

**IRAN NEWS Felicitates All Shiites
On the Auspicious Eid al-Ghadir,
The Day Prophet Muhammad
(PBUH) Appointed Imam Ali (A) as
His Successor. The Next Issue Will
Hit the News-Stands on Sunday**

IRAN NEWS



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Iran Pioneer in Democracy in Region

TEHRAN (IP) - President Hassan Rouhani, stating that Iran is the leading democracy in the region, said that as long as we respect the ballot box and the votes of the people, no one will harm us.

Speaking in a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Rouhani stated, "In Islam, politics is not separate from government and government is not separate from religion. Social activities are not separate from spiritual and religious activities."

Referring to the anniversary of the Constitutional Revolution, the president said: "114 years have passed since the Constitutional Revolution and Iran is a pioneer in democracy and the establishment of the Parliament in West Asia."

Constitutional Revolution of Iran, took place between 1905 and 1911. The revolution led to the establishment of a parliament in Persia (Iran) during the Qajar dynasty.

The revolution opened the way for fundamental change in Persia, heralding the modern era.

Emphasizing that the Islamic Revolution completed the Constitutional Revolution, Rouhani said, "Today, we continued the path of the Constitutional Revolution and we are witnessing religious democracy." **See Page 7**

Coronavirus Kills 185 More Iranians

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Wednesday that some 185 more Iranians have died from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 17,802.

Sima Sadat Lari said on Wednesday that, with the 185 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 17,802.

Some 2,697 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 1,331 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

She noted that a total of 317,483 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some 274,932 of whom have recovered and were discharged from hospital.

Some 4,129 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said.

She added that 2,587,083 tests have so far been carried out in Iran. **See Page 7**

Gov't Approves \$1.6b in New Foreign Investment Projects



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has approved 32 new projects with direct investment from foreign nationals as authorities say the value of foreign direct investment (FDI) schemes approved over the past four month has tripled compared to the similar period last year.

A report by the Iranian finance ministry said that new FDI projects will be scattered in 12 out of the 31 Iranian provinces with an investment value of \$1.6 billion.

The report said the new investment will come from nationals of various countries and will cover projects in energy, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation and services sector.

FDI projects should gain the approval of Iran's Organization for Investment & Economic and Technical Assistance before they can be implemented. The body has endorsed more than \$2.4 billion worth of new projects in the current Iranian calendar year that began late March.

The figure shows a three-fold increase year on year in late July, said the finance ministry report, adding that foreigners will bring investment to a total of 60 new projects that have been approved this year.

The growing foreign investment in Iran comes despite restrictions imposed by the United States on the country's ability to engage in normal banking and finance activities with other countries.

The sanctions, imposed in 2018 after Washington decided to pull out of an international deal on Iran's nuclear activity, have sought to deter governments and entities around the world from getting involved in development projects in Iran.

Government figures published earlier this year showed FDI into Iran had declined significantly in the year ending March 2019 at below \$1 billion.

Meanwhile last week the latest data released by Iran's Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry showed that the country's industrial parks managed to attract 231 investors with a total \$2.1 billion of investment in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

This amount of investment led to the creation of 19,862 jobs in the industrial parks and zones.

According to the Industry Ministry, over 1,100 exporting industrial units are operating in the country's industrial parks and zones whose annual export reaches up to \$12.64 billion.

Based on the report, 62 export management companies (EMC) with an annual export of \$236 million were identified in these areas and 72 export consortia with a total annual export of \$352 million were also formed in the mentioned period.

The ministry also reported that 23 memorandums of understanding (MOU) were signed with foreign partners to develop international cooperation between small and medium industries in the previous Iranian calendar year.

Iran to Pay Ukraine Compensation on Basis of Int'l Documents

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - An Iranian deputy foreign minister said international documents and treaties will be the criteria for the sum of compensation that Iran is going to pay the families of victims of a Ukrainian passenger plane crashed near Tehran in January.

In remarks on Tuesday, Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand reacted to reports that Ukraine would insist on the maximum sum of compensation for the relatives of the jetliner crash victims. He said Iran would definitely pay the compensation because of the mistaken downing of the plane, but "the criteria for the payment must be defined."

"We have told the Ukrainian colleagues that our criterion (on paying compensations) is the international documents (and organizations) of which we are a member and to which we are committed," he underlined.

Baharvand noted that the next round of talks between Iran and Ukraine on compensation for the doomed plane will be held in the first half of October in Tehran.

"Neither we have the intention to use the issue for political purposes nor do we let others do so. We have agreed with the Ukrainian side to not let any third country intervene in the issue," he added.

The remarks come as the first round of Tehran-Kyiv talks on the issue was held in late July in the Ukrainian capital.

Baharvand said that Tehran is optimistic about talks that have been held so far, noting that the Iranian delegation has tried to solve the misunderstandings on the case.

He also noted that the second round of talks will be held in Tehran in October. The next round of talks will have three different sections, he continued, adding that one is the technical aspects that will be discussed by Iran Civil Aviation Organization, another is the judicial aspects of the case that will be discussed by Judiciary officials, and one is the legal aspects regarding the compensation.

Elsewhere in the remarks, Baharvand said that the judicial process will continue independently in Iran as the incident has happened inside the country and those who have committed mistakes are Iranian citizens.

Iran, Afghanistan Ink MoU in Transit Field

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Director General of Sistan and Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Department General revealed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Afghanistan's private sector in the field of transit via Chabahar Port.

He made the remarks on Wed. and reiterated, "A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked with the private sector of Afghanistan in Chabahar Port in line with expanding and broadening transit and investment cooperation."

Given the good neighborliness between the two countries, this Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Afghanistan's private sector in order to develop transit and investment activities of private sector of Afghanistan in the field of transporting, attracting investor, logistics and transit within the framework of transit rules and regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under the MoU, the private sector of Afghanistan was committed to transferring Afghanistan's transit goods via Shahid Rajaei Port in Chabahar to the target markets, he added. **See Page 7**

Chinese, Russian Banks Refuse Transactions With Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of Iran's Chamber of Commerce has said that China's Kunlun Bank is refusing to deal with Iran, as warnings from the international watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regarding banking ties with the Islamic Republic have become tougher this year.

Ali Shariati told local news website ILNA that for Iran the toughest challenge is in importing basic goods from China and occasionally Russia. "China is reverting to excuses regarding [sanctions on] shipping and money transfers," Shariati said.

He told ILNA that FATF's new restrictions "have definitely created new problems even with neighboring and regional countries".

The Paris-based FATF is a financial watchdog monitoring the legal performance of banks and governments in the world and if it detects problems with transparency or signs of money laundering it issues warnings that can put banks and countries in a difficult situation.

Shariati has reiterated that Iran currently has no banking relations with China and Russia, its two diplomatic allies. Recently, Tehran has been advertising a proposed 25-year economic deal with Beijing, but so far there has been no public response from the Asian economic powerhouse.

China, Russia Likely To Veto U.S. Bid on Iran

LONDON (Dispatches) - China and Russia are likely to veto an American effort to extend a United Nations arms embargo against Iran before it expires in October, U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft said.

Although the U.S. circulated a resolution to Security Council members last month to continue the embargo, Craft said on Tuesday that the U.S. has little faith it can bring Russia and China around. That could spell a crisis at the UN, with Craft and Secretary of State Michael Pompeo threatening to invoke a "snapback" provision in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to reimpose all UN sanctions against Tehran.

"The strategy in a perfect world will always be to have them abstain and obviously not veto" the U.S. resolution, Craft said in an online appearance at the annual Aspen Security Forum. "However, let's be realistic here. Right now the strategy is working with other members of the Security Council" to put China and Russia "in a corner and shine a light on them." **See Page 7**



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Leader Pardons, Commutes Sentences of 2,135 Prisoners

TEHRAN (MNA) – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has agreed to pardon or commute the sentences of as many as 2,135 prisoners.

The Leader had been forwarded a request by Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi to pardon or reduce the sentences of prisoners subject to mitigating circumstances.

Ayatollah Khamenei issued the approval on Wednesday on the occasion of Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice), and Eid al-Ghadir, two hugely significant Muslim festivities.

Iran Sympathizes With Lebanon Over Deadly Blast

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message expressed sympathy with Lebanese people over the deadly blast which claimed the lives of scores of people.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the great and resilient people of Lebanon,” Zarif wrote in his Twitter account late on Tuesday.

“As always, Iran is fully prepared to render assistance in any way necessary,” Zarif added. “Stay strong, Lebanon,” he reiterated.

Meanwhile, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi voiced Iran's readiness for helping Lebanese brothers and sisters after a massive blast hit the country's capital.

A massive explosion rocked the Lebanese capital of Beirut leaving a very high number of casualties.

