

**Deputy Foreign Minister for
Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi
Arrived in Vienna on Monday to
Participate in the Joint Commission
Meeting of Iran Nuclear Deal to Be
Held on Tuesday**

IRAN NEWS

**Health Ministry Spokeswoman
Sima Sadat Lari Said on Monday
That Some 109 More Iranians Have
Died From Coronavirus Disease
Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing
The Total Deaths to 21,571**

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Leader: Iran Owes Security to Air Defense Preparedness

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei commended the Iranian Air Defense forces for their contribution to national security.

Head of the military office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Brigadier General Mohammad Shirazi, had a telephone conversation with Commander of Iran's Air Defense Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi Fard on Monday to relay a message from Ayatollah Khamenei.

"Send my regards to the vigilant personnel of the country's Air Defense. The country owes its security to Air Defense's preparedness and wakefulness. Our pious people are grateful for your unwavering efforts. Be appreciative of this," the Leader told the Air Defense units in the message, passed on by General Shirazi.

In remarks in September 2017, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the leading role that the Air Defense plays in safeguarding Iran, calling for efforts to unleash the potential of the country's young talents and develop innovative plans in this field.

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Zarif Raps U.S. Resort To 'Law of Jungle'

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has lashed out at the US administration's resort to the "law of jungle" both at the national and international level.

"All options on the table" has long been a staple of US foreign policy," Zarif tweeted on Sunday night. "It simply means the law of the jungle: disregard for a fundamental principle of int'l law: Non-Use of Force," he added.

"Now, the Trump regime is using the same threat against Americans. A wake-up call? God willing." He made the remarks in reaction to statements by acting US Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf who told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday that "all options continue to be on the table" to end violent protests in Portland, Oregon, including sending in federal law enforcement assistance. Zarif's tweet also contains an innuendo to the fact that American officials have frequently used the sentence in an implicit threat of military force against Iran.

Portland has been the scene of angry protests against police injustice and racial discrimination since May, when George Floyd, a black American, was killed by a white police officer in Minnesota. Tensions in the city intensified in July after the Trump administration deployed federal agents to crack down on the protests.

Nature of "Islamic Republic" Is "Anti-Corruption"



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Judiciary Chief Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi says the nature of Islamic ruling and the Islamic Republic of Iran is clean and anti-corruption and wherever it finds corruption, it will combat it and no organ and official can accept existence of corruption in the society and administrative system.

Speaking during a session of the Judiciary's Supreme Council, Hojjatoleslam Raeisi called for transparency in all sectors especially in the economic sector and called for implementing e-government and launching mechanism for implementation of justice and serious combat with discrimination.

He reiterated that combat and trial are parts of making the administrative system healthy but before anything, the grounds which are source of corruption should be corrected preventive grounds should be set..

Hojjatoleslam Raeisi reiterated that the Islamic Republic and Islamic ruling is innately against corruption and it combats with corruption.

He reiterated that all organs are duty-bound to combat corruption and the Judiciary's task is to supervise and eradicate grounds for corruption and to confront corrupts through fair judgement.

He further said enemies resort to distortion in order to paint a negative picture of the Islamic Republic in order to set up corrupted governments. He once again reiterated that all should stand against distortions and not trust the enemies.

He also said that his body considers the case of Lieutenant General Soleimani's assassination as a priority to deal with. "Pursuing the assassination of Martyr Soleimani is high on the Judiciary's agenda," Raeisi said.

He stressed that the cowardly move by the U.S. will not be left unanswered, adding, "General Soleimani's martyrdom will make the nations in the region more aware" of the U.S. crimes.

He emphasized that the U.S. is terrorist and supports terrorists, too.

At the direct order of U.S. President Donald Trump, American terrorist forces launched airstrikes at Baghdad airport on Jan. 3, assassinating Lieutenant General Soleimani and deputy PMU Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and their comrades. Iran vehemently condemned the attack, vowing to take harsh revenge, part of which came five days later by a missile strike at U.S.' al-Asad airbase in Iraq.

Iran's Natural Gas Exports to Turkey Drop to Zero

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The Turkish Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EMRA) reports that in the second quarter of 2020, the country did not receive any natural gas from Iran.

At the end of March, the separatist left-leaning Kurdish party, PKK, blew up the Iran-Turkey natural gas pipeline, but unlike previous cases Ankara delayed repairing the pipeline for three months. Therefore, it did not receive gas from its eastern neighbor.

Turkey used to repair the damaged gas pipeline within a week in similar cases in the past. This time, however, it took until early July for Iranian gas to flow into Turkey again.

Data provided by the EMRA show that in the first half of this year, the country received only two billion cubic meters of gas from Iran, which indicates a 46% decrease compared with the same period last year. According to a Tehran-Ankara agreement, Turkey must buy ten billion cubic meters of gas a year from Iran.

A report by the Turkish Statistics Center also shows that the country's total imports from Iran in the first six months of the year were \$468 million, an eight-fold drop compared with about \$3.7 billion in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, Turkey's exports to Iran also fell by 40% to \$ 843 million.

Statistics from the EMRA show that the country also reduced gas imports from Russia by 43% to 4.6 billion cubic meters (bcm) in the first half of this year. Instead, gas imports from Azerbaijan increased by 23% to 5.5 billion cubic meters.

Azerbaijan's share in the Turkish gas market has doubled in the last three years, Russia's share is less than half, and Iran's share almost halved. This is potentially a big help for Azerbaijan's economy at a time of low global energy prices. Turkey and Azerbaijan have a special relationship in the region.

Turkey has also doubled its imports of liquefied natural gas from the United States to nearly 885 million cubic meters.

Iran is normally Turkey's second-biggest supplier of natural gas after Russia. Turkey's state gas importer, Botas, imports up to 9.6 Bcm/year of Iranian gas via the pipeline under a 25-year contract, which runs to July 2026. Turkey uses Iranian gas for electricity generation.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Ashura Is Not a Memory But a School

Coronavirus pandemic has forced some smaller size mourning gatherings, used to be held in the past in the roofed places to commemorate the martyrdom of the third Imam of Shiites, Imam Hussein (A), in the first decade of month of Muharram, to be held in a bigger size and in the 20,000-man gathering, and it definitely compensated the shortages resulted by Coronavirus management protocols adopted for holding the Imam Hussein (A)'s mourning ceremonies.

In the narratives have been mentioned that is a passion embedded in the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A) so that it never dies away. This year some people with secular intentions were seeking to restrict mourning ceremonies and gatherings for commemoration of Imam Hussein (A)'s martyrdom anniversary but they got disappointed by seeing such huge mourning gatherings and one can consider this disappointment of the opposition current regarding honoring Imam Hussein (A)'s martyrdom as some part of the passion lying in his martyrdom.

Since Karbala event and Asura to date, 1362 years have passed and during these years light and passion of martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A) has been glittering in the history. According to the historical calculation and according to the late DR. Ahmad Birshak's calculation in the "Iranian Chronology", Karbala event has happened on the 21st of month of Mehr 21 of Solar Hijri calendar year 59.

It is crystal clear for the experts that solar hijri year is not like lunar year that its days change because the Earth's position regarding to the Sun is fixed and one can mention the prayer times of Karbala and convert them into the solar year all narratives and opinions of historians on this event with their exact hours and minutes.

In every second, minute and hour of Ashura event, some incidents have happened that several analytical, glorifying and honoring books can be written and compiled on them. The Supreme Leader considers Imam Hussein (A)'s action an exceptional one. In his remarks some 19 years ago on the Imam Hussein (A)'s move, the Leader said, "We do not understand what patience is. Patience finds it meaning in its own place. Many people from elites, dignities, wise men, compassionates and half-compassionates approached Imam Hussein (A), and told him what he was doing was a mere mistake and useless and his action would harm him and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s Household and belittle the believers."

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China Resumes Reporting Oil Imports From Iran In July

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The latest Chinese Customs' data show the country imported about 120,000 barrels of oil per day from Iran in July, worth a total of \$134 million, after showing zero imports in June.

This figure corresponds with information provided by Kpler, a data intelligence company providing transparency solutions in commodity markets. Based on the same data, two oil tankers, Snow and Stream, with 1.6 million barrels and 2.1 million crude oil, arrived in China last July and delivered their cargo.

According to China's General Administration of Customs' (GAC) statistics published on its official website on Wednesday, August 26, the country imported a total of 2.2 million tons, or 77,000 barrels of oil per day, from Iran in the first seven months of the year. Before the reimposition of U.S. sanctions, China's average daily crude oil from Iran was nine-fold that figure.

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Refer to Page 3

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President Calls for Closer Ties with Kyrgyzstan

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani has offered congratulations to the Kyrgyz nation and government on the anniversary of the country's national day, calling for further enhancement of bilateral ties.

