

Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Friday That Some 118 More Iranians Have Died From Coronavirus Disease Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing The Total Deaths to 22,044

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Aluminum Production Reached 175,000 Tons During The Five Calendar Months to August 21, Indicating a 70% Hike Compared With the Similar Span of the Last Year

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Zarif to Host Swiss Counterpart to Quash Resignation Rumors

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh in a message said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is to host Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland Ignazio Cassis in Tehran on Monday.

Zarif will host Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland Ignazio Cassis and his accompanying delegation in Tehran on Monday, September 8, Khatibzadeh wrote in his Twitter account on Thursday.

Bilateral relations, regional developments and international issues are important topics about which both sides will hold talks, he added.

Khatibzadeh actually refuted allegations that Zarif has submitted his resignation.

Earlier, 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."

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President Inaugurates More Projects Despite Sanctions



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has launched some major power and water projects in Kermanshah, Ardabil, and East Azarbaijan provinces in western and north-western Iran.

The projects, which were inaugurated by President Rouhani through videoconference calls on Thursday, include the second gas unit of Dalahoo Combined Cycle Power Plant in Eslamabad-e-Gharb County in Kermanshah province.

President Rouhani inaugurated five water and electricity projects worth over \$210 million in three provinces during the 18th week of the Energy Ministry's A-B-Iran program.

Inaugurated through video conference in a ceremony held in Tehran, the mentioned projects included a dam, a power station, two small-scaled solar farms, and some electricity transmission lines.

As reported the said projects were put into operation in Ardebil, East Azarbaijan, and Kermanshah provinces in the west and northwest of the country.

With the mentioned projects operational, a total of 1.7 megawatts (MW) has been added to the country's solar power generation, 310 MW to the capacity of the combined cycle power plants, and 21 million cubic meters was also added to the storage capacity of the country's dams.

The solar power plants, one with a capacity of 0.2 MW and the other with a capacity of 1.5 MW were inaugurated in Ardebil province.

The 0.2 MW power plant with a cumulative electricity output of 326,000 kWh is going to save 0.11 million cubic meters of natural gas consumption annually and emit 274 tons of carbon dioxide.

The 1.5 MW solar power plant with a cumulative output of 244,000 kWh will save 0.85 million cubic meters of natural gas, and also prevents the emission of carbon dioxide equivalent to 2056 tons per year while saving 655 cubic meters of water in the year.

The 310-megawatt gas unit of Dalahoo Combined Cycle Power Plant in Kermanshah Province was also among the inaugurated projects, which was put into operation with a total investment of 109 million euros (about \$130 million).

Kalghan Chai dam in the city of Bostanabad in East Azarbaijan was the third project inaugurated via video conference in the presence of Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

With a total capacity of 21 million cubic meters, the mentioned dam was constructed with 13.2 trillion rials (about \$31.4 million) of investment.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Where Does Lebanon Go With PM Adib?

Comparison of Lebanon's demographic texture with any country will get man to no similarity in any part of the world. Lebanon's economy is totally different from most economies in the world. Politics in Lebanon with political party condition in most countries is different. Social relations in Lebanon is even different from what is in its neighboring states. So if we see some incidents happen in Lebanon which have not happened to us, Iranians, or even other similar countries, we should only consider these events specific to this country.

The blast in Beirut has imposed a dear cost on Lebanon that the country and its government have to cope with its pains and plights. Geopolitical position of Lebanon will not let other countries stop coveting Lebanon and the Lebanese. And all of these factors lay the ground for a management that every now and then has faced unexpected incidents and it still faces and will face them.

The role of Lebanese president in administering the country is very sensitive and crucial and this creates some kind of structural difference in the short, mid- and long term strategies. March 14 Movement with support of Saudis and the French has sometimes had upper hand in Lebanon and nomination of Mustapha Adib is one of those winning cards.

Almost all nations in the region especially the Lebanese themselves are fully aware that Adib with a French-oriented background is a full-scale French so that Elysée Palace considers him as its own agent especially Adib has French citizenship and his wife is French and his father-in-law is of the men close to the Elysée Palace.

Adib is an academic and is not well known among the public. Adib has a PhD in law and political science and has taught at the state-funded Lebanese and French universities. He pursued his career in teaching at Beirut War College in 2000 and has also taught subjects including Public international law, Constitutional law, International relations and Geopolitics at various universities in Lebanon and France. He was appointed as the full time professor at the Lebanese University. He has also been he became the President of the Centre of Strategic Studies for the Middle East (CESMO) and since then had conducted numerous studies with the UN, Generic Center for Civilian Control of Armed Forces. Now with such a background he has been nominated for the premiership in Lebanon and forming a cabinet. While the French have presented him as their winning card for Lebanon's premiership and forming the new cabinet, there are some "do's and don'ts" in front of Adib for taking office which cast doubt on his success in forming the government. These ambiguities cause conflicts between national and religious parties and religious minorities.

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Tehran Condemns Charlie Hebdo for Insulting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has strongly condemned the French magazine Charlie Hebdo for republishing cartoons insulting the Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

In a statement on Thursday, Khatibzadeh said any insult to and disrespect for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and other divine prophets are not acceptable at all.

"The French magazine's offensive move, which has been repeated on the pretext of freedom of speech, has hurt the feelings of the world's monotheists, is a provocative move and an insult to the Islamic values and beliefs of over one billion Muslims in the world," he noted.

"Unlike the offensive move made by the magazine, freedom of speech is a great value which must be used in a constructive way in line with the peaceful coexistence of human beings and further understanding among religions," the spokesman added.

The French satirical newspaper whose Paris offices were attacked in 2015 is reprinting the controversial caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

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Dutch Knowledge Can Help Iranian Dairy Chain to Move Forward

THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - The Iranian dairy sector can produce higher quality dairy products in a more sustainable way by using Dutch expertise in the following four areas: milk quality assurance, feed supply including quality assurance, efficient water use and education. The Netherlands has a lot to offer in all these areas.

The Iranian dairy sector would like to use Dutch knowledge to strengthen the dairy chain and eventually be able to export to countries in the region. Any cooperation can also have a positive economic effect for Dutch companies in the dairy chain. Wageningen University & Research has therefore investigated the possibilities for Dutch-Iranian cooperation on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Dairy production in Iran has risen to nearly 9 billion kg per year. At the moment, however, production and quality are not sufficient to be able to export. Dutch technology and knowledge can contribute to better cooperation between all links in the dairy chain. This is to lift the production and quality of the dairy to a higher level and to gain more confidence within the chain. Objectively determining the quality of the milk and payment based on that quality by an independent institute is seen as a useful step in that process.

Water is scarce in Iran and the government therefore attaches great importance to a more efficient use of water. The Netherlands has extensive international experience with water-efficient crop production, both at farm level and in organizing water management at regional and national level. The proper training of employees is also mentioned by Iranian dairy farmers as an opportunity for cooperation with Dutch partners. In addition, the changes in Iran mean that dairy farmers themselves also need more skills and knowledge about strategic and economic decisions.

The research shows that a large part of the milk production in Iran comes from professional dairy farms with more than 150 cows. Some of these companies fall under state-owned holding companies. There does not appear to be a policy aimed at supporting small businesses. There is also a great lack of reliable data about the sector. These themes, as well as the import of feed (additives), medicines, machines and tools (for example biogas technology), have emerged from the research as opportunities for the Iranian dairy sector. However, the aforementioned four themes have the highest priority.

U.S. Blacklists Companies for Helping Facilitate Iran Exports

WASHINGTON3 (Reuters) - The United States on Thursday imposed sanctions on 11 foreign companies, accusing them of helping to facilitate Iran's export of petroleum, petroleum products and petrochemicals in violation of American sanctions.

The Treasury said it slapped sanctions on six companies based in Iran, the United Arab Emirates and China that it said enable the shipment and sale of Iranian petrochemicals and support Trilience Petrochemical Co Ltd, a Hong Kong-based company blacklisted by the United States.

The State Department also imposed sanctions on five companies for engaging in transactions related to Iran's petroleum and petrochemical industry, as well as on three executive officers of the blacklisted companies.

"Our actions today reaffirm the United States' commitment to denying the Iranian regime the financial resources it needs to fuel terrorism and other destabilizing activities," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a separate statement.

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Iran Continues to Jump National Production Despite Sanctions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Vice President and Head of the Budget and Planning Organization Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said on Thursday that given this year's naming by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as a "jump in production", we will mutate the national production without considering the sanctions.

The official made the remarks in a meeting in the Hamedan Province of Iran, adding that everyone, especially Iran's Supreme

Leader (Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei), knows that we have a tough year ahead and "we must send a message to the enemy that the harder sanctions make us more resilient and active in running the country under cruel sanctions despite all the hardships".

Referring to the cruel sanctions imposed by the US, he added that the enemies do not even allow to sell a drop of oil for supplying food and medicine.

