

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in a Message Reacted to U.S.' Anti-Iran Resolution to Extend Arms Embargo, Saying the UNSC Once Again Rejected U.S. Unilateralism

IRAN NEWS

The Two Iranian Football Archrivals, Esteghlal and Persepolis, Were Drawn to Play Their 93rd Derby in the Semifinal of Iran's Hazfi Cup Which Will Be Their First Ever Match Without Spectators

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PGCC Letter to UN Document Forgery, Blatant Fraud

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand named PGCC Secretary-General's letter to the UN as document forgery and a blatant fraud.

In a reaction to some media reports announcing that in a letter to the UN, the Secretary-General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf has asked an extension of an international arms embargo on Iran, Baharvand named the letter a document forgery and blatant fraud.

He said that the letter has been written and sent to the UN by two people from New York, while other PGCC are not informed about the issue.

"More interesting is Mike Pompeo's reaction to this letter," he noted, "Despite knowing that the letter is a fake one, Pompeo called for the UNSC to abide by the US wishes."

In a letter to the UN Security Council on Sunday, Al-Hajraf accused Iran of supporting terrorism and sectarian organizations, a move pushed strongly by the United States.

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Iran's COVID-19 Cases Exceed 330,000

TEHRAN (IFP)- Health Ministry spokeswoman says 331,189 patients have contracted the novel coronavirus so far, including 2,345 new cases identified in the past 24 hours.

In a press briefing on Tuesday, Sima-Sadat Lari said the virus has killed 184 patients since Monday noon, increasing the overall death toll to 18,800.

So far, she added, 288,620 patients have recovered from the disease or been discharged from the hospital.

Lari said 3,983 patients are also in critical conditions caused by more severe infection.

The spokeswoman noted that 2,736,514 COVID-19 tests have been taken across the country so far.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include Tehran, Mazandaran, East Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Ardabil, Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, Gilan, Alborz, Semnan, Golestan, Markazi, Kerman, and Yazd provinces.

The "orange" zones also include West Azarbaijan, Bushehr, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Hormozgan, Zanjan, Hamadan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Lorestan, Ilam, Fars, Qazvin, and Qom provinces, according to the spokeswoman.

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Five Spies Arrested At Gov't Bodies



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Five spies have been apprehended at the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and Logistics of the Armed Forces and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

A spokesperson for the Judiciary said two of the spies have received final conviction verdicts.

"In recent months, five Iranians who were spying for foreign intelligence services have been arrested ... They were spying for Israel, Britain and Germany. Two of those spies have been convicted and sentenced to prison," judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili said in a weekly press conference.

"Masoud Mosahab, serving as the secretary general of the Iran-Austria Friendship Association, spied for Mossad (the Israeli secret service) and Germany's secret service," said the spokesperson.

"He has been sentenced to 10 years behind bars, and his verdict is final," the spokesperson added.

"Shahram Shirkhani, who spied for Britain, has also received a final ruling. He tried to poison the minds of some managers and recruit elements for the UK's secret service," added the spokesperson.

"He had provided the enemy with information about our agreements in domains of the Central Bank, Melli Bank and the defense ministry," said the spokesperson.

He also said that the country is facing an all-out war waged by the enemies' media empire.

Esmaili said that today the Iranian society is facing two major problems which are sanctions and distortion (of facts).

Iran's judiciary spokesman went on to explain further that just as the way the Islamic Iran is countering the economic war, it is also witnessing an all-out war waged by the enemies' media empire by adhering to distortion as a tool against the Islamic system of Iran.

Esmaili added: "In fighting against media war and distortion by enemies, the importance of journalism becomes more and more apparent to us."

Reacting to the closing down of a Persian daily, he said the Judiciary has not closed down any media outlet or arrested any journalist in the past year but he advised the media persons to stay away from the security issues because they are red lines and the Judiciary has to take action.

Gov't Set to Supply Oil at Energy Bourse

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani said that the Iranian government has a plan to supply oil in the energy bourse so that the traders can trade oil in the domestic market.

President Rouhani said that the outlines of the plan have been approved in a meeting of the high council of the economic coordination of the three branches of government.

He, however, noted that the plan has still to be finalized and its executive methods are yet to be determined by the government.

The Iranian president said that the government plan is aimed at controlling the existing liquidity and guiding it in a way so as to help the country's growth and fight against sanctions.

He assured the Iranian people that the government will do its best to create stability in the country's economy and will spare no effort to protect the assets of the people.

President Rouhani stated that the government, with the cooperation of three branches, can thwart the conspiracies of enemies.

He stressed this evening at the 53rd session of the meeting of the Supreme Economic Coordination Council of the three branches of power that overcoming the complex situation created by the outbreak of coronavirus and sanctions on the country requires the adoption of measures and policies that can improve the economic situation.

Rouhani stated that today, in addition to sanctions and pressure, the enemies have sought to create despair, hopelessness, and discouragement about the future among the people. All officials should be careful in their words and behavior so that we can thwart the conspiracies of the enemies and spread hope and joy in the society.

The President said that the leaders of the three branches and other officials welcome the suggestions, criticisms, and solutions of all specialists, experts, and economic activists to improve the economic and living conditions of the people, noting that based on the experience of previous years, we can certainly overcome these problems by relying on the capabilities and capacities of the country and maintaining unity.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



November, the U.S. Election Uncertainty

Nowadays who is in the world who does not believe that U.S. President Donald Trump's political fate is tied with developments and variants like the Coronavirus, anti-racism protests, economic crises resulted from unemployment, the downtrend statistics on gross domestic product (GDP) and the tension between the U.S. and China?

Despite all these factors, one cannot definitely say Trump's Democrat rival in the election Joe Biden is the winner of November 3 election and should wait and see how these variants show themselves in the upcoming days and probably some new variants may emerge in the U.S. political scene which can eclipse the November 3 election.

Former U.S. Defense Secretary General James Mattis, who had avoided criticizing Mr. Trump since his dismissal from his post, has recently in an interview with The Atlantic magazine opened up his criticism and launched an unprecedented attack on Trump and implicitly accused him of trying to divide the U.S. (he means the collapse of the federative system). He implicitly says this concern has spread among layers of the Republicans that consequences of continuing aggressive behavior against the protesters in the riot-hit states as well as disputable management of the Coronavirus and continuation of the current unpleasant economic condition can go beyond a defeat for Trump and they may also lose in the elections for the Congress and even lose the majority in the Senate.

In dealing with protests, Mr. Trump has taken a militaristic approach and has asked armed forces to interfere and put an end to the protests, and in order to deceive the public, he along with his Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley visited St. John's Church near the White House and by holding a Bible tried to employ the elements of army's force and religion's hypocrisy to serve the politics. Of course, his effort did not work because of disclosures of opposition media and it faced a backlash from the military men and Catholic clerics not only in the U.S. but also in the Christian world.

Trump's behavior is going to put the U.S. Army in a position to defy his orders regarding the confrontation with the protesters. This issue made even Esper and Milley to stand against Trump against his idea of using the armed forces for ending the protests. Disobedience of Army from the president has cost him very dear and has created a condition that even he may dismiss his current Defense Secretary, Mr. Esper. Along with all negative variants for Trump, this issue will worsen his challenges.

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MTN States Iran Exit Not Immediate

CAPE TOWN (Dispatches) - MTN Group and MTN Irancell sketched-out details on the company's planned exit from the Middle East, explaining it aimed to offload operations in Iran in the next three- to five-years.

In a statement, the businesses dismissed media reports suggesting an imminent exit from Iran, adding their customer base "could rely on continuing to receive the great service they have come to expect".

The group said its collaboration with MTN Irancell will continue unaffected and the business "will be run as usual".

MTN noted it planned to dispose of its units in the Middle East "in an orderly manner over the medium term", with initial moves planned for operations in Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen.

The group has a 49 per cent holding in MTN Irancell, which was the second-largest operator in Iran with 47 million connections in Q2, figures from GSMA Intelligence showed.

Outgoing MTN CEO Rob Shuter announced last week the company planned to exit the Middle East as it was best served by focusing on its pan-Africa strategy.



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

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Runoff Majlis Election to Be Held on September 11

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Following a delay after the outbreak of the coronavirus, Iran is going to hold the runoff election for the parliamentary seats on September 11, the government's spokesman said.

Ali Rabiei said the runoff parliamentary election will be preceded by week-long campaigns.

The election campaigns must be conducted without any gatherings in compliance with the health protocols, he noted, saying the candidates can use the virtual space.

Tehran Warns Against Any Foreign Interference In Lebanon Politics

TEHRAN (IFP) – The government spokesman has called on other countries not to interfere in efforts to determine the destiny of Lebanon amid unrest and political crisis in the Arab state.

Ali Rabiei made the comment as he weighed in on the recent developments in Lebanon and Iran's stance on the situation in that country.

"As for developments in Lebanon, we are waiting for the Lebanese government to conduct its examinations and announce the results," he said.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran would like all countries not to make any opportunistic intervention in determining Lebanon's fate," he said.