A warehouse at the Beirut Port caught fire on Tuesday afternoon, triggering a huge explosion, Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) reported.

Several smaller explosions were heard before the bigger one occurred.

Meanwhile Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Iran is ready to provide Lebanon with emergency medical supplies and humanitarian aid to Lebanon to handle medical treatment of thousands of people injured in the extensive explosions rocked Beirut on Tuesday night.



Addressing formal session of Majlis on Wednesday, Qalibaf expressed regret over the sad occasion in Beirut port and sympathized with the Lebanese parliament, people and government.

He wished immediate recovery for those who were injured and patience for families of the victims of the deadly accident.

He vowed to cooperate with Iranian and Lebanese officials with regard to accelerating the process of sending humanitarian assistance.

He also urged the Red Crescent and relief agencies to help Iran in this regard.

Meanwhile the head of Lebanese Red Cross said his country needs Iran's humanitarian aids to help those injured in the blast that happened in Beirut.

George Kettaneh said on a phone call with his Iranian counterpart Karim Hemmati that Lebanon has so far done the primary assessments and provided first aid.

Thanking Iran for expressing its readiness for helping the injured of the explosion, he said that they were provided with emergency housing.

Hemmati expressed Iran's condolences over the human tragedy and said that Iranians were very shocked by the tragedy and that Iran reiterated that it is ready to provide any kind of emergency aid to Lebanon.

Iran Condemns U.S. Oil Deal With Syrian Kurdish Group

TEHRAN (IFP) - Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Abbas Mousavi has condemned an oil agreement between the US and a Syrian Kurdish group.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry spokesman condemned the oil agreement that the U.S. has signed with a Syrian Kurdish group as a measure in contravention of the international law and in violation of Syria's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

“The signing of the agreement by the U.S., as an occupier force that is illegally present on the Syrian oil, lacks any legal validity and amounts to another step taken by that country (the U.S.) in plundering Syria's natural resources,” Mousavi added.

Syria's Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that an American oil company had signed an agreement with Kurdish-led rebels who control northeastern oilfields in what it described as an illegal deal aimed at “stealing” Syria's crude.

Reports suggest that American company Delta Crescent Energy LLC has secured the contract with the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to develop and export crude oil from northeastern Syria under a deal approved by the US government.

Turkey has also slammed the Washington-approved oil deal as “theft”.

Tehran, Beijing Cooperation, No Threatening Any Country

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (IP) - Spokesman for the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Parliament Abolfazl Amoei said that other countries do not need to be worried regarding Iran-China agreement since it has no threat for any country.

On the sideline of the open session of the parliament on Wednesday, Amoei elaborated on Pompeo's latest statement saying that Iran-China cooperation creates instability in the region. The MP said that Iran-China cooperation serves the benefits of both countries, and it does not engender any countries' benefit.

What threatens peace and stability in the region is the U.S. illegal presence, he highlighted.

U.S. presence in Iraq, Syria, and the Persian Gulf has nothing except ruins and what brings peace here is the cooperation among the countries in the region, Amoei noted.

He went on to say that since China is considered as the main power in East Asia and Iran in the West, and bilateral cooperation serves the benefits of both countries.

The U.S. imposed sanctions on Iranian creates instability in the region, and they are worried that this cooperation decreases the effect of their unfair sanctions.

Housing Construction Activities Down 18%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Housing construction activities and services across Iran decreased by 18 percent in the fourth Iranian calendar month of Tir (June 21-July 21), IRNA reported, citing Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC).

As reported, the Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for the construction sector fell to 52.78 percent in the mentioned month.

PMI is a measure of the prevailing direction of economic trends in manufacturing. The PMI is based on a monthly survey of supply chain managers across 19 industries, covering both upstream and downstream activity.

Other indicators among the main components of PMI which include the number of new orders, the speed of order fulfillment, the figure for the raw materials purchased, and the recruitment of manpower, also experienced a decrease in the mentioned period. As for the residential building market, based on the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) data, the volume of trade for residential apartment transactions in Tehran (as a statistical sample for the whole country) in the mentioned month increased by 30.3 percent compared to the previous month.

Aluminum Ingot Output Rise 49% in 4 Months

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Production of the aluminum ingot in Iran rose 49 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21) compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Production of this product had also risen 63 percent during the first quarter of the present year (March 20-June 20), compared to the first quarter of the previous year.

Production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase 63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Iran's major aluminum producers produced 275,716 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry. The country's aluminum ingot production in the past year fell eight percent in comparison to the figure for its preceding year.

The data show that among the country's top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance registering a four-percent rise during the mentioned period.

On April 23, during the inauguration ceremony of Iran's biggest aluminum production complex (in the central Fars province), the former industry minister said the country's aluminum production is expected to be doubled with that unit going operational.

Gov't Will Meet People's Essential Needs

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri said on Wednesday that the government is still capable enough to easily meet the essential needs of the people.



Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session, Jahangiri said that the government believes that the coupon distribution mechanism seems not to be necessary.

The vice-president noted that despite the tough sanctions imposed on the country, Iran's annual trade with the world amounts to more than \$100 billion.

He said that today the top priority of the government is to deal with the living problems of the peoples and to solve the economic problems of the country as well.

Jahangiri said that the government will do its best to ensure people's access to their much needed essential commodities.

The vice-president congratulated the reporters on the national Reporter's Day, hailing their efforts to be the voice of the people and at the same time convey the message of the government to the people.

Meat Becomes Unaffordable To More Iranian Families

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A new survey shows that 8.2% of Iranian households cannot afford to eat red meat as they fall below the poverty line.

The result published by the Iranian Students Polling Agency (ISPA), also shows a 3.5 percent increase in households who cannot afford red meat, compared with the same period in July 2019.

According to the survey, 14.4% of Iranian households also ate red meat only a few times last year. By contrast, 40.2 percent said they eat red meat a few days a week and 32.8 percent a few days a month. There is also a 4.3% minority who consumes red meat every day.

In late July, there were reports of rising red meat prices in Iran. At the time, a local news website, Tabnak, said smuggling red meat to neighboring countries was one of the main reasons for the price hike. “Due to fluctuations in exchange rates, the incentive to smuggle out livestock has increased,” Tabnak said.

The latest announced price of red meat in local fruit and vegetable markets shows that one kilogram (about 2.2 pounds) of stew beef now costs about 900,000 rials (approximately \$40), and one kilogram of leg of lamb is sold at about 1,190,000 rials (roughly \$53).

The poverty-line income needed by a four-member household in Iran has risen from 25 million to 45 million rials (\$200) monthly in the past two years, showing an eighty percent increase, the Islamic Parliament Research Center (IPRC) said in a recent study.

Iran Ready to Share Experience With Nicaragua

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Health Saeed Namaki said on Wednesday that Iran is ready to share experience with Nicaragua.

Speaking during a video chat with his Nicaraguan counterpart Martha Reyes Alvarez, the Iranian minister said that Iran is fully committed to its already signed agreements with the Central American country.

Namaki voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate with Nicaragua on different areas, including exports of medicine and sharing the technological know-how.

Tehran Ready to Provide Medical Aid for Those Injured in Beirut Blast

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani has expressed the Islamic Republic's preparedness to send medical aid and medicine and provide any other type of medical assistance for those injured in a massive explosion that hit the Lebanese capital on Tuesday.

In a Wednesday message to his Lebanese counterpart Michel Aounn, President Rouhani described the huge explosion in Beirut port as a source of deep sorrow and grief.

“As the representative of the nation and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I express sympathy with the families of the victims, and offer my heartfelt condolences to you and the people of your friendly and brotherly country,” he noted.

He wished divine mercy for the deceased, and speedy recovery for those injured in the deadly incident.

“As a humanitarian move, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its preparedness to send medical aid and medicine, help treat the injured and provide any other medical assistance,” Rouhani said.

He also expressed hope that an investigation into the incident will soon be completed and calm will be restored to the city.

Knowledge-Based Economy Is Growing Drastically in Iran

YAZD (IP) - Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari said that the knowledge-based economy has grown well in Iran and 5,300 knowledge-based companies are operating in this economy.

At the end of his trip to Yazd, the center of Iran, on Tuesday night, Sorena Sattari stated at the meeting of “Knowledge-based Economy and Surge in Production” that the sales of products of knowledge-based economy companies last year were 120,000 billion Tomans.”

Sattari also stated that currently, 37 knowledge-based companies with assets worth 200,000 billion tomans are present in the Iranian stock market.

