

Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Tuesday That Some 179 More Iranians Have Died From Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing the Total Deaths to 13,211

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araqchi Is Scheduled to Lead a Delegation to Kabul Today For Talks on a Comprehensive Document on Iran-Afghanistan Strategic Cooperation


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CIA Spy Executed, Another Agent of U.S. On Death Row

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Judiciary spokesman says the Judiciary has executed a former employee of the Defense Ministry convicted of spying for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and that another agent of American and Israeli spy services is now on death row.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Gholam-Hossein Esmacili announced that Reza Asgari, who had retired from the Defense Ministry's Aerospace Industries Organization four years ago, was executed last week.

In the final years of his service, Asgari had established links with CIA and received money from the US spy agency in exchange for information about Iran's missile program, he added.

"He was identified, convicted and sentenced to death," Esmacili said.

The Judiciary spokesman was also asked about the case of Mahmoud Mousavi-Majid, who has been sentenced to death for spying on Iranian military advisers in Syria on behalf of CIA and Mossad. The death penalty, he said, is yet to be carried out.

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Iran Drops India From Chabahar Railway Project



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Iran is now going to start the construction of a rail line from its Chabahar port to Zahedan on its own, saying that India had delayed the project's funding and other works even as the agreement between the two governments was signed four years ago.

According to a The Hindu report, the project is expected to complete in less than two years by March 2022 as the Iranian Railways is going to work without Indian assistance. The cost of the project is estimated at approximately \$400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund.

The Hindu report says the development comes as China finalizes a massive 25-year, \$400 billion strategic partnership deal with Iran, which could cloud India's plans.

Four years after India and Iran signed an agreement to construct a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan, the Iranian government has decided to proceed with the construction on its own, citing delays from the Indian side in funding and starting the project.

Last week, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami inaugurated the track-laying process for the 628 km Chabahar-Zahedan line, which will be extended to Zaranj across the border in Afghanistan. Officials told The Hindu that the entire project would be completed by March 2022, and that Iranian Railways will proceed without India's assistance, using approximately \$400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund.

The railway project, which was being discussed between the Iranian Railways and the state-owned Indian Railways Construction Ltd (IRCON), was meant to be part of India's commitment to the trilateral agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan to build an alternate trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

In May 2016, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tehran to sign the Chabahar agreement with Iranian President Rouhani and Afghanistan President Ghani, IRCON had signed an MoU with the Iranian Rail Ministry.

The MoU was to construct the Chabahar-Zahedan railway as "part of transit and transportation corridor in trilateral agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan". IRCON had promised to provide all services, superstructure work and financing for the project (around \$1.6 billion).

However, despite several site visits by IRCON engineers, and preparations by Iranian railways, India never began the work, ostensibly due to worries that these could attract U.S. sanctions. The U.S. had provided a sanctions waiver for the Chabahar port and the rail line to Zahedan, but it has been difficult to find equipment suppliers and partners due to worries they could be targeted by the U.S., said officials. India has already "zeroed out" its oil imports from Iran due to U.S. sanctions.

Indian Ministry of External Affairs and IRCON declined to comment on the issue.

However, when asked if the MoU with IRCON had been cancelled, now that the project has been started without it, an official said India could still join at a "later date." Meanwhile, complicating matters further, Iran and China are close to finalizing a 25-year Strategic Partnership which will include Chinese involvement in Chabahar's duty free zone, an oil refinery nearby, and possibly a larger role in Chabahar port as well.

According to leaked versions of the 18-page "Comprehensive Plan for Cooperation between Iran and China", being finalized by officials in Tehran and Beijing, the cooperation will extend from investments in infrastructure, manufacturing and upgrading energy and transport facilities, to refurbishing ports, refineries and other installations, and will commit Iranian oil and gas supplies to China during that period.

Iranian officials denied a report that also suggested Chabahar port, where India took, will be leased to China. However, Iran proposed a tie-up between the Chinese-run Pakistani port at Gwadar and Chabahar last year, and has offered interests to China in the Bandar-e-Jask port 350km away from Chabahar, as well as in the Chabahar duty free zone.

Each of those possibilities should be watched closely by New Delhi, said former Ambassador to Iran, K.C. Singh. "[The Iran-China deal] impinges on India's "strategic ties" with Iran and the use of Chabahar port. Jask lies to west of Chabahar & right before Straits of Hormuz. China would thus extend its control along the Pakistan-Iran coast," he cautioned.

Leader's Statements; Roadmap for Synergy, Cooperation Among Branches

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani admired Leader's wise statements that outlined the roadmap for the three branches' cooperation and synergy, stressing the need for cooperation, empathy, and efforts of the three branches of government to solve economic problems and improve people's living conditions.

Speaking on Tuesday at the meeting of Supreme Council for Economic Coordination, Hassan Rouhani stated that the council was formed after the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the imposition of oppressive sanctions against the Iranian nation and economic war.

He said, "In the meeting, the Leader of the Revolution stressed the need for readiness and coordination of all bodies for confronting the enemy's economic war, stating that the commander of this war should be the president and other branches should work alongside the government."

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

India-China Border Dispute Seeks Mediation

The border dispute between India and China has undoubtedly been hazardous especially for Asia and carrying a hidden secret. That some seditionists have been trying to make both states busy with the dispute is not unlikely as they have spread rumors that India is to block the route for oil imports for China and with this plan are cooking something in the region.

If we look at it from distance, we see hands of Zionist regime upon the order of the U.S. sedition coming out of the sleeve. China's oil imports in the heat of the Coronavirus pandemic was a key factor in support of OPEC oil prices. China's oil imports in March and April were almost fixed and stable figures. These imports supported global demands for oil in the condition that most countries were experiencing lockdowns. Then in May, China set a record of 11.34m bpd of crude oil imports. Some parts of these imports were economical for China because of accelerating its economic activities and actually because of very low oil prices in the market in April. So these two factors encouraged China to store more oil. Any rupture in China's oil imports will mean rupture in revival of oil prices.

Some oil market analysts like experts in OilX Research Company believe that China's crude oil imports hit a record high of 11.93 million bpd—an increase of 820,000 bpd from May levels. OilX analysts attribute this increase in June to the restart of its economy, along with favorable crude oil prices and spreads.

According to the oil news website Oil Price, in a condition that it is said China was nearly out of space in early June to hold all the oil, it is unknown how much of oil the biggest oil importer is to purchase oil in the upcoming months. If the Strait of Malacca is blocked by India under the pretext of border dispute and political restraint, the oil prices may start an uptrend course, and the trend for revival of global demands for oil after the COVID-19 crisis may delay more.

Threats for blocking the oil transportation routes are of course nothing new but such threats had not happened seriously and publicly before by one of the world's oil consumers, India, for closing the route for imports of oil by China which is one of the major world oil consumers. India is aware of this issue more than any other country and grappling with this phenomenon that China's oil import is one of the factors which has supported boosting the oil prices in the market in the current recession condition.

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UN Report on Lt. Gen Soliemani Arouses U.S. Wrath

TEHRAN (MNA) – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the UN rapporteur report which described the assassination of Lieutenant General Soleimani as "unlawful" move by the U.S. has provoked America's wrath.

Zarif informed that immediately after the assassination of Lt. Gen. Soleimani on January 3, the Iranian foreign ministry started taking legal and political measures to prove the world that the U.S. assassination of the IRGC commander has been an illegal and terrorist act.

Iran followed up the case at UN offices in Geneva and New York, he added while speaking to reporters on the sideline of his visit to the Parliament on Tuesday.

The country's efforts have ended in the recent report of the UN, which is proof for Iran's right and has provoked the US wrath, Zarif expressed content.

On July 11, the UN Special Rapporteur said that the U.S. has distorted the principle of sovereignty as it has failed to provide sufficient evidence of an attack against its interests to justify the assassination of Gen. Soleimani.

It is not possible to target a high-ranking official in another country in this way, UN human rights investigator Agnes Callamard said in an interview with Al Mayadeen.

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EU Vows to Do Everything Possible to Preserve JCPOA

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union (EU) has pledged "to do everything possible" to preserve the landmark nuclear deal signed between Iran and originally six major world powers in 2015.

Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, issued a statement on Tuesday, concurrent with the fifth anniversary of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), describing it as "a historic multilateral achievement for global nuclear non-proliferation."

"The JCPOA remains the only tool to provide the international community with the necessary assurances regarding Iran's nuclear program... The full implementation of the JCPOA by all sides remains crucial," Borrell said.

The deal was reached between Iran and a group of countries then known as the P5+1 — which included the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany — on July 14, 2015. However, in May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of the JCPOA and re-imposed the sanctions that had been lifted under the deal.

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President Felicitates on Bastille Day

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – President Hassan Rouhani called for efforts to exploit the political and economic potential for closer ties and “deeper friendship” with France.

In a message for his French counterpart on Saturday, Rouhani congratulated France’s government and nation on the Bastille Day, the national day of France which is celebrated on July 14.

In the congratulatory message for Emmanuel Macron, the Iranian president expressed hope that relations between Iran and France would grow in light of mutual understanding and joint efforts.