"In particular, the United States' hypocrisy of claiming to be helping Lebanon is a cause for concern, especially at a time when it won't lift its inhumane sanctions in the current deplorable situation," he said.

"We are confident that the Lebanese nation is able to weather these tough times if it maintains its unity and relies on domestic resources and forces," the spokesman added.

"Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran maintains its close contact with the Lebanese government and will keep sending humanitarian aid and items needed by [Lebanese] people," he noted.

Rabiei's comments come as the Lebanese government has resigned amid angry protests following the devastating blast which struck the capital, Beirut, last Tuesday.

He also said Donald Trump had four years time for a successful diplomacy with Iran exploring legal ways for the purpose, but, he opted for the worst pathways compared to those the US experienced over the past several decades.

Rabiei reacted to Trump's statement that if he reelected as U.S. president, he would reach an agreement with Iran soon, saying Trump had four years to initiate successful



diplomacy with Iran exploring a correct, agreed and legal pathway.

Even if Trump is reelected, he will not be successful in reaching an agreement with Iran as long as he embraces maximum pressure on Iran.

We are well-prepared to continue maximum resistance as long as the US continues the hostile policy of maximum pressure against Iran.

If Trump is serious in compensating his mistakes, Iran will welcome it, but it seems that his statement is nothing except for a ploy to gain votes, he noted.

In response to alleged interference of Iran, Russia, and China in US presidential elections, Rabiei said the baseless allegations on Iran intervention in U.S. presidential elections is aimed at taking advantage of Iran-phobia for the election campaign.

He reiterated that Iran is not interested in interfering in US domestic politics and will not give concession to any of the U.S. parties.

Judiciary to File Lawsuit Against Brian Hook

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Judiciary Chief for International Affairs Ali Baqeri on Monday called on the country's prosecutor to lodge a complaint against former U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook for his hostile measures and threatening the Iranian military officials with assassination.

"The prosecutor is required to issue an indictment against Brian Hook because he was the sponsor of the plan to exert maximum pressure against Iran, prevent Iran's access to its financial resources, impose secondary sanctions and resort to force against Iran. He had also threatened (Commander of the IRGC Quds Force) Brigadier General (Esmayeel) Qa'ani of assassination," Baqeri said.

Baqeri said that Iran has started collecting documents, proofs and evidence against Hook.

The top U.S. envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, is leaving his post and U.S. special representative for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, will add Iran to his role "following a transition period" with Hook, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday.



Sanctions Have No Effect on Italy's cultural Activities in Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Italian Ambassador to Tehran Giuseppe Perrone says that his country and Iran enjoy longstanding relations, and the sanctions could not interrupt Italy's cultural activities in Iran.

Of course, sanctions are challenging, but could not create obstacles to hold [cultural] events and exhibitions, Perrone said.

Italy did all cultural activities it had planned to hold in Iran, the ambassador said.

Elaborating on measures taken by Italian Embassy in Tehran to strengthen longstanding relations, the ambassador said that many plans have been implemented in line with widening cultural cooperation.

Such longstanding relations indicate common identity, the ambassador added.

He noted that the two nations have deep mutual understanding rooted in rich civilization.

Italy has been active in Iran over the past years and had done many cultural activities in the areas of cinema, theater, architecture and archeology, said Perrone stressing that Rome will continue cooperation with Tehran.

He said that the Urban Art Units project was unveiled few months ago to be an opportunity for Italian and Iranian artists to work together to get knowledge about culture of one another.

At the same time, the Italian Embassy has planned to co-sponsor organizing an exhibition in future in cooperation with different Iranian partners.

He added that his embassy has focused on the greatness of Iranian architecture in the Italian magazine.

Referring to the coronavirus pandemic which has created obstacles to many world events since its outbreak in December 2019, the ambassador said that the deadly virus changed times and places of some plans.

Meanwhile, Italian and Iranian artists continued cooperation through online programs, he said.

Turning to the issue of Rome-Tehran economic cooperation, the ambassador said Italy was Iran's number one trade partner in Europe for years, but today, it has stood at second place.

He noted that his country makes its all-out efforts to enhance economic relations once again.

Asked about the role of reporters and journalists in bilateral ties, Perrone said they can play an important role in establishment of sustainable relations between the two nations. Further, he gave opinion about Iran, saying that Iran is a country with diverse culture and deep and rich civilization.



Armed Forces Treating COVID-19 Patients in Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said at least 20,000 people infected with the novel coronavirus have been admitted to military hospitals across the country so far.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, the top Iranian commander said hospitals run by the Armed Forces have accepted some 20,000 coronavirus cases so far.

Around 650 coronavirus patients are currently receiving treatment in the military medical centers, he added.

The general further highlighted the scientific and research plans being carried out by the military forces, saying 18 projects, including those for production of medicine and vaccines, are funded by the Armed Forces.

The administration of President Hassan Rouhani has repeatedly praised the country's Armed Force for the great assistance they have been providing for the medical society in the fight against COVID-19.

The Army, the IRGC and Basij have greatly contributed to the countrywide plans to help the medical staff and have expressed readiness to stand by the health society in protecting the lives of people.

Iran, UN to Draw Up Natl. Tourism Promotion Plan with EU Funding

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian Ministry of Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and Handicrafts will continue its cooperation with world bodies to draw up a national Iranian tourism promotion program with EU funding.

A senior official with the Ministry says phase two of the program has been approved, which will see the organization continue to work closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as well as with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

"Based on an official letter sent by the deputy head of UNESCO's regional office in Tehran to the Tourism

Department of Iran, the EU funding has been approved for phase two of joint cooperation to draw up a national program on the promotion of tourism," said Alireza Rahimi.

He said UNESCO had already announced its readiness in a meeting via videoconference to keep working with Iran on implementing the said project.

"The Tourism Department has been notified of the approval of phase two of financing for the continuation of cooperation based on finalizing the proposal of the plan with the technical help of UNWTO's international consultants and the participation of beneficiaries in the process of drawing up the plan," he added.

Saudi Arabia Abusing Old Regulatory Gap in IAEA

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi said that Saudi Arabia continues to refuse to accept IAEA inspections, despite currently pursuing a comprehensive nuclear program.

Referring to lack of transparency about the dimensions and objectives of Saudi Arabia's nuclear program, Mousavi said, "The important issue about Saudi Arabia's nuclear program is the absence of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors in the country."

"As a member of the NPT, Saudi Arabia has the right to use nuclear energy peacefully, but must also abide by its obligations under the treaty," he added, saying, "According to the Article 3 of the treaty, Saudi Arabia is required to accept the IAEA Safeguards and the inspections."

Referring to Saudi Arabia's abuse of the safeguard system over the past 20 years, he said, "Saudi Arabia continues to refuse to accept IAEA inspections, despite currently pursuing a comprehensive nuclear program."

When asked about the reasons why IAEA as a nuclear watchdog does not force Riyadh to respond about its nuclear program, Mousavi said, "The Director General of IAEA and the Board of Governors are responsible for Saudi Arabia's abuse from an old regulatory gap."

"We do not understand why the IAEA does not react to Saudi Arabia. It raises a dual standard, especially in relation to the unjustified haste of the IAEA over Iran's nuclear program," he added.

Iran, Eurasia Conduct \$2.6b Trade in 9 Months

TEHRAN (FNA) - Trade between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) amounted to \$2.6 billion in three quarters since October 27, 2019 – the date when the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Iran and EAEU was signed.

"Iran's exported 1.9 million tons worth \$762 million to Eurasian nations, while its imports amounted to 5.5 million tons worth \$1.8 billion tons," President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mahdi Mirashrafi said.

Mirashrafi added that Russia, Armenia and Kazakhstan were the three top export destinations of Iran to Eurasia in the period. However, Russia with 4.3 million tons of goods worth \$1.5 billion and Kazakhstan with 1.1 million tons of goods worth \$298 million were main exporters to Iran during the same period, he said, adding that over 95% of Iran's imports included basic goods and livestock food.

Iran and the EAEU started implementing the agreement on preferential trade on 862 products as of October 27.

Symbol of Failure of Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters Saeed Mohammad said that strategic plans of the Headquarters are a symbol of failure of enemy's sanctions imposed against the country.

Strategic plans of Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, like Persian Gulf Star Refinery, which was acclaimed by the Leader of Islamic Revolution, are considered as a symbol of failure of enemy's sanctions.

Speaking in a local ceremony on Monday, he drew up the difficulties facing economic sector of the country and added, "today, some people believe that the country has reached a dead end and its problems cannot be resolved but Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters has demonstrated that all difficulties and problems facing the country can be overcome despite sanctions and pressures exerted against the country." He went on to say that the country enjoys high potentials and capabilities and if these capabilities are used optimally, many problems can be resolved.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the pressure of sanctions exerted by enemy against the country and added, "we know that the country has faced severe economic problems and spread of novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, has added to the difficulties in the country but we believe that the country is equipped with high potentials and capabilities which is able to overcome problems facing ahead."

The country can move itself out of economic downturn through national solidarity, unity and amity among all walks of life, commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarter emphasized.