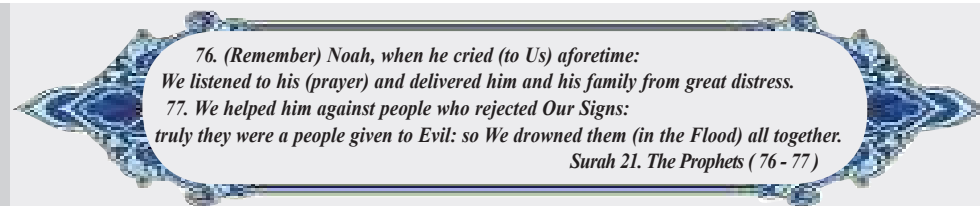
During a one-day visit to Yazd, Sorena Sattari visited knowledge-based companies based in Yazd Industrial Zone and an exhibition of technological products and stem cell accelerators at Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences in Yazd. Herbal plants scientific database for more access to researchers and scientists was set up with the presence of Sattari in Yazd.

There are more than 7,500 plant species in Iran, of which at least 1,700 have been identified as having medicinal characteristics.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:23
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:43
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:17



Car Production Comes Out of Negative Growth

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Acting Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Hossein Modarres Khiabani says the car production in the first four months of the current year has grown by 19 percent and after two years, the car industry has come out of negative growth.

Speaking to IRNA, Modarres Khiabani said that after pullout of French and South Korean auto-makers and reimposition of the U.S. sanctions, nobody thought that Iran could continue its way but the industry has planned to produce 1.2m cars by the yearend.

He added that last year, 831,234 vehicles were produced in the country which shows 13 percent decline comparing to the preceding year.

Modarres Khiabani reiterated that this year the car production has been accelerated as the industry sees positive growth in production after two years of slump.

He also pointed to the growth in the cement production which has been 15 percent comparing to the early days of the Islamic Revolution.

Modarres Khiabani, who has been designated by President Hassan Rouhani as the new minister of industry, Mine and Trade, added that production in petrochemical sector has been doubled comparing to 2012 and the production in the textile and apparel sector has also been doubled during President Rouhani's presidency.



He further said till ten years ago, Iran was importer of cooler and air-conditioner but today it produces 75 percent of its needs.

He also pointed to 49 percent growth in the aluminum production in the first four months, last year the aluminum production was enhanced to 750,000 tons which was twice the previous capacity.

Modarres Khiabani noted that the ministry is planning to inaugurate the first TV panel production in the country in the Government Week.

He added during the week, a refrigerator and freezer production unit with capacity of producing 300 sets will be inaugurated in Qom. Next week Majlis is to hold a session for giving vote of confidence to the designated minister to take the job.

Tehran, Baku Discuss Implementation of Joint Projects

BAKU (IRNA) - Iran's Economy Minister Farhad Dejjpasand and Azerbaijan Republic Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev in a telephone conversation late on Tuesday reviewed implementation of the two countries' joint projects.

During the phone call, the two sides expressed satisfaction with bilateral relations in various areas, including economy, trade, industry, agriculture, tourism, communications and information technology, transit and transportation and exchanged views on further improvement of ties.

The significance of continuing successful cooperation in the energy sector as well as the work done in the field of unification of power transmission networks of Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia was also dealt with by the two officials.

Mustafayev and Dejjpasand stressed the need for maintaining economic relations in the context of the coronavirus epidemic by observing health protocols and leaving the two countries' crossings open for trade and transit exchanges.

They expressed satisfaction with the increase in the volume of transportation and transit exchanges between Iran and Azerbaijan Republic in recent months.

Azerbaijan Republic deputy prime minister and Iran's economy minister are chairing the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation between the two countries.

30% of Cooperative Sector Affected by the Virus Pandemic

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperative Bahman Abdollahi says the outbreak of the Coronavirus has affected all businesses and the cooperative sector is not an exception and almost 30 percent of the sector has been seriously affected by the pandemic.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Mr. Abdollahi said the government has some supportive measures for the businesses which have been affected by the pandemic but all should, too, consider the government's current condition.

He said almost 30 percent of the cooperative sector has been badly damaged due to the pandemic because the cooperative sector is liable to damage more than other big enterprises and some plans should be prepared for them for the post-pandemic era.

Abdollahi reiterated that despite the pandemic and its damages, all efforts are made to revive the activities of the cooperatives. He also pointed to formation of a holding for administering 13 non-stock market companies, adding that the holding will be formed to run these 13 companies and it will pave the ground for those companies to enter the stock market. He also urged the share-holders of the companies not rush in selling their shares and to take advantage of the future advantages.

Abdollahi also announced that in the current condition it is impossible for the chamber to set up a private cooperative but the chamber pursues this idea seriously. He admitted that currently the policy of the Central Bank is to reduce the number of banks in the country and the merge of some banks is the proof for his claim.

He added each economic sector needs financial resources and in the country, 85 percent of economic activities are bank-centered and banks are tasked to finance them. Abdollahi noted that although currently Tose'e Ta'avon (Cooperative Development) Bank exists, due to the general condition it cannot favor any special advantage for cooperatives because it acts like commercial banks and it functions based on the banking system regulations but it can, at best, allocate more parts of its loan facilities to the cooperatives.

Abdollahi also pointed to the chamber's activities regarding construction of houses for labors, adding that the chamber is involved in construction of houses for workers in the industrial parks, reiterating that the government will grant low-interest loans to the applicants for those houses and the chamber will do its best to lower the cost and price of the houses for the workers who apply for them.



Iran Exports to Iraq Up by 20%



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of presiding board of Iran-Iraq Chamber of Commerce says Iran's exports to Iraq in the current year have increased by 20 percent comparing to the same period last year.

Speaking to ILNA, Yousef Bapiri said that Iran exports to Iraq in the first four months of the current have grown by 20 percent comparing to the previous year and if there was a problem for transfer of the money, such a growth was impossible.

He added that Iraqi Kurdistan's borders have always been open and exports to some other parts of Iraq have done through these borders. Bapiri reiterated fortunately despite the coronavirus pandemic, Iran's exports to Iraq have not stopped and it has even soared by 20 percent.

Regarding claims that problems in banking transactions and transfer of money have made exporters be unable to observe their export obligations, he said of course sanctions have restricted banking relations and official transactions, but it is not acceptable to say that the transfer of forex resulted from the exports to the country is impossible.

Bapiri emphasized that those exporters who say they are unable to repatriate their forex into the country are not eligible to continue their activities and exports have no justification for them. He claimed due to the rise in exports to Iraq, he can dare to say that exporters have found their ways for skirting sanctions and they increase their exports day by day.

He noted that currently Iranian traders get their money from their Iraqi counterparts and the forex are repatriated through different channels.

He reiterated that a committed and famous trader is committed to its obligations for return of the forex otherwise he is not a real trader and he is an overnight one.

Iran to Save \$5b Annually By Producing Bio-Implant



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) during his visit of the implementation of bio-implant project in Kermanshah said that by producing bio-implants, the country would save some \$5m annually.

Mr. Amir Bayat said that with the operation of yellow phase of soft-tissue of natural base bio-implant, like heart-vascular valves and tendon ligaments, in Kermanshah and Shamsabad sites, the country would save some \$5m per annum.

He then pointed to the developmental role of IDRO in the less developed provinces with an approach of launching modern industries, saying that the value of investment of IDRO and non-governmental sectors in the project equals to \$32m which creates 120 direct jobs for specialists.

Bayat added natural basic bio-implants are produced based on the modern technology in the world and it has the most adaptability to the bodies in surgeries and medical treatments.

He also pointed to the appropriate interaction of health ministry regarding issuance of principal agreements for experimental production of types of natural base bio-implants. He added with finance of 300b rials, this project under the framework of national campaign on production will be inaugurated in the year of surge in production.

Goure-Jask Pipeline Invaluable Geopolitical Project

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Goure-Jask pipeline of Iran could be regarded as one of the valuable geopolitical projects that could bring numerous economic and political benefits to the economy of the country.

Launching the process of the pipeline that was kicked off in the early summer is aimed to transfer crude oil from Goure to Jask. The project will create unique opportunities for Iran's economic-political and strategic capability in the region and trade development alongside the advantages it has for the residents of Hormuzgan and neighboring provinces.

One of the most significant aspects of the project is easy access to the high seas and oceans, as well as international waters, which is much more attractive merit for foreign customers and for companies that work in the field of trade and transportation of goods.

Also, it will pave the way for Iran to have access to the huge markets of India and China.

The important project could lead to the introduction of commercial and economic capacities of Jask and Makran regions to the domestic and foreign investors.

The 42-inch Goure-Jask pipeline with a length of about 1,000 kilometers is equipped with 5 pumping stations and 2 sphering stops and is accompanied by 11 electricity posts and a 180-kilometer power transmission line.

The pipeline, constructed wholly by Iranian experts, is a sign of domestic resistance to sanctions.

