

Iran's Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Saturday That Some 116 More Iranians Have Died From Coronavirus Disease Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing the Total Deaths to 23,029

IRAN NEWS

In Response to the French Weekly's Insult to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf Described the Insults Of the Arrogance as Sign of Their Deeply Rooted Enmity

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Tehran Condemns Bahrain's Shameful Normalization Deal With Israel

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has strongly condemned a normalization agreement between Bahrain and Israel, saying the Manama regime sacrificed the Palestinian cause against the occupation for the upcoming US presidential election through the "shameful" treaty.

In a statement released on Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry said the Bahraini regime had committed a "fundamental mistake" by turning its back to its own people instead of gaining legitimacy from them. It had also sought refuge from the regime occupying Jerusalem al-Quds and sacrificed the Palestinian cause for the domestic US election, the statement added.

The Foreign Ministry stressed that Iran considers the announcement on the establishment of diplomatic ties between Israel and Bahrain as "a shameful and humiliating act" on the part of the latter, which sacrificed decades of Palestinian struggle and suffering for the U.S. vote.

"The oppressed and right-seeking people of Palestine and the freedom-seeking Muslims of the world, without doubt, will never accept the normalization of relations with the usurping and lawless Israeli regime, and this shameful act will remain in the historical memory of the oppressed and downtrodden Palestinian nation and the world's freedom-seeking nations," it said. **See Page 7**

Iran Will Make Enemies Regret Their Miscalculation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Army's first-in-command warned the enemies to not make any miscalculation in the region as the Iranian armed forces enjoy the utmost readiness.

"The message of the military drill for enemies and those who have bad thoughts in their minds is that they should never test the Islamic Republic of Iran and never follow their miscalculations because they will regret the response; we displayed part of this response as far as it could be displayed," said Army Commander Major General Seyyed Abdolrahim Mousavi on Saturday after the massive 3-day Zolfaghar-99 military drill was wrapped up in the southern regions of the country.

Iranian armed forces cannot even be compared to a year before, he said, adding, "Our defense industries and universities are consistently helping to build new and updated equipment and collaboration [among forces] are increasing and thanks to God, we have the best readiness."

Home-grown 'strategic' equipment, continued the Major General, has been successfully tested during the drill which has achieved all its pre-determined goals. "We managed to successfully integrate Iran-made submarines and drones into operation based on determined missions," he said, adding that Fateh submarine and Simorgh drone are signs of the authority of the country in the region.

The message of the drill for Iranians is that armed forces are fully ready to defend the country, its interests, and ideals, added the commander.

White House Has No Sense of Humanity



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has condemned U.S. sanctions which have obstructed Iran's access to medicines amid the coronavirus pandemic, saying the White House knows nothing about humanity.

Speaking during a meeting of the national task force for fighting the coronavirus on Saturday, Rouhani slammed Washington for blocking a request by the Iranian government for a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to combat the deadly outbreak.

"We requested a \$5 billion loan from the IMF and all members agreed, but America does not allow us to get the loan for medicines and treatment," he said. "They have distanced from humanity as far as this. The White House today has no sense of humanity. If it had a sense of humanity, it wouldn't have done this," he said.

The Iranian president also lashed out at what he called "friendly countries" that have frozen Iran's money in their banks. "We have countries that are also our friends and our money is in their bank, [but] they have locked it three times and are not willing to release our money for our needs. They say that the Americans have pressured" them against unfreezing Iran's money and that they had retreated in the face of the US oppression, Rouhani said.

Such a crime is unprecedented in history, with a country not being able to draw off its money deposited in a bank in a bid to cover its people's health needs, he underlined.

The Americans, he added, are angry about how the Iranian government is managing the country, so they are mounting their pressure despite the country's fight against the highly contagious virus.

Iran has been contending with the deadliest pandemic the world has seen in many decades amid US sanctions, which have seriously hampered efforts to contain the outbreak.

More than 397,801 Iranians have been infected with COVID-19 in Iran. More than 22,913 have died, while 342,539 have recovered.

President Rouhani went on to say that a top priority for the government is to provide medicines for people amid the tough economic situation caused by sanctions.

"At a time when enemies have even banned [companies from sending] medications needed by the people as part of their unfair and illegal sanctions, a high priority for the country is to meet needs for medicines," he said.

He made the remarks during a conversation with Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnasser Hemmati, who presented a report on the trend of procurement of raw materials for pharmaceutical companies.

Hemmati said some \$900 million have been allocated to the import of medicines and medical equipment over the past six months.

Maduro Says "American Spy" Captured Near Venezuelan Oil Refineries

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has announced the capture of an "American spy" with heavy weapons and money near two refineries in the country, which is gripped by an acute fuel shortage crisis as a result of illegal U.S.-imposed sanctions.

"Yesterday we captured... an American spy who was spying in Falcon state on the Amuay and Cardon refineries," Maduro said in a televised address in capital Caracas on Friday.

The individual, Maduro said, was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps who worked with the CIA in Iraq, and was captured with "heavy, specialized weapons and a large amount of cash" in the northwestern state. The arrest took place after authorities had "discovered and dismantled" a "plan to cause an explosion" at El Palito refinery in Carabobo state, west of the capital. Venezuelan authorities have stepped up security at all refineries in the Latin American country after the incidents.

