the extension of Iran’s arms embargo, duration of which will be terminated in Oct. 2020 under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and added, “JCPOA and its pertinent issues are futile and useless for Iranian people so that it did not bear any achievements for people of the country.”

In the current situation, JCPOA cannot even be revived, he said, adding, “people do not accept JCPOA with any justification and argument and do not care about arms embargoes.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, the brigadier general pointed to the salient achievements and considerable progress gained in the country in the defense field and reiterated, “relying on the assistance of the Almighty God, high-quality and best weapons, as well as military equipment, are manufactured in the country.”

The country also has taken a giant stride in the field of technology of launching satellite into space, so that the weapons that are unveiled every now and then during the eight years of Sacred Defense (Iraqi imposed war against Iran in 1980-1988) has frustrated enemies and foiled their conspiracies waged against the country.



Global Arrogance Using Int’l Institutes to Pursue Its Aims

TEHRAN (MNA) – Majlis First Deputy Speaker noted that the Global Arrogance uses human rights and international organizations to pursue its own aims.

Amirhossein Ghazizadeh made the remarks before the start of the open session of the Parliament on Sunday as the country marks the anniversary of massacring people who had gathered in Goharshad Mosque to protest the decree of Reza Shah Pahlavi’s on banning hijab back in 1936.

“The Iranian nation, in its historic Revolution, has shown that it attaches no value to what the domination system pursues, rather, it seeks to preserve its own religious and cultural identity,” the MP said.

Today is the anniversary of a day when the Iranian nation rose to defend the Muslim women’s modesty and identity and to confront the Western pleasure-seeking approach, he added.

“The people of this country were willing to die for this cause but not to succumb to the culture of nudity,” he said, adding, “The Global Arrogance, its allies, and tyrannical regimes seek to impose their evil demands to humans with the pretext of democracy and they use the so-called legal and human rights tools and international organization and institutes to pursue this aim.”

Army Aviation to Achieve Long Range Missiles Soon

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of Army Aviation Second Brigadier General Yousef Ghorbani said that Iran’s Army Aviation will attain long-range 20- and 200km missiles in the near future.

The Army Aviation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has gained salient achievements in the defense and security field, pinpointing missiles and also eight-and-a-half kilometer missile.

He made the remarks in a local ceremony and pointed to the bravery of martyr Lt. Gen. Soleimani and endeared his name and memory in the fight against terrorism.

Today, Army Aviation is the powerful arm of the Establishment, he said, adding, “Army Aviation of the country has gained salient achievements since the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in defending the country with all its might.”

He further pointed out that Iran’s Army Aviation has thus far gained salient achievements and progresses in the defense and security field, Fire-and-Forget and pinpointing missiles as well as eight-and-a-half kilometer missiles.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Brigadier General Ghorbani put the number of parts and equipment manufactured at Army Aviation at 435, showing high capability and potential of Iran’s Army Force in this respect.

He then pointed out that the Army Aviation of the country offers quality aerial emergency services to 18 provinces of the country.

Iran Envoy Slams OPCW Action on Syria

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to the Netherlands described new action made by Western states against Syria in Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as imbalanced, unacceptable and with political motives.

Alireza Kazemi Abadi said such measure has been in line with politicizing OPCW and creating disputes among members.

The 94th Session of the Executive Council wrapped up on Thursday with 29 votes in favor, 9 abstentions and 3 negative votes (Russia, China and Iran) which were approved with regard to West group decision against Syria.

Iranian diplomat termed as illegitimate establishing fact-finding team and criticized the group for its biased and unreal report against Syria which accused the country of using chemical weapons in Ltamenah, northern Syria.

Kazemi Abadi said the new action has ignored many factors like Syria efforts to maintain cooperation with OPCW.

In response to U.S. ambassador’s criticism against Iran’s stance, he said that using chemical weapons by Saddam regime against Iranians in 1980 made countries to understand the importance of signing Chemical Weapons Convention.

Most of the countries which had provided Saddam with chemical weapons and provided him with secret intelligence to attack the most sensitive points in Iran are now among those states which are supporting the action with the OPCW.

Iran Slams Europe’s Failure to Uphold Duties

TEHRAN (PressTV) - On the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, the only declared genocide in Europe since World War II, Iran’s Foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has blasted Europe for failing to meet its duties to prevent the tragedy.

In a post on his Twitter account on Saturday, Zarif paid tribute to the victims of the execution in July 1995 of thousands of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) by posting the snapshot of an article titled, “Srebrenica massacre: Dutch peacekeepers party responsible, court rules”.

“25 yrs ago today, #SrebrenicaGenocide began as Europe failed to uphold its basic duties. Quarter of a century later Europe is plagued by same ineptitude,” he wrote.

The top Iranian diplomat also denounced the UN inaction regarding the slaughter, saying, “The failure of the @UN to take any action at the time—to forever haunt the world body—should remain a lesson for the present.”

Bosnian Muslims commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, where thousands of Muslims were killed by Serb forces.

On July 11, 1995, Srebrenica fell to Bosnian Serb forces led by General Ratko Mladic.

Srebrenica’s Muslim population fled the town, which had been declared a UN “safe haven” for civilians, and rushed to the UN compound where its peacekeepers were supposed to protect them.

The Dutch peacekeepers, however, handed over the base to Serbian troops, who separated out men and boys for execution and sent the women and girls elsewhere to a territory under their control.

Handicraft Expert:

Iranian Handicrafts Suffer From Poor Branding

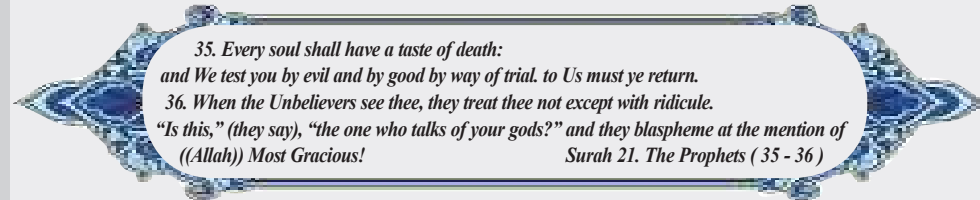
As one of the most original arts and crafts in the world, Iranian handicrafts suffer from poor branding. Ehsan Mohammadi, an economic activist and designer of luxury handicrafts, added: “Iran has the highest rank in many branches of handicrafts in the world, but our country’s products are offered in the target markets without a name or logo.” He explained that the lack of a specific brand and it has led other countries to confiscate Iranian handicrafts in their own names. In addition to financial gain, the registration of their brand will also take over the intellectual property of these products. Ehsan Mohammadi continued: “This situation has caused many people to copy the pure designs and ideas of Iranian handicrafts and use them in their products without paying a fee, and it is interesting to know that even big and well-known brands behave in this way.” He said that we must prevent the continuation of these conditions and to stop them as soon as possible, he said: In the current situation, Iranian artists do not benefit financially from their efforts, nor the results of their efforts are recorded in their names and market. The economic activist added: “We have to brand our country’s handicrafts in order to have both its intellectual property and to benefit from the economic benefits of exporting these products.” He said that in the design of many products of reputable brands, traces of Iranian handicrafts can be seen.





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:42
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:17
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:59



Minister Derides Claims on Iran-China Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Mohammad Eslami said that under the 25-year cooperation deal between Iran and China, Chinese companies are not a priority in the country's projects.