Iran Adopting Anti-Terrorism as Its Ultimate Strategy

TEHRAN (MNA) – A senior judiciary official said the fight against terrorism is the definitive strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, asserting that the country is seriously seeking to eradicate any types of terrorism.

Speaking in a meeting on the occasion of National Day of Fight against Terrorism, the deputy of international affairs of the Judicial System of Iran and secretary of the High Council for Human Rights, Ali Bagher Khani, criticized American's policies over violating the human rights of the civilians in Iraq, Yemen, Palestine and Afghanistan in favor of their own interests.

Terrorism, as a strategic tool, is one of the major pillars of the foreign policy of the US regime, he said and added, "In order to reach its illegal goals and interests, United States use this strategic tool through harboring terrorist groups and even committing terrorist acts."

Bagheri added, "Using its Terrorism Strategy, the U.S. accuses the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as terrorists



due to their opposition against the illegitimate interests of the United States."

Creating a terrorist group like al-Qaeda, or removing the name of a terrorist group like MEK (Mujahedin-e Khalq) from the list of terrorist groups as well as harboring them and providing them with safety, are different terrorism strategies of the Western countries, he stressed.

Referring justice, human dignity, and human rights as the pillars of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bagheri asserted, "As the fight against terrorism is the definitive strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the country is seriously seeking to eradicate any types of the terrorism and so far it has been successful in this regard."

Ayatollah Lankarani Condemns Quran Desecration in Sweden

TEHRAN (MNA) – Ayatollah Lankarani issued a statement and called on the Iranian government to take the strongest actions against burning the Holy Quran in Sweden.

Ayatollah Mohammad Javad Fazl Lankarani issued a statement on Thursday and urged the Iranian government, especially the Foreign Ministry to take the strongest actions against Insulting the Holy Quran in Sweden.

Part of the statement reads as follows:

The very tragic incident of insulting the Holy Quran and the sanctities of Muslims that occurred in Sweden has saddened the hearts of Muslims and followers of all heavenly religions.

The Swedish government must know that this incident has angered all the freedom-seeking people and Muslims. Prophet of Islam is the identity of all the Muslims and insulting him is violating the rights of one billion people.

It is a matter of regret to see the silence of Islamic countries which indicates their disbelief in the Holy Quran. We strongly urge the government of the Islamic Republic, especially the Foreign Ministry to take the strongest approach regarding this issue.

During an illegal gathering on Friday, supporters of right-wing Danish politician Rasmus Paludan, who leads the anti-Islamic group Tight Direction (Stram Kurs), burned a copy of Holy Qur'an in the southern Swedish city of Malmo.

No Talks With U.S.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – President's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi dismissed any plan for negotiations with the US after the foreign minister of Russia expressed readiness to help Tehran and Washington hold talks.

Asked by Tasnim about Sergei Lavrov's idea of Russian mediation between Iran and the US for direct negotiations, Vaezi said, "We have no intention of negotiating with Americans, and we have declared our stance very clearly."

Tehran has already made it clear that the US must accept that it has made mistakes, realize that it has adopted the wrong policy of sanctions on Iran, and admit that it has made a mistake, he added.

Vaezi also noted that the Russian foreign minister has not been the only person to have proposed the idea of mediation, stressing, "Americans must return to the JCPOA and speak within the framework of the JCPOA, otherwise, no other action would yield result."

Iran Not to Let Enemy Impede Country's Production

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Defense Brigadier-General Amir Hatami said on Thursday that the country will not allow the enemy to impede the production through sanctions and pressures.

Speaking in a ceremony to open a military parts exhibition, Brigadier-General Hatami said when participating in the cabinet through video conference, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei stressed that the spare parts of the machinery should be made inside the country.

Brigadier General Hatami said the enemy has tried hard to hurt Iran through not selling spare parts so that the factories stop working.

He said Iran can now make very delicate parts that were not expected to be made inside the country; the Ministry of Defense is now breaking the oppressive sanctions and dependence on foreign productions to provide strategic help to the national industry.

The exhibition is the result of four decades of efforts in making spare parts; it contains 2,000 civilian and military pieces, out of the 38,000 parts produced in the country, he said, adding that a new gearbox used in various vessels was unveiled that brings Iran one step closer to its goals.

Meanwhile Head of the Iranian Defense Ministry's Marine Industries Organization pointed to the capacity of the Islamic Republic in exporting military equipment after the sanctions lifted.

"We have the capacity of exporting billions of dollars worth of military equipment in a year in all military and some non-military fields," Rear Admiral Amir Rastegari told reporters.

As part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), UN arms embargo against Iran is set to be lifted in October. The United States made an effort to extend these sanctions for an unlimited period but failed as its resolution just received one vote of the Dominican Republic.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rastegari said that Dena Destroyer will be delivered to Army's Navy till the yearend (March 20, 2021).

He also said that the process of building Be'sat submarine has started. "Building the first submarine usually takes around 15 years across the world, however, given our experiences with building Fateh and Ghadir submarines, we try to reduce this time."

Tehran Offers Sympathy to Islamabad Over Flood in Sindh

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has offered sympathy to the Pakistani nation and government over the recent flood in Sindh province.

Zarif expressed his sympathy in a phone conversation with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday.

In the phone call, the Iranian top diplomat expressed pleasure with the recovery of Qureshi from COVID-19.

The two sides also conferred on issues related to bilateral ties, the joint commission for Iran-Pakistan cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the latest developments in Afghanistan as well as the issue of Kashmir.

Karachi, the capital and largest city of Sindh province, experienced its heaviest rains in almost a century, killing at least 41 people.

Flooding that resulted has completely inundated several neighborhoods, with the country's National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) saying that hundreds of thousands of people are still trapped due to waterlogging in low-lying slums.

Citizens were left without electricity and mobile phone connection as a result of the flooding.



Iran-Japan Ties Enhanced More Than Ever During Abe's Tenure

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian official has praised the promotion of Tehran-Tokyo relations during the tenure of Abe Shinzo as Japan's prime minister.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the chief of staff of the Iranian president, wrote in a tweet that relations between the two countries are based on mutual respect.

"Age-old relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Japan, which have always been based on friendship, trust and mutual respect, were enhanced more than ever during the premiership of Mr. Abe Shinzo," he tweeted.

"While appreciating the efforts made by Mr. Abe for cooperation aimed at deepening and further expanding relations between the two great nations of Iran and Japan, we wish him health and prosperity and we welcome continued cooperation and constructive interaction with the Japanese government and nation," Vaezi added.

Zarif Advises World Not to Submit for Fear of U.S. Wrath

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif referred to the U.S.' imposition of sanctions on ICC chief prosecutor, saying submitting for fear of the U.S. wrath only increases its appetite.

"The U.S. is imposing sanctions on ICC's chief prosecutor," Zarif wrote in his Twitter account on. "Began w/ individuals, escalated to small, medium & major powers; and NOW int'l personalities," he added.

"The only way to stop this unceasing insanity is to stop complacency," he noted.

"Submitting for fear of the US wrath only INCREASES its appetite," Iranian foreign minister reiterated. According to Reuters, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Phakiso Mochochoko, ICC Chief prosecutor was blacklisted under sanctions authorized by President Donald Trump in June that allow for asset freezes and travel bans.

"Today we take to this next step, because the ICC continues to target Americans, sadly," Pompeo was quoted as saying.

JCPOA Members Have Consensus To Counter U.S. Illegal Measures

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi said there is a consensus among the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the JCPOA, to confront the illegal moves by the U.S. to return UN sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

"The Joint Commission meeting was constructive and the participants agreed that they must counter the unlawful acts by the U.S., which quit the JCPOA in May 2018 and imposed the most cruel sanctions on Iran," he said.

Araghchi pointed out that the meeting was held in a situation created after the recent developments at the [UN] Security Council and the United States' illegal action.

He elaborated that the focal point of the discussions at the meeting was the necessity of integrity and unity against the U.S.' action. The Iranian deputy foreign minister added that participants insisted that Washington had quit the JCPOA in 2018 and cannot restore sanctions against Iran through snapback mechanism.

Moscow Supports Iran Permanent Membership at SCO

TEHRAN (IP) - During the meeting of the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Moscow Kazem Jalali with the Russian Envoy to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Bakhtiar Hakimov on Thursday, September 4, the two sides emphasized the existence of various grounds for Iran's more active presence in the organization.

