

**Governor of Central Bank of Iran
In a Letter to President Hassan
Rouhani Called for Commendating
108 Exporters Which Have
Repatriated The Most Amount of
Forex Resulted to the Country**

IRAN NEWS

**According to the World Steel
Association's Latest Report, Iran's
Steel Production Has Grown by 102
Percent in the First Half of the Year
While the World Steel Production
Has Just Grown by 6 Percent**

VOL. XXVI, No. 7004 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

MONDAY JULY 27, 2020 - MORDAD 6, 1399

2

DOMESTIC

**Tehran-Tashkent
Economic Ties Enhancing**



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

**Iran-China Trade Office to
Focus on Non-Oil Exports**



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

**Portland Protest
Standoff Continues**



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

**Dimitrov-Gasquet
Clash Leads UTS2 Start**



> SEE PAGE 8

Tehran Rejects U.S. Claims, Reaffirms Commitment to Afghan Stability

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - An Iranian official has dismissed the recent remarks made by the U.S. envoy for Afghanistan about Tehran's "insufficient support" for peace in Afghanistan, saying Iran favors stability in the neighboring country.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran supports peace and stability in Afghanistan and stresses the need to establish peace based on the outcome of intra-Afghan talks owned and led by the Afghans," said Mohammad-Ebrahim Taheri, the special representative of the Iranian foreign minister for Afghan affairs.

"We recommend U.S. officials first carefully review the stances [of Iranian authorities] before expressing their opinions about the viewpoints of the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials about regional and Afghan issues," he said.

His comments came after the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, blamed Iran for not properly supporting the Afghan peace process.

"Iran has not been as supportive as it should be in the effort to get to Intra-Afghan negotiations and an Afghan settlement largely due to our relations with them. We have worked hard with India and Pakistan to support the Afghan Peace Process," Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad claimed, while speaking at a virtual event organized by the U.S. Institute of Peace on Friday.

Almost Entire Iran in 'Red State'

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official says the whole country is in a "red state" as far as the coronavirus outbreak is concerned.

Deputy Health minister Iraj Harirchi said the capital, Tehran, has now turned into the source of spreading the virus to the entire country.

"As long as the number of people hospitalized does not drop, we will be witnessing some 200 deaths [per 24 hours]," he added while commenting about the latest situation of the COVID-19 in the country.

He underlined between 5 and 10 percent of those hospitalized die, and around 5 out of every 100,000 people are hospitalized.

"We hospitalize about 4,000 people suspicious of having contracted coronavirus or having tested positive for the virus," he said.

See Page 7

Iran, Eurasia Up Trade Exchanges by 14%



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Trade exchanges between Iran and Eurasia have increased by 14 percent from October 27, 2019, to June 19, 2020, compared to last year's corresponding period, Iran's Trade Development Organization reported on Sunday.

The report added that the exchange has been increased despite the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the drop in trade exchanges in the world.

The total export of Iran to Eurasia accounts for over \$681 million, compared to the same period of last year that shows a 17% increase, the report noted.

On the other hand, the total imports accounts for over a billion and 736 million dollars, compared to the similar period of the year that illustrates 13% of growth, it further noted.

According to the report, the bilateral trade between Iran and Eurasia has reached \$2417m which shows 14 percent growth comparing to the previous year.

Despite the pandemic, both sides have tried to keep their trade exchange balanced.

By the way Iran's imports from Eurasia since the implementation of the agreement have declined by 15 percent comparing to the preceding year.

Accordingly Iran's exports to Eurasia have grown by 63 percent and the growth in the tariff discounted goods has been 70 percent.

Meanwhile director general of transit department of Iran's Customs Administration said that for the first time two trucks have been dispatched from Shahid Rajaee customs checkpoint to Kyrgyzstan via Afghanistan and Tajikistan route.

Meanwhile Irna reported Iran's West Azarbaijan Province enjoys over 900 km of common border with three neighboring countries that Turkey is the best opportunity for Iran to provide exports to Europe in a safe condition owing to its significant role in European economic exchanges and the railway line of Maku Free Zone.

IRNA quoted Maku Free Zone Deputy Head for Logistics and Transportation Organization Mehdi Safari Moghaddam as saying that the preliminary studies of railway connection of Tabriz to Kars in Turkey are in the final stages that construction operations for the expansion of the border trade using the railway route will be done after it is done.

He added that the railway is designed in the transit route of China and Europe for a length of 200 kilometers through an electric power in 2 lines with a speed of 160 km/h. It has been estimated to allocate 30,000 billion rials of credit for the project.

Maku's Member of Parliament Mohammad Alipour characterized Iran as the world economic highway, and said that the establishment of a railway line to turkey in this region can be a special economic potential.

Iran has three approved borders with Turkey that all of them are located in West Azarbaijan Province.

Enemies Have Failed in Economic War Against Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday called the collapse of the country, the main purpose of the enemy in the economic war that has failed to achieve.

Addressing the meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters, Hassan Rouhani explained the objectives of the enemy's economic war, the main axis of which the collapse of Iran, saying that the enemy planned on people's trouble even in meeting their basic needs by imposing sanctions and pressure on them.

Rouhani stressed the enemy's failure in achieving its goal in this regard, adding: "Today, after more than two years since the sanctions were re-imposed, the Iranian government has managed to be successful not only in providing basic and essential goods to society but also in providing raw materials for the production of goods, while even accelerating the growth and surge in production."

He also stressed the supply of goods at a reasonable price is one of the main plans of the government along with the surge in production, adding: "Transparency in the process of determining the price of goods should be clarified by modifying the production route, distribution, and definition of processes in this chain."

Emphasizing that the public sector should be at the forefront of confronting inflation, the President said: "The commodity exchange should be strengthened and bring the prices of the country's manufactured goods to a reasonable level by the transparency of supply and demand and the exclusion of speculative operations."

Rouhani said that the increase in prices for goods produced in the public and non-governmental sectors is not acceptable at all, stating that the public sector should be in the forefront in controlling prices by defining the process of determining prices and dealing with inflation so that we can decrease the economic pressure on the people during the economic war and the hard days created by the coronavirus outbreak.

See Page 7

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Iran, Iraq Remain Supportive of Each Other

Iraq Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi's visit to Tehran and the joint stand taken by both countries strengthened and revealed more the depth of their joint strategy amid the close multilateral interests of both nations. Without any doubt, the U.S. will consider the depth of this strategic tie in the region against itself, and its support of countries, so called, "Western, Arab, Hebrew Alliance," and it will definitely try to destroy it. So all in Iraq and Iran are assigned to protect and support this deep strategic tie with full strength. Not providing pretext to the opposition current will safeguard Al-Kadhimi in fulfilling his expressed undertakings to Tehran.

After assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, anti-Iran media created a vast hype which was aimed to show that Iran's position in Iraq has weakened, and with designation of al-Kadhimi as prime minister, they accused Al-Kadhimi of being a figure close to Saudi Arabia and the U.S., and Iraqi government will distance itself from Iran more and get closer to Saudi Arabia and the West.

Even it was said that Al-Kadhimi had scheduled his first visit to Saudi Arabia and his second visit was to happen in Tehran, and in order to make Iranians happy, he had invited Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to visit Baghdad one day before his flight to Riyadh in order that he was not forced to have a visit to an impartial country like the UAE. But despite all preparations, Saudi King's illness was a pretext for postponement of Al-Kadhimi's visit to Saudi Arabia, and against all predictions and expectations, Al-Kadhimi's first visit took shape in Tehran to overshadow ties with Saudi Arabia.

His visit to Tehran and his important meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has rejuvenated boom in the application of bilateral relations. Supreme Leader's references to some past events in Iraq should have captivated the soul of the young Iraqi Prime Minister. In Iraq the Shiite majority will unlikely accept the expansion of ties with Saudi Arabia and unlikely they welcome closeness to the Saudis. Of course the number of negative propagations against Al-Kadhimi's visit to Tehran was not few but despite all hype from anti-Iran media in the region, Al-Kadhimi was warmly welcomed in Tehran and the Supreme Leader in his first official visit after almost five months symbolically received him in order to signal this message to Iraqis that even the prime minister who is allegedly to distance Iraq policies from Iran is revered by Iranians because Iranians respect Iraqi people's choice. This is while the U.S. President, due to different pretexts and despite former Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi demands, had refrained from meeting him due to his closeness to Iran. In fact, the U.S. president was irreverent about Iraqi nation's choice and even when he paid a visit to Iraq, he did not inform Iraqi government. See Page 7

Lessons of 8-Year-War Reproduces Insight in Society

TEHRAN (IP) - Commemorating Mersad Operation against U.S.-backed MKO, Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff said the lessons of the imposed 8-year-war against Iran reproduces insight in the society against the enemy's plots.

Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri referred to MKO terrorist group (Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization or MEK) as the last link of the world arrogant powers to break the resistance of Iran in the last point of its 8-year-sacred-defense and said the terrorist group backed by the then-time Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was defeated due their strategic mistake and illusion, and the readiness of the Iranian forces.