Iran Working Towards Restoration Of Peace in Yemen

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has discussed the latest developments in the region and in Yemen with Hisham Sharaf Abdullah, the foreign minister of the Yemeni National Salvation Government.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has always believed that the only way to resolve the Yemen crisis is through political means, and has had constructive cooperation with relevant Yemeni and international sides to propose a peace plan for Yemen,” said Zarif in the meeting held via videoconference.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the conviction that the only way to establish stability in Yemen is to maintain its territorial integrity, unity among Yemeni groups and holding comprehensive political talks among different groups and parties to establish a united and broad-based government because Yemen belongs to all Yemeni groups,” said the top Iranian diplomat.



Zarif dismissed as unacceptable the ongoing aggression and unfair blockade against Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition as well as the seizure of ships carrying food and fuel amid the coronavirus pandemic.

“Despite restrictions and obstructive moves, the Islamic Republic of Iran keeps adopting the necessary measures to send humanitarian aid to stem the spread of coronavirus, and as before, will try its utmost to advance the Yemen peace process in a bid to see the blockade lifted, a ceasefire put in place and political talks resumed as part of numerous regional and international consultations,” he said.

The top Yemeni diplomat, in turn, expressed his gratitude to Iran for its political support and humanitarian assistance to Yemeni people. He presented a report to Zarif on the latest political situation in Yemen and the prospects of the Yemeni crisis. He said Yemen will make every effort to realize peace and tackle the human problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tehran Stresses Peaceful Settlement of Azeri-Armenian Dispute Over Karabakh

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry spokesman says the country’s position on the Karabakh region has not changed and still wants both sides to use peaceful means to resolve their dispute.

“Our stance on the Karabakh region between Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic has not changed at all,” said Seyed Abbas Mousavi on Monday.

The spokesman emphasized the need to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries and use peaceful means to iron out differences.

“We believe these two neighboring countries should resolve their difference peacefully, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has always announced its readiness to help settle this row,” he said.

Meanwhile, Mahmoud Vaezi, the chief of staff of the Iranian president, got on the phone with Azeri Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev to express condolences over the deaths of a number of Azeri soldiers killed in a firefight on the Azeri-Armenian border.

Vaezi said Iran’s strategy is that the territorial integrity of all countries, including the Azerbaijan Republic, should be protected.

“Iran has always stressed the need to settle issues and difference through political means and dialogue, and we hope the problems that have emerged will be solved without resort to force,” he said.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a territorial and ethnic conflict between Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts. The conflict escalated into a full-scale war in the early 1990s.

A ceasefire signed in 1994 provided for two decades of relative stability. A four-day escalation in April 2016 became the deadliest ceasefire violation to date.

Iran Urges (P)GCC Chief to Stop Blame Game, Focus on Ending Yemen War

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign ministry spokesman has denounced “unfounded” anti-Iran accusations levelled by the Secretary General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council about Yemen.

In a statement on Tuesday, Seyed Abbas Mousavi dismissed as a blame game the unfounded allegations made by Secretary General of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) Nayef Al-Hajraf.

“We recommend the new PGCC secretary general focuses his attention on the need to stop attacks by the [Saudi-led] coalition aggressors against Yemeni women and children and help settle the Yemen crisis through intra-Yemeni talks rather than pursuing the blame game trend and levelling groundless accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is in line with the destructive



role of some PGCC members,” said the spokesman.

“On behalf of the U.S. and the Zionist regime of Israel, some PGCC members have, against the will of Arab and Muslim nations in the region, sealed their lips, in an intimidating atmosphere, in the face of issues and main threats to

the Muslim world and the oppressed Palestinian nation,” he said.

“Those PGCC members are pressing ahead with their violent bombardments of the resistant and patient Yemeni people and their unjust blockade of the country and preventing food, fuel and medicine needed to combat coronavirus from reaching the country,” he added.

“The Saudis and resigned Hadi administration’s stance on the initiative proposed by the UN secretary general to stop conflicts across the world, including in Yemen, indicate the hypocritical position of these aggressors, who, despite claiming to be observing a ceasefire, push ahead with their fierce bombardments, and while rejecting the Yemen peace plan floated by the UN chief, still insist on trying to settle the crisis militarily, and seek to blame others in order to deflect the world’s attention from their acts of aggression,” he said.

JCPOA Discredits Propaganda Against Iran’s Peaceful Nuclear Program



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Government Spokesman said that Iran proved through the JCPOA that the enemies’ propaganda against its peaceful nuclear program is discredited.

In his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Ali Rabiei remarked the anniversary of the conclusion of Iran’s international nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and stressed that the U.S. is not reliable to be a part of an agreement.

“Due to withdrawal from the JCPOA, the agreement lost its functionality because of Trump’s administration,” Rabiei said, adding that the U.S. deprived the Iranians of the benefits of the JCPOA, and damaged also itself.

He addressed the country’s economic problems and said that people are coping sanctions, US bullying, economic problems, and the Coronavirus which will be passed over by mutual understanding and synergy.

The spokesman said the government is at the forefront of solving the country’s problems, inviting other agencies to cooperate to solve the problems.

Tehran Ready to Create Customs “Green Corridor” With Moscow

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iran’s Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali said on Tuesday that Iran is ready to create customs “Green Corridor” with Russia in the pandemic occasion when many international activities have been brought to lock down.

Jalali released the news through a video-conference with Russian officials at Federal Customs Service including Vladimir Vladimirovich Ivin, Deputy Head of the Customs.

To have multilateral cooperation with Eurasian Economic Union in the framework of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s initiative to create the customs “Green Corridor” in coronavirus and post-coronavirus periods is among the main agenda of development of economic relations, the ambassador said.

During the talks, the two sides exchanged views about fostering Customs cooperation and solving some problems for the Iranian lorry drivers.

The two sides stressed the need to have constant contact.

Russia suggested considering President Putin’s initiative to create “green corridors” for delivery of essential goods that would be unimpeded by sanctions and trade wars, news agency “TASS” quoted Russia’s Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) envoy Alexander Lukashevich as saying in late April.

Putin talked of the initiative at the emergency summit of G20 group last March.



Boosting Defense Diplomacy a Top Priority

TEHRAN (MNA) – Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami said bolstering the defense diplomacy and increasing amicable military ties with friendly countries are high on his ministry’s agenda, according to an Iranian Parliament member.

Brigadier General Hatami attended a session of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission on Tuesday to discuss with the lawmakers the latest defense developments and achievements.

The spokesman for the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, Abolfazl Amouei, quoted the defense minister as saying, “Bolstering the defense diplomacy

and increasing amicable military ties with friendly countries are high on his ministry’s agenda.”

“Maintaining high deterrence power is among the main strategies of the Iranian armed forces,” General Hatami added.

The defense minister also elaborated on the latest achievements in the defense sector, including missiles, drones and naval carriers.

The National Security and Foreign Policy Commission members, at the end of the session, stressed the need for constant efforts for boosting deterrence power as one of the main pillars of the country’s progress.

Iran’s Human Medicine Production Volume Hits 39% Growth

TEHRAN (MNA) – Statistics of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade showed that human medicine production volume hit a 39.1 percent growth.

Some 48.7 billion human medicines were produced since the outset of the current administration up to the last year (from March 21, 2013 to March 20, 2020).

In this period, most of selected industrial products registered a growth in a way that car tire production volume hit a 6.5 percent growth since March 21, 2013 up to March 20, 2020.

In the field of production of detergents, statistics showed that production of detergent registered a 16.9 percent decline in a way that production of detergent hit from 730,000 tons in 2013 to 606,000 tons in 2018.

No Agreement Can Survive By One Party Commitment

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran’s Ambassador to France Bahram Qasemi said in his twitter post to mark the fifth anniversary of signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Tuesday that no agreement or relationship can survive by one party commitment.

If Iran’s partners in the 2015 nuclear deal cannot be loyal to their commitments, Iran cannot remain one party loyal to it, Qasemi said through a Twitter post on the fifth anniversary of signing the landmark deal on July 14.

Iran and the six world powers- U.S., UK, France, Russia, China and Germany- reached a nuclear agreement, aka Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on July 14, 2015, after 13 years of intensive diplomatic talks. The US is no longer the participant in the deal as it withdrew unilaterally from the agreement on May 8, 2018.

The ambassador wrote that the United States has never been and is not trustworthy for implementation of agreements. Since the beginning of implementation of the JCPOA, the U.S. was not responsible for being faithful to its commitments, the ambassador noted adding that the United States started creating obstacles when Iran honored its commitments in good faith.

The U.S. President Donald Trump left the deal unilaterally while his move was against the International Law, Qasemi said. Meanwhile, the Europeans criticized the US and encouraged Iran to continue its presence in the JCPOA and proposed a financial mechanism for trade exchange, the ambassador wrote.

He further described the JCPOA as a turning point in the international agreements, while as he said there is no hope that the greedy US will come back to this multilateral deal. At the end of his remarks, Qasemi called on all members of the July 2015 nuclear deal and other world countries to be vigilant against the U.S. dangerous measures.

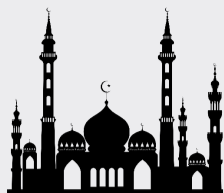
New Bans Enforced in Tehran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The governor of Tehran Province introduced new restrictions and bans in the country’s most populous province after a worrying rise in the novel coronavirus infections and death toll.

Anushirvan Mohseni Bandpay said the weeklong restrictions, imposed in coordination with the Coronavirus Fight Headquarters, would result in the closure of certain businesses and activities.