He said that I'm surprised that some who have not read the text of the contract analyze it without knowing the details.

"The 25-year contract is a strategic document, not an executive one."

Iranian minister added "It is a document that sets out the two countries' strategies for developing long-term cooperation."

Referring to the news that has been published, Eslami said "Let the negotiations on this document come to an end and after its final definition, we can talk about it."

Asked whether the transfer of Chinese passengers during the coronavirus outbreak was part of Iran-China contract with Mahan Airlines, he confirmed "None of these claims are true."

Iranian Ambassador to China Mohammad Keshavarzadeh also said that claims like ceding some islands to China or deploying Chinese military forces in Iran in the framework of Iran-China cooperation are "ridiculous and somehow negative propaganda

Iran-China comprehensive cooperation plan is in fact a roadmap for Tehran and



Beijing; he said, adding that it is a kind of MoU for developing mutual cooperation.

China has the largest foreign exchange reserves in the world and a developing economy which has 15% of the world economy, so all major countries are interested in promoting their ties with China, he said.

Meanwhile Eslami stated that Shahid Beheshti port in Chabahar is considered an important port since it is connected to the Indian Ocean.

On the importance of Zahedan to Chabahar railway project, he said that not only it is considered as north to the south corridor but also it connects Iran to Europe, Central Asia, and China.

"We try to develop Shahid Beheshti port, especially from the west part by having access to sources and prepare them for export markets", Eslami added.

"This is a faster and cheaper way of transit, compared to shipping," he highlighted.

Eslami continued, "Zahedan to Chabahar railway beside its positive effects in the region helps us to facilitate transit."

MSC Gets 7 Licenses For Exploration

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Director of Isfahan Provincial Industries, Mines and Trade Organization says the organization has issued seven licenses for Mobarakeh Steel Company regarding exploration operation.

Mr. Iraj Movafagh, who had attended a meeting with head of Mining Engineering Organization of Isfahan Province of Isfahan Province and some senior officials of Mobarakeh Steel Company, announced that exploration licenses in these areas have been issued for the first time and in favor of Mobarakeh Steel Company in order that the company can carry out exploration activities in the ore deposits sector.

He went on to say that preparations for getting the license had started since last year and due to persistence of Mobarakeh Steel Company, an area around 14,500 kilometers has been handed over to the company and seven licenses have been issued for the company for starting exploration activities.

He noted that at this stage, Mobarakeh Steel Company has a six-month deadline to present its preliminary exploration report to the Mining Engineering Organization and the CEO of the company has promised to submit the report in four months in order to step into the next stage.

Movafagh added that the organization has tried since last year to provide the company with iron ore and they have held several meetings.

He reiterated that Mobarakeh Steel Company and Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) are the beating hearts of national steel industry and this measure should have taken earlier.

Addressing the meeting, the CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company Mr. Hamid Reza Azimian said that creating more value added for the province, supporting the small-scale mines and providing its needed iron ore are the main goals of the company for investment in the mining sector.

He further said unfortunately with arrival of mining sector at the steel industry, some disorders have emerged in the mineral material completion chain of steel-makers, and this problem in providing raw material for steel-makers, including concentrate and iron ore, forced the steel-makers to resolve this problem. So the company decided to provide raw material from mines and sought the organization's help and fortunately it issued seven licenses for the company for exploration activities in an area around 190 kilometers, Azimian added.

Excessive Rise in Raw Materials Price Leading to Instability in Steel Chain

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Khouzestan Steel Company Ali Mohammadi believes excessive rise in the price of raw materials will cause instability in the cycle of steel chain and its market.

Mohammadi said that in a move for making the price of steel ingot real in the market, the price of raw materials suddenly soared significantly and it caused concern for steel-makers.

He added that soaring prices of iron ore concentrate, pellet and sponge iron will definitely lead to instability in the market and failure in its control will cause concerns for the steel-makers.

He further said that in the past, raising the price of raw materials was done based on the price of steel ingot and on reviewing thoroughly the production costs of these products along with profits of all steel chain.

Mohammadi reiterated that by moving to making real the price of ingot in the market, the prices of raw materials have suddenly jumped in the recent two months and it causes serious damages on steel-makers.

He concluded that keeping peace in the current sanctions era and support of steel-makers will lead to sustainable production, provision of domestic needs and continuity in exports and earning forex.

DCI-1 Drilling Jacking System Upgraded

TEHRAN (Shana) - Drilling Company International (DCI) announced the redesign and upgrade of the DCI-1 drilling control and protection system by the company's experts.

Hamidreza Saghafi, CEO of Drilling Company International, told Shana that the Rack Phase Difference (RPD) protection and control system to compensate for the weakness in the control and protection system of the drilling rigs was redesigned and upgraded by the company's experts for the first time in Iran. The system has been installed on DCI-1 offshore rig and has been tested.

IME Witnesses Growth In Weekly Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - During weekdays ending up to July 9, 2020, while over 832,078 MT of commodities worth over \$1,404m were traded on the Iran Mercantile Exchange, the trading volume and value experienced growths of 30 and 54 percent, respectively.



According to the report from IME International Affairs and PR, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 405,221 MT of various products worth close to \$859m were traded.

On this trading floor, 299,993 MT of steel, 6,160 MT of copper, 5,150 MT of aluminum, 150 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 18 MT of precious metal concentrates as well as 93,750 MT of zinc dust were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 424,856 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$560m were traded.

On this trading floor, 125,000 MT of VB feed stock, 121,556 MT of bitumen, 78,658 MT of polymer products, 43,360 MT of chemical products, 1,615 MT of insulation, 38,000 MT of lube cut oil, 50 MT of argon, 2,168 MT of base oil, 2,000 MT of slaps waxes as well as 13,175 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 2,000 MT of commodities were traded on the IME's side market.

It is worth noting that 1,300 kg of saffron was trade on the agricultural trading floor of the IME.

Offering Steel Products on IME a Logical Way for Price Discovery

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Managing Director of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company Mr. Naser Taghizadeh believes that last year the prices of iron ore concentrate and pellet, like the preceding years, were reliant on average of sale price of steel ingot of Khuzestan.

He added that fluctuations in the international prices of iron ore and pellet had no significant impact on the sale prices of products and it just had slight impact on the ups and downs in prices of Khouzestan Steel Company's steel ingots.

Taghizadeh added, "On the system for pricing of the products, we believe by setting up mercantile exchange and offering iron ore and its products on the bourse, the important issue which is price discovery of products of the steel chain will be completed. He noted that the primary and philosophy of formation of Iran's Mercantile Exchange (IME) was to eliminate command the pricing because in the past, these sorts of non-expert measures in the iron ore mines and price of steel have caused problem in price discovery of steel production chain.

He noted that due to major progresses of the IME, today it is in a position that the government and industries can trust it.

Taghizadeh reiterated that strategic goods like products of steel chain have no way but to have real price discoveries on the IME, and linking the whole prices of steel chain to just one product is not logical.

He further said one of the important and essential bases of economy in any country is its mineral resources and its underground reserves. He added that role of mines in the economic growth is apparent in any country and exploiting the mines is an important factor in the economic growth and development. He also said according to the statistics



issued by the International Labor Organization (ILO), occupation of every person in the iron ore mine will lead to occupation of 17 people in the related industries.