In a Monday message to the President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Rouhani expressed hope that the relations between the two countries would further develop in all economic, political and cultural fields considering the historical and cultural common grounds between the two countries. "The redoubled efforts of the officials of the two countries to identify and eliminate possible obstacles and problems and to make the most of the existing capacities can be a great step in development of relations and providing more welfare for our nations," he noted.

Malaysian King Invited to Visit Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani has officially invited the king of Malaysia to visit Iran in order to discuss the problems facing the Muslim world and further strengthen bilateral ties between Tehran and Kuala Lumpur.

In a Monday letter to Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin al-Mustafa Billah Shah, Rouhani congratulated the Malaysian king, nation and government on the country's national day, which marks the independence of Malaysia from the British rule in 1957.

Praising the Malaysian government and nation for their stances and efforts, and highlighting the two countries' common standpoint concerning confrontation with the crises that have come to afflict the Muslim world, including Palestine's continued occupation and the Palestinians' ongoing suffering, President Rouhani said dialogue and constructive interaction among Islamic governments is the only way out of the problems facing the Muslim world.

Accordingly, Rouhani added, the monarch was welcome in the Islamic Republic for talks and consultation on the Muslim world's predicaments and the Islamic Republic's proposals aimed at bringing about peace and security.

The Iranian president said the Malaysian king's potential visit would also feature further development of ties with the "friendly and brotherly" country of Malaysia.

"I hope that under the aegis of the existing political will, the countries will witness



further solidarity between the two nations and development of their mutual relations in all political, economic, cultural, and international areas," he added in the letter.

Rouhani finally wished health and success for the king and prosperity for the Malaysian nation.

Similar to Iran, Malaysia famously and resolutely avoids recognizing Israel in protest at Tel Aviv's apartheid policies targeting the Palestinians. The Malaysian passport bears a blunt reminder of Kuala Lumpur's stance on the matter by forbidding the document from being applied for entry into the occupied territories.

Malaysia's Independence Day commemorates the Malay Declaration of Independence of 31 August 1957, and is defined in Article 160 of the Constitution of Malaysia. The day is marked by official and unofficial ceremonies and observances.

Iran Signs Major Judicial Agreements on Extradition of Prisoners

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Minister of Justice Ali-Reza Avayi told IRNA on Monday that the Government reached major judicial agreements with foreign countries which led to extradition of 2,988 Iranian and foreign prisoners over the past seven years.

Iran has signed 84 judicial agreements with other countries, 32 of which have been signed under President Hassan Rouhani, Avayi said.

He added that in the past one-and-a-half-year, 307 Iranian convicts have been returned home from other countries and 806 prisoners have been extradited to their countries.

The cause of many of the Iranians kept in prisons of

other countries was their ignorance of the laws of the host country and for example they took medicines with themselves that had been illegal there, he said, adding that now that the coronavirus outbreak has provided a legal ground, Iran is trying to extradite more convicts.

Avayi also said that prisons in some countries have bad conditions, but the Iranian prisons, despite problems, provide better services, health, and education.

The minister of Justice said that some people reprimand Iran saying that the country's prisons are more like hotels, saying that the convicts have slipped and committed crimes; they are not supposed to be tormented.

Health Minister Urged to Provide Coronavirus Vaccine

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a phone conversation with the Iranian Health Minister Saeid Namaki, President Hassan Rouhani called for taking the required measures for purchasing and testing foreign anti-coronavirus vaccines in the country.

Referring to the reports about the availability of the vaccine in some countries, the Iranian President ordered that the necessary measures should be taken to purchase the vaccines and to carry out the usual experimental and diagnostic steps in order to start using it in Iran as soon as possible.

As of Sunday, the total number of coronavirus cases in Iran has passed 373,570, of whom 21,462 have lost their lives to the deadly virus.

Iran to Increase Trade Via Its Borders With Afghanistan

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN- Through launching Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) corridor and Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor, trade activities will be increased in the region via Iran-Afghanistan borders.

India-Iran-Afghanistan corridor is the other transit path which plays a significant role in boosting trade via borders between Iran and Afghanistan.

Regarding the significant status of the mentioned corridors in the expansion of trade among the countries located in these paths, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) is seeking to bolster trade via Iranian borders, according to the IRICA spokesman, Ruhollah Latifi.

On August 10, Iran sent two transit cargoes from Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas to Uzbekistan through a newly established Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor under a pilot operation to assess the mentioned route, an official with the IRICA announced at the time.

According to IRICA Director of Transit Bureau Mostafa Ayati, following the successful launch of Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) in late July, this time two trucks loaded with transit goods from Shahid Rajaei Port headed for Uzbekistan by passing through Dogharoon border crossing with Afghanistan.

According to Ayati, as a short and low-cost route to Central Asian countries under the TIR Convention, the development of transit corridors through Afghanistan is supported by both international bodies and the Iranian government and IRICA, in collaboration with Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), are determined to develop this sector.

EAEU Agreement, a Test for Doing Trade Exchanges With World

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said that an agreement inked between Iran and Eurasian Trade Union (EAEU) is a test to prepare infrastructures for doing trade exchanges with the outside world.

Iran-EAEU agreement caused Iran to identify infrastructures of trade exchanges and plan to remove problems facing ahead, said Hamid Zadboum.

Turning to the process of cooperation with EAEU, he reiterated, "in addition to the current members, other countries, including Uzbekistan, are in talks to join the Union, and others, such as Singapore, Vietnam and Iran, only intend to sign Free Trade Agreement (FTA) or carry out economic exchanges."

According to him, membership in an economic union such as Eurasia requires customs and economic integration to create a union in terms of visas and business cards, which is time-consuming.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zadboum pointed to Iran-EAEU Agreement and said, "Iran's agreement with EAEU is currently temporary. In this agreement, a number of items have been listed but as the first year of agreement ends, negotiations for free trade will begin which will cover a wider range of items."

Regarding the problems for expansion of trade ties with EAEU, he stated, "Logistics is one of the problems that should be taken into serious consideration for business exchanges, because, we cannot increase trade but use the same old and traditional system."

Simultaneous increase of export and logistics infrastructures for trade with Eurasia is one of the requirements behind continuation of the agreement, he told IRNA, adding, "Currently, Iran's lackluster logistic infrastructures is one of the problems to develop trade and achieve free trade with these countries."

Iran Quarterly Investment In Ports Tops \$715m

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian authorities say investment has been flowing into the country's ports despite the spread of the coronavirus pandemic which has resulted in lower activity in trade hubs.

The official IRNA news agency said that total private investment attracted to various development projects in Iranian ports had exceeded 161 trillion rials (over \$700 million) in the quarter ending June 20.

It said the investment was on top of 3.5 trillion rials (nearly \$15 million) of funds provided by the Iranian administrative government to spur growth in ports south and north of the country.

The report said the investments over the period had come despite the general decline in activity in ports because of the pandemic and measures taken by the government to curb the virus.

Major equipment and machinery have been installed in Iranian ports, including new cranes and grain suction machines in ports north of Iran that are viewed as less developed compared to peers on the

The report added that nearly 3 trillion rials worth of new investment would be focused on five major projects meant to boost business environment in the Iranian ports.

Iran has seen a general surge in port activity since the United States imposed its unilateral sanctions on the country in 2018.

The surge has been mainly due to Iran's massive infrastructure projects that are meant to boost Iran's non-oil trade with other countries.

A bulk of port development efforts are concentrated in Chabahar, in southeast Iran on the Sea of Oman, where Iran seeks to create a unique hub for trade between the Indian Ocean and landlocked countries located to its eastern and northeastern borders.

"Club of Sanctioned" to Force U.S. Lift Cruel Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) –An Iranian Parliament member stressed, "The unity of the sanctioned countries in the framework of the Club of Sanctioned will definitely make the U.S. come to the conclusion of lifting the sanctions against the countries."

Abbas Goodarzi made some remarks over establishing the Club of Sanctioned countries for concerted action against the US economic sanctions, stressing that forming the Club of Sanctioned is the best strategy to protect the country against economic, political, security, social and cultural impacts of the sanctions against the country.

Considering the Club of Sanctioned as a strategic tool to counter against the cruel sanctions of the United States and its allies, the lawmaker explained, "The unity of the sanctioned countries will definitely make the US come to the conclusion of lifting the sanctions against the countries because if the US does not lift the sanctions, the number of member countries in the Club of Sanctioned will increase and a strong front against the United States will be created which will be lead to the US' own detriment."

"Today, it is a necessity that we move through uniting with our allies to create new channels in the field of economic trade through establishing the Club of Sanctioned", he added.

Vaezi Refutes U.S. Sanctions Threat



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Presidential Office chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi refuted U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday for threatening Iran with sanctions, saying that the U.S. open threat to sanctions are in total disregard of the International Law and setting a dangerous precedent by challenging the UN Security Council.

U.S. Administration under the influence of an extremist group and the Zionist regime makes some decisions which are quite illegal and illogical indicating that they do not have sense of commitment to the outstanding basics of International Law, Vaezi said.