Two former members of the U.S. military were detained in Venezuela earlier this year after a group of mercenaries attempted to intrude into the northern state of La Guaira on speedboats. The Venezuelan military foiled the attack, killing eight of the armed men and arresting several others. Venezuela sits on the world's largest oil reserves and its refineries can produce more than 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) of fuel, but they are working at less than 20% of their capacity mainly due to power outages and lack of spare parts amid U.S. sanctions.

The government announced on Friday a new fuel distribution initiative and said it was planning new refining projects in the face of long lines stretching for kilometers by Venezuelans to fuel up their vehicles.

Venezuela descended into political turmoil after opposition figure Juan Guido unilaterally declared himself "interim president" in January last year, followed by a US-backed botched putsch against the elected government. There was also an attempt at assassinating President Maduro in a drone strike in 2018.

Guido's self-proclamation and his coup attempt received backing from the U.S. administration.

Ever since, Washington has imposed several rounds of crippling sanctions against the oil-rich South American country aimed at ousting Maduro and replacing him with Guido. The sanctions, which include the illegal confiscation of Venezuelan assets abroad and an economic blockade, have caused enormous suffering for millions of people in the country.

Iran Exports \$2.5b Products to Arab States

TEHRAN (MNA) - Director general of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries revealed that \$2.5 billion worth of non-oil goods was exported to Arab states in West Asia in first five months of current year.

Farzad Piltan made the remarks in an interview with IRNA on Sat., and reiterated, "Islamic Republic of Iran exported about \$2.5 billion worth of non-oil goods to the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf and West Asian regions in this period."

Iran's non-oil products were exported to the countries including Iraq, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Syria, Qatar, Jordan, Lebanon and Bahrain in this period, he said, adding, "Accordingly, Iran has not exported any product to Saudi Arabia and Yemen during the first five months of the current year."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Piltan pointed to the spread of the coronavirus global pandemic and added, "Iran's exports value registered some \$3.5 billion decline due to the spread of coronavirus and closure of Iran's borders with neighboring countries as well as stoppage of trade ties across the region and globe." **See Page 7**

Zolfaghar-99 Military Exercise Wraps Up

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Grand Joint Zolfaghar-99 military exercise ended its work in eastern waters of Strait of Hormuz yesterday with a parade of surface and subsurface vessels.

As held in the presence of Iranian Army Commander Major General Seyyed Abdolrahim Mousavi and some of senior commanders of the Iran's Army Force as well as observers from Khatam al-Anbiya Defense Base, a variety of surface and subsurface submarine units of the Navy including destroyers, missile launchers, and submarines of 'Tariq, Ghadir and Fateh-class submarines' marched and showcased their strength and power to the world.

In this ceremony, aircrafts of Iran's Army Air Force accompanied the surface and subsurface units.

The three-day exercise, dubbed Zolfaghar-99, kicked off on Thursday under the command of the Army's Zolfaghar base, codenamed "Sheyed al-Shohada" and with the participation and cooperation of four-unit Army Force and Air Defense Base on the area of two million square kilometers in the eastern waters of the Strait of Hormuz, Makran coast, Oman Sea and North Ocean India up to 10 degrees north. **See Page 7**

Pakistan Gov't Bans Import of Iranian Vegetables

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Pakistan's federal government's Department of Plant Protection (DPP)'s quarantine unit, which is responsible to keep a check on import and export of edible goods, has banned the import of potatoes and tomatoes from Iran due to which there is a fear of price hike and shortage of the two staple vegetables across the country.

Per sources, a ban was imposed on the import of tomatoes and potatoes coming to Pakistan through the Taftan border of Iran, which has led to a nationwide shortage of these items. The shortage can turn more serious in the next few weeks.

Food factories manufacturing potato chips in Pakistan import a large quantity of Agria, a special type of potato from Iran, but due to the ban, these companies have started buying local potatoes in bulks to stock them in the factories. Owing to that, the demand and price system has come under severe pressure and there is a risk of a sharp rise in the price of potatoes in the coming days as well as a decrease in its availability. **See Page 7**

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Cleric Grand Ayatollah Saanei Passes Away

TEHRAN - Iranian Grand Shiite Ayatollah, Yousef Saanei, has passed away at the age of 83 after being hospitalized for several days at a clinic in the holy city of Qom.

An official at the late Ayatollah's office said he had cirrhosis liver, and was suffering from kidney problems.

According to this official, Ayatollah Saanei was admitted to Nekouei Hospital of Qom due to a fracture of his hand and pelvis. He then underwent dialysis to meet the factors required by the liver and kidneys.

Judiciary Pursuing Charlie Hebdo's Insult Via Int'l Sources

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (MNA) – A senior judiciary official said that Iran Judiciary corresponded with several international organizations as soon as the French Charlie Hebdo republished the insulting cartoon.

Ali Bagheri Kani described the desecration of Muslim sanctities as a clear example of hatred, blasphemy and blatant violation of the right to freedom of religion and belief, saying that the actions are also a crime according to Article 32 of the French Press Freedom Law.

He considered these legal documents as an indication of the fact that such action is unjustifiable and unacceptable from the perspective of human rights in the international community.

This is another manifestation of modern ignorance, modernity that mocks human values, he said, adding that the French magazine's derogatory action was taken to divert public opinion from recognizing the presence of the Zionist regime in the region.