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



PERMIT NO : 1399.2297

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY - AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9250077

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY (NISOC) INTENDS TO PURCHASE THE FOLLOWING GOODS:

ITEMS	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
01	PARTS FOR "DEMG DELAVAL" CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMP. TYPE 05MV4	NO:2

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their "INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to qualitative assessment Form no.1, available at www.nisoc.ir not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for Participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 2,721 EURO or 577,500,000 RIAL in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via:

www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN

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Australia Records Deadliest Day of Pandemic So Far

MELBOURNE (AFP) - Australia's worst-hit state of Victoria reported 15 coronavirus deaths on Wednesday, including a man in his 30s, making it the country's deadliest day of the pandemic to date.

An outbreak in Melbourne, Australia's second-biggest city and the capital of Victoria, has seen hundreds of new cases recorded daily in recent weeks, including 725 on Wednesday.

The epidemic surge continued even though Melbourne has been under a stay-at-home lockdown for nearly a month.

Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews told a press conference that the latest fatalities included one man in his 30s and 12 other deaths linked to care homes for the elderly.



U.S. Health Chief to Visit Taiwan, Likely Angering China

TAIPEI (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar will visit Taiwan in coming days, his office said on Tuesday, making the highest-level visit by a U.S. official in four decades in a move likely to anger China, which claims the island as its own.

During his visit, Azar will meet with President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said in a separate statement.

China describes Taiwan as the most sensitive issue in Sino-U.S. ties, and Azar's visit will probably further inflame already poor Beijing-Washington relations.



Massive Blast in Beirut Kills at Least 100



BEIRUT (Reuters) - A powerful blast in port warehouses near central Beirut storing highly explosive material killed 100 people, injured nearly 4,000 and sent seismic shockwaves that shattered windows, smashed masonry and shook the ground across the Lebanese capital.

Officials said they expected the death toll to rise further after Tuesday's blast as emergency workers dug through rubble to rescue people and remove the dead. It was the most powerful explosion in years in Beirut, which is already reeling from an economic crisis and a surge in coronavirus infections.

President Michel Aoun said that 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, used in fertilisers and bombs, had been stored for six years at the port without safety measures, and said it was "unacceptable". He called for an emergency cabinet meeting on Wednesday and said a two-week state of emergency should be declared. "What we are witnessing is a huge catastrophe," the head of Lebanon's Red Cross George Kettani told broadcaster Mayadeen. "There are victims and casualties everywhere."

Hours after the blast, which struck shortly after 6 p.m. (1500 GMT), a fire still blazed in the port district, casting an orange glow across the night sky as helicopters hovered and ambulance sirens sounded across the capital.

A security source said victims were taken for treatment outside the city because Beirut hospitals were overwhelmed with wounded. Ambulances from the north and south of the country and the Bekaa valley to the east were called in to help.

The huge blast revived memories of the 1975-90 civil war and its aftermath, when Lebanese endured heavy shelling, car bombings and Israeli air raids. Some residents thought an earthquake had struck. Dazed, weeping and injured people walked through streets searching for relatives.

Others sought their missing loved ones in the overflowing hospitals. One medic said 200 to 300 people had been admitted to a single emergency department. "I've never seen this. It was horrible," the medic, who gave her name as Rouba, told Reuters. "The blast blew me off metres away. I was in a daze and was all covered in blood. It brought back the vision of another explosion I witnessed against the U.S. embassy in 1983," said Huda Baroudi, a Beirut designer.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab told the nation there would be accountability for the deadly blast at the "dangerous warehouse", adding "those responsible will pay the price."

The U.S. embassy in Beirut warned residents in the city about reports of toxic gases released by the blast, urging people to stay indoors and wear masks if available.

Footage of the explosion shared by residents on social media showed a column of smoke rising from the port, followed by an enormous blast, sending up a white cloud and a fireball into the sky. Those filming the incident from high buildings 2 km (one mile) from the port were thrown backwards by the shock. Bleeding people were seen running and shouting for help in clouds of smoke and dust. Streets looked as if they had been hit by an earthquake, with damaged buildings, flying debris, and wrecked cars and furniture.

Officials did not say what caused the blaze that set off the blast. A security source and local media said it was started by welding work being carried out on a hole in the warehouse.

The government said it was still struggling to establish the magnitude of the disaster. "There are many people missing. People are asking the emergency department about their loved ones and it is difficult to search at night because there is no electricity," Health Minister Hamad Hasan told Reuters. Hasan said 78 people were killed and nearly 4,000 injured.

Lebanese broadcaster al-Jadeed read out appeals for information about the missing into the early hours of the morning. Some people posted photos of missing relatives on social media. The prime minister called for a day of mourning on Wednesday.

The explosion occurred three days before a U.N.-backed court is due to deliver a verdict in the trial of four suspects from the Shi'ite Muslim group Hezbollah over a 2005 bombing which killed former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and 21 others.

Hariri was killed by a huge truck bomb on the same waterfront, about 2 km (about one mile) from the port.

Israeli officials said Israel, which has fought several wars with Lebanon, had nothing to do with Tuesday's blast and said their country was ready to give humanitarian and medical assistance. Shi'ite Iran, the main backer of Hezbollah, also offered support, as did Tehran's regional rival Saudi Arabia, a leading Sunni power.

Qatar and Iraq said they were sending makeshift hospitals to assist the high numbers of casualties.

The United States, Britain, France and Germany expressed shock and sympathy and said they were read to help.

Sri Lankans, Wearing Masks, Flock to Voting Centers

COLOMBO (Reuters) - Sri Lankans lined up before polling stations opened on Wednesday, wearing masks and social distancing, to elect a new parliament that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa hopes will clear the way for him to boost his powers.

The tourism-dependent island nation of 21 million people has been struggling since deadly militant attacks on hotels and churches last year, claimed by Islamic State, followed painful lockdowns to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Rajapaksa is seeking a two-thirds majority for his party in the 225-member parliament to enable constitutional reforms to make the presidency more powerful so he can implement his economic and national security agenda.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0130 GMT).

Election officials wore transparent face shields while medical personnel were deployed to ensure voters kept strict rules to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

"There will be no chance of you getting infected by the coronavirus at polling stations," said the chairman of the Election Commission, Mahinda Deshapriya.

"The polling station is safer than the beach, the restaurant and the marketplace, it's totally corona free."

Sri Lanka had reported 2,828 cases of the coronavirus and 11 deaths as of Tuesday, which is small compared with other South Asian countries. Rajapaksa, who was elected president in November, has claimed credit for controlling the outbreak with strict lockdowns.

He is hoping to install his older brother and former president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, as prime minister.



Russia Building Military Bases in Africa

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Russia is planning to step up its military cooperation with African countries as part of its new Africa strategy, including building bases in six countries, Germany daily Bild reported Tuesday, citing a secret German Foreign Ministry report.

The classified document on what it calls "Russia's new Africa ambitions" says Russian President Vladimir Putin had made "Africa a top priority."

An important aspect of Russia's advance in Africa is military cooperation with some of the continent's dictatorial regimes, it said.

"Since 2015, Russia has concluded military cooperation agreements with 21 countries in Africa," according to the leaked document.

Previously, there were only four military cooperation treaties across the entire continent, it added.

Furthermore, it said, the Kremlin was "contractually assured" it would "be allowed to build military bases in six countries," namely the Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan.

Moreover, Russia's army is partially secretly and partially officially training soldiers from those countries, according to the report.

For example, 180 Russian army instructors are based in the Central African Republic or elsewhere in Africa, said the report.

Youm-e-Istehsal Observed in Tehran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran held a seminar which was also broadcasted to virtual audience to observe Youm-e-Istehsal. The illegal Indian action of abrogating the special constitutional status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and its military siege with worst kind of brutalities by Indian occupation forces was highlighted at the event.



Messages of the President and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan were read out to the participants comprising Iranian scholars, academicians, intellectuals, media persons, members of Pakistani community, Pakistani and Iranian students.

Highlighting serious human rights abuses in the (IIOJK), Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi said that the recent brutal use of force and continued siege of Kashmir by the Indian occupation forces have failed to suppress the indigenous struggle of the Kashmiri people aspiring for their right to self-determination.

Ambassador said that Pakistan raised the Kashmir issue at every forum to sensitize the world community about the fascist Modi government's actions in the region. By abolishing the articles 35A and 370 of the Constitution, Indian government has malevolently attempted to turn the Muslim majority into minority in the IIOJK pursuing its Hindutva agenda. In spite of the appeals from UN Secretary General and Human Rights organizations, India continues its illegal siege and human rights violations. Kashmir has been turned into the biggest prison of the world. Continuous military siege has crippled life in Kashmir, he said.