Two officials discussed cooperation of Iran, as an observer member, with the SCO in issues ranging from the campaign against terrorism, extremism, and unilateralism, to economic cooperation and security of information.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or Shanghai Pact is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance. The creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Later on, Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, as well as Belarus, joined the organization.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



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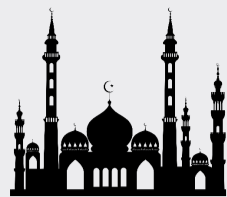
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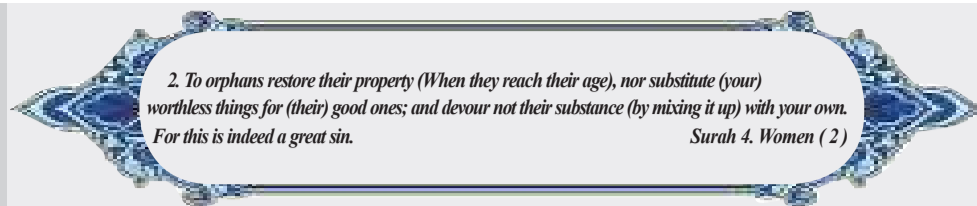
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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:14
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:40



Bangladesh, Zanjan Province Explore Ways For Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – In a meeting between Bangladesh Ambassador to Tehran Gousal Azam Sarker and Zanjan Province Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mine and Agriculture, both sides explored ways for economic cooperation.

During the meeting, Head of Zanjan Chamber of Commerce Mr. Ali Yeganefar said that there are several common fields for cooperation and both parties are determined to expand cooperation in different fields.

He said tourism, agriculture, apparel and IT are of the major fields for joint cooperation between Bangladesh and Zanjan Province and announced the chamber will pursue all fields for cooperation with Bangladesh to operationalize them.

He pointed to the capacities of Zanjan Province in fields like agriculture, handicrafts, textile, medicine, health tourism, science, university and science and technology parks and called for involvement of Zanjani traders for stepping into foreign trade with Bangladesh.

Yeganefar added that with identification of capacities and capabilities, both sides can launch bilateral cooperation between traders of Zanjan and Bangladesh.

He added that concentration of business activists of



Zanjan on potentials of Bangladesh can be an effective step in the roadmap of foreign trade of the province.

He reiterated that the chamber will study the raised issues in the meeting in order to operationalize them through cooperation with Bangladesh Embassy.

Meanwhile Bangladesh Ambassador Mr. Azam Sarker, for his part, pointed to the presence of Iranian students in Bangladesh universities and Bangla students in Iranian universities and called for facilitating the bilateral scientific and academic relations.

He also pointed to the deployment of science and technology parks in Zanjan and Bangladesh, saying that it is necessary that all Bangladeshi and Zanjani researchers to have a close relations for developing ties in all economic spheres especially in IT, agro and academic sectors.

Sarker added that Bangladesh Embassy will do its best for restoring and developing the link between Zanjan Province and Bangladesh, stipulating that both sides should clarify and determine the fields for bilateral investment and cooperation in order that they could be operationalized.

Rise in Volume of Investment on Kish Island

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Morteza Bank says investment in developmental and infrastructure projects on Kish Island has increased.



Speaking on the sidelines of opening ceremony of some projects on Kish Island on Tuesday evening, Mr. Bank said that Kish Island and Aras Free Zone have witnessed the most growth in investment among free zones of the country in the developmental, infrastructural and economic sectors.

He said Kish and Aras are the pioneer zones in progress of developmental projects among the free zones in the country with the rise in the volume of investment.

He added that those inaugurated projects are out of a set of projects which are in the works in the free zones in the production, hotel, oil and oil products reservoirs, quays, power stations and agro sectors which are to be inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday.

On the volume of investment in the free zones especially on Kish Island, he said fortunately free zones witnessed 60 percent growth in investment last year comparing to its preceding year and the most volume of investment has happened in the Kish and Aras zones.

Bank said that despite sanctions, the council has implemented the programs of the resistance economy and increased the volume of investment in those zones.

He said unfortunately due to the Coronavirus pandemic the number of visiting tourists has declined in March and during New Year holidays, adding that by observing the health protocols, the zones can pass this crisis successfully and they once again would see boom in tourism industry.

Bank added that since June, the number of tourists to the zones has grown by one percent on a monthly basis and the current of investment in the free zones is satisfactory.

He reiterated that some 10,000b toman was invested in the free zones last year. He noted that despite cruel sanctions, economic activists are interested in investing in the domestic market and exports, and this year the zones will witness more investment.

Development Projects Inaugurated at Yasouj Airport

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Roads and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami inaugurated some development projects worth 450 billion rials (over \$10 million) in the southwestern Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad Province.



Eslami was accompanied by the Head of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company Siavash Amirmokri and some of the mentioned province's officials in the inauguration ceremony, ILNA reported.

The projects included the development and improvement of runways, completion of runway lighting, improvement of the terminal, completion of buildings, and upgrading of the safety and operational infrastructure of the airport.

As reported, the development and improvement of runways and runway lighting costs were estimated as 300 billion rials (about \$7.14 million), with the implementation of which the length of the runway has been increased from 2600 to 3200 meters and the runway's pavement classification number (PCN) has also improved from 26 to 46.

With the implementation of the said projects, the airport's category has improved from C3 to C4.

It is worth mentioning that the costs of implementing terminal improvement projects, and airport buildings and infrastructure upgrades have been estimated to be 150 billion rials (about \$3.5 million).

Iran Ranks First Among Regional Universities In Times Ranking

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran ranked first in terms of the number of universities in the region and Islamic countries, based on the prestigious 2021 Times ranking.

The Times International website, with its 5 decades of experience as an important analytical source for the world's educational indicators, published in its latest report that Iran ranked first in terms of the number of universities in the region.

In the Times' 2021 ranking, there were 21 Islamic countries that Iran ranked first with 47 universities.

In the Times ranking database, there was only one university from Iran between 2012 and 2014. In 2015, two universities of Iran named Sharif University of Technology and Isfahan University of Technology attended the ranking, and in 2016 the number of universities reached eight. In 2017, it has increased to 13 universities and 18 universities in 2018 and 29 and 40 in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

In 2021, with the presence of seven new universities, we are witnessing the presence of 47 universities from the Islamic Republic of Iran among the top 1,527 universities in the world from 93 countries, and this is ensuring to move more and more of Iran's powerful universities in the prestigious international rankings.

Seoul Unable to Meet Tehran's Medicine Demand

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Health Economy Committee of Tehran Chamber of Commerce says South Korea cannot meet Iran's medicine demand through Iran's frozen money in South Korean banks.

Mr. Mahmoud Najafi Arab says South Korea only provides some part of Iran's medicines and other parts are provided through some European states and some small part through India.

Iran's blocked money in South Korea is estimated to be between 6.5 to 9 billion dollars that Iran has been unable to unblock it in the past one year and a half and South Korean government has not even been ready to return at least \$50m of the amount for provision of food and medicine because of the Coronavirus pandemic. So in such a condition, the issue of importing goods and especially health goods has been raised.



But Najafi Arab says this issue is impossible to happen because he has not so far heard any news about getting health goods instead of blocked money, adding that receiving medicines and health goods instead of blocked money from other

countries has not happened yet.

He further said Iran is just importing a small part of its medicine needs from South Korea and provision of all its medicine demands from South Korea is impossible.

Najafi Arab added that Iran's imports of medicine is in two forms of medicine and raw materials for medicine that raw materials are mostly imported from India and china and small part from South Korea.

He said in case Iran cannot get its money from countries because of sanctions, it can get its necessary goods from them instead of its money and if these commodities are among the basic goods, it can be a major step.

Iran-Russia Boost Tourism by Canceling Visa for Travelers

TEHRAN (IP) - The 8th meeting of the Private Sector Tourism Policy Council was held in the presence of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan.

Speaking at the meeting, Mounesan said about the coronavirus and its impact on the tourism industry, saying, "One of the topics that needs to be addressed during the coronavirus outbreak is planning for smart travel."

"One of the solutions that can help us in the field of tourism during the Coronavirus outbreak is the issue of smart travel or responsible travel," he added.

"The tourism ministry has no authority over people's plans for travels and we cannot tell people to travel or not to do so. Many people travel on their own without using the capacity of tours, which can have its own impacts over the virus spread but if trips are carried out through tours and in official accommodation centers

following all health protocols, they would definitely be safer with lower risks," Mounesan said.

"The process of attracting foreign tourists and experiencing visa waivers with China and Oman was a positive and good experience," he said in another part of his speech.

"Currently, some countries have started attracting foreign tourists and letting foreign trips being made. We can also start attracting foreign tourists again by considering the instructions from the Ministry of Health and observing the health protocols," he said.



Iran-Russia Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - In an online meeting with the Russian Deputy Minister of Digital Development Maxim Parshin on Thursday, Fattahi stressed expanding cooperation between the two countries in telecommunications and post, communications services, and digital economy and welcomed cooperation in the fields of education and research.

Referring to the COVID-19 pandemic in the world, the Iranian official said that the pandemic has made the cooperation of countries in the field of communications and information technology a necessity more than before.

Pointing to Iran-Russia's growing relations, he said as a result of the previous meetings between the ministers of Iran and Russia, it was decided that the quadrilateral meeting among Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey will be held.

