

**Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat-Lari Said on Wednesday That 127 More Iranians Have Lost Their Lives to Coronavirus Disease Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing the Total Deaths to 22,669**

# IRAN NEWS

**Head of Civil Aviation Organization of Iran (CAOI) Said New Round of Talks on Payment of the Damages Inflicted on the Families of the Downed Ukrainian Boeing 737 Will Be Held on October 18**

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## Another Defeat Awaiting U.S. This Month

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the U.S. administration will fail to achieve its goal to revive UN sanctions lifted in 2015 in the context of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and will face another defeat this month.

He made the remarks in the cabinet session.

The president said that the U.S. officials made a miscalculation two years ago in 2018 when they thought they could bring the Iranian people to their knees through imposition of tough sanctions.

He noted that the U.S. officials will not be able to defeat the Iranian people and what they just did was disgracing themselves globally, at the UN Security Council, and even in front of their own people.

"They have to return and will return... otherwise they will face a big damn," the president said. Rouhani also stated that Iran is different from other countries culturally and religiously, adding that the country should not be compared with other countries in terms of the problems caused by the sanctions and the outbreak of coronavirus. **See Page 7**

## Army Plans to Stage Massive War Game in Southern Waters



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian Army forces are going to stage a large-scale military exercise in the Sea of Oman and parts of the Indian Ocean using a combination of new equipment.

The commander of the joint drill, codenamed Zolfaghar-99, said the main stage of the exercise will begin today (Thursday) and continue for three days.

The war game would include forces from the Ground Force, Navy, Air Force, and Air Defense, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said, noting that the drill zone covers an area of 2 million square kilometers in eastern parts of the Strait of Hormuz, Makran Coast, Sea of Oman, and northern parts of the Indian Ocean, down to the 10-degrees latitude.

He also noted that a broad range of vessels, submarines, aircraft and new weapons will be utilized in the war game, including 'Fateh' homegrown submarine.

The Army forces will practice offense and defense tactics in the drill, the commander said, adding that a long-range drone, called Simorgh, would carry out patrol and reconnaissance operations and engage in combat against hostile vessels by dropping smart bombs with pinpoint accuracy.

He said the purpose of the exercise is to ensure security of regional waters and international shipping routes. "Security in West Asia and its vital and strategic waterways requires indigenization of security with constructive cooperation from all regional countries and prevention of foreign presence in regional waters."

With the motto of "sustainable security under defensive authority", the war game will be launched in three different stages of 'intelligence superiority', 'tactics', and 'display of power', added the commander of the military exercise.

Different Army's military equipment will be used during the event, including the powerful homegrown Fateh submarine, Sayyari said.

Elsewhere, he said that providing the region and international waters with security and controlling this security are among the aims of this war game. "The security of the West Asia and its strategic waters depends on the localization of the security and constructive cooperation between all regional countries and not allowing transregional forces' being present in the regional waters; in the past four decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued this purpose by relying on internal capabilities and using young and committed forces."

"The enemies of the Islamic Republic should know that in case they commit any strategic mistake, the geography of battle and the stage of Iran's response to their measures will not be limited to the West Asian region and they will face a vast field of battle."

Commander of Khatam-al Anbiya Central Headquarters Major General Gholam Ali Rashid made the remarks among the army commanders in the area of 'Zolfaghar 99' military exercise, which will be held on the Makran coasts.

Referring to the capabilities and combat readiness of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Gen. Rashid said, "After 40 years and facing the security crises of the beginning of the Islamic Revolution and then eight years of the Imposed War, Iran's Army has the power and ability to prepare combat very well to respond to threats."

"The greatest achievement of the experience of the Holy Defense for the Iranian nation and the armed forces is the need for defense readiness and the use of military force to respond powerfully to threats," he added.

"During the Imposed War, we have got familiar with the components of power and the ways how to use them, so we hope that the enemies would refrain from testing the will and power of Army and IRGC," he stressed.

## Yemeni Forces Pound Saudi Arabia's Abha Airport

SANAA (Dispatches) - Yemeni forces have launched a fourth round of drone strikes against an airport in Saudi Arabia's southwestern region of Asir in less than a week.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said in a post published on his Twitter page that a squadron of domestically-manufactured Sammad-3 (Invincible-3) combat drones struck with great precision the designated sensitive targets inside Abha International Airport on Wednesday morning.

Saree noted that the retaliatory attacks against the Saudi airport will continue as long as the Riyadh regime presses ahead with its military aggression and siege against its impoverished southern neighbor.

Earlier in the day, Yemeni soldiers and fighters from Popular Committees had launched a series of strikes against Abha airport, using a squadron of Qasef K2 (Striker 2K) drones.

On Tuesday, Yemeni troops and their allies used a number of Sammad-3 unmanned aerial vehicles to pound several targets at the same Saudi airport, leading to the disruption of air traffic.

Also on Monday, Yemeni drones struck sensitive military positions at Abha Airport.

Separately, Saudi-led warplanes hit a truck carrying food supplies in the Mahliyah district of Yemen's strategic central province of Ma'rib on Tuesday, leaving a number of civilians dead and injured. **See Page 7**

## Iran Non-Oil Exports Growth Hit 43% in 7 Years

TEHRAN (MNA) - In spite of U.S. sanctions imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the country's export volume of non-oil commodities registered a 43 percent hike over the past seven years.

Goods export is one of the ways of introducing Iranian products to global markets. Despite US sanctions, Iran's export of non-oil commodities broke the record after 40 years in terms of volume.

According to statistics, 134 million tons of products exported from the country last year (from March 21, 2019, to March 20, 2020), showing a 43 percent hike as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

The export of goods and products to different countries is one of the most important currency-yielding markets both in Iran and the world but the Islamic Republic of Iran has faced problems in this field due to the sanctions imposed against the country.

In this line, the government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" has made its utmost effort in line with improving conditions for traders and increasing export of non-oil commodities and has so far concluded various agreements for facilitating export activities in order to alleviate adverse effects of sanctions. **See Page 7**

## Iran's Giant Field Reaches 650,000 bpd Production Plateau

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran is currently producing 650,000 barrels per day of condensate from its giant South Pars gas field, which is mainly used in the Persian Gulf Star Refinery, a senior energy official says.

The rest of the gas produced at the world's largest natural gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is either used in petrochemical plants or exported, deputy Managing Director of South Pars Gas Company Hossein Shamschiri said.

The company is currently operating 12 refineries which process gas produced at the field, including two facilities at phases 11 and 12 which came online a month ago, he said.

"The onshore section of phase 14 is also being completed and will be operational soon," Shamschiri said, explaining that the offshore section is already operational and the gas produced is used in other phases. Iran exported much of its condensate to Asia, with South Korea and Japan being major customers, but U.S. sanctions in 2018 led to a sharp decline in the exports. **See Page 7**

## Japan Tried to Broker Oil Barter Deal Between Iran, U.S.

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The Japanese government tried to melt the freeze between Washington and Tehran by proposing a swap deal involving Iranian oil and U.S. grain, Kyodo reports, citing unnamed government sources.

The proposal was made by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who became the first Japanese PM to visit Iran in 41 years in June 2019. The deal was to be worth several billion dollars and initially met with positive reactions in both Tehran and Washington, according to the Kyodo sources.

The deal indeed looked like a win-win situation: Iran needed food and markets for its sanctioned oil. The United States, on the other hand, needed new markets for its grain and soybeans as the trade war with China had had a negative impact on sales, Kyodo reported.

The barter nature of the deal would skirt U.S. sanctions on Iran but removing these sanctions was not on the table, which led to Iran eventually refusing the deal as it insisted sanctions must first be lifted. What is more, Tehran, for obvious reasons, did not trust the U.S. and insisted that Washington makes a commitment first before Tehran accepted the deal. **See Page 7**

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## Zarif Planning to Make Trip to Europe Next Week

TEHRAN (MNA) – Some diplomatic reports inform that Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is planning to make a visit to Europe.

The trip is likely aimed at negotiating with Europeans about United States' efforts to restore UN sanctions on Tehran.

Diplomatic sources say arrangements are being made for the foreign minister's visit, which will commence as early as next week. Currently, Zarif plans to visit European countries, such as Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

## 240 km of Metro Line Built in Tehran

TEHRAN (IP) - The Mayor of Tehran Pirouz Hanachi stated that 240 km of the usable line has been built in the Tehran metro so far.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Tehran Metro Line 10th project on Tuesday night, the mayor added that the construction of another 240 kilometers of the metro line is also on the agenda.

Hanachi noted that 40 km of this 240 km will be built in the form of line 10th.

The ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Tehran Pirouz Hanachi, Chairman of Tehran City Council Mohsen Hashemi, Head of Planning and Budget Organization Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, Governor of Tehran Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, Head of Khatam-al Anbiya Construction Headquarters of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Saeed Mohammad.

Line 10 of Tehran's metro starts with from Wardavard metro station in the west of Tehran and ends after passing 35 stations and 43 km in the area of Kosar aqueduct in the east of the city.