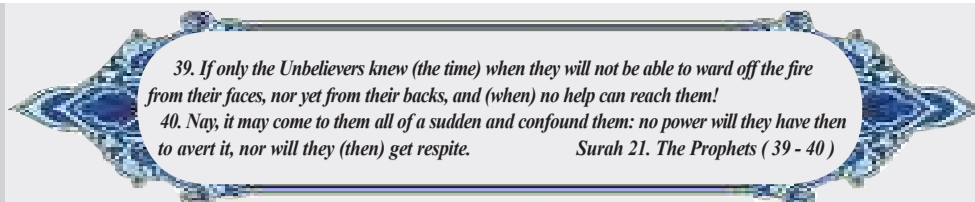
According to the new decision, all universities, schools, boarding schools, seminaries, technical and vocational schools, language teaching and other educational institutes, libraries, theaters, museums, garden museums, ceremony halls, women’s barbershops, beauty salons, mosques and musallas will be closed for one week.

The forced closures also apply to the gyms, cafeterias, coffee shops, teahouses, zoos, amusement parks, water parks, indoor swimming pools, and fitness centers. The provincial governor also declared a ban on all social, cultural and religious gatherings as well as conferences in order to deal with the new wave of coronavirus in Tehran Province.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:41
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:18
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:01



Envoy Lauds Tehran-Vienna Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Austrian Envoy to Tehran Stefan Scholz said Austria has significant cooperation with Iran, adding what makes these relations specific and is regarded as a basis of cooperation is mutual and predictable confidence with regard to reactions and activities.

Stefan Scholz made the remarks addressing the ceremony for signing international MoU between Tehran Municipality and Austrian diplomatic mission on social and cultural issues.

He said that over 700 years from Iran-Austria written interaction, 160 years from diplomatic ties at its highest level, and 60 years from establishing a cultural department in the Austrian embassy have passed.

He said that the mayor of Vienna was among the first Western officials who visited Iran after signing the Iran nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

During his visit, both sides signed MoU on cultural cooperation, he noted.

He also referred to a recent phone conversation between the mayors of Tehran and Vienna and said that they underlined developing cooperation in cultural, sports, music, and scientific fields.

As a result of this cooperation, two rescue teams from Iranian Red Crescent were deployed to Austria, he said adding that Iran-Austria cooperation in this field indicates the depth of confidence between two sides.



He pointed to Iran-Austria's joint project on waste, saying based on the agreement Austria should write the plan for Iran's wastes.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Austrian diplomat referred to the continuation of coronavirus in the world, saying intelligent strategies like using open spaces for implementing civil projects by observing social distancing.

Holding concerts or screening movies in open spaces are among these programs.

Stressing Iran's progress in producing antibodies for fighting coronavirus, Scholz said Austria is interested in having the results of these studies.

He said that Iran is a pioneer in biotechnology and nanotechnology fields in the world and Austria is ready to cooperate with Iran.

Meanwhile, Cultural Deputy of the Austrian Embassy in Tehran Alexander Rieger said thanks to the outbreak of coronavirus, European film week will be held online.

He added that holding the Iranian-European peace concert will be postponed to next year.

Vice mayor of Tehran for social and cultural affairs Mohammad Reza Javadi Yeganeh, for his part, said sports, ecotourism, and mountain are among areas for which both sides can have cooperation.

He expressed hope for developing cooperation between Tehran and Vienna municipalities in cultural, art, social, and sports fields.

Soraya Springs Railway to Turn Aras Zone Into a Mega Logistic Port

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The managing director of Aras Free Zone says after efforts of Aras Free Zone regarding the construction of Soraya Springs Railway, officials of Iran and Turkey are to visit the location of connection between railways of Iran and Turkey for preparing the final report.



According to the public relations of the zone, Mr. Mohsen Nariman said that during the 72nd meeting of workgroup on evaluation and approval of projects in the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the issue of transfer of Iran-Turkey railways through Soraya Springs route was discussed and it was decided the place of connection between two railways and reasons for its implementation to be reviewed thoroughly and after the visit of officials of Iran and Turkey, and then the final report returns to the workgroup.

Nariman added that the feasibility study will be carried out for construction of Jolfa-Soraya Springs railway with double transit track, and in the first stage, one track with capacity of transiting some 10m tons of goods will start operation and at the same time, Turkey is to expand its railway from Kars to Diloji which is exactly on the opposite side of Soraya Springs. And immediately after completion of this 147-kilometer track, Iran's railway connection to Europe will be possible, he noted. He added with construction of this railway, Aras Free Zone will turn into a mega-port and a big logistic hub in the region.

He went on to say that the length of this railway is 28 kilometers, noting that according to the agreement between Aras and Maku free zones, Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) and Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the Maku Free Trade Zone with approval of Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran is in charge of all operations of launching the Jolfa-Soraya Springs Railways, like design of the project till it's coming on stream.

Iranian Banks on Way to Join Russian Mir Network



TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran is considering the protocol to connect to Russian Mir network," the Director General for Europe-U.S. Office of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization of Iran Behrouz Olfat said.

The Iranian official said that during the sanctions, Iran's banking relations with Russia were better compared to other countries in the world.

"For this reason, the Central Bank of Iran and other banks are pursuing the connection of Iranian bank cards to the Russian banking network."

He added that one way is to connect Iranian bank cards to Russia's Mir network, which can greatly facilitate financial exchanges, especially in the tourism industry.

Mir is a national payment system established by the Central Bank of Russia by the law adopted on May 1, 2017. It is currently accepted mostly by Russia-based companies, such as Aeroflot or Russian Railways, though it is gradually becoming popular among foreign companies with Russian operations.

Referring to the Russian financial messenger network, known as Russian SWIFT, Behrouz Olfat confirmed that connecting to Russian SWIFT is actually a protocol that defines certain contracts; adding "Therefore, connection to this mechanism has been on the agenda of commercial banks and Iran's central bank, which, of course, has not been finalized yet."

According to the Central Bank's Monetary and Banking Research Institute, the Russian president's assistant has announced the connection of Iran's electronic financial messaging system to the Russian financial messaging network to eliminate the effects of sanctions on trade between the two countries and banking cooperation.

Iran Obtains Know-How to Produce Raw Material for Remdesivir

TEHRAN (MNA) - An official with the Health Ministry said that Iranian knowledge-based companies have been able to produce raw material needed in manufacturing 'Remdesivir' medicine.

The Director-General of Research and Technology Development Office of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Hossein Vatanpour, made the remarks on Tue. in an interview with Mehr news agency and added, "Iranian knowledge-based companies have been successful in producing raw material and the final product of Remdesivir."

The Ministry of Health and Medical Education is waiting for the results of the clinical trial to kick start the mass production of the medicine, he said.

"Favipiravir" and "Remdesivir" are among the drugs raised for the treatment of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, he said, adding, "we have announced that the Ministry of Health will support knowledge-based companies for producing these two drugs."

When feasibility studies and research works start for production of medicine, it takes six months for producing the drug, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Vatanpour added, "presently, some knowledge-based companies have gained salient achievements and progress in producing the raw material of the medicine, so that we are waiting the results of trials conducted in Iran and world."

Gas Network Enjoys Modern Equipment

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The director for coordinating operation of the National Iranian Gas Transmission Company (NIGTC) says the national gas transmission network enjoys the most modern and update measuring instruments and equipment, Shana reported.

Describing the activities of his department at the NIGTC, Majid Mosadeqi also underlined the significance of the projects for elevating the precision of the measuring systems in order to prevent gas losses.

Operating a gas network of about 37,500 kilometers equipped with 317 turbo compressors in 86 pressure boosting stations, which transmits 800 million cubic meters of gas per day, NIGTC is among the largest companies of its kind in the world.

After the re-imposition of sanctions on Iran, the Iranian National Gas Company (NIGC) and its subsidiaries have been putting indigenizing knowledge of producing their required parts and equipment atop agenda.

Last year, the head of NIGTC announced that Iranian experts have achieved the know-how for producing vibration monitoring and protection systems for gas transmission lines.

According to Saeed Tavakoli, the domestically-made systems would be 20 more cost-efficient than foreign samples.

104 New Iranian Inventions Patented With Int'l Offices

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's National Elites Foundation announced on Monday that 104 new Iranian inventions were registered at the international bodies.

Patent Center of the office of vice-president for Science and Technology will support to register their inventions with the international offices, it said.

The entry of technological products into international markets is an important issue for any country. While more than 5,000 knowledge-based companies are operating in the country, a new and serious effort must be made to attend global markets, the foundation said,

noting that registration of inventions is one of the prerequisites for achieving the objective.

Companies must patent their products to be able to export their knowledge-based products to other countries, it said.

In today's world there is increasing competition among businesses to use innovation to accelerate the development of modern technologies. Under these circumstances, the protection of intellectual property and technological achievements becomes dual importance. The Patent Center also offers its services to inventors in this regard.

Bushehr Province Q1 Exports top \$1.18b

TEHRAN (MNA) - More than 5.7 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.18 billion were exported from Bushehr province, southern Iran, during the first three months of the current fiscal (March 20 - June 20).

According to Director General of Bushehr Customs Office, Behrouz Qarehbeygi, petrochemicals had the lion's share of the province's exports during the three-month period, amounting to 4.2 million tons worth over \$1.14 billion.