He noted that two documents related to the field of communications and information and space technology were signed by the parties in the first meeting. Referring to Russia's capacities and capabilities in the field of communications and information technology, Parshin said that Russia can share these experiences with Iran in the fields of electronic governance and smart cities. The second meeting of the Iran-Russia Cooperation Group on Communications and Information Technology was held online on Thursday.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



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Philippines Delays Release of U.S. Marine

MANILA (Dispatches) - A U.S. marine convicted of killing a transgender woman will stay in detention in the Philippines while a court reviews its earlier ruling to free him halfway into his 10-year jail term, officials said Thursday.

Lance Corporal Joseph Scott Pemberton has been in prison since the October 2014 killing of Jennifer Laude, whom he met at a bar while on a break from military exercises in the northern city of Olongapo. An Olongapo court ruled on Tuesday that Pemberton qualified for early release due to good behaviour while detained in a special jail at the Philippine military headquarters in Manila. He has served half of a 10-year sentence for homicide.



Suga Jumps in Popularity, Tops Favorability Poll for Next PM

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga is now the most preferred candidate among the public to become the next prime minister, surging in popularity after he entered his party's leadership race, an Asahi Shimbun survey showed on Friday.

The survey highlights the growing momentum for Suga, the government's chief spokesman, who emerged as the front-runner to replace Prime Minister Shinzo Abe this week after securing the backing of several of his party's key factions.

Suga has 38% of the public's support, ahead of 25% for former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba who had previously led several media opinion polls. Fumio Kishida, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's policy chief, came in last with 5%.



France Calls on U.S. to Drop ICC Sanctions



PARIS (Dispatches) - France led criticism of US sanctions on the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on Thursday, saying Washington had launched a "serious attack" on the global body.

The ICC, a special multilateral court set up to try genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity cases, has become the latest issue to split Europe and United States under President Donald Trump.

Since its creation, the U.S. has never recognised the court's authority, but the Trump administration took the unprecedented step of sanctioning its chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on Wednesday along with another senior ICC official.

"The measures announced on September 2 amount to a serious attack on the court and signatory states of the Treaty of Rome and, beyond this, a challenge to multilateralism and the independence of the judiciary," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Thursday.

A total of 120 states signed up to the Treaty of Rome in 1998 which laid the basis for the creation of the ICC four years later.

The U.S. was not among them, unlike its Western partners, putting it alongside a handful of states such as Russia, China and Israel which refused the ICC's authority.

Reacting to the U.S. sanctions on Thursday, the European Union said it would defend the court against attempts to undermine it.

"The International Criminal Court is facing persistent external challenges and the European Union stands firm against all attempts to undermine the international system of criminal justice by hindering the work of its core institutions," Peter Stano, spokesman for EU diplomatic chief Josep Borrell, told reporters.

Human Rights Watch said that the Trump administration's action showed "an egregious disregard for victims of the world's worst crimes". At the heart of the dispute are efforts by prosecutor Bensouda to pursue an investigation into alleged war crimes committed in Afghanistan, which could implicate US soldiers.

Afghanistan is a signatory to the ICC which has the power to investigate the most serious human rights abuses when member countries are unable or unwilling to bring perpetrators to justice themselves.

Trump had authorised sanctions on the ICC on June 11.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who called the institution a "kangaroo court" at the time, announced that the sanctions in the form of asset freezes would be enacted.

The court, which has been criticized for concentrating its efforts on African countries in the past, has opened investigations into alleged atrocities in 12 countries, including Myanmar and Afghanistan more recently.

Kremlin Rejects Claims Navalny Poisoned With Novichok

MOSCOW (AFP) - The Kremlin on Thursday rejected claims that Moscow was behind the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, as calls mounted for international action after Germany said he had been dosed with Novichok.

Western leaders are demanding answers from Moscow after Berlin said Wednesday there was "unequivocal evidence" that the 44-year-old Kremlin critic had been afflicted by the infamous nerve agent. Navalny, one of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, fell ill on a flight last month and was treated in a Siberian hospital before being evacuated to Berlin.

Germany's claim that he was exposed to Novichok -- the same substance used against Russian ex-double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter in the English town of Salisbury two years ago -- prompted widespread condemnation and demands for an investigation. Russia denies there is any evidence that Navalny was poisoned and Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that Berlin had not provided Moscow with proof.

"There is no reason to accuse the Russian state," Peskov said, rejecting talk of economic sanctions and urging the West not to "rush to judgment".

Pakistan Backlash Grows Over Charlie Hebdo Cartoons

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Anti-France demonstrators rallied Thursday in Pakistan and the foreign minister lodged a diplomatic complaint as the backlash grew against a French magazine republishing cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

Satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, the target of a massacre by Islamist gunmen in 2015, reprinted the controversial caricatures this week to mark the start of the trial of the alleged accomplices in the attack. Dozens of men gathered in the northern city of Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, yelling slogans that included "Stop barking, French dogs" and "Charlie Hebdo, stop".

"The government of Pakistan should immediately end its diplomatic relations with France as a protest," Sunni cleric Mohammad Zaman said at the rally.

The protest ended peacefully after the men stomped on a French flag, doused it in petrol and then set it ablaze.

In a video message, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said he strongly condemned Charlie Hebdo's action and that he had lodged a protest with the French ambassador in Islamabad. "The published caricatures have hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims," he said.

"I hope that this despicable act will not be repeated and those responsible for it will be taken to a court of law."

Far-right Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan said it was organising a protest after Friday prayers in the eastern city of Lahore. Other protests were expected in the cities of Rawalpindi and Karachi.

TLP has organised huge protests over alleged blasphemy in the past. It paralysed much of Pakistan in 2018 with violent protests against the acquittal of a Christian woman accused of blasphemy.

Images of the Prophet are proscribed in Islam. Insulting religion under Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws can carry the death penalty. Twelve people, including some of France's most celebrated cartoonists, were killed on January 7, 2015, when brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi went on a gun rampage at the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris.



Afghan Gov't Frees Taliban Prisoners Except Few

KABUL (Dispatches) - The Afghan government said Thursday it had released 400 Taliban prisoners under an exchange deal with the militants, except for "a few" opposed by foreign nations, and expected peace negotiations to start soon.

The two warring sides have grown closer this week to launching direct talks in Qatar, tying up the end of a contentious and months-long prisoner exchange.

Kabul has already sent a logistical team to Doha where the Taliban's political office is based, with the negotiators expected to depart later on Thursday.

"The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has received our commandos held hostage by Taliban, after which the Gov't released the remaining 400 convicts, except the few for which our partners have reservations," National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal said on Twitter.

"Diplomatic efforts are ongoing. We expect direct talks to start promptly."

Two Taliban officials confirmed the prisoners had been freed but that those opposed by France and Australia were still in government custody.

Paris and Canberra made protests over the release of the militants because of their links to the murders of French and Australian civilians and troops in Afghanistan.

"Australia and France have some considerations about them," one Taliban official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The Kabul administration will send them to Qatar where they will be in custody during the intra-Afghan talks."

A Western diplomatic source, however, said the decision had not yet been taken.

A date for talks to start is yet to be fixed.

Negotiations were initially supposed to begin in March as agreed in a deal between the Taliban and Washington in February, from which Kabul had been excluded.

But repeated squabbles over the prisoner exchange delayed the negotiations, including the Taliban's demand that 400 prisoners accused of serious crimes be among those freed. The prisoner exchange agreed between the U.S. and the Taliban stipulated that Kabul should release a total of 5,000 militants in return for the insurgents freeing 1,000 Afghan troops.

The Taliban have said they were willing to begin negotiations "within a week" of the prisoner swap being completed and blamed Kabul for delaying the negotiations.

President Ashraf Ghani said on Wednesday that a "critical stage of peace" had been reached and that the talks would help reduce violence and finalise a permanent cease.

Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

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افغانستان ته د سولې راوستلو تړون
موافقتنامه آوردن صلح به افغانستان

الدوحة قطر ٢٩ فبراير ٢٠٢٠ Doha Qatar 29 February 2020



China Threatens to Retaliate After U.S. Tightens Leash on Beijing Diplomats

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China will deliver "a proper and necessary" response to new curbs by the State Department on its envoys to the United States, the foreign ministry said Thursday.

America's top diplomat Mike Pompeo introduced the restrictions on Wednesday, including mandating Chinese diplomats to seek approval to visit universities or meet with local officials. He said the measures were a counterpoint to long-established controls imposed on US diplomats in China. American envoys have to ask permission from authorities to meet with officials, conduct outreach or even visit universities.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman in Beijing said permission is "routinely denied", or cancelled at the last minute.

Unapproved travel to Tibet is also off-limits.

The two countries are locked in a rancorous power struggle over trade, security and tech, while relations have been further poisoned by the coronavirus and rights issues from Hong Kong to the Uighur minority in Xinjiang.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson in Beijing on Thursday warned of "a proper and necessary response" to the ramped-up restrictions on its envoys. The curbs on Chinese diplomats are "a serious violation of the international law and the basic norms of international relations", Hua Chunying told reporters.