PGCC Must Not Follow U.S.

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Chief of Staff of Presidential Office Mahmoud Vaezi on Tuesday said that the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) must not follow the United States as the presence of the country in the region is illegitimate and brings insecurity and instability.

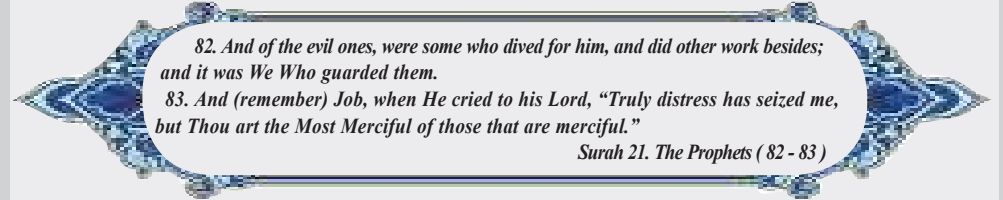
The diplomat made the remarks on Twitter in reaction to the statement of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) to extend the arms embargo on Iran, adding that preserving the security and maintaining the regional states' interests can be achieved through regional trust-building and cooperation.

The Council should not follow the United States, whose illegitimate presence in the region has brought nothing but insecurity and instability, he pointed out.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:09
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:16
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:49
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:22



82. And of the evil ones, were some who dived for him, and did other work besides; and it was We Who guarded them.
83. And (remember) Job, when He cried to his Lord, "Truly distress has seized me, but Thou art the Most Merciful of those that are merciful."
Surah 21. The Prophets (82 - 83)

Iran Exports Dairy Products to 30 Countries

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Spokesman to Iran Customs Administration Seyed Ruhollah Latifi says the country has exported dairy products worth over \$153m to different countries in the first four months.

Latifi said that dairy is one of the products that fortunately Iran has become one of its major exporters, saying that the country has turned from an importing to an exporting dairy product country.

He added that in the first four months of the current year, Iranian dairy producers have exported 152,574 tons of their products worth over \$153m.

Latifi added that despite the outbreak of Coronavirus, closure of borders and trade restrictions in the world, Iran managed to export dairy products to 30 countries in the first four months. He added Canada, Germany, Australia, Russia, Turkey, Malaysia, the UAE, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Iraq and New Zealand were the major destinations for Iran's dairy exports.

Iraq had the most shares of Iran's dairy exports with over \$75m and Afghanistan



trailed Iraq with \$18m. Pakistan with \$13m was the third major destination for Iran's dairy exports.

He said fresh cheese, whey, milk, packed butter, yogurt, cream, industrial milk powder milk and powdered milk for babies were the major products exported in this period.

Latifi noted that due to the climate of Middle East and North Africa states, Iran's food industry has found its special place in the country's non-oil exports, adding that dairy products' exports accounted for 14 percent of Iran's total non-oil exports in 2018 and 15 percent in 2019 and the figure can grow more.

Interaction Between Industry And Media Is Crucial

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Khorasan Steel Complex (KSC) in a message felicitated the Reporters' Day and said interaction between media and industry is very crucial.

Mr. Kasra Ghafoori in his message hailed the media community for their efforts for enlightenment of the public and called their job a tough one.

He said journalists and media persons have important responsibility towards their society by disseminating news and revealing the truth.

He said in the current era, sticking to the ethics and promoting the social values is a must for media persons and it makes their responsibility heavier. Ghafoori noted that media by reports and scientific analysis as well as observing the authenticity of their news can win the public trust.

He reiterated with this approach, media ethics and professional principles is the point of understanding between the media and the major production enterprises like Khorasan Steel Complex.

He reiterated that media and reporters have unique and irreplaceable role in safeguarding and boosting the spirit of social commitment in the society.

Ghafoori added that boosting national unity and covering development issues based on the Islamic-Iranian models of progress will help the companies and key industries a great deal to do their jobs and responsibilities in any field better.

He said it is expected media and journalists to reinforce hope and vigor in the public and society, adding that hope can be an incentive for production and construction and it can help the country against all-out negative propagation and sanctions against the country.

At the end, on behalf of the company, Mr. Ghafoori felicitated the day and wished the media persons and journalists' success and commitment in their jobs.



Afghan Bank Unable to Open a Branch in Chabahar Port

TEHRAN (ILNA) - The head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce told Afghanistan's Ghazafar Bank could not open a branch in Chabahar Port, as a result of Iran being put on FATF's blacklist.

The Iranian official Hossein Salimi said "A basic license has been issued for Ghazafar bank to operate in Iran but for reasons such as the banking laws of the two countries and the fact that Iran is not a member of the FATF, Ghazafar Bank could not have a branch in Iran."

Ghazafar Bank started off its operation from Kabul, Afghanistan, and is offering key financial services both under conventional and Islamic. Ghazafar Bank, a full-fledged licensed commercial Bank, commenced its operations in March 2009. The Share Holders of the Bank belongs to one of the leading business groups of Afghanistan.

Referring to the decline in trade between Iran and Afghanistan, he said: "Iran exports \$ 3.2 billion a year to Afghanistan, which this year will probably reach \$ 2.9 billion due to coronavirus epidemic."

The Iranian official pointed to the impact of Chabahar port in increasing Iran-Afghanistan trade relations, and stated: "In previous years, this port was almost closed, but today some of the goods needed by Afghans are exported through this port."

"We are currently witnessing an increase in China's trade with Afghanistan, and recently the Turks have entered the Afghan market." He confirmed that Iran has started investing in Afghanistan's mines; adding "Afghanistan has rich and pristine mines that can increase Afghan incomes by investing in these areas."

The Annual General Assembly of Khuzestan Steel Company was Held

The Annual General Meeting of Khuzestan Steel Company was held with the presence of 24.76% of shareholders.

According to the Public Relations Reporter, this meeting was held today, Wednesday, August 6, 2020, in the presence of board members, CEO, independent auditor and statutory auditor, representative of the Privatization Organization, representative of the Stock Exchange and Securities Organization and holders of 24.76% of the company's total shares. Following the procedure to prevent the spread of the corona virus was made live for the shareholders on the Aparat site. According to this report, at the beginning of the meeting, Mehran Abbaszadeh, Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Social Affairs, presented a report on the performance of Khuzestan Steel Company in 2019. Abbaszadeh said: production of 3 million and 689 thousand tons of steel ingots, production of 5 million and 852 thousand tons of iron ore pellets, production of 3 million and 724 thousand tons of sponge iron, sale of 3 million and 766 thousand tons of products in domestic and export markets, registration Daily and monthly production records, implementation of development plans, optimization and environment and support for deprived and less developed areas were among the most important programs implemented by Khuzestan Steel Company in 2019. He added: Khuzestan Steel Company, with the aim of producing 3 million and 800 thousand tons and exporting 2 million tons, is the largest supplier of steel ingots in the country and plays a pivotal role in supplying quality raw materials to climbing companies. Export to different countries. The Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Social Affairs said that the 6% growth in net profit in 2019 was due to the change in the composition of domestic sales to exports and product rates, and added: Development and operation of water network to rehabilitation and steelmaking units, commissioning of refinery pier, Electricity, completion and operation of environmental projects, operation of sanitary treatment plants, industrial effluents and wastewater recycling and the use of natural gas in the production process to reduce emissions were among the most important projects implemented in Khuzestan Steel Complex in 2019. Distribution of livelihood and health packages in deprived areas, assistance to flood victims in the province and the country, assistance to Ahwaz University of Medical Sciences in preventing the spread of coronavirus and distribution of educational items are part of the activities in the form of social responsibility.



Abbaszadeh considered the integration along the value chain from the mine to the final product as one of the success factors of Khuzestan Steel Company and continued: Stable and economical supply of strategic items (iron ore concentrate, graphite electrode, scrap, etc.), modernization of production technologies in In order to achieve operational excellence and increase competitiveness (reduce production costs and sustainability in product quality), economic production capacity (Scale-Efficient Plants), strategic marketing and presence in international markets to develop non-oil exports, suitable transportation infrastructure With the priority of sea and rail transportation, diversification of the product portfolio by increasing the share of production of higher value-added products, sustainable supply of energy and water and compliance with environmental standards, suitable business environment and international trade protection laws are other successes of Khuzestan Steel Complex.