He called the French Charlie Hebdo's insult to the Prophet (PBUH) a blatant



violation of Articles 1 and 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

As soon as the Charlie Hebdo republished the insulting cartoon, Iran Judiciary corresponded with several international authorities and stressed they should not allow some countries to have open space and freedom to use the existing gaps to do such actions.

Iran Thanks St. Vincent for Anti-U.S. Stances at UNSC

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has held phone talks with Louis Straker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In the Friday call, Zarif praised the principled stances held by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as a member of the UN Security Council on recent issues including the Security Council Resolution 2231, and its rejection of the U.S.' unlawful moves, which ran counter to the international law and regulations.

Last month, the United States was further isolated over its bid to reimpose international sanctions on Iran with 13 countries on the 15-member UN Security Council expressing their opposition, arguing that Washington's move is void given it is using a process agreed under a nuclear deal that it quit two years ago.

In the 24 hours since U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he triggered a 30-day countdown to a return of UN sanctions on Iran, including an arms embargo, long-time allies Britain, France, Germany and Belgium as well as China, Russia, Vietnam, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Indonesia, Estonia and Tunisia wrote letters in opposition.

Iran Ready to Develop Cooperation With Japan

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian ambassador to Japan announced Tehran's readiness to further expand cooperation with Tokyo based on the model of the Tehran-Beijing agreement.

Morteza Rahmani Movahhed, Iran's ambassador to Tokyo, said in a meeting with Japanese journalists on Saturday that Tehran was ready to cooperate with Tokyo, as a comprehensive cooperation program with China, adding: "Iran and Japan can establish such a long-term relationship together, it will certainly be for the welfare and development of the two countries and the peace and security of West Asia."

The Iranian ambassador in Tokyo stated that Japan is an old friend of Iran and that Iran and Japan are working to create peace and security in the world.

Rahmani Movahhed also said about the resignation of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and its effect on the future of Iran and Japan relations: "Abe made responsible and serious efforts to expand Iran-Japan relations."

The Iranian ambassador stated: "Based on our experiences in the past, Iran is not worried about a change of prime minister in Japan, because relations between the two countries are always friendly and improving."

Tehran, Moscow Hold First Joint Tourism Committee Meeting



TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Iran-Russia joint tourism committee meeting was held on Saturday.

The joint webinar attended by Iranian and Russian representatives focused on technical questions about tourism cooperation between the two countries.

Iranian delegation was led by Mohammad Qasemi, Director General of Iran's Tourism Marketing and Promotion, and Demyan Smilevets, the director of the International Cooperation Department of the Russian Federal Agency for Tourism led the Russian delegation.

The two sides exchanged views about tourism cooperation in a friendly atmosphere.

The two sides also reviewed ways to share experiences in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and measures to thwart the threat posed by the pandemic to the tourism industry.

Important part of the talks was to draw up an action plan on visa waiver for both Iranian and Russian tourists.

Iran and Russia have signed an agreement to draw up an action plan for tourism cooperation in March, 2017.

Iran Welcomes Start of Inter-Afghan Talks in Doha

TEHRAN (MNA) - Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement on Sat. announced that Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes start of inter-Afghan talks between Afghanistan government, political groups and the Taliban in Qatari capital Doha.

Iran hopes that political groups and the Taliban can reach a lasting agreement by preserving valuable achievements of Afghan people, including the constitution, democratic structures, inclusive political participation and rights and dignity of women as well as rights of ethnic and religious minorities.

The full text of the statement is as follows:

Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes start of inter-Afghan talks between Afghan government, political groups and the Taliban, and hopes that these talks will lead to the desired results for the establishment of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and security in the region without foreign intervention and in a comprehensive understanding between Afghans.

Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized that there is no military solution to the problems in Afghanistan and continued presence of foreign forces is one of the main reasons for the continuation of the war in Afghanistan. All issues and problems in Afghanistan can be resolved only through dialogue and negotiation and responsible withdrawal of foreign troops is an unavoidable prerequisite for achieving peace and security in that country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran hopes that Afghan government, political groups and the Taliban will be able to reach a lasting agreement that preserves valuable achievements of Afghan people, including the constitution, democratic structures, inclusive political participation and rights and dignity of women as well as rights of ethnic and religious minorities which ensures peace, tranquility, well-being and prosperity of the Afghan people. This issue will enable Afghan refugees to return to their country and play a constructive role in reconstruction, growth and development of Afghanistan.

Islamic Republic of Iran announces its readiness to assist in advancing peace process in Afghanistan as in the past and to provide its facilities and capabilities to Afghan brothers and sisters.

Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns any political opportunism and business profiteering, especially the U.S. government's use of electoral exploitation of inter-Afghan talks.

Iran-China Police Ties "Strategic"

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Interpol chief Brigadier-General Hadi Shirzad said on Saturday in an interview with the ambassador of China in Tehran that Iranian Interpol relations with the Chinese counterpart are strategic and friendly.

Stressing the necessity to improve security with expanding security relations, Brigadier-General Shirzad told Ambassador Chang Hua that Iran's Police Force demands to transfer its experiences to China and to organize a joint workshop with the Chinese relevant officials. Referring to the measures taken

by the Iranian Police to deal with international defendants, he stressed the necessity of increasing security with expanding interactions of police diplomacy, adding that the more the interactions, the better the security.

