

The New Nigerian President of the United Nations Security Council Declined to Remove a Hurdle Blocking the Trump Administration's Effort to Restore International Sanctions on Iran

# IRAN NEWS

Chief Executive of Iran Airports Company (IAC) Said That All Airports in the Country Will Be Equipped With the Intelligent System Against Coronavirus, Also Known as COVID-19

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## U.S. Push to Use Mechanisms in Iran Nuclear Deal Ludicrous

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian president has dismissed as childish, ridiculous and baseless the U.S. push to use the so-called snapback mechanism in the Iran nuclear deal to bring back international sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

President Hassan Rouhani said Washington's efforts to mobilize United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members against Iran have failed.

He said Washington first tried to get the UNSC to reinstate the arms embargo against Iran that expires in October, 2020, but failed to.

"After this defeat, the US sought another plan to restore its lost face; accordingly, it asked to use the mechanism in the Iran nuclear deal," he said.

"Anyone who is familiar with the ABC's of politics and interaction knows well that if somebody withdraws from an agreement, they cannot return after two or three years and use a concession stipulated in the same accord," President Rouhani noted.

He also underlined that the remaining signatories to the Iran nuclear agreement reiterated in their recent meeting that the U.S. has no right to use the provisions in the deal as it is no longer a party to the accord.

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## Iran Unveils New Homegrown Radar System

### IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian Army's Air Defense Force has unveiled a new homegrown radar system, dubbed 'Kashef-99'.

The new achievement was displayed in a ceremony attended by the force's commander, Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard, in Tehran on Wednesday.

Kashef-99 is a 3D, phased-array, mobile radar, used for discovering micro air vehicles (MAVs).

The new system has been designed and developed by the Modern Technologies Research Center of the Army's Air Defense Force.

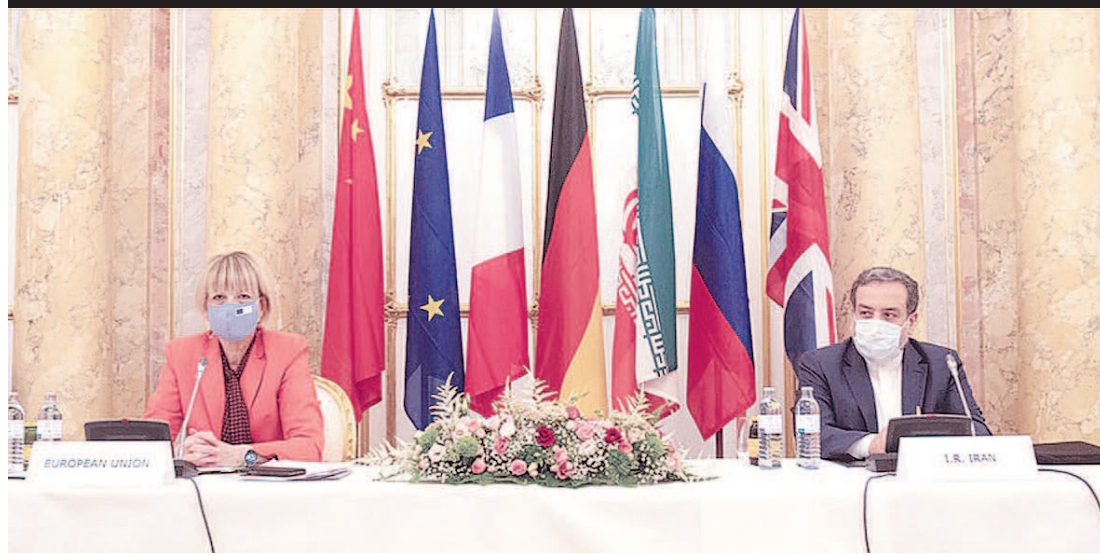
With a 12-kilometer range, Kashef-99 can track 300 targets simultaneously.

Kashef (meaning discoverer in Persian) is a series of Iranian early warning radars developed by SAIRAN.

According to Brigadier General Sabahifard, 27 achievements of the Air Defense Force will be unveiled today.

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## JCPOA Parties Determined To Preserve Iran Deal



### IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The remaining signatories to a 2015 Iran nuclear deal say they will do everything possible to preserve the landmark accord following their first meeting since the United States launched an unlawful push to restore United Nations sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The meeting of the Joint Commission to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was co-chaired by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, European External Action Service Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid.

In a post on her Twitter account at the end of the talks, Schmid wrote that it was "important" that the participants — Iran, France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China — were "united in resolve to preserve" the nuclear deal.

She added that the parties were also determined to "find a way to ensure full implementation of the agreement despite current challenges."

All parties to the JCPOA — Iran, Russia, China, the UK, France and Germany — reiterated that the U.S. is not a participant in the nuclear deal and has no right to use the mechanisms embedded in the JCPOA or in the UNSC Resolution 2231, he underlined.

The JCPOA Joint Commission deems that the U.S. government's anti-Iranian attempts at the UN are illegal, considers as null and void the U.S.' bid to trigger the snapback mechanism, and believes that Washington's measures will get nowhere, he added.

"All JCPOA members and the majority of the international community members are opposed to the U.S.' unilateral policies and its policy of weakening multilateralism, international organizations and multilateral approaches in the international relations. Everybody complains about the measures the U.S. is taking to ruin the international institutions," Araqchi stated. He further criticized the inefficiency of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), a financial mechanism developed by the three European members of the JCPOA — saying while the channel was supposed to organize trade interaction between Iran and Europe in defiance of the US sanctions, it has fallen far below Iran's expectations.

The European parties have come up with some ideas to improve the efficiency of the payment channel, Araqchi added, saying one initiative is to allow Russia and China to join the INSTEX and carry financial transactions.

The EU3 has also proposed the idea of increasing the number of INSTEX shareholders and finding new financial resources to fund the channel, the Iranian deputy foreign minister noted.

Speaking after the meeting, Araqchi also said Iran's JCPOA partners do not recognize the U.S. as a participating side and "do not regard this country as entitled to use the mechanisms of the JCPOA or Resolution 2231."

"The convergence among the participants sent an important message to the world about the position of the JCPOA's members," he said. "This is, of course, the stance of the majority of the international community. The mood at the UN Security Council is also similar."

"All JCPOA members and the majority of the world community are against America's unilateral policies and undermining multilateralism and global institutions in international relations. Everyone is complaining about the measures that the US takes to destroy international bodies," he said. The Iranian diplomat added that a number of initiatives have been put forward on ways to safeguard the JCPOA against Washington's unilateralism, adding, "All signatories are determined not to allow the U.S. to impose its own will [on others] and unilaterally kill a deal that has the support of the international community and the Security Council."

In turn, Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov wrote on Twitter that the Vienna meeting "demonstrated that its participants are fully committed to the nuclear deal and are determined to do their best to preserve it."

## NPT Director Pleased With Iran-IAEA Agreement

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Director for Nonproliferation Policy at the Arms Control Association hailed the recent agreement between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying it is important from the Safeguards perspective and will increase the chance to survive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"The access agreement reached between the IAEA and Iran is important from a safeguards perspective and increases the chances that the JCPOA will survive, but it is unlikely to impact the outcome of the Trump administration's efforts to reimpose UN sanctions," Kelsey Davenport told IRNA elaborating on the impact of Iran-IAEA agreement on US Administration efforts to restore sanctions on Iran.

"The United States claims that it triggered snapback and that UN sanctions will be reimposed Sept. 20—a claim that is disputed by the remaining parties to the JCPOA and other members of the Security Council," she added.

"The United States will try to pressure states into enforcing the UN sanctions, but it is equally clear that the Trump administration will face significant resistance, including from the U.S. allies," she noted.

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## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



## Lebanon and Prospect Of Islamic Resistance

Hizbullah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah who is known as Mr. Resistance on Sunday and in his speech on the occasion of Ashura made some remarks which are very strategic in its kind and at the same time have half an eye on the past, present and the future of Lebanon.

Experts evaluate this speech politically and militarily as a process of an everlasting school in the culture of administering Lebanon. He started his Ashura speech by reminding the 33-day war with Israel, a war which not only changed seriously the fate of Lebanon in all political, military and strategic equations in the West Asia, but also caused regret that 80 million Iranian people have not known it as they should have known and have been remained unaware of the great impacts of the result of war in the regional developments because of filthy and mercenary-like performance of media, although one of the reasons for peace, security and stability in their lives in the past 13 years has been the significant and unbelievable effect of this war.

One should say Zionist and Quds occupier regime had come to put an end to the existence of Hizbullah forever. Ending it both militarily, and politically, through blaming Hizbullah as the main reason for attack and destroying Lebanon, and making people stand against Hizbullah.

But Hizbullah's decisive victory was so that in the past thirteen years no bullet has been fired at Lebanon. In those years, the U.S. had occupied Iraq and Iran was in the heat of its nuclear crisis and destruction of Hizbullah was a prelude to the joint attack of the U.S. and its close allies, led by Quds occupier regime, at Iran. But God Almighty did not let it happen and it was only after Israelis' humiliating defeat that they forgot thinking of any military attack at Iran.