Pompeo's latest measures mean China's diplomats in the US will also have to seek approval for any cultural event outside embassy or consulate properties involving more than 50 people.

Additionally, embassy social media accounts will have to be identified as accounts of the Chinese government.

The U.S. Embassy spokesman told AFP the US was not mirroring "every aspect of China's severe constraints".

Still, the moves will likely dial up diplomatic hostilities between the nations. In July the U.S. ordered the Chinese consulate in Houston to close, prompting Beijing to shutter the American mission in Chengdu.



Shanon
(adviser)

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J, balcony
marble fl
fireplace
pkg, & F.F

Farmanieh Villa (\$7000)
2000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
Sauna, J, pkg
green yard
balcony, & F.F

Elahieh Apt (\$2400)
230sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Apt (\$2000)
Mahmoodieh
160sq.m, 2bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F

Darrous Villa (\$2500)
700sq.m, 5bdrs, S/p, & yard

Jordan Apt (\$1400)
130sq.m, 2bdrs, F.F

Zaferanieh bldg (\$8000)
5storey, 15bdrs, & pkgs

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PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS

Indonesia's Economy to Contract in 3Q

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati predicted that the country's economic growth in the third quarter would undergo contraction, reported Xinhua news agency.

"The economic growth would also be still under the neutral growth in the fourth quarter because efforts to recover economic activities are still very weak," the minister

told a working meeting with the House of Representatives.

Public activities had been increasing since May to June in the hope the consumption would recover gradually, she said, adding that the expectation index from June to July was flat.

The minister said the government has set a target of economic growth in 2020 between minus 1.1 per cent and 0.2 per cent.



France Unveils €100b Economy Rescue Plan



PARIS (AFP) - Facing resurgent virus infections, France's government unveiled details Thursday of a 100 billion euro (\$118 billion) recovery plan aimed at creating jobs, saving struggling businesses and pulling the country out of its worst economic slump since World War II.

"This recovery plan aims to keep our economy from collapsing and unemployment exploding," Prime Minister Jean Castex told RTL radio ahead of the presentation.

He said the government aimed to create at least 160,000 jobs next year thanks to the plan and restore France's economic growth levels of 2019 by 2022 - the year of France's next presidential elections.

Called "France Reboot," the stimulus package earmarks 35 billion euros to make the economy more competitive, 30 billion for more environmentally friendly energy policies and 25 billion for supporting jobs, officials said.

The stimulus equates to 4% of gross domestic product, meaning France is ploughing more public cash into its economy than any other big European country as a percentage of GDP, an official said ahead of its formal launch.

France's recession, marked by a 13.8% second quarter GDP contraction that coincided with the country's Covid-19 lockdown and is set to generate an 11% drop in 2020 as a whole, has also been one of Europe's deepest.

French President Emmanuel Macron's government is banking on the plan to return the eurozone's second biggest economy to pre-crisis levels of activity by 2022 after what is expected to be its worst post-war recession.

That timeline would restore Macron's record on the economy in case he decides to run for re-election in 2022 after the coronavirus crisis wiped out much of the economic gains made before then on growth and jobs.

The recovery plan aims to put Macron's pro-business push back on track, with already flagged cuts in business taxes worth 10 billion euros annually and fresh public funds to give a boost to France's industrial, construction and transport sectors.

Officials said the transport sector would get 11 billion euros with 4.7 billion targeting the rail network in particular, while energy-efficient building renovations would be spurred with 4 billion euros for public buildings and 2 billion for homes.

The hydrogen industry, increasingly seen as a key building block in the transition away from fossil fuels, would get 2 billion.

France reported more than 7,000 virus cases Thursday, the highest daily rate in Europe and well above the several hundred cases a day in May and June, when France was emerging from strict lockdown and testing less.

The number of people in intensive care with the virus is slowly edging up, though is far from the crisis levels of March and April.

Despite the rise, France's schools reopened their doors this week for in-person classes, and authorities are encouraging people to return to work.

German Private-Sector Recovery Slows as Services Struggle

BERLIN (Reuters) - The recovery of Germany's services sector from the coronavirus shock lost steam in August, slowing the broader rebound of the private sector in Europe's largest economy, a survey showed on Thursday.

IHS Markit's final services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to 52.5 from its 13-month high of 55.6 in July.

That was higher than a flash reading of 50.8 and it marked the second month in a row that the services index was above the 50 mark dividing growth from contraction.

The final composite PMI covering both the services and manufacturing sectors eased to 54.4 from 55.3 the previous month. That was higher than the flash figure of 53.7.

IHS Markit economist Phil Smith said the survey data showed that the economic progress in August was only gradual and predominantly driven by domestic demand, which itself was weakened by job losses during the pandemic.

"However, the picture on the employment front is starting to look a little more encouraging, with some signs of hiring in the service sector accompanied by an easing rate of retrenchment across manufacturing," Smith added.

He also pointed to the government's latest decision to expand the Kurzarbeit shorter-hours work scheme until the end of next year, which is expected to further stabilise the labour market and with it domestic demand.

The German economy contracted by a record 9.7% in the second quarter as consumer spending, company investment and exports all collapsed at the height of the pandemic.

The government on Tuesday forecast the economy would shrink 5.8% in 2020, less than its previous outlook of a 6.3% downturn although still the biggest contraction since World War Two.



Australia's First Recession in Nearly 30 Years Adds to Global Economic Virus Woes

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australia has fallen into recession for the first time in three decades, while Brazil's economy shrank by almost 10% because of the coronavirus, leaving China as the only major nation still recording economic growth during the pandemic.

A raft of bleak data from India to Europe in recent days has laid bare the toll from lockdowns as nations try to keep a lid on an illness that has killed more than 850,000 people and infected over 25 million.

The challenges were further highlighted Wednesday when Australia announced its sharpest economic contraction since the Great Depression due to the pandemic, with data confirming the country is in its first recession in 28 years.

The economy shrank 7% in the second quarter of this year, the biggest contraction since records began in 1959, the government reported.

"This is a devastating day for Australia," Prime Minister Scott Morrison told Parliament.

The country is now in recession for the first time in 28 years following a 0.3% drop in the first quarter of the year, since it has logged two straight quarters of contraction.

"Today's national accounts confirm the devastating impact on the Australian economy from COVID-19," Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said. "Our record run of 28 consecutive years of economic growth has now officially come to an end," he added.

The previous biggest downturn since Australia began keeping records in 1959 was a 2% fall in June 1974. Economists estimate a sharper decline of 9.5% in 1930 when Australia became one of the countries worst affected by the Great Depression.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) figures show the average contraction among OECD countries in the June quarter was 9.8%, including a 20.4% slump in Britain, a 13.8% downturn in France and a 9.1% drop in the U.S.

The biggest drag on the Australian economy was a 12.1% drop in household spending, the largest on record. That alone accounted for 6.7 percentage points of the 7% fall, with business and dwelling investment also down.

But Australia's iron ore miners have benefited from greater pandemic disruptions to their main rivals in Brazil. Mining investment increased by 1.3% in the quarter, and high iron ore prices paid by China contributed to a 17.7 billion Australian dollar (\$13 billion) trade surplus, the largest on record.

The government has stumped up tens of billions of dollars to fight the economic fallout from the pandemic and Frydenberg said the contraction would have been far worse without such support, which included payments to employers to avoid laying off staff.

UK Job Losses Accelerate in August

LONDON (Reuters) - Job losses at British companies accelerated in August despite an upturn in demand, a survey showed on Thursday, in a bleak sign ahead of the closure of the government's coronavirus furlough scheme at the end of next month.

The IHS Markit/CIPS Composite Purchasing

Managers' Index (PMI), a monthly gauge of activity in services and manufacturing companies, rose to a six-year high of 59.1 from 57.0 in July.

Still, that was revised down from a preliminary "flash" reading of 60.3, hinting at a weaker end to activity last month.

Some economists view the current strength of the PMI with scepticism because it reflects an inevitable increase in businesses reporting growth as the economy reopens, rather than a recovery in output that could take years.

The survey's index of employment declined for the first time in three months - chiming with widespread reports of layoffs from major employers grappling with the hit from the pandemic.

Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, said companies' ability to cope with the withdrawal of economic support measures like the furlough program was now the "burning question".

The government's job retention scheme has supported almost 10 million jobs in total since its launch in April.

"Worryingly, many companies are already preparing for tougher times ahead, notably via further fierce job cutting," Williamson said.

"Policymakers face a huge challenge in sustaining this recovery and avoiding a 'bounce and fade' scenario."

The services PMI rose to 58.8 in August from 56.5 in July, the highest reading since April 2015, although it was revised down from a preliminary reading of 60.1.