Mohammad Mehdi Momenzadeh, chairman of the annual general assembly of Khuzestan Steel, described the company's approach as creating value for stakeholders, rather than shareholders. He added: The stakeholders of Khuzestan complex are shareholders, employees and their families, society and the environment. In Khuzestan Steel, the managers and the codified system are the two wings of Khuzestan Steel Company to fly towards success. He added: In Khuzestan Steel Complex, elite specialists are working who set pride records in the spring of 2020. This goal was achieved with the efforts of Khuzestan Steel managers and employees. The selection of Khuzestan Steel Company as a model exporter in the conditions of sanctions, shows the overcoming of sanctions and difficult economic conditions. Momenzadeh

said about the situation of Khuzestan Steel Group in the country's capital market: in the days when the stock market has been highly considered by the society, the share of Khuzestan Steel is analyzed by market activists. This share is referred to as a low risk share. Since last year, 4,000 stock exchange activists have been added to the shareholders. Most of them are legal entities. Certainly, the growth of Khuzestan Steel's share will continue in the future. The establishment of a pelletizing plant with a capacity of 2.5 million tons of Simidco Company and the continuous activity of its subsidiaries will strengthen the foundation of Khuzestan Steel Company. The Chairman of the Annual General Assembly of Khuzestan Steel stated: Khuzestan Steel Company is a leader in the discussion of social responsibilities in the country. Social responsibility is not just a good deed, but a strategic action that is pursued in the world's largest companies. Considering the positive performance of Khuzestan Steel in this field, it is expected that this trend will continue continuously and a comprehensive report in this regard will be presented in the General Assembly next year. Following the meeting, the Secretary of the General Assembly explained to the shareholders by reading the auditor's report on the financial statements. Our correspondent's report states that the General Assembly, from the net profit of the main company of the current year in the amount of 871/395/331 million Rials, determined that the amount of 10,095/809/410,000 Rials (530 Rials per share) Within the prescribed period, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 239 and 240 of the Trade Law Amendment Bill approved in 1347, it shall be paid to the shareholders. Also, the amount of 5000 million Rials (gross) should be paid as a remuneration of the board of directors to the legal entities of the board of directors.

In the end, Ali Mohammadi, CEO of Khuzestan Steel, while thanking the shareholders and members of the board of directors, stated: The increasing success of the Khuzestan Steel Group is due to the policy-making of the managers and the unremitting efforts of the employees. Production of new products and diversification of the product portfolio, use of new technologies for sustainable production and promotion of product competitiveness, total resource efficiency, implementation of development plans and balancing of capacities, completion of production chain and presence in upstream industries (concentrate production) Iron ore) and downstream (production of climbing products), localization and technology development are the most important development programs of this company.

Afghan President Signs Off On Taliban Prisoner Release

KABUL (Reuters) - Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Monday signed a decree to release a final batch of “hardcore” Taliban prisoners demanded by the militants, sources told Reuters, paving the way for long-awaited peace talks to begin in Qatar.

“It is signed,” a presidential palace source said.

Afghanistan’s grand assembly, or Loya Jirga, on Sunday approved the release, under election-year pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump for a deal allowing him to bring home American troops.

The war has ground on since U.S.-backed Afghan forces ousted the Islamist Taliban government in late 2001.



China Sanctions 11 Americans In Retaliation for U.S. Move

BEIJING (AFP) - China on Monday sanctioned 11 Americans, including senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, in retaliation for similar US moves prompted by Beijing’s crackdown in Hong Kong.

Washington last week accused 11 officials of suppressing “freedom and democratic processes” in Hong Kong, including city leader Carrie Lam, and announced plans to freeze their US assets.

It was the toughest US action yet in response to Beijing’s introduction of a sweeping and controversial new national security law for the territory.

Beijing said the measure was a violation of international law and “grossly interferes in China’s internal affairs”.



Lebanon Gov’t Resigns Amid Outrage Over Beirut Blast



BEIRUT (Reuters) - Lebanon’s prime minister announced his government’s resignation on Monday, saying a huge explosion that devastated the capital and stirred public outrage was the result of endemic corruption.

The Aug. 4 detonation at a port warehouse of more than 2,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate killed at least 163 people, injured more than 6,000 and destroyed swathes of the Mediterranean capital, compounding months of political and economic meltdown. In a televised address, Prime Minister Hassan Diab said he backed calls by ordinary Lebanese for those responsible for “this crime” to be put on trial.

Diab made the announcement after the cabinet, formed in January with the backing of the powerful Iranian-backed Hezbollah group and its allies, met on Monday, with many ministers wanting to resign, according to ministerial and political sources. Diab said on Saturday he would request early parliamentary elections. Demonstrations broke out again in central Beirut, with some protesters hurling rocks at security forces guarding an entrance leading to the parliament building, who responded with tear gas. “The entire regime needs to change. It will make no difference if there is a new government,” Joe Haddad, a Beirut engineer, told Reuters.

“We need quick elections.” For many ordinary Lebanese, the explosion was the last straw in a protracted crisis over the collapse of the economy, corruption, waste and dysfunctional governance, and they have taken to the streets demanding root-and-branch change.

The information and environment ministers quit on Sunday as well as several lawmakers, and the justice minister followed them out the door on Monday. Finance Minister Ghazi Wazni, a key negotiator with the IMF over a rescue plan to help Lebanon exit a financial crisis, was set to resign, a source close to him said.

Lebanon’s president had previously said explosive material was stored unsafely for years at the port. He later said the investigation would consider whether the cause was external interference as well as negligence or an accident. The Lebanese army said on Monday that another five bodies were pulled from the rubble, raising the death toll to 163. Search and rescue operations continued.

The cabinet decided to refer the investigation of the blast to the judicial council, the highest legal authority whose rulings cannot be appealed, a ministerial source and state news agency NNA said. The council usually handles top security cases.

Anti-government protests in the past two days have been the biggest since October, when angry demonstrations spread over an economic crisis rooted in pervasive graft, mismanagement and high-level unaccountability. An international donor conference on Sunday raised pledges worth nearly 253 million euros (\$298 million) for immediate humanitarian relief, but foreign countries are demanding transparency over how the aid is used.

Bloody Clashes Continue In Belarus After Election



MINSK (Reuters) - At least one person died as Belarusian police clashed with protesters on Monday after the opposition accused President Alexander Lukashenko of rigging his re-election victory amid a chorus of criticism from Western leaders.

Helmeted police fired tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades and used batons to disperse thousands of people in Minsk in a second night of violence. Protesters set up barricades in several areas and threw Molotov cocktails.

One man died while trying to throw an unidentified explosive device at police that blew up in his hands, the government said. Local media reported clashes breaking out in other towns.

In power for more than a quarter of a century, Lukashenko claimed a landslide win against Svetlana Tikhonouskaya, a former English teacher who emerged from obscurity to lead the biggest challenge to his rule in years. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the vote was “not free and fair” and condemned “ongoing violence against protesters and the detention of opposition supporters.”

Events are being closely watched by Russia, whose oil exports run through Belarus to the West and which has long regarded the country as a buffer zone against NATO. They are also being monitored by the West, which has

tried to lure Minsk from Moscow’s orbit.

Germany called for the European Union to discuss sanctions on Belarus that were lifted in 2016 to foster better relations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin used a congratulatory telegram to nudge Lukashenko to accept deeper ties between the two nations, which the Belarusian leader has previously rejected as an assault on his country’s independence.

Foreign observers have not judged an election to be free and fair in Belarus since 1995, and the run-up to the vote saw authorities jail Lukashenko’s rivals and open criminal investigations of others who voiced opposition.

Tikhonouskaya’s campaign rallies drew some of the biggest crowds since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Her team were unable to reach her by phone after she left the election commission building on Monday. Earlier she told reporters she considered herself the election winner.

Trump Escorted From Briefing After Shooting Near White House

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Secret Service abruptly escorted President Donald Trump out of the White House press room in the middle of a briefing on Monday because of a shooting outside the White House.

Trump returned to the media room several minutes later and said a person had been shot by law enforcement and taken to the hospital. He said he understood the suspect had been armed.

“It was a shooting outside of the White House,” Trump said. “It seems to be very well under control. ... But there was an actual shooting, and somebody has been taken to the hospital. I don’t know the condition of the person.”

He said the shooting was near the fence at the edge of the White House grounds.

The Secret Service said in a tweet “the investigation into a USSS officer involved shooting is ongoing. A male subject and a USSS officer were both transported to a local hospital. At no time during this incident was the White House complex breached or were any protectees in danger.”

The doors to the White House briefing room were locked shortly before Trump was escorted out.

Nobody else was wounded in the shooting, Trump said. He praised the Secret Service response and said the agency would have more details on the event later.

“There were no details - we just found out just now,” Trump told reporters.

The president had been speaking about the stock market when a Secret Service agent interrupted him at the podium only minutes into the briefing.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Office of Management and Budget Director Russ Vought were also taken out of the room. Trump told reporters he had been taken to the Oval Office, which is in the West Wing near the briefing room, after he was escorted out.

Bolivia Protests Rattle Political Truce as Military Mobilized

LA PAZ (Reuters) - Bolivia’s government said on Monday it had ordered police and military to protect key installations and the transport of medical oxygen after clashes broke out over protests and roadblocks by opposition supporters demanding a quick election.

Tensions are brewing as the South American nation heads for a key presidential election on Oct. 18, which has been delayed due to COVID-19. Supporters of unseated former leftist leader Evo Morales are demanding the vote be held on Sept. 6.

The standoff threatens to convulse the landlocked country and revive memories of last year’s deadly clashes following a disputed election that led to the resignation of Morales, dozens of people being killed and buildings being set on fire.