Regarding to the coronavirus pandemic, Ambassador Chang said that China is ready for any kind of cooperation with Iran for making the Iranian police smarter and that improvement in the police relations between Iran and China is a necessity for mutual cooperation.



Judiciary Sentences Own High-Ranking Official to 31 Years in jail

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Judiciary has sentenced a high-ranking official in its executive branch to a total of 31 years in prison over involvement in a major financial corruption case.

Judiciary spokesman Gholam-Hossein Esmaeili announced the ruling on Saturday and said Akbar Tabari, the former deputy head of the Judiciary for executive affairs, had been found guilty of eight corruption counts in the high-profile case. "Mr. Tabari has been sentenced to 31 years in prison and confiscation of property resulting from bribery and permanent dismissal from government services and a fine of more than 430 billion rials for forming a multi-member bribery network," Esmaeili said. The spokesman said the verdict issued for the defendant is not final and subject to appeal in the country's Supreme Court.

Two other people involved in the case were also given 15 and 10 years in jail.

In another development on Saturday, Navid Afkari was executed after being convicted of stabbing to death a government employee in the southern Fars province in 2018. Afkari was executed "this morning after legal procedures were carried out at the insistence of the parents and the family of the victim," the head of the Justice Department in Fars province was quoted as saying by state media. The 27-year-old fatally had stabbed Hassan Turkman, a water supply company employee, in the southern city of Shiraz during riots over fuel prices in 2018.

Bahrain's Agreement With Israel, Betrayal to Islamic Cause and Palestinians

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker's special aide for international affairs condemned Bahrain's agreement with the Zionist regime to normalize relations as a great betrayal to the Islamic cause and Palestinians.

Hossein Amirabdollahian wrote on Twitter that the imprudent leaders in UAE, and Bahrain agreements with Israel to normalize relations pave the way for the Zionist

schemes. Pointing to the U.S.-cooked plot regarding the UAE to normalize ties with the Zionist regime, he advised them to learn from history.

Manama and Tel Aviv agreed on Friday to fully normalize diplomatic relations following US President Donald Trump's efforts to facilitate the normalization of relations between the two sides. Bahrain, a tiny island kingdom off the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf, has strategic significance for Washington as the host for the US Navy's Fifth Fleet.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



PERMIT NO : 1399.3118

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY - AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9150036

ITEMS	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
18	PARTS FOR "AIRPACK" RECIPROCATING AIR COMPRESSOR TYPE HA-550-LT SER. NOS. T-1995-00449-1 TO 00449/3 AIRPACK REFERENCE: 7356-COM REF. AIRPACK NEDERLAND B. V. CYLINDER SET 1ST STAGE	413 Nos

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders 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 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 4,932,900,000 RIAL in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via:

www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

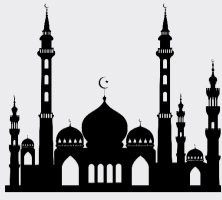
ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P. NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN.
PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

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FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

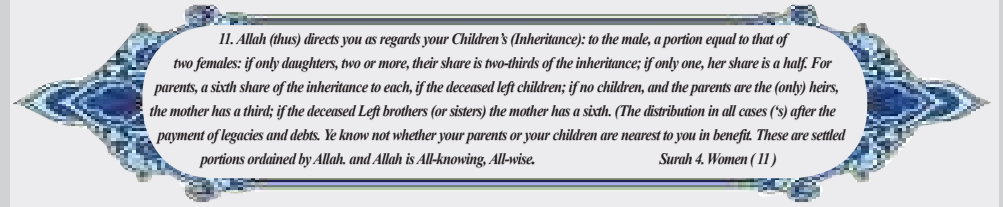
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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:00
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:32
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:21
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:46



11. Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases (s) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah, and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise. Surah 4. Women (11))

Iran Exports of Construction Materials Topped \$7b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of industry, mine and trade says the country earned nearly \$7 billion from exports of various materials used in construction activities in the year ending March 2020, adding that steel and cement contributed to the largest share of revenues gained from shipments.

Ja'far Serqini said that Iran's output of construction materials is nearly double the domestic demand, adding that producers keep tapping into various markets inside and outside the region to find customers for their high-quality products.

"Today our country is a major exporter of steel in the region and a leading exporter of cement in the world," said Serqini, adding that Iran had increased its supply of glass, tile and ceramics to foreign customers in recent years.

The minister said construction materials accounted for 70 percent of total exports of \$10 billion from Iran's mining industry over the past calendar year.



Iran's massive mining and metals sector has expanded in recent years mainly because sanctions imposed by the U.S. on the country's direct sale of crude have led to more activity across the sector.

The government has also raised tariffs on exports of raw minerals as it seeks increased local production for finished products.

That comes despite a decision by Washington in May 2019 to introduce a series of comprehensive bans on Iran's trade of metals.

However, the bans have largely failed to disrupt the flow of out of Iran of products like steel and copper as customers find them increasingly competitive compared to regional and international rivals.

IME Witnesses Growth In Weekly Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - While over 923,380 MT of commodities worth over \$2,000m were traded last week on the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the trading volume and value experienced growth of %98 and %70, respectively.



