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IRAN NEWS

The Police in Iran's Capital of Tehran Have Disbanded an Antique Dealing Ring, Confiscating 750 Antique Coins Dating Back to 3,000 Years Ago

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West Unhappy Over Iran's Development Under Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's ambassador to IAEA, Kazem Gharibabadi stated that main concerns of western countries of the realization of Iran-China cooperation is Iran's progress and development during the sanctions.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is under the most severe, cruel and illegal sanctions imposed by the U.S. Trump has resorted to the so-called policy of maximum pressure against Iran in order to achieve his goals", Gharibabadi wrote on his Instagram page in reaction to the recent rumors on Iran-china 25-year cooperation roadmap.

"We should seize any opportunity available in the international arena to overcome sanctions besides the country's strong infrastructures, the unwavering support of Iranian people for the Islamic Republic of Iran and the resistance against sanctions," he said, adding that "One of these measures is to unite and enter into strategic and long-term cooperation while maintaining national interests and security as well as observing the laws of the country."

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188 More COVID-19 Infected Iranians Die

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Saturday that some 188 more Iranians have died from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 13,979.

Sadat Lari said that, with the 188 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 13,979.

Some 2,166 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 1,293 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

Sadat Lari noted that a total of 271,606 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some 223,300 of whom have recovered and discharged from the hospitals.

Some 3,529 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said.

She added that 2,123,518 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

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Some 25m Iranians Have Contracted COVID-19



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian president has cited a report by the Health Ministry suggesting an estimated 25 million people in the country have contracted the novel coronavirus so far.

President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday around 14,000 Iranian have lost their lives to the disease, too, based on the same report.

"It is likely that another 30 to 35 million people are prone to contract the disease as well," he added.

"The report says we should expect the number of people who will refer to hospitals in the future [due to the coronavirus outbreak] will be twice that hospitalized over the past 150 days," he said, referring to a second peak of the disease.

"Until the end of this [Persian] year (ending March 20, 2021) and probably till the beginning of the next [Persian] year, we may be grappling with this disease," he said.

This is the first time Rouhani has mentioned such a large number of possible infections in the country since the pandemic began and a huge number of possible future cases.

All along, Rouhani has tried to keep the economy open and restrictions imposed in the country have been slow to come, short-lived and haphazard. The rate of infection and deaths slowed in May but with a quick return to normalcy, a second wave began in June.

He also disclosed that more than 200,000 patients have been hospitalized since February and nearly 14,000 have died.

The president said enough medical equipment and treatment services should be provided to tackle the second surge in COVID-19 infections.

President Rouhani also expressed concern over the risk posed by asymptomatic patients.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president said "economic resilience" should be maintained in the country amid the coronavirus outbreak and production of items needed by people should continue.

He also urged authorities not to stir up anxiety in people.

Rouhani hailed the efforts made by Iranian Health ministry and knowledge-based companies for producing disinfectants and protective supplies including gowns and face masks.

He finally gave assurances that "we should not back down in the face of the disease as we will definitely win in the battle against the disease."

EU Deeply Concerned Over U.S. Growing Use of Sanctions

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said on Friday he was deeply concerned over the growing use of sanctions, or the threat of sanctions, by the United States against European companies and interests.

"We have witnessed this developing trend in the cases of Iran, Cuba, the International Criminal Court and most recently the Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream projects," Borrell said in a statement.

Emphasizing that "European policies should be determined in Europe not by third countries," Borrell said the EU opposes the use of sanctions by third countries on European companies carrying out legitimate business, and the bloc "considers the extraterritorial application of sanctions to be contrary to international law."

He said the EU is always open to dialogue, but "this cannot take place against the threat of sanctions."

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell added that the next meeting of the Joint Commission (JCPOA) will be scheduled as soon as travel conditions allow.

He further noted that it will review progress of ongoing discussions covering both concerns regarding nuclear implementation, as well as the wider impacts of the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of sanctions by it, concerning which all JCPOA participants have expressed regret.

On Thursday, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas rejected Washington's latest threat of sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline between Russia and Germany.

The Kremlin also said Thursday that Washington's threat to impose sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 as well as the second line of the TurkStream pipeline stretching from Russia to Turkey across the Black Sea is "unfair competition."

Meanwhile an anonymous EU official has told Business Insider that there are concerns in Europe that Israel might be trying to drag the United States into a conflict with Iran before the November general election.

"I fear the Israeli plan here is to provoke an Iranian response that can turn into a military escalation while Trump remains in office," the EU official was quoted as saying.

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Iran Sends Ukrainian Jetliner's Black Box To Paris

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian deputy foreign minister says the flight recorder of a Ukrainian passenger plane shot down by mistake near Tehran in January has been taken to France for analysis.

Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said the black box of the Ukrainian airplane was taken to Paris on Friday by the officials from Iran Civil Aviation Organization and an Iranian judge.

The process of analyzing the black box data will begin on Monday, the diplomat added.

He also expressed gratitude to the government of France for close cooperation with the Iranian delegation carrying the flight recorder.

Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752) was a scheduled international passenger flight from Tehran to Kiev operated by Ukraine International Airlines (UIA).

On 8 January 2020, the Boeing 737-800 operating the route was accidentally shot down by the IRGC Air Defence shortly after take-off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport. All the 176 passengers and crew were killed.

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Foreign Airlines Resuming Flights to Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - An official at Iran Civil Aviation Organization says the international airlines' decision to resume and increase their Iran-bound flights in defiance of a recent warning from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) about flying above Iran is a clear sign of the Iranian airspace safety.

Deputy Director of Iran Civil Organization for Aviation and International Affairs, Morteza Dehqan, has pointed to the resumption and a gradual increase of flights operated by the foreign airlines to Iran.

He said Tehran has held a series of negotiations with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and a number of European countries to allay concerns about the safety of Iran's airspace and assure them of security of the Iranian sky.

"The return of international airlines to the country after the crisis caused by the coronavirus is a sign of the positive measures and the security and safety of the Iranian airports and airspace," Dehqan added.

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Pakistan Backs Iran's Inclusion in CPEC

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Foreign Minister of Pakistan says the inclusion of Islamic Republic of Iran in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is in the interest of the entire region.

According to Pakistan's state media, Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a statement on Friday said Iran's inclusion in CPEC is highly significant.

He further stated the presence of Iran in advancing the peace process in Afghanistan will benefit all countries in the region.

The remarks by the Pakistani Foreign Minister coincided with a recent statement by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan that the Islamic Republic of Iran was ready to host talks between Afghans.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini has said that Tehran is ready to participate in the CPEC.

The construction and development of the port of Gwadar in the south of Pakistan's Balochistan province near Iran border plays a key role in achieving the goals of this great economic project in Pakistan.

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021-44253335-39

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Zarif to Depart for Baghdad Today

TEHRAN (MNA) – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will depart Tehran to Baghdad today (Sunday).

According to Iraq News Agency, Zarif will travel to Iraq's capital on Sunday to meet and hold talks with Iraqi senior officials.

Last week, Al-Mayadeen reported that Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi would travel to Iran for holding bilateral talks on a series of issues.

Iran Not to Let Enemies Prance Around Its Territorial Waters

TEHRAN (MNA) – A senior naval commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps says Iran will never allow the foreign forces to prance around its territorial waters.

Speaking on Saturday a day before the anniversary of detaining the British-flagged Stena Impero tanker in the southern Iranian waters, the commander of IRGC's First Naval Region, Second Brigadier General Abbas Gholamshahi said, "We will always protect our values and national interests; we will not allow foreign forces to wander around our territorial waters."

He warned the non-regional troops who have been trying to secure their illegal presence in the region, saying that the enemies should better know that they will not be easy for them to prance in the Persian Gulf waters.

When the UK had seized Iranian tanker in Gibraltar last year, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei warned that their vicious act will not be left unanswered.

"Less than 72 hours, our brave soldiers sieged and confiscated Stina Bulk regardless of their escort to disrupt their calculations in the international waters," the general said.

He reiterated the Iranian armed forces' readiness to counter any miscalculations by the enemies.