On Ashura, Nasrallah by reminding the 33-day war emphasized that he was not man of bluff and psychological war. He held a map of the occupied lands in front of the TV cameras and delved into details that in case the smallest aggression against Lebanon and Iran happens, how Hizbullah forces will destroy any part of the occupied lands and how harsh the attack would be. He elaborated it with no exaggeration or slogan and just by mentioning the military progress of Hizbullah forces and tabling objective and apparent facts and figures to back his words. And with his explanations sentence by sentence and word by word, he painted the picture of annihilation of enemy. He also reminded the rulers of the UAE, who have made explicit their enmities against Iran, that in case of any blow from the U.S. against Iran, they will ravage all emirates of the country to the ground.

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## Traders Urged to Help Meet Iran-Pakistan Trade Target

QUETTA (Dispatches) - Iranian Consul General in Quetta Hassan Darwesh has said that without help and cooperation of the industrialists and business people of both countries, the target of trade between Pakistan and Iran cannot be achieved.

During a meeting with a delegation of local businessmen, headed by vice president of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry Badaruddin, here on Tuesday, the Iranian envoy said that the traders and business people of Iran were ready to extend help and cooperation for the achievement of the bilateral trade target.

Mr Badaruddin said that Balochistan's industrialists and business people had always been interested in doing business with different countries, particularly Iran and Afghanistan.

He said that they realised the importance of strengthening of trade relations with the neighboring countries and periodic communication with their business people, industrialists and government officials.

For Pakistan to achieve trade goals with Iran, he said, it was necessary to promote bilateral trade on the pattern the Iran-Turkey trade.

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# Swiss FM to Visit Iran Next Week

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland Ignazio Cassis is scheduled to have an official visit to Iran on September 5-7, Swiss embassy in Tehran announced.

Foreign Ministry of Switzerland in a Twitter message said: “Federal Councillor @ignaziocassis will make an official visit to Iran from 5 to 7 September 2020 as part of the celebrations marking 100 years of Switzerland’s diplomatic presence in Tehran.”

“On 6 September, Mr Cassis will open an exhibition at the historic Negarestan Garden in Tehran on the history of Swiss-Iranian bilateral relations,” it added in a statement attached to its message.

## Tehran Attaches Importance to Promoting Ties With Brasilia

*IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK*

**TEHRAN - Senior Advisor to the Iranian Parliament Speaker on Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian underlined the importance of developing relations with Brazil.**

Speaking in a meeting with Brazilian Ambassador to Tehran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos, Amir-Abdollahian referred to positive background of relations between Iran and Brazil, saying it is possible to reinforce ties in various fields.

He pointed to Iran-Brazil parliamentary friendship group in the 11th parliament, saying friendship groups play important role in facilitating relations.

Iran-Brazil parliamentary friendship group and experts commission in Iranian parliament welcome exchanging delegations and consultations with counterparts in Brazil.



Iranian official alluded to Brazil’s independent and impartial policy and emphasized paying attention to Palestinians’ rights.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos said that there are common grounds for economic cooperation paving the way for reinforcing relations.

Brazil hails developing cooperation with Iran, he added.

He also conferred with Iranian official over regional developments especially Palestinian issues.

In the meantime, Iranian Envoy to Brazil Hossein Gharibi in a meeting with President of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies Rodrigo Maia highlighted the importance of developing all-out relations with Brazil.

He emphasized the need for closer cooperation to compensate for COVID19 damages.

Rodrigo Maia, for his part, underscored developing parliamentary relations between two countries.

## Foreign Ministry to Safeguard Iran’s National Interests

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the Foreign Ministry makes every effort to protect Iran’s national interests.

He made the remarks on Wednesday, noting, “As the U.S. and the Zionist Regime struggle to put economic, political, and security pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran, I and my colleagues in the Foreign Ministry work around the clock to thwart these efforts.”

He went on to say that the Foreign Ministry follows active and innovative diplomacy even in the UN Security Council.

“Three unprecedented diplomatic victories in the Security Council in just a few weeks is an incredible gift for the Iranian nation,” he added.

“Although appropriate tools are needed in this difficult and glorious path, we will spare no efforts to safeguard the country’s national interests,” he maintained.

## Still No Schengen Visa for Iranians

*IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK*

Tehran - The Secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines, Maqsood Ass’adi Samani, said that despite direct flights continuing to depart between Iran, France, the Netherlands, and Austria, Iranians cannot still visit Europe as tourists.

Speaking to the state-run Iran Students News Agency (ISNA), Ass’adi Samanii also noted that Schengen (European Union) visas are not currently being issued to Iranian citizens.

“Although Iranian airlines have resumed their flights to some European countries following months of suspension over the coronavirus outbreak, there is still no possibility of unnecessary tourist trips to these countries and Schengen visas are not currently issued to Iranian citizens,” Ass’adi Samani said.

Austria, Britain, France, and the Netherlands are among the European countries with direct flights to Iran that announced new travel regulations for Iranian citizens, ISNA reported on Monday.

France allows Iranians holding EU, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swiss, British, Canadian, and Australian passports to enter the country. The country recently eliminated the COVID-19 PCR test for travelers, but still says that Schengen visas will not be issued for Iranian citizens until further notice, due to the widespread outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran.

However, the European Union announced two months ago that it allows citizens of Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, and Rwanda. Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uruguay to visit 27 countries in the Schengen zone. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland (four non-EU countries and Schengen allies) are also subject to such regulations.

## U.S. Cannot Use Snapback



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - It is the common belief that U.S. cannot initiate the process of reinstating UN sanctions under UNSCR2231, Chang Hua said in a post on his Twitter account on Wednesday.

His comment came one day after the participants in the latest meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission in Vienna opposed the US government’s plan to refer to the nuclear deal for re-imposing UN sanctions on Iran, saying Washington is no longer a JCPOA party after its withdrawal in 2018.

In a tweet on Wednesday, the permanent mission of China to the United Nations hailed the Tuesday session of the JCPOA Joint Commission as a “fruitful meeting at a critical juncture”, dismissing the U.S.’ push to renew the sanctions on Iran by resorting to UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

UNSC Resolution 2231, which enshrined the JCPOA, states that if no council member has put forward a draft resolution to extend sanctions relief on Iran within 10 days of a non-compliance complaint, then the body’s president shall do so within the remaining 20 days.

The document, however, says the Security Council would “take into account the views of the states involved.”

## Foreign Ministry to Safeguard Iran’s National Interests

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## Air Defense Able to Destroy Any Drones

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of Army Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard said that Iran Air defense has ability to identify and destroy any drones in the country’s sky.

Stating that many air defense equipment is covert and cannot be shown in Media, Sabahifard said, “Defense systems will be used as covert equipment when needed to make enemies regret, so only a limited number of these devices will be unveiled today.”

He added that ‘Emad’ system is a unique system that can model the game of war and be used in all areas of defense, saying, “This system has very advanced software and hardware and has the ability to be upgraded.”

A few developed countries in the world had this

system and now, Iran, also achieved the use of this system by attempts of army defense forces, he said.

Referring to the unveiling of a new homegrown radar system, dubbed ‘Kashef-99’, Sabahifard said, “Kashef-99 is a 3D, phased-array, mobile radar, used for discovering micro air vehicles (MAVs).”

“Today, we have the ability to identify any drones in the sky of the country and the region and destroy it if necessary,” he stressed.

He highlighted that this year, the growth of the achievements of the Army Air Defense Force has increased by one hundred percent.

According to Brigadier General Sabahifard, 27 achievements of the Air Defense Force will be unveiled today.

## Tehran, Moscow to Boost Cultural Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – The chairman of the Islamic Culture and Relation Organization and the Russian Deputy Minister of Culture, stressed to expand cultural ties through the re-signing of the cultural agreement between Iran and Russia.

The international webinar of the Second Joint Cultural Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation was held on Monday with the participation of Abuzar Ibrahim Turkmen, Chairman of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Relation (ICRO), and Maxim Ksenzov, the Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation as well as some cultural and scientific figures and elites via videoconference.

Referring to the issue of the re-signing of the cultural agreement between Iran and Russia, in this meeting, the two sides agreed to continue negotiations in the cultural committee of the 16th round of the Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation which will be held from September 14 to 18 in the Caucasus.

The other topics discussed in this meeting included the reviewing of the activation of the two countries’ cultural cooperation documents, finalization of six documents in the fields of cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism, national documents and library, cinematic, cultural, and artistic cooperation of Iran’s Islamic Culture and Relations Organization with the Republic of Tatarstan and Republic of Bashkortostan.

## TEDPIX Drops Over 52,000 Points on Wednesday

TEHRAN (MNA) - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran’s major stock exchange, fell 52,902 points to 1.631 million on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

Over 12.971 billion securities worth 81.241 trillion rials (about \$1.934 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market’s index dropped 40,959 points and the second market’s index went down 97,654 points.

TEDPIX fell two percent in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday) for the third consecutive week.

The index stood at 1.718 million points at the end of the past week.

TEDPIX had experienced an 11.3-percent drop in the week ended on August 21, and a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 14.

It should be mentioned that the index had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, and while it had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising over the recent months, it witnessed several days of drop in the past three weeks.

While Iran’s stock market has not received any external shocks such as those form the foreign currency exchange rate, inflation, parallel markets, and international issues, some internal factors have caused the recent drops in this market.

## Air Defense Responsible for Most of Iran’s Airspace Security

IRAN (IRP) - Head of Iran’s Passive Defense Organization said that Iran has been successful in both defense and technology fronts.