The election is being fought between Morales’ Movement for Socialism (MAS) party and a fragmented conservative opposition, including interim President Jeanine Anez, who took over in a power vacuum last year promising swift new election.

“It is important to put an end to these mobilizations,” Presidency Minister Yerko Núñez said, blaming “radical” groups allied with MAS who “seek death among Bolivians”

“From today, the Armed Forces and the police will fulfill the mission of safeguarding public institutions ..., safeguarding the provision of oxygen, medical supplies, medicines and health personnel.”

Morales, currently in Argentina, has criticized the interim government, which he accuses of leading a coup, and encouraged mobilizations to protest against the election delay. The protesters, mostly in rural areas, have blocked access to some main cities using stones, rubble and earth.

The Ombudsman’s Office recorded at least three gunshot wounds after clashes during the unblocking of a road in eastern Bolivia, while the health ministry has recorded over 30 deaths due to lack of oxygen as of last week.

Josep Borrell, EU High Representative, urged “political dialogue” to ensure peace was maintained and said tensions were hitting Bolivians already “impacted by the coronavirus pandemic with an already collapsed healthcare system.”

Defense Minister Fernando López told reporters that violence needed to be avoided. “We do not want more deaths. COVID-19 is already taking too many,” he said.



Thai Pro-Democracy Rally Attracts Thousands



BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thousands of people from all walks of Thai society came out in force Monday to an anti-government protest, the largest ever show of dissent targeting premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha’s administration after weeks of rallies.

Waving rainbow flags, acerbic signs and posters of missing pro-democracy activists, the demonstrators descended in waves to Thammasat University in the outer edges of Bangkok as the sun set.

The robust attendance comes after weeks of near-daily student-led protests denouncing Prayut’s military-aligned administration.

Over the weekend, two activists were arrested under charges of sedition -- and then released on bail -- for their alleged role in a massive July 18 rally.

Organisers on Monday reiterated demands for a rewrite to a 2017 constitution, the parliament’s dissolution, and called for the government to “stop threatening the people”. The protest drew a diverse crowd from the LGBTQI community, young high schoolers and elderly pro-democracy supporters.

“Us seniors must support the students,” said a 70-year-old woman who declined to be named. “We must fight for our sons, daughters, nephews and nieces.”

The kingdom has long been locked in a cycle of violent street protests and coups by a putsch-happy army.

Demonstrators regard former army chief Prayut, who led the 2014 coup, as a remnant of Thailand’s junta legacy as his premiership was ushered in under a military-scripted charter in last year’s poll.

The pandemic has seized up Thailand’s economy, leaving millions jobless and angry at the inequalities of a society perceived to favour the kingdom’s elite establishment. “No more fake democracy,” read a sign at the demonstration, which drew around 4,000 by nightfall, according to an AFP estimate.

“This is the right time to send our voices to the government to let them know that we’ve had enough,” said one university student, declining to be named.

Prayut has vowed to hold public forums with young people.

Shanon
(adviser)

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5bdrs, S/p
S, Jacuzzi
L.balcony
Fully Furn

Parsian

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S/pool, S, J, gym
balcony, yard, F.F

Kamranieh (\$2600)
300sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, & F.F

Zafar bldg (\$6000)
4storey, 12bdrs
yard, L.balcony
enough pkg lots

Elahieh Apts
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Germany Welcomes S. Korea's Participation in G7 Summit

BERLIN (Yonhap) -- Germany welcomes South Korea's participation in an upcoming Group of Seven summit, but opposes letting Russia back into the forum, Berlin's top diplomat said Monday.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas made the comment after talks with his South Korean counterpart, Kang Kyung-wha, in the German capital.

"We very much welcome South Korea's participation in the G7 summit," he said during a joint press conference at the Berlin Wall Memorial, calling South Korea an "important" country in the world.

But Maas made clear that Germany is against expanding the group if it involves accepting Russia back in.



China's Inflation Rises in July, Propelled by Food Prices

BEIJING (Xinhua) -- China's consumer inflation accelerated for the second straight month in July on the back of higher food prices, official data showed Monday.

Consumer price index (CPI), the main gauge of inflation, grew 2.7 percent year on year last month, expanding from a 2.5-percent gain in June and a 2.4-percent rise in May, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

On a monthly basis, consumer prices went up 0.6 percent. Meanwhile, food prices, which account for nearly one-third of the weighting in China's CPI, edged up 2.8 percent last month.

In breakdown, pork prices climbed 10.3 percent from June due to tight supplies and increasing demand from the recovering catering industry.

Prices of vegetables rose 6.3 percent from June as unfavorable weather conditions disrupted supplies and transport.

Compared with the same period last year, food prices remained the main driving force of consumer inflation in July, rising 13.2 percent year on year and contributing 2.68 percentage points to the CPI growth.

Excluding food and energy, the core CPI rose 0.5 percent year on year, down from 0.9 percent in June, according to Dong Lijuan, a senior statistician with the NBS.

The overall inflation is under control as the core CPI hit a record low, said Wen bin, chief analyst at China Minsheng Bank.

In the first seven months of this year, CPI rose 3.7 percent year on year.

Monday's data showed China's producer price index, which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, fell 2.4 percent year on year in July.

The reading narrowed from the 3-percent drop in June and 3.7-percent fall in May.

On a monthly basis, overall producer prices gained 0.4 percent as industrial production continued to pick up and market demand gradually warmed, Dong said, adding that rising prices of international commodities also played a role.

Due to rebounding global crude oil prices, prices in the sectors of oil and natural gas extraction surged 12 percent last month from June, while those for the processing of oil, coal and other fuel went up 3.4 percent.

During the January-July period, factory-gate prices were down 2 percent on average compared with the same period last year.

Pakistan' Economy Witnessing V Shaped Recovery

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) -- Pakistan's Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar said that Moody's reconfirmation of Pakistan's credit rating with a stable outlook reflected that Pakistan's economy was witnessing a 'V' shaped recovery amid COVID-19 pandemic.

In the middle of a global pandemic it was a testimony to the 'V' shaped recovery, Pakistan had seen, Umar said in his tweet. He said the economic recovery could become possible due to prime minister Imran Khan's balanced approach to safeguarding national health and livelihoods, delivering success on both counts.

Meanwhile the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has enhanced the limits for housing finance and microenterprise loans up to Rs3 million from the existing limit of Rs1 million for borrowings from the microfinance banks.

Likewise, the maximum size of general loans has been enhanced from Rs150,000 to Rs350,000.

Further, to commensurate with enhanced loan sizes, annual income eligibility for general loans and housing loans has been increased up to Rs1.2 million and Rs1.5 million, respectively. Moreover, the limit for lending against gold collateral to meet borrowers' immediate domestic or emergency needs has also been enhanced.

The decision to increase the limit of housing finance loans has been made in view of the fact that the existing loan limit was insufficient to promote low cost housing finance through MFBs.



Similarly, limits for lending to micro enterprises needed to be enhanced considering the large unmet demand from Micro and Small Enterprise (MSEs). These initiatives would further support the micro borrowers and enterprises and an early revival of economic activities in the current challenging times.

However, in order to ensure sustainability, the enhanced loans sizes for housing and microenterprises would be allowed to those MFBs which are on sound footing and have the capacity to successfully cater the higher loan sizes.

In addition, SBP Relief Package for microfinance banks, which included deferment of principal and restructuring of microfinance loans to deal with the adverse implications of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, have now been expanded with three measures.

S. Korea Tipped to Rank 9th in 2020 Global GDP Rankings

SEOUL (Yonhap) -- South Korea's position in global gross domestic product (GDP) rankings is expected to rise three notches to ninth in 2020 despite a virus-caused economic contraction, a report showed Monday.

According to the report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD), Asia's fourth-largest economy is forecast to see its nominal GDP to decline 1.8 percent on-year to about US\$1.54 trillion this year.

The amount would be the ninth-largest among 37 OECD members and nine non-member countries for which the Paris-based club has put forward growth outlooks.

GDP, the broadest measure of an economy's performance, refers to the total value of goods and services produced within the economy in a given period.

South Korea is expected to leapfrog Brazil, Canada and Russia -- which ranked ninth, 10th and 11th last year, respectively -- as those economies are feared to be hit harder by the coronavirus pandemic.

Canada is projected to suffer an economic contraction of 7.5 percent this year, with the Russian economy forecast to shrink 14.1 percent. Brazil's nominal GDP is predicted to drop 3.9 percent.

Despite a 5.7 percent decline in nominal GDP, the United States is forecast to top the global GDP list with \$20.20 trillion this year. China is likely to come next with \$13.83 trillion, followed by Japan with \$4.85 trillion, Germany with \$3.56 trillion, India with \$2.72 trillion, Britain with \$2.45 trillion, France with \$2.38 trillion and Italy with \$1.73 trillion, according to the report.

The coronavirus outbreak, which started in China in December, has pounded economies across the world due to lockdowns, which have sent consumption and trade tumbling. The coronavirus has infected nearly 20 million people globally, with the death toll nearing 730,000.