Iran Ready to Mediate Between Azerbaijan, Armenia

TEHRAN (Tasnim) –Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif voiced Tehran's readiness to mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia following a flare-up of tensions between the two neighbors.



In a telephone conversation with Azerbaijan's new Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov on Friday, Zarif congratulated the Azeri diplomat on his new post.

He also stressed the need to broaden the bilateral ties between Tehran and Baku.

The top Iranian diplomat further expressed regret at the recent clashes between Azeri and Armenian military forces and the deaths of a number of troops, and once again

expressed Iran's readiness to mediate between the two countries to de-escalate the tensions.

Zarif had also held telephone conversations with his Azeri and Armenian counterparts on Tuesday, advising both sides to exercise restraint and initiate talks aimed at resolving rifts peacefully. The clashes broke out on the volatile Armenia-Azerbaijan border on Sunday and have continued over the past days.

Fifteen soldiers from both sides and one civilian have died since Sunday in the clashes between the neighboring former Soviet republics.



The 30,000-tonne UK-flagged Stena Impero tanker was seized by Iranian naval forces on July 19, 2019 when it ignored distress calls as it collided with a fishing boat on its route.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said the ship had also used a wrong path to enter the Strait of Hormuz.

A day after the seizure of the Stena Impero, Iran released footage showing Iranian speedboats cruising near the tanker as a military helicopter hovered over the vessel.

Two months later, on September 24, Iran released the tanker.

Tehran Warns Seoul Over Blocking Oil Revenues

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Parliament's Vice-Speaker lambasted the South Korean government for freezing of Iran's oil revenues under the US pressure.

In comments on Friday, Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi described Seoul's continuation of freezing Iran's funds in the country's banks as "unethical and illegal".

He said it is a source of regret and surprise that the South Korean government is blocking the Iranian nation's money under the US pressure.

Qazizadeh Hashemi lashed out at Seoul's "rude" behavior and said it indicates South Korea is not committed to any ethical or legal principle.

South Korea is violating another nation's rights under the pressure of the US bullies, he said, calling for the Iranian Foreign Ministry's active pursuit of the release of the Iranian money.

MPs May Oblige Iran Gov't to Stop Implementing Additional Protocol

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian lawmaker has provided more details of a parliamentary motion that, if passed, would oblige the government to suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Mahmoud Nabavian said on Saturday that the motion to cease Iran's voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol has been submitted to the Parliament's presiding board.

He said the plan is going to be discussed at the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission and other relevant commissions.

According to the motion, the government will be obligated to suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol and to approve and carry out the inspections "only under the Safeguards" agreements, the lawmaker added.

Nabavian further noted that the purpose of the motion is to give the Islamic Republic the "upper hand" in the face of the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspections of the nuclear sites, military centers, and sometimes the universities of Iran.

Iran should have a weapon in confrontation with the U.S. sanctions, he stressed.

In September 2019, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the country was ready to pursue ratification of the Additional Protocol in the Parliament provided that the U.S. Congress endorses the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and lifts all anti-Tehran sanctions.

Auto Production Volume at 18% Growth in Current Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - Production of vehicles by domestic car manufacturers registered an 18 percent growth since the beginning of the current year (started March 21) up to July 14.

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, production volume of car hit from 238,700 in the previous year (ended March 20, 2020) to 282,100 cars in the current year (from March 21 to July 14, 2020), showing an 18 percent hike.

In the same period, car delivery also recorded a 30 percent growth as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Given the above issue, car delivery to applicants hit from 164,190 in last year (ended March 20, 2020) to 214,024 in the current year (from March 21 to July 14), registering a 30 percent hike.

Sistan, Baluchestan Exports 54k Tons of Cement to Afghanistan

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of Road and Transportation Department of Sistan and Baluchestan Ayoub Kord said on Saturday that as of March 20, 54,000 tons of cement have been exported to Afghanistan from the province.

The consignment has been transported via 2,056 cargoes of trucks through Milak joint board in the said time, Kord said.

With an annual production capacity of 87 million tons, Iran's cement industry holds the world's sixth place in terms of production capacity. The country's annual cement consumption stands at about 61 million tons and the annual exports of the commodity chain are over 11 million tons.

Neighboring countries are not only the consumers of Iranian cement but also demand the transfer of the cement industry's technology to their countries.

Parliament's Serious Reaction Halts Criminals

TEHRAN (IP) - The newly elected head of the Iranian Parliament's Article 90 Commission has said that with parliament's serious action in the monitoring field, criminal's inclination to commit crimes would decline.

In a question about the parliament's Article 90 Commission's duties Nasrullah Pejmanfar said legislation and supervision of the well-implementation of laws are the defined duties of Article 90 Commission.

"Monitoring field requires Article 90 Commission's seriousness, operation and realism without which corruption in the society will not be prevented," Pejmanfar noted.

"There are social, cultural, economic, political and military- security committees in the parliament which are our concern to focus on them as well," he asserted.

The Article 90 Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iranian Parliament) specifically monitors the performance of the government, the judiciary, and the parliament.

Article 90 of the Iranian constitution stipulates that anyone who has a complaint about the performance of the parliament as well as the executive and judiciary branches can file a complaint and then submit it to the Article 90 Commission of the parliament.

Two Historical Structures Dug Out in Central Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - Two ancient structures dating back to the Parthian Empire (Arsacid Empire) have been unearthed in central Iran.

They were discovered on a historical hill in the city of Isfahan during operations to save antiquities in the ancient site.

The structures include a workshop and a metal melting furnace, says the head of the archaeological team.

"Marks of severe burns, furnace heat and pieces of metal were found around the walls of this Parthian structure," the senior archaeologist said.

"Silver coins would be mostly made beyond borders and outside the realms of empires, but copper coins were made locally. The coin found in the metal melting furnace is a Parthian copper coin clearly bearing Greek letters," according to the lead archaeologist.

Other structures have also been discovered on the historical hill in Isfahan which shows the site used to be an urban area, and not simply a military fortress or a single mansion, he said.

Majlis Pursues Economic Diplomacy

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of the Iranian Parliament's Economic Commission called economic diplomacy as one of the significant potentials and priorities that the Commission will pursue.

Mohammad Reza Pourebrahimi referred to the reformation of budget structure, saying that the reformations include the organization of tax exemptions, prevention of tax evasion, creation of new tax bases, enhancing the efficiency of government assets as well as their identification and transference, and reduction of the governmental companies' expenses.

The senior lawmaker also put emphasis on addressing people's livelihood and reformation of the banking system which were assigned by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.



SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

PERMIT NO : 1399.1940



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(FIRST/SECOND PUBLISH)- RETENDER ONE STAGES TENDER

Subject of Tender:HYDRAULIC RAISING CYLINDER (3-STAGE)

• Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial)
National Iranian Drilling Company	10,171,996	Tender No. :FP/17-98/119-3 Indent No.: 43-22-9801548006	11,160,000,000

• Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.
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• Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof (closing date 1399/05/11 – Aug 01,2020)	
	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1th floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148656 -06134148615
	Submitting Method	• Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. • Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	• 35 Days after the last time of Purchasing. (closing date 1399/06/15- Sep 05,2020) • The envelopes will be opened On Sep06,2020 (1399/06/16) at 11:45 a.m.
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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:38
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:23
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:03

45. Say, "I do but warn you according to revelation":
But the deaf will not hear the call, (even) when they are warned!
46. If but a breath of the Wrath of thy Lord do touch them, they will then say,
"Woe to us! we did wrong indeed!"
Surah 21. The Prophets (45 - 46)

Tehran Eyes Expanding Economic Ties With Muscat

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran is determined to expand economic cooperation With Oman with an eye on developing this Persian Gulf Arab state.

Iran-Oman Chamber of Commerce held its annual general meeting online in Tehran where the participants announced the future plans of the chamber which are focused on boosting tourism, industry, mine, transportation, fishery and easing the ground for presence of Iranian economic activists in Oman despite current problems in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Addressing the meeting, Head of Iran-Oman Chamber of Commerce, Mohsen Zarrabi, pointed to the current bilateral relation of both states and termed it good. He further said that fortunately since 2013, the infrastructures for Iran-Oman relations have been in good condition and Oman is a good destination for export and re-export for Iranian products.