Taghizadeh reiterated that Iran is among those countries which are rich in natural resources as the country is among the top states in the world in terms of its mineral materials. He further

said according to the existing data, Iran has 18 types of mineral material with 57b tons of estimated reserves and 37b tons of confirmed reserves which accounts for 7 percent of mineral reserves in the world.

He stated that despite being rich in mineral materials, the role of mines in the national economy has been slight and according to the statistics the share of mines and mineral industries from the domestic gross production accounts for 7 percent.

Taghizadeh also said currently two major iron ore companies (Chadormalu and Golgozar) produce 54 percent of the iron concentrate in the country and they have made production and national steel industries free from imports.

Iran, India Seeking to Expand Railroad Cooperation



TEHRAN (MNA) – In a meeting on Saturday, Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) and Indian Ambassador to Tehran conferred on expanding railroad cooperation.

Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) Hamid Zadboum met and held talks with Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra on Saturday.

The two sides conferred on facilitating trade exchange between the two countries and emphasized on holding the fourth meeting of the Joint Trade Committee.

The development of railroad cooperation, expansion of regional cooperation with Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, holding joint trade committee meetings, strengthening bilateral ties between chambers of commerce, and the diversification of trade between the two countries were other points discussed in the meeting.

Indian Ambassador to Tehran further referred to the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries and emphasized India's commitment to strengthening and developing relations with Iran.

Iranian Companies to Go to China Int'l Import Expo

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has announced that it supports the presence of knowledge-based companies in the China International Import Expo when the COVID-19 disease is eradicated in the country.

China intends to hold the third International Import Expo after the coronavirus is contained in the country. The previous edition of the exhibition brought together 3,000 companies from 150 countries. Iran participated in the second edition of the expo with 15 companies.

China International Import Expo is a trade fair held in autumn annually in Shanghai. It is the world's first import-themed national-level expo. It features exhibitions of multiple countries and businesses.

The first and second editions of the exhibition were held in 2018 and 2019 by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and Shanghai Municipality.

The exhibition is a good opportunity for Iranian companies to introduce Iranian products and services and hold meetings with foreign firms for further cooperation.

This year, with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology as well as the Iran National Innovation Fund, Iranian knowledge-based companies will take part in the event.

Tehran Helps Baku With Providing Water to Its Cities

TEHRAN (MNA) – Officials in Azerbaijan announced on Saturday that Iran helped the country in solving the problem of water shortage in some border areas.

Due to the decrease in the water level in the Aras River, water supply to the border city of Saatli and several other cities along the River in Azerbaijan was faced with a problem that was reportedly solved by pumping water from the Aras Dam that is jointly operated by Iran and Azerbaijan. Officials in Azerbaijan announced on Saturday that Iran helped the country in solving the problem of water shortage in some border areas.

According to the agreement reached on July 7, Iran has increased pumping water from the Aras Dam to the cities of the Republic of Azerbaijan along the Aras River which solved the problem of water shortage in these cities.

Croatia Makes Face Masks Compulsory in Public Indoor Spaces

ZAGREB (Reuters) - Croatia said on Saturday that wearing face masks will be obligatory in most closed public spaces from next week as the number of COVID-19 cases keeps rising.

The number of new infections reached 140 on Saturday, the highest recorded so far in a single day. Most cases are in the capital Zagreb and in east of the country.

The national civil protection directorate said that from Monday face masks will be obligatory for both employees and clients in shops, and also for employees in bars, restaurants and other places where there is close contact with customers.



Lebanon Records New Coronavirus Infection High

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Lebanon's number of new coronavirus infections increased for a third consecutive day to a record 86, the government said on Saturday.

Lebanon has recorded 2,168 infections and 36 deaths since February.

Health Minister Hamad Hassan told Reuters on Friday the spike was partly due to expatriates who came after the airport was reopened on July 1. One infected 12 people at a wedding and another infected 12 at a funeral, he said.

A second cluster of infections had appeared among nurses and doctors and a third among refuse collectors, he said.



Erdogan Rejects Global Criticism Over Hagia Sophia Decision



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has rejected international condemnation over the decision to change the status of Istanbul's landmark Hagia Sophia from a museum to a mosque, saying it represented his country's will to use its "sovereign rights".

In the past, he has repeatedly called for the stunning building to be renamed as a mosque and in 2018, he recited a verse from the Quran at Hagia Sophia.

"Those who do not take a step against Islamophobia in their own countries ... attack Turkey's will to use its sovereign rights," Erdogan said at a ceremony he attended via video-conference on Saturday.

The colossal Hagia Sophia was built 1,500 years ago as an Orthodox Christian cathedral and was converted into a mosque after the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, now Istanbul, in 1453. The secular Turkish government decided in 1934 to make it a museum.

Erdogan on Friday formally converted the building back into a mosque and declared it open for Muslim worship, hours after a high court annulled the 1934 decision turning it into a museum. He said Muslim prayers would begin at the UNESCO World Heritage Site on July 24.

The president went ahead with the plan despite appeals from NATO ally the United States and from Russia, with which Ankara has forged close relations in recent years.

Greece swiftly condemned the move as a provocation, France deplored it while the US also expressed disappointment.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko on Saturday said Moscow regretted the decision. "The cathedral is on Turkey's territory, but it is without question everybody's heritage," he told the Interfax news agency.

The World Council of Churches wrote to Erdogan expressing "grief and dismay" over the move and urged him to reverse his decision.

As a World Heritage museum, "Hagia Sophia has been a place of openness, encounter and inspiration for people from all nations," interim secretary-general Ioan Sauca said in the letter released on Saturday.

Sauca said the museum status had been "a powerful expression" of Turkey's commitment to inclusion and secularism.

The influential bishop Hilarion, who heads the Russian Orthodox Church's department for external church relations, also expressed his sorrow.

"It is a blow to global Christianity ... For us [Hagia Sophia] remains a cathedral dedicated to the Saviour," he told state-controlled TV Rossiya24 late on Friday.

Bulgarian President Calls on Mafia-Type Gov't Resign

SOFIA (AFP) - Bulgarian President Rumen Radev called on Saturday for a resignation of the "mafia-type" conservative government, which he blamed for ordering police raids on his offices this week.

The president's legal affairs and anti-corruption secretary and his security and defense advisor were detained for questioning on Thursday and their offices searched as part of two separate probes into influence-peddling and disclosure of state secrets.

The searches sparked public anger and brought thousands of demonstrators onto the streets of Sofia to condemn the raids as an attack by the government and the chief prosecutor against the Socialists-backed Radev, rather than on the real oligarchs.

The president is an outspoken critic of the cabinet of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, accusing it of "links with oligarchs".

"Turning the government into a mafia-type structure has pushed freedom-loving Bulgarians of all ages, regardless of their political affiliations, to raise demands for respect of the law," Radev said in a televised address to the nation.

"There is only one way out of the current situation -- resignation of the government and the prosecutor general," he added.

An "anti-mafia consensus" is forming in the country, out of anger built up by years of "corruption, incitement of fear, prosecution racketeering and inaction against plunder, and trampling upon the presumption of innocence," Radev said. "Europe has no right to look away from Bulgaria. The European Union needs a democratic Bulgaria," he added.

Borisov went live on social media late Saturday to appeal for calm, urging the protesters to respect the police and "not shed blood".

He said he would "stay in power" citing the need for stability as "the world enters into its most horrible crisis".

The searches this week have been seen by the opposition and observers as an attack against the president.

Eighteen people were arrested, and two protesters and four police officers injured as a second night of protests on Friday evening turned violent.