Euro Zone Investor Morale Improves in August

BERLIN (Reuters) - Investor morale in the euro zone rose for a fourth consecutive month in August but the low reading suggests that

the coronavirus-hit economy is still in recession in the third quarter, a survey showed on Monday.

Sentix's index for the euro zone improved to -13.4 from -18.2 in July. That was its highest reading since pre-lockdown times in February and compared with the Reuters consensus forecast for a reading of -15.1.

The current situation index rose to -41.3 from -49.5 in July, its highest reading since March.

"There is still no rejoicing in absolute terms," said Sentix Managing Director Patrick Hussy. "The process of economic recovery is proving sluggish."

The expectations index for the bloc was almost unchanged, dipping to 19.3 from 19.5 in the previous month.

"It is remarkable in this context that a second wave of corona infections does not leave a new fear reflex in the economic indicators," Hussy said, after Germany has seen a rise in new coronavirus cases in recent weeks.

Sentiment in Germany picked up for a fourth straight month, with investors feeling more upbeat about both the current situation and the future. Sentix suggested this may be linked to a surge in industrial orders in June.

Sentix surveyed 1,078 investors from August 6 to 8.

Turkey's Unemployment Rate Inches Up to 12.9% in May

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Unemployment in Turkey edged up slightly to 12.9% in May, the country's statistical authority announced Monday.

The figure was up 0.1 percentage points from the same month last year, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) said.

Turkey's labor participation rate dropped to 47.6% in the April-June period due to the lockdowns brought about by the coronavirus. Labor force participation fell from 52.9% a year ago but rose from 47.2% a month earlier.

The impact of the pandemic was also evident in employment, which dropped 2.4 million year-on-year in the period to 25.9 million. The employment rate fell 4.7 percentage points to 41.4%.

The unemployment rate was 12.8% both a month earlier and in April-June 2019. The non-agricultural unemployment rate rose to 15.2% from 15% a year earlier, according to TurkStat. In April, the government imposed a three-month ban on layoffs to mitigate the pandemic's impact.

The Turkish Parliament last month approved a law allowing President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to extend the layoff ban until July 2021. With the new law, Erdoğan will be allowed to extend the ban by three months each time until June 30, 2021.

The previously passed bill aimed at creating a legal basis for banning layoffs to protect those lacking job security while mitigating the outbreak's effects on the economy.

Erdoğan will have the authority to decide for each sector whether to extend the short-term employment allowance benefit, a system that provides additional wages to employees whose hours are cut short.

Under the allowance, the government has paid 60% of staff salaries for a period of three months. The allowance was recently extended to the end of August.

The labor force participation rate among youths, those ages 15-24, dropped to 35.4% in the April-June period from 43.6% a year earlier, with the unemployment rate rising to 24.9% from 23.3%, the data showed.

The rate of young people who were neither employed nor in school reached 29.1%, up 5.1 percentage points from last year's May rate of 24%.

The number of women participating in the workforce dropped by 5.1 percentage points from last year to 33.7%.

Meanwhile, the total number of people employed in the public sector was 4.8 million, with a 4.3% percentage point increase in the second quarter compared with the same period last year.

Under its economic program, the Turkish government targets an unemployment rate for this year of 11.8%. The program projects a gradual unemployment drop to 9.8% in 2022.

French Economic Activity Runs 7% Below Normal Level in July



PARIS (Reuters) - Economic activity in France ran at 7% below normal levels in July, a slight improvement on June, as the construction sector neared pre-coronavirus crisis levels of activity and industrial capacity usage nudged higher, the Bank of France said.

In its monthly update on business conditions, the central bank said on Monday the euro zone's second biggest economy contracted 13.8%, in line with its forecast.

"The rebound continued in July, at a more moderate rhythm, in line with the trajectory anticipated last month," the bank said.

In June, economic activity was 9% below normal levels, up from the 32% reduction seen during the first two weeks of lockdown in March.

The positive trend continued just as France and other European governments took new measures to curb a renewed rise in infection rates, desperate to avoid a return to the lockdowns that battered economies globally.

In the manufacturing industry, capacity utilisation in July rose 3 points to 72%.

Manufacturing and service sector activity would be stable in August, the bank projected.

Tehran-Madrid Flights To Resume in September

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian embassy in Spain announced that Iran air will resume flights between Tehran and Madrid in September.

The airline will operate its first flight along the Tehran-Madrid route in September after a five-month hiatus, Iranian embassy in Spain announced on Monday, saying that the license of airline's normal and weekly flights on the Tehran-Madrid-Tehran route have been issued by the Spanish aviation authorities. Flights between Iran and Spain were suspended about five months ago from the closure of borders due to the coronavirus outbreak.



German Firms Expect Restrictions to Public Life

BERLIN (Dispatches) - An Ifo survey has found that some German firms anticipate a year more of restrictions as Europe's biggest economy fights to recover from a pandemic-induced downturn. The leisure sector is the most pessimistic.

The German economy expects public life to be restricted for another 8.5 months due to the coronavirus pandemic, a survey by the Munich-based Ifo economic institute showed on Monday.

Firms in the leisure industry, hit hard by the coronavirus crisis, particularly feel pessimistic, with companies expecting 13 more months of restrictions. Those in the arts, cultural and gastronomy sector expect another 11 months.

The beverage sector is the most optimistic, foreseeing an end to restrictions in 6.4 months.

Service providers in Germany expect restrictions to last another 8.9 months. People working in teaching and child care expect 10 months more of restrictions.

Accommodation businesses such as hotels and hostels anticipate a further 9.3 months, and postal services expect an average of 6.6 months longer on public life restrictions.

Those working in trade expect a further 8.6 months of coronavirus restrictions. Construction firms foresee another 8.2 months and industry anticipates another 7.8 months of restrictions.

In Germany's manufacturing industry, leather producers expect the longest restrictions with 11.2 months, while textile manufacturers expect 9 more months. Retail businesses expect 8.8 months of restrictions and wholesale businesses expect 8.4 months. Chemical firms, meanwhile, project another 8.2 months and mechanical engineering firms 7.9 months.



In the first six months, 59 percent fewer tourists came to Berlin than in the previous year. The Statistics Office said on Monday (Aug.10) 2.7 million guests visited Berlin. The last time such a low number was recorded was in 2004. The slump was even worse for foreign tourists: two thirds stayed away. Since June, the figures have been recovering and are at 30 to 40 percent of the previous year.

Around 8,500 firms took part in the survey. Two-thirds of them had applied for some form of government assistance during the pandemic. However, 40% of the companies polled still reported a drop in turnover of at least 30%.

Jet Fuel Demand Still Has a Long Way To Recovery



LONDON (Dispatches) - Jet fuel demand for commercial flights crashed during the worldwide lockdowns in April, and although some of the demand has returned, jet fuel consumption in July was still nearly 70 percent down compared to the same month of 2019, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said.

Aviation fuel is the worst-hit fuel in the COVID-19 crisis and faces the most prolonged period of recovery compared to other fuels such as gasoline or diesel.

A very slow recovery in jet fuel demand will drag on global oil demand for at least another two years as overall passenger traffic numbers continue to be low and mandatory quarantines continue to stop people from traveling on international flights. Demand for gasoline has picked up from the lows in April when most of the world was under lockdown, but demand for jet fuel continues to languish and is expected to grow only marginally next year from a very low base in 2020, analysts and international agencies say.

According to EIA estimates, using data from aviation company Cirium, global demand for jet fuel for commercial passenger flights crashed from an average of 4.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in January and February to 1.0 million bpd in April. From May onwards, jet fuel demand started to slowly creep up, but at a much slower pace than gasoline demand for road transportation, for example.

By the first two weeks of July, the consumption of jet fuel by commercial passenger flights had increased to an average of 1.6 million bpd, up from the 1-million-bpd low in April. Still, the July 2020 demand was 69 percent less than the consumption of jet fuel for commercial flights in July 2019, according to EIA estimates.

Although jet fuel demand has increased in nearly every major market from the low points in April and May, the recovery has not been equal, the administration noted. While demand in China was down 43 percent year on year in June, consumption was down significantly more in other markets, including down 75 percent in the U.S., down 80 percent in the rest of Asia-Pacific, and down 87 percent in Europe.

Dwarf Planet Ceres Is an Ocean World

PARIS (AFP) - The dwarf planet Ceres -- long believed to be a barren space rock -- is an ocean world with reservoirs of sea water beneath its surface, the results of a major exploration mission showed Monday.

Ceres is the largest object in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter and has its own gravity, enabling the NASA Dawn spacecraft to capture high-resolution images of its surface.

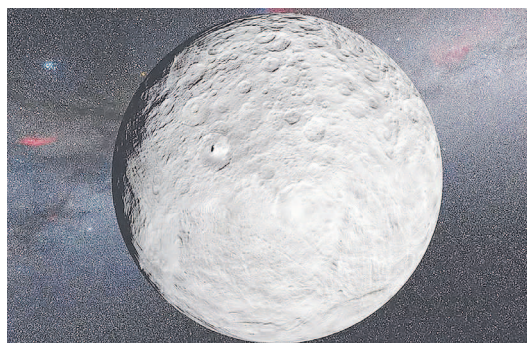
Now a team of scientists from the United States and Europe have analysed images relayed from the orbiter, captured around 35 kilometres (22 miles) from the asteroid.

