

Moscow Has Responded to John Bolton's Claims About Russia Not Needing Iran in Syria, Saying President Vladimir Putin Is Not In the Habit of Discussing Such Matters Behind His Partners' Back

IRAN NEWS

President Hassan Rouhani Announced on Wednesday Plans In the Coming Days to Launch the Next-Generation 5G Mobile Network First in Tehran, Then in Other Cities Across the Country

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Swiss Humanitarian Trade Deal With Iran Faces Delay, Questions

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Swiss "good offices" between Tehran and Washington have brought about a humanitarian aid channel allowing Swiss-based companies to send medicines and other vital goods to Iran despite US sanctions. But it remains to be seen to what extent the now-delayed deal will help the Iranian people versus Swiss political and economic interests.

The channel, known as the "Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement" (SHTA), was facilitated by Swiss "good offices" between the US and Iran. It comes amid the coronavirus pandemic, which has hit Iran particularly hard, and as Switzerland and Tehran mark 100 years of diplomatic ties.

Iran is seen by many countries as a sponsor of terrorism and a potential nuclear threat. United States-led sanctions since the Islamic revolution of 1979 have taken a severe toll on the economy and have recently been tightened under the Trump administration. But whilst other countries have broken diplomatic ties, Switzerland has always had a policy to "talk to all countries", as former Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Pascale Baeriswyl told swissinfo.ch last year. In addition, Switzerland represents the diplomatic interests of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia in Iran, and of Iran in Saudi Arabia and Canada.

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Tehran, Moscow to Sign 20-Year Cooperation Agreement



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister said that Tehran and Moscow have agreed to extend the cooperation agreement between the two countries for 20 years.

Addressing the reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Mohammad Javad Zarif said that there is a cooperation agreement between Iran and Russia that was concluded at the time of the former Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami, noting that this agreement was for 10 years and has been extended for two to five years, and in another eight months, it will be extended for 20 years.

"The agreement relates to another period of international relations and our relations with Russia. I agreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin to review this agreement," Iran's Foreign Minister added.

"Of course, when the deadline comes, if someone does not object, it will be extended, but we saw better than a comprehensive long-term strategic contract is developed and the contract is updated and finally signed and submitted to the parliament for approval," Zarif noted.

Zarif referred to his trip to Moscow, saying he had a one-hour secured telephone conversation with the Russian President and stressed: "I conveyed the President Hassan Rouhani's special message on the Iran Nuclear Deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and some bilateral issues to Putin."

Meanwhile on Tuesday and in Moscow, Zarif said Iran-Russia relations are at their strongest in decades, adding that such sustainable ties will benefit both countries and guarantee global peace and security.

"Today, relations between Iran and Russia are at their highest peak in comparison to the previous decades and we hope that we will be able to maintain these relations all the more powerfully and in a longer-lasting fashion," Zarif said in a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

He added that mutual relations "are certainly in line with the two countries' interests and based on mutual respect and will guarantee peace and security in the world."

He hailed Russia's opposition to US unilateral policies against Iran during sessions held at the United Nations Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The top Iranian diplomat said the vote of Russia and China against the IAEA Board of Governors' anti-Iran resolution and their stern opposition to U.S. attempts to extend the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Tehran indicated "consolidated relations among Iran, Russia and China and their resistance against the US unilateralism."

The stance of China and Russia highlighted their leading role in maintaining the landmark 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

China and Russia last month rebuked the UN nuclear agency for giving in to US bullying as the IAEA's Board of Governor passed a resolution critical of Iran for the first time since 2012.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif said his current visit is a good opportunity for Iranian and Russian officials to discuss mutual issues and the latest developments in the region, particularly in Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen.

Zarif also reacted to some assumptions about the mediating role of Iraq in Iran-Saudi Arabia relations. He reiterated that Tehran has been always ready to hold talks with Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian FM criticized that Saudi Arabia is dependent on foreign powers such as the US, the UK, and the Zionists regime, instead of relying on its neighbors who are always present in the region.

The Russian foreign minister, for his part, said his meeting with Zarif was an "important stage" in the joint efforts by the remaining members of the JCPOA to maintain this "most important achievement of multilateral diplomacy."

Lavrov emphasized that there are still chances to preserve the international nuclear accord.

"We consider the line that our American colleagues took to completely unravel this important document to be destructive, as has been the case with other documents on non-proliferation," he said.

"Nevertheless, we are confident that chances for the JCPOA to return to a stable course still remain, at least we, like our Iranian friends, are doing our best to this end," the top Russian diplomat pointed out.

Lavrov added that China and the remaining European members of the JCPOA seem to be willing to preserve the agreement as well.

COVID-19 Kills 219 More in Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Wednesday that some 219 more Iranians have died from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 14,853.

Sima Sadat Lari said that, with the 219 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 14,853.

Some 2,586 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 1,934 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

Sadat Lari noted that a total of 281,413 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some 244,840 of whom have recovered and were discharged from hospital.

Some 3,609 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said.

She added that 2,228,277 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

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Gov't to Use Forex Reserves Held Abroad To Balance Market

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani unveiled plans to use the foreign currency reserve assets held in other countries in order to control the currency prices at home.

Speaking at a cabinet session on Wednesday, Rouhani said his administration has devised plans to regulate the market situation and contain the price hikes that have put pressure on people.

The Central Bank of Iran is trying to push the currency prices to a balanced rate, he noted, urging domestic exporters to abide by the regulations and repatriate the money earned by exports.

"We are trying to use the currency we hold in other countries as reserves, as good measures have been taken in recent days with at least three countries," the president said.

Pointing to the fluctuations in the currency market over the past days, Rouhani assured people that the foreign currency rates will regain balance in the coming days.

The president also touched on Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's visit to Iran, saying Tehran and Baghdad have reached good agreements on customs affairs, exchange of commodities, and economic and banking cooperation.

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Iran Requests Pakistan Authorities to Audit 6 Hot Water Treatment Plants

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - It has been requested by the Iranian government to Pakistan authorities to audit six hot water treatment plants. The audit that is being delayed can affect the export of Pak mangoes to Iran in the future.

Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research Assistant Chief Muhammad Khurram Jamshaid wrote a letter to the plant protection adviser and Department of Plant Protection (DPP) director-general to investigate the hot water treatment plants and submit a report to the Plant Protection Organization of Iran.

The letter stated, "A technical team will conduct an audit of the six plants strictly under the standard operating procedures (SOPs) notified by the DPP and in line with the protocols agreed between NPPO, Iran and NPPO, Pakistan, in light of an inspection report of Iranian inspectors, and submit its fair and transparent inspection report on each plant separately to the ministry for perusal and approval of the competent authority before onward submission to the NPPO, Iran."

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Iranian Delegation To Leave for Ukraine On Crashed Plane

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and international affairs announced that the investigation of the Ukrainian plane crashed will be finished within the two or three coming days.

Mohsen Baharvand said Iran fulfilled all that was obliged to do in the plane crash accident according to the national and international regulations.

"At the time of the accident, we invited countries whose nationals had lost their lives to participate in the investigation, in which we hosted large delegations from all the relevant countries, especially Ukraine and Canada," Baharvand said.

He also referred to the victims' families and said as, for the victims of the accident, their survivors were given the necessary access to forensic medicine and to see the laboratories.

The official said Iran invited the relevant parties to start reading the black box immediately and extracting its information, yet the investigation coincided with the coronavirus outbreak and delayed.

The Iranian delegation will leave for Kiev on July 29 and 30, to negotiate and consult with the Ukrainian side, according to Baharvand.

UN Warns of Alarming Rise of Hunger in War-Torn Yemen

DUBAI (AFP) - Acute food insecurity is forecast to rise sharply in war-ravaged Yemen over a combination of factors exacerbated by the coronavirus, a report by several UN agencies said Wednesday.

The report, which covers only the southern parts of Yemen, forecasts that the number of people "facing high levels of acute food insecurity" will increase from two million in February-April this year to 3.2 million in July-December.

That represents 40 percent of the population in 133 districts in southern Yemen covered by the study, up from 25 percent. Economic shocks, conflict, floods, desert locusts and now the novel coronavirus were creating a perfect storm for the expected sharp rise in food insecurity, the report said.

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Part of Iran's Frozen Funds Released

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Presidential Office Mahmoud Vaezi said that parts of Iran's frozen funds in several countries have been released, noting that the amount will be used in the remittances section of the Central Bank of Iran to address the concerns and problems of importers.

He commented on the declining trend of the exchange rate and the return of calm to the market. He said the turmoil in the foreign exchange market is more of a psychological and emotional war from outside and several centers, such as Dubai and Sulaymaniyah, that was created by a number of brokers and money changers in the foreign exchange market.

Iran Favors a Dignified And Independent Iraq

TEHRAN (IFP) - Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has warned the United States that Iran will definitely reciprocate the assassination of top commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani.

In a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in Tehran on Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that the Islamic Republic of Iran will never forget the American assassination of General Soleimani in Iraq and "it will definitely deal the reciprocal blow to Americans."