Ambassador emphasized that Pakistan would continue to support the Kashmiris till they achieve their right to self-determination. He thanked the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei, the Iranian Government and people of Iran for supporting the cause of the Kashmiri Muslims and condemning the recent Indian atrocities in IIOJK. Renowned Iranian scholars Hojjat-ul-Islam Syed Salman Naqvi and Syed Hassan Raza, in their speeches, condemned the abrogation of special status of Kashmir, atrocities and human right violations being committed by Indian occupation forces against the peaceful Kashmiris in IIOJK. They appealed to the Muslim Ummah to raise its voice unanimously in support of the innocent Kashmiri Muslims and demand immediate restoration of special status and put an end to illegal siege of Jammu and Kashmir.

Large banners displayed at the Embassy building, special articles and leaflets published by Iranian print media in Persian daily Jamhori Eslami and English daily Iran News, to mark the Kashmir day, to condemn the abrogation of articles 370 and 35-A and to spread awareness among the Iranian masses about sufferings and struggle of Kashmiris against atrocities being perpetrated by Indian occupation forces in Illegal Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Belarus Leader Claims Opposition Massacre Plot Before Vote

MINSK (AFP) - Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko on Tuesday vowed to protect his country from the opposition and Russia which he said were coordinating violent protests ahead of presidential elections this week.

The 65-year-old has ruled over the ex-Soviet country wedged between Russia and Europe with an authoritarian grip for 26 years and has cracked down on the country's emboldened opposition in the lead-up to Sunday's election.

During a televised address to the nation, Lukashenko slammed what he said were attempts by his opponents to organise "a massacre" on the streets of the capital Minsk, claiming his critics were being backed by "billion-dollar resources" to create unrest. "Will Belarus survive? Will it survive this hybrid war?" he said, sweating profusely and repeatedly mopping his brow.

"We will not give the country to you. Independence is expensive, but it is worth it," he said during his speech which lasted more than an hour and a half.



Farmanieh Apt (\$2800)
250sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
green yard
Nicely Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Darrou Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, Jacuzzi
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Nice, Neat & modern Pasharan Apt
300sq.m, 4bdrs
S/pool, S, J
gym, pkg
(\$3200)

Apt (\$1300)
Zaferanieh
130sq.m, 2bdrs
S/p, S, J, gym, & F.F

Velenjak bldg (\$10000)
5storey, 20bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
marble floor
Brand new
Semi Furn

Jordan (\$1300) 2bdrs, & S/p
Jordan (\$1800) 3bdrs, & S/p
Jordan (\$2200) 4bdrs, & S/p

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Apple Has No Interest in Buying TikTok

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Apple Inc has no interest in acquiring TikTok, the company said on Tuesday, denying a report by news website Axios from earlier in the day.

Axios, citing sources outside Apple, earlier reported the iPhone maker has expressed interest in buying the ByteDance-owned firm.

Microsoft Corp is currently negotiating a deal to acquire the popular short-video app, with a 45-day deadline imposed by President Donald Trump's administration.



Coronavirus May Shrink Global Imbalances Further in 2020

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday that global current account imbalances narrowed in 2019 as trade slowed, and the coronavirus could narrow them further in 2020, but some commodity exporters and tourism-dependent countries will swing to current account deficits.

The IMF's External Sector Report on currencies and imbalances for the world's 30 largest economies showed that net current account balances fell by 0.2 percentage point to 2.9% of global GDP.

The Fund projected a further narrowing by 0.3% of global GDP in 2020, partly due to massive fiscal and monetary stimulus by many countries and continued pressure on trade.

"Major commodity exporters should see their current accounts going from significant surpluses to significant deficits," IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said in a webcast presentation of the report.

The IMF projected that Saudi Arabia, which had a 5.9% current account surplus in 2019, will see a deficit of 4.9% in 2018 due to the collapse of oil prices and demand.

Tourism-dependent Thailand and Malaysia will see their surpluses shrink dramatically in 2020, the report showed.

The fund said the U.S. dollar's current account position in 2019, a deficit of 2.3% of GDP, was moderately weaker than warranted by economic fundamentals and would likely narrow to 2.0% in 2020. But it estimated that the dollar's real effective exchange rate was overvalued by around 11% in 2019.

China's current account surplus of 1.0% in 2019, projected to grow to 1.3% in 2020, was broadly in line with economic fundamentals, the IMF said in the report. It estimated that China's yuan was undervalued by around 2% in 2019, largely due to trade tensions with the United States, but said the assessment was "subject to especially high uncertainty."

China's real effective exchange rate had appreciated by 1.8% from the 2019 average through May 2020, the report showed.

Argentina Announces Debt Restructure Deal With Creditors

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) - Recession-hit Argentina announced on Tuesday it has reached an agreement with three major creditors over the restructuring of a \$66 billion debt as it seeks to solve its latest sovereign default crisis.

The government of President Alberto Fernandez had set an August 4 deadline to complete a deal but it has now pushed the date to August 24 "to give effect to the agreement," which came after months of wrangling and extensions.

Argentina's economy ministry said in a statement that the deal "will allow members of the creditor groups and such other (bond) holders to support Argentina's debt restructuring proposal and grant Argentina significant debt relief."

The bonds, issued under foreign legislation, represent roughly a fifth of the country's \$324 billion debt, which amounts to around 90 percent of its GDP. Argentina has been in default -- for the ninth time in its history -- since May 22 when the country missed a deadline to pay \$500 million in interest on the debt that is subject to the current negotiation.

It missed another deadline last week to pay \$600 million more.

The deal involves the Ad Hoc, Argentina Creditor Committee and Exchange Bondholder groups, as well as "certain other significant holders," the economy ministry said.

Last month the three major groups, claiming to represent "60 percent of the exchange bonds and 51 percent of the global bonds in circulation," giving them veto power over any deal, said they had rejected Argentina's latest proposal.

Argentina had offered a deal that represented 53.5 cents on the dollar -- a significant improvement on its original starting position of 39 cents -- but the creditor groups were holding out for no less than 56.5 cents on the dollar.



Russia Seeks Additional \$1.9b In Taxes From Oil, Gas

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's finance ministry is looking to raise as much as US\$1.93 billion (143 billion Russia rubles) in taxes from the oil industry over the next two years, as the oil price crash has shrunk Russia's key revenue stream—oil.

According to a document on a Russian government website, cited by Reuters, the finance ministry is looking to receive more tax proceeds by amending the tax code and the recently implemented profit-based tax.

The government and the Russian oil industry are heading for a dispute over the proposed tax amendments, Russian business daily Kommersant reported on Monday, citing sources familiar with the matter. According to Kommersant's sources, the proposal -- if passed -- would negatively affect mostly Gazprom Neft, the oil division of gas giant Gazprom, and Rosneft, the biggest oil producer in Russia.

The profit-based tax, introduced as an experiment last year, has led to the Russian budget not receiving US\$2.9 billion (213 billion rubles), according to the sources.

The Russian companies, however, strongly disagree that they should repay that sum under a new tax amendment, and the issue could be escalated to President Vladimir Putin, Kommersant reported.

The possible changes to the tax code would be harmful to the fundamentals of Russia's oil industry, Reuters quoted VTB Capital as saying in a note.

Currently, Russia's economy is suffering the consequences of the oil price crash it helped create with the temporary rift with its OPEC+ partner Saudi Arabia in March. The Russian ruble crashed, and Russia's oil income shrank as a result of the plunge in oil prices. The oil price crash, along with the coronavirus-driven global recession, will result in Russia's economy shrinking this year by 6 percent, or by the most in 11 years, the World Bank said in its latest economic report on Russia earlier this month.

Colombia Economic Growth to Recover to Over 4% in 2021

BOGOTA (Reuters) - Colombia's economic growth will recover to close to 4.1% in 2021 after a recession this year, the country's central bank said, amid

uncertainty about when economic activity will return to pre-pandemic levels.

The Andean country's economy has suffered as low oil prices and a coronavirus lockdown have shuttered businesses and sent unemployment soaring.

The central bank's technical team places 2021 gross domestic product growth at between 3% and 8%, with a figure of close to 4.1% as the most likely, the bank said in its quarterly monetary policy report released late on Monday.

The bank has said the economy is set to contract between 6% and 10% this year, with a shrinking of 8.5% as the most likely scenario.

"The ranges reflect the high uncertainty that both the global economy and the Colombian economy are facing," the report said. "The central scenario means the levels of economic activity observed in 2019 will not be recovered in 2021."

The bank's GDP estimates are considerably less optimistic than the government's, which says GDP is set to contract 5.5% this year but will recover to 6.6% growth next.

A lack of inflationary pressures has allowed the central bank board to cut 200 basis points from the benchmark interest rate since March, taking it to a new historic low of 2.25%.