Major General Bagheri noted that the U.S.-backed MKO terrorist group still is plotting against Iran in making riots in the country by airing black propaganda against Iran through cyberspace, yet they face the vigilance of the Iranian nation.

See Page 7



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

Judiciary Official Urges Follow-Up On U.S. Attack on Iranian Airliner

TEHRAN (MNA) –Prosecutor-General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri called on Iranian Foreign Minister to pursue legal actions regarding US attack on the Iranian airliner.

In a letter to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Saturday, Montazeri called for legal actions against the US attack on the Iranian passenger plane.

Two U.S. warplanes put the lives of tens of Iranian and Lebanese civilians in danger after conducting dangerous maneuvering near Beirut-bound Mahan Air's Flight 1152 on Syria's air on Thursday night. The airliner's pilot reportedly reduces flight altitude to avoid colliding with the warplanes which led to several injuries among passengers.

Tehran-Tashkent Economic Ties Enhancing

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian hailed historic, cultural and religious commonalities between the two Iranian and Uzbek nations, saying that given the serious resolve by the two countries' governments, bilateral relations have improved, as trade volume registered an increase by 40 percent in 2019.



In a videoconference with Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade Sardar Omar Zaqov late on Saturday, Nahavandian hailed positive developments took place in bilateral relations, saying that Tehran and Tashkent enjoy the great historical asset and cultural and religious commonalities which can help strengthen mutual cooperation in various fields, especially in the field of economy.

Referring to the impact of coronavirus outbreak on reducing the volume of economic exchanges between the two countries in recent months, he said that there are various ways to overcome the existing obstacles and make up the shortcomings.

Nahavandian pointed to Iranian experts' capabilities and experiences in the technical and engineering fields, saying that Tehran is ready to share its experiences

with Tashkent in all fields.

Zaqov, for his part, described Iran as among the main partners of his country, saying, "We are determined to promote cooperation between the two countries in various fields, particularly in the fields of economy and trade."

"We believe that geographical proximity and spiritual commonalities are a good opportunity that can be used to increase the level of economic relations between the two countries several times over," he said.

Expressing pleasure over Iranian companies' activities in Uzbekistan, he said that Tashkent welcomes the presence of Iranian investors and technical engineering companies in the economic and development projects and is interested in expansion of scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries.

Tehran Determined to Continue Friendly Ties With Powers in Asia

TEHRAN (IP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman said Iran has a longstanding policy of maintaining balanced, friendly relations with all Eurasian and East and South Asian powers and we are determined to uphold this policy.

Seyed Abbas Mousavi on his Twitter account on Saturday noted the long history of Iran's friendly relations policy with all the powers of Eurasia, East, and South Asia.

He stated, "Our potential longterm cooperation agreements w / #China & #Russia, & our continued joint work w / #India in Chabahr prove this."

On June 21, the Iranian government reviewed and approved the final draft of a 25-year comprehensive Iran-China cooperation plan.

Also, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif recently announced the renewal of a 20-year agreement with Russia.

Revenge for Lt. Gen. Soleimani To Change Fate of Region

TEHRAN (MNA) – First Deputy Speaker of Iranian Parliament Seyyed Amir Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi said that the revenge for Lt. Gen. Soleimani will change the fate of the region.

Referring to the harassment of U.S. fighter jets for the Iranian airliner, Ghazizadeh noted that the US is afraid of Iran's revenge for the martyrdom of Lt. General Soleimani.

He further said that Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission along with Iran's Armed Forces will adopt necessary measures to give a strong and decisive response to the hostile enemy.

Two U.S. warplanes put the lives of tens of Iranian and Lebanese civilians in danger after conducting dangerous maneuvering near Beirut-bound Mahan Air's Flight 1152 on Syria's air on Thursday night. The airliner's pilot reportedly reduces flight altitude to avoid colliding with the warplanes which led to several injuries among passengers.

Iran Holding 7th Largest Copper Reserves Globally

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran discovered new copper reserves of nearly 528 million metric tons to rank 7th among the largest holders of such reserves in the world, said an industry official.

Managing Director of National Iranian Copper Industries Co (NICICO) Ardesht Sa'ad Mohammadi said on Saturday that more reserves could be found in the near future enabling Iran to push behind Indonesia in terms of copper reserves' size.

Currently, Iran holds 4.2% of the global reserves, Sa'ad Mohammadi said, adding that new copper findings had been reported in the Southeast and Northwest of country.

This is while Iran had the 9th largest reserves of copper in 2011 totaling around 32.5 million tons.

Iran has already earned billions of dollars from exports of different metals despite a series of illegal US sanctions targeting the industry since May 2019.

Sa'ad Mohammadi said the major copper reserves, located in provinces of Kerman and East Azerbaijan, would serve more than 100 years of output at current production level.

He added that Iran plans billions of dollars of new investment in the industry in the next 10 years.

The NICICO chief said, however, that four new copper smelters are due to open in Iran to add nearly 150,000 tons to the current capacity for production of copper concentrates.

Iran produced 1.1 million tons of copper concentrates last year (ended March 19), while copper cathode production topped a quarter of million tons in the same period.



Enemies Failed in Creating Duality Between Science, Religion



TEHRAN (MNA) – First Vice President said that malicious plans orchestrated by enemies against Islamic Republic of Iran in creating duality between science and religion were failed.

Speaking in a session of Headquarters to Coordinate Cultural Engineering Roadmap, Eshagh Jahangiri pointed to the outbreak COVID-19 in the country and said that seminary schools shone in the fight against COVID-19.

He pointed to the decisions adopted by the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters with regards to holding mourning ceremonies during Muharram, which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), as well as preserving health protocols in order to prevent outbreak of COVID-19, and added, "consequences of coronavirus in all areas especially in cultural and social fields is very complicated."

He called on various organizations to cooperate with the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention HQ and focus on cultural issues.

Jahangiri pointed to the issues raised regarding National Document for Developing, Expanding and Strengthening of Mosque, and said, "mosque is an important center in the country that can solve many problems facing ahead and it is necessary to strengthen this valuable center more than before with appropriate policy using capacity of public participation."

U.S. Cannot Tolerate Iran's Ties With Neighbors

TEHRAN (MNA) – Americans cannot tolerate Tehran-Beijing, Tehran-Moscow, and Tehran-Baghdad relations and also Iran's relations with some neighboring countries, said an advisor to Iran's Parliament Speaker.

Speaking in a TV program broadcasted from IRIB on Saturday night, Iranian Parliament Speaker's Special Adviser for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that Iran's priority is to boost ties with neighbors such as Iraq and to use such ties solve challenges posed by the White House's 'unilateral, crazy' policies.

Pointing to the recent visit of Iraqi PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi to Tehran, he said that the trip shows the depth of ties between the two countries.

As far as economic ties are concerned, there has been a major increase in bilateral trade as



it is standing at \$14 billion on a yearly basis, while Iran's trade with European countries does not even reach \$3 billion, Amir-Abdollahian added.

He went on to say that PM al-Kadhimi openly paid an official visit to Iran while Americans are busy pressuring all countries, including Iraq, to cut economic ties with Tehran.

The most important message of Iraqi PM's meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei was the message of 'friendship, brotherhood, and support'.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, al-Kadhimi paid a two-day visit to Tehran last week and met with senior Iranian officials including the Leader, President Rouhani, and Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf among others.

Armed Forces to Unveil IT Achievement

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of Geographical Organization of the Armed Forces said that a major part of salient achievements of the Organization in the field of spatial information technology (IT) will be unveiled on the Defense Industry Day.

Amir Majid Fakhri made the remarks on Sun. in a meeting held in the presence of senior officials of Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization and stated, "Geographical Organization of the Armed Forces, given the assigned missions such as leadership, monitoring, producing positional information within the framework of location-based services, managed to update software and hardware infrastructures in the field of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) at the unsparing efforts of the Ministry of Defense.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the most important measures taken by the Geographical Organization of the Armed Forces in the field of e-government as follows, establishment of technology tower and accelerator of geometric sciences of the Organization, design of electronic sales system of products and services, development of Spatial Information Management System, design and development of 10 new products leading to information and communication technology, including routers, trackers as well as registration of 40 specialized services presentable to public in the system of Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization of the country in Shahid Rajaei Festival.

Benefited from domestic capacities and relying upon specialties of its expert engineers, the Geographical Organization of the Armed Forces will remove problems of the country in the field of accessing spatial information systems.

FM Urged to Discuss With Regional States U.S. Expel From PG

TEHRAN (MNA) – A member of the Iranian parliament called on Foreign Ministry to follow up the U.S. harassment of an Iranian airliner and negotiate with regional countries over US expel from Persian Gulf.

Tehran's representative in Iranian parliament Seyed Nezamoddin Mousavi said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stated that the U.S. military presence in various countries causes insecurity in the region.

Referring to the recent provocation by US warplanes against an Iranian airliner, he said that despite the fact that the Americans tried to make excuses for their harassment, it is clear that the Americans are constantly seeking to create tension and sedition in the region, and in this regard, they do not hesitate to harass a passenger plane.

He went on to say that the U.S. actions are solely for the purpose of inciting sedition and insecurity, and Iran's Foreign Ministry must take a firm stand against this American aggression.