Referring to the assassination of General Soleimani and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as an example of result of American presence in Iraq, the Leader told al-Kadhimi, "They (Americans) killed your guest at your home and brazenly admitted to such crime, while this is not an issue of little importance."

"Iran certainly opposes anything that would weaken the Iraqi government," Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized, adding, "However, the Americans' view about Iraq is totally contrary to ours, because the U.S. is an enemy in the true sense of the word, and does not favor an independent and strong Iraq with a government elected by majority vote."

"For the Americans, it is not important who the prime minister of Iraq is. They are after a government similar to the government of Paul Bremer, the American governor of Iraq shortly after the fall of Saddam," Ayatollah Khamenei warned.

"Iran would not interfere in Iraq's relations with the U.S., but expects the Iraqi friends to realize the U.S. and be mindful that the U.S. presence in every country is the source of corruption, destruction and devastation," the Leader underscored.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran expects that the decision made by the Iraqi government, nation and Parliament about the eviction of Americans would be pursued, because their (American) presence causes insecurity," Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

The Leader then noted that the relations between Iran and Iraq are literally



brotherly in light of the abundant historical, religious, cultural and traditional commonalities, adding, "What is greatly important to the Islamic Republic of Iran in the bilateral relations is the interests, expediencies, security, dignity, regional might, and improvement of situation in Iraq."

Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear that Iran will never interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs, stressing, "Iran favors a dignified and independent Iraq with its territorial integrity, unity and domestic solidarity being protected."

The Leader also praised the consensus among the Iraqi political groups and currents about the election of Prime Minister al-Kadhimi's government, saying, "The Americans and their proxies always seek power vacuum in the regional countries in order to foment chaos and pave the way for their interference, the same job they did in Yemen, as everybody is now witnessing the deplorable situation in Yemen."

Highlighting Tehran's support for al-Kadhimi's government, the Leader said wisdom, religion and experience dictate that Iran and Iraq must broaden ties in all fields.

"However, the expansion of relations between Iran and Iraq has opponents, above all the US, but one should not be afraid of the US by any means, because it cannot do a damn thing," the Leader emphasized.

While the U.S. is attempting to create problems, the Iraqi government should vigorously make headway regardless of such disturbance and preserve the popular support, Ayatollah Khamenei added.

The Leader finally lauded Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani as a great asset to Iraq, saying another major asset is the Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces) which must be maintained.

Foreign Forces Main Source of Insecurity in Region



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said that the region will not see security as far as foreign forces are present.

"We believe that as far as foreign forces are present, the region will not achieve stability and security. And we also believe that a powerful and advanced Iraq can become an important model for bilateral and regional ties," Qalibaf said in a meeting with the visiting Iraqi PM Mustafa Al-Kadhimi in Tehran.

The Iranian lawmaker underlined the significance of the expansion of trade and economic ties and expressed content about the ever-increasing development of mutual ties despite the coronavirus outbreak.

He noted that Iran supported Iraq in the fight against terrorism and the ISIL adding that the Iranian nation will never stop following up the complaint case about the assassination of commanders Lt. Gen. Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis by the direct order of the U.S. president.

Qalibaf added that regional stability and security will only be ensured after the foreign forces leave the region.

Al-Kadhimi, for his part, said that Iraq will never forget Iran's supports and cooperation in cultural, security, and economic sectors.

He added that the two sides must not interfere in each other's issues and vowed that the Iraqi government will not let the country change into a security threat against Iran.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi arrived in the Iranian capital Tehran on Tuesday noon to hold talks with senior Iranian officials.

Cooperation With China to Positively Influence Iran Economy

TEHRAN (MNA) - An Iranian lawmaker said that "as China is a good political and economic partner for Iran, the strategic cooperation with this country would influence our economy positively."

Ali Akbar Karimi made some remarks over the Iran-China 25-year document, noting that China is one of the world's great political, economic and international powers and it is a permanent member of the Security Council which has veto power.

He went on to note that unlike the United States and some European countries, China has never had a colonial and domineering approach towards the Iranian nation in the past.

"Although the United States and European countries have always sought to weaken China's economic influence and

power in the world, this country has steadily grown in such fields," he said, adding, "Despite its economic interactions with Western countries, China is also a serious competitor to the United States and Europe."

"On this basis, Iran's strategic and long-term cooperation with China would bring some positive effects on our economy," he said, adding that China is a good partner for Iran both politically and internationally, and in terms of economic power it can help us get through sanctions.

According to this lawmaker obtaining china's modern technology, expanding oil and nonoil export to this country as well as attracting millions of Chinese tourists to Iran can be considered as achievements of this bilateral agreement.

S Korea Urged to Clear \$7b-Debt to Iran ASAP

TEHRAN (MNA) - Deputy chairman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Abbas Moghtadaei urged South Korea to pay Iran's 7-billion-dollar debt as soon as possible.

Addressing the lawmakers at the open session of the Parliament on Wednesday, he underlined that if South Korea does not fulfill the obligation, the Parliament will start sanctioning the South Korean goods and will call on restriction on Tehran-Seoul ties.

Moghtadaei lamented that about 7 billion dollars of Iran's oil revenues have been blocked by South Korea and the country postpones its payment.

The MP added that the Iranian nation will not forget who did not make its commitment while Iranians were under the toughest conditions.

As reported, Iran may officially sue South Korea as Seoul refrains from paying off its oil debts to Tehran.

In case the diplomatic efforts do not lead to constructive results and South Korea continues to obey the US' policies, Iran will summon South Korea's ambassador to Tehran and force Seoul to pay off its debts through international tribunals.

President Hassan Rouhani has recently issued an order to resort to legal procedures to restore the petrodollars held in South Korea.

WHO Delivers 16 CT Scan Machines to Assist Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered 16 CT scan machines to strengthen Iran's emergency response to COVID-19.

CT scanning is a key component of the clinical diagnosis of COVID-19 patients. The units, worth more than \$4 million, were procured by WHO through support from the Government of Japan and the State of Kuwait.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, WHO is supporting Iran's efforts to turn the course of the disease. By delivering vital equipment and medicines, training health workers, and raising awareness in communities, WHO works with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to serve the people of Iran," said Dr. Christoph Hamelmann, the WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Oman Minister Highlights Growing Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Omani Minister of Commerce and Industry says that his country and Iran enhanced their relations in the pandemic era despite the lockdown in the aftermath of the deadly virus outbreak.

Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy made the remarks in a meeting with outgoing Iranian Ambassador to Oman Mohammad Reza Nouri-Shahrudi to bid farewell. According to Iran's Embassy in Muscat, Nouri-Shahrudi has ended his tenure.

Omani minister, in the meeting, underlined the importance of fostering Muscat-Tehran cooperation. For his part, the Iranian ambassador appreciated Omani nation and government for cooperation in strengthening bilateral relations during his post.

He elaborated on important measures taken to develop Tehran-Muscat trade. The two sides reviewed the latest situation of bilateral relations in industrial and trade fields.

The two officials also discussed the regional developments. Nouri-Shahrudi had started his mission in Muscat more than three years ago.

FM Slams South Korean Yonhap Over Unprofessional Act

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Foreign Ministry criticized the South Korean news agency Yonhap's rumor on summoning the Ambassador of Iran to Seoul as an unprofessional act.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry announced that Yonhap News Agency has published baseless news in an unprofessional act, noting that the Iranian envoy Msoud Shabestari Badamchi was not summoned but invited.

Pointing that Yonhap reference for the news was an Iranian media outlet, the ministry said the media in Iran is free to publish content and is responsible for what they write, thus their opinion has nothing to do with the official position of the Iranian government or Foreign Ministry.

Regarding Iran's assets in South Korea, the Public Relations of the Foreign Ministry stressed that comprehensive follow-up is on the agenda in accordance with the order of the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

Over 23,000 Tons of Fish Exported in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) - Spokesperson of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that more than 23,462 tons of different species of fish were exported from the country in the first three months of the current year.

Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi made the remarks and added, "about 3,305 tons of fish were imported into the country in the same period."

He put the value of fish exported from the country in the same period at over \$37,415,785.

In the meantime, about 606 tons of caviar, valued at \$727,000, were exported from the country from March 21 to June 20, 2020, he maintained.

Fish and aquatic animals included live decorated freshwater and seawater fish, salmon, trout, various species of crabs, dried fish, different species of shrimps were exported from the country to more than 34 target markets, IRICA spokesman added.

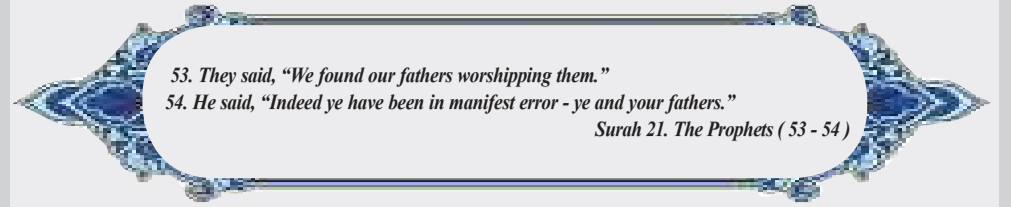
Elsewhere in his remarks, Latifi pointed to the export markets of these marine products and added, "marine products were exported to countries such as Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, United Arab Emirates, China, Hong Kong, Russia, Thailand, Azerbaijan Republic, Qatar, Kuwait, Armenia, etc."