Zarrabi noted that of course appropriate infrastructures have been prepared for imports from Oman which is undeniable.

He stated that in 20013, the trade volume between both states stood at \$221m which has gradually grown five-fold in recent years and the figure stood at \$1.16b at 2018, admitting that the trade volume faced a downtrend in 2019 and fell to \$694m.

Zarrabi blamed the U.S. sanctions, some sudden changes in regulations and overnight bans which are announced in the country for this decline in trade with Oman. He admitted that unexpected changes in regulations have upset Omanis and they have lost their trust for continuing trade with Iran.

He also said that stability in the macro-economic policies of the country for developing export markets is crucial and inevitable.



Zarrabi reiterated that without stability and planning, successful export cannot be achieved, adding due to the current forex condition of Iran, non-oil exports and forex revenues of the country are very important and the government should provide infrastructures for developing exports.

He also pointed to the facilities which have been provided by Omani government for Iranian traders as they can get visas upon their arrivals in the country and this decision has eased the way for cooperation for Iranian private sector traders.

Zarrabi also pointed to the outbreak of the coronavirus, saying that at the time of pandemic when most countries had closed their borders to Iran's exports, Oman was the only country which kept its border open to Iran.

He further said both countries have started cooperation on tourism sector since 2018 and so far the number of health and religious tourists has reached 86,000.

He noted that Oman is rich in terms of mineral resources and both countries can boost their bilateral cooperation in this sector by having joint investment.

Zarrabi added that talks are underway for boosting cooperation in other sectors like fishery and transportation. The general meeting was held online and it was the first experience of the chamber for meeting online.

IME Posts Weekly Trade of Over 559k Tons of Commodity

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - During weekdays ending up to July 16, 2020, over 559,589 MT of commodities worth over \$1,119m were traded on the Iran Mercantile Exchange.



According to the report from IME International Affairs and PR, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 202,258 MT of various products worth close to \$594m were traded last week.

On this trading floor, 192,835 MT of steel, 4,110 MT of copper, 3,500 MT of aluminum, 140 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 18 MT of precious metal concentrates as well as 5 kg of gold bullion dust were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 354,876 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$528m were traded.

On this trading floor, 103,000 MT of VB feed stock, 97,717 MT of bitumen, 74,577 MT of polymer products, 34,218 MT of chemical products, 640 MT of insulation, 35,000 MT of lube cut oil, 2,234 MT of base oil as well as 7,490 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 2,455 MT of commodities were traded on the IME's side market.

Iran Exports to UAE Increase



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Director-general of Iran's Arab and African Office of the Trade Promotion Organization announced that Iran exports to the United Arab Emirates have increased in the first quarter of this year.

Farzad Pilten said on Friday that Iran's exports to the UAE reached about \$ 1 billion, showing an 8% increase compared to the same period last year; Adding "Iran's exports to the UAE was about \$ 900 million."

"Statistics show that Iran exports to this country have reached 3.4 million tons from 2.4 million tons compared to the same period last year, which shows an increase of about 40%," he confirmed.

According to reports, the UAE remains one of Iran's biggest trading partners despite Abu Dhabi's hostile foreign policy posture against the country and US sanctions against Tehran.

Iran and United Arab Emirates (UAE) resumed bilateral trade exchange via sea, Fars news agency reported on June 5, quoting the ports affairs director of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO).

Ravanbakhsh Behzadian said that maritime trade between Iran and the UAE had been halted since the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic.

"According to the new health guidelines and protocols, these business communications have resumed between the two countries," he added.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government is pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20).

Exports to Iraq Top \$1.45b in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran exported more than five million tons of goods worth around \$1.45 billion to Iraq during the first three months of the current fiscal to June 20, said the secretary general of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce.

"The exports to the neighboring country were hit hard with a 19.35% and 57.45% decline in terms of volume and value compared with the corresponding period of last year due to the novel coronavirus pandemic," Hamid Hosseini also said on Friday.

The official noted that as many as 16,000 trucks carried goods from Iran to Iraq across the main borders,

bringing \$970m revenues to the country.

Noting that Iraq is the second top destination of Iranian goods after China, Hosseini expressed hope that the situation would improve in the coming weeks as the two countries are trying to resume their trades after an almost five-month challenging period.

Iran's export commodities to Iraq through mainly include cement, agro products, steel products, plastics, cars, car parts and petrochemicals.

Iran exported \$9 billion worth of goods to Iraq last year that ended on March 19 making Iraq its top destination among the neighboring states.

Third Shipment of Afghanistan Transported From Chabahar to India

CHABAHAR (IP) - Afghanistan sent its third shipment of transit goods to India via the Iranian port of Shahid Beheshti in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Despite regional media recently claimed the possible failure of the Iran-India-Afghanistan tripartite cooperation development project through the port of Chabahar, the Afghan Ministry of Transport announced on Friday that the country's third transit cargo ship has sailed to India through Chabahar port.

According to the ministry, the transit of shipment cargo carried out in line with the India-Afghanistan-Iran tripartite agreement which was unprecedented.

Afghanistan's first and second transit cargo of dried fruits was exported to India through Chabahar port about twenty days ago.

Meanwhile, Indian wheat is being transported to Afghanistan through Chabahar port and so far 5 shipments carrying this wheat have been transferred from this port to Afghanistan.

The port of Chabahar in southeastern Iran is of great importance to India due to its strategic location and closest access to landlocked Central Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

New Delhi, Kabul, and Tehran inked a trilateral deal in 2016 to develop Shahid Beheshti Port as a hub for the transit of goods from India to landlocked Afghanistan.

Iran, Senegal Review Economic Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's Ambassador to Dakar Mohammad Reza Dehshiri held separate meetings with Senegalese Minister of Petroleum and Energy Mouhamadou Makhtar Cisse and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment Moussa Balde.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the expansion of cooperation in the field of oil, gas, and energy.

The holding of the fifth meeting of the Iran-Senegal Joint Commission as well as



the program of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of official relations between the two countries were among the topics discussed during the meeting of Dehshiri and Makhtar Cisse on Friday.

Dehshiri also met and held talks with Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment Moussa Balde on Thursday.

The two sides reviewed the development of agricultural cooperation between Iran and Senegal.

Production of Oilseeds to Grow in Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The production of oilseeds and fodder in Iran is planned to exceed 1 million tons in the current Iranian year (began March 20, 2020), Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad Abbas Keshavarz said.

Keshavarz noted that this is reflected in the government's program to prevent the import of these products.

The official added that given the importance of strengthening Iran's food security

and security in the agricultural sector, the programs related to summer and autumn sowing have been prepared and submitted to the government.

The deputy minister stressed that Bahar county of Hamadan Province is one of the main counties for potato production.

"The potato is Iran's second food product in terms of consumption, and 40 tons of potatoes are harvested per hectare a year," he said.

The oilseeds have been planted on 220,000 hectares in Iran in the current Iranian year. So far, 260,000 tons of rapeseed has been purchased from farmers in Iran.

Joint Platform for Commercial And Heavy Vehicles Is a "Must"

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) says in order to be able to compete with foreign auto-makers, design of a joint platform for commercial and heavy vehicles is a must in order to reduce the final cost of production.

Mr. Ami Bayat said by reducing the final cost of the product and design of a joint platform, the number of circulation and output of the production will increase and it helps the country to develop genuine standardization.

He also pointed to the cruel sanctions, saying that despite all pressures, the ministry of industry, mine and trade pursues strongly all ways for thwarting sanctions and to indigenize the imported machineries, equipment and raw material.

On the delivery of ready buses to the customers, he said the talks with Organization for the Protection of Consumers and Producers (OPCP) are underway for pricing vehicles.

Bayat expressed hope in the upcoming days, the issue of pricing of vehicles would end with an appropriate and logical price in favor of both consumers and producers.

He reiterated that in the current condition that the country is challenging with economic sanctions and the Coronavirus pandemic, supporting the producers will have important role in economic stability in the country.