Mousavi noted that the Foreign Ministry must legally prosecute the US harassment in international forums, including the UN and ICAO.

He added that in addition, Foreign Ministry should negotiate with the regional countries over US expel from the region.

U.S. Threatening Iranian Civilian Plane Terrorist Act

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Jalal Firouznia said on Sunday after visiting the injured people of the threatening by the U.S. warplanes on Iran's civilian plane in Beirut that the harassment was a typical example of terrorism.

Iran's Mahan Air passenger plane was en route to Beirut, Lebanon, on Thursday, when it was approached and threatened by two U.S. F-5 military jets over Syria.

Although the Iranian plane finally landed in Beirut Airport unharmed, some of its passengers were immediately taken to hospital.

Firouznia said Iran will take all the necessary measures to condemn the US move.

The issue will be pursued in the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the courts pertaining to what happened to the passengers and the injured ones, so as similar moves do not take place.

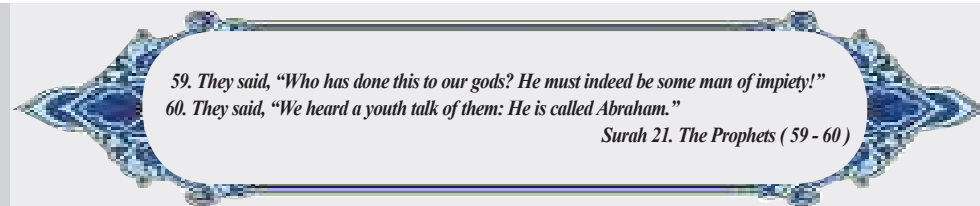
Saying that the U.S. measure is by no means justifiable, he added the U.S. is responsible for all "the cowardly terrorist act" and the only way to eliminate insecurity and threat from the region is to expel the U.S.

"The reason of the all the problems and the terrorist actions is US' illegal presence in the region."



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:32
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:31
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:09



Iran-China Trade Office to Focus on Non-Oil Exports

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce Majid Reza Hariri says the project for developing non-oil exports to China is one of the priorities of the private sector and it is better in the first phase of launching Iran-China Trade Office in Shanghai, China, it should be taken into consideration.

Speaking in the meeting with representatives of big state-run companies, Hariri said according to the plans, the trade office is to be launched by the end of 2020. He said state-run companies are to cooperate with Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce for launching the trade office in Shanghai. He delved into details of launching trade office in Shanghai, saying that the trade offices are aimed at accelerating economic cooperation between the two countries and launching the Iran-China Trade Office is not an exception. He added that preparations have begun for setting up the trade office in China and now it is good time for launching such an office. Hariri added that since the pandemic has led to restrictions for travels among countries, it is good time for preparing the grounds for cooperation for the time when the restrictions are lifted.

He admitted that it is the first experience for the country for launching such a trade office, adding that between 2009 and 2013, Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce had offices in Shanghai but due problems and the U.S. sanctions their activities were suspended.

Hariri admitted that during the nuclear talks and signing the JCPOA, the issue of reopening the trade office in China was forgotten and was put on hold.

He reiterated that the U.S. reimposition of sanctions and pulling out of the JCPOA made the government work on this issue in the past year and Iran's Chamber of Commerce was assigned to relaunch trade offices abroad.



He added that since Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce has experience of years of activities, China is the first place that Iran can practically start its trade activities.

Hariri reiterated that of course Iranians have purchased a trade office in Syria but it is totally different with trade offices in Iraq, Afghanistan and China, and each has its own characteristics and each can work in a certain field.

On choosing Shanghai as the first venue for the trade office, he said Iran has had trade office in Shanghai and it can use the same place for the office, adding that Shanghai is one of the major commercial cities of China, noting that although Beijing is the political capital of the country, the heart of its trade is Shanghai and Iran should take advantage of this opportunity. Hariri said that Iranians should take advantage of China's market because China is one of the biggest consuming countries in the world and it is one of the biggest importers. He reiterated that China's 1.4b population is incomparable with the markets of Iraq and Afghanistan.

On the Iran-China 25-Year Strategic Accord and its impact on the trend of cooperation of private sector, he said the accord is more a media hype but what is seen as the strategic cooperation between Iran and China is to prioritize expansion of trade relations, and the colorful role of the private sector should be highlighted.

Hariri noted that the first phase of Iran-China trade office will open in Shanghai to serve Iranian companies for exports to China's market. He further said imports of machinery and needed items are of the primary goals of the office.

He added that in the second phase, attraction of Chinese companies and serving Chinese companies through Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce will be on the cards.

NIDC Drills 31,000 Meters of Wells in 4 Months

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Head of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) says the company has drilled 31,035 meters of oil and gas wells in the first four months of the current Iranian year in the oil-rich areas in the country by using its rigs.



Hamid Reza Khoshayand said that during this period, drilling operation in 39 development, workover, exploratory and descriptive wells have been completed and delivered to the applicant companies.

He also noted that among these wells were one exploratory, 15 development, one descriptive and 22 workover wells that 31 wells belonged to the National Iranian South Oil Company.

Khoshayand added that 3 wells belonged to Iranian Offshore Oil Company, four wells belonged to the developmental projects of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company and one well belonged to Oil Exploration Operations Company which were drilled and completed.

He added that NIDC owns 70 onshore and offshore rigs, adding that currently 9 onshore rigs are used in the operations.

Iran, Brazil Review Economic Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) – Senior Iranian and Brazilian officials discussed on Sunday the ways of boosting economic cooperation between the two countries.

Accompanied by their delegations, Iranian Ambassador to Brazil Hossein Gharibi and Governor of the State of Paraná Ratinho Júnior explored the ways of broadening mutual relations in the agricultural, petrochemical and technological fields.

Gharibi expressed Iran's readiness for expansion and diversification of economic ties with the South American country, stressing the need for utilization of all capacities to compensate for the losses inflicted by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Ratinho Junior, for his part, referred to the heavy damages by the coronavirus on Brazil's economy, noting that creating job opportunities is high on the country's agenda, hence, cooperation with Iran could pave the way to some extent in this regard.

The members of Iran-Brazil Parliamentary Friendship were also present in the meeting.

Gas Industry to Celebrate Self-Sufficiency



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Managing Director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hossein Montazer Torbati announced that the company has started manufacturing 35 items of strategic and widely-used goods in the national gas industry in cooperation with the knowledge-based Iranian companies, adding that concurrent with increase in the production capacity and processing in refinery, the national gas industry will soon obtain self-sufficiency and it will need no imports of foreign goods and will celebrate the achievement.

Montazer Torbati pointed to the increase in Iran's gas production capacity and setting consecutive records in the production chain, transfer, distribution, development and exports of gas, adding that concurrent with massive planning for retaining the gas production, the developmental plans of the gas industry have not been halted in the sanctions era and even during the outbreak of the Coronavirus.

He added that in the year of surge in production, the company has put on its agenda some plans for maximum utilization from the capacity of manufacturers, contractors and Iranian producers, reiterating that to make production network needless of imports, the company has defined and started a four-stage strategic plan for indigenizing knowledge and technology of widely-used items in the gas industry.

Montazer Torbati pointed to the identification of technological and strategic needs of the national gas industry and 20 items needed by NIGC in refining, transfer and distribution sectors, asserting that currently 35 most demanded items in the gas industry have been identified and the work for their manufactures have begun in cooperation with knowledge-based Companies which will reduce the national gas industry's dependence on foreign purchase and imports.

He further announced the company's support from construction of the first complex for producing chemical materials which are needed for sweetening the gas in the country, adding that it is expected the complex to join the network by the end of next year and it will make gas industry needless of importing four items of chemicals.

Tehran, Baku Emphasize Developing Transit Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – Customs heads of Islamic Republic of Iran and Azerbaijan Republic on Sat. stressed the need to expand and develop transit cooperation.

In a meeting held through video conference, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said that the two countries of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan have a long history in the field of customs and trade cooperation.

Turning to the request of Azerbaijan for transiting live animal to Nakhichevan from Iranian land and territory, Mir-Ashrafi added, "with the cooperation made between customs officials and Ministry of Agriculture, it is scheduled to hold talk with customs officials of Republic of Azerbaijan with regards to the provision of health protocols within the next two weeks."

Elsewhere in his remarks, IRICA president pointed to holding a joint border meeting between customs officials of the two countries in Bileh Savar and Yardimli border and added, "following the necessary visits made, the demarcation of new border in this region, that could help increase trade between the two countries, will be taken into consideration."

While announcing readiness for the development of transit cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan, he added, "we will make our utmost cooperation in this field and we are confident that, given the existence of actual and potential capacities in this field including North-South Corridor, this issue will benefit both countries."

Safar Mehdiyev Chairman of State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for his part, expressed his satisfaction with the development of customs cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this meeting, senior customs officials of the two countries also discussed signing and sealing a trilateral transit Memorandum of Understanding between Iran, Russia, and Republic of Azerbaijan and expressed their readiness to increase customs and transit cooperation.