Over 3,305 tons of different species of fish, valued at \$6,979,322, were imported into the country from 18 countries in the world during the first three months of the current year, spokesman of IRICA stated.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:36
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:27
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:06



Tehran Ready for Comprehensive Trade Cooperation With Baghdad

TEHRAN (IFP) - First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri has expressed Tehran's readiness to sign a comprehensive agreement on economic cooperation with Iraq, describing the deal as a major step in meeting the target for the promotion of bilateral trade.

In remarks at a meeting of high-ranking Iranian and Iraqi delegations, held in Tehran on Tuesday, Jahangiri pointed to a target that the two countries have set to raise the value of annual trade exchanges to \$20 billion, saying, "In order to achieve that target, the Joint Economic Commission of Iran and Iraq is prepared to draft the comprehensive document on economic and trade cooperation between the two countries."

The vice president also stressed the need to support and provide impetus for the Joint Economic Commission and the Iran-Iraq High Joint Commission, saying the activities of those commissions would greatly help settle the problems and remove the trade obstacles.

Hailing the formation of Iraq's new government in light of interaction and constructive dialogue among various Iraqi political groups, the Iranian vice president said the Islamic Republic has always attached importance to stability and security in Iraq.

Iran would welcome the restoration of Iraq's role in the region, Jahangiri noted, adding, "Tehran supports the strengthening of Iraq's regional role and expansion of its interaction with the countries."

The bulk of problems that have gripped the regional countries are caused by the outsiders, he deplored, calling for concerted efforts to overcome the challenges that have been aggravated by the outbreak of coronavirus and a decline in the oil prices.

The vice president also pointed to the American assassination of top Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani, saying Tehran expects Baghdad to seriously pursue the case of martyrdom of the general, who had gone to Iraq as a guest of the Baghdad government.

Highlighting the ample opportunities for cooperation between Iran and Iraq, Jahangiri said, "Fortunately, the cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad has made an acceptable progress in various sectors, as in the oil, gas and electricity (industries), and has been carried out to a great extent, but there are still multiple other grounds for the promotion of bilateral economic relations."



Strong banking and financial ties are requisite for the enhancement of economic relations, he noted, calling for plans to accelerate the implementation of banking agreements.

He further pointed to a temporary shutdown of border trade following the outbreak of coronavirus, saying the borders have reopened. "It is necessary for the two countries to observe the health protocols strictly, so that the Iranian and Iraqi merchants could work confidently and in safe conditions."

The vice president then highlighted the active role of the Iranian private companies in the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructures and offering technical and engineering services, urging Baghdad to resolve the problems of the Iranian contractors and companies and settle the debts.

Jahangiri finally reaffirmed Iran's commitment to supporting the Iraqi government and nation in hard times, in the same way that it assisted the Arab country in the fight against ISIS terrorist group.

For his part, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, who was chairing the Iraqi delegation, said Baghdad is willing to establish broad relations with Tehran considering their historical, cultural and religious commonalities.

"The common history and values have caused Iran and Iraq to have common interests, and such factors remind us that the two countries should develop major economic partnership," the Iraqi premier said.

Al-Kadhimi also praised Iran as the first country that rushed to help Iraq in the war against terrorism and Takfiri groups, stressing that the government and nation of Iraq will never forget such Iranian support.

"That's why Iraq stood by the Islamic Republic of Iran and helped it overcome the economic crises and challenges," the visiting prime minister added.

He finally pointed to the difficult economic conditions that Iraq is facing, voiced his country's readiness to hold meetings of the Joint Economic Commission and the High Joint Commission, and added, "I hope we would be able to overcome all problems in cooperation with each other."

Iran, Iraq Finalize Two Electricity Cooperation Contracts

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Energy said that Iran and Iraq have finalized two cooperation agreements in the field of electricity.



Reza Ardakanian made the remarks in his meeting with Iraqi Electricity Minister Majid Mahdi Hantoush on the sideline of visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It was decided that the mentioned contracts would be finalized and signed between the two sides with regards to reducing losses of electricity distribution networks in the provinces of Karbala and Najaf as well as contract for repairing and maintaining distribution transformers in Iraq, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ardakanian pointed to his talks with Iraqi side regarding the repayment of debts pertinent to Iran's export of electricity and energy to neighboring Iraq and added, "under the agreement made, a part of the payment of Iraq's debt to TAVANIR (Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Management Company) would start at the end of July 2020."

It should be noted that Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi arrived in Tehran on Tuesday at the head of a high ranking political and economic delegation for a two-day visit.

Iran, Iraq to Increase Customs Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Allawi and the Director General of Iranian Customs Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi called for strengthening customs and border cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, both officials stressed the need for reopening Iraqi borders and broadening technical customs cooperation with Iran.

Allawi highlighted Iraqi government's interest to use Iran's experiences in the fields of customs, especially in the field of electrification of the procedures and declared the country's decision to reopen southern borders soon.

He further noted that the Iraqi government is ready to send customs experts to Iran to draw on Iran's technical experiences.

Establishment of joint trade gate was another issue discussed by the two officials.

Mir-Ashrafi welcomed matters raised by the Iraqi minister and voiced readiness to exchange customs information.

Iran to Launch Special Trade Office in China

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior businessman says major Iranian companies are teaming up to create a trade office in China amid growing economic relations between the two countries.

Gholamhossein Jamali, a board member at Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), said on Tuesday that the trade office in China would play a major role in protecting Iranian businesses and firms working in the East Asian country against growing restrictions caused by US sanctions.

"We are working to launch this office before the end of the current Christian calendar year," Jamali was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency.

The announcement comes amid reports of booming economic relations between Iran and China as the two countries move to finalize a 25-year comprehensive partnership agreement that would massively boost bilateral cooperation in areas like energy, infrastructure, tourism and trade.

China was the top buyer of Iranian oil before the United States introduced its unilateral sanctions on Iran two years ago. However, Beijing is still a top economic partner for Iran and the balance of trade between the two countries hit \$20 billion in the year ending March, according to Iranian government data.

Other senior Iranian figures involved in trade with China said that the planned trade office would seek to resolve problems facing Iranian businesses and companies in China.

Agricultural Exports Increase



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's agricultural exports increased by 30.4 percent in terms of volume and 6.8 percent in terms of value during the first four months of the current Iranian year.

Deputy for customs affairs of Iran Customs Administration Mr. Mehrdad Jamal Arvanaghi said that the amount of exported agro products in the first 4 months of the current year is over 2.7m tons which shows 30.4 percent growth comparing to the same period last year which was 2.07m tons.

He added that exported goods this year were valued at \$1.69b which shows 6.8 percent growth in terms of value comparing to the same period last year which was valued at \$1.58b.

Arvanaghi added that pistachio, tomato, water melon, potato, chocolate, biscuit, apple and cheese were of the major agro products which have been exported by Iran in this period. He further said Iraq, China, Afghanistan, Russia and the UAE were the major destinations for Iran's exports.

He highlighted the major actions of the customs administration for easing exports process like allocating a green corridor for export acclamations for agro items.

He reiterated that the outbreak of the Coronavirus has not have any negative impact on exports of agro products due to the measures and health protocols taken by the customs administration.

Tehran, New Delhi Set to Cooperate to Produce "Remdesivir"

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian and Indian Pharmaceutical companies are cooperating to produce Remdesivir to treat COVID-19 at a competitive price, said the deputy chairman of Iran Pharmacists Association.

Seyed Ali Fatemi said researchers have found that Remdesivir medicine can reduce the risk of the novel Coronavirus, and as a result, all countries are looking for obtaining this medicine.

"The Remdesivir medicine is made in the United States and it has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration," Fatemi said and added, "Currently an Indian company has been able to produce the raw material of this medicine."

He continued that the Indian Company has entered a cooperation with an Iranian Pharmaceutical company for producing Redemisiver, noting that the Indian sample of this medicine would be at a reasonable price in comparison to the American Remdesivir.

"The quality of the medicine which is going to be produced with the cooperation of Iranian and Indian pharmaceutical companies is no different from the American one" he added.

By referring to the shortage of this medicine in the world and that all countries are looking to supply it, he said that this medicine is prescribed only for patients who are hospitalized in the intensive care unit and who are connected to a ventilator.

It is worth mentioning that yesterday the Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education Saeed Namaki said that the home-made 'Remdesivir' will enter the Iranian pharmaceutical market next week.

There is no reliable and effective drug in the world for the treatment of patients suffering from coronavirus but the two drugs named "Remdesivir" and "Favipiravir", as prescribed by some doctors, were distributed in the country especially when the effectiveness of the two drugs were emphasized in the U.S. and Europe.