The line is supposed to complete the west-east corridor of the Tehran metropolis.

Ali Emam, Managing Director of Tehran Metro Company, added on Tuesday evening at the start of the Tehran Metro Line 10 project, that this line has many advantages because it goes to Wardavard station on Line 5, which is an inter-provincial line, extending from Tehran-Karaj to Hashtgerd in Alborz province.



Emam added that studies show, districts 2, 5, and 22 of Tehran, are the destination of 33% of passengers from Alborz province and with the launch of Tehran Metro Line 10, a large part of this population will be transferred to this line.

The Managing Director of Tehran Metro Company said that the construction of Tehran Metro Line 10 is planned in 5 phases, the first phase of which will be from the Kuhsar neighborhood of Tehran to the International Exhibition which is inaugurated on Tuesday.

The Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of Iran (PBO) Nobakht also announced the allocation of 8,500 billion tomans of assistance to municipalities for the development of the metro by the end of the current Iranian year (starting from March 21).

Nobakht stated that the government is obliged to participate in the construction of metro lines for the welfare of citizens.

With a length of 43 km, Tehran Metro Line 10th starts from Vardavard metro station in the west of Tehran and ends after passing 35 stations in the Ghanat Kowsar district in the east of the city.

## Iran Is Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy Priority

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The ambassador of Kazakhstan to Iran said in a press conference on Wednesday that Iran is a friend and among his country's foreign policy priority.

Iran and Kazakhstan have no problems with each other whatsoever and are in good terms, said Askhat Orazbay.

Orazbay said both President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif had already said that Kazakhstan had never betrayed or bothered Iran.

He said his country has been a friendly nation to Iran and even hosted a meeting of nuclear negotiations of Iran.

Regarding the policy of his country not to sell land to foreigners, he said that it doesn't mean they cannot be active there, adding that Iran had farming lands in Kazakhstan; extraterritorial cultivation is possible.

Reading the message of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to his people, he said his country will continue to fight the coronavirus epidemic.

He added that Kazakhstan has paid \$1.1 billion to 4.5 million people that have lost their incomes due to the coronavirus outbreak.



## Stability of Stock Market In Interest of Country



TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance said that capital market conditions are commensurate with the general conditions of the economy.

Addressing the press on the sidelines of the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Farhad Dejpasand referred to the stock market situation, saying: "We had a period of boom, and it's been weeks since fluctuation increased."

Dejpasand noted: "Fluctuation is in the nature of the stock market and stock market activists should think of the market as medium and long term. In the current situation of stock exchange industries, their real growth in August was over 2%, because they are surveyed companies. We received the best approvals for the capital market during this period."

He went on to say: "If listed companies increase their capital, by depriving them of the right of priority, they can calculate 20% of taxable income at a zero rate. This is an excellent score and a positive signal. We have created the best situation in the last few years in terms of rules and regulations and facilitating entry and exit in the capital market."

The minister said: "State-owned companies and the public sector are obliged to offer 25% of their shares by floating. So far, regulations have been enacted to make the activity of the stock exchange more prosperous."

Dejpasand emphasized, "Stock exchange activists and people are worried, but they should react with patience. We must have calculations in the capital market. In the stock market, calculations of periods count not the calculations of moments."

He reiterated: "The necessity of the stability of the stock market is that we all move with patience. Today, one of the inevitable necessities of Iran's economy is the stability and deepening of the capital market. The economy needs a deep capital market."

Dejpasand highlighted: "Another recent decision is to allocate one percent of the inputs of the National Development Fund to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund. It had been approved since 2015, and it was finally decided that this approval would be implemented."

## Zarif Reacts to Macron's Remarks on Freedom of Expression

TEHRAN (MNA) – In reaction to the remarks of French President who called blasphemy a part of freedom of expression, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called these remarks disgusting.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Zarif wrote, "Freedom of Expression? Or Institutionalized Hypocrisy? Instigate violence and hatred against 1.8 Billion Muslims by stereotypical defamation and desecration of their Holy Book and Prophet."

"Touch party line about events in recent history—repugnant as they are," he added. "Enough already."

French President Emmanuel Macron criticized on Friday what he called "Islamic separatism" in his country and those who seek French citizenship without accepting France's "right to commit blasphemy."

Macron defended satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which published caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

The weekly republished the images this week as the trial began of 14 people over the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and on a kosher supermarket.

Speaking at a ceremony on Friday celebrating France's democratic history and naturalizing new citizens, the French President said, "You don't choose one part of France. You choose France... The Republic will never allow any separatist adventure."

## Russia Stable, Effective Partner of Iran

### IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Chief of Staff of the President of Iran Mahmoud Vaezi said on Wednesday: "These days the relations between Iran and Russia can be analyzed at three levels: international, regional and bilateral."

At the international level, he said, the relations are focused on cooperation between the two countries for establishing international peace and security, mutual support in international forums, strengthening multilateralism, and international law.

The Iranian official added at the regional level, the two countries cooperate in countering terrorism, extremism, and separatism, resolving regional crises, transport, transit, and participation in regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Union.

At the third level, said Vaezi, there is bilateral cooperation in the political, military, security, economic, trade, scientific, technological, and cultural sectors.

Regarding Russia's role in developing the technology of Iran's nuclear power plants, he said: "Iran-Russia nuclear cooperation is carried out in a transparent, lawful manner and under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. If the same

transparency is upheld for the nuclear activities of some of our neighbors, it will certainly strengthen trust between Iran and those countries."

Pointing to Russia's cooperation with Iran in JCPOA, Vaezi noted: "The JCPOA is one of the major achievements of the non-proliferation regime through negotiation and multilateralism, engineered by several countries, including Russia, beyond the hostile behavior of the US administration. In fact, supporting JCPOA at the international level is support for multilateralism, peace and security, and international responsibility. By supporting JCPOA, Russia, and European countries have supported the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations and legitimate international agreements, and of course, Iran's activism and good relations with Russia in this way cannot be ignored."

Vaezi also referred to the U.S. failure to extend the arms embargo on Iran and its impact on Iran's cooperation with Russia in the field of weapons, and said: "Russia has long been Iran's partner in the field of defense weapons and it is normal Iran will cooperate with it after the lifting of the arms embargo."

## Iran Condemns Terrorist Attack on Afghan VP's Convoy

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has condemned the Wednesday terrorist attack against the Afghan vice-president's convoy, which killed at least 10 civilians and injured 15 others.

In a statement, Khatibzadeh described the assassination attempt as a move made by the enemies of Afghanistan's peace and stability given the imminence of intra-Afghan negotiations.

The roadside bomb in Kabul targeted Afghan First Vice President Amrullah Saleh on Wednesday morning, his spokesman said, but he escaped the attack unharmed.

Initially, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said at least two civilians died but the death toll later rose to 10. The ministry said at least 15 people were wounded.

The Taliban, who have pledged not to launch attacks in urban areas under a deal with the United States, denied responsibility.

In a video posted on Facebook soon after the explosion, Saleh, with bandages on his left hand, said he had been travelling to his office when his convoy was attacked.

Saleh, a former intelligence chief and an outspoken Taliban critic, has survived several assassination attempts, including one on his office last year ahead of presidential elections that killed 20 people.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, which comes just before long-awaited peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in Qatar's capital, Doha.

## Iran, Malaysia Discuss Preferential Trade Agreement

TEHRAN (MNA) - The third round of talks for signing a preferential trade agreement between Iran and Malaysia was held through video conference, an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

According to Anvar Kamrani, in this meeting, which was attended by representatives of relevant executive bodies, including the Vice Presidency for Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the parties discussed the rules of origin, the preparation of the lists of goods, and the date for exchanging the mentioned lists.

"It was decided in the meeting that the lists proposed by the two sides should be prepared and exchanged by October 15, 2020, based on the national tariffs of the other country," TPO portal quoted Kamrani as saying.

The head of the TPO's Asia-Pacific Markets Office continued: "It is expected that by agreeing on the commodity lists, the preferential trade agreement will be signed between the two countries, which will increase trade between the two sides."

Back in May, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin expressed readiness to boost the economic and trade interaction between the two Muslim nations.

## Iran Congratulates Tajikistan on National Day

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani has offered congratulations to his Tajik counterpart and the people of the country on the 29th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In a Wednesday message to President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, Rouhani said Tehran is always willing to develop and deepen relations with Dushanbe in all bilateral and multilateral fields considering the common culture and language.

"In the current situation resulting from the global coronavirus crisis, it is necessary for the officials of the two countries to work harder and interact with each other to develop cooperation in order to solve the economic problems of the region and share experiences in fighting this disease," Rouhani said.

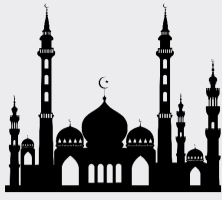
He also expressed hope that the two states would witness further development of their relations in line with mutual interests, as well as development of regional and international peace and security through good understanding and joint efforts.

Rouhani finally wished health and success for Rahmon and prosperity and felicity for the people of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Each year, Tajikistan celebrates the anniversary of its independence on September 9.