They focused on the 20-million-year-old Occator crater and determined that there is an "extensive reservoir" of brine beneath its surface.

Several studies published Monday in the journals Nature Astronomy, Nature Geoscience and Nature Communications also shed further light on the dwarf planet, which was discovered by Italian polymath Giuseppe Piazzi in 1801.

Using infrared imaging, one team discovered the presence of the compound hydrohalite -- a material common in sea ice but which until now had never been observed off of Earth.

Maria Cristina De Sanctis, from Rome's Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica said hydrohalite was a clear sign Ceres' used to have sea water.



"We can now say that Ceres is a sort of ocean world, as are some of Saturn's and Jupiter's moons," she told AFP.

The team said the salt deposits looked like they had built up within the last two million years -- the blink of an eye in space time.

This suggests that the brine may still be ascending from the planet's interior, something De Sanctis said could have

profound implications in future studies.

"The material found on Ceres is extremely important in terms of astrobiology," she said. "We know that these minerals are all essential for the emergence of life."

Writing in an accompanying comment article, Julie Castillo-Rogez, from the California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said the discovery of hydrohalite was a "smoking gun" for ongoing water activity.

"That material is unstable on Ceres' surface, and hence must have been emplaced very recently," she said.

In a separate paper, U.S.-based researchers analysed images of the Occator crater and found that its mounds and hills may have formed when water ejected by the impact of a meteor froze on the surface.

The authors said their findings showed that such water freezing processes "extend beyond Earth and Mars, and have been active on Ceres in the geologically recent past".

Italian Cruise Ships to Sail Again in High-Stakes Gamble

ROME (AFP) - Italy's cruise industry is preparing to sail again in Mediterranean waters, hoping to help jumpstart the country's economy while restoring the reputation of the beleaguered global sector.

MSC Cruises, a privately owned company based in Geneva, will resume operations with two departures from Italy this month, it said at the weekend.

It becomes the first global operator to announce cruises for the lucrative Mediterranean market after the coronavirus pandemic froze cruises throughout the world.

The MSC Grandiosa and MSC Magnifica are to set sail on August 16 and 29 from Genoa and Bari, respectively, to sites in Italy, Malta and Greece in a high-stakes gamble for the industry that Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has called a "fundamental part of our economy".

Italy's 14.5 billion euro (\$17 billion) cruise industry -- Europe's largest -- is a key economic driver that supports nearly 53,000 jobs, according to the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

A Europe-wide suspension of cruises through August could result in a total economic loss of about 25.5 billion euros, CLIA has calculated.

Italy approved the restart of its cruise industry from August 15 as part of efforts to revive a moribund economy devastated by a more than two-month quarantine, with cruise operations suspended in March.

"After months of lockdown... people obviously want to return to travelling, visiting places," MSC spokesman Michele Curatolo told AFP on Monday.

The Costa Crociere Group, MSC's giant rival owned by Carnival, has yet to confirm whether it will go ahead with cruises for August 15 and 16 advertised on its website.

The industry's reputation suffered a hit with dozens of deaths and thousands of infections aboard cruise ships.

Global health authorities criticised its slow response to the spread of the virus, from lax monitoring of crew, to continued operation of self-service buffets and gyms, to lack of personal protective equipment.

At the start of the coronavirus pandemic, various cruise ships were stranded at sea around the world from Japan to California as nations, including Italy, blocked them from their ports.

As of June 11, 3,047 people were infected and 73 people died aboard 48 CLIA cruise ships, according to Johns Hopkins University data provided by CLIA.

November, the U.S...

FROM PAGE 1

Although his suggestion for postponing the November 3 election due to the pandemic was rejected by his Republican partisans and he has been forced to swallow his words, but it is unlikely that if Trump's defeat paves the ground for defeats of his Republican partisans in the Congress and Senate elections, they may change their minds and resort to such a policy and pretext that the condition is not good for holding election.

Most strategists in the think-tanks in the world and even in the U.S. believe that today the U.S. lacks a stable condition and this condition may lead to more unexpected crises. Even if the elections are postponed, the condition will not progress in Republicans' favor because the Speaker of the Congress will take the helm of administering the country, something which is not definitely to the benefit of the Republicans.

The Democrats have completely taken advantage of the bewilderment in the White House and in some states they have strengthened their positions by wooing the voters. Both Speaker of Congress Nancy Pelosi and Trump's rival Biden in their interviews have pointed to the inefficiency of Trump and his camp's policies in the White House and they have put Trump in more difficult condition.

After the news about resignation of U.S. Special Representative for Iran Mr. Brian Hook, this assumption has been strengthened in the U.S. media that Trump my blame Hook for failure of his policies regarding Iran, and his concern about Iran's strategic deal with China, resulted by his headline policies, may push him to stop his headline measures against Iran and soften his behavior.

The New York Times wrote, "The departure of Mr. Hook, 52, appears to bury any remaining chance of a diplomatic initiative with Iran before the end of Mr. Trump's term." According to this report, Elliot Abrams who is currently the U.S. special representative for Venezuela is to replace Hook.

These changes in the policies of the White House are more an indication to this point that the U.S. will lead to more instability in its policies day by day and this instability can loom uncertainty over the November 3 election.

PGCC...

FROM PAGE 1

Banning Iran from arms trade will lead to stability and security in the region, claimed Al-Hajraf without acknowledging that Saudi Arabia is one of the world's biggest arms purchasers, spending billions with the United States and the United Kingdom, in particular.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi vehemently condemned the anti-Iranian statement on Sunday night. Mousavi expressed regret at the unconstructive approach adopted by certain PGCC members vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Iran's COVID-19...

FROM PAGE 1

Minister of Health has said on Tuesday that through sufficient supervision over the observance of the health protocols, great and glorious Muharram rituals along with the observance of the health protocols will await Iranians.

Saeed Namaki said at the National Muharram Special Follow-up Task Force meeting: "One of the most important and fundamental historical supports in these days was the intelligent support and insight of the Leader of the revolution, and the permanence of this method will be judged in history."

Iran's senior health official said, "We are managing the sanctions in the most difficult days and we have to circumvent the sanctions to get medicine but thanks God no disease has wandered the pharmacies to get medicine."

Namaki said: "It is important for us to preserve the honor and dignity of the Islamic system and it is important that others cannot be mistaken that Ashura and Tasua caused the spread of coronavirus and some say that science does not rule the Iranian health system and the health system is run with emotions."

He said: "I have no doubt that we will have a passionate Muharram this year and our colleagues have been working in different shifts for six months."

"I have no doubt that the observance of the protocols will be carried out by the directors of the religious bodies and there will be sufficient supervision over the observance of the health protocols so that we have a great and glorious Muharram along with the observance of the health protocols."

South Pars Phase 22-24 Gas Recovery up 200 mcf

TEHRAN (Shana) - The head of the offshore section of South Pars 22-24 phases development project said 3 new wells had become operational in the project which added 200 mcf to the phases' gas output.

According to Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), Mehrdad Kazemi, referring to the operation of the SPD22 platform of South Pars Phases 22 to 24 in January 2019, said: "By observing safety requirements, hook-up activities and launching three wells in the SPD22 platform, the number of wells in the production operation of this platform increased."

Regarding the measures taken to fully exploit and complete the capacity of the South Pars SPD22 platform, he said with planning and round-the-clock efforts, all hook-up activities of casting, equalization and flowline of wellhead for three wells were completed within 10 days by relying on local forces.



Sancho to Stay Until 2023

BERLIN (Reuters) - Borussia Dortmund winger Jadon Sancho left with his team for a pre-season training camp in Switzerland on Monday with the German club saying the talented player would stay after a contract extension to 2023. Sancho has been the target of several top clubs with ongoing speculation of a possible transfer to the English Premier League. "We plan on having Jadon Sancho in our team this season, the decision is final. I think that answers all our questions," Dortmund sports director Michael Zorc told reporters in Switzerland.

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

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info@irannewsdaily.com
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Kubo Joins Villarreal on Loan

MADRID (Reuters) - Villarreal have signed Japanese playmaker Takefusa Kubo on loan from Real Madrid for next season, the La Liga club said on Monday. Kubo, 19, impressed last season in his debut campaign in the top-flight on loan at Real Mallorca although was unable to prevent the team from being relegated a year after winning promotion. The playmaker spent time at Barcelona's academy but was forced to leave the club due to FIFA's rules prohibiting the signing of underage players, which led to Barca being hit with a transfer ban.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12, 2020

Lillard Scores 51, Embiid Injured In Blazers' Win

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Damian Lillard poured in 51 points and added seven assists to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to a 124-121 victory over a Philadelphia 76ers' squad that lost Joel Embiid to injury near Orlando.