World Food Price Index Rises for Third Month Running in August

ROME (Reuters) - World food prices rose for a third month running in August, led by coarse grains, vegetable oils and sugar, the United Nations food agency said on Thursday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 96.1 points last month versus 94.3 in July. The Rome-based FAO also said in a statement that worldwide cereal harvests remained on course to hit an annual record in 2020.

The agency's cereal price index rose 1.9% in August from the month before and 7% above its value a year earlier.

Among the major cereals, sorghum, barley and rice prices rose the most, FAO said. Maize also climbed strongly, pushed up by concerns over U.S. production prospects following recent crop damage in Iowa. The vegetable oil price index climbed 5.9% month-on-month, returning to around the levels registered when the coronavirus crisis hit the world at the start of the year.

Palm oil was buoyed by expected output slowdowns in major producing countries, which, combined with firm global import demand, were expected to result in lower inventory levels.

Average sugar prices rose 6.7% from July, reflecting forecasts of a reduction in production due to unfavourable weather conditions in the European Union and Thailand. Strong import demand in China also helped push prices higher.

By contrast, the dairy index was little changed on the month, with falls in cheese and whole milk powder offset by stronger butter and skim milk quotations.

The meat index was also largely steady, with bovine and poultry prices in retreat while pig meat prices rose after four consecutive months of declines, as Chinese imports jumped.

FAO revised down its forecast for the 2020 cereal season by 25 million tons, largely due to expectations of a lower maize production in the United States.

However, despite this reduction, the agency still expected a record harvest this year of almost 2.765 billion tons, up 3% on 2019 levels.

"Record maize harvests are forecast for Argentina and Brazil, while global sorghum production is expected to grow by 6% from the previous year. Worldwide rice production in 2020 is also expected to reach a new record of 509 million tons," FAO said.

The forecast for world cereal utilization in 2020/21 hit 2.746 billion tons, up 2% on the 2019/20 level. The estimate for world cereal stocks by the close of seasons in 2021 was 895.5 million tons, down 33.4 million tons since July.

Nordics Welfare Model Limits Corona Economic Damage



STOCKHOLM (AFP) - While the coronavirus crisis has pushed Europe's economies into record second quarter slumps, Nordic countries have fared better than most, with their well-oiled welfare states helping to limit the damage.

Without the government's help, Markus Larsson insists, "we would have had to lay off maybe 20 more people."

At the head of a chain of bakeries in Linköping, southern Sweden, the small-business owner has the state to thank for helping keep his business afloat.

Larsson benefitted from state-sponsored reductions for his business's rent and social benefits charges, and was able to reduce his staff's working hours while the government topped up their salaries. Those measures made it possible for him to limit lay-offs to around 20, out of a staff of 100. Sweden has made headlines around the world for its softer approach to the new coronavirus, refusing to lockdown and keeping schools, restaurants and most businesses open throughout the pandemic.

It now has the world's eighth-highest death toll relative to its population, at 573 per million.

In mid-March, the government was quick to announce economic aid worth up to 28 billion euros (\$33 billion) to help businesses. In Sweden -- as in neighbouring Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland -- "policy response to combat the economic impact of the pandemic has been prompt, large, and well-designed," Robert Bergqvist, analyst at SEB bank, told AFP.

Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland all adopted stricter confinement measures than Sweden, including shutting schools, but shops and businesses largely stayed open there as well. In Finland, "we were able to get the virus under control relatively quickly with a relatively modest lockdown. We never had to close down the whole economy, or all the stores or factories," said Danske Bank economist Jukka Appelqvist.

Like elsewhere, the Nordic countries introduced state aid, compensated employees whose hours were reduced, and agreed to postpone tax payments, but the effects seem to have paid off more in the Nordics than elsewhere.

Iran Attends China Int'l Fair With Participation of 148 States

BEIJING (IRNA) - Iran took part in China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) which started work on Friday with participation of 148 countries across the world.

Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed the opening ceremony of the international fair.

Also, 18,000 companies have attended the CIFTIS online or offline. About 10,000 people participated in the international event in person.

CIFTIS 2020 is China's first important trade event after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2019.



China's Population to Drop By Half, Immigration Helps U.S. Labor Force

PARIS (Dispatches) - China's population is projected to drop by half by 2100, calling into question the country's future economic growth in the face of a sharp decline in its labor force. In contrast, America's population and labor force is likely to be sustained if the Trump administration's policy of reducing U.S. immigration level is reversed.

The population of China is projected to decline from 1.4 billion in 2017 to 732 million by 2100, a drop of 48%, according to a new report published in the medical journal *The Lancet* and authored by University of Washington School of Medicine Professor Stein Emil Vollset and 23 coauthors. The number of people of working age in China is expected to plummet. The report forecasts a decline of 64% for China's population aged 20-24 years. That is the prime age for a country's military, the authors note.

"In raw numbers, China's labor force has been declining over the last decade, but they have more than made up for numbers with higher levels of education," said Mark Regets, a labor economist and senior fellow at the National Foundation for American Policy. "They cannot keep doing that as their population falls by half."

Regets notes that population size is only one source of national power, but it makes a difference whether your population is slowly increasing or is declining. "A falling population has serious implications for the average age in society," said Regets. "In percentage terms, the size of the labor force will fall even more than the size of the population."

Much of the Trump administration's response to China is based not only on the country's size but concern about the Chinese government's ability to direct investment through industrial policy. Economists who study China believe such "ability" has harmed the country's economy.

Economist Nicholas Lardy, the author of *The State Strikes Back*, writes that a significant factor in China's economic slowdown "is the slowing pace of economic reform, reflected in the growing role of the state in resource allocation and deteriorating financial performance of state companies." Lardy notes, "Under the leadership of President Xi, state industrial policy increasingly displaced the market-oriented economic reform program advanced in the Third Plenum document." Trump administration efforts at implementing a U.S. industrial policy during the coronavirus pandemic have so far resulted in scandal and questionable use of taxpayer money. White House adviser Peter Navarro, who has been a chief critic of China, has attempted to implement what some would consider a Chinese-style direction of resources during the pandemic.

"On Monday, the administration terminated one contract that Navarro had directly negotiated - for 42,900 Philips ventilators," according to the Washington Post. "A Department of Health and Human Services spokesperson said the cancellation was 'subject to internal HHS investigation and legal review.' The contract had been criticized by a House oversight subcommittee, which concluded that the government had overpaid for the ventilators by \$500 million. The cancellation came after another transaction Navarro championed, a government loan to fund Eastman Kodak's transformation into a drugmaker, unraveled and became embroiled in a securities investigation. The watchdog panel says it is broadening its inquiry to examine all of Navarro's deals."

Like China, America faces its own aging population issues but immigration can address many of them if immigration levels are returned to those in place before Donald Trump took office. The number of legal immigrants will decline by 49% (or 581,845) between FY 2016 and FY 2021 due to Trump administration policies, according to an analysis



from the National Foundation for American Policy. "Average annual labor force growth, a key component of the nation's economic growth, will be approximately 59% lower as a result of the administration's immigration policies, if the policies continue," concludes the analysis. "Economic growth is crucial to improving the standard of living, which means lower levels of legal immigration carry significant consequences for Americans."

Economists Pia Orrenius and Chloe Smith of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas found that without immigration, the U.S. economy would struggle to grow: "The economy expands with growth in the labor force and its productivity. Due to the retirement of baby boomers and population aging in general, immigration will play an even larger role in workforce growth going forward than it has in the past. Absent offsetting increases in productivity growth, less immigration will, therefore, translate directly into slower gross domestic product growth."

The *Lancet* study, which is based on pre-Trump immigration projections for the United States, estimates the U.S. population will increase slightly from 325 million in 2017 to 336 million in 2100: "In our reference scenario, despite fertility rates lower than the replacement level, immigration sustained the U.S. workforce."

"[L]iberal immigration policies in the USA have faced a political backlash in recent years, which threatens the country's potential to sustain population and economic growth," according to the authors of *The Lancet* study. "The optimal strategy for economic growth, fiscal stability, and geopolitical security is liberal immigration with effective assimilation into these societies."

In discussing economic size and global political influence and power, *The Lancet* authors write, "Nations that sustain their working-age populations over the long-term through migration, such as Canada, Australia, and the USA, would fare well." Observers cannot miss the irony that the Trump administration's self-described "nationalist" immigration policy would severely weaken America's future and the country's place in the world.

Where Does Lebanon Go...

FROM PAGE 1

Condition in Lebanon today is more sensitive and critical than Rafic Hariri's era. Zionist regime's glittering eyes, and armed teeth and gnashing sound of enmities from its wicked neighbor states are evident. Hezbollah has found a different scene of action and Lebanese



people adore Hezbollah but Western moves open the scene for excitation of the youths in Lebanon. Recently, Spokesperson for the United States Department of State Morgan Ortagus in her fully interventionist remarks has said that the U.S. would not accept presence of Hezbollah in Lebanon's government. This enormity and rudeness indicates that the U.S. has elements in Lebanon who are probably considered as mercenaries of CIA or the U.S. government who try to impose their will and measures for forming a full secular government in Lebanon.