Speaking on the occasion of National Air Defense Day, Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali stressed: “Today, a major part of ensuring the security of Iran’s airspace is on the air defense base.”

Brig. Gen. Jalali stated that air defense has a completely defensive aspect, emphasizing: “Passive defense and air defense are two wings of defense and complement for the country and the perfect defense is formed by the deep combination of the two.

He reminded: “Today, the air defense is in charge of a major part of the security of Iran’s airspace which in other words generates authority and deterrence.”

Head of Iran’s Passive Defense Organization went on to say: “The downing of the American advanced spy plane showed the oversight and capability of the country’s air defense, but what doubled the sweetness of this victory was the use of a native system in this operation.

Emphasizing that the current security of Iran is rooted in looking inward and localizing, Brig. Gen. Jalali addressed the border guards of Iran’s airspace, saying: “We appreciate your bravery and We are always grateful for your consciousness and awareness.”

## 473 Tons of Illicit Drugs Busted

TEHRAN (MNA) – Some 473 tons of different kinds of illicit drugs have been seized by Iran’s anti-narcotics police forces, in the first 6 months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2020).

Anti-narcotics police Chief of NAJA (Islamic Republic of Iran Law Enforcement Forces) Colonel Majid Karimi made the announcement in a press conference on Wednesday, saying that following the extensive intelligence operations, the anti-narcotics police forces of the country have successfully confiscated 473,000 kilograms of various kinds of narcotics since the beginning of the year.

The figure indicates a 37 percent increase compared to the corresponding period last year, he added.

70 smugglers have also been arrested in this regard and handed to the judiciary, he noted.

Being a neighbor to the biggest producer of drugs in the world has caused the Islamic Republic of Iran to shoulder a heavy burden as one of the main routes for drug transport.

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking and thousands of Iranian forces have been so far martyred to protect the world from the danger of drugs. Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug trafficking over the past decades.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:48
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:10
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:37

*1. O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.*  
Surah 4. Women (1)

# Iraq's Electricity Industry Active With Iranian Gas

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** On the sidelines of a meeting, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh referred to the purchase of Iranian gas by Iraq and said that using Iranian gas is very economical for Iraq because natural gas replaces diesel, which is more than twice the price of the gas.

When asked the question that the Iraqi Minister of Oil has stated that its country does not need Iranian gas and will cut it off in the future, Zanganeh replied: "No, they have not said such a thing. They have signed contracts for gas production in Iraq because Iraq has the capacity to produce gas and can use it anyway, but this is time-consuming and now Iraqis are willing to receive a lot of gas from Iran."

Zanganeh also mentioned in his meeting with people about renting foreign boats and said: "The Ministry of Oil has generally banned the leasing of foreign vessels and has given priority to leasing domestically built vessels."

Regarding Iran's gasoline reserves, the oil minister said: "Iran's gasoline reserves had reached more than 5 billion liters in May, but now they have decreased due to exports."

Zanganeh went on to say that in months of Ordibehesht and Khordad, the amount of stored gasoline hit 5b liters but currently due to exports, the figure has decreased and everything is getting normal.



He further said that developing CNG industry for the public transportation was another issue which was discussed in the meeting, reiterating that CNG is a priority for the ministry. Zanganeh added that talks with knowledge-based companies for manufacturing equipment and offering services have started.

He emphasized that the ministry is determined to stop imports if the domestic-made equipment is high quality, and it is the policy which is pursued in any section of the ministry.

He further said competition is a main factor for improving the quality, admitting that currently the number of foreign companies in the country is insignificant and there is no high competition in the country which is not good at all but this is a good opportunity for growth of domestic companies.

Zanganeh noted that all needed equipment by the oil ministry, which is domestically-made, is studied by the related bodies and in case its quality is verified the purchase, import of its similar foreign-made counterpart will be banned.

Establishing the organization for issuing quality certificate was a major move which started two weeks ago, and this organization assures consumers of the quality of the domestic-made goods and their standards which are needed by the oil industry, the minister added.

## Iranian Knowledge-Based Firms Benefiting From U.S. Sanctions

**TEHRAN (FNA) -** Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari said that the U.S. sanctions have been a blessing for the country's knowledge-based companies by flourishing their market.



"We cannot say that the sanctions have not been effective, but they have brought many advantages for the knowledge-based companies and created a good market for them," Sattari said.

He added that the knowledge-based companies in Iran have sold products worth 120,000bln toman (nearly \$26.6bln) last year.

Sattari also said that Iran stands among the first 10 world states in many fields of engineering, including mathematics, construction and biotech, and enjoys the biggest startups in the region. In relevant remarks last month, Sattari had said that his country was moving towards an oil-free economy with the help of knowledge-based companies.

## ICC Sympathizes With Its Japanese Counterpart



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) by sending a message expressed its sympathy with cooperative sector of Japan on the Coronavirus pandemic.

According to the public relations of ICC, the chain of consolation messages of world's cooperative sector on Coronavirus crisis reached Iran. The chain started from South Korea when its cooperative sector extended its sympathy with the Philippines and later the cooperative sector of the Philippines extended its consolation with Nepal cooperative.

The chain went ahead when India sent its consolation message to Iran and now ICC as the representative of Iran's cooperative sector extended the consolation message to Japan on the pandemic.

## KSC to Employ 244 New Workforce Through Exam

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** Korasan Steel Company is to hire 244 new forces through holding an entrance exam soon to reinforce its staff.

The company announced that the CEO of Khorasan Steel Company has ordered for holding an entrance exam for employing 244 new forces from the committed and capable youths in order to reinforce the biggest eastern industrial complex in the country.

The CEO of the company Mr. Kasra Ghafoori said that in order to remain impartial and to hire the deserved youths in the complex, the company is to hold an entrance exam for the volunteers who are eager to join the biggest industrial unit in the east of the country.

He said that the company is to employ 244 educated youths with different university degrees. The entrance exam is to be held in the next month in one of the academic centers.

Ghafoori added that so far some 2500 people are working in the complex, adding that 90 percent of the company's staff is native and from Khorasan Razavi Province.

He noted that employing skillful and capable force is one of the key pillars for developing an organization that Khorasan Steel Complex pursues it.

He said next week the company is to announce details of the exam in two large circulated newspapers.

## Tehran, Pyongyang Emphasize on Financial-Trade Cooperation



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** Islamic Republic of Iran and North Korea stressed the need to enhance financial and trade cooperation.

Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) Hamid Zadboum and North Korean Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran Han Sung-o on Tue. emphasized strengthening financial and trade cooperation between the two countries.

In this meeting, the two sides also emphasized the need for activating financial and commercial interactions.

TPOI in the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade is responsible for responding to the issues related to foreign trade, Zadboum said, adding, "strengthening and paving suitable way for trade between the private sectors of the two countries is essential."

For his part, North Korean Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran Han Sung-o emphasized the significance of solidarity, unity and amity between the two countries in the face of US sanctions and development of economic, trade and cultural cooperation with Iran.

The envoy praised the successful effort of the Islamic Republic of Iran in confronting the two problems of coronavirus, COVID-19, and sanctions.

He pointed to the age-old relations between Iran and North Korea and called for more interactions and talks between the two countries in order to develop level of economic and trade cooperation.

North Korean envoy to Iran proposed setting up a Joint Trade and Economic Committee between the two countries.

The Committee will pursue all requirements needed for bilateral trade cooperation, so that the meetings of the Committee will be held both in Tehran and Pyongyang periodically.

The two sides described setting up a joint trade and economic committee between Iran and North Korea as 'constructive move'.

## Iran Planning to Diversify Petchem Output Basket by 2025

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** Head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi said the country's petrochemical products basket is going to be more diversified by the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025).

Mohammadi made the remarks in a ceremony for introducing the company's new project director, Shana reported.

The official noted that major development plans were underway for diversifying the country's petrochemical output considering the wide range of feedstock available.

"The macro development planning that the



company is currently making for the petrochemical industry is beyond the second and third leaps of the industry, and we expect the company's projects directorate to follow up and help achieve these plans," Mohammadi said.

Noting that implementing 17 petrochemical projects is planned for the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 20, 2021), the deputy oil minister for petrochemical affairs added: "Medium-term planning shows the determination of the National Petrochemical Company and its commitment to these plans, everyone in NPC is following this trend and the effective role of this company in the development of the country's petrochemical industry is becoming more prominent."

## IKCO Develops Panoramic Roof for Popular French Model

**TEHRAN (PressTV) -** Iran's largest car manufacturer the IKCO is launching a new version of its popular French model Peugeot 207 with a panoramic roof.

Ahmad Aqajani, a project contractor working for the Iran Khodro Company, said on Tuesday that the carmaker has already launched mass production for the new version of Peugeot 207, saying the move would boost sales and help increase customer satisfaction.

Aqajani said the panoramic glass roof developed for Peugeot 207 is part of a wider scheme at IKCO to produce modern vehicle roofs for various models through the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) method.

He said mounting panoramic roofs on mass-produced cars like Peugeot 207 required some adjustments to IKCO's production lines.

"We added some robots and equipment to the lines and a number of new working stations were built inside the line," he said, adding that all parts required for mounting new roofs on IKCO's home-made and foreign models have been fully manufactured by Iranian parts makers.

The contractor said the IKCO plans to sell 700 units of Peugeot 207 equipped with panoramic roof in its initial offering to the market, adding that the company has a capacity to manufacture 200,000 units of the car, including normal hatchback versions, per year.