WHO Reports Record Daily Increase In Global Coronavirus Cases

GENEVA (Reuters) - The World Health Organization reported a record increase in global coronavirus cases on Friday, with the total rising by 237,743 in 24 hours.

The biggest increases were from the United States, Brazil, India and South Africa, according to a daily report. The previous WHO record for new cases was 230,370 on July 12. Deaths have held steady and averaged less than 5,000 a day in July.

Total global coronavirus cases were approaching 14 million on Friday, according to a Reuters tally, marking another milestone in the spread of the disease that has killed more than 590,000 people in seven months.



Foreign Ministers of China, Russia Oppose U.S. Unilateralism

MOSCOW (Reuters) - The foreign ministers of China and Russia held a telephone conversation on Friday, in which they opposed "U.S. unilateralism", China's state news agency Xinhua reported.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi told Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov that Beijing felt the United States was reviving a "Cold War mentality" in its policy toward China, according to the report. It quoted Lavrov as saying that Russia opposed unilateralism in international affairs. The remarks come as tensions between the United States and China have increased over China's imposition of its national security law in Hong Kong, an ongoing trade war between the two economies and their handling of the coronavirus outbreak, among other diplomatic rifts.



EU Leaders Deadlocked Over COVID Recovery Plan



BRUSSELS (Reuters) - EU leaders failed on Friday to make headway in negotiations over a massive stimulus plan to breathe life into economies ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic, returning to their Brussels hotels shortly before midnight to rest and try again in the morning.

Many of the 27 heads declared on arrival for their first face-to-face summit for five months that a deal was crucial to rescue economies in free fall and shore up faith in the European Union, which has lurched for years from crisis to crisis.

But officials said a thrifty camp of wealthy northern states led by the Netherlands stood its ground on access to the recovery fund, in the face of opposition from Germany, France, southern nations Italy and Spain, and eastern European states. The proposed sums under discussion include the EU's 2021-27 budget of more than 1 trillion euros and the recovery fund worth 750 billion euros that will be funneled mostly to Mediterranean coast countries worst affected by the pandemic. Diplomats said the 27 remained at odds over the overall size of the package, the split between grants and repayable loans in the recovery fund and rule-of-law strings attached to it.

But the main stumbling block was over vetting procedures to access aid, an EU official said, with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte demanding that one country could block payouts from the fund if member states backslide on economic reform.

"If they want loans and even grants then I think it's only logical that I can explain to people in the Netherlands ... that in return those reforms have taken place," Rutte said, estimating the chances for a deal at fifty-fifty.

Polish premier Mateusz Morawiecki was even more gloomy.

As the leaders broke up for the day, he tweeted that they were divided by a bundle of issues and said it was "highly probable" that they would fail to reach a deal on Saturday or even on Sunday if the summit drags past its scheduled two days.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who celebrated her 66th birthday around the negotiating table in Brussels, was also cautious on chances for an agreement, envisaging "very, very difficult negotiations".

After initial elbow bumps between the leaders - all wearing face masks - and birthday gifts for Merkel and Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa, tense meetings followed in the evening with Rutte and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Orban, who critics accuse of stifling the media, academics and NGOs, threatened to veto the entire plan over a mechanism that would freeze out countries that fail to live up to democratic standards.

With EU economies deep in recession and immediate relief measures such as short-time work schemes running out, the spectre of an autumn of hardship and discontent is looming.

Erdogan Says Egypt's Actions In Libya Are Illegal

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has denounced Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for supporting forces based in eastern Libya, after Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met Libyan tribesmen who urged Cairo to intervene in the war.

Turkey has been providing military aid to the United Nations-recognised government in the Libya conflict, while Egypt, the UAE and Russia have backed its foes in a rival administration based in the east. Recent weeks have seen dramatic military advances by the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), which drove back forces of the eastern renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar who had launched an assault on Tripoli last year.

Eastern-based legislators called this week for Egypt to intervene in the conflict. El-Sisi met Libyan tribesmen on Thursday and said Egypt would not stand idle in the face of a direct threat to Egyptian and Libyan security.



Pakistan PM Khan Urges Simplicity to Slow Virus Over Eid

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Pakistanis should celebrate the upcoming Eid festival with "simplicity" to prevent a spike in new coronavirus cases, Prime Minister Imran Khan said Friday.

Many people ignored social distancing guidelines and flocked to mosques and markets during the last religious holiday marking the end of Ramadan in May -- helping fuel a subsequent surge in COVID-19 cases across Pakistan.

The increase prompted the World Health Organization to call for new lockdowns across Pakistan.

"Eid ul Azha must be celebrated with simplicity so as not to repeat what happened last Eid when SOPs (standard operating procedures) were ignored & our hospitals were choked", Khan tweeted, adding that he was ordering the "strict implementation" of government guidelines.

The Eid festival of animal sacrifice will begin at the end of the month and lasts for several days. Authorities expect a rush of people going to markets to look for sheep, goats and other animals to slaughter.

Many in Pakistan return to their family homes from cities to observe the festival. According to official tallies, around 260,000 people in Pakistan have tested positive for coronavirus, including more than 5,470 deaths.

In recent days, Pakistan has seen the rate of new infections slow considerably. While some medical experts have said this is because of a decrease in testing, Khan said the "positive trend" was primarily the result of "smart" lockdowns in which hotspots are sealed off.

Cricketer-turned-politician Khan drew criticism early in the virus crisis for resisting a comprehensive, nationwide lockdown and instead leaving provincial governments to enact most of the restrictions.

He argued that impoverished Pakistan could not afford the type of sweeping shutdowns seen in other countries.

Indonesian Rescuers Hunt for Dozens Missing After Floods Kill 36

JAKARTA (AFP) - Rescuers pulled bodies from under mud and debris Friday as they raced to find dozens still missing after flash floods killed at least 36 people on Indonesia's Sulawesi island.

More than 14,000 people left homeless by the disaster have taken refuge at temporary shelters in hard-hit North Luwu regency, with the country's search and rescue agency hunting for 66 people still unaccounted for.

Several rivers burst their banks after torrential rains pounded the region Monday, sparking the deadly flash floods.

On Friday, officials said at least 36 people had died in the disaster, following the retrieval of more bodies.

They also raised previous missing victim figures from a dozen to more than 60, citing new reports from concerned relatives.

"The chances of finding them alive are slim as

we've been searching for four days now and it's a difficult situation in the field," Andi Mukti, coordinator of North Luwu's search-and-rescue team, told AFP.

"There's thick mud up to two metres (six feet) high."

The search would still continue through the weekend, he added.

Several thousand houses as well as government offices and public facilities were engulfed by mud from the floods.

This week, desperate residents searched through their homes for pots and pans and other belongings to take to the temporary shelters in flood-prone North Luwu.

In January, record rains triggered flooding and landslides that killed nearly 70 people in and around Indonesia's capital Jakarta, which is on neighbouring Java island.

The Southeast Asian archipelago is regularly hit by floods during the rainy season.



Punches, Water Balloons Thrown In Taiwan Parliament Melee



TAIPEI (AFP) - Taiwanese lawmakers threw punches and water balloons inside the legislature on Friday, the third parliamentary brawl in a fortnight, over the nomination of the head of a top government watchdog.

A legislator from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was caught on camera punching an opposition party member during a vote on nominee Chen Chu.

Kuomintang (KMT) lawmakers later threw water balloons at the speakers' podium, forcing their DPP colleagues to don plastic raincoats and hold up cardboard shields.

The parliament in Taipei was once notorious for mass brawls, and has been the scene of frequent protests.

Scuffles broke out over reform policies and pension cuts when President Tsai Ing-wen first took office four years ago.

Such confrontations had since subsided, but in the last fortnight they have returned with abandon over the decision to nominate Chen, 70, to head the Control Yuan, an investigatory agency that monitors the other branches of government.

The KMT is opposed to her appointment, which requires approval from the DPP-dominated parliament.

The party also claimed that 24 out of 27 people nominated for membership of the Control Yuan have close ties with the DPP in the "worst ever" nomination list for the agency.

"We demand a new review and we demand the nominations be withdrawn," KMT chairman Johnny Chiang told supporters gathered outside the Control Yuan building, also in the capital.