Political analysts and experts familiar with Lebanon's affairs say that nomination of Adib has been backed by the club of Lebanese Prime Ministers (Saad Hariri, Najib Mikati, Foud Siniora and Tammam Salam) and it means support and approval of most currents and wings of Sunnis with premiership of Adib despite knowing this fact that loyalty of Adib to Mikati will stop him from having special relations with Saad Hariri and Tammam Salam.

Shiite currents, which are formed by two movements of Hezbollah and Amal, have attached great importance to the peace in Lebanon regarding the designation of Adib, and their silence and companion means implicit approval of Adib's nomination for premiership, and forming the cabinet especially because Hezbollah has a pleasant background and record from Adib because he tried hard to stop Hezbollah from being designated as a terrorist group when he was Lebanon's ambassador in Germany. He also had a very important role to stop Hezbollah being condemned despite the U.S. and Zionist regime's lobbying when he was in Berlin.

In case Adib succeeds in forming a cabinet, it likely provides the return of a relative balance of power in Lebanon and if this balance does not conflict with the Zionist regime's policies, it can bring peace and calm to Lebanon for years and it can, to a certain extent, reconstruct the ruins in Beirut.

President...

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony via videoconference, President Rouhani announced that the directive for the implementation of a program to award free electricity to 30 million low-consuming subscribers will be referred to the Energy Ministry over the next two months.

"This program, which will be implemented in the next two months, is a gift from the government to the people of our country, especially the residents of the villages, who are mainly among the low-consuming households," Rouhani said. He further stressed: "We are witnessing that the effort, dedication, and devotion of our nation, including employees, workers, and engineers throughout the country has paid off, and this condition is of great importance for us."

Rouhani pointed out: "We are not in normal conditions and this year, and we are organizing such great inauguration ceremonies at the most difficult and severe time of sanctions." The Iranian president went on to say: "In the history of Iran during the last 2.5 years and from the beginning of 2018 until today, there has been no record of such pressure on the nation, and the people resisted these conspiracies with more endurance every day."

Rouhani reminded: "We have proved that the United States has failed, and we definitely declare to the world and to history that the United States used all its plans and power to defeat the Iranian nation in order to put pressure them."

Stating that the United States has suffered major political defeats in recent weeks, Rouhani said: "In more than seventy years since the establishment of the United Nations, there has been no record of the United States drafting a resolution against the Iranian nation, begging for votes for months, and calling on various countries. When the United States introduced a plan in the Security Council that was against Iran's arms embargo, only one country voted for the United States, and 13 countries either voted against it or rejected the US resolution, that is, they rejected their plan."

The President continued: The U.S. 'snapback' mechanism resolution raised at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting about 10 days ago during a meeting on regional issues and the Palestinian cause and it also failed when 13 out of the 14 members delivered a speech and rejected it."

The Iranian president also stressed: "With the resistance of the Iranian nation, on the one hand, the political defeat of the United States in the United Nations has been embodied, and on the other hand, we witness the prosperity of Iran." The inauguration ceremony of several developmental plans accomplished with Iran's President Hassan Rouhani in attendance via video conferencing.

Committee Formed to Oversee Development of COVID-19 Vaccine

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Health Minister Saeed Namaki announced the creation of a special national committee charged with overseeing the development of a COVID-19 vaccine.

In a decree on Thursday, the Iranian minister tapped Dr Mohammad Mahdi Gooya, the head of the Health Ministry's Communicable Diseases Center, to lead the panel, which will be tasked with cooperating with all Iranian scientific centers and knowledge-based firms to facilitate the creation of a vaccine for the viral infection.

He also assigned Dr Alireza Biglari, the director of the Pasteur Institute of Iran, Seyed Mahmoud Masiha Hashemi, Assistant Professor at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Dr Seyed Alireza Hosseini, an associate professor of exercise physiology, and Dr Ehsan Shamsi Gooshki, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Medical Ethics Department, Faculty Member, as member of the committee.

On August 12, Namaki said a number of vaccines for the novel coronavirus being developed inside the country had successfully passed the human tests and were ready for clinical trial.

Iran, Japan Discuss Mutual, Int'l Issues

MOSCOW (IRNA) - The ambassadors of Iran and Japan to Russia discussed ways to expand cooperation and issues of mutual interests in Moscow.

Kazem Jalali and Toyohisa Kozuki discussed regional and international issues, including political and economic cooperation between the two countries, Syria, coronavirus, and the Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Jalali stressed the illegality of the U.S. actions against Iran and Washington's attempts to restore sanctions despite the opposition of the world, especially the members of the United Nations Security Council.

He added that Iran has been deprived of the economic and political interests of the JCPOA due to US sabotage.

Zarif...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reportedly thanked Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis for Switzerland's role in repatriating U.S. hostages imprisoned by Iran before his upcoming visit to Tehran.

Pompeo thanked Cassis for Switzerland's role in repatriating U.S. hostages imprisoned by Iran, the State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus said on Wednesday.

"Secretary Pompeo thanked Foreign Minister Cassis for Switzerland's continued and constructive role as our protecting power in Iran and for its assistance in caring for and repatriating US citizens wrongly imprisoned by the Iranian regime," Ortagus said in a statement.

The U.S. has no diplomatic ties with Iran and relies on the Swiss embassy in Tehran to represent the U.S.

Tehran Condemns...

FROM PAGE 1

The move was announced on Tuesday, a day before 13 men and a woman accused of providing the attackers with weapons and logistics go on trial on charges of terrorism on Wednesday.

In an editorial this week accompanying the offensive caricatures, the paper said the drawings "belong to history, and history cannot be rewritten nor erased".

Many consider the republishing of the offensive cartoons as a renewed provocation by a publication that has long courted controversy with its satirical attacks on religion.

The caricatures re-published this week were first printed in 2006 by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten*, setting off sometimes violent protests by some Muslims who found the depictions offensive.

Charlie Hebdo, infamous for its irreverence and accused by critics of racism, regularly caricatures religious leaders from various faiths and republished them soon afterwards.

The January 2015 attacks against Charlie Hebdo and, two days later, a kosher supermarket, touched off a wave of killings claimed by the ISIS terrorist group across Europe.

Seventeen people died in the attacks - 12 of them at the editorial offices - along with all three attackers.

U.S. Blacklists...

FROM PAGE 1

The move freezes any U.S. assets of those blacklisted and generally bars Americans from dealing with them.

The action targets Iran's Zagros Petrochemical Co, which the Treasury said agreed to sell Triliance hundreds of thousands of tonnes of Iranian petrochemicals this year.

Triliance, a Hong Kong-based broker, was hit with sanctions in January over accusations it ordered the transfer of the equivalent of millions of dollars to the National Iranian Oil Co as payment for Iranian petrochemicals, crude oil, and petroleum products.

The Treasury also blacklisted UAE-based Petrotech FZE and Trio Energy DMCC, Hong Kong-based Jingho Technology Co Ltd and Dynapex Energy Ltd, as well as China-based Dinrin Ltd, accusing them of being front companies for Triliance and Zagros.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have spiked since Republican President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal struck by his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, and began reimposing sanctions that had been eased under the accord.

Aston Villa Sign Forest Defender Matty Cash

LONDON (Dispatches) - Aston Villa have signed Nottingham Forest defender Matty Cash in a deal worth a reported £16 million (\$21 million).

Cash agreed a five-year contract with Villa, who narrowly escaped relegation from the Premier League last season. Sheffield United and West Ham also reportedly made bids for the right-back. "We are delighted to welcome Matty to Villa and believe we have secured one of England's brightest young prospects," said Villa manager Dean Smith.

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De Vrij Out of Dutch Squad Through Injury

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Netherlands defender Stefan De Vrij has withdrawn injured from their Nations League matches against Poland on Friday and Italy on Monday, the Dutch football association said on Thursday.

No details were given of the injury but it leaves the Dutch thin in defence with Juventus' Matthijs de Ligt also absent following shoulder surgery last month. De Vrij, 28, helped Inter reach the Europa League final last month.

Murray Crashes out of U.S. Open in Round Two



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Andy Murray crashed out of the US Open second round in straight sets to 15th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime on Thursday.

The former world number one was demolished by the 20-year-old Canadian 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 inside Arthur Ashe Stadium in 2hr 8min.

Murray, playing in his first singles Grand Slam since the 2019 Australian Open, had rallied to win a thrilling five-set match against Japan's 49th-ranked Yoshihito Nishioka the first round on Tuesday.

But the Scotsman, who is trying to rebuild his career after an injury-ravaged three years, was unable to repeat the heroics against the big-serving 21st-ranked Auger-Aliassime who dominated from start to finish.