Iran's car industry has thrived technologically and logistically in recent years mainly because a series of American sanctions imposed on the country since 2018 have forced car makers to develop innovative solutions to maintain output at normal levels.

The IKCO and other car manufacturers have developed various high-tech parts needed to finish foreign models by using expertise and investment inside Iran.

## Non-Oil GDP Growth Stands at -1.7%

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN-** Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) excluding oil fell 1.7 percent in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) compared to the same period last year, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

The figure including oil fell 3.5 percent, ILNA reported. Based on the SCI data, the country's non-oil GDP reached 1.445 quadrillion rials (about \$34.4 billion) in the mentioned period, while the figure stood at 1.656 quadrillion rials (about \$39.4 billion) with oil included.

The data indicate that in the spring, the production by the agricultural sector increased by 1.5 percent, the industries and mines by 2.8 percent, and the service group by -4.1 percent compared to the spring of the previous year.

According to SCI, the country's non-oil GDP fell 0.6 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19), while with the oil included, the decline was seven percent.

The oil and gas sector recorded the highest negative growth of 35 percent, while the GDP growth for the mining sector fell 32.8 percent last year, based on the SCI data.

Meanwhile, the industry sector registered a negative growth of 14.7 percent which indicated a more intense shrinkage for this sector compared to the preceding calendar year.

In a report published in early June, the World Bank predicted that Iran's GDP is going to increase by 2.1 percent in 2021 after experiencing a 5.3 percent fall in the current year due to the negative impacts of the coronavirus outbreak.



## Bashir Appears at Trial Over 1989 Coup

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - Ousted Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir appeared in court on Tuesday at the start of a trial over the military coup in which he took power in 1989.

Giving his profession as “former president of the republic”, Bashir seemed in good physical condition as he appeared in a metal courtroom cage wearing white prison-issue clothes and a medical face mask that he lowered to identify himself.

In footage carried by Sudanese state TV he said he was resident in Khartoum’s Kober prison, 76 years old, and had two wives.



## U.S. Mulls Sanctions On Seven Belarusians

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States is considering imposing sanctions on seven Belarusian individuals it believes were involved in falsifying the Aug. 9 election and in violence against peaceful protesters, a senior U.S. State Department official said on Tuesday.

“We’ve got a group of seven people that we are working with Treasury for the evidentiary package” to impose sanctions, the senior U.S. State Department told Reuters in an interview. “It is a minimal effort to ... not just name and shame but to show that when people both steal elections and commit violence against peaceful protesters exercising fundamental freedoms of assembly and speech that there needs to be some accountability.”



## India Accuses China of Fresh Provocative Actions at Mountain Border



NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India’s foreign ministry on Tuesday accused Chinese troops of taking “provocative actions” on the disputed Himalayan mountain border while commanders from both sides were holding talks on Monday to defuse tensions between the Asian giants.

“Due to timely defensive action, the Indian side was able to prevent these attempts from unilaterally altering the status quo,” ministry spokesman Anurag Srivastava said in a statement. Indian troops had deployed on four strategic hilltops after what New Delhi called an attempted Chinese incursion along a border in the western Himalayan region of Ladakh over the weekend, an Indian official said.

China denied that it started the latest flare-up, with an embassy spokeswoman in New Delhi accusing Indian troops of trespassing across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) - the de facto border - and conducting “flagrant provocations”.

Indian and Chinese troops have been locked in a border confrontation for months in the high-altitude snow deserts of Ladakh, and have held talks to reduce friction. The two have disputed the course of the frontier for over half a century.

The Indian official, who was briefed on the latest incident, said the Indian troop move responded to an attempt by a

large number of Chinese infantry to push through a key mountain pass late on Saturday. “We mobilised and occupied the four heights,” the official said, adding all four hilltops were on India’s side of the LAC.

The Indian official said the Chinese soldiers were backed up by military vehicles and drew close enough to engage Indian troops in verbal arguments, but there were no clashes.

He said the incident occurred on the southern bank of Pangong Tso, a picturesque lake where Indian and Chinese troops have been facing off since April. The Indian official said the Chinese had also been consolidating positions on the northern bank of the lake with what appeared to be new defensive positions.

But Ji Rong, a spokeswoman for the Chinese embassy in New Delhi, said Indian troops had violated the LAC at Pangong Tso’s southern bank and near another mountain pass.

“What India has done runs counter to the efforts made by both sides for a period of time to ease and cool down the situation on the ground, and China is resolutely opposed to this,” she said.

“India...said it pre-empted Chinese military activity,” China’s state-backed Global Times said in an editorial. “The word ‘pre-empt’ shows it was Indian troops that first took destructive action, and the Indian troops initiated the stand-off this time.”

In June, 20 Indian soldiers were killed in hand-to-hand combat with Chinese troops in Ladakh’s Galwan area, the most serious clash between the two countries in 50 years. Both sides then agreed to pull back with military chiefs in the region holding five rounds of talks. But the Indian military said this week Beijing had reneged on the deal by carrying out “provocative military movements to change the status quo”.

## Belarus Detains Students Marking New Term With Protests

MINSK (AFP) - Police in Belarus detained several dozen university students as they marked the first day of school with protests against strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko.

Hundreds of students took to the streets of the capital Minsk for the latest in three weeks of rallies rejecting the strongman’s claim to have won a sixth term in elections last month and demanding he resign.

Students from several universities chanted “Fascists!” and “This is our city!”

Some attempted to form a human chain but were detained by riot police, with rights group Viasna saying more than 40 were arrested. Thousands of Belarusians have been taking part in unprecedented protests since the August 9 election, which Lukashenko says he won with 80 percent of the vote but critics say was rigged.

More than 100,000 people have flooded the streets of Minsk for three straight weekends to demand the resignation of the 66-year-old strongman, who has ruled the ex-Soviet country since 1994.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has raised the possibility of sending military support if Belarus “starts to get out of control” and Lukashenko has been pictured brandishing an assault rifle during protests.

Lukashenko has dismissed the calls to resign, brushed off the idea of holding new elections and instead detained protesters and members of the opposition.

On Tuesday, Lukashenko vowed to punish EU members Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after they banned him and 29 other high-ranking officials over the election and subsequent crackdown.

“We will simply try to solve this problem with economic methods,” Lukashenko said on a visit to the western city of Baranovichi, suggesting he could re-route Belarusian cargo from Baltic ports and send it via Russia.

“Of course, it would be a little bit disadvantageous for us. But we can agree with Russians on tariffs.”

Lukashenko also accused the opposition of wanting to cut the country “into pieces” and claimed that if his critics came to power “it will be massacre”.

“What happened in Ukraine will be just a walk in the park” in comparison, he said, in an apparent reference to a Kiev uprising and the outbreak of a separatist insurgency in Ukraine in 2014.

Lukashenko has proposed plans for a referendum on constitutional reforms, in what appears to be an attempt at compromise.



## Erdogan Accuses EU of Using Greece as Bait

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip accused European nations of using Greece as “bait” in the Mediterranean Sea confrontation while belittling Athens’ military might on Tuesday.

Erdogan, who has threatened Greece with military action, described Turkey’s activities in the eastern Mediterranean as the “pursuit of [its] rights and justice” and denounced what he said were Greek efforts to “imprison” Turkey to a small region surrounding its coast.

“Efforts to descend on the riches of the Mediterranean, which are the rights of every country around it, is an example of modern-day colonialism,” Erdogan said.

He also accused some nations he did not name of pushing Greece into a confrontation with Turkey. “Even if hostile fronts unite, they cannot stop the rise of Turkey. It’s laughable now to use as bait a country [Greece] - which could not even fight its way out of a paper bag - against a regional and global power like Turkey,” Erdogan said in a speech at his palace in Ankara.



## Macron Tells Lebanese Leaders to Reform swiftly or Face Sanctions

BEIRUT (Reuters) - French President Emmanuel Macron has warned Lebanese politicians they risk sanctions if they fail to set the nation on a new course within three months, stepping up pressure for reforms in a country collapsing under the weight of an economic crisis.

Visiting for the second time in less than a month, Macron marked Lebanon’s centenary by travelling to a forest outside Beirut to plant a cedar tree, the emblem of a nation facing the biggest threat to its stability since the 1975-1990 civil war.

In central Beirut, close to the port that was devastated in a huge Aug. 4 blast, police fired teargas at stone-throwing protesters who gathered outside parliament to vent anger at mismanagement and state corruption that has dragged Lebanon into crisis.

“It’s the last chance for this system,” Macron told POLITICO in an interview. “It’s a risky bet I’m making ... I am putting the only thing I have on the table: my political capital.”

Macron, who toured the wrecked port on Tuesday, said he wanted “credible commitments” and a follow-up mechanism from Lebanon’s leaders, including a legislative election in six to 12 months. Should they fail to shift direction in the next three months, he said, punitive measures could be imposed, including withholding bailout money and sanctions on the ruling class.

Lebanese politicians, some of them former warlords who have overseen decades of industrial-scale corruption, now face a daunting task with an economy in meltdown, a swathe of Beirut in tatters after the port blast and sectarian tensions rising.

Pressure from Macron, who told online news provider Brut he would visit again in December, has already pushed major parties to agree on a new prime minister, Mustapha Adib, who has called for the rapid formation of a government and promised swift reforms to secure a deal with the International Monetary Fund.