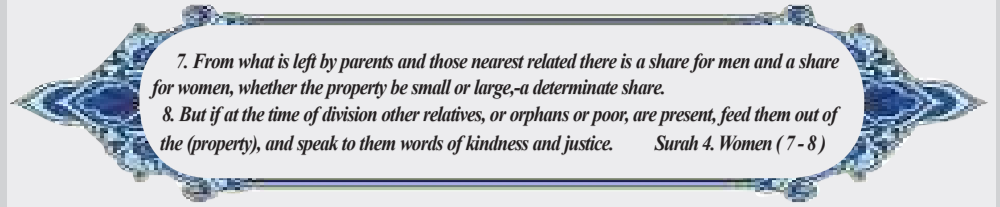
Most of Tajikistan's population is composed of the Persian-speaking Tajik ethnic group, who share language, culture, and history with Iran and Afghanistan.

After independence, Tajikistan suffered from a devastating civil war which lasted from 1992 to 1997. Since the end of the war, newly established political stability and foreign aid have allowed the country's economy to grow.



PRAYER TIME

- Noon (Zohr) 13:01
- Evening (Maghreb) 19:36
- Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr) 05:19
- Tomorrow's Sunrise 06:44



# Tehran, Ankara Mull Over Ways of Targeting \$30b Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Head of Iranian President's Office for Communications said that the two countries of Iran and Turkey mulled over ways of targeting to reach \$30 billion worth of bilateral trade.**

On the sidelines of the meeting held between Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday through video conference, the two countries explored avenues for reaching \$30 billion bilateral trade.

In his twitter account on Tuesday, Alireza Moezzi wrote, "The Sixth Meeting of Supreme Council of Strategic Relations between Iran and Turkey was held in Tehran on Tue. through video conference in the presence of Iranian and Turkish presidents and eight ministers of the two countries."

Ways of targeting \$30 billion worth of trade in bilateral trade, which had been agreed in the previous meeting of the two presidents, also was examined, he underlined.

Expansion of cooperation in the fields of energy, transport and tourism were of the issues of mutual concerns agreed between Iranian and Turkish presidents in this meeting, Moezzi added.

Regional issues such as spread of peace and stability in Syria, continuation of Astana Peace Process and operationalization of its agreements were also discussed between the two countries.

According to Moezzi, issue of Palestine and treacherous behavior of some regional countries in normalization of ties with Israel and undermining the Islamic world were the other issues taken into consideration in this meeting.

Chief of Staff of the President of Iran Mahmoud Vaezi said Tehran and Ankara are going to develop their cooperation in a wide range of business sectors, especially banking, as soon as possible.



He said the economic ties between the two countries are of great volume and very good documents have been signed; therefore, it is needed that Tehran and Ankara develop their relations in the banking sector as soon as possible.

He further added that the governors of the central banks of the two countries have highlighted this matter while President Rouhani and President Erdogan have also discussed using national currencies in trade and business.

Vaezi went on to say that expansion of the trade ties was discussed during the Sixth Meeting of the High Level Cooperation Council between Iran and Turkey.

"It is decided that the two countries give priority to purchasing each other's domestic products. It was also decided that Iran and Turkey talk about bartering goods."

Chief of Staff of Iran's President said energy was another issue discussed by the two sides.

Moreover, he said the sides have exchanged views on export of natural gas and petrochemical products.

"A committee will be formed to follow up on these issues. We talked about cooperation in the electricity field as well. About the preferential trade agreement, we decided to show more flexibility to work on 60 kind of goods on both sides," reiterated Vaezi.

According to him, another issue on the agenda during the meeting was close customs cooperation between Iran and Turkey.

"We talked about using electronic systems to speed up the procedures at customs," he added.

He noted that joint investment was another issue on the agenda.

"We discussed the formation of a joint committee to support Iranian and Turkish companies and mutual investments. We weighed in on rail and road transportation and transit. On the other hand, we reached good agreements on cooperation at borders as well as increasing the number of trucks," underlined Vaezi.

# Dolatabadi Wants to Enter Guinness Book of World Records

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Susan Dolatabadi may soon enter the Guinness Book of World Records after setting an unbelievable record for indoor cycling.



Morvarid Javaherian who is a referee for registering records in Iran in an interview talked about a record which was set by Dolatabadi in the indoor cycling.

She said this is for the first time that a woman in Iran set such a record and her name would be registered in the national book of records.

Javaherian added that one can hope Dolatabadi's name to be registered in the Guinness and she is to send a film of her record-setting attempt to the Guinness Institute in order that she would be given a chance to repeat her record.

Susan Dolatabadi is the founder of the fixed and indoor cycling in Iran who set a record of three hours of cycling with RPM (indoor cycling workout).

She says she is happy that she could set such a record for the first time and she wants to invite others for a challenge for breaking her record.

She reiterated that her goal is to be the first Iranian woman whose name enters the Guinness Book for this field of sport and to make the name of Iran in the indoor cycling proud.

She then expressed her gratitude to the fixed and indoor cycling committee for its support of her for setting the record.

# Economic Ties With Iraq Going Back to Pre-Covid-19 Era

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's ambassador to Baghdad says despite regional problems and the current situation caused by the coronavirus epidemic, Iran's economic relations with Iraq are being normalized, gradually going back to pre-Covid-19 outbreak.

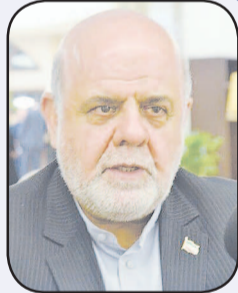
In an interview with IRNA, Iraj Masjedi said one of the main tasks and missions of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Iraq is working on the economic sector, accordingly, a specialized committee has been set up and activated to do focus on this target.

As he said the formed committee works on making investments and doing trade with the Iraqi provinces, activities of Iranian companies in Iraq, and cross-border trade and banking issues with the Iraqi side.

Masjedi added that despite the coronavirus outbreak and the limitations caused by this disease, with the efforts made, the two country's border crossings have been gradually re-opened to resume mutual trade and economic activities.

Iran-Iraq trade is gradually being normalized, returning to the pre-coronavirus epidemic conditions, he informed.

Masjedi said that since the new Iraqi government has taken office, dozens of meetings have been held with the Iraqi ministers and economic officials, including the ministers of finance, oil, agriculture, transportation, housing and urban development, trade and power to improve the expansion of mutual economic ties and cooperation.



# Pakistani Cabinet Approves Setting Up Shipping Line to Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Cabinet of Pakistan, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan, has approved setting up a shipping line with Iran and some other states, as part of cooperation with Iran, a step heralding bright prospects for the two neighboring countries in maritime sector.

Pakistan's Minister of Maritime Affairs, who accompanied Prime Minister Khan during his official visit to Iran in 2019, yesterday announced on his Twitter account that the government has agreed to launch a shipping line with some countries.

"Historic day for Pakistan, Federal Cabinet allowed to start Ferry/Passenger Ships to all possible destinations across the world," wrote Seyed Ali Haider Zaidi.

A Pakistani government spokesman who is also information Minister told reporters in Islamabad hours after the cabinet meeting that Pakistan would implement a plan to launch a shipping line to facilitate travel, especially for pilgrims.

Implementation of shipping line project which the previous governments had announced is a serious step by the Pakistani government to enhance maritime cooperation with Iran.

Meanwhile, the English-language website "Pakistan Today", referring to the development wrote: The path of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of sea, especially the shipping line, has been paved.

According to the plan of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs of Pakistan, the international shipping line will be launched from the ports of "Karachi and Gwadar" to the ports of neighboring Iran.

# Propane Output of South Pars Phase 19 To See 240% Growth by 2021



TEHRAN (Shana) -- The head of operation of 10th South Pars refinery announced a 240% increase in propane production in phase 19 of the South Pars gas complex by the end of the current Iranian calendar year to March 20, 2021.

According to the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), Mohammad Nemati stated that procedural changes, commissioning and completion of different units of phase 19 had caused a significant increase in plant's yield, adding production of butane and propane had increased by 350 and 70 tons per day by July which was made possible by launching turbo-expanders in the refinery.

He said the in the second phase of commissioning the turbo-expanders and bringing online the third and fourth gas processing trains of the refinery which will come on stream in fall, 1,700 tons of propane output will be added to the refinery's productivity.

Moreover, butane production will also increase by 1,000 tons per day, he said.

# Countdown Begins for Commissioning 23 Wells in South Azadegan

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has about to complete sinking 23 development wells at South Azadegan Oilfield, an NIDC official said.

According to NIDC, Mohammad Khavarinejad said 98% progress has been made in drilling 23 wells in the development of South Azadegan oil field, adding: "Out of this number, drilling of 21 wells have been completed so far."

He said NIDC has so far drilled 81,103 meters in the wells by using 9 drilling rigs.

Once completed, the wells will be handed over to the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), as the operator of the field, for operation and oil production, he said.

So far, the National Iranian Drilling Company has drilled 64 wells under turnkey contracts (EPDS) in the southern part of Azadegan oil field and is currently drilling 10 wells in the field.



SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



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**TENDER NO.: 01-31-9680030**

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

ITEMS	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
35	PARTS FOR " MAN TURBO " SCREM GAZ COMPRESSOR TYPE CP 80 TAG NO C503 A/B SER. NO. : 270259 & 270261 JOB NO. : 82121 REF. MAN TURBO	165 Nos

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their "INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to qualitative assessment Form no.1, available at [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir) not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for Participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,886,900,000 RIAL in favor of NISOC.

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# U.S. Envoy Meets New Taliban Chief Negotiator

KABUL (Reuters) - U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has held a meeting in Doha with the head of the new Taliban team due to open peace talks with a team representing the Afghan government, the Islamist insurgent group said on Tuesday.

The negotiations, the result of an agreement between Washington and the Taliban, are to begin in Doha after the release of the last half-dozen or so of 5,000 Taliban prisoners.

The Afghan negotiators had been expected to fly from Kabul to Doha this week, but are awaiting a signal from the Afghan government that the release - to which Western governments have objected - is going ahead.



# Trump to Host Israel-United Arab Emirates Deal Signing Ceremony

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump will hold a Sept. 15 signing ceremony for the historic diplomatic agreement normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, a senior White House official said on Tuesday.

As part of the deal, announced at the White House on Aug. 13 following what officials said were 18 months of talks, the Persian Gulf state agreed to normal relations with Israel, while Israel agreed to continue with plans to suspend its annexation of the West Bank.



# Belarusian Protest Leader Detained, As Lukashenko Rejects Dialogue



KYIV (Reuters) - Prominent opposition leader Maria Kolesnikova was detained by Belarusian authorities, a border official said, after thwarting what a Ukrainian government minister described as an attempt to expel her from Belarus.

The fate of Kolesnikova, a key figure during four weeks of mass protests, had been a mystery since supporters said she was snatched in the street by masked men in the capital Minsk on Monday. Deputy Ukrainian Interior Minister Anton Gerashchenko told Reuters Kolesnikova had successfully prevented "a forcible expulsion from her native country".

"Maria Kolesnikova made a courageous act that did not allow the Belarusian special services to expel her to the territory of Ukraine," he said. "All responsibility for her life and health is on Alexander Lukashenko, the dictator of Belarus."

The Interfax Ukraine news agency said the activist had deliberately ripped up her passport so that Ukrainian border officials would not be able to let her through.

Soon after the incident, President Alexander Lukashenko told Russian reporters that he would not rule out holding new elections, but rejected any talks with opponents who he said were bent on steering the country towards disaster.

Fellow opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who is in exile in neighbouring Lithuania, called for Kolesnikova to be released, telling Reuters that her detention would only inflame the anti-government protests.

Kolesnikova's whereabouts were unclear. Two other opposition figures who had gone missing around the same time as her, Anton Rodnenkov and Ivan Kravtsov, entered Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the Ukrainian border service said.

"Kolesnikova has now been detained, I can't say concretely where she is, but she has been detained," Anton Bychkovsky, a representative of the Belarusian border service, told Reuters by phone. "She was detained in connection with the circumstances under which they (the group) left the territory of Belarus," he said.

Lukashenko, who has crushed dissent in Belarus for the past 26 years, conceded in his interview with Russian journalists that he may have held onto power too long. "Yes, maybe I overstayed a bit," Russian journalist Roman Babayan cited Lukashenko as saying.

But the 66-year-old leader said he was the only person capable of protecting the country for now. Lukashenko said his supporters would be attacked if he left power, said Babayan, editor-in-chief of the Moscow Talks radio station.

"I won't talk to the opposition Coordination Council because I don't know who these people are," Lukashenko said. "They are no sort of opposition. Everything they suggest is a catastrophe for Belarus and the Belarusian people."

Belarus has seen a tense political stalemate since a disputed presidential election on Aug. 9, with protesters flooding the streets and security forces responding with mass arrests and - according to some of those detained - beatings and torture.

The country of 9.5 million people is of key strategic interest to Moscow as a route for its oil and gas exports and a buffer between NATO and Russia.

# India, China Accuse Each Other Of Firing Shots at Tense Border

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - China and India have accused each other of firing shots on their flashpoint Himalayan border in a further escalation of military tension between the nuclear-armed Asian rivals.

The relationship between the two countries has deteriorated since a hand-to-hand combat clash in the Ladakh region on June 15 in which 20 Indian troops were killed.

Experts fear the latest incident will intensify a months-long standoff between the Asian giants that erupted in late April.

Beijing's defence ministry accused India of "severe military provocation", saying soldiers crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the western border region on Monday and "opened fire to threaten the Chinese border defence patrol officers".

"According to the Chinese side, Chinese troops approached the India side for negotiations, and then they say some Indian troops fired at the Chinese side," Al Jazeera's Katrina Yu reported from Beijing.



# Russia Ready to Mediate in Eastern Mediterranean Crisis

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told Cyprus that Moscow was ready to help mediate in any talks with Turkey as tensions simmer over energy exploration in the Mediterranean Sea.

Decades-old tensions between Turkey and Cyprus, which is backed by Greece, have come to a head this year in disputes over commercial rights in the Eastern Mediterranean, an area thought to be rich in natural gas.

"As far as your relations with Turkey are concerned, we are ready to promote dialogue, pragmatically based on mutual interests and in search of decisions, which will be fair and based on international law," Lavrov said on Tuesday at a meeting with Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades in Nicosia.

NATO allies Turkey and Greece are at loggerheads over the extent of their continental shelves.

Ankara also disputes the rights of Cyprus to explore for natural gas in the sea area around the island, saying that some of the areas infringe on its continental shelf.

Turkey also says the island's estranged Turkish Cypriot community also has rights over any finds.

Cyprus was divided in a Turkish invasion in 1974 triggered by the military then ruling Greece, splitting the island's Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities into separate sides.

Turkey has no diplomatic relations with Cyprus, instead backing the breakaway Turkish Cypriot statelet in the north of the island.

Greece and Turkey have deployed naval and air forces to assert their competing claims in the region. Lavrov's offer to mediate the crisis came as

Greece said it will bolster its military with new weapons, troops and the development of its defence industry, amid concerns of open conflict between the two countries.

"The Turkish leadership is unleashing, on a near-daily basis, threats of war and makes provocative statements against Greece," Greek government spokesman Stelios Petsas said on Monday.

# U.S. Blacklists Ex-Lebanese Ministers, Vows More Action

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States expanded its sanctions related to Lebanon on Tuesday, blacklisting two former government ministers it accused of enabling Hezbollah and warning that more actions targeting the Shi'ite group were coming.

In a statement, the U.S. Treasury Department said it had designated former Lebanese Transport Minister Yusuf Finyanus and former Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil for engaging in corruption and leveraging their political power for financial gain.

"Finyanus and Khalil were involved in directing political and economic favors to Hezbollah and involved in some of the corruption that made Hezbollah's work possible in Lebanon," David Schenker, a senior State Department official for the Middle East, told a briefing call.

"This should be a message both to those who cooperate with Hezbollah, those who enable Hezbollah, but also Lebanon's political leaders,"

Schenker said. He added that "everyone should absolutely expect" more sanctions.

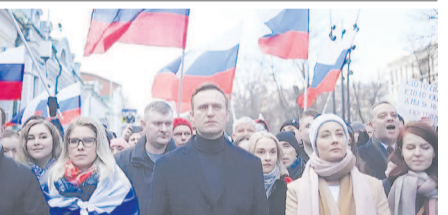
The Wall Street Journal in August reported that some U.S. officials wanted to designate Gebran Bassil, the son-in-law of President Michel Aoun and a former foreign minister who heads the largest Christian political bloc in the sectarian power-sharing system.

Asked by reporters if Bassil and Riad Salama, Lebanon's central bank governor, were next to be sanctioned, both Schenker and senior U.S. government officials declined to comment.

Mohanad Hage Ali, a fellow at Carnegie Middle East Center described the U.S. move as one to give a message to Lebanon's current political establishment. "This is a kill the chickens to scare the monkey situation, where second rank members of the political elite are placed under sanctions to get things moving on the political level," he said.



# All Options Open On Sanctions Against Russia Over Navalny



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany will keep all options open on possible sanctions against Russia over the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, the country's minister for Europe told AFP.

"We have made it very clear that we will look at the entire set of instruments," Michael Roth said in an interview, responding to a question on what action Germany might take against Russia over the case.

Germany said last week there was "unequivocal evidence" that 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner Navalny had been poisoned with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that "only Russia can and must answer" questions on the case.

Moscow has fiercely denied involvement, the Kremlin denouncing as "absurd" attempts to blame the poisoning on Russia.

On Monday, Merkel's spokesman underlined that she would not rule out consequences on the multi-billion-euro Nord Stream 2 pipeline project if Moscow failed to thoroughly investigate the case.

While noting that the pipeline was not just a German project, Roth stressed: "We are open to all sanction options."