According to the report from IME International Affairs and PR, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 477,117 MT of various products worth close to \$1,300m were traded.

On this trading floor, 462,825 MT of steel, 6,540 MT of aluminum, 8,180 MT of copper, 120 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 12 MT of precious metal concentrates, 140 MT of zinc ingot as well as 10 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 440,856 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$712m were traded.

On this trading floor, 106,400 MT of VB feed stock, 165,124 MT of bitumen, 69,771 MT of polymer products, 42,229 MT of chemical products, 39,500 MT of lube cut oil, 1,310 MT of insulation, 2,107 MT of base oil, 140 MT of argon as well as 14,275 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 5,407 MT of commodities were traded on the same trading floor.

PGPIC Sets New Records in Global Rankings



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - ICIS announced the top 100 Petrochemical Companies in 2020, and The Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), which is under the most severe sanctions, is ranked 40th in the world and second in the region.

According to the report released by the ICIS, which examines companies' performance reports in 2019, the sales change of the top 100 petrochemical companies in the world due to increased competition in the market and excess production capacity in 2019 compared to the previous year. The sales change decreased by 4.9 percent, which reduced the sales of 34 companies by more than ten percent.

Also, the operating profit of the top 100 petrochemical companies has decreased by an average of 17.4% and their net income is inclined by 46.5% compare to 2018 as the profit margins of these companies have been critically affected.

Ten of the top 100 companies in the report of 2018 have identified losses in 2019. The performance of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) as the only Iranian company in the list is impressive compared to the average of the top 100 companies. PGPIC operating profit change percentage is much better than the average list and also its regional rival SABIC.

Also, the PGPIC is ranked second in the Capex changes for the second year and stands after BASF, which shows the constant investment to maintain and develop the company's competitive advantage in global markets.

Also, in R&D and the total assets change, PGPIC is among the top 15 companies in the list of 2019, which will lead to risen production and sales in the following years.

The ranking of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company in this list in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 was equal to 34, 44, 38, and 35. PGPIC maintains its position in the list as the top 40 companies despite unjust sanctions on the activities of the petrochemical industry in Iran and its activities as well as limited access to the international financial resources. Difficulties in selling and transporting products and a sharp decline in the price of Rials against foreign currencies that leads to a decrease in sales in 2019 were other crucial problems of this company.

The report released by the ICIS describes the situation of the petrochemical industry in 2020. It predicts a decline in sales and operating profit change in 2020 as one of the effects of the Covid-19.

Iranian Co. Unveils Environmental Disinfection Device

TEHRAN - Sanaye Tahvie Pars Saeed Company (STPS Co.)

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

result of reverse engineering from an American model, adding the American model is priced at \$4750, while the Iranian model is a lot cheaper worth approximately \$250.



during a press conference yesterday unveiled its new product, a new model of environmental sanitizing device with the CEO of the company Mr. Amir Saeed Maleki, Majlis lawmakers Mohammad Mehdi Zahedi and Dr. Mohammad Hassane Asefari, and head of Medical Council of Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Rezaq Morovvati in presence.

Addressing the presser and reporters, the CEO of STPS Co. Dr. Maleki briefed the participants of major activities of the company. He said the company since its establishment in 1986 the company has been involved in producing high quality products like centrifugal fans which compete with their foreign-made likes.

He then pointed to the company's new product which is a UV air sanitizer (environmental disinfection device), adding that the product has been inspired by its American rival. The CEO of the company and the inventor of the device added that the environmental disinfectant is the

which discourage producers and innovators, adding that low quality goods can easily be imported and regulations are very soft for them but regarding domestic production, regulations are tough and they hinder producers of continuing their activities. He also called for adopting tough regulations for imports in order to prevent imports of low quality products.

He noted that the company began its activities for manufacturing this product in February and it has now finished it by conducting some tests and now it is ready to enter the market.

Mr. Maleki criticized current regulations in the country that he does not expect any favoritism from the officials but equal chance for domestic productions and imports. He also urged Iranians to support domestic production as it is necessary for Iranians to support their compatriots and their products. He added that the new product of the company can destroy Coronavirus and it has been successfully tested and its result has been positive.

Maleki reiterated that no disinfectant is used in this device as the sanitizer is used by UV rays and it has no harm to human body. He concluded that they are unknown soldiers of the country and they do their best to save the country from importing low quality products. On export of the product, he said currently the government has banned export of medical equipment but in future the company may export its product.

Meanwhile Majlis lawmaker Dr. Zahedi, for his part, praised the success of the company and its innovation and said Majlis supports domestic production and it will try to remove hindering regulations and laws and approving laws to ease domestic production for private sector.

He called on producers to reflect their problems to Majlis in order that lawmakers could find solutions.

Loading, Unloading Non-Oil Goods Almost Doubled in Chabahar Port

CHABAHAR (IRNA) - Loading and unloading non-oil shipments in Chabahar Port has increased by 97% in the current Iranian year compared to the same period last year, Managing Director of Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran (PMO) Behrouz Aqae said on Saturday.

Chabahar, Iran's only ocean port, which is located by the Sea of Oman, is being developed further with Indian investment. Importing basic commodities through Chabahar has increased by 330%, Aqae said, adding that the port's unique offers to the importers and exporters, as well as shipping lines, have driven investors toward Chabahar.