Knowledge-Based Companies, Successful in Fighting Against COVID-19

ISFAHAN (IP) - The Vice President for Science and Technology Sorrena Sattari, while visiting the Digital Health Innovation Center and the Exhibition of Technological Products of Isfahan Science and Technology Town, signed a contract to build a "medical equipment park" in this city.

Digital Health Innovation Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences is the location of technology teams in the field of digital health. Due to the coronavirus situation in Iran, leading and specialized teams are located in the Digital Health Innovation Center in Isfahan.

Sattari during a visit to the Digital Health Innovation Center in Isfahan on Tuesday evening said that the knowledge-based companies were successful in meeting the essential needs of the country after the



outbreak of coronavirus.

Referring to the important role of knowledge-based companies in the production of anti-coronavirus products, Sattari added that before coronavirus, many products were not produced in Iran, for example, the volume of mask production in Iran was 200,000 per day, but with the role, knowledge-based companies are playing, now the types of three-layer masks and N95

have reached mass production.

During a one-day visit to Isfahan, central Iran, the Vice President for Science and Technology of Iran pointed out that in addition to the production and supply of masks in the country, coronavirus diagnostic kits, ventilators, and equipment related to the "ICU" room of the hospital are also being made by knowledge-based companies.

U.S. Offers \$5 Reward for Arrest of Venezuela Chief Justice

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States on Tuesday offered a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest of the chief justice of Venezuela's supreme court, who faces U.S. money laundering charges.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Maikal Jose Moreno Perez had "personally received money or property bribes to influence the outcome of civil and criminal cases in Venezuela" in recent years.

"Moreno Perez received the bribes in exchange for judicial actions" in more than 20 cases, such as ordering lower-court judges to release the accused or dismiss cases, Pompeo said.



U.S. Defense Chief Plans to Visit China on Crisis Communications

WASHINGTON (AFP) - U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper plans to visit China for talks on how to improve two-way communications in a crisis as geopolitical tensions between the superpowers rise and concerns mount over a potential South China Sea flashpoint.

Esper said Monday that he hopes to make the trip before year-end to "establish the systems necessary for crisis communications and reinforce our intentions to openly compete in the international system in which we all belong."

Last week, the United States formally declared Beijing's pursuit of territory and resources in South China Sea as illegal, explicitly backing the territorial claims of Southeast Asian countries against China's.



Pompeo Congratulates Britain On Decision to Drop Huawei



LONDON (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo congratulated Britain on its decision to strip out Chinese telecoms firm Huawei from its telecommunications network.

"I think the United Kingdom made a good decision," he said, speaking to reporters in London on Tuesday. Pompeo added: "We don't have an end state that we seek from Huawei. We have an instinct for the people in the United States, which is to make sure that ... the private data that belongs to Americans doesn't end up in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party." He also said the United States and Britain still have more work to do on a free trade deal, adding that he hoped a deal could be finalized before too long.

"A third round (of negotiations) scheduled for later this month, a primary focus for the United States is to see that we can make progress on this and bring this to a closure just as quickly as possible," he said during a brief news conference with his British counterpart Dominic Raab. "I spoke with the prime minister this morning about this, and I hope that we can get it finalized before too long," said Pompeo.

Pompeo also encouraged other nations to push back against the Chinese Communist Party and described China's leadership as a threat, speaking after a meeting with British ministers in London on Tuesday. He told reporters: "We want to see every nation who understands freedom and democracy, and values that and knows that it's important to their own people, their own sovereign country, to be successful, to understand this threat that the Chinese Communist Party is posing to them and to work both themselves and collectively to restore what is rightfully ours."

Meanwhile Raab said Britain, the United States and other allies needed to stand up for their values on the international stage, speaking alongside Pompeo. "The UK is really clear that we need to work with our American friends, and also with other partners together in the international system to protect our freedoms and interest and stand up, as we've shown over Hong Kong, stand up for our values," he said.

UK Gov't Failed to Find Out Whether Russia Meddled in Brexit Vote

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's government failed to find out whether Russia meddled in the 2016 referendum on membership of the EU, a parliamentary report released on Tuesday said, saying the intelligence services should investigate and make their findings public.

The long-anticipated report by parliament's intelligence and security committee found that Russia had tried to influence a separate referendum in 2014 when voters in Scotland rejected independence.

But it said the committee was unable to determine whether Russia had attempted to influence the European Union referendum, which led to Britain's exit from the bloc this year.

When asked for evidence on suspected Russian meddling in the vote, Britain's main domestic intelligence agency MI5 produced just six lines of text, the committee said.

Federal Presence in Portland Gives Protests New Momentum

PORTLAND (AP) - Mardy Widman has watched protests against racial injustice unfold in her hometown of Portland, Oregon, for more than seven weeks but stayed away because, at age 79, she feared contracting the coronavirus.

But that calculus changed for Widman when President Donald Trump sent federal law enforcement agents to the liberal city to quell violent demonstrations — a tactic he's said he'll use for other cities as well. On Monday, a masked Widman was in the street with more than 1,000 other Portlanders — a far larger crowd than the city had seen in recent days, as it entered its eighth week of nightly protests. "It's like a dictatorship," Widman, a grandmother of five, said, holding up a sign that read: "Grammy says: Please feds, leave Portland."

"I mean, that he can pick on our city mostly because of the way we vote and make an example of it for his base is very frightening," she said.

Far from tamping down the unrest, the presence of federal agents on the streets of Portland — and particularly allegations they have whisked people away in unmarked cars without probable cause — has given new momentum and a renewed, laser-sharp focus to protests that had begun to devolve into smaller, chaotic crowds. The use of federal agents against the will of local officials has also set up the potential for a constitutional crisis — and one that could escalate if Trump sends federal agents elsewhere, as he says he plans to do.

Federal forces were deployed to Portland in early July, and tensions have grown since then: first, on July 11, when a protester was hospitalized with critical injuries after a U.S. Marshals Service officer struck him in the head with a round of what's known as less-lethal ammunition. Then, anger flared again over the weekend after video surfaced of a federal agent hitting a U.S. Navy veteran repeatedly with a baton while another agent sprays him in the face with pepper spray.

Crowds had recently numbered fewer than 100 people but swelled to more than 1,000 over the weekend — and they are once again attracting a broader base in a city that's increasingly unified and outraged.



Russia Considers Military Spending Cuts



MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia is considering cutting spending on the military as low oil prices and the coronavirus crisis have pummeled its economy, a document published by the finance ministry shows.

The ministry has proposed the government cut state spending on the military by 5% between 2021 and 2023. The proposal, published on Monday, also includes budget spending cuts of 10% for the court system, the servicing of Russia's debt and wages for civil servants. Russia, which flexed its military muscle with its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and intervention in the Syrian conflict, dropped out of the list of the top five biggest military spenders in 2018 after its spending fell 3.5%.

Last year it returned as the world's fourth largest military spender and increased its military expenditures by 4.5% to \$65.1 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. That amount corresponded to 3.9% of its gross domestic product, it said. President Vladimir Putin has called for better living standards and investment in healthcare and education.

Some government officials have called for lower military spending to free up funds for such initiatives.

Military expenditures have increased under Putin, but the Kremlin said in 2018 that Russia would cut its defence budget to less than 3% of GDP within the next five years.

Exact figures for military funding are considered a state secret in Russia, but in 2018 the defence ministry said 20 trillion roubles (\$282 billion) had been earmarked for the construction of military infrastructure under a new armament programme for 2018-2027.

The World Bank expects the Russian economy to contract by 6% this year.

France Denounces Unacceptable Treatment of Uighurs in China

PARIS (Dispatches) - France said the imprisonment of ethnic and religious minorities in China's western Xinjiang region is "unacceptable" and demanded that Beijing let independent human rights observers visit the area.

Rights groups and experts estimate that more than one million ethnic Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking minorities have been rounded up into a network of internment camps.

"France is closely following all the testimonies relayed by the press and through human rights organisations," Foreign Affairs minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told parliament.

"According to information that we read or have, there are imprisonment camps for Uighurs, mass detentions, disappearances, forced labour, forced sterilisations, the destruction of Uighur heritage," Le Drian said.

"All these actions are unacceptable. We condemn them

firmly," added Le Drian, prompting applause in parliament.