He noted that butane, propane, polyethylene, methanol, urea, Styrene, butene, raffinate, cement, clinker, base oil, Polystyrene and alkylbenzene, were the major petrochemical products exported from the province.

Gas condensate comes next with 7,000 tons worth \$3.7 million, while other commodities shipped from Bushehr ports amounted to 1.3 million tons worth \$44 million, Qarehbeygi added.

The official said imports via Bushehr customs stood at 196,000 tons worth \$218.14 million during the three months to June 20 to register a 17% decline in terms of value compared with the similar period of last year.

Red Meat Production Rises 39%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that production of red meat in Iran stood at 30,400 tons in the third month of the current Iranian calendar year (May 21-June 20), showing 39 percent growth compared to the same month in the past year.

The SCI's report said that beef and veal had the lion's share (56.4 percent) in the country's red meat output during the third month with 17,200 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 10,500 tons, goat meat with 2,100 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 623 tons.

As previously announced by the SCI, production of red meat in Iran stood at 30,900 tons in the second month of the current Iranian calendar year (April 20-May 20).

The SCI's report indicated that beef and veal had the lion's share (55.7 percent) in the country's red meat output during the second month with 17,200 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 11,000 tons, goat meat with 2,100 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 552 tons.

Production of red meat in Iran stood at 94,900 tons in the last quarter of the past Iranian calendar year, indicating 16 percent growth compared to the same quarter in the preceding year. Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after.

Catalonia Seeks to Bypass Ruling Striking Down Home Confinement

LLEIDA (Reuters) - Spain's Catalonia approved on Monday a decree giving it legal backing to place restrictions on the city of Lleida and its surroundings to stem a surge in coronavirus infections, defying a judge's earlier ruling that such an order was unlawful.

After an extraordinary late night cabinet meeting, the regional government said it would seek legal authorisation allowing it to limit people's movements, adding that on Tuesday it could confine Lleida area inhabitants at home.

Earlier on Monday, Catalonia leader Quim Torra urged the 160,000 people living in an area where coronavirus cases have increased to stay home, defying a court ruling which rejected a mandatory home



U.S. Discusses Five-Power Summit With Russia

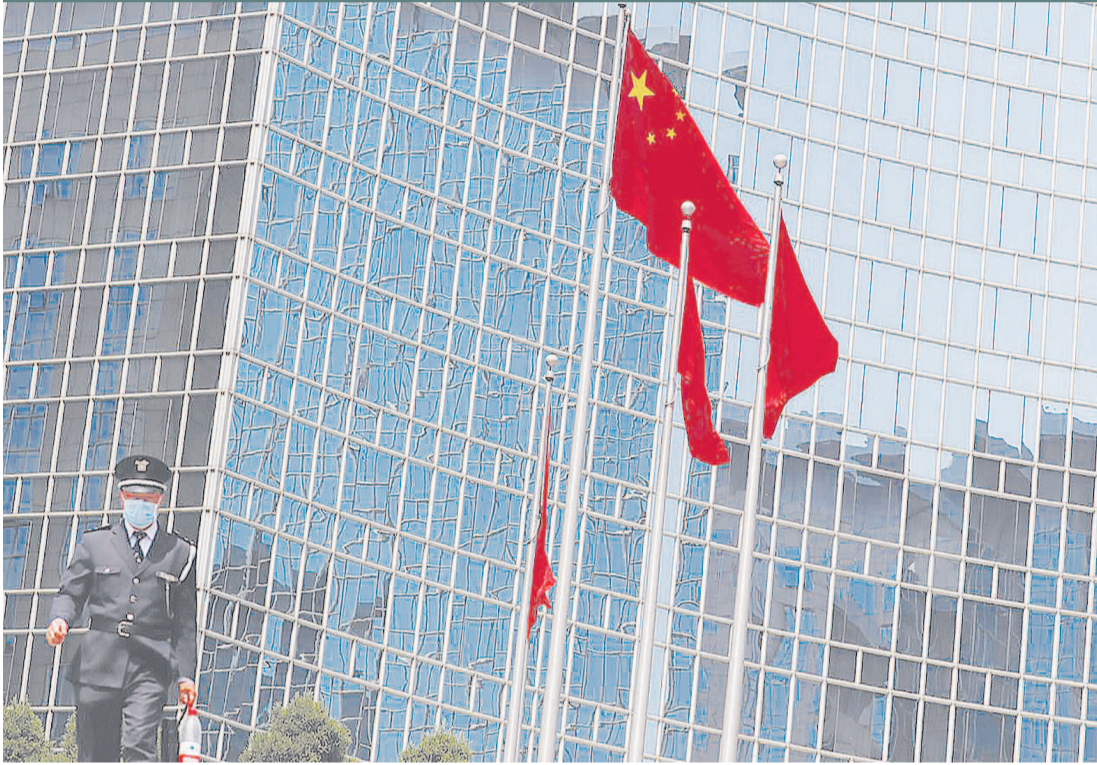
WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States said Monday that it spoke with Russia about convening a summit of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, a key priority for President Vladimir Putin.

In a telephone call, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov "discussed convening P5 leaders in the near future to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations," the State Department said.

Putin has been urging such a summit that would bring him together with US President Donald Trump, potentially just before the Republican vies for reelection in November.



Japan Accuses China of Pushing Territorial Claims



TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's annual defence review accuses China of pushing its territorial claims amid the coronavirus pandemic and suspects Beijing of spreading propaganda and disinformation as it provides medical aid to nations fighting COVID-19.

China "is continuing to attempt to alter the status quo in the East China Sea and the South China Sea," Japan said in the defence white paper approved by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government on Tuesday.

The white paper described "relentless" intrusions in waters around a group of islets claimed by both nations in the East China Sea, known as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China.

In the South China Sea, it said Beijing was asserting territorial claims by establishing administrative districts around disputed islands, that forced countries distracted by the coronavirus outbreak to respond.

Japan's criticism of China echoes similar comments made by the United States, and comes as

tension in the region increases as Beijing and Washington conduct separate military drills in the resource-rich South China Sea and as relations between the world's two largest economies deteriorated.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday rejected China's disputed claims to offshore resources in most of the South China Sea, saying they were "completely unlawful".

Beijing insists its intentions in the waterway, through which around \$3 trillion of global trade passes each year, are peaceful.

Japan sees China as a longer-term and more serious threat than nuclear-armed North Korea. Beijing now spends four times as much as Tokyo on defence as it builds a large modern military.

Japan's defence review also claimed China appeared to be responsible for "propaganda" and "disinformation" amid "social uncertainties and confusion" caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

Such disinformation included online claims that the coronavirus was brought to China by a U.S. military member, or that Chinese herbal remedies could treat COVID-19, a defence ministry official said at a briefing.

Other threats faced by Japan include North Korea's ongoing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as well as a resurgence of military activity by Russia in the skies and waters in Japan, at times in joint drills with China, the defence review said.

Taliban Car Bomb Attack On Afghan Intel Office

KABUL (Dispatches) - At least 11 security personnel were killed Monday in an attack claimed by the Taliban on a rural office of Afghanistan's intelligence agency, officials said.

The insurgents said a suicide bomber detonated a device inside a car near the National Directorate of Security (NDS) while gunmen stormed the building in Aybak city in the north of the country.

Abdul Latif Ibrahim, governor of Samangan province, told AFP 11 people were killed and 63 others, mostly civilians, were wounded in the explosion and gunfire.

The attack, which lasted for nearly four hours, ended after security forces shot dead three armed men, the governor's spokesman Sediq Azizi said.

"It was a huge explosion that broke all our windows," said witness Haseeb, who only gave one name, a government employee who works near the NDS compound. "Many people have been wounded by flying pieces of glass."

In recent months, the Taliban have carried out near-daily attacks against Afghan forces -- even as the government prepares to engage in peace talks with the militants aimed at ending the country's decades-old war.

In two separate attacks on Sunday blamed on the Taliban, at least 19 security personnel were killed, officials said.

A group of 12 soldiers and police were killed in a seven-hour battle with Taliban fighters who attacked their outpost in the northern province of Kunduz, Mohammad Yusuf Ayubi, the provincial council chief said.

Taliban forces have regularly attacked security forces in the northern province, often attempting to enter Kunduz city, which has briefly fallen twice to the militants in recent years.

In the second attack late Sunday in northeastern Badakhshan, seven policemen were killed in fighting with Taliban fighters, Nik Mohammad, spokesman to the governor said.

The Taliban claimed both attacks in Kunduz and Badakhshan.



U.S. Navy Battles for Second Day to Save Burning Warship in San Diego

SAN DIEGO (Reuters) - Hundreds of firefighters battled through a second day from the air, land and water on Monday to save a U.S. war vessel swept by flames while moored at a San Diego shipyard, as the number of sailors and civilians injured in the blaze rose to nearly 60.

The USS Bonhomme Richard, an amphibious assault ship whose size ranks second in the U.S. Navy fleet to that of an aircraft carrier, remained largely shrouded in thick, acrid smoke on Monday as the vessel began listing to its starboard side.

The fire, accompanied by at least one large explosion, erupted Sunday morning in the lower cargo hold of the 844-foot-long (257 meter) ship, docked for routine maintenance at its home port at U.S. Naval Base San Diego.