Forming a cabinet has taken months in the past. But Macron said he would push politicians to move swiftly and said billions of dollars in funds pledged at a 2018 Paris donor conference in Paris would not be released without reforms.

Macron, who also visited Beirut in the immediate aftermath of the port blast that killed more than 190 people and injured 6,000, said the international community must stay focused on the emergency in Lebanon for six weeks. He said he was ready to help organize an international conference with the United Nations in October. “I am ready to host it in Paris,” he said.

## U.S. Warns N. Korea Still Pressing Ballistic Missile Development

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. government warned Tuesday



that North Korea continues to acquire materials and equipment for its ballistic missile program, despite claims in Washington that Pyongyang has pulled back on its nuclear ambitions.

In a joint global “advisory” the Treasury, Commerce and State Departments detailed North Korea’s ongoing efforts to obtain everything from forestry trucks for missile launchers to common metals and materials that can be used in rockets, warning sellers to beware of sanctions on the country.

“The United States is committed to disrupting North Korea’s ballistic missile procurement network and promoting accountability for entities and individuals assisting or providing support to North Korea’s ballistic missile program,” the Treasury said.

The State Department said Pyongyang’s missile development efforts “pose a significant threat to both regional and global stability.”

The advisory came as negotiations between the two countries aimed at halting North Korea’s nuclear weapons progress, launched with fanfare at a 2018 summit between president Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un, have remained at a standstill since early last year.

Nevertheless, two months before a presidential election, Trump and his campaign have claimed success in dealing with North Korea.

“In North Korea, the president lowered the temperature, and against all odds got the North Korean leadership to the table. No nuclear test. No long range missile test,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the Republican National Convention last week in support of Trump.



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## USTR Extends Some China Tariff Exclusions Only Through End-2020

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Trade Representative's office said on Tuesday it has extended China tariff exclusions for a wide range of goods, including smart watches and certain medical masks, through the end of 2020, rather than renewing the previous one-year extension. In a Federal Register notice, USTR said the extensions were applied to products excluded from its 7.5%

"Section 301" tariffs imposed a year ago on some \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods a year ago amid tense trade talks between the world's two largest economies. The products included a number of Bluetooth and wearable data-transmitting devices, such as those imported from China by Apple Inc, FitBit, Sonos and other technology companies.



## U.S. Manufacturing Activity At Nearly Two-Year High

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. manufacturing activity accelerated to a nearly two-year high in August aided by a surge in new orders, but employment at factories continued to lag amid safety restrictions intended to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The upbeat report from the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) strengthened expectations for a sharp rebound in economic activity this quarter, though the improvement in manufacturing remained uneven as the coronavirus pandemic boosted demand for goods like home electronics at the expense of heavy-duty equipment like machinery and aircraft.

The ISM described sentiment as "generally optimistic, though to a lesser degree compared to July." The ISM said its index of national factory activity increased to a reading of 56.0 last month from 54.2 in July. That was the highest level since November 2018 and marked three straight months of growth.

A reading above 50 indicates expansion in manufacturing, which accounts for 11% of the U.S. economy. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index would rise to 54.5 in August.

Manufacturers of transportation equipment said "airline industry continues to be under great pressure." Makers of machinery said "capital equipment new orders have slowed again."

In contrast, manufacturers of electrical equipment, appliances and components reported "strong demand from existing and new customers." Similar sentiments were echoed by makers of chemical, wood and fabricated metal products.

Manufacturing is also picking up across the world. In China, factory activity expanded at the fastest clip in nearly a decade in August, while it remained on a recovery path in the euro zone.

Stocks on Wall Street rallied on the data. The dollar was steady against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices fell.

The ISM's forward-looking new orders sub-index increased to a reading of 67.6 in August from 61.5 in July. The survey's measure of order backlogs at factories accelerated as did orders for exports.

Though factory employment continued to improve last month, it remained in contraction territory. The ISM's manufacturing employment measure rose to a reading of 46.4 from 44.3 in July.

According to the ISM "companies and suppliers operated in reconfigured factories, with limited labor application due to safety restrictions."

Factory employment was already in decline before the coronavirus crisis because of the Trump administration's trade war with China. Its struggle to rebound even as orders received by factories are rising fits in with economists' views that the labor market is losing steam after being boosted by the reopening of businesses in May.

The government's closely followed employment report to be released on Friday is expected to show 1.4 million jobs created in August after 1.763 million were added in July, according to a Reuters survey of economists. That would leave nonfarm payrolls about 11.5 million below their pre-pandemic level.

A separate report from the Commerce Department on Tuesday showed construction spending edged up 0.1% in July after falling 0.5% in June. Economists had forecast construction spending rebounding 1.0% in July. Construction spending dipped 0.1% on a year-on-year basis.

Spending on private construction projects advanced 0.6%, boosted by investment in homebuilding amid record-low mortgage rates. Spending on residential projects surged 2.1%, eclipsing a 1.0% drop in outlays on nonresidential construction projects such as manufacturing and power plants.

Spending on public construction projects tumbled 1.3%.

## Germany Sees Economy Recovering Faster Than Expected in 2020

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany expects the economic devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to be less severe this year than originally feared, but sluggish foreign demand is likely to weaken the rebound in Europe's largest economy next year.

Presenting the government's updated forecasts on Tuesday, Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said a strong response from the state was helping fuel a quicker than expected recovery from the coronavirus shock.

"The recession in the first half of the year turned out to be less severe than we had feared," Altmaier told reporters, adding that the worst was over for the economy.

"Overall, we can say that at least for now, we are dealing with a V-shaped development," Altmaier said. He added that he did not expect authorities to impose another round of lockdown measures as in March and April.

Confirming an earlier Reuters report, Altmaier said Berlin had revised upwards its 2020 forecast to a decline of 5.8% from a previous estimate of -6.3%.

That would still represent the biggest economic slump since World War Two. The German economy contracted by 5.7% in 2009 as the global financial crisis unfolded.

For 2021, the government revised downward its growth forecast to an expansion of 4.4% from its previous estimate of 5.2%. This means the economy will not reach its pre-pandemic size before early 2022, Altmaier said.

The government expects exports to tumble by 12.1% this year before jumping by 8.8% in 2021. Private consumption is seen falling by 6.9% this year and then rising by 4.7% in 2021.

## Virus Plunges Brazil Into Recession With Record 9.7% Drop

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Brazil's economy, the biggest in Latin America, contracted by a record 9.7 percent in the second quarter of 2020, plunging into recession as coronavirus lockdowns hit home, the official statistics agency said Tuesday.

Brazil has been hit hard by the pandemic, with the second-highest number of infections and deaths worldwide after the United States, and stay-at-home measures to contain the virus have taken a heavy toll.

"GDP is now at the same level as late 2009, at the height of the global financial crisis," the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) said in a statement. It was the biggest drop since the current system of records began in 1996, it said.

There were record contractions of 12.3 percent in the industrial sector and 9.7 percent in the services sector, which together account for 95 percent of the Brazilian economy, IBGE said.

"These results refer to the peak of social distancing, when many economic activities were partially or totally paralyzed to fight the pandemic," IBGE national accounts coordinator Rebeca Palis said in the statement.

The contraction was worse than the 9.2 percent average forecast by 49 economists polled by business daily Valor.

However, it was better than the 11.1 percent drop economists were predicting in May.

Brazil fared better in the second quarter than many other economies, including Britain (-20.4 percent), France (-13.8 percent), Mexico (-17.1 percent) and Chile (-13.4 percent).

"The country suffered one of the more modest downturns in Latin America," consulting firm Capital Economics said in a note.

"But with fiscal policy set to turn from a tailwind to a headwind, the pace of the recovery is likely to lose momentum."

Analysts say Brazil's improvement was largely thanks to the decision by President Jair Bolsonaro's administration to launch a massive stimulus program that has been paying 600 reais (\$110) a month to 66.4 million Brazilians hit hardest by lockdown measures.

That is nearly one-third of the population.

Bolsonaro, who faces pressure from deficit hawks to rein emergency spending back in, announced Tuesday the government would extend the measure for four more months, but halve the payout to 300 reais.

"The Brazilian fiscal package was brutal, it was absolutely enormous," Margarida Gutierrez, an economist at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, told AFP.

Brazil's economy shrank a revised 2.5 percent in the first quarter, as the impact of the pandemic began to hit, IBGE said.

Since then, Covid-19 has exploded in Brazil: the country has now registered more than 3.9 million infections and 121,000 deaths.

## Power Demand Pushes UAE August Oil Output Above OPEC+ Quota

DUBAI (Reuters) - The United Arab Emirates pumped 2.693 million barrels of oil per day in August, above its OPEC+ quota, after hot weather and people holidaying at home drove associated gas demand for power generation, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The output exceeds the country's quota under the OPEC+ supply pact by about 100,000 bpd, the sources said on Tuesday on condition of anonymity. The pact allows the UAE to produce 2.590 million bpd.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies including Russia, a group known as OPEC+, are seeking to cut production by 7.7 million bpd between August and December.

The UAE will compensate for the August rise by reducing its oil supply and exports in the coming months, the sources said.

UAE Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei confirmed the August rise in output in a tweet later on Tuesday. He said that "measures have been taken to compensate for this temporary increase due to peak summer electricity demand" and reiterated the UAE's commitment to the OPEC+ pact.