One of the president's advisers has been charged with "trading in influence" for having acted as an intermediary between a businessman and the president, another for "disclosure of state secrets".

On Saturday, hundreds of people invaded a small beach on the Black Sea to protest against the perceived impunity of high-ranking officials who broke the law.

The Black Sea coast is public property but access to the beach has been cut as it is hear an estate used by the leader of a small liberal party that quietly backs Borisov.

U.S. Warns Citizens of Heightened Detention Risks in China

BEIJING (Reuters) - The U.S. State Department warned American citizens on Saturday to "exercise increased caution" in China due to heightened risk of arbitrary law enforcement including detention and a ban from exiting the country.

"U.S. citizens may be detained without access to U.S. consular services or information about their alleged crime," the State Department said in a security alert issued to its citizens in China, adding that U.S. citizens may face "prolonged interrogations and extended detention" for reasons related to state security.

"Security personnel may detain and/or deport U.S. citizens for sending private electronic messages critical of the Chinese government," it added, without citing specific examples. The state department also did not say what prompted the security alert.

The security alert comes as bilateral tensions intensify over issues ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic, trade, the new Hong Kong security law and allegations of human rights violations against Uighurs in the Xinjiang region.

Washington and Beijing recently exchanged visa bans against each other's officials, underscoring the deteriorating relations.

The Chinese foreign ministry could not be immediately reached for comment outside of business hours on Saturday. Beijing called on Wednesday a similar warning issued by Australia about the risk of arbitrary detention in China "completely ridiculous and disinformation."

Giant Protests in Russia After Popular Governor's Arrest

MOSCOW (AFP) - At least 10,000 protesters marched through the eastern Russian city of Khabarovsk Saturday in support of a popular local governor arrested this week for allegedly ordering several murders.

A court in Moscow on Friday ruled to hold 50-year-old Sergei Furgal for two months pending trial for the murders of several businessmen 15 years ago.

He vehemently denied any involvement.

Furgal's nationalist Liberal-Democratic Party has thrown its weight behind the governor, and on Saturday said "35,000 people came out to the streets" in Khabarovsk to protest his arrest. But the rally, estimated by various sources to have involved between 10,000 - 40,000, was clearly fuelled by broader anti-Kremlin sentiments too, with people chanting anti-Vladimir Putin slogans.

Local news website DVHab.ru called the rally "the biggest in the history of Khabarovsk", saying the crowds temporarily blocked traffic as they walked through the city of more than 600,000 inhabitants.

Footage showed people shouting "Freedom!" "Moscow go away!" and "Sergei Furgal is our choice" as they walked.

Some held posters saying "We are Sergei Furgal!"

Others demanded that Furgal be flown back from Moscow and the charges investigated locally.

The website put the number of protesters between 20,000-30,000, while police estimated about half that, and local supporters of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny claimed a figure of up to 40,000.

Navalny and other Kremlin critics in Moscow cheered the turnout. "I'm proud of my compatriots who took to streets demanding fair elections, justice and their right to elect public officials," he wrote. The demonstrations were unprecedented for almost any Russian city outside Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, and, though unauthorised, seemed peaceful and took place without police interference.

Smaller rallies were held in other cities in Khabarovsk region, reports said.

Popularly elected in 2018, Furgal embarrassed the ruling United Russia party, securing 70 percent of the vote.

His sudden arrest came just days after President Vladimir Putin -- who has been in power for two decades -- won a landslide ballot on constitutional reforms that could allow him to extend his rule until 2036.



N. Korea Denounces UK for Sanctions On Organizations Accused of Links To Prison Camps



SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea denounced Britain on Saturday for announcing sanctions against two organizations that the British government has said are involved in forced labor, torture and murder in North Korean prison camps.

The move against the two organizations, named as the Ministry of State Security Bureau 7 and Ministry of People's Security Correctional Bureau, is part of the first sanctions under Britain's new global human rights regime. Sanctions on 25 Russians and 20 Saudis were also announced.

"Britain's latest move is a flagrant political plot to jump on the bandwagon of the United States' inimical policy," a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in a statement carried on state media KCNA.

"We strongly condemn and reject the UK's daring to impose sanctions on the institutions responsible for our country's security as violent interference in domestic affairs."

The sanctions will take the form of asset freezing.

North Korea and the United States have failed to find a compromise over North Korea's nuclear weapons program or international sanctions imposed on Pyongyang.

Recent North Korean statements, including one by Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un, have reiterated Pyongyang's objections to what it sees as hostile and self-serving policies of the United States.



Velenjak Apt (\$2000)
210sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Shariati Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
6bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
green garden
Fully Furn

Parsian

Gheitarieh Apt
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, S, J
balcony, pkg
(\$2100)

Kamranieh (\$2500)
280sq.m, 3bdrs, S/pool
S, J, balcony, gym, F.F

Farmanieh bldg
3storey, 10bdrs
green garden
S/p, pkg lots
(\$5000)

Jordan (\$1200) 2bdrs, S/p, F.F
Jordan (\$1800) 3bdrs, S/p, F.F
Jordan (\$2200) 4bdrs, S/p, F.F

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Dubai Announces New Economic Support Package

DUBAI (Reuters) - Dubai has announced a new package to help the economy cope with the effects of the coronavirus outbreak, worth 1.5 billion dirhams (\$408 million), the crown prince of the emirate, Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al-Maktoum, said on Twitter on Saturday.

The package is the third announced by Dubai, the second-largest and wealthiest member of the United Arab Emirates federation. The three packages are worth a total of 6.3 billion dirhams, Sheikh Hamdan said.



Iraq PM Vows to Fight Customs Corruption

BAGHDAD (AFP) - Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi launched a new campaign on Saturday against corruption at the country's borders, saying millions of dollars were being lost by not properly taxing imported goods.

Speaking at the Mandili crossing on the border with Iran, Kadhemi said Iraq's frontier had become "a hotbed for corrupt people".

"This is the beginning of our promise to combat corruption. The first phase is to protect border crossings with new security forces," he said.

"The second is to fight 'ghosts' trying to blackmail Iraqis, and the third is to automate the crossing with new technology," the premier said, standing alongside Border Crossing Commission head Omar al-Waeli.

In response to a question by AFP, Kadhemi added: "We encourage businessmen (importing goods) to pay the customs, not the bribes."

"This will serve as a message to all corrupt people."

Iraq imports virtually all of its consumer goods from either its eastern neighbour Iran or its northern neighbour Turkey.

But government officials, foreign diplomats and businessmen have long complained that the import process at both borders is complicated and rife with corruption.

They accuse customs offices of getting kickbacks from traders in exchange for charging no or low import duties.

In June, Finance Minister Ali Allawi said the government would seek to boost its non-oil revenues, including through import duties, to make up for the collapse in state income from falling oil prices.

"The ports should give us revenues of seven trillion Iraqi dinar a year. We only get one trillion right now," he told reporters at the time.

"To close that gap, we'll need a string of reforms to the customs administration," he said.

Mandili was established in 2014 and is currently controlled by a mix of intelligence forces and the Hashed al-Shaabi.

There was no noticeable activity at the border on Saturday, as all of Iraq's 32 crossings remain officially closed to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Hashed fighters could be seen standing in the blistering midsummer sun. Iraq is ranked one of the top 20 most corrupt countries in the world according to Transparency International, with some \$450 billion in public funds vanishing into the pockets of shady politicians and businessmen since 2003.