He said that using trigger mechanism is inside the nuclear deal, adding that U.S. Administration in an illogical act pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and it is clear that the country will be no longer able to the JCPOA mechanisms.

U.S. officials are now aware of their mistake of withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal and are conducting desperate and unlawful moves to cover up their mistake

After their withdrawal, they tested this approach several times and faced unprecedented objections in the international community, Vaezi noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he described U.S. unilateral policies as paving the way for its isolation, saying that the U.S. claims leadership of the world, but, is now isolated, proving legal nature of Iran's code of conduct.

In the name of God

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



RENEWAL OF INTERNATIONAL
Tender No.9800377

Esfahan Steel Co. (ESCO.) intends to purchase 27 ton Refractory Blocks

For Rolling Mill Furnace's Burner through international tender No.9800377.

Prospective bidders specialized and experienced in the said area may visit Esfahan Steel Co.'s website at www.esfahansteel.ir to get the tender documents not later than 09.09.2020. The place and deadlines for the submission of the offers are as follows:

In Esfahan: Confidential Secretariat of ESCO.'s Security Department, at the man gate next to Melli Bank, Esfahan Steel Company, 45th km of Zobahan-Shahrekor Highway, Esfahan, Iran, Telephone No.0098-31-5257-2197 max up to Wendseday dated 23.09.2020 at 1:00 (p.m.);

InTehran: ESCO.'s office, near to Shahed Alley, Karim Khan Zand Boulevard, Vali-e-Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran.

Tel. No. 0098-21-8891-5657 max up to Tuesday dated 22.09.2020 at 1:00 (p.m.);

Email Address: toa@esfahansteel.ir max up to Tuesday dated 22.09.2020 at 1:00 (p.m.).

For further information, prospective bidders may contact us via phone No.: +98-31-5257-2017.

For the confirmation of the receipt of offer by ESCO.

You can contact through Tel. No. 0098-31-5257-2197

Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:04
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:50
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:10
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:37

109. But if they turn back, Say: "I have proclaimed the Message to you all alike and in truth; but I know not whether that which ye are promised is near or far.
110. "It is He Who knows what is open in speech and what ye hide (in your hearts).
Surah 21. The Prophets (109 - 110)

Iran Exports to Iraq Growing

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A major Iranian businessman in charge of coordinating trade between Iran and Iraq says Iran's exports to the Arab country are growing compared to initial months of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the Middle East beginning late February.

However, Seyyed Hamid Hosseini said that exports to Iraq had fallen by almost a third when calculated against a monthly average seen in 2019.

"The monthly average (value) of exports to Iraq over the past year was \$750 million which is more than the average this year of \$500 million," said Hosseini, who is a senior member of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Hosseini further said that current monthly value of exports shows a 30-percent increase compared to initial months of the current calendar year in Iran when borders to neighboring countries were closed to curb the spread of the pandemic.

The \$500-million mark reached over July-August was a record this year, as claimed by the businessman who added that total exports between March 20 and August 21



had exceeded \$2.44 billion.

"Every day around 3,000 cargo trucks are transferring Iranian exports goods to Iraq and thus exports to this country is flowing on full capacity," he told the semi-official Fars news agency.

Iran relies on Iraq as a major customer for selling goods and services at a time the country's normal exports of crude oil have been hampered by American sanctions.

Official figures published on Saturday by Iran's customs office (IRICA) showed that exports to Iraq in the fifth calendar month of Mordad (July22-August21) had reached \$441 million in value terms, making the country only second to China in the list of Iran's main export destinations over the monthly period.

Value of KSC's Share Grows by 377%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Khouzestan Steel Company says the value of the company's share in the stock market has grown by 377 percent since last July and it tops steel-making companies in the country.

Speaking with reporters on the occasion of the Government Week, Mr. Ali Mohammadi praised the media persons for observing their social responsibilities. He then highlighted major performance of the company in the past year, noting that the company has been committed to its organizational and social duties and responsibilities.

Mohammadi said that the company ranks first among steel-making companies in terms of growth in the value of its share as the value of its shares in the stock market has grown by 377 percent since last July. He noted Esfahan Steel Company with 296 percent, Mobarakeh Steel Company with 294 percent and Khorasan Steel

Company with 180 percent growth in value of their shares trail Khouzestan Steel Company.

He then pointed to the company's 8,000-billion-toman investment in the next months, adding that major part of the investment will be spent in the development sector. Mohammadi added that one of the programs of the company is to construct casting machine for producing wide slab with a credit around \$200m and by its launch, the



raw materials needed by the oil industry will be provided.

He then pointed to the slogan of the year "Surge in Production", adding that the company's annual turnover is around 200,000b rials. He reiterated that maximum pressure and even Coronavirus pandemic have been unable to stop Khouzestan Steel Company's performance and the company has improved three records for daily, monthly and quarterly production in the first quarter of the current year. He stated that the company has been 5 percent ahead of the schedule in the first five months.

Mohammadi noted that over 80 percent of equipment and raw materials needed by the company are provided by the domestic companies and the company held an exhibition on indigenization with presence of 65 companies in the province last year.

He then highlighted major actions of the company regarding its social responsibilities like construction of 96-bed hospital at Ghale Chanaan Region, distributing over 3,000 food packages among the Coronavirus victims and covering 1,000 students and renovating a school at Karoun.

State Printing Office of Iran (SPOI) Renewed (Second stage)

Tender of purchasing 384 Kg types of Pantone inks

State printing office of Iran intends to purchase the aforementioned inks through a public tender. Therefore ,participants in the tender should first receive their tender documents from Aug. 26-2020 to 12:00 hours on Sep. 2-2020 in the Governmental portal address at : www.setadiran.ir and after register needed documents in mentioned address, physically submit envelopes A,B and C to the secretariat of the company before the end of administrative hour(12:00 PM) on Sep.13-2020.Tender documents presented after the stated deadline will not be accepted.

The guaranteed amount for participating in the tender is 875/000/000 Rials (3550 EURO) and should be presented in the form of a bank guarantee in envelope A. All stages of bid , including receiving tender documents ,submitting price proposal of tenders and opening the envelopes ,will be done through the portal of Government's electronic procurement system at the following address : www.setadiran.ir.

It is necessary that tenders , if not taken membership previously , should carry out the registration stages in the mentioned website and receive the signed and sealed electronic certificate for participating in the tender. For more information, please contact the governmental portal phone numbers at 41934 ,registration office Tel: 88969737 and 85193768.Envelopes opening date is on Tuesday Sep.15-2020 at 10:00 AM in Transactions Commission Room of State Printing Office of Iran.

Meanwhile ,the cost for publishing the advertisement shall be borne by the tender winner.

Address : State Printing Office of Iran, No: 29,Next to Khayyam Park, Igbal Lahouri St., Imam Husein Square,Tehran, Iran,Postal code : 1714744153,Tel : 33349079

م.الف: ۱۷۹۹

Hormozgan Steel Co. on Course to More Value-Added

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Complex says the company is after new markets for its exports, and Middle East countries due to their projects can be good targets for the company's exports.

Speaking in an interview, Farzad Arzani said that the roadmap of the company for marketing for its products in the international market is focused on attractive markets, adding that Persian Gulf and Middle East states due to their oil and gas projects are considered as good target for exports of wide steel sheets (API) and the company has set sight on those states.

He noted that due to predictions on European states and some part of Asian states' demand for thick and wide steel sheet with different grades, the company has set them as targets for exports of its new products.

Arzani added that by launching the production line for producing wide sheets, the company can save the country huge amount of forex and it can also meet the domestic market's demand.

He said by inauguration of wide rolling line at the company with production capacity of 1.2m tons per year, the company will produce certain types of sheets, and the company will be no longer only a slab-producer and it can produce different types of steel products. Arzani added that construction of this line will pave the ground for access to more value-added, in other words, steel ingot of the company will be converted into wide sheet in the other section of the company.

This product is used in ship-building, oil, gas, petrochemical and many other industries and it can earn the company huge amount of value-added.



Khoshgbar Gostaresh Awarded With Highest Badge for Customer Satisfaction

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Gostaresh Khoshkbar Middle East Company was awarded with the highest badge of customer satisfaction during the national conference on customer satisfaction with and approach on the role of management in improving responses to customers during and post Coronavirus era which was held at IRIB's conference hall with presence of some government officials and Majlis lawmakers.



The Manager of Khoshkbar Gostaresh Middle East Company Mr. Mohammad Ali Ahmadifar received the highest badge and award during the conference.

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Mr. Ahmadifar said the Coronavirus pandemic inflicted huge damage on the national economic cycle and even several developed countries have faced such economic decline in this period but through the time, they could handle the condition and returned to the pre-Coronavirus era.

He noted that unfortunately European and even Persian Gulf states are reluctant to buy goods from because of their wrong notion that Iran has handled the Coronavirus weakly and it might have affected its food industries and the virus might be transferred to their countries.