The Canadian smashed 24 aces and 52 winners in a one-sided affair. Murray mustered just two aces and nine winners.

Felix Auger-Aliassime amassed 97 winning points compared to Murray's 68. Meanwhile third seed Daniil Medvedev made light work of his second-round match at the US Open on Thursday, defeating Christopher O'Connell in straight sets.

The Russian progressed to the third round 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 at the expense of the 116th-ranked Australian inside the U.S. National Tennis Center's Louis Armstrong Stadium.

The 24-year-old world number five, seeking his first Grand Slam, is looking to go one better than last year when he lost an epic five-set final to Rafael Nadal.

Medvedev will take on American wildcard J.J. Wolf for a place in the fourth round. Even after 23 Grand Slam singles titles and a glittering career that has spanned four decades, Serena Williams says she still has to remind herself that no one is perfect.

The 38-year-old superstar took another step toward an all-time record-equaling Grand Slam title at the US Open on Thursday with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Russia's Margarita Gasparyan in the second round.

Williams' straight sets win in 1hr 33min on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court put her into a third-round meeting with

fellow American Sloane Stephens.

Williams, 38, looked in imperious form in the opening set, serving well and unfurling some thunderous groundstrokes to keep Gasparyan on the back foot.

However she didn't have it all her own way in the second, being broken twice by Gasparyan who clawed her way back to 4-4.

However the 117th ranked Russian was unable to build on that momentum and was broken when serving to stay in the match.

Williams said she was unfazed by her slight wobble in the second set. "It wasn't that frustrating," she said. "I felt like she returned really well and I think that's been what's holding me back as I get frustrated."

"But I'm out here and I'm fighting and I felt like it was just a minor setback and if anything it can help me know what not to do next time."

Williams said she is learning to dial back her relentless pursuit of perfection, one of the hallmarks of her career. "I always feel like I'm not perfect unless I'm perfect," Williams said.

"That's not a fun way to live your career and live your life. "So it doesn't matter if I lose 20 points in a row now. I just feel like, 'It's OK, it's fine, I'm here, and I'm happy. I get to play tennis after all these years.'"

"I always feel joy when I win. But that's also unrealistic because you can't win every single match every time, and that's kind of the pressure I put on myself. "It's just completely unrealistic. So I don't. I had to take a step back and just really say, 'OK, Serena, no matter who you are or what you are, no one has ever done that.'"

Van de Beek Honors Ex-Ajax Teammate Nouri With Shirt Number



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United's new signing Donny van de Beek has revealed he will wear shirt number 34 in honor of former Ajax team-mate Abdelhak Nouri, who suffered brain damage after an on-pitch heart attack.

United announced they had completed a deal for the Netherlands international worth a reported initial 39 million euros (\$46 million).

Nouri, now 23, suffered brain damage while playing for Ajax in a pre-season game in Austria in 2017.

Van De Beek, also 23, explained why he had chosen shirt number 34 in an interview on United's official website.

"This is a special thing for me because my good friend Abdelhak Nouri... maybe you know the story, he had a heart attack and he's a good friend of mine."

"I'm really close with his family and his brother is one of my best friends and I talk a lot with them."

"So I decided to take his old number on my shirt and I want to get good memories with this number."

Van de Beek, who has signed a five-year deal at Old Trafford, is Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's first signing of the summer transfer window.

Brazil Announces Equal Pay for Men's and Women's National Teams

BRASILIA (Reuters) - The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said on Wednesday that its men's and women's national soccer teams will receive equal pay and prize money.

"There is no more gender difference, the CBF is treating men and women equally," CBF chief Rogerio Caboclo said in statement here. The CBF said that it had also appointed two women's soccer coordinators, Duda Luizelli and Aline Pellegrino.

Pay disparity between men's and women's professional soccer players has been in the spotlight since the United States women's team sued the governing body U.S. Soccer last year alleging gender discrimination in earnings and working conditions.

The team's claims were dismissed by a court in May and a bid to immediately appeal the decision was denied.

Australian soccer's governing body said in November that it had reached agreement with the players' union on a new collective bargaining agreement that "closes the pay gap" between the men's and women's teams. New Zealand and Norway have also moved to address the pay gap between their male and female players.

Pliskova Humbled by Inspired Garcia at U.S. Open

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Top seed Karolina Pliskova suffered a shock 6-1 7-6(2) loss to Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia in the second round of the U.S. Open to blow the women's draw wide open.

Sep 2, 2020; Flushing Meadows, New York, USA; Caroline Garcia of France hits a backhand against Karolina Pliskova of Czech Republic (not pictured) on day three of the 2020 U.S. Open tennis tournament at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. Danielle Parhizkaran-USA TODAY Sports

Pliskova, a former world number one, had no answer to Garcia's power and precision as the Frenchwoman raced out of the blocks to open up a 5-0 lead in the opening set.



Zidane, who has feuded with Bale throughout his two spells in charge, said the winger did not want to play in last season's Champions League last-16 second-leg tie at Manchester City.

Bale has two years left on his Real contract, but there appears little chance he will force his way into the manager's plans.

Bale Accuses Real Madrid of Making It Difficult to Leave

LONDON (AFP) - Gareth Bale has accused Real Madrid of making it "very difficult" to leave the Spanish club as the Wales forward looks to end his Bernabeu exile.

Bale is out of favor with Real manager Zinedine Zidane and played just 48 minutes of Madrid's 12 games when the Spanish season resumed after the coronavirus lockdown.

The 31-year-old almost joined Chinese Super League club Jiangsu Suning in 2019 before Real pulled the plug on the deal, a decision that still irks Bale. "I think the club needs to answer that question because I tried to leave last year. They blocked everything at the last second," Bale told Sky Sports. "It was a project I was excited for last year but it didn't materialise. There's been other instances where we've tried to go but the club won't allow it or done something. "So it's on the club, I can't really do anything. I have a contract. All I can do is carry on what I'm doing and hopefully something comes up. "But as I said, it's in the club's hands. They make things very difficult to be honest."

Bale became the world's most expensive player when he joined Real Madrid from Tottenham for £85 million (\$113 million) in 2013. He has won two La Liga titles and four Champions League with Real, but his critics accused him of showing a lack of respect as his row with the Zidane intensified.

Premier League Terminates China Broadcast Contract

MANCHESTER (Reuters) - The Premier League has cancelled its contract with Chinese broadcasters PPLive Sports International after just one season, the league said in a statement on Thursday.

The broadcasters, part of retail group Suning, paid around \$700 million for three years of English Premier League (EPL) streaming rights from the 2019-20 season.

"The Premier League confirms that it has today terminated its agreements for Premier League coverage in China with its licensee in that territory. The Premier League will not be commenting further on the matter at this stage," the league said in a statement.

The Daily Mail had reported last month that the Chinese broadcasters had withheld payments due to the league in March.

In a statement posted on their official company Weibo account, PPLive Sports International said that it had held negotiations over the price of the rights with the league. "COVID-19 has brought many challenges, and it's especially obvious during broadcasting rights negotiations," the statement said. "After rounds of meetings, PPLive Sports and the Premier League have a disagreement on the price of broadcasting rights. We regret we couldn't have an agreement with the Premier League."

"The direction of PPLive Sports' strategic development will not change. Broadcasting rights strategy adjustment is based on objective reality and strategic thinking. PPLive Sports will continue to dedicate itself to providing high quality services to fans, copyright holders and partners."

The deal with PPLive Sports International was struck during the peak of Chinese interest in international football and marked a huge increase in revenue on the previous deal.



Henderson Aims to Oust De Gea From Man Utd No.1 Spot

LONDON (Dispatches) - Dean Henderson has set his sights on dislodging David de Gea as Manchester United's first-choice goalkeeper and becoming England's number one this season.

Henderson has returned to Old Trafford after two impressive seasons on loan with Sheffield United.

The 23-year-old signed a new five-year contract with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side last week and believes he is capable of unseating Spain's De Gea, who made a series of costly mistakes last term.

Henderson's fine form also saw him drafted into Gareth Southgate's England squad for Nations League matches against Iceland and Denmark.

He is competing against Jordan Pickford and Nick Pope in an attempt to make his England debut. To star for England, Henderson needs to be playing regularly in the Premier League and he warned De Gea that he has not returned to Old Trafford just to sit on the bench.

"Look, 100 percent the aim is for me to play football next season and I don't think I want to be not playing after last season, coming off a good season with momentum," Henderson said. "It wouldn't be clever for me to sit around and not play football, I don't think it would help any parties at all. "Listen, for me with Man United, David De Gea has obviously been a great goalkeeper first and foremost for many years and he's been phenomenal."

"That's something I aspire to be, to have a career like him at the club. So I'll be going back in on the first day of pre-season working my socks off to get in that starting line-up."

Despite joining United's academy at 14, Henderson, who learned his trade during loan spells at other clubs, is yet to make a first-team appearance for the club.