Every premier has pledged new measures to fight corruption but few have been able to make a dent in the deep-rooted practices across the public and private sector.

IMF Predicts Recovery in Pakistan's Economy During 2021

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted recovery in Pakistan's economy during financial year 2021.

In a report titled "Policy Actions Taken by Countries," IMF said a gradual recovery is expected in Pakistan's economy in Fiscal Year 2021 as the economy reopens.

The report highlighted the measures taken by the present government to contain spread of COVID-19.

According to this report, since mid-April, the federal government, in coordination with the provinces, has been gradually easing lockdown arrangements, by allowing 'low-risk industries' to restart operation and 'small retail shops' to reopen with newly developed Standard Operating Procedures.

In addition, restrictions on domestic and international movements have been lifted and educational institutes are expected to restart on July 15. 'Selective' lockdown arrangements remain in place, through the closure of shops on weekends and the sealing of specific areas of high risk.



A relief package worth Rs1.2 trillion was announced on March 24, which is now being implemented and will be pursued in the fiscal year 2020-21. The report then details various measures taken by both federal and provincial governments to ease the economic impact of this pandemic.

Key measures by the federal government:

elimination of import duties on emergency health equipment; cash transfers to 6.2 million daily wage workers, cash transfers to more than 12m low-income families; accelerated tax refunds to the export industry, out of which 65pc have already been disbursed, and financial support to SMEs and the agriculture sector.

The report also mentions the provision of tax incentives to the construction sector to address the acute employment needs generated by the lockdowns.

The provincial governments, according to this report, have been also implementing supportive fiscal measures, consisting of cash grants to the low-income households, tax relief and additional health spending.

Trump Accuses Biden of Plagiarizing His Economic Proposals

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump on Friday accused former Vice President Joe Biden of plagiarizing his economic policies, a day after the presumptive Democratic nominee unveiled a plan to promote American manufacturing and goods.

But despite some similarities in messaging between Biden's "Buy American" and Trump's "America First" rhetoric, the two candidates' policy plans significantly diverge. "He plagiarized from me, but he could never pull it off," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked about Biden's plan for the economy. "He likes plagiarizing. It's a plan that is very radical left. But he said the right things because he's copying what I've done, but the difference is he can't do it."

Trump did not specify what parts of Biden's economic plans were plagiarized.

Biden's "Build Back Better" economic plan features a "Buy American" component that would invest \$400 billion in government procurement that the campaign says would boost demand for U.S.-made products. The plan also calls for a \$300 billion investment in research and development over four years that would be spread across the country to businesses and entrepreneurs.

Biden also repeated his desire to raise the corporate tax rate to 28 percent, following GOP legislation that lowered the rate to 21 percent in 2017.

The Biden campaign responded to Trump's comments by saying Biden's plan is the antithesis of the president's economic policies.

"The truth is, Trump promised voters he'd stand with American workers, but spent his entire time in office siding with corporate boardrooms and his big money donors over middle class families - creating giant new financial rewards for outsourcing jobs and trying to take healthcare away from millions," Biden spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement to POLITICO. "His presidency has thrown American manufacturing into a recession, killed tens of millions of jobs, and sent the strong economy he inherited from the Obama-Biden Administration into a full-on meltdown."

Under Trump's presidency, unemployment rates had reached record lows before the coronavirus pandemic hit the United States in March 2020.

During the 2016 campaign and his time in office, Trump has pushed an "America First" agenda. Trump pledged to slash outsourcing, renegotiate NAFTA, cut taxes and regulations and bring back American manufacturing.

While a major focus of Trump's economic policies are what he labels unfair trade deals, Biden's campaign said his proposals instead center on domestic investment and job creation.

U.S. Slaps French Goods With 25% Duties in Digital Tax Row

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration on Friday announced additional duties of 25% on French cosmetics, handbags and other imports valued at \$1.3 billion in response to France's digital services tax, but would hold off on implementing the move for up to 180 days.

The U.S. Trade Representative's office said delaying the start of the tariffs would allow further time to resolve the issue, including through discussions in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The decision also reflected France's agreement to defer collection of its 3% tax on digital services.

The U.S. move follows a U.S. Section 301 probe, which concluded the French tax discriminates against U.S. tech firms such as Google, Facebook (FB.O) and Apple Inc.

France and other countries view digital service taxes as a way to raise revenue from the local operations of big tech companies which they say profit enormously from local markets while making only limited contributions to public coffers.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer first disclosed on Thursday plans to impose new tariffs on French goods with deferred implementation. The \$1.3 billion worth of goods is part of a list first published by USTR in December.

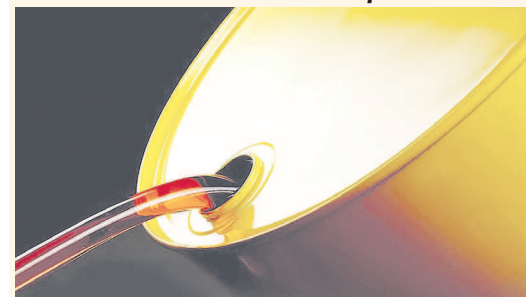
The United States has initiated similar Section 301 investigations of digital services taxes adopted or being considered by 10 other countries, including Britain, India and Turkey, which could result in tariffs against their goods.

OECD talks aimed at developing a multilateral solution for taxing digital services have failed to produce any results, with negotiations complicated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Last month, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin caught European countries by surprise when he suggested a pause in the OECD talks given the lack of progress there.

A spokesman for the European Union told Reuters earlier that Brussels could propose its own solution if the OECD talks failed to produce an agreement. He urged Washington to resume the talks.

OPEC Crude Oil Production Drops To Its Lowest in Nearly 30 Years



DUBAI (Dispatches) - Crude oil production of OPEC+ members for June reduced by almost 2 million barrels.

The over-performance by Saudi Arabia that has cut its crude oil production by 1 million barrels per day (more than mandated), has helped in reducing OPEC crude oil production to its lowest point in nearly 30 years, thus sending crude oil price soaring to about \$42 support levels, and dampening growing concerns of COVID-19 resurgence.

In the month of July, a report from the International Energy Agency (IEA) showed a 108% compliance rate against 89% a month earlier.

Crude oil production of OPEC+ members for June reduced by almost 2 million barrels, compared to the month of May showing 33.4 million barrels per day. This agreement by major oil producers has helped in limiting oil production.

The report from International Energy Agency (IEA) said, "On the supply side, global oil production fell sharply in June to stand 13.7 million barrels per day below the April level. The compliance rate with the OPEC+ supply agreement was 108%."

Data from the report also shows that in the month of June, major oil producer, Russia fulfilled its quota for reducing oil production by 100%.

"This solid performance by the OPEC+ group has been supplemented by substantial market-driven cuts, mainly in the United States," the report added.

Meanwhile, Edward Moya, senior market analyst at Oanda, in a note, said that Crude prices got a boost for the session, in part due to the "upbeat COVID-19 vaccine and treatment news" and a softer dollar, but U.S. benchmark prices remain "anchored below the \$41 level and will likely struggle for any major moves" until after next week's OPEC+ Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee meeting.

He added that, "The demand outlook risks warrant a discussion for OPEC+ to consider extending production cuts into August."