He admitted that the virus has toughened the condition for exports of food products especially dried fruits and in this condition, one should not wait and see the virus to be completely eradicated and he should work for finding a solution for exports of food stuff.

Ahmadifar reiterated that his company adopted all essential hygienic protocols in its production lines and for its staff based on the international standards by indigenizing all of the protocols in order to create a drastic change in the process of its producing its products by considering all conditions imposed by the virus.

He said major part of production process in his company faced drastic change, adding that despite problems, the company monitors carefully the raw materials before arrival at the factory till the moment the products are transferred to the terminals for shipment.

He reiterated that the main goal of the company is customer satisfaction and this policy is pursued fully either international or domestic markets in the export and the company has been successful in implementing it full so far and the staff of the company are very committed regarding the quality of the products to meet customers' demands.

He admitted that the virus has intensified the problems for exports in all sectors. Ahmadifar called for not losing hope because it is in such conditions that most companies have found creative solutions to overcome the problems and have had successful record in the trade. He also urged the government to support the private sector because the private sector can earn forex for the country.

NICICO Welcomes New Ideas and Projects in Nano Industries and Hi-Tech

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of National Iranian Copper Industry Company (NICICO) says the company welcomes any new idea and project in Nano and hi-tech industries for creating value-added.



Dr. Ardeshtir Saad Mohammadi said that copper has huge potential and high value for investment, adding that NICICO due to endeavors of its staff and support of officials is in good condition this year and the body of the company, namely, its personnel, have shown their high potentials by registering several records for production in the first five months of the current year as the company is in excellent position in terms of operational and financial indexes.

He also welcomed any idea and project in Nano industries and Hi-techs, adding that all should work to create more value added for NICICO by entering this field.

Saad Mohammadi also pointed to some developmental projects of the company, saying that speed of developmental projects should be important for anyone in the company. He stated that today job creation is an important and sensitive issue in the country and all projects should have economic justifications.

He then pointed to the approval of the annual general meeting of the company for increasing the capital, noting that this is a good decision and soon this will happen through the accumulated profits of the company. Saad Mohammadi also pointed to the company's investment for construction of a sport camp at the town of Varzeqan, reiterating that developmental projects of the company at Sungun Copper Complex can create a big development in the region.

Confirmed Global Coronavirus Cases Top 25 Million

PARIS (Dispatches) - Global coronavirus infections soared past 25 million on Sunday, as countries around the world further tightened restrictions to try to stop the rampaging pandemic.

A million additional cases have been detected globally roughly every four days since mid-July, according to an AFP tally, with India on Sunday setting the record for the highest single-day rise in cases with 78,761.

The surge in India, home to 1.3 billion people, came as the government further eased lockdown restrictions on the weekend to help ease pressure on the reeling economy.



Other Countries Not to Interfere In Chinese Internal Affairs

PARIS (Reuters) - The Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi, said on Sunday what was happening in the Xinjiang region and Hong Kong was an internal Chinese matter and that other countries should not interfere.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian earlier said that in a meeting with Wang-Yi he had reminded him of Paris' deep concerns about the worsening human rights situation in those two regions.



German Gov't Says Unacceptable Attempt to Storm Reichstag



BERLIN (AFP) - The German government Sunday slammed the "unacceptable" behaviour of protesters during a mass rally against coronavirus restrictions in which hundreds were arrested and an attempt was made to storm the Reichstag parliament building.

The Reichstag is the "symbolic centre of our democracy", Interior Minister Horst Seehofer told Sunday's edition of the Bild newspaper.

"It is unacceptable to see extremists and trouble-makers use it for their own ends."

Police said some 38,000 people, double the number expected, had gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus, such as the wearing of masks and social distancing.

Late Saturday, several hundred protesters broke through barriers and a police cordon to climb the steps leading to the entrance to the Reichstag.

They were narrowly prevented from entering the building by police, who used pepper spray and arrested several people.

Police initially appeared overwhelmed, as only a handful of officers were there to block the crowd.

"We cannot be present everywhere and it is precisely these weaknesses in the deployment that were exploited, in this case to cross the security barriers in order to reach the steps of the Reichstag," said local police spokesman Thilo Cablitz.

Images of the incident at the iconic building shocked Germany.

The Reichstag, where German deputies meet, has a powerful symbolic role in the country.

The building, with its famous dome, was burnt down by the Nazis in 1933 in an act aimed at destroying what remained of German democracy between the two world wars.

"Plurality of opinions" is a "characteristic of the good functioning of society," said Seehofer. But "freedom of assembly reaches its limits when public rules are trampled on."

About 300 people were arrested in scuffles with police, in front of the Reichstag but also outside the Russian embassy not far from there in the city centre, where protesters pelted police with bottles.

Berlin city authorities had initially decided not to allow the Saturday demonstration to go ahead, fearing that the protesters would not keep a distance of 1.5 metres (five feet) apart or comply with face mask requirements.

Protesters Crowd Minsk as Lukashenko Gets Birthday Call From Putin



MINSK (Reuters) - Belarusians chanting "Happy Birthday, you rat" and flying red-and-white opposition flags gathered near President Alexander Lukashenko's residence on Sunday as protesters kept up pressure on the veteran leader to resign, before dispersing peacefully.

The president, in office for 26 years, has shown no inclination to step down. For the second weekend in a row he appeared in a black cap and carrying an automatic rifle while walking around his residence, according to a photo published by Russia's RIA news agency.

Lukashenko, who turned 66 on Sunday, is struggling to contain weeks of protests and strikes since winning an Aug. 9 election his opponents say was rigged. He denies electoral fraud and has said the protesters, whom he previously called "rats", are backed from abroad.

Russian President Vladimir Putin used a birthday phone call to invite Lukashenko to visit Moscow, a sign of the Kremlin's willingness to back Lukashenko as he grapples with the unrest and the threat of new Western sanctions.

Tens of thousands of protesters streamed into central Minsk, carrying balloons, flowers and flags, in the afternoon. Belarus

had a white-red-white flag for a brief period in the early 1990s and it has become a symbol of its anti-government protests.

Passing cars honked their horns in solidarity. Some women lay down in protest in front of a cordon of helmeted security forces.

Protesters then converged on Lukashenko's residence, which was guarded by a wall of security forces carrying shields. A column of armoured military vehicles was seen driving towards the city centre.

Police made sporadic detentions throughout the day, bundling people into prisoner vans. At least 140 people were detained, the interior ministry said, according to RIA. Some protesters resisted arrest by what appeared to be plain-clothes officers, an eyewitness said.

Earlier on Sunday, video footage shared by local media showed women dressed in traditional dress laying several pumpkins in front of the main government building, a folk custom intended to signal the rejection of a suitor.

Mustapha Adib on Course to Be Designated Lebanon PM

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon's Ambassador to Germany Mustapha Adib looks set to become the new Lebanese prime minister-designate.

Fouad Siniora, a senior member of the Future Movement led by Lebanon's main Sunni politician Saad al-Hariri, said on Sunday the party would nominate Adib for the post of prime minister in formal consultations starting today.

The announcement makes Adib the clear favourite for the position, which must be filled by a Sunni Muslim in Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system.

Under Lebanese laws, the president consults with parliamentary blocs to name a prime minister and the candidate who gets the most support is asked to form the new cabinet.

The previous government led by Hassan Diab quit earlier this month following a devastating August 4 explosion at the port of the capital, Beirut, which killed some 200 people and wounded thousands of others.

The Future Movement, led by former premier Saad al-Hariri, announced its support for Adib after a meeting of its parliamentary bloc on Sunday.

Hezbollah and its Shi'ite ally the Amal Movement will also nominate Adib in the consultations, a senior Shi'ite source told Reuters.

President Michel Aoun, a Maronite Christian allied with Hezbollah, is required to designate the candidate with the greatest level of support among MPs at Monday's consultations.

Once designated, the process of forming a new government will get underway. Until a new administration is agreed, the Diab government continues in a caretaker capacity.

North Macedonia's Parliament Approves New Left-Wing Coalition Gov't

SKOPIE (Dispatches) - North Macedonia's Social Democrats returned to power Sunday after parliament approved their new coalition, ending a months-long leadership void amid the pandemic.

The vote brings Prime Minister Zoran Zaev, credited for putting the Balkan state on an EU path, back into top office after his party narrowly won a victory over right-wing rivals in July.

"A period of order, justice and discipline is coming, it is time for vetting of the judiciary and unselective rule of law," Zaev told the assembly.

His governing coalition, a tie-up with the largest party representing the ethnic Albanian minority, was approved by 62 votes in the 120-seat assembly following two days of heated debate that ended just before a midnight deadline.

The vote ends a period of eight months in which North Macedonia was run by a weak technical government, who were only supposed to be in power until April, when a snap election was initially scheduled.

The vote was then delayed because of the coronavirus pandemic until July, leaving the Balkan state without

sturdy leadership as the virus took its toll.