The strategic location of Chabahar has encouraged Iranian and foreign investors to use it for transport of goods, Aqae said. He said that Chabahar is well-equipped and modern, adding that the highest number of import of basic goods was that of wheat with 479,000 tons.

He said that compared to the same period last year, the volume of export through Chabahar Port has become 37-fold. Construction material, farming products, and perishable goods that are exported in refrigerated containers are a big part of exported goods through Chabahar Port. Transit of goods has become 157-fold, which includes farming products, wheat, sugar, and food, he said, adding that Chabahar offers a 30% discount for Terminal Handling Charges (THC) for loading and unloading and a 50% discount for foreign transit containers, which is just a part of the ports offers.

Chabahar also offers an 87% for storage costs of transit containers and a 75% for storage costs of imported goods containers, also empty containers to load exported or transit goods have a three-month long exemption from storage costs, said the PMO managing director. Aqae also said that the government of Iran is paying special attention to further develop Chabahar Port and completing its infrastructures.

Oil Ministry Attaching Great Importance to Passive Defense

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The meeting of passive defense of Kharg Island was held last week with deputy National Iranian Oil Company, deputy of energy department of national passive defense organization, senior manager of emergency in the operational region of Kharg and some oil and petrochemical companies' officials in presence.

In the meeting the CEO of Iranian Oil Terminals Company (IOTC) Mr. Abbas Assadrouz who is also manager of emergency in Kharg region said Kharg Island can be introduced as Small Iran which has had great role in the national oil exports.

He then pointed to the actions taken regarding the Coronavirus pandemic in the island, adding that because of those actions, now condition is good and acceptable on the island. He then pointed to using capabilities and capacities of domestic experts, adding that one of the strong points of this company in improving the safety of oil installations is its increasing the operational capability.

Assadrouz added that the projects for improving the safety and optimizing the operational activities in the oil terminals on Kharg Island are progressing well according to the schedule. He reiterated that IOTC is ready for any unexpected crisis due to its young and committed servants of Islamic Iran.

Meanwhile deputy head of National Iranian Oil Company Mr. Farokh Alikhani said that oil ministry attaches great importance to the passive defense field in the sensitive and crucial parts of the company and it has taken appropriate actions.

CEO of Esfahan Oil Refining Company Visits Face Mask Producing Unit



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The CEO of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC), accompanied with senior officials of the company, visited the face mask producing unit of cooperative consumption company of EORC.

During his visit, Mr. Ebrahim Kavaniipoor expressed his gratitude to the efforts of management of EORC, adding that cooperative company is in any condition after serving the personnel of EORC and also its fellow-citizens. He expressed hope that with the launch of the surgery mask production line by this company, an effective step will be taken in line with protecting health of fellow province citizens.

Kavaniipoor added that fulfilling social responsibilities is one of the excellence goals of the company and it is hoped that this action would help a great deal to the hygienic and health sector of the province, reiterating that full automatic line of surgery mask production line will be soon be completed due to constant pursuits.

Meanwhile according to the head of cooperative consumption company of EORC, currently the face mask production unit produces 5000 masks per day and injects it in the market.



Shanon
(adviser)

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J, & pkg
L.balcony
Fully Furn

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

Parsian

(\$2000)
Elahieh Apt
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
Fully Furn

Farmanieh Apt (\$2500)
240sq.m, 3bdrs, S/pool
Sauna, Jacuzzi, & pkg
L.balcony, Fully Furn

(\$4000)
Niavaran Villa
1300sq.m, 5bdrs
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pkg lots, & F.F

Darrous Apt (\$3000)
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India Plans to Restrict Copper, Aluminum Imports

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India is planning to raise surveillance of copper and aluminum imports while developing policies to curb shipments from China and other Asian nations to protect domestic producers, said two government sources and an industry official.

Officials in New Delhi are expected to soon ask importers to register with authorities as a first step towards tighter controls that would require permits for individual shipments of the two metals, government sources said. The sources declined to be identified due to the sensitive nature of the discussions.



Britain Signs Trade Agreement With Japan

LONDON (Dispatches) - The deal, which has so far only been agreed upon in principle and for which details are thin, will increase commerce with Japan by around 15 billion pounds (\$19 billion) and expands upon a recently signed deal between the EU and Japan, the U.K. said.

"The agreement we have negotiated — in record time and in challenging circumstances — goes far beyond the existing EU deal, as it secures new wins for British businesses in our great manufacturing, food and drink, and tech industries," said Britain's international trade secretary, Liz Truss.

The government said U.K. businesses would benefit from tariff-free trade on 99% of exports to Japan and that it would give British businesses a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region.

Skeptics say no amount of such trade deals can mitigate for the losses Britain would suffer in the event of a 'no-deal' outcome with the EU, given that trade with the 27-nation bloc accounts for around half the country's total.

While the U.K. left the EU this year, it is still trying to agree on new trade relations when current deals expire at the end of the year.

Concerns over a post-Brexit deal have risen in the past few days as relations between the U.K. and the EU soured. The announcement from the British government that new legislation breaches parts of the withdrawal agreement, which allowed for the country's smooth departure from the bloc, has prompted a furious reaction from the EU and raised the prospect of an imminent collapse in the talks.