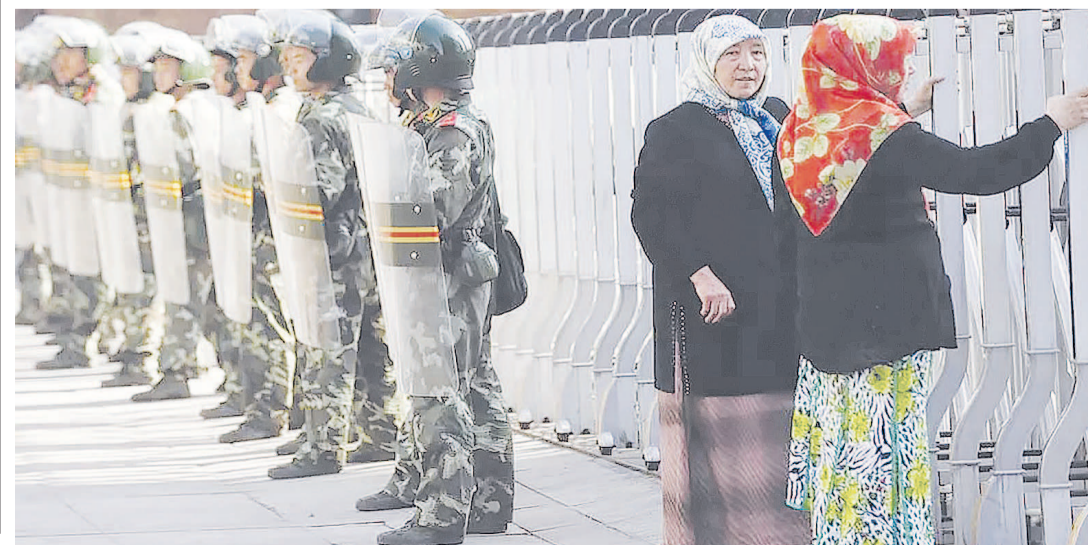
He said France wanted China to allow access to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

His comments come as tensions between the West and China are rising over a new draconian security law in Hong Kong and mounting opposition to the use of products made by Chinese telecom giant Huawei.

Earlier this month, the U.S. slapped sanctions on senior Chinese officials, demanding an end to the "horrific" abuse of Uighurs, and on Monday blacklisted 11 Chinese firms for alleged complicity in the repression.

On Sunday, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab accused Beijing of "gross, egregious human rights abuses".

Beijing denies any wrongdoing, saying Uighurs are attending vocational training centres, and has imposed retaliatory sanctions on three US senators.



Syria's Ruling Baath Party Wins Parliamentary Polls



DAMASCUS (AFP) - Syria's ruling Baath party and its allies have won a majority in parliamentary elections, results announced Tuesday by the electoral commission showed.

President Bashar al-Assad's party and allies took 177 seats out of 250 in Sunday's polls, the third such elections since the start of the war nine years ago.

Turnout stood at 33 percent, commission head Samer Zamreeq said, down from 57 percent in 2016.

Hussam Qatirji, a businessman under sanctions from the European Union, retained his seat.

The election comes as the Damascus government has reconquered much of the territory lost at the beginning of the country's war, but faces its hardest economic challenges yet amid the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 7,000 polling stations opened across government-held parts of Syria, including for the first time in former opposition strongholds.

The millions of Syrians who fled the conflict were not eligible to vote.

Shanon
(adviser)

Elahieh Apt (\$2500)
250sq.m, 4bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Tajrish Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Niavaran (\$1800)
150sq.m, 3bdrs, & F.F

Jordan Apt (\$2500)
200sq.m, 3bdrs, & F.F

Pasdaran Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m, 7bdrs, & yard

Commercial Office (Jordan)
200sq.m, 4bdrs, pkg lots

Gheitarieh Apt (\$2500)
250sq.m, 3bdrs, S/pool, Sauna
roof garden, pkg, & F.F

Cell: +989121907875
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
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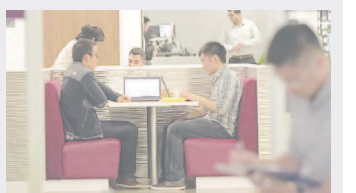
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LinkedIn Cuts 960 Jobs

LONDON (Reuters) - Microsoft Corp's professional networking site LinkedIn said on Tuesday it would cut about 960 jobs, or 6% of its global workforce, as the coronavirus pandemic is having a sustained impact on demand for its recruitment products.

California-based LinkedIn helps employers assess a candidate's suitability for a role and employees use the platform to find new job. Jobs will be cut across sales and hiring divisions of the group globally. Announcing the plan in a message posted on LinkedIn's website, Chief Executive Ryan Roslansky said the company would provide at least 10 weeks of severance pay as well as health insurance for a year for U.S. employees, and will hire for newly-created roles from laid-off staff.



Turkey Scrambles for Gold, Overtaking Russia as Top Buyer

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Turkey has overtaken Russia as the world's largest purchaser of gold amid concerns that it could be barred from dollar settlements over cooling ties with the U.S.

Central banks around the world have been building up reserves of the precious metal in the last decade to diversify their portfolios. Russia had been a major contributor to the trend and is now the world's fifth-largest gold-owning country, holding nearly 2,300 tons, according to the latest World Gold Council figures.

But Russia's gold purchases for the January-May period plunged roughly 60% on the year to around 28 tons. The country's central bank said in late March that it would halt domestic gold purchases, starting April 1, without explaining why.

"Looking from the outside, it's highly likely that the plunge in crude oil prices impacted Russia's stance on gold purchases," said Takahiro Morita of financial research firm Morita & Associates. If Russia is generating less from oil exports, the country has less money for gold.

Instead, Turkey has emerged the world's largest buyer of gold for reserves. It purchased about 148 tons in the January-May period -- roughly triple the year-earlier figure.

Like Russia, Turkey has recently seen its foreign-currency income dwindle. Tourist spending, a key driver of its economy, has fallen in light of the coronavirus outbreak, and the lira has traded at the weakest levels on record lately.

"There is little economic rationale for Turkey to stretch itself thin to buy gold right now," said Kota Hirayama of SMBC Nikko Securities. The country would have an easier time defending its currency against further depreciation if it simply held on to its foreign-currency reserves.

Yet Turkey is acquiring gold anyway, presumably because relations with the U.S. have soured in recent years. The Trump administration imposed sanctions on Turkey in 2018 over the detention of an American pastor by Turkish authorities.

Turkey procured a surface-to-air missile system from Russia 2019, putting fellow NATO members in an awkward spot.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has demanded the extradition of a U.S.-based Muslim cleric accused of involvement in the attempted coup against Erdogan in 2016. Washington has so far refused, creating another bilateral flashpoint.

Should relations worsen further and the U.S. toughen sanctions, Turkey risks not being able to procure U.S. dollars for payment settlements. Just last week, U.S. President Donald Trump signed a bill that blocks banks in China from procuring dollars, in response to the national security law it imposed on Hong Kong. There is one warning sign that Turkey could very well share the same fate as China. In March, back when the global pandemic rocked global financial markets, the U.S. Federal Reserve opened up liquidity swap lines to a host of central banks facing dollar shortages.

Turkey was conspicuous in its absence from the expanded roster of recipients. "It's possible that it fueled the Turks' anxiety that it cannot rely on the U.S. in an emergency," Hirayama said.

The shift away from the dollar threatens to spill over to central banks elsewhere in the world, particularly in developing economies. Developing-nation central banks had strongly trended toward holding U.S. Treasuries in foreign-currency reserves, thanks to the debt's high liquidity.

Oil Demand to Hit Pre-COVID Levels In 2021

LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S. demand for petroleum and liquid fuels is expected to remain below the 2019 average from before the COVID-crisis until August 2021, despite the uptick in consumption in recent weeks, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said.

Total demand for motor gasoline, distillate fuel oil, and jet fuel crashed in March and April due to the stay-at-home orders and reduced travel as states were trying to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Demand has increased since the lows in April, and will continue to rise in the second half of this year as economic activity picks up. Yet, total demand levels will continue to trail the pre-crisis levels until August next year, the EIA has estimated.

In April, U.S. consumption of liquid fuels reached its all-time monthly low since the early 1980s at an average of 14.7 million barrels per day (bpd), according to the administration.

The oil demand crash in April, when most of America was under stay-at-home orders, resulted in the biggest monthly inventory jump in U.S. commercial crude oil inventories in data going back to 1920, the EIA said earlier this month.

In terms of volumes, nearly half of the plunge in fuel consumption in 2020 has come from low gasoline use. This year, gasoline demand is expected to average 8.3 million bpd, down by 1.0 million bpd -- or 10 percent -- from 2019. Next year, with rising employment, gasoline consumption is set to increase to 9.1 million bpd, or to be some 2 percent less than its 2019 average.

All liquid fuels consumption in the United States this year is set to average 18.3 million bpd in 2020, down by 2.1 million bpd from 2019, according to EIA's July Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO).

Next year, U.S. liquid fuels consumption will average 19.9 million bpd, still below the 2019 average of 20.5 million bpd, according to the EIA.



UK Borrows Record 128b Pounds In Three Months to June

LONDON (Reuters) - British government borrowing surged to a record 128 billion pounds (\$162 billion) in the first three months of the 2020/21 financial year, when COVID-19 lockdown measures were tightest, more than double the entire previous year's borrowing.

Most economists think British government borrowing this year will be its largest since World War Two relative to the size of the economy.

Borrowing in June, excluding state-owned banks, was 35.5 billion pounds, the government statistics office said. That was five times more than a year earlier though below economists' average forecast of 41.5 billion pounds in a Reuters poll, following a big downward revision for May.

April, May and June made up the three highest months of borrowing in Britain's history, even though spending on job support was lower than first estimated, and tax revenues higher, the Office for National Statistics said.