After an upsurge of coronavirus cases in June and July, the virus has infected some 14,000 and killed nearly 600 in the country of around 2 million.

Zaev pledged to tackle the pandemic and its economic effects, as well as make progress on EU accession talks after the country officially became a candidate for membership earlier this year.

During the parliamentary debate the right-wing opposition accused the Social Democrats of corruption and mismanaging the pandemic and economy.

They also accused Zaev's camp of sacrificing the country's national identity in a historic agreement with Greece. The July election was the first since Zaev's party added "North" to its name early last year in exchange for Greece's promise to stop blocking its path to EU membership.

Athens claimed exclusive rights to the name Macedonia for its own province.

The accord ushered the country into NATO and helped secure its status as an EU candidate country.

But it deepened fault lines in the polarised society, angering critics on the right.



Democrats Oppose Trump Wisconsin Visit



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democrats said Donald Trump should not visit the Wisconsin city where protests erupted last week after a Black man was shot in the back by a white police officer, while the Republican president said "strength" was the only way to deal with unrest.

The Aug. 22 shooting of Jacob Blake in front of three of his children turned Kenosha, a mostly white city south of Milwaukee, into the latest flashpoint in a summer of U.S. demonstrations against police brutality and racism ahead of Trump's November reelection bid. Trump has taken a hard stand against the racial protests and the White House said he will visit the Midwestern city on Tuesday, raising concerns among Democrats that this may worsen the strife.

"They centered an entire convention around creating more animosity and creating more division around what's going on in Kenosha," Wisconsin's Democratic Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes told CNN, referring to last week's Republican National Convention.

"So I don't know how, given any of the previous statements that the president made, that he intends to come here to be helpful, and we absolutely don't need that right now," he added. Critics accuse Trump, who faces Democratic former vice president Joe Biden in the Nov. 3 election, of seeking to exacerbate violence with incendiary rhetoric, while the president has repeatedly called in tweets for "law and order."

In a statement on Sunday, Biden accused Trump of "recklessly encouraging violence."

"He may believe tweeting about law and order makes him strong - but his failure to call on his supporters to stop seeking conflict shows just how weak he is. He may think that war in our streets is good for his reelection chances, but that is not presidential leadership - or even basic human compassion."

Republicans accuse Democratic mayors and state governors of losing control of cities rocked by demonstrations that have seen outbreaks of violence, arson and vandalism.

U.S. Representative Karen Bass, a Democrat who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus, said Trump's trip to Kenosha would only increase tensions.



Zaferanieh Apt (\$2500)
250sq.m, 4bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Elahieh Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
L.balcony
Fully Furn

Parsian

Farmanieh Apts
(\$1800) 2bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F
(\$2200) 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F
(\$3000) 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Darrous bldg
2storey, 4unites, 12bdrs
S/pol, S, J, enough pkg lots
green yard, & Fully Furn

Fereshteh Apt (\$2300)
220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, Sauna
Jacuzzi, balcony, pkg, F.F

Cell: +989121907875
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Belarus Crisis Does Not Contribute to Stability in Russian Economy

MOSCOW (Reuters) - The Kremlin said the political crisis in Belarus did not contribute to economic stability in Russia but said Moscow had sufficient safety buffers to mitigate risks.

"We of course have safety buffers in our economy, which allow us to keep all economic processes stable and hedge risks," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call. "But of course what is happening in Belarus clearly does not contribute to economic development and stability, it's rather the opposite."



26th AEM - METI CONSULTATIONS

28 August 2020, Ha Noi, Viet Nam



ASEAN, 8 Other Countries Call for Strengthening Regional Supply Chains

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Economic ministers from the 10 ASEAN member states and eight other countries including India have underscored the importance of strengthening regional supply chains to make them resilient and less vulnerable to shocks besides advancing sustainable economic growth.

They reaffirmed their commitment to promote trade and investment, minimise disruptions to trade and global supply chains and facilitate supply chain connectivity, including for essential goods like medical supplies, medicines, including vaccines, food, commodities and other essential supplies and services in the region. The ministers also recognised the importance of facilitating the essential movement of people across borders, without undermining each country's efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, to stabilise the trade and investment, according to a joint statement released after the virtual meeting of 8th East Asia Summit Economic Ministers' Meeting (EAS-EMM) held on Friday.

It was chaired by Vietnam's Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Tuan Anh and attended by Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal besides economic ministers from Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States.

They said the COVID-19 global pandemic has created unprecedented challenges that have caused not only loss of lives but also economic downturn for most countries around the world.

"The ministers underscored the importance of further strengthening regional economic cooperation, and resolved to take actions aimed at mitigating the economic impact of the pandemic on global and regional trade and investment, ensuring macroeconomic and financial stability and restoring business confidence in the region," said the joint statement.

They welcomed the increasing trade and strong investment performance among EAS economies with the combined nominal GDP reaching 51.6 trillion dollars in 2019, marking an increase by 4.1 per cent from previous year.

ASEAN merchandise trade with non-ASEAN EAS participating countries amounted to 1.3 trillion dollars in 2019, accounting for 48.1 per cent of ASEAN's total trade while foreign direct investment (FDI) reached to 61.2 billion dollars, representing 38.1 per cent of ASEAN's total FDI inflows.

The ASEAN comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The ministers welcomed regional initiatives to mitigate the impact of pandemic including the establishment of the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund as well as the work towards the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies and the Standard Operating Procedures for Public Health Emergencies Response.

The ministers also acknowledged the important role of initiatives, which aim to ensure the equitable global distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines.

Chile Unemployment Hits New Record of 13%

SANTIAGO (AFP) - Unemployment in Chile has reached a new record high of 13.1 percent, the national statistics institute said. Unemployment rose by 5.6 percentage points in the rolling May-July quarter compared to the same period in 2019.

The statistics institute said it was the highest figure since 2010, when the body changed its calculation method. That means that more than a million people are out of work, leaving 8.1 million employed after the loss of 1.8 million jobs over the last year.

However, the unemployment figure doesn't take into account the 760,000 people that took advantage of a government initiative launched in March to protect jobs affected by the coronavirus pandemic by allowing the temporary suspension of contracts and access to unemployment insurance.

The institute said that taking into consideration those unemployed, those on the government scheme, and those not looking for work but able to, then the number of people out of employment rises to 30 percent of the potential workforce.

"These are the most severe figures... that we've had in the history of our country," said Labor Minister Maria Jose Zaldivar.

The institute said that of those still employed, a third have reported a drop in their income.

"The numbers speak for themselves and show why this has to be the priority," said Finance Minister Ignacio Briones, while asking Congress to approve laws that would reactivate the economy by creating jobs.

Chile is one of the worst-affected countries in Latin America by the coronavirus, with 400,000 cases and close to 15,000 deaths.

The Central Bank expects the economy to shrink by 7.5 percent in 2020.

China Sees Record-Breaking Electricity Consumption In August

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's electricity consumption hit a record this month after rising steadily since the start of summer, the People's Daily reported, noting that the trend suggested a robust recovery in economic activity in Asia's second-largest economy.

Electricity consumption in the manufacturing sector has specifically posted a marked recovery since July, reversing a negative consumption trend from the first half of the year.

In even better news, electricity consumption in the consumer goods production sector rose by as much as 46.1 percent during the second quarter of the year, signaling expectations of more robust consumer spending—a vital indicator of an economy's health and conducive to higher energy demand.

The data is the latest sign that China's economy is improving steadily after the lockdowns prompted by the pandemic, and ties in with data about oil imports, which have also been rising over the past few months.

There has been, however, worry that the end of China's oil-buying spree is nearing after imports declined in July from June. Even with the slowdown, though, the July 2020 average was 25 percent higher than the average for July 2019.

Positive economic news from China has been as crucial to oil prices' recovery as OPEC+'s production cuts, and it will only become more critical now that the group has eased its cuts by some 2 million barrels daily.

The latest in this respect were the results from a CNBC survey among global CFOs, which revealed the executives were more optimistic about China's economy than that of the United States, for the first time in history ever.

The average outlook of the SFOs surveyed by CNBC was "stable" for China's GDP, while their outlook for U.S. economic growth was for a "moderate decline." Even their outlook for Europe is more favorable than that of the U.S.: the executives have also given Europe's economy a "stable" outlook.



Euro Zone Sentiment Recovers for Fourth Straight Month in August

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Euro zone's economic sentiment grew in August for the fourth consecutive month after a record slump caused by COVID-19 lockdowns in March and April, a survey released on Friday by the European Commission showed.

While remaining well below pre-crisis levels and the long-term average, the monthly indicator which gauges confidence in the economy soared to 87.7 points from 82.4 in July, above the 85.0 point average forecast of economists polled by Reuters.

The new pick-up, confirming the gradual rebound from May, was driven mostly by higher optimism in the service sector, the largest in the 19-country currency bloc. It remains in negative territory, but rose to -17.2 in August from -26.2 in July.