Chen is a long-time human rights advocate and was jailed for six years when Taiwan was a dictatorship under the KMT. Despite the morning's melee, voting went ahead and Chen's nomination was approved.

She has said she will quit the DPP after her nomination is approved, to maintain the impartiality of the position, and accused the opposition of smearing her with unfounded accusations.

Gheitarieh Apt (\$3000)
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
pkg, & F.F

Shanon (adviser)

Tajrish Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
S/pool, S, J
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

(\$2400)
Zaferanieh
250sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
balcony, & F.F

Farmanieh Apts
(\$1800) 150sq.m, 2bdrs
(\$2200) 200sq.m, 3bdrs
Both with S/p, S, J, & F.F

Nice view

(\$12000)
Niavaran bldg
5storey, 20bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg lots
yard, Brand new

Darrous Apt (\$1500)
180sq.m, 3bdrs, & F.F

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Singapore Exports Surge 16.1% in June

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Singapore's June non-oil domestic exports (NODX) jumped 16.1% from a year ago, beating forecasts, official data showed on Friday, helped by shipments of pharmaceuticals, specialised machinery and electronics.

That was reversal of a revised 4.6% decline in May, and higher than the 6.2% increase forecast by

economists in a Reuters poll. The figure was also boosted by a low base comparison from the year earlier.

On a seasonally adjusted month-on-month basis, exports rose 0.5% in June after a revised 4.6% fall in the previous month, Enterprise Singapore said in a statement.

Economists had forecast a 2.2% contraction.



Cuba Will Eliminate Dollar Tax to Boost Economy

HAVANA (AFP) - Cuba will eliminate Monday the 10 percent tax it has previously levied on the use of the US dollar -- and widen the categories of products for which it can be used to pay -- in response to the country's economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic and Washington's ongoing embargo.

"We are going to eliminate that 10 percent levy even despite the hostility and the intensifying of the blockade of the United States," Economy Minister Alejandro Gil told state TV.

The use of the dollar has been accompanied by a financial penalty since 2004, with the government justifying the move by pointing to the difficulty of operating in US currency in the face of sanctions.

Facing a cash shortage as the embargo tightened and its own economic reforms were delayed, Cuba last year began allowing citizens to purchase household appliances and cars with dollars via bank cards.

Despite the high demand for using dollars, consumers had to deposit their money -- often received through remittances -- into a bank before they could use it. With the penalty, only 90 cents of every dollar made it onto their cards.

With the tax canceled as of July 20, demand could increase even more.

"It is a fair and logical measure," economist Omar Everleny Perez told AFP. "To continue supplying stores, the country needs a currency that allows it to do so."

The new rules will allow certain high-end groceries and hygiene products to be purchased using dollars in some stores, though it is so far unclear which ones.

"There is a segment of the market with economic solvency," Perez said, pointing to the purchases some in Cuba are able to make.

The sale of groceries in both currencies -- with one CUC equivalent to one dollar and 24 CUP equivalent to one dollar -- will continue.

The Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) predicts Cuba's GDP will contract 8 percent in 2020 thanks to the pandemic.

Tourism, the country's economic driver, has been paralyzed for the last four months due to travel restrictions put in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus and the island has had to make adjustments in the face of an "exceptional" situation, economy minister Gil said.

The government has supported the creation of small and micro businesses in both the public and private sphere, as well as encouraged foreign investment in food production.

"This is a system of measures that are orientated to strengthening us, not just to stay afloat but also to get ahead and develop," Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said.

Russian Banking Sector Profits Recover in June

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Profits in Russia's banking sector rose to 70 billion roubles (777 million pounds) in June from just 500 million roubles in May, which included some weeks of lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, the central bank said in a report on Friday.

Despite the recovery, the central bank said the June figure was much lower than the average monthly profit in 2019, which stood at around 140 billion roubles.

Three benchmark interest rate cuts by the central bank this year and declining household incomes linked to the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic have put banking sector funding under pressure.

The report said bank retail deposits increased 1.9% in June, compensating for seasonal outflows from January to May and people stockpiling cash when restrictive health measures were introduced to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus in March.

This increase was driven primarily by a family support programme that saw the government hand out around 290



billion roubles to citizens, it said, with Russia's largest lender Sberbank attributing 3% growth to such payments.

In the first six months of 2020, deposits grew 1.2%, while Russian banks made a profit of 630 billion roubles (\$8.1 billion).

However, as the central bank noted in a recent review of baking sector liquidity, long-term rouble deposits - an important source of bank funding - fell for the first time since early 2018, with short-term deposits up to 30 days driving the growth.

Chief analyst at Sberbank Mikhail Matovnikov said customer behaviour had changed during the pandemic, with people trying to avoid visiting banks and therefore opening accounts less often, adding that consumption had decreased more than income, allowing people to accumulate savings.

"We find ourselves in a state of crisis, and this has to affect the deposit base," said the CEO of Moscow-based management consultancy firm Frank RG, Yuri Gribanov.

"The state of market stagnation could last from six months to a year."

Greece, Egypt Close to an Exclusive Economic Zone Agreement

ATHENS (Dispatches) - Greece and Egypt appear to be close to signing an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) deal.

"The agreement between Greece and Egypt on the definition of the EEZ is nearing completion," Greek Ambassador to Cairo, Nikos Garilidis told Al-Ahram newspaper.

"We are close, very close," noted the Greek ambassador.

At the same time, Garilidis emphasized that it is up to Turkey to continue the good relations with its neighbors.

"If Turkey abandoned its Ottoman ideas,

then Greece could contribute to further economic co-operation," he added.

Regarding Libya and the role that Turkey is trying to play, Garilidis argued that Turkey wants to play a dominant role in the region, but this cannot be accepted by many Mediterranean countries.

Finally he stressed that Turkey should enter into agreements, but on the basis of international law.

Greece is ready to discuss with Turkey the possibility of a delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) for the two countries, if the other party is willing, Environment and Energy Minister Kostis Hatzidakis said last month, as reported by Greek City Times.

"If Turkey wants to make a deal similar to that (Greece did) with Italy, we are here to discuss it," Hatzidakis tweeted.

"If it doesn't, the Mitsotakis government has made its positions clear, both on (the) Evros (land border) and with the EastMed (pipeline). In no way will we leave our country defenceless," he added.

General Konstantinos Floros, the head of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, said that Greece will not tolerate any violation of its sovereignty.

The statement came after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu claimed that some of Greece's islands do not have continental shelves that entitle them to an Exclusive Economic Zone. This contradicts international law like the United Nations Charter Law of the Sea, in which Turkey is one of only 15 countries in the whole world to not recognise.

Turkey's Removal From F-35 Program to Cost Partners Up to \$9m Per Aircraft

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish companies' removal from the F-35 fighter jet development project would cost the program \$600 million, plus an additional cost of \$7 million to \$9 million per aircraft, Turkish Defense Industries Presidency (SSB) Chairman Ismail Demir said.

Ankara was suspended from the program nearly a year ago over its purchase of a Russian-made air defense system.

Demir was speaking at a panel organized by the Washington branch of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) on the defense cooperation between Turkey and the U.S.

He criticized Washington's concerns on a NATO country's use of a Russian system in terms of security, saying that Turkey has repeatedly stressed it will use the S-400 air defense systems as a single unit to protect its own weapon systems as well.

Turkey is ready for mutual work to find a solution for the concerns of Washington, Demir said, adding that Moscow has also explained its concerns in regard to the data of its S-400 systems, and Ankara is committed to protecting them.

The defense industry head stressed that it is not logical for Turkey to harm the program since it is a part of it, noting that, however, the U.S. is very close to agreeing to mutual dialogue.

"With the removal of our companies, there will be an increase of around \$7 million to \$9 million for each aircraft's cost," Demir said, which he pointed out all program partners would pay, not just Turkey.

Ankara has also repeatedly stressed that Turkey will continue manufacturing components for F-35 fighter jets through 2022, despite being unilaterally suspended from the program.