Following the figures, finance minister Rishi Sunak restated his intention to put the public finances on a more sustainable footing over the medium term, and launched a much-delayed long-term review into government spending. But analysts doubt the economy will be strong enough for him to start tightening fiscal policy later this year.

"If (interest) rates remain as low as they are currently -- and it is likely the Bank of England will make sure they do -- the chancellor may just decide to push out those difficult decisions a little longer," HSBC economist Elizabeth Martins said. Last week Sunak set out up to 30 billion pounds of new measures, partly to encourage businesses to take workers back when he ends a furlough scheme supporting more than 9 million jobs in October.

Public sector debt, excluding state-owned banks, stayed a fraction below the milestone of 100% of gross domestic product it appeared to pass in May, after an upward revision to GDP, and now stands at 1.984 trillion pounds or 99.6% of GDP.

This is still the highest debt burden since the 1960s, the statistics office said.

Bond markets have been happy to finance this borrowing, however. At a bond auction on Tuesday investors bought a six-year gilt with a record-low negative yield, meaning the government will pay back less than it borrowed.

Britain's government has announced extra spending and tax cuts worth around 192 billion pounds for this financial year, and last week its Office for Budget Responsibility estimated borrowing would hit 322 billion pounds or just over 16% of GDP.

This figure is based on a scenario where the economy shrinks by 12.4% over 2020, and the unemployment rate rises to its highest since 1984 at 11.9% by the end of this year.

The OBR said borrowing was currently running 15% below this scenario - though it noted the official figures were likely to be revised, and did not yet include any provision for write-offs of government-backed lending to businesses.

U.S. Adds 11 Chinese Firms to Economic Blacklist

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Commerce Department added to an economic blacklist on Monday 11 Chinese companies it said were implicated in human rights violations regarding China's treatment of Uighurs in the western Xinjiang region.

The step, which leaves the firms unable to buy components from U.S. companies without U.S. government approval, prompted an accusation of slander from China, which vowed to take measures to protect its companies' rights.

The Commerce Department said the companies were involved in using forced labor by Uighurs and other Muslim minority groups.

Among them are numerous textile companies and two firms the government said were conducting genetic analyses used to further the repression of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities.

It was the third group of companies and institutions in China added to the U.S. blacklist, after two rounds in which the Trump administration cited 37 entities it said were involved in China's repression in Xinjiang.

"Beijing actively promotes the reprehensible practice of forced labor and abusive DNA collection and analysis schemes to repress its citizens," Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement.

In Beijing, a foreign ministry spokesman said the United States was trying to oppress Chinese companies and slander China's policies in Xinjiang under the pretext of protecting human rights.

"We urge the U.S. to correct its mistakes," Wang Wenbin told a news conference on Tuesday, adding that China would take all necessary measures to protect its companies' legitimate rights.

The companies added to the blacklist include Nanchang O-Film Tech, a supplier for Apple's iPhone that hosted Apple chief executive Tim Cook in December 2017, according to O-Film's website. It is also a supplier to Amazon.com Inc and Microsoft, according to an April congressional letter.

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Shipping's Switch to Cleaner Fuel Smooth Sailing So Far



SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Seven months after the United Nations' shipping agency brought in hotly anticipated new rules to curb emissions, the raft of technical issues and leap in fuel prices that were expected to result have failed to materialise, ING Bank said on Tuesday.

Global shipping and oil firms had flagged major concerns over potential disruptions from International Maritime Organization (IMO) rules implemented at the start of 2020, which capped marine fuels' sulphur content at 0.5% against 3.5% previously.

However, shipping and marine fuel suppliers say expected technical issues, such as damage to engines from blending different streams of very low sulphur fuel oil (VLSFO), have proved easier to resolve than previously thought.

Meanwhile, as the coronavirus outbreak battered global oil prices and slashed demand, prices of VLSFO slid along with those of other products.

"We are now well into the IMO 2020 shipping regulations, and it is clear that all the hype leading up to implementation was exaggerated," said researchers at ING Bank in a note on Tuesday.

The impact of the transition to lower sulphur fuels was partly softened by the COVID-19 pandemic, said ING.

"COVID-19 has only added further pressure to 0.5% very low-sulphur fuel oil (VLSFO), with road transportation having been hit significantly as a result of country lockdowns," said the Dutch bank.

Lower refinery output of road transportation fuels like gasoline and diesel during the lockdowns helped "ensure enough VLSFO availability for the shipping industry", said ING. However, with gasoline demand on the rise following the reopening of economies, VLSFO supplies could tighten throughout the remainder of the year if a resurgence in cases does not lead to renewed lockdowns.

Industry participants had expected ships to switch to burning gasoil to comply with the rules, but a jump in VLSFO output has seen more ships adopt that fuel instead, as a cheaper and more operationally familiar fuel.

Chabahar to Receive Several Mobile Harbor Cranes

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) says India has ordered the necessary equipment for Chabahar port's development project and the port will receive several mobile harbor cranes during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to Mohammad Rastad, India is currently pursuing the construction and installing of the necessary equipment in the port under the framework of a temporary operation contract, and after finishing this phase the main build-operate-transfer (BOT) contract will be activated.



China, France Vow to Promote Finance, Economic Cooperation Amid COVID-19 Battle

PARIS (Dispatches) - Both China and France agreed to strengthen finance and economic cooperation amid COVID-19 battle during the bilateral economic and financial dialogue on Tuesday.

The seventh China-France High-Level Economic and Financial Dialogue is held Tuesday via video link, co-chaired by Chinese Vice Premier Hu Chunhua and French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire.

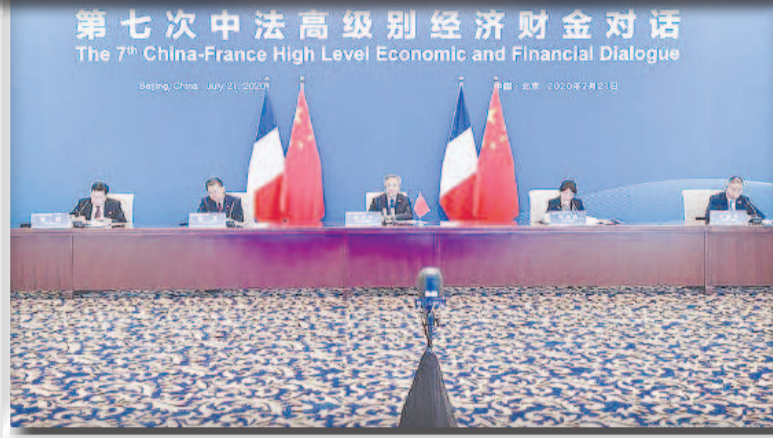
Hu said that since the beginning of this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping has spoken with French President Emmanuel Macron four times with a series of important consensus on jointly responding to the epidemic and developing Sino-French relations reached, expressing the hope that both sides will implement the consensus reached by two heads of state and promote the China-France comprehensive strategic partnership.

China is willing to work with France to further strengthen anti-epidemic cooperation, consolidate cooperation in major projects such as aerospace, advanced manufacturing, expand cooperation in agriculture, science and technology, finance and trade, striving to create the fair, transparent business environment without discrimination.

The two sides should strengthen communication and coordination in international institutions and multilateral platforms, jointly maintain the rules-based multilateral trading system, promote the improvement of global economic governance, and actively respond to various global challenges, promoting the stable recovery of the world economy.

French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire stated that France attaches great importance to high-quality French-Chinese relations development. In the context of the impact of the epidemic on the global economy, both France and China should join hands to strengthen practical cooperation in various fields. France is willing to work with China to further deepen cooperation in traditional fields, tap the potential for cooperation in emerging fields, promoting bilateral cooperation to achieve more positive results.

Focusing on the theme of "deepening bilateral economic and financial cooperation, and jointly responding to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic", both sides



conducted in-depth exchanges on international and multilateral cooperation in response to the epidemic and deepening cooperation in key areas, with 42 cooperation outcomes.

Established in 2013, the China-France High-Level Economic and Financial Dialogue is an important platform for communication and policy coordination on strategic, overarching, and long-term issues in the economic and financial sectors. It has played a positive role in deepening bilateral pragmatic cooperation in these areas, strengthening communication and coordination on major international economic and financial issues, and promoting the development of the China-France comprehensive strategic partnership.

According to Reuters, Le Maire said on Tuesday that France would not ban China's Huawei from investing in the country. "We will protect our national security interests...We won't ban Huawei from investing in 5G," Le Maire said while talking to France Info radio.

Swiss Humanitarian...

FROM PAGE 1

Swiss ties with Iran are maintained at the highest level. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Bern in 2018 and in May 2020 Simonetta Sommaruga, who holds Switzerland's rotating presidency this year, spoke with Rouhani on the phone.

"In view of the 100th anniversary of Switzerland's diplomatic presence in Iran, we discussed bilateral affairs, the pandemic and our arrangement for exports of humanitarian goods," she tweeted.