Confidence also rose in the industry and retail trade sectors, although factory managers' production expectations edged down after three consecutive monthly increases that pulled them to above pre-crisis levels. Consumer confidence posted a slight recovery to -14.7 points from -15.0, confirming preliminary estimates released by the Commission earlier in August [nS8N2BP00H].

Consumer price expectations edged down, with a slightly higher appetite for major purchases in the coming twelve months, and a slight reduction in such major spending for now, the survey showed.

The employment expectations indicator continued to improve for the fourth month running, while confidence in the construction sector slightly worsened.

Among the bloc's largest economies, sentiment improved markedly in France, the Netherlands and Germany. It also rose in Italy, but it fell in Spain.

India's Growth to Pick-Up From Second Quarter of FY-21

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's growth in the first quarter of current financial year is likely to be "the worst" amongst the four quarters of FY-21 because of economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, an EY India's report said indicating improved economic performance from the second quarter.

"High frequency indicators for India are giving positive signals after the first two months of the pandemic," the consultancy firm said in its latest edition of Economy Watch before the scheduled release of official gross domestic product (GDP) data. The optimism of the report is based on indicators such as the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), sales of passenger vehicles, power consumption and the rise in the foreign exchange reserve.

"In June and July 2020, PMI manufacturing was close to the benchmark level of 50 at 47.2 and 46.0 respectively. Although IIP has continued to contract in June 2020, its rate of contraction has come down to -16.6% from its May 2020 level of -33.9%. In June 2020, passenger vehicle sales picked up sharply with sales of 1,20,188 units as compared to sales of 33,546 units in April and May 2020 considered together," it said. Although power consumption shows a continued contraction, the rate of contraction has been coming down over successive months since April 2020 when it was at -25%. This fell to -0.4% in the first 20 days of August 2020, it added. It also pointed at the foreign exchange reserves continued to rise steadily reaching a level of \$538 billion by August 7, 2020 as a positive indicator.

DK Srivastava, chief policy advisor of EY India, however, said one adverse development is the slowing down of bank credit growth to 5.8% in the fortnight ending 17 July 2020. "Due to subdued demand, average credit growth fell to 6.4% in the first quarter of FY21 as compared to 7.1% in fourth quarter of FY20," he said.

He said the center's capital expenditure grew by 40.1% in the first quarter of FY-21 as compared to a contraction of -27.6% in the corresponding period previous year, indicating frontloading of capital expenditure by the Union government, which is "welcomed as it signals investment in infrastructure" in line with the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) objectives.

In his Independence Day address on August 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled over Rs 110 lakh crore infrastructure projects to boost the economy and create jobs. "In order to rapidly modernise India, there is a need to give a new direction to overall infrastructure development," he said, adding that over 7,000 projects under NIP have been already identified.

Pakistan's Economy Set to Grow

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has predicted economic growth in the coming days, saying things are moving in the right direction.

Speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Sarwar stated that rupee-dollar exchange rate was no more being controlled and kept artificially high, as was done in the past.

Shedding light on the challenges faced by businessmen, the governor said all concerns of the business community were genuine and resolution of the issues would help to boost the national economy manifold.

He pointed out that the current government had reduced the import bill and also the current account deficit significantly. "No other government has achieved what we have done in two years," he said, adding, "bold steps taken by the government will soon bear fruit and all concerns of the business community will be addressed shortly."

He assured the business community that he would arrange meetings of LCCI members with the government officials concerned to resolve their issues.

Speaking about the high energy tariff, Sarwar said the agreements signed by previous governments with the independent power producers (IPPs) were being renegotiated and hopefully electricity prices would be reduced.

He stressed the need for strengthening relationship between the industry and academia so that research being conducted by various universities could be according to needs of the industry.

LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said the chamber had declared an export emergency right after its elections.

He apprised Sarwar that to achieve the export target, the LCCI had set up an export facilitation centre for providing essential information to exporters and an Africa desk had also been established to explore the untapped export market in the African continent.

Sheikh underlined the need for industrial zoning in Lahore, adding that the existing Quaid-e-Azam Industrial Estate and Sundar Industrial Estate had already been fully utilised and there was no space available to set up new industrial units.

He urged the government to regularise all existing industrial units established at Ferozpur Road, Shahdara Road, Multan Road, Raiwind Road, Bund Road, Kasur Road and Katarbund Road without any conversion charges.



88% of Iranian Cross-Border Customs Offices Open

SANANDAJ (IRNA) - Some 88% of Iranian cross-border customs offices are currently open for trade and passengers movements, an official with Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) said on Monday.

Mojtaba Mousavian, the deputy head of TPO, made

the remarks during a local meeting in the western province of Kurdistan.

He said that Iran enjoys joint borders with 15 neighboring countries and that Iran prefers to expand border trade with neighbors as the country faces tough sanctions.



Abenomics Fails to Deliver as Japan Braces for Post-Abe Era

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's signature shock-and-awe 'Abenomics' stimulus strategy was already faltering even before his decision on Friday to step down due to health reasons.

That blunt assessment by many Japan observers underlined the daunting political challenge Abe has faced in his efforts to pull the economy out of decades of economic stagnation.

And the coronavirus crisis may have just put the final nail in the coffin to his 'three arrows' reform programme as the economy sinks deeper into recession, analysts say.

After sweeping to power in late 2012, Abe deployed his three arrows of Abenomics - large-scale monetary easing, fiscal spending and structural reforms - to reignite the world's third biggest economy after years of subpar growth and falling prices.

There were some quick-hit successes.

The Bank of Japan's "bazooka" stimulus programme lifted business sentiment and helped weaken the yen, giving exporters windfall profits that trickled down to wages and new jobs.

Corporate governance reforms drew in huge amounts of overseas money, pushing up foreign ownership of Japan's listed stocks to a record 31.7% in 2014 from 28% in 2012. It stood at 29.6% in 2019.

"We were able to end 20 years of deflation with the three arrows of Abenomics," the prime minister told a news conference on Friday announcing his resignation, when asked what he thought were his legacies.

But Abe will leave behind a pile of unfinished business for his successor.

"The focus at the moment will be on the coronavirus recovery and controlling the infection, regardless of who will be the next prime minister," said Takeshi Minami, chief economist at Norinchukin Research Institute.

"There has been talk that Abenomics has been having a harmful impact, so I think the focal point will be on suggestions how to make changes to it."

The biggest disappointment for the prime minister, and many Japan observers, is that the third-arrow reforms to reshape an economy hobbled by low productivity, a rapidly ageing population and a rigid labour market, have proved elusive.

"Abenomics has singularly failed to deliver Japan the domestic conditions that would spark higher growth beyond more reliance on external demand," said Brian Kelly, Managing Partner at Asian Century Quest.

Now, Japan is paying the price as COVID-19 wipes out the short-term benefits brought by Abenomics, such as an inbound tourism boom, reflation growth and rising job availability.

Abe's failure to entice companies to spend more on capital expenditure has given Japan Inc a huge cash-pile that served as a liquidity buffer to weather the pandemic's shock.

But the experience may give firms an excuse to keep hoarding cash rather than spend on new business opportunities, which could stifle innovation and weigh on Japan's potential growth - factors Abe was focussed on addressing through the third arrow.

"COVID-19 may have reassured corporate executives that cash is indeed king," said Hideo Hayakawa, a senior fellow at the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research. "My fear is that companies may feel even more inclined to save rather than spend."

Social distancing policies and other business constraints to contain the virus may cripple potential growth - already low due to slow progress in deregulating



highly-protected medical and agriculture industries, and accepting more foreign workers to address chronic labour shortages.

Japan's potential growth rate, which used to exceed 4% in the 1980s, slid near zero last year from around 1% before Abenomics began, according to BOJ estimates.

"Structural reform, or the third arrow, has been the declaring failure of Abenomics," said Samuel Tombs, chief U.K. economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics.

"Even the government's signature immigration reform last year was much ado about nothing, in practice."

COVID-19 also dashed a grand experiment of Abenomics that aimed to turn around Japan's "deflationary mindset," in which companies and households hold off on spending on expectations that low growth and wages will persist.

The economy stumbled to a record contraction in the second quarter that shrank nominal gross domestic product (GDP) to 507 trillion yen (\$4.8 trillion), around levels marked in 2013 and far distant from Abe's 600-trillion-yen target.

"Japan's economy may have performed better after Abenomics, but not enough to change public sentiment dramatically," said Yoshiki Shinke, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

"With the pandemic, we'll likely see growth fall further. With many legacies of Abenomics wiped out, we know now there was no magic wand to fix Japan's chronic woes," he said.

Moreover, with the BOJ having exhausted its tool-kit to achieve its elusive 2% inflation target, policymakers face the challenge of seeking to revive the economy with a dearth of ammunition.

Japan's huge debt also limits room for big fiscal spending, which may keep any economic recovery weak, analysts say.