U.S. President Donald Trump recently confirmed that Turkey continues to produce key parts for the jet. Pentagon spokeswoman Jessica Maxwell said in late June that the U.S. will continue working with Turkish companies to produce some parts of F-35 jets until 2022.

Maxwell was quoted by Anadolu Agency (AA) as saying the companies would keep producing 139 components of the jets until 2022. "Our industry partners will carry out the continuing contracts," she said, adding that the Pentagon was still looking for alternatives to Turkey. Demir said now even third-party countries had contacted Turkey for those parts.

James Stavridis, the U.S.' former Europe force commander, speaking at the same panel, said Turkey's geographical position is critical for the NATO alliance, and it is "also very important for the United States."

Stavridis noted that Turkey has been successful in producing strong warfare systems, unmanned aerial vehicles being at the forefront, saying, "Turkey is extremely important for NATO's fighting force with its military power and capacity that the country has reached today." He noted that despite some tactical differences between the U.S. and Turkey, both countries need to understand each other in terms of strategic relations.

Japan June Exports Seen Tumbling Again



TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's exports likely tumbled at a double-digit pace for the fourth month in a row in June, as the coronavirus epidemic took a heavy toll on global demand and the country's export-led economy, a Reuters poll showed on Friday.

Global demand for cars and other durable goods has plunged since March as the pandemic prompted many countries to lockdown, forcing businesses to shut and people to stay at home.

Though more countries have started re-opening their economies and activity has likely bottomed out, policymakers and analysts play down the prospects for a sharp recovery in global demand.

Analysts polled by Reuters expect data on Monday will show Japan's exports fell 24.9% in June from a year earlier, following a 28.3% fall in May, which was the biggest annual decline since September 2009.

Imports probably fell 16.8%, versus a 26.2% drop in the previous month, resulting in a trade deficit of 35.8 billion yen (£265.7 million), the poll of 16 economists showed. "Both exports and imports are likely to show signs of bottoming out," said Kenta Maruyama, an economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting.

"While China-bound shipments will lead a recovery, Europe and America as well as car-related demand are slow to recover. As such, fully-fledged Japanese export recovery will be delayed into autumn or later."

A private factory survey for June had indicated new orders remained deep in contraction territory.

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) will release the trade data at 8:50 a.m. on Monday (2350 GMT Sunday).

ECB Survey Points to Shallower Recession, Stronger Rebound

FRANKFURT (Reuters) - The euro zone economy may contract less this year than the European Central Bank had forecast and its recovery could also be quicker, the bank's Survey of Professional Forecasters showed on Friday.

The quarterly survey sees the economy shrinking by 8.3% this year, a downgrade from its May projection for a 5.5% drop but



a more benign outcome than the ECB staff's own estimate for an 8.7% drop. For next year, growth is seen at 5.7%, above the ECB's staff's 5.2% estimate in June.

Although the euro zone suffered its biggest recession in generations, recent data suggest the economy bottomed out in April or May and a recovery is now underway, even if it is bound to be choppy, uneven and prone to setbacks.

The survey was also more optimistic about inflation as it sees 2020 price growth at 0.4% against the ECB's 0.3% projection while inflation in 2021 is seen at 1% as against the ECB's 0.8% prediction.

Growth projections for 2025, deemed as the "longer-term", were left unchanged at 1.4% but the longer-term inflation forecast was cut to 1.6% from 1.7%, short of the ECB's target for inflation at just below 2%.

2 Iranian Films Invited to Melbourne Film Festival

TEHRAN (ISNA) – Two Iranian films are invited to 2020 Melbourne International Film Festival, which has moved online due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The virtual festival, titled MIFF 68 ½, will run from August 6-23 and marks the first time Australia's biggest film festival will not take place since its launch in 1952.

The selection comprises 74 features and 44 shorts from 56 countries.

Iranian film "Just 6.5" directed by Saeed Roustaei and Iranian documentary "Sunless Shadows" directed by Mehrdad Oskoui are selected as the representatives of Iran's cinema at the festival.



Rising Coronavirus Infections Threaten U.S. Economic Recovery

BALTIMORE (AP) - Rising coronavirus infections across dozens of states are threatening the U.S. economic recovery, forcing businesses and consumers to freeze spending and keeping the unemployment rate stubbornly high.

The government reported Thursday that retail sales rose a sharp 7.5% in June, but the positive trend was undercut by more recent data showing that credit card spending has stalled. A separate report showed that more than a million Americans sought unemployment benefits last week – a sign that companies continue to cut jobs as the virus slashes through the heavily populated Sunbelt.

Economists fear that any positive momentum could come to a halt later this summer if infections and deaths rise and more businesses close.

"Conditions in the labor market remain weak and the risk of mounting permanent job losses is high, especially if activity continues to be disrupted by repeated virus-related shutdowns," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

It was the 17th consecutive week that jobless claims surpassed 1 million. Prior to the pandemic, just 200,000 people sought unemployment assistance in a typical week.

The Labor Department data emerged as the nation saw more troubling infections. Florida reported a single-day record of 156 deaths, along with nearly 14,000 new cases, mirroring a broader trend this week that has seen the national death rate spike. The seven-day rolling average for new deaths has risen to 730, a more than 21 percent increase from a week ago.

Infections are now climbing in 40 states, and 22 states have either paused or reversed efforts to reopen their economies, according to Bank of America.

Businesses and consumers alike are adjusting to the perpetual risk of outbreaks.

Cash payments are out. Deliveries are in. Skeleton crews are keeping retailers afloat. It's a moment of both caution and innovation that will likely produce lasting changes in how Americans spend. Business as usual may never return because the steps to improve safety also enable companies to streamline and operate with fewer workers.

At the R. House food hall in Baltimore, all orders and payments now go through an app, Toast TakeOut. Customers gather on an outdoor patio instead of venturing inside what had previously been an auto dealership. That reduces the hall's potential capacity to 100 eaters from 350 before the outbreak and makes the business more reliant on take-out.

But the payment app has become a convenience for customers, who no longer need to wait in lines for cash registers and can settle into their seats while ordering from the local eateries on site that range from authentic tacos to Korean BBQ to Hawaiian poke bowls to fried chicken sandwiches.

Consumers are shifting their spending patterns in ways that could make it hard for jobs to return to a retail sector that employed 15.7 million people before the pandemic. Even with the June rebound, sales at eateries and



clothing stores are down more than 20% from a year ago. Meanwhile, spending on an annual basis has picked up at building material stores, online outlets and merchants in the sporting goods, musical instrument, books and hobbies categories.

Adding to all this pressure are signs that the recovery in consumer spending began to stall at the end of last month, according to analysis of credit cards by the bank JPMorgan Chase.

The total number of people receiving jobless benefits nationwide dropped 400,000, to 17.3 million, last week, the government said, suggesting that hiring in some regions could offset some of the mounting job losses seen last week in Florida, Georgia, California, Arizona and South Carolina.

But huge U.S. companies continue to announce layoffs. American Airlines warned workers Wednesday that it may have to cut up to 25,000 jobs in October because of sharply reduced air travel. United Airlines warned 36,000 of its employees last week that they may lose their jobs.

The uncertainty of what comes next is heightened by the pending expiration of many of the government-support programs that have shored up the finances of both businesses and families.

The government's small-business loan program will stop taking applications Aug. 8. More than \$500 billion has already been loaned, and more than half of small companies that got loans say they have spent all the money, according to a survey by the National Federation of Independent Business. Nearly a quarter say they have laid off workers or expect to do so once the funds run out.

France Postpones Pension Reform Talks Until 2021



PARIS (Reuters) - Negotiations between the French government and unions over a controversial pension reform will be postponed until 2021 to focus on economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, Prime Minister Jean Castex said on Friday.

The reform, pushed by President Emmanuel Macron and the single greatest revamp of the pension system since World War Two, was halted in its tracks in February by the pandemic.

The proposal angered unions and brought thousands of people onto the streets at the turn of the year. The decision to push it back aims in part to ease those tensions as France grapples with the economic fallout from the coronavirus.

"The priority now is the battle against the crisis, for employment and to tackle unemployment," Castex told reporters after his first meeting with union representatives since becoming prime minister this month.