OPEC+ countries that breach their targets are under pressure from other members of the group, including de-facto OPEC leader Saudi Arabia, to reduce production by the end of September to offset any oversupply since the cuts were agreed.

The August increase in the UAE's crude production stemmed from higher power demand during the hot summer months, the sources said. It was boosted this year as

people stayed at home because of COVID-19 fears and travel restrictions.

Curbs on crude output also reduce production of associated gas, a byproduct used to power air conditioners and as feedstock for the petrochemicals industry.

UAE spot crude exports have risen since July because of destocking from tanks filled during an April production surge and lower domestic refinery runs, consultancy Energy Aspects said in a report last week.

The consultancy also said that the UAE originally planned to raise its October output to 0.9 million bpd above its quota.

Abu Dhabi National Oil Company ADNOC, the UAE's main oil producer, told customers it would cut its October crude term supplies by 30% for all crude grades, Mazrouei said.

An internal OPEC+ report found that the UAE, which made additional voluntary cuts in June, overproduced by about 50,000 bpd between May and July.

## China Accuses U.S. Using National Security As Excuse to Act Against Chinese Firms



BEIJING (Reuters) - China accused the United States on Tuesday of using "national security" concerns as an excuse to act against Chinese firms, in a response that followed days after the Pentagon listed 11 more Chinese firms as being owned or controlled by the military.

"I don't think this kind of behavior will be of any benefit to the U.S.," China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters at a daily briefing on Tuesday.

The U.S. has "repeatedly abused the concept of national security, misused national power, and oppressed particular Chinese companies," she said.

Chinese companies abide by regulations and market principles she added.

The Pentagon on Friday listed 11 companies, including construction giant China Communications Construction Co, China Three Gorges Corporation Limited, Sinochem Group Co Ltd and China Spacesat, as having links with the Chinese military, laying the groundwork for potential sanctions.

Earlier in the year the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) document listed 20 companies operating in the United States that Washington alleges are backed by the Chinese military.

The Pentagon's designations do not trigger penalties, but a 1999 law that mandates the compilation of the list says the president may impose sanctions that could include blocking all property of the listed parties.

## Maersk to Cut Jobs in Major Re-Organization

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) - Maersk will cut jobs in a major shake-up that will affect a third of the shipping giant's staff as it seeks to integrate its seaborne container and in-land logistics businesses, it said on Tuesday.

Maersk, which handles about one in five containers shipped worldwide, has been under pressure from investors to speed its transformation from an unwieldy conglomerate but has proved resilient in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cost cuts and its reinstatement of more upbeat guidance last month have helped to double its share price since March and the shares were trading 0.9% up at 9,652 crowns by 0835 GMT.

The company sold its oil and gas assets in 2017 to Total as part of its efforts to become a more streamlined company focused on its container and in-land logistics business for large customers such as Walmart and Nike.

Under the shake-up, its Damco freight-forwarding business and Africa-focused carrier Safmarine will be integrated into Maersk by the end of the year and their brands will cease to exist, Maersk said in a statement on Tuesday.

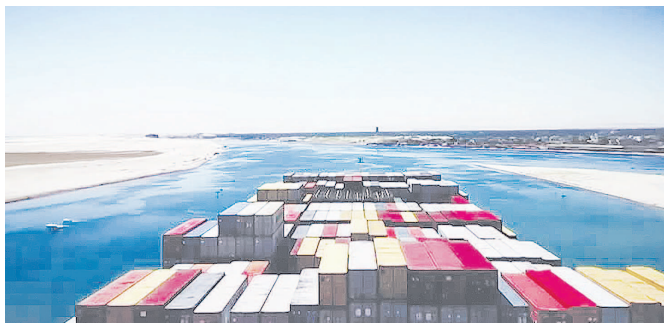
"Simplifying the organisation will regrettably impact jobs due to duplicate roles and roles that will no longer be needed," Chief Commercial Officer Vincent Clerc said earlier in an internal email sent to Maersk employees and seen by Reuters.

A Maersk spokeswoman said that between 26,000 and 27,000 employees out of Maersk's total headcount of 80,000 will be affected by the restructuring.

The company did not say how many would be laid off and the internal email also gave no detail on the number of job cuts.

Hamburg Sud, which Maersk bought in 2016, will remain a separate brand but its back office will be rolled into that of Maersk, the company said.

The Hamburg Sud unit employs 4,500 people while Damco and Safmarine have 2,300 and 1,100 staff respectively, according to Maersk.





## COVID-19 Kills 125 More in Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Wednesday that some 125 more Iranians have died from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 21,797.

Sima Sadat Lari said that, with the 125 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 21,797.

Some 1,858 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over

the past 24 hours, some 1,136 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

Sadat Lari noted that a total of 378,752 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some of 326,801 whom have recovered or discharged from hospital.

Some 3,693 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said.



## Supply Curbs, Uncertain Demand To Keep Oil Rangebound Above \$40

LONDON (Reuters) - Oil prices will see little change this year and a modest uptick in 2021 as output cuts take effect, with the demand picture clouded in uncertainty due to the coronavirus pandemic, a Reuters poll showed on Tuesday.

The survey of 43 analysts and economists forecast benchmark Brent crude to average \$42.75 a barrel in 2020, up from July's \$41.50 consensus and compared with an average price of \$42.60 so far this year. Brent is expected to average \$50.45 in 2021.

The 2020 U.S. crude price outlook rose to \$38.82 per barrel from July's \$37.51.

Global demand, meanwhile, was seen contracting more steeply this year, by between 8-10 million bpd versus July's 7.2-8.5 million bpd consensus.

"The market's looking for a catalyst to break out of its recent range," said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of commodity research, BNP Paribas.

"On the bearish side, this could be a degradation of OPEC+ discipline as prices begin to rise, or more severe economic setback ... On the bullish side, a positive outcome in phase III COVID-19 vaccine trials that will re-shape expectations around the path of a global economic recovery."

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, or 'OPEC+', have urged nations producing oil above agreed quotas to deepen cuts in August and September.

Its current policy calls for a 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd) cut.

"OPEC+ will likely support a floor at \$40, but plateauing demand recovery and concerns of a COVID-19 second wave will make price gains difficult," Jefferies analyst Jason Gammel said.

"Declining U.S. production could be supportive into year-end."



The International Energy Agency this month cut its 2020 demand forecast by 140,000 bpd to 91.9 million bpd and, with the pandemic throttling air travel, predicted consumption in 2021 will be slightly lower than it was in 2019.

"Air traffic is likely to suffer for longer," said Norbert Ruecker of Julius Baer.

## Chinese Bus Offers New Evidence of Airborne Coronavirus Spread

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A person on a poorly ventilated Chinese bus infected nearly two dozen other passengers with coronavirus even though many weren't sitting close by, according to research published on Tuesday that offers fresh evidence the disease can spread in the air.

Health authorities had initially discounted the possibility that simply breathing could send infectious micro-droplets into the air, but did a U-turn as experts piled on pressure and evidence mounted.

The article published Tuesday in JAMA Internal Medicine probes the threat of airborne infection by taking a close look at passengers who made a 50-minute trip to a Buddhist event in the eastern Chinese city of Ningbo aboard two buses in January before face masks became routine against the virus. Researchers believe a passenger, whose gender was not identified, was likely patient zero because the person had been in contact with people from Wuhan, the city where the contagion emerged late last year.

The scientists managed to map out where the other passengers sat, and also test them for the virus, with 23 of 68 passengers subsequently confirmed as infected on the same bus. What is notable is that the sickness infected people in the front and back of the bus, outside the perimeter of 1-2 meters (three-six feet) that authorities and experts say infectious droplets can travel.

On top of that, the sick passenger was not yet showing symptoms of the disease, such as a cough, when the group made their trip to a religious event.

Researchers also noted the air conditioning simply recirculated the air inside the bus, which likely contributed to spreading of the virus. "The investigations suggest that, in closed environments with air recirculation, SARS-CoV-2 is a highly transmissible pathogen," they wrote, referring to the name of the virus. "Our finding of potential airborne transmission has important public health significance."

## Betting on Asia's Debt, Europe's Hunt for Yield Heads East

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Low yields at home are sending some previously shy European investors into Asia's credit markets, money managers say, lured by the promise of higher returns and a hope that rebounding economies can hold defaults at bay.

Unlike in Europe or the United States, Asia's central banks have not stepped in to put a floor under corporate debt prices. That has the market's recovery in Asia trailing the rest of the world.

"Now people are looking for the valuation gap to close," said Hayden Briscoe, head of Asia-Pacific fixed income at UBS Asset Management. Starting with family offices, then private banks, flows from Italy, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have broadened over the past few months, he said.

"I don't think it's slowing down," he said. "We haven't had a day of outflows, it's just been continuous."

Like elsewhere Asia's junk bond spreads, the premium over safer assets that buyers demand for riskier debt, have narrowed sharply since March.