Any response would have to be "the result of talks and close European coordination," said Roth, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU.

The minister also noted that the case was not a bilateral quarrel. "It is a conflict between Russia and democratic constitutional states, particularly in Europe but also worldwide."

"The poisoning of Navalny is a serious violation of the chemical weapons accord and of an international, rather than bilateral, nature." It was key to send a "clear signal", he said.

**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Parsian**

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3bdrs, S/p  
Sauna, J  
roof garden  
marble floor  
pkg, & F.F

**Farmanieh Villa (\$7000)**  
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5bdrs, S/p  
Sauna, J  
nice yard  
terrace, pkg  
elegantly Furn

**Kamranieh Apts**  
(\$1800) 160sq.m, 2bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F  
(\$2700) 260sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F

**Nice mountain View**

**(\$1800) Gheitarieh Apt**  
180sq.m, 3bdrs  
balcony, & F.F

**Niavaran (\$2000)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs  
balcony

**Elahieh bldg (\$5000)**  
4storey, 13bdrs  
pkg lots

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## French Economy Due to Bounce Back in Q3

PARIS (Dispatches) - France's National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies released Tuesday official data showing the French economy will bounce back in the third quarter, predicting 17% growth after shrinking by 13.8% over the second quarter of the year. An estimated 25.5 million people make up the workforce in France, out of a total population of 67.06 million, while unemployment stands at 7.1%. During the second quarter of

this year, 215,200 job losses were recorded due to the pandemic shutdown and closing of businesses -- 158,200 of those in the private sector and 57,100 in the public. Although salaried employment fell by 0.9% in the second quarter, notably, temporary employment surged by 23%, with 108,100 jobs added. Ironically, in the first quarter of the year, temporary employment had dropped drastically, by 40.4%.



## China's New Yuan Loans Set to Rise in August

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's new bank loans are expected to have risen in August from the previous month, as the central bank sought to keep liquidity flush to support embattled smaller companies and backstop an economy recovering from the coronavirus shock. Chinese banks are estimated to have issued 1.22 trillion yuan (135.74 billion pounds) in net new yuan loans last month, compared with 992.7 billion yuan in July, according to the median estimate in a Reuters survey of 35 economists.

That would be largely in line with the 1.21 trillion yuan tally a year earlier. Broad M2 money supply growth in August was seen at 10.7%, matching previous month's pace. Annual outstanding yuan loans were expected to grow 13.0% for August, again the same as for July.

Chinese authorities have urged banks to offer cheaper loans and cut fees to help struggling businesses hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Premier Li Keqiang has said that growth in M2 - a broad gauge of money supply - and total social financing will be significantly higher this year.

Early August data suggested the world's second-biggest economy has largely managed to bounce back from the coronavirus crisis, with exports rising at their quickest pace in over a year even though weakness in imports pointed to soft domestic demand.

China's policymakers reiterated recently a flexible and targeted approach to monetary policy and said fiscal policy would be more proactive, indicating to many analysts that Beijing has shifted from its emergency stimulus mode to more targeted measures.

Analysts with Capital Economics expected the issuance of corporate bonds to have eased slightly in August. But other forms of non-bank financing are likely to have picked up, including government bonds and equity.

They also noted the pick-up in shadow credit in July suggested that regulators may have relaxed their grip on the shadow banking sector.

In August, the total social financing (TSF), a broad measure of credit and liquidity, was expected to have risen to 2.73 trillion yuan from 1.69 trillion yuan in July.

"Credit growth may edge up further in August and September before softening in Q4," said economists with UBS, who expected China's macro policy stance to remain supportive in the rest of 2020, but with low incentive to ease further.

"U.S.-China tension may persist as a key headwind for China's growth recovery and RMB exchange rate in the coming months."

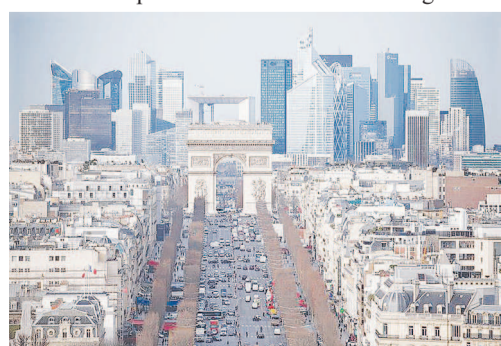
## Euro Zone GDP Revised Up, But Still a Record Drop

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The euro zone economy declined by slightly less than initially estimated in the second quarter, but the drop was still the sharpest ever as consumer spending caved in due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 11.8% from the previous quarter and by 14.7% year-on-year, data from the European statistics agency Eurostat showed on Tuesday.

That compared with initial estimates of respectively 12.1% and 15.0% reported at the end of July.

The contraction in the April-June period, during with COVID-19 restrictions were in place across the continent, was the steepest in a data series that began in 1995.



In the first three months of this year, the contraction was already 3.7% quarter-on-quarter and 3.2% year-on-year.

The sharpest second-quarter declines from the previous quarter were in Spain, Greece, Portugal and France.

Household spending had the greatest negative influence, cutting 6.6 percentage points from growth, followed by gross fixed capital formation at minus 3.8 points. Net trade, government spending and inventory changes also had a negative impact.

Eurostat also reported that employment fell by 2.9% in the second quarter, also the sharpest decline since records began in 1995, after a 0.3% drop in the first three months of 2020.

The impact was moderated by government support schemes, but the decline in hours worked, at 12.8%, was more pronounced.

## S. African Economy Shrinks by Half in Second-Quarter "Gut Punch"

PRETORIA (AFP) - South Africa's economy shrank by more than half in the second quarter, an unprecedented decline, as the coronavirus pandemic took its toll on the continent's most industrialized state, the statistics agency said Tuesday.

The government shut down the country in March as it scrambled to rein in the spread of coronavirus, pushing the economy into deep recession. "South Africa's economy contracted by 51%" in the second quarter of 2020 compared with the same period last year, Statistics South Africa said in a statement, adding: "The punch in the gut was severe."

The record contraction came after a lockdown imposed on March 27 -- one of the world's strictest -- caused most economic activity to cease. The predicted drop in GDP was driven largely by steep declines in the construction, manufacturing and mining sectors, where activity shrank by up to 70 percent.

South Africa's economy was already in recession -- its second in two years -- when it was hit by the virus, and had shrunk by two percent during the first three months of 2020.

The second-quarter contraction -- the fourth in a row for the ailing economy -- "dwarfs the annualized slowdown of 6.1 percent recorded in the first quarter of 2009 during the global financial crisis," the statisticians said. Despite the restrictions South Africa, with 639,362 cases and more than 15,000 deaths, is the worst affected country in Africa, accounting for more than half of the continent's diagnosed cases.

It ranks among the top seven countries in the world in terms of confirmed infections.

In June, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni projected that the economy would shrink by 7.2 percent in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the deepest slump in 90 years.

The anti-virus restrictions also severely affected the tourism industry, one of South Africa's leading contributors to GDP.

Borders were shut and even domestic travel was curtailed during the three months while restaurants closed and the sale of alcohol was prohibited.

"Spending on restaurants and hotels ground to an almost complete halt, plunging by 99.9%," StatsSA said.

Alcohol sales were prohibited to ease pressure on hospitals, allowing doctors in emergency wards to focus on Covid-19 rather than road accidents and other booze-related injuries.

The agriculture sector was the only one that appeared relatively unscathed by the pandemic as it boosted maize exports while enjoying a hike in international demand for citrus fruits and pecan nuts.

While the economy is expected to start picking up in the third quarter as the lockdown restrictions have gradually been eased, "electricity supply constraints are likely to curb the sustainability of the recovery," warned Sanisha Packirisamy, an economist at Momentum Investments. The electricity supply company Eskom last week resumed rationing power because of breakdowns at its ageing coal-powered plants.

"We expect growth to contract by 8.1% this year and are penciling in a shallow recovery of 2% in 2021, as an increase in the number of business closures, persistently higher levels of unemployment and ongoing challenges to electricity supply detract from the expected upturn," Packirisamy said in a note.

The UN forecasts that it will take around five years for South Africa's economic activity to return to pre-pandemic levels.

## Malaysia Seeks to Reroute \$10.6b Belt-and-Road Rail Project

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) - Malaysia's government on Tuesday said it will seek to reroute a \$10.6 billion rail project being built across the peninsula under China's "Belt and

Road" trade initiative, and as a result will reassess the cost and schedule with the Chinese contractor.

The government revived the 640 km (398 mile) East Coast Rail Link last year with a budget cut by a third to 44 billion ringgit (\$10.57 billion) after halting the project in 2018.

It contracted the Malaysian unit of China Communications Construction Co Ltd, to build the line.

Deputy Transport Minister Hasbi Habibollah in parliament on Tuesday said the government plans to revert to the original route detailed in 2017 but with minor changes around the south of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

"The government will renegotiate with the Chinese government and the main contractor of the project to ascertain the cost implication and project implementation schedule," Hasbi said.

He said the results of the renegotiation will be presented to the government to finalise the route.