Washington announced on February 27 that the SHTA was "fully operational" but Iran's private Tasnim News Agency (pro-regime) ran an article on May 9 entitled, "Iran gets nothing from Swiss Humanitarian Channel". It said that the "moribund state of the channel contrasts with the fanfare with which the Trump regime announced it" and that "knowledgeable observers say the way the channel is structured places substantial burdens in the way of companies looking to sell Iran humanitarian supplies".

Asked whether the SHTA was operational, the Swiss foreign ministry blamed its delay on the coronavirus.

"Unfortunately there have been delays due to Covid-19," it said in a July 13 email to swissinfo.ch. "Interested companies, particularly in the pharmaceutical sector, were faced with other priorities overnight. However, we would also like to emphasise that a number of companies have already been approved and that first transactions should be carried out shortly."

The ministry had said in June that "interested Swiss export and trading companies are in the process of collecting the necessary information and documents and preparing them for submission to SECO [Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs]. After successful examination by SECO, the companies can start processing the transactions."

SECO declined to say which companies had been approved or to give further details. However, trial operations of the channel began in January, during which Swiss pharmaceuticals giant Novartis supplied Iran with €2.3 million (CHF2.4 million) worth of cancer drugs and medicines needed for organ transplants.

"For the benefit of Iranian patients, Novartis worked with the Swiss and US authorities and Banque de Commerce et Placements [Swiss bank] to achieve a first payment channel transaction for the shipment of three lifesaving drugs: Sandostatin LAR (used to treat certain types of cancer), Myfortic and Neoral (both immunosuppressants)," Novartis told swissinfo.ch.

But the pharmaceutical firm declined to say more, adding only that "the spring 2020 launch of the Swiss payment channel for commercial shipments of medicine may improve Iranian patient access by increasing the predictability and stability of the future supply of medicine to Iran."

The SHTA is a payment mechanism to enable the delivery of humanitarian goods to Iran and is "available to Swiss firms in the food, pharmaceutical and medical sectors", according to the Swiss economics ministry. "Under the SHTA, the U.S. Treasury Department will provide the banks involved with the necessary assurances that financial transactions can be processed in accordance with US legislation."

This comes in the wake of the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal.

"Since the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear agreement with Iran in May 2018 and reintroduced unilateral sanctions, it has become increasingly difficult for Swiss exporters to supply humanitarian goods to Iran, although such shipments are in principle not subject to US sanctions," the economics ministry explained in a February 27 press release. "Due to the legal risks associated with US sanctions, hardly any financial institutions were willing to make payments in connection with Iran. The few remaining payment channels were expensive, complex and not very reliable."

Iran Requests Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 1

Patron-in-Chief of the All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Importers and Merchants Association (PFVA) Waheed Ahmed said, "Pakistan's mango industry is worth Rs100 billion, which employs a 22.5-million workforce. Despite these clear directives, the audit has been delayed at the cost of our credibility."

In the Multan region, there are 6 hot water treatment plants. The technical team will also conduct a yearly audit of Ramadan Associates, Multan.

He said, "Iranian authorities could have come themselves had the coronavirus not hit the country. In that case, it would be an embarrassing situation for the country."

Blood Test Finds Cancers Before Standard Diagnosis



PARIS (AFP) - A blood test has been shown to detect five types of cancer years before the diseases could be spotted using conventional diagnostic methods, according to a study published Tuesday.

Developed by a Sino-U.S. startup, the test found cancers in 91 percent of people who showed no symptoms when the blood sample was collected but were diagnosed one-to-four years later with stomach, esophageal, colon, lung or liver cancer, researchers reported in Nature Communications.

"The immediate focus is to test people at higher risk, based on family history, age or other known risk factors," said co-author Kun Zhang, head of the bioengineering department at the University of California San Diego and an equity holder in Singlera Genomics, which developed the test.

Early detection of cancers is crucial because survival is significantly enhanced when the disease can be treated in its early stages and tumours can be removed, whether surgically, with drugs or with radiation.

To date, however, there are few effective early screening tests available.

Researchers examined blood samples from more than 600 individuals enrolled in a 10-year health survey of 120,000 people in China, conducted between 2007 and 2017. The monitoring programme included regular blood samples.

For 191 patients diagnosed with cancer, the scientists used the new test to analyse blood samples taken up to four years earlier. They separately detected cancer -- with 88 percent accuracy -- of 113 patients who were already diagnosed when the blood samples were collected.

The technique, developed over a decade, is designed to detect asymptomatic disease based on a biological process called DNA methylation analysis, which screens for DNA signatures specific to different cancers.

More large-scale studies across long time periods are needed to confirm the potential of the test for early cancer detection, the authors cautioned. Half of the 32 authors either work for Singlera Genomics, are co-inventors of patents related to the test or hold equity in the company.

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths a year.

In 2018, lung cancer caused 1.76 million deaths, colon cancer 862,000, stomach cancer 783,000, liver cancer 782,000, and esophageal cancer 508,000, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

COVID-19 Kills...

FROM PAGE 1

According to the spokeswoman, the provinces of Mazandaran, East and West Azerbaijan, Khorasan Razavi, Alborz, Khuzestan, Lorestan, Golestan, Kerman, Zanjan and Ilam are in the red alert.

Meanwhile Spokesman for Food and Medicine Administration stated that since the Coronavirus outbreak, more than seven treatment protocols have been compiled in the country to contain the disease. Speaking on methods, medicines, and effectiveness of new treatment of COVID-19 patients, Kianoush Jahanpour said that the new edits are being made based on new evidence to contain the novel virus.

He remarked that the two committees of the National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus and Treatment have put the issue of reviewing and developing diagnostic and treatment protocols on their agenda since the outbreak, and all treatment regimens that may be used in the world are documented, evidence-based.

He stated that any medicine entry or removal from the national protocols to treat the patients is subjected to either the research studies done in the world or clinical observations carried out in the country.

"Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, the country has both anti-virus therapies and maintenance therapies that have been put on the agenda by the scientific committee, consisting of a group of specialists and representatives of scientific associations," noted Spokesman for Food and Medicine Administration.

Gov't to Use...

FROM PAGE 1

"We have also had good political ties with Russia and China since years ago, which have improved in recent weeks," Rouhani said, adding that he has delivered a message via Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif for Russian President Vladimir Putin about closer regional relations.

"We hope to continue cooperation with the neighbors and friends, including Russia, Iraq, Pakistan, Qatar and Afghanistan," the president added.

Rouhani said Iran is seeking to broaden its relations with the neighbors and other friendly countries.

"We hope to boost our cooperation with the neighbors including Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as all other friendly states such as China and Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea littoral states," he added.

Referring to the constructive ties with China and Russia in the past years, the president said, "In continuation of our diplomacy we have had fruitful talks with the Russian and Chinese sides in the past weeks to strengthen our relations."

UN Warns of...

FROM PAGE 1

The World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other partners who prepared the report called the increase "alarming".

Laurent Bukera, WFP country director in Yemen, said that "Yemen is facing a crisis on multiple fronts".

"We must act now... The warning signs have returned and with coronavirus pandemic added to the mix, it could get a lot worse if humanitarian action is delayed," he warned.

The WFP has previously said that despite humanitarian assistance, over 20 million people all over Yemen are food insecure, including nearly 10 million who are facing acute food shortages.

The population of Yemen is around 27 million.

The UN has called the situation in Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Tens of thousands have been killed and millions displaced since rebels took over the capital Sanaa and other territory in 2014.

The war escalated in March the following year, when a Saudi-led military coalition intervened against the rebels.

The food security situation in Yemen had eased in 2019 thanks to a massive scale-up of international aid, the report said, before this year's setback.

The report "is telling us that Yemen is again on the brink of a major food security crisis," said Lise Grande, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Yemen.

Grande said the UN averted famine in Yemen last year after receiving generous aid from the international community.

"Unless we receive the funding we need now, we won't be able to do the same this time," she warned.

Citi Open in Washington Cancelled Due to Coronavirus Disruption

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Citi Open in Washington, which was scheduled to restart the men's ATP Tour after the COVID-19 shutdown, has been cancelled for 2020, organizers announced on Tuesday.

The tournament was set to begin on Aug. 14 and serve as a build-up for the U.S. Open but the organisers said concerns about travel restrictions and recent trends in the coronavirus outbreak had led to the decision to scrap the event.

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Marquez MotoGP Return Date Uncertain

PARIS (AFP) - Reigning MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez underwent a successful operation on his arm Tuesday after crashing in the season-opening race in Spain, but his return date is unknown.

Honda said Marquez would remain in a Barcelona hospital for up to 48 hours after a titanium plate was inserted into his right arm during surgery. "His aim is to return to the 2020 World Championship as soon as possible with an expected date becoming clearer soon," the team added.

Man City Leave Watford Still on Relegation Tightrope

LONDON (Dispatches) - Raheem Sterling scored twice as Manchester City thrashed Watford 4-0 on Tuesday to leave the Hornets still precariously poised just three points above the relegation zone.

Watford became the first Premier League team to sack three managers in a season when Nigel Pearson departed on Sunday, but the change of management made little difference as City bounced back from their weekend disappointment of losing an FA Cup semi-final to Arsenal.