Iranian-Made Medicine for COVID-19 to Hit Market in 3 Weeks

TEHRAN (ISNA) - Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari announced that an Iranian-made medicine for coronavirus will hit the shelves in three weeks' time.

Sorena Sattari made the comments while visiting the sci-tech park of central Hamadan province where he also got a first-hand account of projects and achievements accomplished by knowledge-based companies at the park.

He said that almost all domestic needs for equipment needed to combat COVID-19 have been met by



knowledge-based companies.

"We have imported almost no equipment required to fight coronavirus," he said.

He said the use of technological and innovation biome during the days when the country was in need amid the coronavirus outbreak was one of the good events that happened, according to IFP.

"During the coronavirus outbreak, knowledge-based companies tapped into their potential and met domestic need without reliance on imports," he said.

Iran Devises Comprehensive Autism Screening System

TEHRAN (IFP) - A group of Iranian researchers at a knowledge-based company have developed a comprehensive autism screening system.

The apparatus is installed at medical centers and helps medical personnel to conduct an initial screening of children suffering from autism.

"The comprehensive autism screening system is a multi-faceted device ... which analyses the child's behaviour using a camera," said Manouchehr Moradi Sabzevar, the CEO of the company which has developed the system.

"This system is equipped with smart games which are used to examine the possibility of a child having autism," he added.

"This apparatus studies children between 1.5 and 5 years old," he went on to say. "The comprehensive autism screening system is connected to the company's data center via and online network. Data collected by the apparatus is fed into the company's Analysis and Evaluation Centre, and the result is sent to the medical center accordingly," Moradi said. "The device is also fitted with a smart audio system which analyzes the sound of a child crying and presents the result to medical staff," he notes.

He says the system is undergoing clinical tests at medical centers and has, fortunately, received good feedback from medical staff. "With the support of relevant institutions, we hope the system could be mass-produced and exported," he says.

Reopening of Chazzabeh Border Crossing Postponed



TEHRA (MNA) – The reopening of Chazzabeh Border crossing between Iran and Iraq, which was due on Sunday, has been postponed for almost a week.

Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration Ruhollah Latifi said on Sunday that the reopening has been postponed so that the Iraqi team positioned in the border crossing could carry on its health protocol-related tasks.

He predicted that Chazzabeh border crossing would resume operation for commercial exchanges within a week after five months of hiatus due to the coronavirus outbreak.

According to Governor of Dasht-e Azadegan Hossein Silavi, once operational, the crossing will be open all weekdays, except on official holidays.

On July 23, Khosravi border crossing (called Manzarieh on the Iraqi side) also resumed its commercial operations in a bid to facilitate the challenged exchanges between the two countries.

Khosravi border crossing links Iran's Kermanshah province and Iraq's Diyala Governorate.

Vietnam Detects First Coronavirus Case in Nearly 100 Days

HANOI (AFP) - Vietnam has detected its first locally-transmitted case of coronavirus in nearly 100 days, authorities said Saturday, in a country whose swift and full lockdown won praise for controlling the spread of the disease.

"Patient 416" is a 57-year-old retired Vietnamese man in the southern city of Danang, and the first community transmission since April 16.

Local health officials have tested 105 people who had been in close contact with him, the Ministry of Health said on its website.



Jordan Orders Two-Year Closure of Teachers' Union

AMMAN (AFP) - Jordan's judiciary on Saturday ordered a two-year closure of the teachers' union as part of an investigation into alleged graft and arrested 13 members, state media reported.

The move came three days after the Teachers' Association organised a demonstration attended by hundreds of protesters demanding the government honour a 2019 agreement for a rise in wages.

The government and the union, which represents 100,000 teachers, had reached the deal after a month-long strike over salaries.

The teachers had been demanding a 50-percent salary hike and had obtained raises ranging from 35 to 75 percent.



Portland Protest Standoff Continues



PORTLAND (AP) — Federal agents again repeatedly fired tear gas to break up rowdy protests in Portland, Oregon, that continued into the early morning Saturday as demonstrations that have happened every night for two months showed no signs of letting up.

Authorities say six federal officers were injured and one person was arrested.

Thousands gathered in front of the downtown federal courthouse beginning Friday evening. Demonstrations have happened in Oregon's largest city nightly since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis in May. President Donald Trump said he sent federal agents to Portland to halt the unrest but state and local officials say they are making the situation worse.

Late Friday, a federal judge denied a request by Oregon's attorney general to restrict the actions of federal police.

The latest demonstration went until federal agents entered the crowd around 2:30 a.m. Saturday and marched in a line down the street, clearing remaining protesters with volleys of tear gas at close range. They also extinguished a large fire in the street outside the courthouse.

The Federal Protective Service had declared the gathering in Portland that began Friday evening "an unlawful assembly. Harry Fones, a Homeland Security spokesman, said at a news conference Saturday afternoon some people launched large fireworks, threw hard projectiles and used power tools to damage property.

Craig Gabriel, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, said at the news conference that of the six federal officers who were injured, one suffered a concussion and another was taken to the hospital for burns.

He said one person was arrested for failing to comply with orders. That person was later released without charges, bringing the total number of people arrested on or near the courthouse property since early July to 60.

"It's the very few of the crowd who come not intent on doing anything with their voice but intent on destruction and intent on confrontation, unfortunately, with federal police," Gabriel said, acknowledging that the majority of protesters are peaceful.

Gabriel said the fence erected around the courthouse has been targeted by "violent agitators."

"If the courthouse can stand and can have integrity and not subject to damage or attack, then the officers will go home. I think — not to be flippant — but I think it's that simple," Gabriel said.

Earlier Friday night, the protest had drawn various organized groups, including veterans, Healthcare Workers Protest, Teachers against Tyrants, Lawyers for Black Lives and the "Wall of Moms."

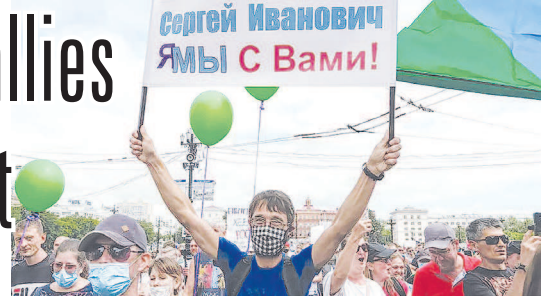
Mass Anti-Kremlin Rallies Grip Russia's Far East

KHABAROVSK (AFP) - Huge anti-government demonstrations erupted in Russia's Far East on Saturday over the arrest of a popular governor who was replaced this week by a Kremlin appointee who never lived in the fraught region.

Residents of Khabarovsk near the border with China took to the streets en masse for the third Saturday in a row after governor Sergei Furgal was arrested by federal law enforcement and flown to Moscow on murder charges this month.

The running demonstrations have been some of the largest anti-government protests in Russia in years, which the Kremlin said this week were being fuelled by opposition activists outside Khabarovsk.

Tens of thousands of residents marched through Khabarovsk waving the region's flag, carrying banners and chanting slogans against President Vladimir Putin as passing cars honked their horns in support.



Poland to Quit Treaty on Violence Against Women

WARSAW (Reuters) - Poland will take steps next week to withdraw from a European treaty on violence against women, which the right-wing cabinet says violates parents' rights by requiring schools to teach children about gender, the justice minister said on Saturday.

Zbigniew Ziobro told a news conference his ministry would submit a request to the labour and families ministry on Monday to begin the process of withdrawing from the treaty, known as the Istanbul Convention.

"It contains elements of an ideological nature, which we consider harmful," Ziobro said.

Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party and its coalition partners closely align themselves with the Catholic Church and promote a conservative social agenda. Hostility to gay rights was one of the main issues promoted by President Andrej Duda during a successful re-election campaign this month.

On Friday, thousands of people, mostly women, protested in Warsaw and other cities against proposals to reject the treaty.

"The aim is to legalise domestic violence," Magdalena Lempart, one of the protest organisers said on Friday at a march in Warsaw. Some protesters carried banners saying "PiS is the women's hell".

PiS has long complained about the Istanbul Convention, which Poland ratified under a previous centrist government in 2015. The government says the treaty is disrespectful towards religion and requires teaching liberal social policies in schools, although in the past it has stopped short of a decision to quit.

Ziobro, the justice minister, represents a smaller right-wing party within the ruling coalition. A government spokesman was not available on Saturday for comment on whether Ziobro's announcement of plans to quit the treaty represented a collective cabinet decision.

The World Health Organization says domestic violence has surged this year in Europe during months of lockdown aimed at fighting the coronavirus.

Greece, Turkey Argue Over Hagia Sophia a Mosque

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey and Greece exchanged harsh words on Saturday over the conversion of Istanbul's Hagia Sophia into a mosque, a day after Islamic prayers were held at the ancient site for the first time in nine decades.

Greek criticism of the move to convert the site from a museum has been scathing, underlining tense ties between Greece and Turkey. Church bells tolled in mourning across Greece on Friday as Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan joined prayers at the building.

"Greece showed once again its enmity towards Islam and Turkey with the excuse of reacting to Hagia Sophia Mosque being opened to prayers," Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said in a written statement on Saturday.