Consumer price increases will stay below the long-term target range of 3% in 2021, the report said, remaining around 2.5% during the second half of that year.

Inflation will begin to increase from the first quarter of 2021, it said, "in part because of lower comparative figures from the year before and the reversal of government economic relief."

Excess capacity will remain high, unemployment will mean little pressure on labor costs and exchange rate pressures will be moderate.

July Sees Turkey's Highest Monthly Exports of 2020

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's exports in July reached the highest level of 2020 as they hit over \$15 billion (TL 104 billion), Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan announced Tuesday.

The figure rose 11.5% month-on-month, hitting the second-highest July figure of all times, Pekcan said in a statement.

She added that exports fell 5.8% compared to the same month of last year, driven by high base effect, fewer working days and the coronavirus pandemic.

The country's imports reached \$17.8 billion in July, posting a 7.7% decrease from July 2019. Pekcan, in a written statement, said the growth in exports not only reduces the country's current account deficit but also continues to be a driving force for the Turkish economy.

"The import coverage ratio of exports which was 82.6% in June, reached 84.5% in July. The import coverage rate of exports excluding gold rose to 93.9%. Thus, not only the highest export value of 2020 was reached in July with the export of \$15.1 billion but we have reached the highest import coverage ratio of the year with 84.5% in total and 93.9% excluding gold," she said.

Pekcan noted that when gold is excluded from foreign trade figures, it is clearly seen where Turkish economy stands today as a competitive point on the trade value chain, adding that the gold is a kind of capital, saving material and therefore it would be healthier to consider gold as a capital movement.

The growth trend in major exporting sectors that begin with the normalization process following a pandemic break has continued in July, Pekcan said, as the exports of the automotive, ready-to-wear and textile sectors have recorded 10.1%, 41%, 18.5% increases, respectively, month-on-month.

While the overall exports to the European Union countries have increased by 12.8% in July, Germany ranked first among the countries that Turkey made the most of the exports in this period with \$1.45 billion.

The U.K. and the U.S. followed Germany with \$963 million and \$942 million respectively.

Underlining that there is an increase in the number of exporting companies, Pekcan said, "While approximately 27,000 companies exported in April, over 41,000 companies exported in July."

"Despite all the negativity of the pandemic period, Turkey has proven to be a reliable and stable supplier country," Pekcan underlined. Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM) Chairman Ismail Güllü said the newly announced export figures show that Turkey has left behind the negative period between March and May that saw the impacts of the pandemic. Turkey has recorded a 35% increase in exports in June, Güllü noted, adding that the positive trend continued with the July figures.

Pakistan May Become Regional Hub for Trade



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Ambassador of China to Pakistan Yao Jing said Pakistan possessed a huge potential to become a regional hub for trade and vast connectivity, and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offered such opportunities.

He also lauded the enthusiasm manifested by the Pakistani leadership and its people towards CPEC. Talking to Geo News program 'Jirga' in an interview, the Chinese ambassador strongly disapproved the propaganda by certain quarters in the West about CPEC by maintaining that it offered prospects of better future for the people of the two countries and would prove beneficial for the whole region. He said that a lot of projects have been completed under CPEC, while expansion is being made on the development fronts. Terming such propaganda highly 'unfortunate', he said it was part of China-bashing by certain quarters having political purposes.

Yao Jing expressed his satisfaction that there was 100 per cent consensus between China and Pakistan and the two friendly countries had already outright rejected such moves. He said that CPEC was a transparent project between the two governments, and they will effort for making it more viable. Responding to a question, he said the development of Gwadar, Karachi Port and Port Qasim offered immense opportunities and bright prospects for the wider regional connectivity.

To another question, he expressed his pleasure that Pakistan was tirelessly making efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan, which would ultimately open trade opportunities upto landlocked Central Asian states, which were looking to expand the scope of their trade routes.

The Chinese ambassador to a query said Huawei being a private Chinese company was facing problems in the United States and the West because they considered China as a rival in the latest technology.

Iran to Send 2000 Humanitarian Packs to Beirut

TEHRAN (MNA) – “2,000 packages weighing 9 tons of food, as well as medicine and medical supplies, will be sent to Lebanon by IRCS”, Iranian Red Crescent Society spokesman announced.

According to the spokesman, the Red Crescent Society will set up an RDH hospital and send a medical team to Lebanon, including general practitioners, orthopedists, anesthesiologists specialists, pediatricians,

neurologists, nurses, operating room specialists, and field hospital experts. This medical team consists of 22 medical staff who will leave for Beirut by plane this evening, he reported.

The shipment of humanitarian aid from IRCS is being sent to Lebanon following the request of the director of Lebanese Red Cross, George Kataneh for the need for humanitarian aid from the Iranian government and IRCS, he noted.



Indian Gov't Looking at Non-Tariff Barriers to Curb Chinese Imports

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - To check the inflow of non-essential imports, primarily from China and Hong Kong, the government will focus on non-tariff barriers (NTBs) that are mainly a mix of stricter quality standards, such as mandatory certification requirement from the Bureau of Indian Standards, and imposition of import licence restrictions, according to officials dealing with the matter.

The Commerce & Industry Ministry is in consultations with a number of other line-Ministries to evaluate the best-suited NTBs for imports that are to be regulated including that of consumer items such as footwear, furniture, plastic goods, toys, leather products and sports items.

“Imposing non-tariff barriers is what will give us quick and targeted results in terms of checking imports from select destinations to the extent required. The government will of course keep raising import tariffs wherever possible but it has to also ensure that domestic shortages are not created,” an official familiar with the matter told BusinessLine.

The Centre is trying to increase import curbs on products from China in order to bridge its high trade deficit with the country, valued at \$48.66 billion in 2019-20. India also wants to send a strong message to its neighbour, which is creating trouble at the India-China border in the Galwan valley. Imports from Hong Kong and some other South-East Asian countries are also under the radar, as there is a fear that Chinese goods are being routed through these countries.

Draft Quality Control Orders on toys and electrical equipment, requiring mandatory quality certification from BIS for both imports and domestically produced items, have already been notified to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), seeking comments of members, the official said.

“In fact, the government is trying to speed up domestic consultations on quality control norms and BIS certification requirement for most of the 371 items short-listed by the Commerce Ministry earlier this year,” the official added.

However, while stricter quality norms can serve to hold up imports as certification



would be completely up to the BIS, the government cannot ignore the fallouts of higher quality standards on MSMEs, the official said.

The other option, of imposing licence requirements for imports, already implemented last week in the case of televisions, helps to check imports without affecting domestic producers. It slows down imports as licences need to be obtained and the matter is completely in the hands of the government. But, if used rampantly, it could cause trouble at the WTO.

“While imposing licensing requirement is the easiest form of NTB as it places no obligations on the domestic industry, it is not used often by governments as it could fail to pass muster at the WTO, especially on grounds of lack of transparency if a particular country is targeted,” a Delhi-based trade expert explained.

Despite the possible trouble at the WTO, the government is looking at imposing licensing requirements for some more consumer items in the months to come as some other countries, too, were putting in place such measures especially to deal with Covid-19 related disruptions, the official added.

WHO Urges Russia To Follow Guidelines On Virus Vaccine



GENEVA (AFP) - The World Health Organization on Tuesday urged Russia to follow the established guidelines for producing safe and effective vaccines after Moscow announced plans to start swiftly producing COVID-19 jabs.

Russia said Monday it aims to launch mass production of a coronavirus vaccine in September and turn out “several million” doses per month by next year.

Russia is pushing ahead with several vaccine prototypes. Officials claimed that one trialled by the Gamaleya institute in Moscow has reached advanced stages of development and is about to pass state registration.

“We are very much counting on starting mass production in September,” Industry Minister Denis Manturov said in an interview published by state news agency TASS.

Asked about the developments in Russia, the WHO stressed that all vaccine candidates should go through the full stages of testing before being rolled out.

“There are established practices and there are guidelines out,” WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier told reporters at the United Nations in Geneva.

“Any vaccine...(or medicine) for this purpose should be, of course, going through all the various trials and tests before being licenced for roll-out,” he said.

“Sometimes individual researchers claim they have found something, which is of course, as such, great news. “But between finding or having a clue of maybe having a vaccine that works, and having gone through all the stages, is a big difference.”

The pandemic has seen an unprecedented mobilisation of funding and research to rush through a vaccine that can protect billions of people worldwide. Scientists in the West have raised concerns about the speed of development of Russian vaccines, suggesting that researchers might be cutting corners after coming under pressure from the authorities to deliver.

The WHO’s overview of COVID-19 candidate vaccines, published on Friday, lists 26 candidates in clinical evaluation -- of which six have progressed as far as wider Phase 3 levels of testing.