Since then, flames have spread upward throughout much of the ship and into the tower and other structures on the top of the vessel, Rear Admiral Philip Sobeck told a late-morning news conference.

Because it was undergoing repairs at the time, only about 160 of the ship's usual contingent of 1,000 crew members were aboard at the time, and all major munitions had already been removed from the vessel as a standard safety practice, Navy officials said.

Helicopters dropped water over the ship throughout Monday while fire boats on the perimeter streamed water on the hull to cool it from the outside. San Diego fire crews discontinued blasting water into the ship from shore, apparently out of concern for destabilising the vessel's buoyancy.

Asked whether the ship might be burned beyond repair, Sobeck said he was "hopeful" it could be spared. "Once we get the fire out, which is our priority, then we'll make that assessment." The fire's cause was unknown, but a Navy spokesman told Reuters there was no evidence of foul play.

The Navy said 36 sailors and 23 civilians had been treated for minor injuries, including heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation, and no personnel remained hospitalized.

Hong Kong Office Warns Pro-Democracy Poll Could Violate New Security Law

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Beijing's top representative office in Hong Kong has warned the pro-democracy opposition's primary elections at the weekend could violate a new national security law, exacerbating concerns over a crackdown on the former British colony's democracy movement.

Preliminary results showed a group of young democrats, or "localists", performed strongly in the elections that drew more than 600,000 votes, reflecting a potential change of guard to a more radical grouping likely to rile authorities in Beijing.

The primary polls are aimed at selecting democracy candidates who stand the best chance of success in September elections for the Legislative Council, Hong Kong's governing body. Final results are due later on Tuesday.

Many observers see the election as a symbolic protest vote against the tough new security law that punishes what Beijing broadly defines as subversion, secession, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces with up to life in prison.

"The goal of organiser Benny Tai and the opposition camp is to seize the ruling power of Hong Kong and ... carry out a Hong Kong version of 'color

revolution'," a spokesman for the Liaison Office said in a statement just before midnight on Monday.

Luo Huining, the head of the Liaison Office, will have oversight over the implementation of the contentious security law that will also allow mainland security agents to be officially based in China's freest city for the first time.

Critics of the law fear it will crush wide-ranging freedoms promised to Hong Kong when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997, while supporters say it will bring stability to the city after a year of sometimes violent anti-government protests.

The law has drawn condemnation from Western nations, with the European Union saying on Monday it is working on measures to punish Beijing for the move, including a possible review of EU governments' extradition treaties' with the financial hub and offering more visas to its citizens.

The law has also seen countries such as Britain and Canada caution citizens over an increased risk of arbitrary detention in Hong Kong and possible extradition to mainland China where they could face trial in courts controlled by the Communist Party.



UAE to Make History With Launch Of Mars Probe

DUBAI (AFP) - The United Arab Emirates plans to make history today with the scheduled launch of the "Hope" mission, which will make it the first Arab nation to send a probe to Mars.

A rocket carrying the unmanned spacecraft is due to take off from Japan's remote Tanegashima Space Center at 5:51 am local time although poor weather could delay lift-off until later in a launch window that runs until August 13.

The Emirati project is one of three racing to Mars, including Tianwen-1 from China and Mars 2020 from the United States, taking advantage of the period when the Earth and Mars are nearest: a mere 55 million kilometres (34 million miles) apart.

But unlike the two other ventures, the UAE's Mars probe will not land on the Red Planet. "Hope" -- or Al-Amal in Arabic -- is expected to reach Mars's orbit by February 2021, marking the 50th anniversary of the unification of the United Arab Emirates, an alliance of seven sheikhdoms.

Once there, it will loop the planet for a whole Martian year -- 687 days. The probe is expected to detach from the launch rocket about an hour after blast-off, which is when the UAE Mars mission's deputy project manager Sarah al-Amiri said the real excitement will begin.

"In my heart of hearts, I'm looking forward to the initial 24 hours after separation, and that's where we see the results of our work," said Amiri, who is also Minister of State for Advanced Sciences.

"It is when we first get the signal, when we know that every part of the spacecraft is functioning, when the solar panels are deployed, when we hit our trajectory and are headed towards Mars," she told AFP earlier this month.

Keiji Suzuki from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, which is carrying the Hope probe into space, said that with thunderstorms forecast there was doubt over whether the launch would take place on schedule.

"The weather is going downhill," he said during a briefing Monday. "However, the current forecast is not for severe thunderstorms all the way through, so our current assessment is that there are chances for a launch."



Kamranieh (\$3200)
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
fireplace
pkg, & F.F

Shanon (adviser)

Zaferanieh Villa (\$8000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
Sauna, J
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

Kamranieh Apt (\$3000)
260sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Darrous Apt (\$2700)
300sq.m, 4bdrs
S/pool, S, J, pkg
Fully Furn

Jordan (\$1800)
3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Feresachteh bldg (\$6000)
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enough pkg lots
Semi Furn

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French Consumption Has Almost Returned to Normal Levels

PARIS (Reuters) - French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Monday that French consumption has almost returned to normal levels and that forced household savings during the coronavirus lockdown period could boost consumption later on in the year.

"Our recovery plan...is working. A few weeks ago

consumption in France was at minus 30%, today we are just minus 5%, we have almost returned to normal," Le Maire said on RTL radio.

Le Maire also said that he estimates that households will have saved about 100 billion euros by year-end due to the coronavirus crisis. "What I wish for is that they will spend this 100 billion," he said.



IMF Predicts Worst Mideast Downturn in Half Century

DUBAI (AFP) - The IMF Monday again sharply lowered its Middle East and North Africa economic forecast, to its lowest level in 50 years, over the "twin shock" of the coronavirus pandemic and low oil prices.

The region's economy will contract by 5.7 percent this year, and shrink by as much as 13 percent in countries torn by conflict, the Washington-based International Monetary Fund warned. The economic malaise will see poverty and unemployment rise, stoking social unrest, and send budget deficits and public debt surging, it said. In its regional economic outlook update, the IMF projected the economies of the Middle East and North Africa to contract by 5.7 percent this year, 2.4 percentage points lower than its April forecast.

The projection is the lowest in over 50 years, according to World Bank data, and comes after the region posted modest growth last year.

The battered energy-based economies of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) states are forecast to shrink by a hefty 7.1 percent, 4.4 percentage points lower than April. "The region has been facing a crisis like no other -- a twin shock that affected the normal functions of their economies during the confinement measures," Jihad Azour, director of IMF Middle East and Central Asia Department, told AFP.

Mideast countries applied some of the most stringent lockdowns and measures against the coronavirus, halting most economic activities. Oil prices plunged by about two-thirds in a freefall as the global economy ground down to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. They have partially recovered to around \$40 a barrel. The region's oil-exporting countries are expected to lose around \$270 billion of energy revenues, "which is a big drop," Azour said. The IMF said that the region's hardest-hit countries will be those that are "fragile and in conflict situations," with their economies forecast to contract by as much as 13 percent.

GDP per capita in those unstable countries is expected to plummet from \$2,900 in 2018-2019 to just \$2,000 this year.

"This is a dramatic downturn that will aggravate existing economic and humanitarian challenges and raise already high poverty levels," the report said.

"Social unrest could be rekindled as lockdown measures are lifted," Azour warned that job losses, together with worsening poverty and inequality, could create stability challenges for governments in the region.

"(Job losses) will come on top of an already high level of unemployment, especially at youth level," he said.

The IMF said that large and growing deficits are expected to push public debt levels to 95 percent of GDP among Middle East oil importers by the end of this year.

Debt levels are forecast to grow rapidly in Sudan to 258 percent of GDP, in Lebanon to 183 percent and in Egypt over 90 percent, it said. The woes of oil-importing nations are also compounded by a sharp drop in remittances from their nationals working overseas, who have been put out of work due to the pandemic, Azour said.

The IMF report also warned that the potential decline in expatriate workers -- who account for more than 70 percent of the labour force in some oil-exporting countries -- would also dampen their recovery.

Some 25 million expatriates work and live in the six GCC states, forming half of the population of the group which takes in regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates along with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. Oxford Economics predicted in May that employment across the GCC could fall by 13 percent this year, with job losses of some 1.7 million in Saudi Arabia and 900,000 in UAE. Azour said that with so few certainties in the current environment, the situation could be even worse than forecast. "We are in an odd situation where the level of uncertainty is still high; uncertainty about the capacity to control the pandemic and its expansion, uncertainty about the recovery itself, and also uncertainty about the oil prices," Azour said.

Saudi Aramco Cuts August Heavier Crude Supply for Asian Refiners

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco will reduce its August-loading shipments of medium and heavy crude grades to at least six Asian buyers, several sources familiar with the matter said on Monday.

Buyers in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and India were notified by Aramco over the weekend about the supply cuts, the sources said. This is the fourth month in a row the company is cutting shipments for heavier grades.

Saudi Arabia, the largest producer and biggest exporter in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has been cutting its production and exports to comply with an agreement between OPEC and allies, including Russia, to cut output by a record of 9.7 million barrels per day over May to July.

Aramco will cut Arab Heavy crude supplies for August by about 10% of their contracted volumes while Arab Medium supplies were also reduced, five of the sources said. These grades are considered so-called heavier crudes because of their higher densities compared to other types of oils.

However, buyers were given the option to switch these supplies to lighter crude grades, two of the sources said.