Virus-Hit Afghanistan Gets \$200-Million World Bank Grant

KABUL (Dispatches) - The World Bank has approved \$200 million in aid to help Afghanistan tackle economic losses from the coronavirus pandemic, as confirmed cases top more than 34,000 in the conflict zone.

The country's war-ravaged economy has been severely impacted due to a months-long lockdown, with thousands of people losing their jobs in the economic fallout.

Afghanistan has also grappled with increased militant violence in recent months that has diverted vital attention and resources away from the fight against the disease.

"The program will provide vital fiscal resources to manage the impacts of the pandemic in the context of rapidly slowing economic growth and declining government revenues,"

Henry Kerali, the World Bank head for Afghanistan, said in a statement on Thursday, July 9.

Afghanistan has so far declared just over 34,000 cases of COVID-19, with nearly 1,000 deaths.

"In the cities, the cases are steady but we are worried the cases may spread in rural areas," Abdul Qadir, a senior official at the health ministry, told Agence France-Presse on Friday, July 10.

Qadir said the World Bank funds will be used to help mitigate the impact on healthcare, social, and business sectors.

The virus first spread to Afghanistan as infected migrants returned from neighboring Iran, the region's worst-hit country.



Iranian Airline to Resume Tehran-Istanbul Flights

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran Air, the airline of the Islamic Republic of Iran, will resume flights between Tehran and Istanbul as of today, July 13, according to an official.

The head of Iran Air Public Relations Office, Hossein Jahani, said on Sunday that the airline will operate its first flight along the Tehran-Istanbul route on Monday after a four-month hiatus.

Iran Air is scheduled to operate two flights per week (Mondays and Fridays) from Tehran to Istanbul and vice versa, the official added.



Singapore Ruling Party Wins Poll But Support Falls

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore's ruling People's Action Party (PAP) has retained power in Friday's general election but with a reduced majority, final results show.

The PAP, in power since 1965, won 83 of 93 parliamentary seats or 61.2% of the vote - down from nearly 70% it had in the 2015 poll.

The opposition Workers' Party secured 10 seats - its best result.

The election was widely seen as a referendum on the government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

The small city state is one of only a handful of countries to have held a vote during the pandemic.

Strict safety measures were put in place, with voters wearing gloves and masks and given timed voting slots.

Singapore has been one of the worst hit countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with more than 45,000 cases.

As large-scale gatherings and events are deemed a high risk during the pandemic, only a few countries have gone ahead with national elections during the past months.

South Korea voted in April while Serbia went to the polls in late June. In both countries, voters returned the incumbent government to power.

The PAP victory now brings current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong yet another term in office.

The son of country's founding father and long-time ruler Lee Kuan Yew, Mr Lee has been in office since 2004 - but has indicated the forthcoming term will be his last.

The PAP's two-thirds majority gives him a virtually free hand in passing key bills, although the party leadership is expected to start some soul-searching with the diminished popular support.

Meanwhile, supporters of the Workers' Party have been celebrating on the streets, with honking horns and waving party flags.



"The results have surpassed the expectations even of some in the opposition," Loke Hoe Yeong, author of First Wave, a book on the history of the Singapore opposition, was quoted as saying by the AFP news agency.

This time round, the main issues in the election were the government's handling of the pandemic and the looming economic recession.

Singapore had initially been praised for keeping the virus in check until clusters in its migrant population dramatically drove up infection numbers.

In terms of per capita cases, Singapore now ranks among the world's worst affected countries although the death rate is low and almost all cases originate from within the foreign worker community living in dormitories.

Focus on Low-Performing Students Will Add \$6.3T To Turkish Economy

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey has seen good progress over the last decade, not just enrolling more students in education but also raising the learning standards of these students, said Andreas Schleicher, founder of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

"I am hopeful that Turkey will see further improvements in the years to come," he added.

Schleicher, who is head of education at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which runs PISA, said, the COVID-19 struck at a point when most education systems were simply not ready for the digital learning.

"If Turkey can address the needs of the lowest-performing students, that is to ensure that every 15-year-old achieves at least the most basic level on the international PISA test, that would add \$6.3 trillion to Turkey's economy over the working life of those students," he said.

Schleicher, a German-born statistician, and researcher in the field of education said according to the PISA data a little more than two-thirds of 15-year-old students in the OECD countries are in schools where digital devices have sufficient computing capacity.

With its headquarters in Paris, the OECD is an intergovernmental economic organization of 37 countries aimed to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

"And even in a technologically advanced country such as Japan, just 40% of 15-year-old students are in schools with adequate software for learning," said Schleicher.

On average across OECD countries, just about half of 15-year-olds are in schools with an effective online learning support platform.

"Two-thirds in schools where principals consider that their teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in instruction. And one in 10 students do not even have a place to study at home, not to speak about a computer," he added.

According to him, in some way, the state of technology in education mirrors the state of mind of the school systems.

"Our school systems were invented in the industrial age when the prevailing norms were standardization and compliance," he stressed.

He added the current education system, inherited from the industrial model of work, makes a change in a fast-moving world that is vulnerable to disruptions and crises.

"In a way, the changes in our societies have vastly outpaced the structural capacity of our current education systems to respond," he said.

He also noted even the best education minister can no longer do justice to the needs of millions of students, hundreds of thousands of teachers and tens of thousands of schools.

"At this moment of crisis, the challenge is to build on the expertise of teachers and school leaders and enlist them in the design of superior policies and practices," he said, adding that this requires innovators who challenge institutional structures that too often are built around the interests and habits of educators and administrators rather than learners.

Pointing out that technology can enhance and extend the reach of great teaching, but not replace poor teaching, he said education is not a transactional experience, but a relational phenomenon.

Safeguarding the Health, Rights of Women and Girls -Even During COVID-19

TEHRAN, 12 July 2020 (UNIC) – United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem in her statement on World Population Day, 11 July 2020, called for attention to the vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls during the COVID-19 crisis.



7 million unintended pregnancies.

On this World Population Day, we call attention to the vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls during the COVID-19 crisis, and why protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights and ending the shadow pandemic of gender-based violence is imperative, especially in these challenging times.

We are encouraged that so far 146 Member States have signed on to the Secretary-General's call to make peace in the home a reality, and we are partnering to support them. As part of our COVID-19 response, we are innovating to deliver remote services such as hotlines, telemedicine and counselling, and gathering and using disaggregated data to support governments in identifying and reaching those most in need.

Positive public messaging around gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes and harmful social norms can reduce the risk of violence. In this, men and boys can and must be key allies.

Sexual and reproductive health care is a right, and like pregnancies and childbirth, human rights don't stop for pandemics. Together, let's put the brakes on COVID-19 and safeguard the health and rights of women and girls – now!

No organization or country can do this alone. The pandemic is a stark reminder of the importance of global cooperation. The United Nations, which this year marks its 75th anniversary, was founded to foster international cooperation to solve international problems. As the global community comes together in solidarity to survive this pandemic, we lay the foundation for more resilient, gender-equal societies and a healthier, more prosperous future for all.

Tehran-Beijing...

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Elsewhere in his remarks, Vaezi touched upon Europe's stance on the Iran nuclear deal.

He said the three European countries seem to be interested in preserving the nuclear deal, but cannot live up to their obligations under the US pressure. He then weighed in on the reason for the Europeans' flip-flop on Iran. "What the Europeans have shown so far has not been based on any logic and principle and they have acted very hesitantly," he said.