The Gamaleya candidate, which is among the 26 being tested on humans, is listed as being in Phase 1. A further 139 candidates worldwide were listed as being in pre-clinical evaluation.

Lindmeier said the WHO had not been officially notified of any Russian vaccine on the verge of being deployed.

“If there was anything official, then our colleagues in the European office would definitely look into this,” the spokesman said.

“In general terms, there are a set of guidances and regulations, rules, how to deal with safe development of a vaccine.

Pandemic's Economic Fallout Will Worsen Conflicts

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches)

- The coronavirus pandemic is worsening the humanitarian situation in the world’s deadliest conflicts and threatens to unleash economic devastation that will intensify violence, United Nations diplomats and experts warn.

Covid-19 is hampering aid programs, diverting the attention and resources of major powers battling the deadly virus at home, and cutting remittances to already fragile, war-weary economies, they say.

“There’s a very high level of concern that its economic impact is going to spark more disorder, more conflict,” said New York-based UN expert Richard Gowan.

“We’re still only really in the opening act of quite a long drama,” he told AFP.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’s plea for a global ceasefire back in March has gone largely unheeded, with fighting continuing to rage in hotspots such as Yemen, Libya and Syria.

Lockdowns are restricting the movements of envoys, peacekeeping troops and non-governmental agencies, hindering mediation efforts and impeding the distribution of desperately needed aid to increasingly vulnerable civilians.

In Yemen – where tens of thousands of civilians have died since 2015 in what the UN describes as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis – fighting is intensifying, according to diplomats who say the country is in free fall.

“Famine is again on the horizon. Conflict is again escalating. The economy is again in tatters. Humanitarian agencies are again nearly broke. And then the new problems – Covid-19 is spreading out of control,” UN relief chief Mark Lowcock said last week.

The British diplomat told the UN Security Council that the coronavirus crisis had slashed remittances, which has long been a lifeline for Yemen, by as much as 70%.

He cited a recent survey that found that about half of Yemeni families have lost at least 50% of their income since April.



“Help Yemen now or watch the country fall into the abyss,” he implored.

Lowcock also reported depressing economic news from Syria, whose economy has been devastated by almost a decade of civil war.

He said lockdown measures to contain the spread of Covid-19 was one factor in the Syrian economy expecting to contract by more than 7% this year.

The diplomat added that job losses in recent months have increased unemployment from 42% last year to close to 50% now.

Diplomats say western governments are reducing the amount of aid they send to humanitarian crisis zones as they focus on getting their own coronavirus-battered economies up and running again.

Analysts say it has also taken the steam out of peace efforts as mediators swap face-to-face meetings for Zoom and Skype calls.

In January, at a summit hosted by Germany in Berlin, world leaders committed to ending all foreign meddling in Libya’s civil war and to uphold a weapons embargo as part of a plan to end the nine-year conflict.

But last month Guterres denounced “unprecedented levels” of interference in the war-torn country, where Russia and Turkey back rival factions.

“Now obviously Germany’s focus is on propping up the European economy,” said Gowan, of the International Crisis Group think-tank.

Experts are also watching with close concern Lebanon, currently mired in its worst economic crisis since its 1975-1990 civil war, with runaway inflation and bank capital controls fuelling poverty, despair and angry street protests.

“It’s a pretty bleak and depressing picture across the board,” a UN diplomat told AFP.

“The economic fallout is just going to exacerbate conflict in those countries,” he added.

Japan to Restart Tourism as COVID-19 Infections Rise

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan is preparing for an increase in the number of new coronavirus infections. Recently, more than 1,000 cases were reported for two straight days in the country.

The news comes about one week after the announcement of a national travel campaign to restart the tourism industry. National broadcaster NHK reported that the country had 1,266 new cases on Thursday. That number is higher than the old record of 1,264. The virus is spreading quickly in Tokyo and several other areas of the country.

Northern Japan’s Iwate prefecture was the last-remaining area free from coronavirus infection. It had its first cases recently, while the southern island of Okinawa had 44 infections, hitting record numbers for three straight days.

However, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s government launched a national travel campaign on July 22. The goal is to restart the tourism industry and help the economy.

A member of the World Health Organization’s influenza group said the campaign was not well timed. He also said it created problems for those who fear the virus, but are in need of money and business.

“I’m not going to lie, I get a bit shocked when I see that someone’s visiting from far away,” said Keiko Tsukahara. He is the co-manager of a small hotel in the hot springs town of Nikko, north of Tokyo.

“But we have had zero income for the past few months and we need customers,” he said.

Mayor Soichiro Miyashita of the town of Mutsu, however, ordered 21 city buildings and other city-owned tourist attractions to be closed. He said health was more important than business.

The small town in northern Japan’s Aomori prefecture has only one hospital, with just four beds for patients with infectious diseases. It has so far reported no COVID-19 cases.

“As we experience the second wave of cases, it shouldn’t be a choice between our lives or the economy,” said Miyashita.

Iran Pioneer...

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We all should know that as far as we respect the ballot box and the votes of the people, no power will harm us, he added.

When the government is elected by the people, the government and the parliament and the rest of the bodies of government are directly and indirectly elected by the people, it does not make sense to decide from somewhere else and from a palace in another country to end the government for the Iranian people and make turmoil, the President continued.

The chairman of the Supreme National Security Council added, “As long as there are elections, Iran will remain strong.”

“Of course, [enemies] can harass us, but they cannot deprive Iranians of the government and democracy,” Rouhani concluded.

Coronavirus...

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According to the spokeswoman, Tehran, Mazandaran, Golestan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Isfahan, Alborz, Khorasan Razavi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Semnan, Yazd, Markazi, and Gilan provinces are in a critical situation (Red status).

Fars, West Azerbaijan, Bushehr, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Ilam, Zanjan, Hamedan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Lorestan and Qom provinces is on alert, she concluded.

Iran, Afghanistan...

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Transit cooperation between Chabahar Port and Afghanistan has followed with considerable growth in recent years, he said, adding, “despite restrictions caused by the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, transit of goods to neighboring Afghanistan has experienced considerable growth in such a way that 2,664 (TUE) transit goods of Afghanistan were transferred to the target markets via Chabahar port.”

In this line, four ships, carrying Afghanistan’s transit consignments, have been transferred to India via Shahid Rajaei Port as well as two Afghanistan’s shipments of nuts to China through this port.

China, Russia...

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“Everyone is going to know this is a choice between tyranny and freedom,” she said.

The ban on arms deals with Iran is set to expire in October under terms of the 2015 agreement, which President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of in 2018. The Trump administration maintains that quitting the deal doesn’t prevent it from invoking the provision to snap back sanctions that had been lifted.

Several diplomats say that France, Germany, the U.K., Russia and China are trying to negotiate a solution that might prevent the U.S. from taking such a step, but that no clear compromise has emerged.

Mahan Air Resumes Tehran-Moscow Flights

TEHRAN (MNA) – Mahan Air revealed the resumption of Tehran-Moscow flights for holders of valid residence or Russian passport by fully observing health guidelines amid pandemic.

Due to the coronavirus global pandemic, the Iranian Airline advised passengers to fully observe health guidelines and protocols at Moscow Airport.

Iran’s Mahan Air on Tuesday revealed that flights of this airline en route Tehran-Moscow will be resumed for holders of valid residence in Moscow or Russian Passport, provided that all passengers should fully observe health protocols and guidelines due to the pandemic.

Having negative PCT test approved by the Ministry of Health in English, issued no later than 72 hours before the flights, is mandatory for all passengers of this flight except Russian passport holders.

Also, health form, which is delivered to passengers on the flight, must be filled out during the flight before arriving in Moscow.

After landing and opening doors of the plane, officials of the Ministry of Health enter the cabin of the plane, so that aforementioned form must be delivered to them by the passenger.

If a passenger suspected of having COVID-19, to prevent the spread of coronavirus to others, the very passenger, diagnosed with COVID-19 and some passengers around the suspected individual will be isolated.

Leverkusen Quarantine Amiri After COVID-19 Contact

BERLIN (AFP) - Bayer Leverkusen said on Tuesday midfielder Nadiem Amiri is in quarantine having had contact with someone who has COVID-19 and will miss this week's Europa League clash at home to Rangers.

Leverkusen said the 23-year-old attacking midfielder had "brief contact in private with someone with the coronavirus" and has been separated from the squad for a week. Ahead of Thursday's last 16, second-leg meeting, Leverkusen hold a 3-1 lead after winning in Glasgow before the competition was halted in March due to the pandemic.

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Pedro Bids Early Farewell To Chelsea After Surgery

LONDON (AFP) - Chelsea forward Pedro has undergone surgery on his shoulder ahead of an expected transfer to Roma, meaning he will not play for the Premier League club again.