Saudi Aramco's previous supply cuts in Asia have been focused on these crude grades.

"They have cut supplies of medium and given us more of extra light and light (crude). Both grades suit us so there is no problem," said an official at India's Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd, adding that overall it received full nominated volumes.

OPEC's Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMCC) will meet to recommend the next level of cuts after compliance in the group hit 107% in June, up from 77% in May.

Russia to Push Back Deadline for \$360b Spending on National Projects

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday supported a proposal to extend the deadline for a 25.7 trillion rouble (\$363 billion) package of state spending, known as the national projects, by six years until 2030 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin suggested Russia give itself more time to complete the 13 projects, strategic spending goals ranging from infrastructure to education and healthcare, in light of the economic slowdown brought about by COVID-19 and the resultant strain on state coffers.

The pandemic has dealt a serious setback to the projects, which formed the cornerstone of Putin's bid for re-election in 2018, including the key target of Russian GDP growth exceeding the global average by the time the spending reached its scheduled conclusion in 2024.

Russian GDP was forecast to grow by 3.1-3.2% in 2021-22.

"We have to work under tighter budget constraints," said Mishustin.

"The spread of the coronavirus and its consequences for the global economy and our country, on the one hand have spurred development in certain segments of the market, but on the other hand have created new limits, slowing economic growth and constricting consolidated budget revenues."

Mishustin said these changes must be taken into account when setting targets and suggested extending the deadline for Russia to achieve these national goals until 2030.

Putin, boosted by constitutional changes voted for by the electorate this month that would allow him to stay in power until 2036, on Monday ordered his administration to prepare draft decrees that would make the proposal a reality.

Daimler Talks With Workers Heat Up

FRANKFURT (Reuters) - Labour representatives at German carmaker Daimler said on Monday that discussions with management over cost cuts had become "rougher", after a board member said over the weekend that more than 15,000 jobs were at risk.

The auto industry has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, which shut factories and showrooms forcing traditional carmakers to seek deeper cuts.

Daimler had already said in November, before the pandemic started, that it would cut at least 10,000 jobs worldwide over the following three years, following peers as they cut costs to invest in electric vehicles while grappling with weakening sales.

The owner of the Mercedes-Benz brand had stuck with a pledge at the time to avoid forced redundancies at its German workforce until 2029.

Daimler board member Wilfried Porth told Stuttgart Zeitung over the weekend, however, that more than 15,000 workers would now have to take a buyout or retire to avoid forced layoffs.

The works council for Daimler said on Monday it was aware of the seriousness of the situation.

"The tone of our discussion is getting rougher and is putting our cooperation to the test," it said.

Daimler managed to come through a crisis in the past, the works council said, adding it had always found a way forward, and did not expect the situation to be any different this time around.

Daimler reiterated on Monday the company wanted to avoid forced redundancies, but for this to happen the carmaker needed to find alternative ways of cutting costs.

Slumping Prices Hit OPEC's 2019 Oil Revenue

LONDON (Dispatches) - OPEC's 13 members suffered an 18.4% contraction in their oil export revenue in 2019 on slumping prices, the organization's Annual Statistical Bulletin showed July 13, denting their economies leading into 2020's COVID-19 crisis and market meltdown.

The value of OPEC petroleum export revenue fell to \$564.9 billion in 2019 from \$692.3 billion in 2018, the report showed, as anemic demand growth and continued competition from non-OPEC producers impacted the group.

The figures demonstrate the financial pain OPEC was already facing even before the coronavirus pandemic wiped out nearly a fifth of global oil demand in the second quarter of 2020. And they highlight the urgency behind the producer group's efforts to prop up the market through production cuts, as the oil-dependent governments try to defend prices over market share.

OPEC cut its production by 1.86 million b/d, or 6%, in the year, while non-OPEC output grew by 1.3 million b/d, or 2.9%, the report showed.

The International Monetary Fund on July 13 said Middle East oil exporters, which form the core of OPEC, are in for extreme pain in 2020, revising downward its estimate of economic growth to -7.3%. It said its forecast reflects the "'double whammy' from oil price fluctuations (and supply cuts) and the pandemic-linked lockdowns."

OPEC is in the fourth year of coordinated production cuts with 10 allies, including Russia. The deal for 2019 called for 1.2 million b/d in combined cuts between the 23 countries, though core Gulf OPEC members Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait contributed voluntary additional cuts to help boost the market's recovery.

In May, the OPEC+ coalition implemented the steepest cuts in history, at 9.7 million b/d, as oil demand plummeted in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Those cuts are set to roll back to 7.6 million b/d in August, and OPEC officials have said they see a brighter outlook for oil demand in the months ahead. A key market monitoring committee, co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and Russia, will convene online Wednesday to assess market conditions.

According to the bulletin, OPEC shipped 70% of its exports -- 15.73 million b/d -- to Asian markets, where demand has been robust.

OPEC crude exports to Europe fell to 4.01 million b/d in 2019, down 12% year on year. North America, where U.S. and Canadian production has been surging, cut its imports of OPEC crude by more than half to 1.22 million b/d, down 53% from 2018.

OPEC oil product exports averaged 3.88 million b/d in 2019, according to the report, down 17% on year.

Imports of petroleum products by OPEC member countries averaged 1.68 million b/d in 2019, 31% lower than in 2018.

Spain Says EU Recovery Fund Debt Is Not Charity



MADRID (Reuters) - Joint borrowing by European Union countries to finance a fund to recover from the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is not charity, Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha Gonzalez said ahead of a crucial summit on the issue July 17-18.

All the countries involved would contribute to reimbursing the debt, even northern countries dubbed "frugal", she said on Monday in an interview with Belgian radio station RTBF.

"It is not like the Netherlands is providing charity to Spain or France," Gonzalez said. Each country would take a share of the debt proportional to its economic weight, she said.

Germany would contribute 20%, Spain 9% and the Netherlands 6%, for instance, said Gonzalez.

The 27 European Union leaders are due to meet later this week to negotiate the seven-year EU budget and the creation of a 750 billion euro (£671.34 billion) stimulus fund financed with common debt.

Two-thirds of the amount would be transferred in form of free grants and a third in repayable loans.

The creation of that fund has pitched the wealthy, thrifty north against the high-debt south, which has been hit harder by the pandemic.



Ancient Artifacts to Be Returned From Austria

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran’s head of International Affairs of Police and Director General of Interpol said on Tuesday that some Iranian ancient artifacts have been delivered to Iran’s representative at the country’s embassy in Vienna.

As Brigadier General Hadi Shirzad said the artifacts had been smuggled to Austria but thanks to a judicial cooperation agreement and the cooperation between the two country’s Police, they are to be returned to Iran. The objects belong to the eras of Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties, he added.



World Hunger Worsening as Coronavirus Weighs and Obesity Rises

ROME (AFP) - Nearly one in nine people in the world are going hungry, with the coronavirus pandemic exacerbating already worsening trends this year, according to a United Nations report published Monday.

Economic slowdowns and climate-related shocks are pushing more people into hunger, while nutritious foods remain too expensive for many, contributing not only to undernourishment, but to growing rates of obesity in adults and children.

“After decades of long decline, the number of people suffering from hunger has been slowly increasing since 2014,” said the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World annual report.

Not only did people need enough food, but nutritious food, the study said, citing costly “health and environmental consequences” of sub-par diets. Nearly 690 million people, or 8.9 percent of people around the globe, are hungry, the UN found.

That number rose by 10 million people in just one year to 2019, and by 60 million in the past five years, found the study, which said eradicating hunger by 2030 - a goal set five years ago - will be impossible if trends continue.

By 2030, over 890 million people could be affected by hunger, or 9.8 percent of the world’s population, it estimated. Five United Nations agencies co-authored the report: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Last year, the report estimated that over 820 million people were going hungry, but estimates were recalculated following revised data from China for prior years.

When measuring both moderate and severe food insecurity in 2019, the number balloons from 690 million to 2 billion people without “regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food”. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit hard in nations with widespread poverty, could cause another 83 to 132 million people to become undernourished this year, the report said.

Global trends had already been worsening before coronavirus, it said.

About a quarter of Africa’s population could go hungry by 2030 from 19.1 percent today, already twice the world average. In Asia, the number of hungry people fell by 8 million people since 2015, although the continent remains home to more than half the world’s undernourished people.

Trends in Latin America and the Caribbean are worsening, with 9 million more hungry people last year than in 2015.

“A key reason why millions of people around the world suffer from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition is because they cannot afford the cost of healthy diets,” found the report. In all regions, adult obesity is on the rise,



with healthy diets of fruits, vegetables and protein-rich foods unaffordable to some 3 billion people.

Over 57 percent of people in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia cannot afford a healthy diet. Low-income countries rely on starchy staples like cereals and tubers that can cost 60 percent less than healthy diets, but lack necessary proteins and key vitamins and minerals to reduce infections and ward off disease.

The report found 21.3 percent of children under five, or 144 million, experienced stunted growth due to malnutrition, most of them in Africa or Asia.

Another 6.9 percent were “wasted” with nutritional imbalances, while 5.6 percent were overweight. Of the overweight children, 45 percent come from Asia, and 24 percent from Africa, underscoring how malnutrition takes the form of both undernutrition and obesity. Current patterns in food consumption are estimated to result in health costs of over \$1.3 trillion per year by 2030.