City had thrashed Watford 8-0 earlier in the season and 6-0 in last season's FA Cup final and there appeared little belief from the hosts of causing an upset from the off.

Hayden Mullins took charge on a temporary basis for the second time this season and set up to frustrate the visitors by defending deep with little threat of ever testing City's soft spot at the heart of their defence.

Ben Foster delayed the floodgates opening with a stunning save after Rodrigo's shot deflected off Gabriel Jesus.

However, there was little doubt over the outcome once Sterling controlled Kyle Walker's cross and fired powerfully into the top corner on 31 minutes.

Nine minutes later Sterling was taken down inside the area by Will Hughes and was given the chance to further his chances of chasing down Jamie Vardy for the golden boot as Kevin De Bruyne handed over responsibilities from the penalty spot.

Foster nearly made the Belgian regret that decision with a brilliant save from Sterling's penalty but the England international followed up to tap home his 19th Premier League goal of the season.

Goal difference could yet decide who



stays in the top-flight between Watford, Aston Villa and Bournemouth come the weekend and Mullins's men did themselves little favours after the break as they moved level with Villa and Bournemouth on -27.

Foster kept the score down with great saves from Jesus and Sterling in the opening minutes of the second period.

The Watford goalkeeper stood up again to save Sterling's initial effort in the lead up to City's third, but Phil Foden was on hand to tap into an empty net.

Moments later Aymeric Laporte was left completely unmarked to head home De Bruyne's free-kick as the latter moved to within one of Thierry Henry's record of 20 Premier League assists in a season.

City will end the season in second place no matter what happens on the final day.

But Guardiola's men won a fourth straight league game for the first time this season to cut the gap on champions Liverpool to 15 points and probably deny the Reds the chance to beat City's record winning margin of 19 points set two seasons ago.

Meanwhile Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp has urged the club's supporters to celebrate at home as the club prepare to lift the Premier League trophy following their clash with Chelsea.

Klopp's Liverpool secured their first top-flight title in 30 years with seven games to spare and will be presented with the trophy on a special podium built on the Kop stand at Anfield.

The Merseyside police has already warned fans not to repeat the widespread gatherings that took place on the city's waterfront after the club's title win last month, amid fears of a fresh spike in COVID-19 infections.

Leeds Announce Record-Breaking Five-Year Kit Deal



LONDON (Reuters) - Leeds United, who earned promotion to the Premier League last week, have signed a five-year kit deal with German sportswear firm Adidas starting from the 2020-2021 season.

Leeds ended a 16-year wait to return to the top-flight after second-placed West Bromwich Albion's defeat at Huddersfield Town on Friday and were crowned champions of the second-tier Championship the following day when third-placed Brentford lost at Stoke City.

No financial details were disclosed but Leeds confirmed on Tuesday it was a record-breaking kit sponsorship deal for the club.

Adidas will take over from Italian sportswear brand Kappa, whose five-year deal with the club expires at the end of the current season.

"We're looking forward to our return to the Premier League with anticipation next season and partnering with adidas, who are one of the most recognisable names in sport, represents a new beginning for the club," said chief executive Angus Kinnear in a club statement here.

Leeds host 21st-placed Charlton in the final game of the season on Wednesday.

Marseille Sign Balerdi On Loan From Dortmund

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Marseille have signed Argentina defender Leonardo Balerdi from Borussia Dortmund, both clubs announced on Tuesday.

In a statement, the clubs said Marseille had signed the 21-year-old on a one-season loan deal with an option to buy.

French media report Marseille will have to spend 15 million euros (\$17.2 million) if they do wish to buy the centre-back before the end of next season.

Dortmund's sporting director Michael Zorc said in a statement Balerdi had approached the club with a transfer request in the hope of getting more playing time.

Balerdi, who played eight times for Dortmund since signing for Boca Juniors in 2019, is expected to join his new club in Bavaria late on Tuesday or Wednesday, before their friendly with German fourth division side SV Heimstetten.

He is Marseille's second recruit of the summer following the arrival of midfielder Pape Gueye, another promising 21-year-old, from Le Havre.

The signing of Balerdi will please coach Andre Villas-Boas, whose team finished second in Ligue 1 last season to reach the Champions League but needed strengthening in central defence.

Mbappe to Stay at PSG Next Season

PARIS (AFP) - Kylian Mbappe said on Tuesday he would remain with French champions Paris Saint-Germain next season "whatever happens" despite repeated speculation over his future.

"I'm here. I'm part of the project for a fourth year," Mbappe, 21, told BeIn Sport during half-time of PSG's friendly against Celtic at the Parc des Princes.

"The club's 50-year anniversary is an important one in the eyes of the club, the supporters, of everyone, so I will be here whatever happens."

"I'm going to try and bring back trophies with the team and give the best of myself," added Mbappe, who arrived at PSG from Monaco in 2017 in a deal worth 180 million euros (208 million).



Chelsea Long Way From Being Title Contenders

LONDON (Reuters) - Chelsea manager Frank Lampard believes his side are a long way short of the levels of Premier League Champions Liverpool and Manchester City, who have set the benchmark in terms of consistency.

Lampard's Chelsea, currently third in the league, visit title winners Liverpool on Wednesday, chasing the three points they need to secure Champions League football next season.

Liverpool go into the game having dropped eight points in their past five matches, but still remain 30 points clear of Chelsea.

When asked how far his team had to go to compete with Liverpool and second-placed

Manchester City, Lampard said: "A long way.

"We have to be realistic about that as a club, as do many of the other clubs, because themselves and Manchester City, particularly Liverpool this year, have shown an incredible consistency that only comes through hard work and time with fantastic players and fantastic coaching.

"We are at a different point in the curve. You are talking about probably the two best club teams in world football, up there with a couple of others in European football.

"The points don't lie over the past few seasons. We are realistic but we have targets and we want to close that gap."

Chelsea have already spent big in the transfer market to recruit attackers Hakim Ziyech and Timo Werner for next season.

The club have been linked with a move for Bayer Leverkusen playmaker Kai Havertz in the British media but Lampard refused to discuss transfer speculation.

Atalanta Reach Scoring Milestone



BERGAMO (Reuters) - Atalanta took their Serie A tally to 95 goals, the highest by any side in a single season for more than 60 years, when they beat Bologna 1-0 on Tuesday in a match featuring a furious row between the two coaches.

Half-time substitute Luis Muriel scored the only goal in the 62nd minute to extend Atalanta's unbeaten run in Serie A to 15 games and take them second on 74 points with three matches left.

However, they are six behind leaders Juventus, who have a game in hand and are poised to claim the title. Inter Milan, who host Fiorentina on Wednesday, are third with 72.

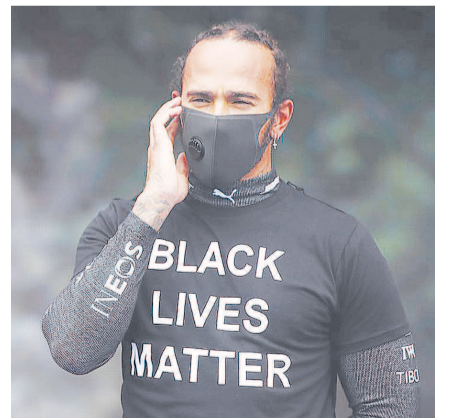
The previous side to score 95 goals were Fiorentina in 1958/59 while Atalanta are still well short of Torino's all-time record of 125 set in 1947/48.

Tempers flared in the first half when Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini complained to the referee about a Bologna player and was hailed with expletives by his opposite number Sinisa Mihajlovic.

With no spectators in the stadium, Mihajlovic's obscene outburst was captured by microphones and broadcast to viewers around the world. Both men were booked and Gasperini was then sent off for continuing to remonstrate with officials.

Bologna, who were thumped 5-1 by AC Milan in their previous outing to Mihajlovic's fury, had the best effort of the opening period when Musa Barrow's curling free kick smacked the bar.

Hamilton Disappointed With Past Champions' Comments



LONDON (Reuters) - Lewis Hamilton has hit back at past Formula One champions Mario Andretti and Jackie Stewart for their comments on his anti-racism stance and push for greater diversity in the sport.

Andretti, who won his title in 1978 and is now 80, was quoted by the Chilean newspaper El Mercurio as saying he had a lot of respect for the six times world champion but asked why he had 'become a militant'.

The American great also spoke, in comments translated into Spanish, of "creating a problem that doesn't exist" and added that "in motor racing colour doesn't matter; you have to win your place with results, and that's the same for everyone."

Triple champion Stewart, 81 and Britain's most successful driver until Hamilton came along, had told ITV's Good Morning Britain that he did not think Formula One had as big a problem as it might seem.

Hamilton is the only Black driver in a sport that is heavily white and male.

"This is disappointing but unfortunately a reality that some of the older generation who still have a voice today cannot get out of their own way and acknowledge there is a problem," Hamilton said in an Instagram story.

"Again, this is plain ignorance but that will not stop me from continuing to push for change," he said of Andretti's comments.