The 33-year-old Spain international confirmed on social media his operation had been successful.

He landed awkwardly on his right shoulder when appearing as a substitute in Chelsea's 2-1 FA Cup final defeat by Arsenal at the weekend. Pedro will miss Chelsea's Champions League last-16 second-leg clash at Bayern Munich on Saturday before he leaves Stamford Bridge.

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SPORTS

THURSDAY AUGUST 6, 2020

Champions League Ready to Resume, At Long Last

PARIS (AFP) - After an enforced hiatus of almost five months, the UEFA Champions League and Europa League resume this week in order to clear up the last remaining business in a troubled season.

Both competitions were frozen in March as the coronavirus pandemic took hold across the continent, and while European football's governing body acted swiftly to move Euro 2020 back a year, for a long time it was unclear how it would manage to complete its two landmark club competitions.

In the end the solution was to set up two mini tournaments bringing all teams together in one place from the quarter-finals onwards, with all ties being decided in one-off matches behind closed doors.

And so the Champions League will move to Lisbon for the 'Final Eight' starting on August 12 and ending with the final at Benfica's Estadio da Luz on August 23.

The Europa League, meanwhile, will be played to a conclusion at a series of venues in western Germany, with the last eight beginning on August 10 and the final in Cologne on August 21.

"I believed it from the first moment," said the UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin recently when asked if he ever doubted it would be possible to play the tournaments to a conclusion.

"You should always be optimistic, and if something like this crisis happens, you must have a plan ready. "At the present time, we will be playing matches without spectators until further notice. We will not take any risks."

There is, though, no question of further changes being made to the formats despite concerns about an increase in Covid-19 cases in and around Lisbon, and more recent worries in Germany about a rise in cases there.

UEFA also recently insisted it was "confident" there would be no more delays despite cases of coronavirus emerging among players at Real Madrid and Sevilla. It is, in any case, now or never.

Indeed, the preliminary round of next season's Champions League begins next



Saturday, the same day Bayern Munich entertain Chelsea and Napoli visit Barcelona in their outstanding last 16 second legs. Before that, Manchester City defend a 2-1 first-leg lead at home against Real on Friday as Pep Guardiola's side target Champions League glory on the back of the club's success at getting a two-year ban from the competition overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The winner of that tie will face Juventus or Lyon in the quarter-finals in Lisbon.

It is the Europa League which is first up, though, with the last 16 being completed today and tomorrow. Two ties -- Inter Milan against Getafe and Sevilla against Roma -- will go ahead as one-off ties in Germany as the first legs were never played.

Six second legs will also be played with the winners heading to Germany for the last eight. Among the ties to be completed is Manchester United's against Austrian side LASK, which will be a formality for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team after they won 5-0 in the first leg in March. Their form since the Premier League resumed in mid-June has been excellent and they have already sealed a place in the 2020-21 Champions League, but now they want to finish this never-ending season with a trophy.

"Now our focus is on the Europa League because this is a really good trophy and we want to win," Bruno Fernandes told MUTV. "I came to Manchester to win trophies. We need to play every game to win. If we go into the Europa League and win every game, we know we'll win the trophy."

United, Europa League winners in 2017, could yet find themselves facing Premier League rivals Wolverhampton Wanderers in the semi-finals in Cologne on August 16 should both teams get there. Wolves entertain Greek champions Olympiakos on Thursday having drawn 1-1 in the first leg of their last-16 tie. Their campaign started more than a year ago now, with a 2-0 win over Northern Irish side Crusaders in the second qualifying round on July 25, 2019.

Extending it by another couple of weeks would do them no harm.

Benitez Fumes In Two-Minute China Press Conference

SHANGHAI (AFP) - Rafa Benitez said three times "I didn't like the game" and apologised on his way out of a curtailed press conference following a 2-1 defeat for his Dalian Pro side on Tuesday.

Salomon Rondon, who was with the Spanish coach at Newcastle United before both moved to the Chinese Super League last year, equalised in the 79th minute against Jiangsu Suning.

But a young Dalian team conceded a penalty late on and Jiangsu's Italy striker Eder converted to condemn the 60-year-old Benitez to another disappointing result.

Under Benitez, a 2005 Champions League winner with Liverpool, Dalian have taken just one point from their first three matches of the coronavirus-delayed CSL season.

The game was played behind closed doors because of COVID-19 but footage posted online showed the former Real Madrid boss spend at least 30 seconds towards the end facing away from the pitch, deep in thought.

Benitez, who has been consistently linked with a return to the Premier League since moving to China in July last year, was unable to hide his frustration afterwards.

"I didn't like the game and that's it," he told a post-match press conference that lasted barely two minutes even with translation.

"I didn't like the game, that's the reason why," Benitez added, after being asked why he turned away from the pitch towards the end.

"I would say that I didn't like the game too much," he added to a third question.

When the press conference was brought to a premature end, the usually affable Benitez said, "Thank you, sorry," and walked out.

Dalian have filed a complaint to the Chinese Football Association over the referee's handling of the match, local media said.

Benitez arrived in China to fanfare but he has found it difficult to make an impact at Dalian, winning only seven of his 20 matches.



can get anywhere near Dortmund's lofty asking price.

It is understood that discussions are ongoing about a deal for the England winger.

The Bundesliga club have reportedly set an August 10 deadline and want

Solskjaer Tight-Lipped on Man Utd Sancho Talks

LONDON (AFP) - Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer kept his cards close to his chest over the possible signing of Borussia Dortmund star Jadon Sancho on Tuesday.

The Old Trafford giants are hoping to make the 20-year-old their marquee signing in the transfer window when the impact of the coronavirus pandemic means few other clubs

more than £100 million (\$130 million) for the player.

But Solskjaer gave little away in his press conference ahead of the second leg of United's Europa League last-16 tie against Austrian side LASK.

"This transfer window is a long one and every transfer takes its course," said the Norwegian. "It is what it is."

"At the moment, I've got no updates for you anyway so if there's any news, we'll update you."

Chris Smalling had hoped to be involved in the competition with Roma, but an extension to his season-long loan move has not been reached.

The defender said he was disappointed that he "can't finish what we started this season" as the Serie A side prepared to face Sevilla, with Solskjaer ready to welcome the 30-year-old back to Old Trafford.

Madrid Masters Tennis Cancelled Due to COVID

MADRID (AFP) - The Madrid Open tennis tournament has been cancelled due to fresh outbreaks of coronavirus in the region, organisers confirmed on Tuesday, raising doubts around the upcoming U.S. and French Opens.

Originally scheduled for May, the postponed Madrid tournament was scheduled to take place on the clay courts at Caja Magica between September 12 and 20.

"We share in the disappointment that the Mutua Madrid Open will not be able to take place this year," said Andrea Gaudenzi, the ATP Chairman, in a statement.

The tournament was expected to boast a stellar field, including world number two and five-time champion Rafael Nadal, and would have been a key warm-up event two weeks before the start of the French Open. The Italian Open is due to go ahead in Rome in the week leading up to the grand slam at Roland Garros but it remains to be seen how other competitions react.

Before then, hard-court events are planned later this month in Lexington and New York ahead of the US Open at Flushing Meadows, which is due to start on August 31.

After a rise in coronavirus cases in Spain, the regional government of Madrid recommended on Saturday that the Madrid Open be called off, with its cancellation duly confirmed on Tuesday.



Pirelli Blames Race Circumstances for Silverstone Tyre Failures

PARIS (AFP) - Pirelli said on Tuesday that problems with its tyres late in the British Grand Prix, which saw Lewis Hamilton cross the line on three wheels, was due to unusually long use of the second set of tyres.

Hamilton clung on to the victory on Sunday after driving with one tyre in shreds for most of the final lap, while his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas and Carlos Sainz Jr of McLaren also suffered punctures on a hot afternoon at Silverstone which saw the safety car come out twice.

Bottas was second when his tyre disintegrated and Sainz was up to fourth when his fell to bits. Both finished outside the points. In a statement Pirelli, the exclusive tyre supplier for Formula One, said that the "key reason" behind the tyre problems was "a set of individual race circumstances that led to an extremely long use of the second set of tyres".

"The second safety car period prompted nearly all the teams to anticipate their planned pit stop and so carry out a particularly long final stint: around 40 laps, which is more than three-quarters the total race length on one of the most demanding tracks of the calendar," the Italian manufacturer said.

"Combined with the notably increased pace of the 2020 Formula 1 cars (pole position was 1.2 seconds faster compared to 2019) this made the final laps of the British Grand Prix especially tough, as a consequence of the biggest forces ever seen on tyres generated by the fastest Formula 1 cars in history.