"Japan failed to normalise monetary and fiscal policies when the economy was in better shape," said former BOJ board member Takahide Kiuchi.

"Now, it's paying the price."

Pakistan Slams Indian Forces' Firing at Kashmiri Mourners

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a statement on Sunday, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry "strongly condemned" the firing of pellets and tear gas against those attending the Muharram procession in Kashmir.

"Due to the illegal and indiscriminate use of pellets, dozens of Kashmiris have reportedly been seriously injured, including with eye injuries causing permanent blindness," reads the statement. It notes that the Indian forces "have been using pellet guns and lethal cartridges since 2010 resulting in a large number of deaths and grievous injuries to thousands of Kashmiris, including women and children. The Kashmiri youth has been systemically targeted in this deadly campaign."

"Indiscriminate targeting of civilians with pellet guns, causing excessive and permanent injuries and even deaths, is a clear violation of human rights and humanitarian law. The government of India is in clear violation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials."

The statement notes that the BJP leadership is the direct responsible for the illegal actions in the region. "No illegal Acts, such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and Public Safety Act (PSA), can provide legal cover to a crime recognized as such by international law."

Islamabad also urged the international community to "take urgent cognizance of these egregious human rights violations" in Jammu and Kashmir and "use all tools at its disposal to hold India accountable for its illegal actions."

Government forces have fired shotgun pellets and tear gas to disperse hundreds of mainly Shia Muslims participating in a Muharram procession in Indian-administered Kashmir, injuring dozens, witnesses have said, according to Al-Jazeera.

Jafar Ali, a witness, told AFP news agency the procession started in the Bemina area on the outskirts of the main city of Srinagar and that government forces were present in heavy numbers. Ali and other people who saw the clashes said security forces fired pellets and tear gas to break up the gathering. Police said mourners violated prohibitory orders that restrict all religious processions to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

At least 40 people were injured, according to witnesses.

"The procession was not just peaceful but was also following health protocols," said Sajjad Hussain, a witness. "They [government forces] unleashed such violence and did not spare even women mourners."

63 Power Supply Projects Come on Stream in Isfahan



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - Managing director of Isfahan Province Electricity Distribution Company highlighted major achievements of the company during a presser held on the occasion of the Government Week, noting that 63 electricity supply projects have come on stream by the company concurrent with the Government Week.

Speaking at a presser, Mr. Hamidreza Pirpiran said that the company implemented projects which can be categorized in seven groups that the first group was the implementation of projects for providing the applicants with electricity, noting some 20,000 subscribers in different sections have joined the company's list. Pirpiran further said the company has increased the number of medium pressure networks in east of Isfahan by 60 kilometers in order that people can perform better in production of agro and fishery products.

He further said in the second group of projects, the company pursued the expansion of electricity network and conducting maneuver power, noting that by doing it, the company can increase sustainable electricity distribution for subscribers and the load of the network would lower.

Pirpiran also pointed to other groups of the projects implemented by the company like smartization of measuring systems, parameters of the network, exchange of information and smart link between the company and subscribers who have smart meters.

He then added that reducing the number of power outages was the other goal of projects, adding that in 2014, the period of electricity outages was 850 minutes per one subscriber while the figure has been lowered to 150 minutes per one subscriber. Pirpiran stated that using solar energy as a clean energy is one of the priorities of Energy Ministry, admitting that to this end, first the infrastructures and culture for using this type of energy should be prepared and promoted in the country.

Experimental Implementation QR Code Project in Isfahan



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The QR Code project, or coding for abrupt response, is to be implemented experimentally by Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company.

The CEO of the company Eng. Hashemi Amini announced that the company is to implement QR Code project for faster response. He said in order to facilitate faster access of subscribers to the online website services of the company, the company is to implement the QR Code project since early days of the month of Shahrivar in towns of Shahreza and Barkhar which are under coverage of the company as well as House of Isfahan District which is under coverage of District 5 Office of the company in the city of Isfahan.

He then highlighted the details of how the system would function and how the subscribers should act for using this service. Mr. Amini stated that QR Code is one of the latest methods for offering services in the world and it can also be used in education and dissemination of information to the citizens.

He expressed hope that after experimenting the project in these three towns and district, the company would be able to conduct it in all towns and villages under the coverage of the company. It is noteworthy to mention that currently the company serves over 1.16m subscribers in 93 towns and cities and 951 villages of the province.

UN Security Council Calls for More Women Peacekeepers

NEW YORK (AFP) - The Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling on UN members to boost the numbers of women peacekeepers, diplomats said, seeing the move as a way to improve the effectiveness and credibility of the missions.

The proposal put forward by Indonesia, a non-permanent member of the council, called on "Member States, the United Nations Secretariat and regional organizations to strengthen their collective efforts to promote the full, effective, and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women in peacekeeping operations."

The text specified that this effort must lead to the involvement of women "at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership positions."

Ashura...

FROM PAGE 1

Since the moment Imam Hussein (A) decided to set out his journey from Mecca to Kufa, people found out that these hurdles and immoralities against Imam had begun till Ashura. To be patient regarding these events and misbehaviors is very difficult. That time, I in my remarks pointed to this issue and told that the late Imam Khomeini (R) was patient and his patience was of Imam Hussein (A)'s type."

Likening Imam Hussein (A)'s patience to Imam Khomeini's in creating the Ashura culture and school in 1979, in other words, approximately 1300 years after Ashura Movement and School, is actually explanation, teaching and materialization of concepts of the school, as Imam Hussein (A) wished, which has helped the Islamic Republic to survive safely from all enmities from the East to the West through bloods and martyrdoms in the past 42 years.

Martyr Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani is the product of the very school and trained by such an academy. Through the history many currents had decided to turn Karbala and Ashura event into a just historical memory but history shows that they have failed and it is because of the literature of the uprising that innocence and innocence-orientation is the major base in all dimensions of it.

So this school is not a memory because memory loses its significance through the history and upheavals but not only have Muharram, Karbala and Ashura not ebbed but also they have survived and continued.

This is the very school that gives life and turns the ground for haplessness and incapability into a sustainable resistance against hegemony and it is going to materialize the ground for its continuation and deployment of making the world "Husseini" and to establish the universal government of his brave child Hazrat Mahdi (A) with the name of Hussein (A).

Leader...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile referring to the achievements of country's air defense in recent years, Iranian Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said that Iran's air defense has a high position in the region.

He made the remarks in his meeting with Commander of Army Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard on Monday.

"During the post-revolutionary years, and especially after the establishment of the air defense base in 2008, the country's air defense has gained good achievements in various fields of air defense, including radar, missiles and communication systems," Mousavi said.

Stating that Iran's air defense has a sublime position in the region, he stressed the need to increase cooperation among the armed forces.

He also appreciated the good performance and Air Defense personnel's efforts across the country.

China...

FROM PAGE 1

However, Kpler said that for the first time in July that the Indian tanker Giessel had delivered Iranian oil to China on June 13 as disguised as "Indonesian oil".

Later, the international tanker tracking company, TankerTrackers.com, confirmed the revelation, adding that 1.6 million barrels of Iranian oil had been smuggled to China by Giessel.

So far, sixteen oil tankers have secretly delivered Iranian crude to the markets, via clandestine ship-to-ship transfers in the middle of oceans, TankerTrackers reported.

Gilbert out of Tour de France

NICE (Reuters) - Philippe Gilbert has pulled out of the Tour de France after the former world champion broke his knee cap, leaving the Lotto Soudal team with six riders on Sunday, down from eight after just one stage of the race. The Belgian outfit said the 38-year-old would not be at the start of Sunday's second stage around Nice after 2012 world champion Gilbert hit the ground in Saturday's rain-hit opening, one of several riders to fall during the stage. Team mate John Degenkolb was already out after the German finished outside the time limit on Saturday.

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Spurs Sign Right Back Doherty From Wolves

LONDON (Reuters) - Tottenham Hotspur have signed right back Matt Doherty from Wolverhampton Wanderers on a four-year contract, the north London club said on Sunday. Financial details of the transfer were not disclosed but British media reported Spurs paid 15 million pounds (\$20 million) to secure the 28-year-old Ireland international. "I'm extremely happy... I'm very proud to be joining such a big club," Doherty told Spurs' website here "With the size of the club... and the manager, once I knew there was interest it was a no-brainer for me to get myself down to London."

Hamilton Sweeps to Dominant Belgian Win

B RUSSELS (Reuters) - Lewis Hamilton took another step towards a record-equalling seventh Formula One title on Sunday with a dominant lights-to-flag victory in the Belgian Grand Prix.

The Briton, who had started from pole position after an inspired qualifying display, was at the front for every single lap as he led team mate Valtteri Bottas across the line for a Mercedes one-two.

Hamilton looked to be in perfect control in the lead after retaining his advantage at the start and down the long flat-out blast to the Les Combes chicane despite a snap of oversteer.