But healthier diets could lower those costs by up to 97 percent, the report estimated, citing a vegetarian diet with associated health costs of less than \$100 million.

Costs are also associated with greenhouse gas emissions caused by today’s food production system which could also be reduced by alternative diets.

While acknowledging high prices for healthy food are due to a variety of factors from insufficient diversification and inadequate food storage to domestic subsidies that favor staples, the report called an “urgent rebalancing of agricultural policies and incentives.”

India-China Border...

FROM PAGE 1

The recent disputes between India and China, while both are major oil importers in Asia and the world, may increase effective security threats in the Strait of Malacca which is the second important oil passage in the world.



The strategic situation of the Strait of Malacca lies on this point that it links the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and it is the shortest route for shipping oil used Middle East countries for exporting oil to the Asian markets like China, Japan and South Korea.

The relation between India and China in recent two decades has always been in full tension but its recent flare-up of tension in their border dispute has been the most violent one in the past 50 years since both countries experienced a war on demarcation of their borders.

What is important is that both countries are nuclear power states and escalation in their dispute will cause concerns for the UN and countries in the region. Both countries respect Iran a great deal, and in case our Foreign Ministry prepares the ground for mediation between these two superpowers, without any doubt it will help a great deal to Asia’s security and satellite countries of these two states. All officials of these two countries are fully aware of Iran’s justice-seeking nature, and of course with Iran’s involvement, the condition will totally change. Now it is up to the friendship groups in the Foreign Ministry to find ways for making foreign minister involved in this God-pleasing deed.

CIA Spy Executed...

FROM PAGE 1

Mousavi-Majd has been found guilty of providing information to US and Israeli spy services on the whereabouts of Major General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), who was assassinated in Baghdad in January 2020.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Esmaeili announced the approval of the death penalties handed to three people, who had been arrested in connection with the 2019 riots in Iran.

Two of them were arrested at the scene of an armed robbery, he said, noting that they filmed their criminal acts of torching banks, buses and public places and sent them to news agencies abroad.

Violent riots hit several Iranian cities in late 2019 following protests prompted by gasoline rationing and price hikes. A total of 230 people, including members of security and Basij forces, were killed in the unrest.

Esmaeili said that there is no systemic corruption in the country based on accurate comprehensive judicial dominance. He stressed the fight against economic corruption as the top priority of the Judiciary.

Esmaeili reiterated that the enemies try to misrepresent Iran as a country suffering systemic corruption, the fact is there are corruption cases Judiciary strongly fight against.

Yet, he said the country’s economy has been subjected to the enemy’s sanctions, mismanagement, some abusers, economic war, and the Coronavirus.

IMF Warns Lebanon Of High Price of Delaying Reforms



BEIRUT (AFP) - The International Monetary Fund warned Monday of the high cost of holding up reforms in Lebanon, two months into bailout talks to redress its nosediving economy.

After Lebanon for the first time defaulted on its sovereign debt in March, the government pledged a financial rescue plan and in May started talks with the IMF on unlocking billions of dollars in aid.

But sources familiar with the talks say they have hit a wall, with alleged lack of political commitment to reforms and disagreements over the scale of financial losses for the state, central bank and commercial banks.

Lebanon’s government has estimated losses at around 241 trillion Lebanese pounds, which amounts to around \$69 billion at an exchange rate of 3,500 pounds to the greenback.

In contrast, a parliamentary committee has quoted much lower figures using the old currency peg of 1,507 pounds to the dollar.

“For productive discussions to continue, it is very important that the authorities unite around the government’s plan,” said Athanasios Arvanitis, the IMF’s deputy director for the Middle East and Central Asia.

“We are also worried that attempts to present lower losses and postpone difficult measures to the future would only increase the cost of the crisis by delaying the recovery and also hurting particularly the most vulnerable,” he said during a press conference streamed online.

Lebanon is grappling with its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war, with deteriorating living conditions sparking widespread protests since October and plunging almost half the population into poverty.

Banks have severely restricted dollar withdrawals and the Lebanese pound has plummeted to record lows on the black market, sparking rapid price hikes.

U.S., Five Other States Want to Link South and Central Asia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States and five Central Asian countries have pledged to work together to “build economic and trade ties that would connect Central Asia to markets in South Asia and Europe.”

In a joint statement issued in Washington this week, they also expressed strong support for efforts to peacefully resolve the situation in Afghanistan which, the Americans believe, would create opportunities for the economic integration of South and Central Asian regions.

The New York Times reported on Sunday that Iran and China also have drafted a joint plan to integrate the two regions. They are creating “a sweeping economic and security partnership that would clear the way for billions of dollars of Chinese investments in Iran,” the report added.

The Times, which has obtained a copy of the deal, reported that the Chinese investment in Iran would total \$400 billion over 25 years.

The deal would “undercut the Trump administration’s efforts to isolate the Iranian government” and “would vastly expand” China’s presence in the region, the report added. The two countries would jointly build a network of telecommunications, ports, railways and roads that would enhance China’s access to markets in the Middle East and Europe.

Diplomatic observers in Washington say that both the United States and China see huge economic prospects in the South and Central Asian regions and want to have a controlling share in the trade routes that their integration may open.

At the inaugural meeting of a trilateral forum in late May, the United States, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan also reviewed projects that could bring prosperity to the entire region by linking South and Central Asia.

A joint statement issued after their meeting, underlined the need to build railway links between Central Asia and Pakistan and a gas pipeline that goes all the way to India via Pakistan.

Leader’s Statements...

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Stating that the Supreme Council for Economic Coordination was formed to make special decisions in special economic conditions, Rouhani said: “Accordingly, it was decided that decisions that require coordination between branches be binding for everyone after the approval of the Leader of the Revolution.”

Referring to the important decisions made in the meeting during the last two years, the President said, “So far, with all the existing problems, we have been able to overcome the problems with coordination and empathy, and in the coming year, the three branches can make effective decisions for the prosperity of the country’s economy.”

Rouhani stressed that today, due to sanctions and the spread of coronavirus, the country is in difficult economic conditions, adding, “Despite all the problems we face in various sectors, including import, export, oil sales, and foreign exchange, the government is determined to work hard to solve the problems and improve people’s difficult living conditions until the last moment of its service.” The President thanked the Leader for the wise statements that outlined the roadmap for the three branches’ cooperation and synergy and expressed hope that the officials of the three branches could advance the country in the best possible way with empathy, coordination, and appropriate decisions to reduce people’s problems and improve their livelihoods.

Rouhani went on to say that the Americans expected Iran’s economic development to stop shortly after the sanctions began, adding that today the country is ruled through planning and relying on an oil-free economy adding that this is a demonstration of strength and a great victory for the Iranian nation in the economic war. Referring to the effects of the Coronavirus on the current state of the world economy, Rouhani said that Iran, in a situation where even some developed countries had been difficulty in meeting the daily needs of the people, has also passed through this space with special measures and readiness of structures and machineries through people’s cooperation.

EU Vows...

FROM PAGE 1

The United States has failed to provide sufficient evidence of an ongoing or imminent attack against its interests to justify the assassination of Gen. Soleimani, she added, saying that thereby, the US has distorted the principle of sovereignty.

The U.S. action violated the rules of different principles, she stressed.

In the 44th regular session of the Human Rights Council which was held on Thursday, UN Special Rapporteur Agnes Callamard called the assassination of Lt. Gen. Soleimani by U.S. forces a violation of international law.

The attack violated the UN Charter, she added, calling for accountability for targeted killings by armed drones and for greater regulation of the weapons.

EU Vows...

FROM PAGE 1

Verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran remained fully compliant with the JCPOA for an entire year, waiting for the co-signatories to honor their commitments and offset the impacts of the U.S. withdrawal.

But, as the European parties continued to renege on their obligations, the Islamic Republic moved in May 2019 to suspend its JCPOA commitments under articles of the deal covering Tehran’s legal rights in case of non-compliance by the other side.

Borrell said, “As the Coordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission, I am determined to do everything possible together with the remaining participants of the JCPOA and the international community to preserve the agreement.”

“We should not assume that an opportunity will arise again in the future for the international community to address Iran’s nuclear program in such a comprehensive manner,” he added.

The EU foreign policy chief says he received a letter from Iran that demands triggering the dispute resolution mechanism of the 2015 nuclear deal over the failure of the three European signatories to the accord to honor their commitments.

His statement came days after he received a letter from Iran demanding the launch of the dispute resolution mechanism of the nuclear deal over the failure of the three European signatories to the agreement to honor their commitments.

Germany Confirm Home Friendlies Against Turkey, Czech Republic

BERLIN (AFP) - Germany will host Turkey and the Czech Republic in international friendlies this autumn as part of their Nations League preparations, the German FA confirmed Monday. Germany plan to host Turkey in Cologne on October 7 and the Czech Republic in Leipzig on November 11 followed by Nations League games against either Spain, Ukraine or Switzerland. On Friday, the German FA confirmed they will host Spain in Cologne on September 3, then face the Swiss away three days later, both in the Nations League.