Castex said the reform, which includes raising the retirement age by two years to 64, would not be scrapped. A deferment until after the 2022 presidential elections might defuse union and voter concerns, but would undermine Macron's already-weakened credibility as a reformer.

The reform is central to Macron's ambition of creating a more flexible and competitive labour force. But trade unions who argue that it will erode hard-earned benefits and leave pensioners worse off.

Castex also said that the full implementation of unemployment insurance reform would be postponed to Jan. 1.

Only Together Can We Fend Off the Common Threat of COVID

TEHRAN 2020 (UNIC) – United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his message for Nelson Mandela International Day, 18 July 2020, said only together can we fend off the common threat of COVID and recover better.

The full text of his message reads:

Each year, on Nelson's Mandela's birthday, we pay tribute to an extraordinary global advocate for equality, dignity and solidarity.

Madiba was a moral giant of the 20th century, whose timeless legacy continues to guide us today.

The theme of Nelson Mandela International Day is "Take action, inspire change".

It highlights the importance of working together, from governments to citizens, to build a peaceful, sustainable and equitable world.

We mark this day at a time when the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic endangers everyone, everywhere, and especially the most vulnerable.

In the face of these challenges, world leaders need to recognize the vital importance of unity and solidarity.



COVID-19 is exposing deep inequalities.

We need to fight this pandemic of inequality through a new social contract for a new era.

Only together can we fend off the common threat of COVID and recover better.

As the United Nations marks its 75th anniversary in this fragile time, we reflect on the life and work of Nelson Mandela, who embodied the highest

values of the United Nations and who took action and inspired change.

Despite many years as a prisoner of conscience, Madiba retained his dignity and commitment to his ideals.

Let his example propel any governments that keep such prisoners to release them.

There should be no prisoners of conscience in the 21st century.

Nelson Mandela reminded us that: "As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest."

On this Mandela Day, let us recall that we can, and must, be part of the quest for a better future of dignity, opportunity and prosperity for all people on a healthy planet.

EU Deeply...

FROM PAGE 1

The U.S. president, who champions a "maximum pressure" Iran policy and is a staunch Israeli ally, is trailing in the polls behind his rival Joe Biden with less than four months to go until the next election.

Biden, who was the vice president when the U.S. negotiated the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, has criticized Trump for quitting the agreement and signaled that he would rejoin it if he gets elected.

"There would be a lot less appetite for adventures and secret missions to blow up nuclear facilities under a Biden administration," the EU official noted.

West Unhappy...

FROM PAGE 1

"Today, China does not only oppose U.S. policies of unilateralism and expansionism but also is the world's second-largest economy," said Iran's envoy to IAEA, stressing that China also has a number of common grounds with Iran on international issues, and in recent years has always opposed international organization's decisions and actions against Iran.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he called Iran's strategic cooperation with China a wise decision in the interest of both countries, adding that "It is natural that in such a situation, the United States and its allies will make any efforts to keep Iran in economic isolation and prevent it from entering into extensive trade and economic relations with other countries."

"The United States and its allies' opposition against this document shows that entering into a long-term, strategic partnership with China that benefits both countries is a wise decision" he asserted.

According to Gharib Abadi, one of the main concerns of foreign opponents of the realization of this strategic document is Iran's progress and development during the sanctions, which is challenging the western country's system of domination as much as possible.

Finally, he said that it is necessary to highlight that western countries are not only sympathetic to the Iranian people but also their main concern of the realization of this strategic document is Iran's progress and development during the sanctions.

188 More COVID-19...

FROM PAGE 1

According to the spokeswoman, the provinces of East Azerbaijan, Ilam, Bushehr, Khuzestan, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Zanjan, Kerman, Golestan, and Fars are in a critical situation namely Red status.

The infection rate is reducing in Khuzestan and Zanjan provinces due to the cooperation of people in observing the health protocols.

Meanwhile Health Minister said numerous research teams are working on a COVID-19 vaccine in Iran and have reached promising results.

Saeed Namaki reported the progress of several Iranian research teams in the production of a COVID-19 vaccine, expressing hope that people will hear good news in this regard. He said that the Iranian-made vaccine worked on animals and yielded good results and will be soon tested on humans too.

According to the World Health Organization, the number of people infected with Coronavirus in the world has exceeded 14 million, of which nearly 600,000 people have lost their lives. The number of people infected with the virus in Iran also has reached about 270,000 and about 14,000 have died due to the disease.

Iran Sends...

FROM PAGE 1

According to Iranian officials, 146 passengers used an Iranian passport to leave the country, 10 used an Afghan passport, five used a Canadian one, four a Swedish one, and two used Ukrainian passports.

The Ukrainian government, however, says there were 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians (mostly Iranian-Canadian dual nationals), 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, 7 Afghans, and 3 Britons on the plane.

Foreign Irlines...

FROM PAGE 1

His comments came after the EASA issued a warning on Thursday that civilian aircraft flying in Iranian airspace may be at risk for accidental targeting of the air defence, similar to the accidental shootdown of the Ukrainian plane in January.

Dehqan said the recent warning was not anything new and was a renewal of an advice of caution issued last year, extended until January 16, 2021.

The official finally highlighted the strict plans to carry out the health protocols in Iran's civil aviation industry to contain the spread of COVID-19, saying careful and constant inspection of the airports and airlines is being conducted.

Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 1

During his tenth visit to Pakistan in May last year, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif made proposals for connecting the ports of Chabahar and Gwadar.

The initial value of CPEC was \$ 46 billion, which has now grown to \$62 billion. This plan, which is in fact a regional communication network, can expand the connections between the countries of the region.

According to CPEC website, the project aims to promote transport, information technology, interconnected networks, including roads, railways, ports and air communication channels, data and fiber optics, energy cooperation, industrial development, poverty eradication, tourism and public relations.

The CPEC became partially operational on November 13, 2016, when a Chinese shipment was transported through the port of Gwadar to Africa and West Asia. The rest of the projects of CPEC started in 2017.

The construction of rail and road transport network from Chinese border to the port of Gwadar is one of the most important projects of the CPEC. The development of Pakistan's Gwadar port is also part of the major plan.

Marquez Tops Practice Times in Jerez

JEREZ (AFP) - Honda's world champion Marc Marquez topped the time sheets after Friday's two practice sessions ahead of the delayed MotoGP curtain-raiser in Jerez.

Yamaha's satellite SRT riders Franco Morbidelli and Fabio Quartararo took the honours in the afternoon session, but could not better Marquez's effort in cooler conditions in the morning.

Track temperatures soared to 54 degrees Celsius for the second session, with similar blistering conditions forecast for Sunday's Spanish MotoGP in Andalusia.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE	
Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448 Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450 Editorial Board: 44253449 Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395 Advertising Department: Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234 Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com	E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com ISSN 1024-6053 P.O. Box: 15875-8551 Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St. Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Hamilton on top as Mercedes Dominate in Hungary

BUDAPEST (AFP) - Lewis Hamilton topped the times ahead of team-mate Valtteri Bottas as Mercedes dominated Friday's opening practice for this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix.

The defending six-time world champion clocked a best lap in one minute and 16.003 seconds to outpace the championship-leading Finn by 0.086 seconds, both men running on hard tyres.

Sergio Perez was third for the much-improved Racing Point team ahead of his controversial 'pink Mercedes' team-mate Lance Stroll, Daniel Ricciardo of Renault and Sebastian Vettel, who offered some hope for Ferrari, by taking sixth.

Spurs Are Champions League Level Team

LONDON (Reuters) - Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho believes Europa League qualification is the least the club deserve after coming through a difficult campaign but said the players at his disposal are of Champions League level.

Tottenham were 14th in the Premier League standings when Mourinho took charge of the north London club last November, and have surged up to seventh with two games remaining.

Only title winners Liverpool, Manchester City and in-form Manchester United have recorded more points than Spurs since Mourinho's arrival, despite losing his key players to injuries.

"I think Spurs would be even better than that without all the problems that we had," Mourinho told a news conference ahead of Tottenham's clash against Leicester City on Sunday. "No other team had even similar problems."