The durability of his tyres, which stirred memories of his winning three-wheeled limp to the line at his home British Grand Prix, raised some concern for the champion.

But even those worries, which injected a hint of jeopardy into the otherwise straightforward race, proved unfounded as he crossed the line a comfortable 8.4 seconds clear of his Finnish stablemate. "I know it's not necessarily what everybody always wants to see, a Mercedes at the front," said Hamilton, who now has a 50-point lead in the championship over Bottas and is 47 ahead of Red Bull's third-placed finisher Max Verstappen.

"But no matter how much success we have, we just keep our heads down."

Hamilton's win was the 89th of his career, putting him ever closer to matching Michael Schumacher's seven title triumphs and leaving him just two short of the German's record tally of 91 race victories. It was also the champion's fifth win from seven races so far this season and the fourth of his career on the Spa-Francorchamps track.

Bottas, winner of the season-opening Austrian Grand Prix but now effectively two whole race victories behind Hamilton, said: "I think Lewis was faultless today."

Verstappen, the only non-Mercedes winner so far this year, took his sixth consecutive podium but dubbed the race "boring."

"I ran out of tyres at the end, so I was just stretching it out, saving the front tyres," said the



22-year-old, who had a lonely afternoon after a first-lap battle with former team mate Daniel Ricciardo. "It was not enjoyable out there today."

Ricciardo finished fourth for Renault, while also taking the extra point for fastest lap. Team mate Esteban Ocon rounded off a strong weekend for the French manufacturer by snatching fifth on the last lap from Red Bull's Alexander Albon.

Lando Norris, the sole McLaren in the race after team mate Carlos Sainz failed to make the start due to an exhaust issue, was seventh while Alpha Tauri's Pierre Gasly took 'Driver of the Day' honours in eighth.

Ferrari, winners in Belgium for the last two years, finished out of the points as their lack of speed was laid bare on Spa's long straights.

Sebastian Vettel, leaving Ferrari at the end of the year, was 13th, a place ahead of last year's pole-sitter and winner Charles Leclerc, whose race was further hampered by slow pitstops.

"We need to work and find something because like this it's very difficult," Leclerc said of the Italian team's form that even drew a shake of the head from Vettel's replacement Sainz.

The race was interrupted by an early safety car, sent out after a crash involving Antonio Giovinazzi and George Russell. The Italian lost control of his Alfa Romeo at the exit of the Fagnes chicane.

Russell, running behind Giovinazzi in his Williams, collected a loose wheel that came off the car, leaving debris strewn across the track.

Messi Contract Is Valid



B ARCELONA (Reuters) - La Liga on Sunday released a statement saying Lionel Messi's Barcelona contract was still valid, days after his shock announcement that he wants to leave the club and hours after he failed to attend a pre-season medical on Sunday.

The ruling body said the only way for the Argentine forward to be released from the contract was to trigger a 700-million euros (\$833 million) release clause.

"In compliance with the applicable rule, La Liga will not approve a request to be de-registered as a player with the Spanish football federation, unless the amount in the release clause has been paid," La Liga said in a statement.

Messi did not attend a medical with Barcelona on Sunday, a Barca club source confirmed. Reuters footage showed players arriving for coronavirus tests on Sunday morning and Messi did not appear. He had been due at Barcelona's training ground at 10.15am local time.

The 33-year-old six-times world player of the year informed his lifelong club on Tuesday he wished to leave immediately, plunging Barca into new turmoil less than two weeks after their humiliating 8-2 Champions League quarter-final defeat by Bayern Munich.

Juventus Sign

American McKennie on Loan With Option to Buy

TURIN (Reuters) - Juventus have signed United States international midfielder Weston McKennie on a one-season loan from German club Schalke with an option to buy at the end of the campaign, the Italian champions said late on Saturday.

The Turin club, who sealed a ninth straight Serie A title last month, will pay 4.5 million euros for the loan period and up to 25.5 million euros more if they decide to make the move permanent, Juventus said in a statement.

The versatile 22-year-old started his career in the youth system at FC Dallas before moving to the Schalke academy as a teenager, going on to score five goals in 91 appearances for the Bundesliga side.

"The agreement we have made with Juventus is the most financially beneficial for Schalke and the most attractive sporting move for Weston," Schalke's Head of Sport Jochen Schneider said.

"Obviously deciding to let go one of our most talented players like Weston is partly down to the financial state the club is in."

McKennie has played largely as a defensive midfielder for Schalke, making him a potential like-for-like replacement for Frenchman Blaise Matuidi.

Matuidi left Juventus at the conclusion of his contract this month to head to the United States with Major League Soccer (MLS) outfit Inter Miami.

Ferrari Not Expecting Any Miracles After Poor Belgian GP Showing

LONDON (Reuters) - Charles Leclerc has warned Ferrari fans not expect any miracles on Sunday after the Italian Formula One team was knocked out of the second phase of qualifying for the Belgian Grand Prix.

"Well to be honest, it's very difficult to find an explanation," said the Monegasque who claimed his first grand prix win from pole position in last year's Belgian race but on Saturday he qualified only 13th.

Team mate Sebastian Vettel also had a poor qualifying session and qualified 14th.



Media reports said the 28-year-old Paris Saint-Germain and Brazil talisman was in talks with Nike's German rivals Puma.

Neymar, Nike Part Ways After 15 Years

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Nike said it had parted ways with Neymar, ending one of its most high-profile sponsorship deals a decade and a half after signing the star striker as a 13-year-old prodigy.

"I can confirm Neymar is no longer a Nike athlete," a spokesman for the US sportswear giant, Josh Benedek, said in an email to AFP, without giving further details.

Sebastian Vettel, leaving Ferrari at the end of the year, was 13th, a place ahead of last year's pole-sitter and winner Charles Leclerc, whose race was further hampered by slow pitstops.

"We need to work and find something because like this it's very difficult," Leclerc said of the Italian team's form that even drew a shake of the head from Vettel's replacement Sainz.

The race was interrupted by an early safety car, sent out after a crash involving Antonio Giovinazzi and George Russell. The Italian lost control of his Alfa Romeo at the exit of the Fagnes chicane.

Russell, running behind Giovinazzi in his Williams, collected a loose wheel that came off the car, leaving debris strewn across the track.



Medvedev Has No Concerns About U.S. Open COVID Precautions

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Russia's Daniil Medvedev had no doubts about playing this year's U.S. Open in New York despite the novel coronavirus pandemic causing several high-profile players to withdraw from both sides of the draw.

The world number five is the third seed in the men's draw, behind Novak Djokovic and Dominic Thiem, for the Grand Slam tournament that starts on Monday.

"I don't think I ever really doubted playing here," the 24-year-old told reporters at Flushing Meadows on Saturday. "I was almost sure I will come here. "Safety was a priority for everybody (but) as soon as everybody really got the information of how it's going to be here I think everybody decided to go."

Medvedev added that he felt safe with the bio-security measures put in place by tournament organisers, which includes playing without crowds.

"I think to get infected here is really tough," he said.

"I think it's a good bubble."

While the men's draw has lost Nadal, who beat Medvedev in five sets in last year's final, 20-times grand slam winner Roger Federer and 2016 champion Stan Wawrinka, the Russian is not prepared to get too far ahead of himself repeating this year. "When I come into the slam, my goal is to win seven matches," he said ahead of his first round clash with Argentina's Federico Delbonis on Tuesday.

"But I take it match by match."

Prior to this week's Western and Southern Open, which was played in New York, Medvedev had not played since February due to the COVID-19 shutdown. He made the quarter-finals of the event, which is normally played in Cincinnati, and felt he was as prepared as he could be for the Grand Slam.

Murray Wants ATP Management to Be Given More Time

LONDON (Reuters) - Former world number one Andy Murray says he is not in favour of a breakaway players' group led by Novak Djokovic and has urged fellow athletes to give the governing body more time to tackle their concerns.

Top-ranked Djokovic, Canadian Vasek Pospisil and American John Isner resigned from the players' council of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) after other members formally asked them to step down. The move has provoked resistance from the two most successful players in men's tennis, Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal, who are also part of the players' council, while the sport's world governing bodies have urged unity.

"I won't be signing it today," three-times Grand Slam winner Murray said ahead of the U.S. Open. "I'm not totally against a player union, player association, but right now there's a couple of things: One is I feel like the current management that are in place should be given some time to implement their vision," the Briton told reporters. "Whether that works out, or not, would potentially influence me in the future as to which way I would go."

Djokovic posted on social media with a picture of more than 60 players on court at the U.S. Open venue. "We are excited to announce the beginning of the Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA), the first player-only association in tennis since 1972," Djokovic wrote.

Djokovic has said their intention was not to disrupt the existing ATP tour but offer a platform for players to be better heard on decisions that affect their livelihoods.

The ATP governs the men's professional tour and former Italian player Andrea Gaudenzi took over as chairman in January for a four-year term.