The ministry strongly condemned hostile statements by the Greek government and parliament members to stir up the public, and the burning of a Turkish flag in the Greek city of Thessaloniki, it said.

Hagia Sophia was opened to prayer as a mosque in line with the will of the Turkish people and belonged to Turkey like all cultural assets in the country, it added.

The Greek Foreign Ministry responded with its own statement, saying "the international community of the 21st century is stunned to observe the religious and nationalist fanatic ramblings of today's Turkey."

Friday's ceremony sealed Erdogan's ambition to restore Muslim worship at the site, which most Greeks view as central to their Orthodox Christian religion.

On Friday, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis called Turkey a "troublemaker", and the conversion of the site an "affront to civilisation of the 21st century".

Greece and Turkey disagree on a range of issues from airspace to maritime zones and ethnically split Cyprus. This week they also exchanged barbs over the delimitation of their continental shelves in the eastern Mediterranean, an area thought to be rich in natural resources.



Tunisian President Designates New PM

TUNIS (Dispatches) - Hichem Mechichi, who until now has served as Tunisia's interior minister, has been appointed to form the next government, the president's office said Saturday.

The 46-year-old lawyer succeeds Elyes Fakhfakh, who resigned earlier this month -- but Mechichi was not one of the names proposed by the ruling political parties to President Kais Saied.

The president made the announcement in a video posted on the presidency's website.

As well as being interior minister in the outgoing government, Mechichi has been a counsellor to President Saied, handling legal matters. He has previously been chief of staff at the transport ministry and also served in the social affairs ministry.

Mechichi now has a month to form a government against a backdrop of political tensions among the major parties.

At that point his choice will be put to a parliamentary vote of confidence and will need an absolute majority to succeed. Failing that, parliament will be dissolved and new elections organised within three months.

In the last elections held in October the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha came top but fell far short of a majority -- holding 54 of 217 seats in parliament -- and eventually agreed to join a coalition government.



Shanon
(adviser)

Mahmoodieh (\$2500)
240sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J
L.balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Jordan Villa (\$3000)
800sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
green yard
parquet fl
Fully Furn

Parsian

(\$2400)
Farmanieh
280sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
Fully Furn

Darrous Apts
140sq.m, 2bdrs (\$1400)
220sq.m, 3bdrs (\$2000)
300sq.m, 4bdrs (\$2700)
with All facilities

(\$20000)
Andarzgoo bldg
7storey, 20bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg lots
balcony, Brand new

Gheitarieh
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, & F.F

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

Vali-e-Asr
100, 200, 300sq.m, 5bdrs
(\$26 per sq.m) pkg lots

IRAN NEWS
ADVERTISING
44253401

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

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

IRAN NEWS
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS
ADVERTISING

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

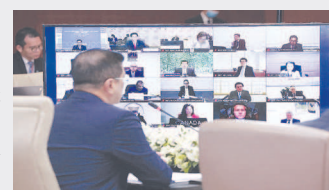
Malaysia Won't Rule Out In-Person APEC Summit

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia has not yet ruled out an in-person summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders in November in Kuala Lumpur, though all other gatherings of the group will be virtual.

New Zealand, which is hosting next year's APEC summit, has said already that it will use virtual platforms

to conduct the meeting in light of the travel restrictions and uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 outbreak.

But Malaysian Trade Minister Mohamed Azmin Ali said his country's government had not yet cancelled the meeting of the 21 leaders of the APEC countries including Thailand, which it is scheduled to host in November.



Foreign Investors Withdraw \$7b From Turkey's Bond Market

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Foreign investors are fleeing Turkey's local currency bond market, adding to the woes in the indebted Turkish economy which is heavily dependent on foreign funding, the Wall Street Journal said.

Investment funds withdrew more than \$7 billion from Turkey's local currency bond market in the six months up to the end of June - the largest first half yearly drawdown on record, WSJ said, citing data from Turkey's central bank. Nonresidents' ownership of outstanding Turkish government bonds has fallen to around 5 percent, down from nearly a third in 2013, WSJ said.

The bonds have grown less attractive to investors as the central bank slashed interest rates to less than the rate of inflation this year, sending the real yield on the debt to below zero.

"Turkey is becoming irrelevant for fixed-income investors," Viktor Szabó, investment director at Aberdeen Standard Investments, told the WSJ. "The way they pulled out of Turkey is really unprecedented." Turkey's economy was only just recovering from a 2018 recession when the COVID-19 coronavirus hit this year, sending a shock through the economy.

COVID-19 lockdowns have crippled the European Union's purchases of cars and textiles from Turkey, and wiped out most of the country's foreign-exchange revenue from tourism.

Meanwhile, Turkey's central bank spent billions of dollars of foreign-exchange reserves and borrowed foreign currencies from domestic banks to buy lira to halt the slide in the currency.

Despite those efforts, the currency in May still slumped to a record low against the U.S. dollar before recovering slightly, leaving its retreat this year at about 13 percent.

With the lira sliding, Turkey's overseas borrowing costs have risen this year, which is spooking foreign investors. "Nobody wants to buy long-dated bonds in Turkey anymore. It's one of the signs of stress," Jan Dehn, head of research at Ashmore Group, told the WSJ.

Investors are also increasingly worried about how borrowers will repay their debt, as Turkish banks issued loans to households at a record pace in the first half of the year. The government is guaranteeing debt to small and medium-size businesses to keep credit flowing.

The WSJ reported that Turkey's central bank now owes more in foreign currencies than it has in its coffers. Turkey's dependence on its reserves and borrowed currencies has led to investors speculating that Ankara heading towards a balance-of-payments crisis, which would leave Turkey unable to pay for essential imports or make payments on its external debt.

In which case, Turkey would be forced to let the currency weaken and raise interest rates, reducing economic growth, or to seek a bailout, the WSJ said.

IMF Expects Net Income of \$1.9b in 2021

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund forecast it will swing to a net income of \$1.9 billion (Dh6.97bn) next year and \$2.4bn in 2022 but warned the projections are subject to "larger-than-normal" uncertainties amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Washington-based lender expects a net loss of \$1.6bn for the year ended April 30, partly due to an unrealised pension-related adjustment during the fiscal year, it said in a statement on July 24. The accounting adjustment offset net operational income of about \$1.9bn and the resulting loss will be absorbed by the Fund's "sizeable" reserves.

"Operational income for FY 2021 and FY 2022 is expected to remain strong," the IMF said. "However, these projections are subject to a high degree of uncertainty related to the scale of new lending associated with the Covid-19 economic fallout, as well as the timing and amounts of disbursements under approved arrangements included in the projections."

The projected net income for the next two years also depends on uncertainties related to the discount rate used to measure the fund's retirement plan obligations and asset returns. Such uncertainties can have "a large impact on the actual outcome, given the heightened volatility in financial markets in the wake of the pandemic", it said.

Additional uncertainties weighing on its income projections include the performance of the fund's investment and retirement plan asset portfolios in the wake of the pandemic.

The lender's executive board agreed to maintain the margin for the rate of charge on IMF lending unchanged at 100 basis points above the interest rate for Special Drawing Rights - a multilateral reserve asset used by the lender based on a basket of currencies - for financial years 2021 and 2022, according to the statement.

This is the basic lending rate for member countries that choose to borrow from the IMF.

This year's net operating income, mainly from lending and investments, was "robust" and reflects "ongoing elevated use of fund credit that is expected to remain high" as member countries seek help to cope with the pandemic.

Last week, the fund temporarily increased the amount of financing member countries can request in a year and removed caps on the number of funding disbursements poor countries can secure.

The move came as the lender seeks to help strengthen economies struggling in the wake of the pandemic.

As of mid-July, 72 countries had received financial assistance from the IMF's emergency financing instruments after the fund doubled the annual access limits under these facilities on April 6.

Russian Central Bank Cuts Key Rate Over Virus Impact

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's central bank on Friday cut its key rate by 0.25 points to 4.25 percent - its lowest in recent history - to speed economic recovery after coronavirus lockdowns.

The bank cited fears of "considerable" disinflationary pressures stemming from global virus restrictions in a statement announcing the cut.

"The recovery of the global and Russian economies will be gradual" even though easing restrictions have revived economic activity, the bank said.

It predicted that inflation could fall below the target 4.0 percent in 2021 to between 3.5 and 4.0 percent before stabilising around 4.0 percent later on.

It said inflation had increased slightly in June to an annualised 3.2 percent from 3.0 percent in May.

After GDP growth of 1.6 percent in the first quarter, the economy was hit by a "a steep decline in domestic and external demand," the bank noted in its statement.



In June, however, "the decline in industrial production, the contraction of orders in both external and domestic markets, and the growth in unemployment slowed down."

"Recovery continues in retail trade and the services sector," the bank said.

In June, retail sales fell by 7.7 percent from the same month a year earlier,

while the unemployment rate stood at 6.2 percent.

The bank said weaker economic activity was due in part to both a drop in exports, and cuts in oil production set by the OPEC cartel and its allies including Russia to control oil prices after a dizzying fall in the spring.

The economic recovery could be unstable owing to a decline in household income, the bank said.