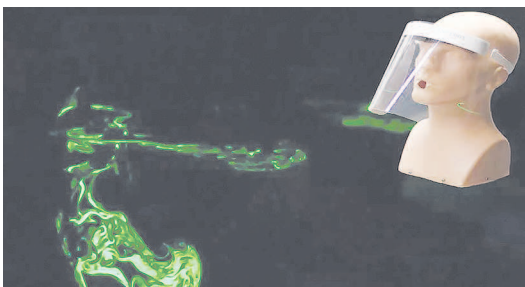
But Asian high yield .MERADHY still offers a rich 686 basis points over safe-haven benchmarks, which is at least 200 basis points more than what European .MERHE00 or U.S. MERH0A0 junk debt offers. At the same time Asia's economies, especially China which dominates the region's \$260 billion high-yield market, are emerging in better shape from the coronavirus crisis.

## Study Shows How Masks With Valves and Face Shields Allow Spread of Virus

WASHINGTON (Dispatches)

- People wearing plastic face shields or masks fitted with a valve can spray invisible droplets over a very wide area when they sneeze or cough, making the devices ineffective at preventing the spread of coronavirus when used on their own, a simulation model shows.

In a report published Tuesday in the US journal Physics of Fluids, researchers at Florida Atlantic University used vertical and horizontal laser sheets to track tiny droplets of distilled water and glycerin as they spread from a hollow mannequin head fitted with a plastic face shield or a mask with a breathing valve on it.



The face shield initially blocks the passage of the droplets as they move forwards, but "the expelled droplets can move around the visor with relative ease and spread out over a large area," the researchers said.

As for a mask with a valve fitted to make breathing easier, "a large number of

droplets pass through the exhale valve unfiltered, which make it ineffective in stopping the spread the COVID-19 virus if the person wearing the mask is infected."

The researchers concluded that despite the comfort that both types of protection offer, high-quality cloth or medical masks of plain design are preferential in helping prevent the spread of the virus.

## Egypt Signs 15-Year Contract With French Metro Line Operator

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Egypt on Tuesday signed a 15-year, billion-euro contract with French transport operator RATP Dev to manage Cairo's third metro line, the transport ministry said.

The government has sought to expand the run-down network in recent years to ease the burden on the traffic-choked streets of the capital, home to more than 20 million people.

In 2012 its third metro line went into operation, stretching 47 kilometres (29 miles) from east to west.

The new 1.1 billion-euro (\$1.4-billion) contract between RATP Dev and the National Tunnels Authority aims "to alleviate the pressure on the Egyptian Company for the Management and Operation of the metro, which is in charge of the first and second lines," the transport ministry said. Over three million commuters use the Cairo metro every day, but the metro company has been grappling with heavy losses and debts for years.

The government has hiked fares several times in recent years to generate funds for upkeep of the three-decade-old network. In August, authorities raised the metro tickets covering up to nine stops from three to five Egyptian pounds (\$0.32). The fare for up to 16 stops now costs seven pounds (\$0.44).

A third of Egyptians live below the poverty line.

## Iran Unveils...

FROM PAGE 1

While congratulating Aug. 31, the Establishment Anniversary of Air Defense Force, Sabahifard seized this opportunity to express his thanks to the round-the-clock and nonstop efforts of all personnel of the Army's Air Defense across the country."

A number of 27 salient achievements of Iran's Army Air Defense Force were unveiled yesterday.

The commemoration ceremony of Anniversary of National Defense Day was held on Tuesday at Unknown Martyrs' Cemetery in the presence of commanders, senior officials and staff of Iran's Army Air Defense by fully observing of anti-coronavirus and social-distancing protocols due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country.

While congratulating Aug. 31 the Establishment Anniversary of Air Defense Force, Sabahifard seized this opportunity to express his thanks to the round-the-clock and nonstop efforts of all personnel of Army's Air Defense across the country."

## NPT Director...

FROM PAGE 1

"Iran's fulfillment of the Safeguards obligations may reinforce efforts by states to resist the U.S. attempt to enforce UN sanctions, but it won't impact the Trump administration's approach," U.S. expert noted.

Commenting on the influence the E3 stance concerning pressure of Trump administration to invoke the sanctions snapback, Davenport said: "The Trump administration's silence over the agreement reached between Iran and the IAEA is telling something."

"The United States pushed for resolution of the IAEA investigation and used Iran's failure to comply as ammunition in its quest to discredit the JCPOA and justify the maximum pressure campaign," she added.

"If the JCPOA survives and a new president takes office, resolution of the IAEA investigation removes a political barrier that could have impeded a return to full compliance with the JCPOA by the United States and Iran," she said, adding that Trump's goal is to destroy the JCPOA and ensure that there is no deal for a future president to come back.

"The E3 rightly pushed for Iran to cooperate with the IAEA investigation and requests for access. Iran fulfilling the Safeguards obligations likely reinforces confidence in E3 efforts to preserve the JCPOA and in existing efforts to resist the Trump administration's attempts to manipulate the Security Council and snapback UN sanctions."

"But even prior to the IAEA-Iran agreement, the E3 remained steadfast in their opposition to the Trump administration snapback invocation bid, noting that the U.S. does not have legal standing to reimpose UN sanctions and that the snapback is incompatible with European support for the JCPOA," the US analyst stated.

## Lebanon and...

FROM PAGE 1

By his analysis, he showed the Saudis how they would be destroyed and he reminded all states in the region how any aggression against Iran will cost them dear. He continued his fiery speech to prove this point that the U.S. will not dare to wage a war against Iran.

Experts believe that the thought of Sayyad and Mr. Resistance and any sentence of him is expressed like a precision-guidance missile which is fired at enemies with full calculation and study and it sows the seed of fear and panic in the hears of the public opinions of hegemonic currents and Western, Saudi and Emirati rulers. This is a thought that takes attacking approach and stand in order to prevent enemies not even think of any dream of attack at Iran and Lebanon because they know that the real peace is only restored when we obtain real power and enemies cannot sleep the nights well because of their concerns and nightmare of this God-oriented power.

But it is a pity that while Sayyad Hassan alone with his brave speech had entered the political, psychological media war scene to thwart some part of West, Saudi and Arab-Hebrew psychological war against Iranians, unfortunately our national broadcasting IRIB with over tens of TV channels and its big media bodies and tens of several dedicated budgets did not reflect the voice of this Sayyad of Resistance who is, in true sense of the word, defender of goals of the Islamic Revolution in the world. It was expected his speech to be translated into different languages like Arabic, English, Persian and even Hebrew, or even video clips of his speech to be prepared and re-casted in order that his detailed analyses and data could make the determination of pro-resistance enthusiasts in the world stronger, and hearts of enemies be filled with concerns and panic and their queues be disarrayed. But we stood in a corner watching it with open mouth and passively. Passivity has taken us to the court of enemies and perhaps penetration of individuals and vicious thoughts have targeted the heart of our media outlets.

If I say outspokenly that his speech was of the type of Martyr Lieutenant Qassem Soleimani's, I have not boasted or exaggerated. This speech filled hours of programs of most-watched and popular media of enemies, and several analyses have been added on its influential dimensions. Viva Mr. Resistance who put on display a curtain of genuine Islam's power.

## U.S. Push to...

FROM PAGE 1

Rouhani said the consensus among UN Security Council member states against the U.S. is unprecedented in the history of the world body and amounts to a victory for Iran as well.

Rouhani added, "The United States wanted to defeat us economically and make us surrender to its unworthy bullying; however, today, we can see despite the temporary obstacles created in our economic ties and trades due to the coronavirus, the Central Bank of Iran has allocated \$14.5 billion to provide people with essential goods."

He noted that while the coronavirus pandemic has slashed major economies in the world by up to 20%, Iran's economy has contracted only by 3%.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani expressed gratitude to people for meticulously observing coronavirus-related health protocols during mourning rituals of Muharram.

"I would like to thank all the religious preachers and enthusiastic eulogists who, with their new initiatives, performed this year's Muharram rituals, while observing all health protocols."

"Such vigilance helped us not to give any excuse to the enemies."

## Traders Urged to...

FROM PAGE 1

He underlined the need for promotion of legal trade and said that it would bring prosperity in both the countries and help improve living standards of the people of Iran and Pakistan.

The Iranian consul general said that he would be happy to arrange meetings between delegations of the chambers of commerce and industry of Iran and Pakistan.

"We hope that trade relations between the two Islamic neighbours will be further strengthened," Mr Darwesh said and added that the Iranian government was ready to extend help and cooperation in this regard.

Former caretaker chief minister of Balochistan Allauddin Marri was prominent among those who attended the meeting.



## Mkhitaryan Leaves Arsenal For Roma on Permanent Deal

ROME (Dispatches) - Arsenal midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who spent last season on loan at AS Roma, is to stay with the Italian capital after both clubs agreed a permanent move, he announced on social media. Arsenal, on its site, said Monday evening it had agreed to terminate Mkhitaryan's contract by "mutual consent to allow him to join Roma as part of a final transfer". The duration of his contract with Roma has not been specified and no fee has been disclosed.

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## Ex-Olympic Champion Rebensburg Ends Skiing Career

BERLIN (AFP) - Former Olympic giant slalom champion Viktoria Rebensburg announced her retirement from downhill skiing Tuesday, explaining in a video message that she no longer feels she can compete at the top level. "Today is definitely not easy for me, after 13 years (competing) to end my career with immediate effect," said the 30-year-old in a video on Twitter. "I made this decision with a heavy heart and after much consideration," because "I realised from my last few ski training sessions that I can no longer reach my top level".