The cost of the project incorporating the rerouting will be more or less the same as at present, and will not return to the higher cost of the original plan, Hasbi said.

## Russia to Build Up Half-Finished Oil Wells to Regain Market Share

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia believes it is extremely important to quickly regain, or even raise, its oil market share once demand recovers, as it readies to build up its fleet of unfinished oil wells, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said.

To ensure Russia has not lost market share after a global production cut agreement finishes in 2022, Moscow has worked out a program of unfinished oil wells, which could start operating once the deal expires.

"Once (oil) demand starts returning to the pre-crisis levels, it will be extremely important for Russia and for other oil producing countries to quickly regain market share, or even to raise it," Novak said in a ministry's in-house magazine.

Sources told Reuters last week the plan had stalled over the finance ministry's unwillingness to provide funds amid the need to address the economic impact from coronavirus.

On Tuesday, Novak did not say if the programme of unfinished wells, a scheme widely used by U.S. shale oil producers, has been approved by the government after being first announced in May.

The finance ministry has not replied to a request for a comment. Last week, the ministry said that ways to support oil service companies were under discussion, without using the state budget or sovereign wealth fund as sources of financing.

OPEC and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, are cutting output by 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd) until December to support prices as the pandemic hammers demand.

Novak said the government considered offering three-year tax breaks for companies engaged in the program from early 2022, estimating the number of the unfinished wells at 2,700.

Banks are to provide part of the funds under guarantees by the state bank VEB and while the tax breaks are estimated at 32 billion roubles, the budget is set to regain 1.15 trillion roubles (\$15 billion) once the wells are operating, he said.

Total spending by oil companies themselves is seen at 300-400 billion roubles, Novak said. To provide some respite for the industry, he suggested companies should engage in "green" energy production until oil demands recover.

Novak said a similar idea could be considered for the gas sector, also hardly hit by the weak demand amid the pandemic.

## German July Trade Figures Point To Slow Recovery



BERLIN (Reuters) - German exports remained far below their pre-crisis levels in July despite a 4.7% increase during the month, data published on Tuesday showed, adding to signs that Germany's economic recovery from the coronavirus will be slow.

Imports rose by only 1.1% on the month, taking the seasonally adjusted trade surplus to 18 billion euros, the Federal Statistics Office said.

Economists expect Europe's biggest economy to show a return to growth in the third quarter, helped by higher activity levels domestically and in some of Germany's main trading partners after lockdowns were lifted from April. Yet weak demand from major economic peers still grappling with the pandemic, such as the United States, is holding back a stronger recovery.

The data showed that exports to the United States were 17% lower in July year-on-year. Exports to China, however, which is experiencing a more pronounced recovery than the United States, were only 0.1% lower. "While today's numbers are good news for our call of surging GDP growth .... (in the second half of the year) and suggest that the export sector is flourishing again, we should not get carried away by these numbers," said Carsten Brzeski, euro zone chief economist at ING.

He added: "They are still part of the mechanical rebound. In fact, the German export sector is still suffering from structural challenges including trade tensions, Brexit and global supply chain disruptions as well as difficulties among its main trading partners to cope with the virus."

The German economy contracted by a record 9.7% in the second quarter as household spending, company investment and trade all collapsed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Exports were in July still more than 12% lower than in February. Trade tensions, uncertainties linked to Britain's departure from the European Union and an automotive sector struggling to adapt to electrification had suppressed demand for German goods and services before the pandemic, setting off a recession in the manufacturing sector.

The COVID-19 crisis makes a full recovery difficult. The VDMA business association said on Tuesday that German engineering firms expected production to decline by 17% this year before growing by only 2% in 2021 - barring both a second coronavirus wave and resurgent trade disputes.

## Cyberspace Provided For Education Sector

ZANJAN (IRNA) - Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) urged all on Wednesday to make efforts to prepare the ground for university students, professors, teachers and school students to use cyberspace as an opportunity for education sector.

Cyberspace is a chance for both continuing education and

remaining healthy, Mohammad-Javad Azari-Jahromi said at a council meeting in the northwestern Iranian province of Zanjan.

Azari-Jahromi is in Zanjan to review the level of access to internet and national information network in the Iranian provinces including Zanjan. At his remarks, the minister said 86,000 schools in the country have joined national information network.



## Cooperate on Climate or "We Will Be Doomed"

LONDON (Dispatches) - World powers must pull together and retool their economies for a green future or humanity is "doomed", UN chief Antonio Guterres has warned, telling AFP that failure to control the coronavirus pandemic illustrates the danger of disunity.

Before the virus struck, 2020 was billed as a pivotal year for the plan to dodge the bullet of catastrophic global warming, with high profile summits planned to catch a wave of public alarm over the future of the planet.

The coronavirus crisis may have shunted climate into the sidelines as nations launched unprecedented shutdowns to try to slow its spread, but Guterres said the need for climate action was more urgent than ever.

In a searing assessment of the international response, Guterres said the pandemic should sharpen governments' focus on cutting emissions, urging them to use the crisis as a springboard to launch "transformational" policies aimed at weaning societies off fossil fuels.

"I think the failure that was shown in the capacity to contain the spread of the virus -- by the fact that there was not enough international coordination in the way the virus was fought -- that failure must make countries understand that they need to change course," he told AFP.

"They need to act together in relation to the climate threat that is a much bigger threat than the threat of the pandemic in itself -- it's an existential threat for our planet and for our lives."

The UN chief said "pollution and not people" should be taxed and called for nations to end fossil fuel subsidies, launch massive investments in renewables and commit to "carbon neutrality" -- net zero emissions -- by 2050.

"We need to have a number of transformational measures in relation to energy, in relation to transportation, in relation to agriculture, in relation to industry, in relation to our own way of life, without which we would be doomed," he said.

His comments come as the landmark Paris climate deal goes into effect this year in a bid to cap the rise in temperature to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

The accord was already on a knife edge before the pandemic, with doubts over commitments from major polluting nations and concerns that it is still far short of what science says is needed to avert disastrous climate change.

U.S. President Donald Trump shocked the world in 2017 when he said the United States -- history's largest emitter -- was withdrawing from the Paris deal. It is due to leave on November 4, just after the country's presidential election.

The pandemic has further dented hopes that diplomatic pressure could sweep foot-dragging nations into announcing bold climate action plans, as major summits were postponed and nations focused inwards.

Guterres said there was currently no clear sign that a United States government



recovery policy would align with Paris goals, but he expressed hope that states, businesses and individuals "will compensate for the lack of political commitment that exists at the present moment".

He said much now rests on the actions of major emitters, China, the US, Europe, Russia, India and Japan, in interviews with AFP and other members of Covering Climate Now, a global collaboration of news outlets committed to increased climate coverage.

"We have never been as fragile as we are, we never needed as much humility, unity and solidarity as now," he said, blasting "irrational demonstrations of xenophobia" and the rise of nationalism.

"Either we are united, or we will be doomed," he added, ahead of a largely virtual UN General Assembly this month.

Climate change warnings are no longer predictions of a distant future. Earth's average surface temperature has gone up by one degree Celsius since the 19th century, enough to increase the intensity of droughts, heat waves and tropical cyclones.

"The expectations that we have in relation to the next five years about storms, about drought and about other dramatic impacts in the living conditions of many people around the world are absolutely terrible," Guterres said, ahead of a multi-agency climate report.

The United Nations says it is still possible to reach a safer goal of a 1.5C cap in temperature rise, but to get there global emissions must fall 7.6 percent annually this decade.

### Another Defeat...

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the government's measures to boost the country's production and development, the president said: "Measures taken in various fields, including industry, agriculture, and services, show that people are not affected by sanctions and fear of coronavirus."

Appreciating the resistance of the Iranian nation against the economic pressure and the oppressive sanctions of the enemy, Rouhani said: "The great Iranian nation, all branches, agents, and officials of the executive branch have used all their power in the current difficult conditions."

"Although for the past seven months, we have been facing sanctions and coronavirus at the same time, fortunately, our country has been on the path of economic growth in July and August," said the president.

"The fact that the companies listed in the stock market have grown by 2.8% in August this year compared to the same period last year shows that the country is on the path of the surge in production and the enemies have failed to achieve their goals," he added.

"Regarding education, our first priority is face-to-face education, but there is no compulsion here," said Rouhani.

"Despite the special conditions that have been created for education this year with the outbreak of coronavirus, the doors of no school and university are closed, but in the meantime, there is no compulsion in this regard and we do not force anyone," noted Iran's president.

"We want our students to be in perfect physical and mental health," Rouhani said, stressing the need for close monitoring of the health of students in educational centers by the ministries of education and health.

### Iran Constructing...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran identifies perpetrators of sabotage at Natanz nuclear facility: AEOI spokesman

Salehi said Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) will later comment on the identification of the elements behind the incident at Natanz facility.

The AEOI spokesman t Behrouz Kamalvandi said on Sunday that the country's security forces have identified the perpetrators of the act of sabotage at Natanz nuclear facility.