"The Europeans are in such a situation because of their weakness in interacting with the U.S. – they failed to reach any principles in their relations with the U.S.," he said. "In my idea, the Europeans are waiting for the remaining months to the U.S. elections to pass, and they believe Trump will not win the election; hence, they are hopeful of the future, and this goes for Europe and many other countries which have problems with Trump's behaviour," he noted.

Over 220,000 Covid-19...

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"So far, around 1,972,207 COVID-19 diagnosis tests have been conducted in the country," the Health Ministry spokeswoman said.

According to the spokeswoman, the provinces of Khuzestan, Khorasan Razavi West Azerbaijan, and Mazandaran Provinces are in the red. The provinces of Tehran, Fars, Kerman, Alborz, Kohgiluyeh, and Boyer-Ahmad

Golestan, Boushehr, Hormozgan, and East Azerbaijan are on alert.

Meanwhile Director-General of Health Ministry's Public Health Laboratories said that Quantitatively Iran is capable of doing over 30,000 coronavirus diagnostic tests and is about to increase them as long as COVID-19 is colliding with flu. In response to question on Iran's laboratories diagnostic test capacities and the approved methods on Sunday, Siamak Samiei said there over 180 labs volunteer to offer services out of which 70 are private ones, some 80 to 90 belong to the Health Ministry and the rest run by armed forces and Science Ministry and others, conducting PCR tests.

170 labs have been given licenses after their equipment and immunity to conduct the tests were proven by Pasture Institute's medical research center and started their activities under medical universities' supervision, he said. Samiei referred to two methods for the diagnostic tests one of which was Molecular detection which is too expensive, requiring skilled staff.

U.S. Economy's...

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The U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell in an interview said that there were perceptible challenges in way of the economy. He said the outlook for the U.S. economy is "extraordinarily uncertain" and the success of the recovery effort will depend in large part on the country's ability to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

In Europe, macroeconomic indicators published about European states show that the condition in the continent almost has remained bad although the European Central Bank (ECB) has announced its plan to increase the emergency bond-buying program -- taking it to 1.35 trillion euros and this plan will continue till 2021. By the way, during this period the American securities by foreign country holders would have reached \$6.878 trillion. The Trump Administration's tax bill which was approved in 2017 is blamed as main factor for the rise in the government's debts. According to predictions, the bill in a 10-year span will increase the government's debts by 41.5 trillion.

Today the U.S. is more vulnerable than any other countries in facing the blown tire of its economy. 50 million unemployed people in the U.S. forms almost one-sixth of its total population and almost one-fourth of the total employed community of the country.

With this economy which is facing day by day the imminent closure of production factories and people's incapability in paying their banking debts and starvation and poverty which are shaping uprising on the pretext of racism and social gap, we will soon witness segregation of most states from the federative system of the U.S. rather than holding an election.

Leader...

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Ayatollah Khamenei, expressing satisfaction with the sensitivity of the 11th parliament to the issues of the revolution and the MPs' strive in formation of the presiding board and commissions, added that the four-year term for representation is a good opportunity to pave the way for the country's general movement and have a great impact on the process of resolving Iran's problems and progress and future.

In another part of his remarks, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution likened the country's many economic problems to a "disease" and at the same time underscored that due to its strong strength and defense power, the country can undoubtedly overcome this disease, as the enemies acknowledge today that despite the toughest sanctions and all-out pressure, they have not been able to achieve their anti-Iranian goals.

Ayatollah Khamenei termed "inflation, the devaluation of the national currency, irrational expensiveness, problems of manufacturing companies and the problems caused by sanctions" as issues that have made life difficult, especially for the lower and middle classes.

Explaining some of the country's capabilities, Ayatollah Khamenei added that creating thousands of knowledge-based companies, implementing hundreds of infrastructure projects, continuous exploitation of new projects, astonishing progress in the military industry and admirable successes in space issues are the results of using part of the country's very strong and extensive capacities.

The Leader of the Revolution described the spiritual capacities of the nation, which are rooted in the religious and revolutionary faith of the people, as complementary to the many natural, geographical and historical capacities and added that spiritual capacities should be considered and used as a very important factor.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred to "the timely and dedicated presence of the people in the face of the first wave of Corona", "the nation's very valuable services in the movement of Pious Help Movement to weak families" and "the glorious and dazzling presence of the people in the funeral procession of General Soleimani" as examples of the Iranian nation's deep spiritual capacity

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According to PMO head, loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19). Mohammad Rastad has announced that the entrance of ocean vessels to the ports of the country increased eight percent in the previous year.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play some significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Famed India Cricket Stadium to Be Used for Coronavirus Quarantine

KOLKATA (AFP) - Kolkata's legendary Eden Gardens cricket stadium is to be used as a quarantine centre for Indian police who have the coronavirus, officials said Saturday.

With the city's hospitals under growing pressure, hundreds of beds are to be set up in the 80,000 capacity stadium that was used for the 1987 World Cup final.

Nearly 550 Kolkata police have tested positive for the coronavirus and two have died.

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No Player Parties at Berlin Tournament

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Organizers of a Berlin exhibition tennis tournament aimed a thinly-disguised jibe at Novak Djokovic and Alexander Zverev on Saturday by declaring: "There'll be no player parties here."

Germany's world number seven Zverev was due to be one of the headline acts in Berlin but pulled out last week. He had played in Djokovic's ill-fated Adria Tour event in the Balkans which saw the world number one, as well as fellow players Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki all test positive for coronavirus.

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SPORTS

MONDAY JULY 13, 2020

Liverpool's Record Bid Hit by Burnley Draw, Norwich Relegated

LONDON (AFP) - Liverpool's bid to set a new Premier League points record was rocked by a 1-1 draw against Burnley, while Norwich were relegated as Michail Antonio's four-goal blitz fired West Ham to a thumping win on Saturday.

Jürgen Klopp's side are chasing the record total of 100 points set by Manchester City in 2018, but the champions have no margin for error after being held at Anfield for the first time this season.

They have 93 points and need to win their remaining three matches against Arsenal, Chelsea and Newcastle to break City's record.

They would tie the 100-point mark if they win two and draw one of those matches.

Liverpool took the lead when Andrew Robertson met Fabinho's lofted pass with a powerful header in the 34th minute.

But they wasted chances to increase their lead, with Roberto Firmino hitting the post before Curtis Jones and Mohamed Salah fired wide.

They were made to pay for those misses in the 69th minute.

Liverpool were unhinged by a long free-kick into their area as James Tarkowski's header found Jay Rodriguez, who drilled a superb low strike past Alisson Becker.

Johann Berg Gudmundsson almost won it for Burnley when he hit the bar in the final minutes.

It was the first time Liverpool had failed to win a home league game since January 2019.

At Carrow Road, a seventh successive league defeat condemned Norwich to relegation as Antonio's ruthless display boosted West Ham's own survival bid after a 4-0 victory.

Daniel Farke's side are 13 points from safety with only three games left, meaning they are certain to make an immediate return to the Championship after last season's promotion campaign.

The Canaries have set an unwanted



record with a fifth Premier League relegation after going down on four previous occasions in 1995, 2005, 2014 and 2016.

Meanwhile Raheem Sterling struck a hat-trick as Manchester City crushed Brighton 5-0 at the AmEx Stadium in the Premier League on Saturday.

Second-placed City had lost their previous three away games but never looked likely to extend that streak against a Brighton side that struggled from the outset.