Even before the standoff, the trade discussions had made little progress, with the two sides seemingly wide apart on several issues, notably on business regulations, the extent to which the U.K. can support certain industries and over the EU fishing fleet's access to British waters.

The EU has been particularly insistent on ensuring that British-based businesses don't have an unfair advantage as a result of laxer social, environmental or subsidy rules in the U.K.

British businesses are worried about a collapse in the talks that could see tariffs and other impediments slapped on trade with the EU at the start of next year. Though the U.K. left the bloc on Jan. 31, it is in a transition period that effectively sees it abide by EU rules until the end of this year. The discussions are about agreeing the broad outlines of the trading relationship from the start of 2021.

Most economists think that the costs of a "no-deal" outcome would fall disproportionately on the U.K.

Supporters of Brexit have said that one of the benefits of unshackling the British economy from the EU is that it allows the country to sign trade deals with whomever it wishes — the EU negotiates trade deals on behalf of all its members.

The concern over future trade ties comes at a time when the British economy continues to recover from a deep recession caused by the shutdown of businesses to limit the coronavirus pandemic.

The Office for National Statistics said the economy grew by a month-on-month rate of 6.6% in July as many sectors started reopening after months of being idle. Despite the increase, the economy remains 11.7% smaller than it was in February. Economists think the recovery will moderate as new virus infections have picked up again, leading the government to put new limits on social gatherings and travel.

The looming end of a salary-support scheme and heightened uncertainties over a trade deal with the EU are also expected to weigh on growth and, as a result, most economists think the economy will end the year about 8% smaller than it was before the pandemic.

"The big risk to the U.K. upswing remains a disorderly hard exit from the EU single market," said Kallum Pickering, senior economist at Berenberg Bank.

\$2.1b Asiana Airlines Takeover Collapses

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - A \$2-billion-plus deal for a South Korean property developer to take over loss-making Asiana Airlines collapsed Friday in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, with state-owned banks mounting a bailout to try to save 9,000 jobs.

The global travel restrictions imposed to try to control the virus have wreaked havoc on the airline industry, but Asiana was in trouble even before it struck.

In December, a consortium led by HDC Hyundai Development agreed to buy a controlling stake in the airline from its biggest shareholder Kumho Industrial and pump in fresh cash in a deal totalling 2.5 trillion won (\$2.1 billion).

But Asiana reported operating losses of 268 billion won in the first six months of this year — with its debts soaring to 11.5 trillion won. It has cancelled most of its international flights and since April has put all its 9,000 employees on unpaid leave for 15 days a month as it tries desperately to stay airborne.

HDC repeatedly sought to carry out further rounds of due diligence on the airline, in what was widely seen as an attempt to force a price cut.

"Kumho Industrial has notified HDC of the deal termination," Choi Dae-hyun, vice president of Asiana's main creditor Korea Development Bank (KDB), announced Friday.

KDB and another state-owned lender Export-Import Bank of Korea will inject another 2.4 trillion won into the carrier to help keep it flying, he said. They are expected to become its biggest shareholders and Choi said they would seek a new buyer after restructuring the airline.

But Asiana has already received state cash injections totalling 3.3 trillion won since the beginning of last year.

And Kim Dae-jong, a business professor at Sejong University in Seoul, said it would be hard to find a willing acquirer.

"With Asiana's debt 22 times more than its assets, it will be really difficult for any company to show interest in buying it," he told AFP.

"The government has kept it afloat with rescue funds because it doesn't want to see massive layoffs happening," he said. "But it can't continue doing that forever," he added, suggesting the best option would be for Asiana to be merged with flag-carrier Korean Air, its biggest rival.



Cuba Plans First Official Peso Devaluation Since 1959 Revolution

HAVANA (Reuters) - Communist-run Cuba will soon devalue the peso's one-to-one exchange rate with the U.S. dollar for the first time since the 1959 revolution, according to three sources who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject.

As part of the reforms, due before the end of this year, authorities will also unify Cuba's two domestic currencies, according to two Cuban sources and a foreign businessman, all with some knowledge of the plan.

The peso will be kept and the convertible peso, which is fixed on par with the dollar for state business but exchanged with the public at 24 pesos to buy and 25 pesos to sell, will be eliminated, the sources said.

Cuba's government has said it will respect the peso's current rate with the public for a time to allow residents to change their convertible pesos for pesos and do so automatically for convertible peso bank accounts.

"The most important measure is going to be changing the official exchange rate used by the state companies," Omar Everleny, one of Cuba's best-known economists, told Reuters.

"There are several proposals. It will never be one on one ... It is between 10 and up," he said.

The peso's value versus the Canadian dollar, euro and other convertible currencies also is expected to be adjusted downward based on international market rates.

The Cuban economy is largely owned and run by the state, and exchange rates are set by the government.

The measures are part of a package of reforms aimed at fighting an economic crisis caused by tough U.S. sanctions under President Donald Trump and exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and the bureaucratic inefficiency of the island's Soviet-style economy.

Iraq Debates Its Contribution to OPEC+ Oil Cuts

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - A debate within Iraq over whether it should ask to be exempt from OPEC+ oil supply cuts has resurfaced as low prices squeeze its finances, challenging a government struggling to tackle the destruction of years of war and rampant corruption.