"It is for the security organizations to painstakingly investigate [the incident] and they are expected to give their final view in this regard. Their investigations are underway and as far as we know, they have detected the agents [who committed the act of sabotage] as well as the motive, methods and manner of the sabotage," Kamalvandi added.

### Iran Non-Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

According to the statistics of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) and Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran's export of non-oil commodities in the first year of activity of the current administration in 2013 hit 93.886 million tons, valued at \$41.848 billion, showing a one percent hike as compared to a year earlier.

Accordingly, Iran's export of non-oil commodities last year (ended March 20, 2020) hit 134.331 million tons in terms of weight and broke the record of export volume over the past forty years.

Iran exported 134.331 million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$41.242 billion, last year (ended March 20, 2020).

Drawing a comparison between export statistics in 2013 and 2019 showed the export of non-oil goods and commodities registered a 43 and 14.1 percent growth in terms of weight and value respectively.

### Japan Tried to...

FROM PAGE 1

U.S. sanctions aimed at stifling Iran's primary source of foreign income have decimated these exports, but Iran is still sending oil abroad. The amount of this oil is higher than the official figures suggest.

According to TankerTrackers.com data, as of August, Iran was exporting as much as 600,000 barrels daily, using ship-to-ship transfers with transponders turned off to avoid detection, skirting U.S. sanctions. The daily average number compares with an estimate of 227,000 bpd made in a U.S. Congressional report.

Most of the oil Iran exports ends up in China, whether directly or indirectly, coming from Indonesia or Malaysia.

According to official data from the Central Bank of Iran, the income from exports of oil, gas, condensates, and oil products totaled \$29 billion in the last Iranian year, from March 2019 to March 2020.

## Indian Economy to Contract 10.5% in FY21



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Fitch Ratings on Tuesday slashed India's FY21 growth projection to (-) 10.5 per cent, from (-) 5 per cent estimated earlier, saying the continued spread of the virus and imposition of sporadic shutdowns across the country has disrupted economic activity.

In the first quarter of current fiscal India's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by a massive 23.9 per cent.

Fitch said India recorded one of the sharpest GDP contractions in the world in the April-June quarter, but noted that growth should rebound strongly in the July-September period amid re-opening of the economy.

However, there are signs that the recovery has been sluggish and uneven, it said.

In its September update of Global Economic Outlook (GEO), Fitch said, the deepest recessions were in India, the UK and Spain, countries that saw particularly large shocks in daily mobility data on visits to retail and recreation venues, and where lockdowns were stringent and long-lasting throughout 2020 (April-June).

It said multiple challenges are holding back growth recovery, both in the short and medium term.

"New cases of the coronavirus continue to increase, forcing some states and union territories to re-tighten restrictions... The continued spread of the virus and the imposition of sporadic shutdowns across the country depress sentiment and disrupt economic activity," Fitch said.

It further noted that the severe fall in activity has also damaged household and corporate incomes and balance sheets, amid limited fiscal support.

Also a looming deterioration in asset quality in the financial sector will hold back credit provision amid weak bank capital buffers.

Furthermore, high inflation has added strains to household income and supply-chain disruption and excise duties increases have caused prices to rise. It projected inflation to slow amid weak underlying demand, easing supply-chain disruption and a good monsoon.

"We have slashed our GDP forecast for this fiscal year to - 10.5 per cent, a huge revision of - 5pp (percentage points) compared to the June GEO. We expect the shortfall of activity relative to our pre-virus forecast to be 16 per cent by early 2022," Fitch said.

GDP growth is likely to be (-) 9.6 per cent in July-September, (-) 4.8 per cent in October-December and 4 per cent in January-March quarter this fiscal, as per Fitch projections.

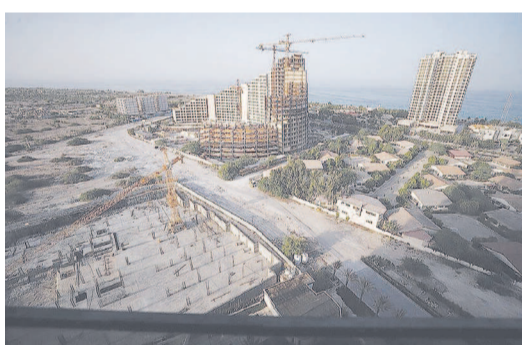
## Kish Island Being Developed Despite Sanctions

KISH (IRNA) - Iran has planned to launch several infrastructural and tourism projects in the Persian Gulf port city of Kish today (Thursday) in the face of the U.S. sanctions and the outbreak of the potentially deadly coronavirus.

More than 2,000 billion tomans have been invested in these projects that have brought employment for 1,000 people.

Morteza Bank, an advisor to the Iranian president and secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council, expressed pleasure with investments in Kish and Aras free zone -- the latter is located in northwestern Iran, Azarbaijan province.

The following projects are to be inaugurated through video conference by President Hassan Rouhani today: Kish Innovation Center, the center is to open to house knowledge-based enterprises, export companies, financial centers of the knowledge enterprises, startups, accelerators, and other intermediary organizations for expansion and



development of the economy, and support for innovations and commercialization strategic technologies needed by the country.

The center will help Kish City to reach its designated stance as the scientific and research pole, role model of sustainable development, the best place for investment in the Persian Gulf region, using knowledge enterprises and accelerators to develop Kish Free Trade Zone.

Tunnel to connect Kish Island to the optical fiber project, two projects have been carried out in technology and optical fiber to create the communications infrastructures for business and development of Kish and create the smart city.

According to the head of the project Amir Sodagaran, the project was done in two years. It will improve the quality and quantity of communication services. It also helps the sustainability of communications of Kish Island with the mainland.

### Iran's Giant Field...

FROM PAGE 1

The sudden halt meant Iran had to store large volumes of condensate in oil tankers, incurring high demurrage costs, but the country largely avoided the expense and disruption thanks to the operation of two major refineries in the country.

Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh has said all Iranian condensate exports will stop in the current Persian year that ends in March 2021. They will be processed in the Persian Gulf Star and Siraf condensate refineries to produce gasoline and naphtha. On Saturday, official news agency IRNA said the Iranian government will sell parts of its shares at the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company. Naphtha is a gasoline blending component and a feedstock for plastics and other petrochemical products. Asian customers favor Iran's South Pars condensate for its rich naphtha yield compared to other grades.

South Korea was the biggest client of Iranian condensate with 300,000 barrels per day (bpd), but the country stopped the imports even before the US sanctions came into effect in November 2018. The United States is reportedly pushing its condensate and also naphtha on South Korea. Before February, about 130,000 bpd of Iran's gas condensate was used in its petrochemical plants, while another 80,000 bpd went to domestic condensate refineries not including the Persian Gulf Star.

The Persian Gulf Star Refinery currently receives 420,000 bpd of gas condensates. Its third phase was opened in February which made Iran self-sufficient in gasoline. The completion of the fourth phase will open another 60,000 bpd capacity for condensate feedstock. Iran is building another refinery, the \$2.8 billion Siraf plant, with a capacity to process 360,000 bpd of gas condensate. It includes six processing units, each with a capacity to turn 60,000 bpd of condensate into better value-added products.

### Yemeni Forces...

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Masirah TV reported that Saudi-led military aircraft conducted 15 air raids against the same Yemeni region, and another five against the neighboring district of Rahabah.

There were, however, no immediate reports about the extent of damage caused and possible casualties. Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power. The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives over the past five years. The Houthi Ansarullah movement, backed by the armed forces, has been defending Yemen against the Saudi-led military aggression.

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## Kolarov Leaves Roma for Inter

ROME (Dispatches) - Veteran Serbia left-back Aleksandar Kolarov has joined Inter Milan from Roma, the Italian clubs announced on Tuesday.

Kolarov, 34, who won the Premier League twice in a seven-year spell with Manchester City, spent three campaigns at the Stadio Olimpico.

"The defender, 34, joins the Nerazzurri for an initial fee of 1.5 million euros (\$1.7 million)," said Roma.

## Leverkusen Set To Sign Schick

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayer Leverkusen are poised to spend some of the money from Kai Havertz's transfer to Chelsea with Czech centre-forward Patrik Schick reportedly undergoing a medical at the Bundesliga club on Tuesday.

After also selling striker Kevin Volland to Monaco last week, Leverkusen, who finished fifth in the Bundesliga last season, are set to sign Schick, 24, from AS Roma on a five-year contract.

# Ronaldo at the Double, France See Off Croatia

PARIS (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo scored a stunning brace to take him to 101 international goals for Portugal in a 2-0 victory over 10-man Sweden in the Nations League on Tuesday, while France won a repeat of the 2018 World Cup final 4-2 over Croatia.

Ronaldo broke the mythical 100-goal mark on the stroke of half-time, the 35-year-old Juventus attacker curling in a free-kick from 25 yards over the wall and into the far left corner beyond Sweden's stranded goalkeeper Robin Olsen for a memorable milestone in his trophy-laden career.