Sterling, who has now netted 27 goals in all competitions, opened the scoring in the 21st minute when he collected a nod-down from Gabriel Jesus outside the box and superbly drove it into the bottom corner. Jesus made it 2-0 just before the break, turning in from close range after Rodri had headed a corner goalwards.

City took total charge in the second half, with Kevin De Bruyne striking the post in the 51st minute and two minutes later Sterling heading in a fine curling cross from Riyad Mahrez.

Bernardo Silva made it four and then Sterling bundled in the fifth in the 81st minute, the ball bouncing in off his head after he had fallen to the floor.

The result ensures that City, on 72 points, will finish in the runners-up spot, although they will have to wait for the decision from the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) on Monday to find out if they will be able to compete in next season's Champions League.

City have been banned from European competition for two years by UEFA but appealed to CAS in a bid to overturn the decision.

"We've qualified for the Champions League which was the minimum requirement for this club. We won it on the pitch and hopefully on Monday UEFA will allow these players to play next season. They deserve to be in the Champions League," said City manager Pep Guardiola.

Ganguly Confirms Australia Tour



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's cricket chief Sourav Ganguly Saturday said the national team will tour Australia in December but called for a shortened quarantine period for the players.

Australia has checked the spread of the coronavirus except in Melbourne, its second-biggest city, which has witnessed a recent surge in cases.

"Ya, ya, we have confirmed that tour. In December we will be coming. We just hope the number of quarantine days get reduced a bit, Ganguly told TV channel India Today.

"Because we don't want the players to go all that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks. It is very, very depressing and disappointing."

"And, as I said Australia and New Zealand have been in good position except Melbourne. So from that point of view we will be going there and hopefully the quarantine days will be less and we can get back to cricket."

By Friday, Australia, a nation of 25 million, had recorded just more than 9,000 COVID-19 cases, 106 of them fatal.

Renault Chose Alonso Over Vettel

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Renault signed Fernando Alonso rather than Sebastian Vettel to succeed McLaren-bound Daniel Ricciardo next year because his level of motivation was more convincing, Alain Prost said Saturday.

The four-time world champion, who is an advisor to the French team, said Renault also considered signing Valtteri Bottas, currently with Mercedes, but preferred Alonso, who will be 40 next year, for the same reasons.

"There were three great champions -- Fernando Alonso, Sebastian Vettel and Valtteri Bottas," he explained.

"It was a little less obvious for Sebastian, in the sense that his motivation was not very clear. It was also difficult for Valtteri in that he has the best car.

"We wanted someone who is not a replacement option, but someone who is fully motivated for the project."

Both Alonso, who is leaving Ferrari at the end of this year, and Bottas, who won last weekend's season-opening Austrian Grand Prix for Mercedes, are currently under contract with top Formula One teams while Alonso has no ties.

Prost said he had talked to Alonso regarding concerns about his age and his motivation, notably in relation to widespread reports of his negative attitude during his final period with McLaren before he left in 2018.

"Yes, that is a subject that I raised with him," Prost told RMC Sport.

"Frankly, this is the risky side, but he talks about it openly.

"He says that he has changed a lot and that his sabbatical years have matured him. In a way, he knows that he has no right to disappoint on this level."

Prost also rejected suggestions that Renault had signed Alonso for marketing objectives, rather than his racing talent -- which brought him two titles, in 2005 and 2006, when he was previously with the team.

Prost admitted money was a factor, but added: "Making a choice only for marketing would be a mistake, but all the manufacturers in F1 want to reduce costs.



pole position for the Styrian Grand Prix.

The Mercedes driver, who struggled in practice on Friday, bounced back to his best with a fastest lap in one minute and 19.273 seconds, outpacing nearest rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull by a stunning 1.2 seconds.

His performance confirmed his enduring class on a day when heavy rainstorms had delayed the session by 45 minutes and forced the cancellation of third practice.

It was his third pole success at the Red Bull Ring circuit, the 89th of his career and confirmed his reputation as a great driver in the wettest conditions.

Hamilton Storms to Styrian Grand Prix Pole

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Defending six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton delivered one of his greatest qualifying performances in treacherous rain-swept conditions when he stormed to

"What a tricky day," said Hamilton.

"It was so difficult for all of us with this weather and some of the time you can't see where you are going, but I loved it -- though I did have a big aquaplane and had my heart in my mouth."

Ferrari-bound Carlos Sainz was third for McLaren ahead of Valtteri Bottas, winner of last Sunday's season-opening Austrian Grand Prix at the same circuit, in the second Mercedes, Esteban Ocon of Renault and Lando Norris in the second McLaren.

Norris, however, will drop three places on the grid after taking a penalty on Friday for ignoring yellow flags in opening practice.

That will elevate Alex Albon, who was seventh in the second Red Bull, Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri and Daniel Ricciardo, ninth in the second Renault, but leave Sebastian Vettel 10th in the leading Ferrari on another difficult day for the Italian team.

His team-mate Charles Leclerc qualified 11th.

Ronaldo's Penalty Double Edges Juve Closer to Title

MILAN (AFP) - Cristiano Ronaldo scored two penalties as Juventus snatched a dramatic 2-2 draw against Atalanta on Saturday to take a massive step towards a ninth straight Serie A title.

Lazio's 2-1 loss to Sassuolo earlier in the day gave Atalanta, on an 11-match winning streak heading into the game, the chance to move second and cut the gap to Juve to six points.

But despite trailing twice and being outplayed for long periods, Maurizio Sarri's Juventus moved eight points clear at the top with six matches remaining as Ronaldo took his tally to 28 league goals this season.

It was an ultimately frustrating outing for Atalanta who stay third, nine points off the pace.

Juve started brightly but it did not take long for the visitors to take control and start to dominate possession. Josip Illicic fired the first real chance of the game wide, but Atalanta grabbed the lead in the 16th minute, scoring for the 25th consecutive match in all competitions.

Papu Gomez was the creator, wriggling free in midfield before exchanging passes with Duvan Zapata before sliding the ball back for the Colombian to drill home his 15th league goal of the campaign.

The goal made Atalanta the first Serie A club in almost 70 years to have three players score 15 times in a league season, with Zapata joining Illicic and Luis Muriel in reaching the mark.



Messi Tees Up Barcelona Victory At Valladolid

MADRID (AFP) - Lionel Messi made it 20 assists for the season in Barcelona's stodgy 1-0 win over Real Valladolid on Saturday, even as his team's La Liga challenge appears almost over.

Messi teed up Arturo Vidal's winner at Jose Zorilla to become the first player to provide 20 assists in Spain's top flight since Xavi Hernandez in 2009.

Victory for Barca means Real Madrid cannot clinch the title on Monday by beating Granada but only an incredible collapse will prevent them putting their name on the trophy later in the week.

If they beat Granada, Madrid will win La Liga by prevailing at home to Villarreal on Thursday, regardless of Barcelona's results. Overall, Madrid need only five points from their remaining three matches to secure their third La Liga title in eight years.

"We are doing things that deserve more than where we are," said Barca coach Quique Setien.

"To win La Liga, I don't know, because our rival is winning everything."

Yet even as Barca's turbulent domestic campaign draws to a close, Messi continues to shine. His delightful pass for Vidal in the 15th minute, a scoop between two Valladolid defenders, triggered more remarkable milestones.

As well as matching the best La Liga total for assists by one player in the last 11 years, Messi extends his own career-best number of assists in a single league season.