It expects gross domestic product (GDP) to fall by 4.5 to 5.5 percent in 2020, before rebounding by 3.5 to 4.5 percent in 2021.

The bank's next monetary policy meeting is scheduled for September 18.

World Bank Eyes More Loans to Philippines

MANILA (Dispatches) - The World Bank is looking to extend more loans to the Philippines this year, part of which will be used to fund the government's coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic response, the Department of Finance (DOF) said.

In a statement, DOF said the Duterte

administration's economic and infrastructure clusters held an online meeting with the World Bank last week to welcome Ndiame Diop, the newly designated country director for Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand.

Diop succeeded Achim Fock, the World Bank operations manager for these four countries, who had assumed the post of country director in an acting capacity.

During the meeting, Diop revealed that there are currently nine Philippine projects proposed for World Bank financing.

"Moving forward, the pipeline is really strong with nine projects, many of which are geared toward supporting the government effort to address the crisis as well as helping the recovery," Diop said.

He said three of these projects, which amount to almost \$1 billion, "are expected to be approved by September."

The World Bank has already provided \$1.2 billion in concessional financing assistance to the Philippines to help contain the spread of COVID-19 and provide emergency relief to sectors most affected by the pandemic.

This includes the \$500 million Third Disaster Risk Management Development Policy Loan, \$500 million Emergency COVID-19 Response Development Policy Loan, and the \$200 million additional loan for the Social Welfare Development and Reform Project II.

Diop said including COVID-19 assistance, the World Bank has delivered \$1.9 billion in loans to the Philippines over a one-year period from June 2019 to June this year.

Japan, Britain to Protect Encryption Keys in Trade Pact

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan and Britain have agreed not to force their companies to disclose algorithms or set up local data servers, as part of talks aimed at a bilateral trade deal, the Nikkei said on Saturday.

A Japan-Britain agreement on advanced digital standards would pave the way for creating an international framework to protect intellectual property and the free flow of data, the business daily reported, without citing sources.

The two nations hope to clinch a deal before Britain's transition out of the European Union concludes at the year end, to avoid any gaps in bilateral trade arrangements.

Under the bilateral deal, the two governments would not force their companies to hand over encryption keys, which are used to protect proprietary corporate technology and information, the Nikkei said.

The two nations are expected to agree not to force companies to set up servers and other related facilities within their borders and to protect the free flow of data, the report said.

A Japanese government official declined to comment, as the talks are ongoing. A call to the British embassy in Tokyo went unanswered.

Although Britain will be covered by the Japan-EU economic agreement until the end of the year, Tokyo hopes to complete the bilateral trade deal before that, as it would need legal checks by the government before being submitted to parliament, which could meet in coming months, a Japanese negotiator said this month.

In the trade talks, Tokyo wants to secure at least as favorable automobile tariffs as it has in its existing EU trade pact, the negotiator told Reuters.



India's GDP to Contract 7.5% In the Current Fiscal



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - HDFC Bank forecast a deeper contraction of 7.5% for growth in the current fiscal, down from -4.8% it expected in May, as Covid-19 cases surged in non-metro areas, forcing states and local governments to re-impose lockdowns in July.

The country was facing a situation similar to that in the US, where each state would have its own epidemic curve of a rise, peak and fall in cases, the report released on Friday said.

This would prolong economic recovery, it said, projecting -11% growth for the second quarter and a weak 0.7% and 1.5% recovery in the third and fourth quarters of FY21 respectively.

Citing similar reasons, rating agency ICRA slashed its forecast to -9.5% from -5% earlier, while CARE Ratings revised its expectations to -6.4% from -1.3%.

According to the HDFC dispersion index, which measures the spread in new daily cases, there was a spike at the end of May, when migrants traveled back to their homes and more recently in July as mobility increased during the unlock phase.

The number of cases has a strong inverse correlation with the Human Development Index (HDI) of the state, the report said, which in turn was inversely correlated to high outbound migration. This meant reverse migration would bring the infection to areas of high vulnerability.

"With the exception of Madhya Pradesh, both Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar are net exporters of migrant labour. The dispersion also means that in these vulnerable states, which are associated with much less developed healthcare facilities than the initial hotspots, you might just have a rapid escalation of cases," said Abheek Barua, chief economist of HDFC Bank.

Including UP and Bihar, nine states have imposed lockdowns in varying forms through July.

Tehran, Baghdad Examine Issues Concerning Border Rivers

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi and Iraqi Minister of Water Resources and Dam Operation Mehdi Rasheed Mehdi Jasem on Sunday discussed the issues of the rivers on the border.

The two sides conferred on the topic of water and reviewed the previous talks on the issue.

During the meeting, both sides called for bolstering the bilateral relations that benefit their mutual interests.



New Delhi Extends \$400m Currency Swap Facility to Colombo

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's economy will spring back to normal sooner than expected and may even make a sharp V-shaped recovery in the next financial year, two top finance ministry officials said, dismissing forecasts of a sharp contraction in GDP in the current fiscal. Monetising of the fiscal deficit by the RBI was not currently on the table, one of them said.

Direct and indirect tax collections in the June quarter were encouraging and daily e-way bill data was also showing a positive trend, finance secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said.

"All these things are actually giving an encouraging signal that the economy is coming back to the rate sooner than what was being anticipated," Pandey said at an event of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Ficci) on Thursday by video conference.

If the current uptick continues without additional shocks, the sharp contraction forecast by several agencies for the current fiscal won't come to pass, said economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj at the same event.

"June and July have been more promising than we initially thought... If we continue in this manner, and we are not saddled with any more surprises, it may not be as bad as the outside world thinks or we were thinking," Bajaj said. "Unless Covid hits us very badly and we have to change our strategy in the middle, which seems very unlikely now, I am expecting a V-shaped recovery."

Localised shutdowns on account of Covid-19 outbreaks have prompted the further lowering of GDP estimates. Ratings agency ICRA expects a 9.5% contraction in GDP in the current year against its initial 5% shrinkage estimate, citing a setback to the recovery seen in June due to the mini lockdowns.

The government was open to borrowing more to boost spending on infrastructure but monetising the fiscal deficit by the RBI was not under consideration.

"At this point of time, monetisation is not on the table at all. It has not been discussed with the central bank also," Bajaj said. "The revenues are going up and



we also mobilised some extra revenues through excise duty. So that is something that is going to help us this year."

Income tax collections for the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal, which includes advance tax and tax deducted at source, were 80% of the year-ago level, Pandey said. These numbers should be seen in the context of corporate tax being cut to 22% from 30%, he said.

Goods and services tax (GST) collections of Rs 91,000 crore in May were at about 70% of the year earlier. This is expected to have improved in June, Pandey said, adding that the pace of transactions had risen compared to the previous months of lockdown. India's nationwide shutdown began on March 25 and was progressively eased in May.

PGCC Economic Recovery to Be Slow And Gradual in 2020-21



DUBAI (Dispatches) - The rapid spread of the coronavirus has fundamentally changed the global economic environment and a recovery is going to be gradual across the world and in the region, Markus Wiedemann, Chief Investment Officer of Liechtensteinische Landesbank (LLB) said in an interview.

"Most economists believe that a full recovery will take time – this is likely to be the case for UAE as well. The OECD expects that economic output in industrial countries at the end of 2021 will still be below the pre-crisis level, even if there is no second wave of infections," said Wiedemann.

Regional economic growth in 2020 and 2021 will be slow and anemic. The collapse in Brent as well as the spending by the GCC bloc to counter the economic effects of Covid-19 come at a huge cost.

"The region's oil dependence plays a major role in the rate of the recovery by acting as a pace setter - higher oil prices naturally stimulate the regional economies in the Persian Gulf, therefore steadily rising Brent prices are paramount to ensuring a sustainable recovery into 2021," said Wiedemann.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Saudi Arabia's economy, the largest economy in the region, is projected to contract 6.8 per cent in 2020. Saudi is expected to gradually return to growth in 2021 of about 3.1 per cent, while Qatar is expected to rebound the highest to 5 per cent ahead of the planned 2022 World Cup.

The region's oil dependence plays a major role in the rate of the recovery by acting as a pace setter - higher oil prices naturally stimulate the regional economies in the Persian Gulf, therefore steadily rising Brent prices are paramount to ensuring a sustainable recovery into 2021.

"Austerity measures and "belt tightening" in the form of sharp government spending cuts have been implemented across the GCC swiftly and will have an adverse impact on growth in the short to medium term across the region. KSA may be sighted here again as the Kingdom took this opportunity to increase VAT to 15% from 5% in an attempt to alleviate pressures on its balances and ensure its credit rating (S&P: A-) as well its Dollar peg remain intact which is crucial to the PGCC as a whole," said Wiedemann.

Bahrain and Oman remain the weakest links with the vulnerability ratings in the GCC with breakeven oil prices of 81.1 and 72.2 respectively and external debt to GDP of 192.9 and 105.6 respectively. The prevailing consensus however remains intact that both would receive immediate support from the greater GCC block should they be in danger.

Nordic Economies to Weather Corona Crisis Better Than Europe

COPENHAGEN (Dispatches) - Nordic countries and in particular Sweden are set to weather the coronavirus crisis better than most of Europe's economies according to a report, although one Swedish economist has warned "it's too early to tell".