"The fact that we are fourth (in the form table) since my arrival, without (Hugo) Lloris, Harry Kane, (Moussa) Sissoko and Son (Heung-min), is a good reflection of the potential we have."

"The minimum we deserve is to finish in a position that keeps us in European football, a competition that is not our level, we are better than that. We need to win these two matches now."

Victory against Leicester and Crystal Palace on the final day of the season will guarantee Spurs at least a seventh-placed finish as well as a Europa League spot, as long as ninth-placed Arsenal fail to win the FA Cup.

Mourinho said he is motivating his players to win the final two games of the season with the talk of winning Europa League next year.



"It's just a feeling to try to motivate the boys because our level is Champions League."

Meanwhile Pep Guardiola has challenged Manchester City to extend his impressive record at Wembley when the FA Cup holders face Arsenal the semi-final.

City have won the League Cup three years in a row and are bidding to retain the FA Cup after thrashing Watford in last season's final. With City also having enjoyed two Community Shield victories and an FA Cup semi-final success against Brighton at Wembley since Guardiola took charge in 2016, the national stadium is clearly a happy hunting ground for the Spaniard.

Not only that, Guardiola also won the European Cup at the old Wembley during his playing days with Barcelona in 1992, returning to lift the Champions League in the rebuilt stadium as Barca manager in 2011.

The City boss admitted his players generally thrive on the big stage, but he pointed to their 2017 FA Cup semi-final defeat against Arsenal as proof that nothing should be taken for granted this weekend. "It shows the team likes and enjoys playing the finals. Wembley is an incredible place to play," Guardiola told reporters on Friday.

"But no semi-final was easy in my career, never ever. They are always tight and we lost semi-finals in my first year here." The FA Cup has taken on extra importance for City this year after they were forced to surrender the Premier League title to Liverpool.

Thiago Alcantara Set to Join Liverpool



BERLIN (AFP) - Spain midfielder Thiago Alcantara is on the verge of joining Premier League champions Liverpool after stalling over signing a contract extension at Bayern Munich, according to a report in Bild on Friday.

The paper claims Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp wants to sign the playmaker who helped Munich win the Bundesliga title and German Cup double last season, but the clubs have yet to agree a transfer fee.

According to Bild, Liverpool are not willing to pay more than 25 million euros (\$28.5 million), while Bayern want around 40 million euros for the 29-year-old.

Earlier this week, there were widespread reports that Alcantara's house in Munich is already up for sale.

With a year left on his contract, Alcantara has stalled on signing an extension, but Bayern clearly want to keep him.

"We negotiated with him and granted his wishes, but it looks like he wants to do something new at the end of his career," Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said in early July. Alcantara joined Bayern in 2013, when newly-arrived head coach Pep Guardiola started three years in charge by declaring "Thiago or nothing" in terms of new signings.

Britain Unveils Plans to Let Fans Return to Sports Events

LONDON (Reuters) - Snooker, horse racing and cricket will be the first sports to bring back spectators in England in coming weeks, the British government announced on Friday, in a trial of plans aimed at reopening elite sports to fans more widely from Oct. 1.

The government will allow spectators at carefully selected trial events from late July to early August to 'stress test' new guidelines on a return to some kind of sporting normality.

The pilot events include the re-scheduled World Snooker championships in Sheffield, the Goodwood horse racing festival and two county cricket friendly fixtures, including one between Surrey and Middlesex at London's Oval ground.

Elite sport in Britain returned without fans last month after a near three-month shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For months millions of us have felt the void of being unable to go to the match to support our team or attend a top-class sporting event," Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said.

"So I am pleased that we are now able to move forward with a plan to help venues safely reopen their doors to fans."

The events were selected to represent a range of sports and indoor and outdoor spectator environments, the government said in a statement. "I recognise that not every sport, team or club has the benefit of huge commercial revenue, and it's often their dedicated fans that are the lifeblood which keep them going," Huddleston said.

Strict operating standards will have to be met before reopening to the public, including rules about ticketing, transportation, crowd management and enhanced hygiene measures.

The government's guidance initially applies to elite sport in England only; other parts of the United Kingdom have separate rules.

Horse racing has seen both the Grand National and Epsom Derby run behind closed doors this year. The return of fans to Goodwood will be a major boost for the sport.

"It marks an important day for the sports industry following a few challenging months," Adam Waterworth, Sport Managing Director at the Goodwood Estate, said.

"I'm telling the players, two more victories to win the Europa League," he said.

"I know it's not like that, I know the Europa League is a long competition and of course has some good teams."



to continue to serve you and this Olympic movement, which we all love so much, for another four years," he told an IOC session.

IOC's Bach Ready to Run for Second Term as President

LONDON (Reuters) - International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said on Friday he was ready to run for a second term at next year's election.

The 66-year-old German, a former Olympic fencer who won a gold medal for West Germany in the team foil event at the 1976 Games, was first elected in 2013 for an eight-year term and is eligible for one further term of four years after that.

"If you the IOC members want, I am ready to run for a second term as IOC president and movement, which we all love so much, for another four years," he told an IOC session.

During the session, which due to the COVID-19 pandemic was held by video conference for the first time, Bach received declarations of support from several dozen IOC members, causing a delay of around 45 minutes.

If re-elected, Bach will have to oversee the IOC's recovery after it decided, along with the Japanese government, to postpone this year's Tokyo Olympics for one year due to the pandemic.

In his opening speech, Bach also warned against a "growing misuse of sport for political purposes", saying that boycotts were "once again a real danger".

"This comes exactly 40 years after the completely unsuccessful boycott of the 1980 Olympics (in Moscow), it appears that today some just do not want to learn anything from history," he said.

Bach added that "such sporting boycotts do not have any political effect whatsoever" and pointed out that the Soviet army, whose invasion of Afghanistan sparked the 1980 boycott, remained in the Central Asian country for another nine years.

Venues Secured For Delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics

TOKYO (AFP) - Tokyo 2020 organizers said Friday they have secured all the venues needed to hold the Olympics next summer, clearing a major hurdle to hosting the event postponed over the coronavirus.

Refunds for ticket holders unable to attend the rescheduled games will begin in late 2020, they added.

Tokyo 2020 reported the progress during an online meeting with the International Olympic Committee, confirming that the delayed Games will use all the venues originally booked for the event.

The 2021 event schedule will also be largely the same as the original, except for small changes made for logistical reasons, said Hidemasa Nakamura, Tokyo 2020 games delivery officer.

"There is still work to be done. But we have arrived at a major milestone," Nakamura told a briefing in Tokyo ahead of the IOC meeting.

With the schedule set, athletes can now begin to prepare in earnest for the delayed Games, due to open on July 23, 2021, said Koji Murofushi, Tokyo 2020 sports director.

"Now athletes aiming to take part in the Tokyo Olympics can set concrete goals to work toward," he said. The Games' unprecedented delay has caused major logistical headaches and the final price tag for the postponement remains unclear.



Beijing 2022 Games Pressing Ahead Despite Coronavirus Threat

BEIJING (AFP) - Beijing 2022 organizers were "pressing ahead" with preparations for the Winter Olympics Friday after a senior IOC official warned the coronavirus could force the Games to be postponed.

Dick Pound, a former International Olympic Committee vice-president, told AFP that all options would have to be considered if the Beijing Games cannot be held in 2022.

Beijing is due to host the Winter Olympics just six months after the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games, which have been put back a year to July-August 2021 because of the coronavirus.

However, with the pandemic showing no signs of receding, Japanese and IOC officials have both raised fears that the Tokyo Olympics may have to be cancelled altogether.

"To get to that point, where you decide you can't do it (Beijing) in 2022, you explore whatever options you can do," Pound said in an interview.

"If we're in Tokyo, things all may be ready for Beijing. On the other hand, they may not be," he added.

In a statement to AFP, Beijing 2022 said the IOC is ploughing on with both Games as planned, despite the coronavirus still claiming lives in much of the world.

"As far as we know, the position of the IOC is very clear and remains unchanged," Beijing organisers said. "They are fully concentrated and committed to the successful delivery" of both the Tokyo and Beijing Games, they added.