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Racing Point Confident Despite Misconceived Renault Protest

LONDON (Dispatches) - Racing Point on Monday said they were "confident" a "misconceived" protest by Renault regarding the legality of their Formula One car would not see the FIA find any wrongdoing. Renault lodged a protest against Racing Point, whose car has been dubbed the 'pink Mercedes' due to alleged similarities with the world champions' cars from last season, after Sunday's Styrian Grand Prix. The protest regards concerns over regulations on 'listed parts'.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY JULY 15, 2020

Fish Sets Course Record, Wins American Century Championship

LONDON (Dispatches) - After five consecutive Top-5 finishes, Mardy Fish finally captured the American Century Championship title. Not only did Fish win the star-studded tournament, he actually set the course record at Edgewood Tahoe with a blistering 63 on Saturday. The previous course record of 64 was set in 1984 by Lee Trevino, a six-time PGA Tour major winner. Fish became the first tennis player to win in the event's 31-year history. In these difficult times, the tennis world will take any win it can get.

The 38-year-old beat former Buffalo Bills defensive tackle Kyle Williams by nine points, and the rest of the field by a whopping 18. We caught up with a cautiously optimistic Fish on Wednesday and suggested that his 8/1 pre-tournament odds were worth a bet.

Some of the bigger names this weekend included Stephen Curry, Patrick Mahomes, Jerry Rice, Charles Barkley, Larry Fitzgerald, Tony Romo, Greg Maddux, Charles Barkley, and Oscar De La Hoya. James Blake finished tied with Maddux for 26th place.

"That's why I love these things, my world would never collide with people like Canelo Alvarez or Steph Curry," Fish said. "I'd never cross paths with these guys in my day to day life, so it's really cool." Three-time champion Mark Mulder finished in sixth place, while two-time defending champion Romo was forced to withdraw with a wrist injury after Saturday's round.

Fish's golf swing is every bit as smooth as his two-handed backhand. He learned to golf left-handed at four years old, and primarily focused on golf and tennis his whole life.

Much like tennis, a good golf swing depends on balance, hand-eye coordination, and hip rotation. Though the two sports are different in many ways, the basic swing principles remain the same. You shouldn't be surprised to hear that Jack Sock and Steve Johnson, both armed with bazookas for forehands, can hit the golf ball a mile. Chubbs Peterson said it best, "It's all in the hips."

After playing a quick nine holes with Fish, Jack Nicklaus—arguably the greatest golfer of all time—said this about the former ATP No. 7.



"He is the best non-professional golfer that I have ever seen play. I have never seen anybody with as nice a golf swing and as good a golf game that doesn't play it professionally, or as a top amateur. I was flabbergasted how good Mardy was."

Fish was throwing darts all weekend, and will no doubt be celebrating his elusive victory with his fellow sports stars tonight in Lake Tahoe.

Meanwhile two-time champion Andy Murray has bemoaned the fact that there was no Wimbledon this year, saying "you never know how many opportunities you're going to have left to play" at big events.

Wimbledon 2020 was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, making it the first time since World War II that the grass-court Grand Slam did not take place.

Murray, who won the tournament in 2013 and 2016, was hoping to make his singles return at SW19 this year having missed the previous two editions due to injury.

However, tennis was forced to go on a hiatus at the beginning of March due to Covid-19 and will only restart in August.

"Missing the big competitions because I'm getting old for a tennis player, you never know how many opportunities you're going to have left to play the biggest competitions," the former world No 1 said during a video call hosted by the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, with pupils from Bond Primary School in south London also listening in.

"So missing Wimbledon this week is obviously a shame. I miss the travelling. That's one of the things that I really enjoyed doing over my career is seeing different parts of the world."

Neuer Filmed Singing Song By Controversial Croatian Nationalist



BERLIN (AFP) - A video has emerged of Germany and Bayern Munich captain Manuel Neuer singing a Croatian song which has right-wing nationalist links while on holiday.

In the filming, Neuer, 34, can be seen in a group at a beachside bar singing "Lijepa li si" (You are beautiful) by controversial Croatian singer Marko Perkovic, known as 'Thompson'.

Perkovic, who is known for his sympathies for Croatia's World War II pro-Nazi regime, earned the nickname 'Thompson' after the brand of weapon he carried during the Croatian war of independence in the early 1990s.

The song in question is a patriotic number that cites Herceg-Bosnia -- which Zagreb-backed Bosnian Croats self-proclaimed as a statelet during Bosnia's 1990s war and which they had hoped would eventually merge with Croatia.

Neuer, who has led Germany since 2016, is holidaying with his friend and Bayern Munich goalkeeper coach Toni Tapalovic, 39, on the Dalmatian coast on the Adriatic Sea.

Neuer has not yet commented on the video, but his personal manager told German daily Bild the player does not speak Croatian. A press officer from Bayern Munich declined to comment when contacted by AFP. Neuer's managers were not immediately available for comment.

Pogba Says Man Utd Now a Proper Team

LONDON (AFP) - Paul Pogba has hailed Manchester United's improved form, saying they are now a "proper team" as they hunt Champions League qualification for next season.

United, on a 17-game unbeaten run in all competitions, host Southampton on Monday, with the chance to leapfrog Chelsea and Leicester into third place in the Premier League.

Pogba, who scored his first goal of an injury-ravaged season in United's 3-0 win at Aston Villa on Thursday, told the club's official matchday programme that players were now pulling in the same direction.

"Like I said before, it's about the team," he said. "You can call it a proper team. Sometimes before, we were maybe too defensive or too offensive and we didn't have this balance or this control."

"Now you can see we have that balance and there is more structure and we've been working hard on that. The improvement is huge and you can tell that." The French World Cup winner said United, who are also still chasing FA Cup and Europa League glory, were heading in the right direction but were not yet where they wanted to be.

"United is about trophies, we know that," he said. "And there are trophies we know we can get and we can win."

Washington Redskins Confirm Name to Be Changed

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Washington Redskins confirmed Monday the team is changing its name following pressure from sponsors over a moniker widely criticized as a racist slur against Native Americans.

Washington announced earlier this month that the Redskins name had been placed under review after a wave of rallies against racial injustice swept across the United States following George Floyd's death on May 25.

"Today, we are announcing we will be retiring the Redskins name and logo upon completion of this review," the NFL team said in a statement on Monday.

Manchester City's Ban From European Football Overturned



next season's elite Champions League competition.

CAS ruled that City did not breach Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules by disguising equity funding as sponsorship. Sport's highest court also reduced a fine for failing to cooperate with UEFA to 10 million euros from 30 million euros. "Most of the alleged breaches reported by the (UEFA) Adjudicatory Chamber of the CFCB (Club Financial Control Body) were either not

established or time-barred," CAS said in a statement.

European soccer's governing body UEFA ruled in February that City had committed serious FFP breaches and failed to cooperate with its investigation.

Missing out on the Champions League would have cost City, who have denied any wrongdoing, as much as 100 million pounds in prize money and broadcast revenue, as well as matchday and other revenues. The FFP regulations are designed to stop clubs running up big losses through spending on players. They also ensure sponsorship deals are based on their real market value and are genuine commercial agreements — and not ways for owners to pump cash into a club to get around the rules.

CAS said its full legal ruling, with details of the case and the decision, would be published in the coming days.

Real Madrid One Win Away From Title



MADRID (AFP) - Real Madrid are one victory away from clinching the La Liga title after they held off a second-half comeback from Granada on Monday to win 2-1 and move four points clear of Barcelona.

With two games left, Madrid will be crowned champions if they beat Villarreal at home on Thursday regardless of how Barca fare at the Camp Nou against Osasuna.

But they were made to sweat by a Granada team that are gunning for Europe and have been arguably the division's surprise of the season after being promoted from second tier only last year.

Ferland Mendy and Karim Benzema looked to have set Madrid on course for a comfortable win at Los Carmenes but Granada were transformed after the break and Darwin Machis' 50th-minute strike gave them hope.

An increasingly nervy Madrid were clinging on by the end and needed Sergio Ramos to clear one shot off the line as Zinedine Zidane's side dug in for a ninth consecutive victory.

When the final whistle blew, Zidane roared with relief and Ramos clenched his fists after coming through their toughest test since the restart.

"We can't relax, we're a bit closer but we have to carry on," said Ramos afterwards.

"We let our guard down here a bit on the second half. We won the first half and lost the second and maybe that's a warning for us. We have to make sure we don't repeat that mistake."

Mourinho Targets Third Europa League Title With Spurs



LONDON (AFP) - Tottenham boss Jose Mourinho has set his sights on winning next season's Europa League if his side can qualify -- even though he admits it is "not a competition I am in love with".

Spurs took a big step towards reaching the second-tier European competition with a 2-1 win against Arsenal on Sunday thanks to Toby Alderweireld's late goal.

Mourinho has already won the Europa League with Manchester United and with Porto -- in its earlier guise as the UEFA Cup -- and wants his side to allow him a crack at a third.

"I would love to play Europa League," said the Spurs boss, whose side are eighth in the Premier League table.

Seventh place could be enough to secure qualification, depending on results in the FA Cup. "It is not a competition I am in love with, it is not a competition that I like very, very much to play, but when you cannot play the Champions League, you play the Europa League," added Mourinho.

"In my career I have only played the Europa League twice and I have won it twice. It would not be bad to play a third time and win it a third time. We have to fight until the end to finish in a Europa League place. "If you ask (six-time Formula One world champion) Lewis Hamilton if he wants to win Formula Two, I don't think it will be a great deal for him, but it is a competition and I prefer to play Europa League than to not play."