"While Sweden has not been immune from Covid, despite its light-touch lockdown, we expect it to be the best of a very bad bunch this year," read the report by British analysts Capital Economics.

"The key message is that we forecast the Nordic economies to experience the shallowest recessions in Europe, and our GDP forecasts this year are now above the consensus. That said, inflation will remain frustratingly low across most of the region, and policy tightening is years away," Economic analyst David Oxley writes.

The report states that all the economies of the Nordic countries have performed better than the rest of Europe - and that Sweden tops the list.

"The Nordic economies have weathered the Covid crisis comparatively well, and if our above-consensus forecasts for GDP growth this year prove accurate, the region will see some of the smallest falls in output in the whole of Europe.

"We forecast output in Denmark and Norway to fall by about 3% this year, and while Sweden has not been unscathed, despite its light-touch lockdown, the fact that the economy grew in Q1 sets the stage for an even smaller contraction."

But the Swedish economy is not completely immune to the corona crisis either, according to the report. Many consumers have kept their money tight and cut back on unnecessary expenses, despite the fact that shops and restaurants have remained open, writes the TT news agency.

The report also notes how neighboring countries closing their borders affected both exports and the hospitality and tourism industry.

"With that said, the fact that Sweden was the only major economy to grow in the first quarter works wonders for economic arithmetic," the report states.

One explanation given for Sweden's better performance is that unlike in most European countries, the primary schools have been kept open, which has meant that the parents have been able to carry on working as usual.

In addition, private sector output is projected to decline by four percent relative to GDP, which is only a third of the expected fall in the rest of the euro area, writes TT.



Lars Calmfors, professor emeritus of international economics and researcher at Stockholm University, says that it is possible that Sweden has done better than other countries - but that it is too early to say.

"We have closed down less than other countries, which may have made us do somewhat better so far," he told TT news agency.

"But it will all depend on what happens during the autumn: Have we reduced the spread of infection enough or will it increase again? If it increases, it will hit the economy.

Calmfors also believes that it is irrelevant that Sweden had a GDP increase during the first quarter, as the spread of infection came here relatively late compared with the countries in Southern Europe.

But while the outlook maybe brighter than the rest of Europe it doesn't mean it's particularly positive. Nordic governments are forecasting deep recessions.

Sweden is forecasting a six percent drop in GDP this year, according to the government.

Norway is expecting a 3.5 percent drop and Denmark a 4.1 percent drop, according to their respective central banks.

In more bad news this week the Swedish unemployment rate jumped to its highest level since 1998 in June, at nearly 10 percent, due to the economic fallout from the novel coronavirus, Statistics Sweden said.

The seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate among 16 to 64-year-olds, the statistics agency's longest-running series, reached 9.4 percent last month, surpassing the nine percent peak in early 2010 in the wake of the financial crisis.

A poll of economists by Reuters news agency concluded Denmark, Norway and Sweden face among their worst economic downturns on record this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but will largely recover the lost ground in 2021.

Sweden is predicted to grow 3.9% next year, Norway 4.0% and Denmark 3.8%, the report said, although job growth looks slow, with the forecasts showing only minor falls in unemployment between 2020 and 2021.

Robert Bergqvist, chief economist at SEB bank warned predictions for 2021 were "surrounded by great uncertainty", with much dependant on how other parts of the world fared and whether there was a second wave of coronavirus infections.

For the economist Lars Calmfors, economic performance in Sweden depends simply on how well the country succeeds in keeping the spread of infection down in the future.

Lessons of...

FROM PAGE 1

While reproducing vigilance and insight in the society, the lessons from the 8-year-imposed-war can protect the country from the conspiracies and seditions of the enemies and guarantee its redemption in the critical point of the future, the Iranian commander noted.

July 27, 1988, is the anniversary of the Mersad Operation carried out jointly by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and Army against U.S.-backed MKO terrorist group on the western borders of Iran.

Mersad Operation was launched on July 27, 1988, in Kermanshah province, western Iran, to counter an attack by MKO terrorist group backed by Saddam Hussein of the Iraqi Baathist Regime. Iranian forces successfully by surrounding a large number of attackers in the

Pataq Strait (or Mersad) after three days of fighting, finally defeated the MKO terrorists.

More than 4,800 members of the MKO terrorist group were killed and wounded in the operation. The MKO has carried out numerous terrorist attacks against Iranian civilians and government officials since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Out of the nearly 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist attacks over the past four decades, about 12,000 have fallen victim to MKO's acts of terror.

Washington and the European Union have removed the MKO from their lists of terrorist organizations. The anti-Iran terrorists enjoy the freedom of activity in the US and Europe and even hold meetings with American and EU officials.

Iran, Iraq...

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Kadhimi's remarks in Tehran indicated his smartness and awareness regarding Iraq's brotherly ties with Iran and despite the U.S. demands from Baghdad to cut its economic relations with Tehran while the Americans increase the pressures, he insisted on continuing economic and non-economic cooperation and even called for expansion of strategic criteria in relations with Iran.

After his remarks in Tehran and taking stands in return to Baghdad, most analysts believe that Al-Kadhimi's stands in Tehran as well as his sincere meeting with the Supreme Leader could affect his relations with Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Today and after serious damages that Iran and Iraq have suffered from the U.S. and its allies in the region, unity and consolidation among neighboring states under the shade of resistance can be a solution for the future and the compensation for the past. And smartness of other involved countries would understand the significance of this issue that the West and especially the U.S. is on the verge of decline and subsequently on the course of collapse. Investment on a broken roof is to the benefit of no investor.



Almost Entire Iran...

FROM PAGE 1

The deputy minister underlined that some 600 people are hospitalized in Tehran alone every day.

He stressed the need to observe health protocols while mentioning that there have been a few public places which have failed to abide by health directives properly.

Harirchi also said the percentage of people using face masks in Iran has increased, urging citizens to keep using masks to help stem the spread of the virus.

The top official, meanwhile, noted that a vaccine for the disease is unlikely to be distributed across the globe at least for a year. Meanwhile Health Ministry spokeswoman says the number of Iranians who have tested positive for COVID-19 has increased to 291,172 after the detection of 2,333 new cases since yesterday.

Speaking at her daily press briefing on Sunday, Sima-Sadat Lari said the novel coronavirus has taken the lives of 216 patients during the past 24 hours, bringing the overall death toll to 15,700.

Of the new cases identified over the past 24 hours, 1,282 patients have been admitted to the hospital, she added.

The spokeswoman said at least 253,213 patients have recovered from the coronavirus infection so far or have been discharged from hospitals across Iran after full recovery. Lari noted that among those undergoing treatment in medical centres at present, 3,695 COVID-19 patients have critical health conditions because of more severe infection.

The spokeswoman also said 2,327,850 coronavirus diagnostic tests have been carried out in Iran so far.

As in previous days, Mazandaran, Fars, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Khorasan Razavi, Alborz, Khuzestan, Lorestan, Golestan, Kerman, Zanjan, and Ilam provinces are considered as "red zones" as far as the coronavirus outbreak is concerned, she added.

Enemies Have Failed...

FROM PAGE 1

Appreciating the economic activists along with the government's policies and programs in this field, the President said: "In special economic conditions that are not comparable to any other time in the history of the country, the government, with effective and diligent cooperation of reputable entrepreneurs, producers, and exporters, has operated the economy without oil and managed the country's economy in these difficult conditions."

The President also emphasized the implementation of foreign exchange policies based on the new directive on how to return foreign exchange to the economic cycle. Referring to the continuing economic pressure of the enemy, Rouhani said: "The government is determined, despite all the pressure, to implement a regular program to meet the foreign exchange needs of basic goods and raw materials and intermediates of production units and create the necessary balance in the foreign exchange market."

Mustafi Ruled Out of FA Cup Final Against Chelsea

LONDON (Reuters) - Arsenal defender Shkodran Mustafi will miss the FA Cup final against Chelsea on Aug. 1 because of a hamstring injury, the Premier League club said. Mustafi, 28, sustained the injury during the closing stages of Arsenal's 2-0 semi-final victory against Manchester City at Wembley last week. "Will miss remaining matches of this season. Further details on recovery programme will be confirmed in the coming days," Arsenal said.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

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

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

Xavi Tests Positive For COVID-19

Doha (Dispatches) - Former Barcelona star Xavi Hernandez has tested positive for coronavirus, his Qatari club Al-Sadd said on Saturday, adding he would miss their league restart fixture against Al-Khor. Xavi, 40, recently quashed rumors that he was preparing to move back to Barcelona and signed on for another season at the helm of the Qatari top-flight side. "A few days ago, following the Qatar Stars League protocol, I tested positive in the last COVID19 test," Xavi said in a post on Al-Sadd's twitter account.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

MONDAY JULY 27, 2020

Dimitrov-Gasquet Clash Leads UTS2 Start

LONDON (Dispatches) - Eight ATP players will be in action this weekend, with their sights set on joining Zverev and Auger-Aliassime in the final four. The second edition of the Ultimate Tennis Showdown—aptly named UTS2—kicks off this weekend at the Mouratoglou Academy in Nice, France. Eight ATP competitors will be in action, with their sights set on getting through to the final four. Two notable names are playing UTS for the first time. As part of a new tournament format, No. 7-ranked Alexander Zverev and No. 20-ranked Felix Auger-Aliassime received direct entry into the semifinals, which will take place on August 2.