Carmelo Anthony recorded 20 points and seven rebounds as Portland (33-39) moved within a half-game of the eighth-place Memphis Grizzlies in the Western Conference race. The Trail Blazers are a half-game ahead of the San Antonio Spurs and one game in front of the Phoenix Suns for the play-in berth. Josh Richardson scored a season-best 34 points and matched a season high of six 3-pointers for the 76ers (42-28). Embiid exited with a left ankle injury with 6:18 left in the first quarter and had two points on 1-of-6 shooting and collected four rebounds.

Anthony moved into 15th place in NBA history with 26,411 career points. He passed Paul Pierce (26,397) and John Havlicek (26,395).

Houston Rockets 129 - Sacramento Kings 112

Austin Rivers scored 41 points off the bench, James Harden tallied 32 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, and Houston roared back from a sluggish start to top Sacramento.

The Rockets (44-25) improved to 4-1 in the restart while the Kings (29-41) were eliminated from playoff contention when the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Philadelphia 76ers earlier Sunday.

Houston played a second consecutive game without guard Russell Westbrook (right quad contusion), although Westbrook and guard Eric Gordon (left ankle sprain) are nearing a return. Rivers helped compensate for their absences with his career high scoring, including 19 points on 7-of-8 shooting prior to the intermission to help the Rockets erase an early 13-point deficit.

San Antonio Spurs 122 - New Orleans Pelicans 113

DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points and San Antonio kept its playoff hopes while helping to end those of New Orleans.

The Spurs (31-38) improved to 4-2 during the restart and stayed in the thick of the tight battle for the eighth and ninth positions in the Western Conference. The Pelicans (30-40) fell to 2-4 in the restart and, following Portland's win later in the day, were eliminated from the playoffs.

Toronto Raptors 108 - Memphis Grizzlies 99

Marc Gasol capped a key third-quarter run with a 3-pointer in his first game against his longtime employer and Toronto clinched the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference with a win over slumping Memphis.

Gasol was dealt from Memphis to Toronto last February and was a member of the Raptors'



championship team in 2019. He contributed 10 points and six rebounds in 22 minutes to lift the Raptors to a fourth win in five games since the restart.

Boston Celtics 122 - Orlando Magic 119 (OT)

Gordon Hayward scored 31 points and Jayson Tatum added 29 to lift Boston past Orlando in overtime. Jaylen Brown collected 19 points and 12 rebounds for the third-place Celtics (47-23), who saw their slim chances to secure the second seed in the Eastern Conference go by the boards earlier on Sunday when Toronto wrapped up the No. 2 seed with a win over Memphis.

Nikola Vucevic had 26 points and 11 rebounds and Terrence Ross added 18 points off the bench for the reeling Magic (32-39), who have dropped four in a row.

Oklahoma City Thunder 121 - Washington Wizards 103

Darius Bazley scored a career-high 23 points to lead Oklahoma City past Washington, pulling ahead of Utah for fifth in the Western Conference in the process.

For the second consecutive game, the Thunder jumped out to a big lead early. But unlike Friday's game against Memphis, where an 18-point first-quarter lead turned into a 29-point blowout loss, this time Oklahoma City was able to keep control to remain in the thick of the race for a top-four spot in the Western Conference.

Brooklyn Nets 129 - Los Angeles Clippers 120

Caris LeVert had 27 points and 13 assists, leading Brooklyn past Los Angeles despite Kawhi Leonard's 39 points.

Joe Harris scored 23 of his 25 points in the first half before fouling out late in the contest. Tyler Johnson scored 21 points, Garrett Temple added 19, and Jarrett Allen finished with 16 points and 16 rebounds for the Nets (34-36).

Willian Confirms Chelsea Exit After Seven Years



LONDON (Reuters) - Brazilian midfielder Willian has confirmed he will leave Chelsea after seven 'wonderful' years at Stamford Bridge.

The 32-year-old, linked with a move across town to Arsenal, posted a farewell letter to the club's fans on Twitter here

"The time has come to move on. I am certainly going to miss my team mates," he said. "I leave with my head held high, safe in the knowledge that I won things here and always did my best in a Chelsea shirt!"

Willian, who began his career with Corinthians in Sao Paulo, joined Chelsea from Anzhi Makhachkala in 2013 and made over 300 appearances for the club, winning two Premier League titles.

He was out of contract this summer and had failed to agree a new long-term deal with the club.

"In August 2013 when I received the offer from Chelsea, I was convinced that this was where I had to play," he said.

"Today I am certain that it was the best of decisions. There were so many happy times, some sad, there were trophies and it was always very intense."

Spanish midfielder Pedro also announced he was leaving the club on Sunday after five years.

Germany Bars Fans From Soccer Matches

BERLIN (Reuters) - The health ministers of Germany's federal and state governments have agreed to extend a ban for spectators in stadiums at Bundesliga soccer matches until at least the end of October due to the coronavirus pandemic, a source told Reuters on Monday.

The Bundesliga season restarted in mid-May after a suspension of more than two months, becoming the first European league to resume under strict rules to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

"We need to stay vigilant. In the current situation, spectators in the stadiums would be the wrong signal," Health Minister Jens Spahn said in a tweet.

Spahn pointed to a rising number of new coronavirus cases over the past few days and warned against taking any avoidable risks that could further increase the infection rate. Government officials have repeatedly urged Germans to stick with such precautionary measures as social distancing and the wearing of face masks, but the rising number of infections suggest some have become less careful during the summer months.

Tour de France to Embark From Brest in 2021

PARIS (Dispatches) - The 2021 Tour de France will start in the western French port of Brest, organisers said Monday, a week after Copenhagen pulled out of staging it.

Brittany will host four full stages and all the build-up to the 2021 Tour, the region's president Loig Chesnais-Girard announced.

"We have been talking with local authorities about this since 2018," Tour de France chief Christian Prudhomme told AFP.



"I think it was my best match of the week," the 23-year-old Ferro said after landing the second title of her career with a dominant display. "I was feeling relaxed... I don't know

Ferro Is the First Champion in Five Months

PALERMO (Reuters) - France's Fiona Ferro became the first WTA champion in five months on Sunday as she overpowered Anett Kontaveit 6-2 7-5 to win the Palermo Ladies Open, the first Tour event to be staged since the COVID-19 epidemic shut down the sport.

Ferro went 10 matches unbeaten in regional exhibition events after the Tour was suspended in March, and continued to gather further momentum with five more wins in Palermo this week as major tennis returned in the Sicilian capital.

"I think it was my best match of the week," the 23-year-old Ferro said after landing the second title of her career with a dominant display. "I was feeling relaxed... I don't know

why because it was a final! I wasn't really feeling pressure."

Several exhibition events have taken place globally since the sport was halted in early March due to the pandemic but the women's claycourt tournament in Palermo was the first across both the elite WTA and ATP tours in five months.

There were strict health protocols, including limited number of fans and no handshakes between players after the match.

Players and officials underwent COVID-19 tests every four days and one player who tested positive pulled out of the tournament last weekend.

"I had a good intensity throughout the whole match, I didn't miss a lot, made a lot of winners, so I'm really happy to have the trophy with me," said the Belgian-born Ferro.

She struck 51 winners and broke Kontaveit's serve five times in a clinical display as she clinched the title on her second match point.

The result ensures Ferro will make her world top-50 debut at number 44 when the latest WTA rankings are released on Monday.

Fernandes Penalty Lifts Man Utd Past Copenhagen



COLOGNE (AFP) - Bruno Fernandes scored a penalty in extra time as Manchester United scraped past FC Copenhagen 1-0 on Monday in the quarter-finals of the Europa League, reshaped into an eight-team straight knockout tournament in Germany due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Portugal international notched his competition-best seventh goal of the season as United set up a semi-final clash against Sevilla or Wolves, joining Inter Milan in the last four following the Italian side's 2-1 victory over Bayer Leverkusen in Dusseldorf.

All games from the quarter-finals onwards in this season's Europa League are being played behind closed doors as one-off ties across four venues -- Cologne, Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Gelsenkirchen -- in a unique format following a five-month interruption. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer recalled Fernandes, Paul Pogba, Marcus Rashford, Mason Greenwood and Anthony Martial after rotating his side for last week's second leg of their last-16 tie against Austrian club LASK Linz.

Bayern Munich Turn Up Heat Against Barcelona



BERLIN (AFP) - Hansi Flick says treble-chasing Bayern Munich must adapt quickly to the heat in Portugal as they fine-tune preparations for Friday's Champions League quarter-final against Barcelona with Jerome Boateng and Kingsley Coman fit again.

Flick oversaw training on Monday in temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius at Bayern's training camp in Lagos in south-west Portugal.

Both centre-back Boateng, who picked up a leg injury in Saturday's last 16 return leg against Chelsea, and winger Coman, who missed the 4-1 victory with a knock, trained on Monday and are in the frame to face Barca.

"It's very important that we get used to the temperatures," said Flick, although cooler temperatures are forecast for Friday's tie in Lisbon.

Bayern underlined their status as one of the favourites to lift the Champions League trophy on August 23 as Robert Lewandowski scored twice and set up two more goals in the rout of Chelsea.