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SPORTS

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

# Murray Marks Grand Slam Return by Five-Set Win Against Nishioka

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Former champion Andy Murray produced an astonishing fightback to outlast Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 4-6 4-6 7-6(5) 7-6(4) 6-4 in his long-awaited return to Grand Slam singles action in the U.S. Open first round on Tuesday. The 33-year-old Briton, contesting a singles match at a major for the first since the 2019 Australian Open, appeared to be heading for an early exit as a fearless Nishioka outplayed him for two sets on a virtually empty Arthur Ashe Stadium. Yet as he has so often done throughout his career Murray simply refused to accept defeat. Desperately trying to spark himself into life, Murray recovered from a break down in the third set and saved a match point late in the fourth. At the start of the fifth set he required treatment on his battered toes and again slipped a break behind before dredging his tank to finally crush 49th-ranked Nishioka's spirit and claim victory in four hours 38 minutes. It was Murray's 10th win from two sets down and showed that despite undergoing two hip surgeries, he remains one of the sport's great warriors. "I'm tired, my toes are the worst part, my big toes are pretty beat up," Murray, whose emotional defeat in five sets against Roberto Bautista Agut in Melbourne in 2019 looked like ending his career, said on court. "At the beginning I was apprehensive about playing a long match because I've not played one for a while and I was sort of pacing myself. But when I was two sets down I managed to put the afterburners on and managed to get through." Murray will have to recover quickly as his next opponent could be Canadian 15th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime. He said his first job was to try and find an ice bath.



"They have one in the locker room but that's supposed to be for an emergency. This is an emergency," Murray said. Murray, who claimed the first of his three Grand Slam titles in New York in 2012, opened the match with a delicious topspin lob, but for the next two sets was second best against the 24-year-old showing absolutely no respect for reputations. Meanwhile with no fans to cheer her on, Serena Williams was left to push herself to a record-breaking straight-sets victory in the first round of the U.S. Open on Tuesday. The six-time champion did not need the help of a fan-filled Arthur Ashe Stadium to provide a lift during her 7-5 6-4 win over the 96th ranked Kristie Ahn. But at some point during the next two weeks at Flushing Meadows, Williams, as she has instinctively done many times over the last two decades, will look to the stands for a turbo-boost and there will be none. "I think the hardest is making sure you stay pumped," said Williams, when asked about the lack of fans and big-crowd atmosphere. "For me it was clearly easy because I'm always overly passionate. "I love being passionate. It's what I'm best at." Running on empty will take on a whole new meaning at the COVID-19 impacted U.S. Open, where the boisterous energy provided by capacity crowds that pack tennis's biggest stadium have in the past refilled fatigued players' tanks.

## Sevilla Re-Sign Barcelona's Rakitic



MADRID (Dispatches) - Barcelona said on Tuesday they had agreed to sell Croatia midfielder Ivan Rakitic back to Sevilla. Under the deal the southern side will pay the Catalan outfit 1.5 million euros (\$1.8 million) plus nine million euros in variables for the 32-year-old, Barca said in a statement. "FC Barcelona publicly express their gratitude to Rakitic for his commitment and dedication and wish him good luck and success in the future," the statement added. Rakitic, who had a year left on his contract at the Camp Nou, spent three seasons with Sevilla and won the Europa League in the 2013/14 season right before he made his big switch in 2014. He was one of several Barcelona players who were reportedly told they were not part of new manager Ronald Koeman's plans. On Monday, Lionel Messi boycotted Barca's first pre-season training session as the striker upped the stakes in his battle to leave this summer. After skipping coronavirus tests on Sunday, Messi missed Koeman's first session in charge since being appointed last month. It appears increasingly likely Messi will try to force a transfer by refusing to play in La Liga next season, which begins on September 12.

## Blatter's Turn to Face Swiss Prosecutor Over Platini Payment

BERN (AFP) - Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter was facing questioning Tuesday by a Swiss prosecutor over a payment of two million Swiss francs (\$2.2 million) made to former UEFA boss Michel Platini in 2011. The 84-year-old arrived around at 09:00 am at the headquarters of the Public Ministry of the Confederation (MPC) in Bern, where Platini, the former head of European football, had been questioned the day before by prosecutor Thomas Hildbrand. "This is the moment when we start to talk about this dossier which has lasted for five years, and about which I have never been asked questions, so I am happy to be able to give information on it," said Blatter as he arrived. The investigation, which was set up in 2015, is looking into the payment Platini received from FIFA in 2011 for an advisory job completed in 2002, on suspicion of "complicity in unfair management, embezzlement and forgery". Platini said in June when he was added by Hildbrand to the investigation that the Swiss Attorney General's office had "confirmed in writing in May 2018" that his case was closed. The 65-year-old former French football great now has the status of "accused" alongside Blatter. Blatter, who led the global football body from 1998 to 2015, told AFP the payment was above board. "It was back pay for work done by Michel Platini. The sum was validated by the finance commission. It cannot be a criminal offence," said Blatter. FIFA deemed the sum a "disloyal payment" and suspended Blatter and Platini from all football-related activities, which prevented the former UEFA chief from running for another term as president in 2016.

## Traore Awaits Confirmation Of Positive COVID-19 Test

MADRID (Reuters) - Spain could be without Wolverhampton Wanderers winger Adama Traore for their Nations League matches against Germany and Ukraine after he tested positive for COVID-19, the Spanish soccer federation said on Tuesday. All members of Luis Enrique's squad were tested on arrival at the Las Rozas camp.

# Arsenal Complete Signing of Brazilian Defender



Gabriel joined Lille in 2017 and, after loan spells at Troyes and Dinamo Zagreb, he impressed as Lille finished fourth in the curtailed 2019/20 Ligue 1 season. "He has many qualities which will make us stronger as a defensive unit and as a team," said Arteta. "He has proved with Lille that he is a defender with many outstanding attributes and we are looking forward to watching him grow as an Arsenal player."

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal completed the signing of Brazilian defender Gabriel Magalhaes from Lille on Tuesday for a reported £22 million (\$30 million).

The 22-year-old bolsters Mikel Arteta's defensive options as the Gunners look to return to the Champions League this season after a four-year absence.

Gabriel adds to Arsenal's growing Brazilian contingent since the club's former midfielder Edu left his role as coordinator for the Brazilian national team to become technical director last year.

He joins experienced international duo David Luiz and Willian, who is Arsenal's only other signing so far in the close season.

"He is a player we have been studying for a while and he was in demand from many clubs, so we are proud to have agreed and completed this transfer with Lille and the player," said Edu.

"Gabriel is a player of high quality and Mikel and his coaches are looking forward to integrating him into the club."

Arsenal are also reportedly close to agreeing another season-long loan deal for Dani Ceballos from Real Madrid, while Arteta said after Saturday's Community Shield victory over Liverpool that club captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is close to extending his contract to remain at the Emirates.

## Rashford Forms Taskforce With Food Brands to Feed Kids

LONDON (Reuters) - Marcus Rashford has formed a taskforce with some major food brands to help tackle hunger among children, the Manchester United and England forward said on Tuesday.

Rashford had earned widespread praise after the 22-year-old successfully campaigned for school food vouchers to be provided over the summer holidays in Britain, revealing that he had relied on such support as a boy.

Announcing the child food poverty group that includes Aldi, Asda, Tesco, Deliveroo, Sainsbury's and Kellogg's among others, Rashford wrote an open letter to parliament endorsing three policy recommendations of the National Food Strategy.

The points include the expansion of free school meals to children whose families are on universal credit, expansion of holiday provision to all children on free school meals, and increasing the value of Healthy Start vouchers.

"I feel like at times people think they are being looked down on if they ask for help, and I think in this generation... that is something that should change," Rashford told the BBC. "You should feel free if you want to ask for help...hold your head up high and, if you need help, go and get help."

"...we had to think about the best way to do it, to think about how these families can eat long term and not have issues. We wanted to do it the best way...introduce the best people into our group, and see if using them (we) can push it even more."

Rashford had also helped to raise around 20 million pounds (\$26.9 million) with charity Fareshare UK to supply meals to struggling families during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Leipzig Set to Start Season in Front of 8,400 Fans

BERLIN (Dispatches) - RB Leipzig on Tuesday received permission to host 8,400 fans for their first Bundesliga game of the season in mid-September, which could make them the first German top-flight club to welcome back supporters since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country in mid-March.

It would see the Red Bull Arena at 20-percent full for Leipzig's 2020/21 campaign opener against Mainz on September 20.

"We are aware of the great trust placed in us by politicians and the authorities and will deal with it extremely responsibly and carefully," Leipzig managing director Oliver Mintzlaff told magazine Kicker. According to AFP subsidiary SID, Leipzig have been given permission by local authorities to allow supporters into their 42,000-capacity stadium providing the low rate of infection does not rise sharply.

The current rate in the east German city is 3.2 new cases per week per 100,000 inhabitants. It must remain below 20 in order for fans to return. The last time Leipzig did not play behind closed doors was during a 3-0 win over Tottenham in the Champions League last 16 in mid-March.

The tickets for the game against Mainz would be allocated by a lottery system for the club's 22,500 season-ticket holders.

Only supporters residing in the state of Saxony would be allowed in. Hertha Berlin, Union Berlin, Eintracht Frankfurt and Wolfsburg are also seeking permission from their local health authorities to host limited numbers of fans.

All spectators will be expected to wear face masks and follow social-distancing rules, with no beer sold and no away fans permitted.