The bonus second goal, and his 101st, came in the 72nd minute, the former Manchester United and Real Madrid forward cutting back inside the Swedish defence and producing a deft finish into the far corner from 20 yards.

After making his first senior international appearance as an 18-year-old in 2003, Ronaldo notched up his first goal for Portugal in a 2-1 defeat by eventual winners Greece at Euro 2004.

Ronaldo, capped 165 times by Portugal, is second only to Iran's Ali Daei, on 109, in the list of top men's international goal scorers.

Incredibly for Ronaldo, just 17 of his 100 goals have come in friendly matches, and his nine hat-tricks all came in FIFA or UEFA tournaments or qualifying games.

At the Stade de France north of Paris, Eduardo Camavinga became France's youngest international in 96 years as les Bleus won a repeat of the 2018 World Cup final over Croatia.

Midfielder Camavinga, aged 17 years and nine months, replaced Ngolo Kante in the second half and is only surpassed by Julien Verbrugghe, aged 16 years and 10 months in 1906, and Maurice Gastiger, at 17 years and 4 months in 1914.

Deschamps made seven changes from



Saturday's win over Sweden in Solna with Wissam Ben Yedder and Anthony Martial leading the attack after Kylian Mbappe contracted Covid-19.

Antoine Griezmann, Dayot Upamecano, Olivier Giroud as well as an own goal from the visitors' goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic secured a repeat result from Russia two years ago after Dejan Lovren had opened the scoring for Croatia, Wolfsburg's Josip Brekalo adding their second in the 55th minute.

The result sees Didier Deschamps' World Cup winners second on goal difference in Group A behind Portugal.

FIFA's number one ranked side Belgium, led superbly by Manchester City playmaker Kevin De Bruyne, handed Iceland a 5-1 drubbing to follow up on their 2-0 win over Denmark.

The Islanders actually opened the scoring through an 11th-minute deflected shot from Holmber Fridjonsson.

But a reshuffled Red Devils outfit hit back almost immediately through Axel Witsel in the 13th minute, before a Michy Batshuayi double (17, 70) coupled with goals from Dries Mertens (50) and new cap Jeremy Doku (80) combined to put the game out of sight.

Belgium's win moves them to the top of League A Group 2 ahead of their trip next month to England, who were lucky to escape with a 0-0 draw away to Denmark in Copenhagen on Tuesday.

Gareth Southgate's preparation for the game was thrown into turmoil when Phil Foden and Mason Greenwood were sent home after breaching coronavirus protocols following Saturday's 1-0 victory in Iceland.

Southgate can use that distraction and a lack of match fitness ahead of the start to the Premier League season on Saturday as excuses for the Three Lions' lack of sharpness going forward, in sharp contrast to their free-scoring form in qualifying for Euro 2020 prior to the coronavirus shutdown.

## Barty Opts Out of French Open Over Covid-19 Concerns



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Ash Barty has prioritized her health over her status as women's tennis No. 1 by opting out of a second Grand Slam event during the coronavirus pandemic, this time skipping a title defense at the French Open.

After pulling out of the U.S. Open, which is being contested in New York without crowds, Barty has also decided against traveling to Europe for a clay court tournament in Rome and the rescheduled French Open from Sept. 27 because of concerns over Covid-19. She has indicated she may not play competitively again until 2021.

The 24-year-old Australian said it was a tough decision, particularly because Roland Garros is where she captured her first major title last year.

"Last year's French Open was the most special tournament of my career so this is not a decision I have made lightly," Barty said in a statement Tuesday. "I wish the players and the French Federation all the best for a successful tournament."

The statement was issued within hours of French Open organizers saying spectators would be allowed at the tournament despite a growing number of coronavirus cases in the country.

## Greenwood Sorry for Coronavirus Breach

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United forward Mason Greenwood has apologised for the embarrassment caused by his breach of coronavirus regulations while on England duty in Iceland.

The 18-year-old said he had learned a lesson from the incident, which resulted in his being dropped from the squad for Tuesday's Nations League match in Denmark, along with Manchester City midfielder Phil Foden.

England manager Gareth Southgate refused to comment on the nature of the breach but media reports said the pair left the bio-secure bubble to meet two local girls.

Both players have been fined 250,000 Icelandic krona (\$1,800, £1,350) by Reykjavik police and the Football Association said it would be launching a full investigation.

"Having now had the chance to reflect on what's happened, I can only apologise to everyone for the embarrassment I have caused," Greenwood said in a statement.

"It was irresponsible of me to break the Covid-19 protocols which are in place to protect players, staff and the public.

"In particular, I want to apologise to Gareth Southgate, for letting him down when he had shown great trust in me."

Greenwood added: "Playing for England was one of the proudest moments in my life and I only have myself to blame for this huge mistake."

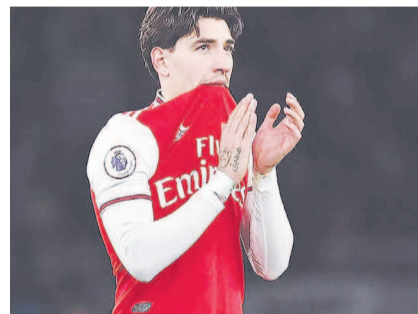
## Serena Undecided Over French Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Serena Williams said Monday she wanted to talk to French Open organizers about safety protocols before confirming whether she'll play, adding she'd hoped to stay in her apartment during the Slam.

The French Open tournament director announced Monday that all players at Roland Garros will be housed in two designated hotels "without exception," to reduce the risks from coronavirus.

But Williams, who has been allowed to stay in a private house during her US Open bid, suggested it was illogical to be so strict over accommodation when spectators would be present in arenas.

# Bellerin Invests in Green Football Club



LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal and Spain defender Hector Bellerin has become the second-biggest shareholder at Forest Green Rovers, a lower-tier English side recognized as the world's greenest football club.

Under chairman Dale Vince, a British green energy industrialist, the League Two club has focused on sustainability, installing solar panels, using a solar-powered robot grass mower and creating an organic pitch.

Forest Green, based in southwest England, are also the world's first vegan football club.

FIFA has described Forest Green as the greenest football club in the world and they were the first to be certified carbon neutral by the United Nations.

Bellerin, who recently raised money to plant 60,000 trees in the Amazon rainforest, will work with Vince to help promote environmental issues among clubs, leagues and supporters.

"When I first played Forest Green Rovers, all I knew about them was that it was a long way from London," said the Arsenal defender, who is a vegan.

"As I heard more about the club and its work, I knew I wanted to meet them and be part of it. "So many people feel there's no solution to the world's problems, but Forest Green are already doing plenty -- and showing others the way."

## European Clubs Chief Warns of Heavy Virus Losses for Clubs

LONDON (Dispatches) - European Club Association chairman Andrea Agnelli warned on Tuesday that football was still in "crisis-management" mode, predicting damaging financial fallout from the coronavirus pandemic over the next few years.

Agnelli said rebates owed to Champions League and Europa League broadcasters totalled 575 million euros (\$678 million) and he predicted a revenue drop for clubs of four billion euros over two years. The Juventus chairman said the overall value of the transfer market could plummet by up to one-third.

The disruption caused to European club competitions by the Covid-19 pandemic has left rights-holders seeking compensation from UEFA, the continent's governing body.

"We have seen very important rebates to the principal broadcasters both at domestic level and at international level," he told the ECA general assembly, being held by videoconference.

"We have seen a £330 million (\$430 million, 365 million euros) rebate in the Premier League, we have seen a downturn in the Bundesliga domestic rights of about 200 million euros and we are in the process of finalising the account with UEFA with a reduction of around 575 million euros for the international club competitions, and that is all money that is not going to be distributed.

"We (European clubs) are looking at a revenue decrease of approximately four billion euros in the next two years."

The ECA chairman said the absence of fans had wiped out a crucial source of income, predicting a downturn in sponsorship revenue and a 20 to 30 percent drop in the overall value of the transfer market.



## Djokovic Urges Angry Fanbase Not to Turn on U.S. Open Line Judge

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Novak Djokovic has pleaded for compassion for the line judge he inadvertently struck in the throat with a ball at the U.S. Open on Monday after the female official faced a backlash from fans of the world number one on social media.

The Serb was disqualified in the fourth round after he hit a ball to the back of the court in frustration after dropping serve in the first set against Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta, sending the official to the floor.

A section of Djokovic's fans took to social media to hurl abuse at the official after her Instagram username was carried by Serbian media.

"Shame on you. Old lady full of evil," read one of the messages left on her Instagram account, while other users accused her of faking the injury and "bad acting".

Djokovic on Tuesday defended the official on Twitter, while thanking fans who had left him positive messages of support.

"Please also remember the linesperson that was hit by the ball last night needs our community's support too. She's done nothing wrong at all. I ask you to stay especially supportive and caring to her during this time.

"From these moments, we grow stronger and we rise above. Sharing love with everyone. Europe here I come."

With the line judge screaming out in pain as she fell to the ground, a horrified Djokovic ran over to her and apologised.



A tournament spokesman told Reuters later that the line judge appeared to be okay and was not brought off-site.