Auger-Aliassime was scheduled to play the first edition of UTS, but had to pull out a few days before the event due to injury. "I have been looking forward to competing again, and I'm excited that it's finally happening," the Canadian commented. "I've been watching what Patrick has done with UTS1 - the level was high, and the organization was very professional. I can't wait to play this format."

The other eight players in the men's event will battle it out across two groups for the right to join Auger-Aliassime and Zverev. Group A features Grigor Dimitrov, Richard Gasquet, Feliciano Lopez and Alexei Popyrin and Group B boasts Benoit Paire, Fernando Verdasco, Corentin Moutet and Dustin Brown. The top finisher in each group after August 1 will move forward, with the first two waves of round-robin matches taking place this Saturday and Sunday.

The order of play features Lopez taking on Popyrin; Dimitrov facing Gasquet in a battle between three-time Grand Slam semifinalists and former Top 10 players; Paire meeting Brown; and Moutet facing Verdasco, who's also a former Top 10 player and Grand Slam semifinalist.



Dimitrov against Gasquet could turn out to be the match of the day, not just given their resumes but also their head-to-head history. They've played each other eight times before and the Frenchman leads, 5-3, but the Bulgarian has won their last three meetings—all in straight sets. Gasquet will have the benefit of 10 UTS matches under his belt, going 7-3 en route to a semifinal showing earlier this month.

Day 2 of round-robin play on Sunday will see Moutet face Brown, Dimitrov battle Lopez, Gasquet take on Popyrin and Paire square off against Verdasco. The third and final day of round-robin play will be on Saturday, August 1.

There are some notable additions to the UTS format since the first edition of the event, including a "No-Let" rule. If a serve hits the net and goes in, players will play on without replaying the serve.

UTS2 will also include a women's event, with Alize Cornet, Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Ons Jabeur and 13-year-old newcomer Brenda Fruhvirtova taking the court on August 1 and 2.

Cornet and Pavlyuchenkova have both spent years in the upper echelon of women's tennis, with Cornet rising as high as No. 11 and Pavlyuchenkova climbing to No. 13. And Jabeur could be headed that way soon, too. The Tunisian reached her first Grand Slam quarterfinal at the 2020 Australian Open and afterwards, made her Top 50 debut, peaking at No. 39.

Silva Says Career Beyond Wildest Dreams



LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester City's David Silva says his trophy-laden career with the Premier League club has exceeded his wildest dreams as he prepares for his final league game against Norwich City.

Silva has won 11 trophies in 10 seasons with Manchester City, including four Premier League titles, since arriving from Valencia in 2010.

The 34-year-old Spaniard, who has scored 60 goals in 308 league appearances, will depart the Etihad Stadium when his contract expires at the end of the season.

"When I look back at everything, I could never in my wildest dreams have imagined what I would achieve," Silva said. "When you are young, you don't dream about all of this."

"You dream about becoming a footballer, a professional footballer, you dream of playing in the top flight - but you never think about all the things that you could possibly achieve."

Silva has won the Premier League's Player of the Month award just once despite being one of City's most consistent players but he is unconcerned with the lack of personal accolades.

"I would like to be remembered as a good guy, who enjoys football. I hope the people enjoyed my football as well. It's simple," he said.

U.S. GP Cancellation Is a Big Loss

LONDON (Reuters) - The cancellation of the U.S. Grand Prix is a big loss for Texas but Austin's Circuit of the Americas will aim to attract more fans next year, promoter Bobby Epstein said on Friday after Formula One's announcement.

The sport scrapped all four races in North and South America due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a blow for the sport's hopes in a region it views as key for future growth.

The absence also of Mexico, Canada and Brazil from the calendar means 2020 will be the first season the global sport, whose championship started in 1950, has not had a round in the Americas.

"We sold out last year, we would've expected to sell out this year and next year we'll hopefully go and make room for even bigger capacity," Epstein told Austin's American-Statesman newspaper.

Epstein said the sole U.S. race, hosted at the Austin circuit since 2012, had an estimated direct impact of \$392 million on the local economy and \$880 million in direct, indirect and induced spending.

The MotoGP motorcycle series had already cancelled its round at COTA, the only purpose-built F1 venue in the United States, this month.

Epstein said everyone agreed it was too risky to spend millions on shipping freight to Texas in the current climate.

"You really would be betting now on the situation getting a lot better, and I don't think anyone's willing to place that bet," he said.

Austin may not be the only U.S. race when Formula One returns, with Miami pencilled in as a second venue for 2021.

The Indianapolis 500 was included as part of the championship from the first season in 1950 until 1960 and a U.S. Grand Prix featured at a variety of venues from 1959 to 1991 and then again from 2000-07 before returning in 2012.

Sao Paulo Mayor Bruno Covas said he respected the decision to cancel. The contract at Interlagos ends this year but Covas said talks with F1 continued for 2021.

Canadian Grand Prix president Francois Dumontier told CBC that his race, a home one for Racing Point's Lance Stroll and Williams' Nicholas Latifi, needed spectators to make it financially viable.



ankle and the 21-year-old collapsed on the pitch in pain before he was substituted. Perrin was sent off for the challenge as PSG won 1-0.

PSG Confirm Mbappe Suffers Ankle Sprain

LONDON (Reuters) - Paris St Germain forward Kylian Mbappe suffered an ankle sprain in Friday's French Cup final win over St Etienne and his injury will be reassessed in three days' time, the Ligue 1 champions said on Saturday.

A rough tackle from Loic Perrin saw the St Etienne defender catch Mbappe on the ankle and the 21-year-old collapsed on the pitch in pain before he was substituted. Perrin was sent off for the challenge as PSG won 1-0.

"Serious right ankle sprain to the external lateral compartment. To be re-evaluated in 72 hours with clinical and ankle imaging analysis," the club said of Mbappe's injury in a statement here

Mbappe, who returned to the bench on crutches after halftime, told French President Emmanuel Macron during the trophy ceremony that he heard a crack when he was tackled but did not think he had broken his ankle.

Ligue 1 champions PSG did not say if Mbappe will feature in Friday's French League Cup final against Olympique Lyonnais, with the Parisians chasing a quadruple of titles this season.

They also face Italian side Atalanta in a Champions League quarter-final single leg knockout game in Lisbon on Aug. 12.

Ibrahimovic Dismisses Retirement Talk

MILAN (AFP) - AC Milan striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic has ruled out hanging up his boots after this season, insisting Saturday he is "just warming up".

"So you think that I'm done, that my career will soon be over? You don't know me," the 38-year-old said in a dramatic video posted on Instagram.

"All my life I had to fight. No-one believed in me, so I had to believe in myself.

"Some people wanted to break me, but they only made me stronger. Others wanted to exploit me, they only made me smarter. "But now you think I'm done? To all of you, I only have one thing to say. I'm not like you because I'm not you.

"I am Zlatan Ibrahimovic and I am just warming up."

Ibrahimovic rejoined Milan in January from Los Angeles Galaxy on a six-month contract worth 3.5 million euros (\$3.9 million) with the option for an additional season.

The Swede helped the former Italian giants to their last Serie A title in 2011, and has had a big impact since his return with the club moving up from 11th to sixth in the table.

The former Manchester United, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain striker has scored seven goals in 16 league games with two left to play.

Ibrahimovic's announcement comes days after coach Stefano Pioli, with whom the Swede is on good terms, signed a new two-year deal.



Marquez Quits Andalucia MotoGP

PARIS (Dispatches) - World champion Marc Marquez will not start the Andalucia MotoGP in Jerez after dropping out of qualifying on Saturday four days after an operation on a broken arm.

"Marc has tried to listen to his body, to see how he responded," Honda boss Alberto Puig said. "When he saw that he could not, we have all decided not to race tomorrow."

The six-time Spanish MotoGP champion broke his right arm in a crash at the delayed season-opening Spanish Grand Prix on the same track last Sunday and underwent surgery on Tuesday. He was declared fit to race on Thursday.

The Honda rider sat out practice on Friday and struggled in Saturday's third session before dropping out of opening qualifying without recording a time.

Frenchman Fabio Quartararo, who won his maiden MotoGP race last week, grabbed pole with a lap of 1min 37.007sec to edge Yamaha's Maverick Vinales by 0.095sec.

It was the second consecutive pole position, and eighth in his MotoGP career, for the young Frenchman who rides for the Yamaha satellite team. Francesco Bagnaia, an Italian with Pramac Racing, was third fastest, 0.169sec behind Quartararo, to complete the front row of the grid.

Veteran Italian Valentino Rossi was fourth quickest for Yamaha.

In the opening practice session of the morning, Spaniard Vinales had broken the track record set by Quartararo the previous week with a time of 1:36.584, but times slowed in the intense heat.