OPEC's second-biggest producer, Iraq has failed in the past to fully comply with OPEC+ oil output reductions, pumping above its production targets since the pact was first signed in 2016

between OPEC and its allies led by Russia.

"Iraq always believed they were not properly treated in December 2016 when they were not exempted. As the economy continues to reel from low prices this issue keeps resurfacing," said an OPEC source.

Iraq's economy and oil sector were battered by years of wars, sanctions and a stubborn Islamist insurgency triggered by the U.S. invasion. Baghdad complained it had struggled to revive its stagnating oil industry, at a time where other OPEC members benefited and boosted their market share.

Iraq relies on oil to fund 97% of its state budget. Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Allawi told parliament on Wednesday that reforming Iraq's economy would take five years of work and that state debt amounted to 80-90% of national product, while foreign debt was at \$133 billion.

From May 1, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, a grouping known as OPEC+, made a record cut of 9.7 million bpd, or 10% of global output, after the coronaries destroyed a third of world demand. From Aug. 1, the cut tapered to 7.7 million bpd until December.

Iraqi politicians have criticized the pact which was signed by the previous caretaker government under which Baghdad had committed to a big cut in its output.

With oil prices currently trading at around \$40 a barrel, opposition to the oil cuts is rising behind closed doors and talks of reviving old calls to review the size of the reductions have resurfaced, Iraq and OPEC sources told Reuters.

A senior Iraqi official with knowledge of the talks said there were differing views between the oil ministry and the prime minister's office over whether to fully comply with the cuts or ask for an exemption for next year.

IMF Chief Warns Global Economic Crisis "Far From Over"

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has warned that a full recovery for the global economy is "unlikely" without a vaccine for the coronavirus.

In a column co-authored with IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath, Georgieva warned that the crisis might cause further bankruptcies and unemployment, urging governments to continue their support of workers and businesses.

Lockdowns have eased and there has been a "sharp rebound of output, consumption and employment," they said in Foreign Policy magazine, adding, "this crisis, however, is far from over." "The recovery remains very fragile and uneven across regions and sectors. To ensure that the recovery continues, it is essential that support not be prematurely withdrawn."

They argued that businesses, even insolvent firms, will continue to need help to prevent destruction of millions of jobs.

But they also warned that governments need to be cautious about the way they distribute their scarce resources, noting, some companies are expected to fail, especially in industries like travel that are unlikely to survive or will be curtailed in a post-pandemic world.

Speaking to the World Economic Forum, Georgieva said that rapid government action "put a floor under the world economy," which helped everyone without "differentiating between... winners and losers."

She went on to say that policymakers will need to make wise investments in areas that have the greatest benefit which include green jobs like training workers to make buildings more energy efficient — and "accelerating digital transformation" but in a way that will minimize inequalities.

"In other words, support programs that take the countries towards growth that is green, smart and inclusive," the IMF chief said.

Nevertheless, the two writers cautioned in the essay that "Though the world has learned to live with the virus, a full recovery is unlikely without a permanent medical solution."

There are currently 128 coronavirus vaccines currently under development, they said, noting there might be a solution, but again, they added, "we must urgently devise multilateral solutions" to ensure adequate supply and distribution.

So far, over 28,029,000 have been infected with the virus and more than 908,000 have died globally.

India Tanks to 105th Spot From 79th In Global Economic Freedom Ranking



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's ranking in economic freedom tumbled to 105th among 162 countries in 2018 from 79th the previous year. It should be noted that this drop cannot be attributed to the Covid-19 crisis, whose impact would become evident only two years later.

A major disappointment for India came on the parameter of "freedom to trade internationally", on which India ranked 139th, compared with 137th in 2017, showed the 'Economic Freedom of the World' report — it measures how policies and institutions of countries support economic freedom — released today by Centre for Civil Society and Canada's Fraser Institute.

Another key disappointment was India's ranking on "regulation", where it stood 122nd in 2018, against 114th a year earlier.

However, the country gained one place to 88th on "sound money" in the latest report, against 89 in the previous one. It retained its position at 79th on "legal systems and property rights". On the size of the government, a major claim of the Narendra Modi government, the country's ranking declined to 54th in 2018 from 36th the previous year.

India reported a fall in each component of economic freedom. While a score closer to 10 indicates a higher level of economic freedom, the country's score fell on each — to 7.16 from 8.22 the previous year on the size of the government, to 5.07 from 5.17 on legal system and property rights, to 8.34 from 8.37 on sound money, to 5.71 from 6.08 on freedom to trade internationally, and to 6.53 from 6.69 on regulation of credit, labor and business.

Parth J Shah, president of the Centre for Civil Society, said: "The Centre and state governments have initiated business process re-engineering to simplify business registration and compliances. No doubt that some of these efforts have had a bearing on India's score."

Iran Sends Back 1000 Illegal Pakistani Immigrants

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Iran handed over at least 1,000 illegal Pakistani immigrants last week to local authorities at Taftan border, Pakistani English Daily, 'Dawn' said on Saturday.

'Dawn' said that officials of border Levies Force received these deported Pakistanis between Sunday and Thursday as Iranian authorities handed over 200 migrants each day.

Majority of these migrants hailing from different parts of country, particularly from Punjab, tried to reach European countries via Iran without having valid traveling documents, the sources said, adding that the illegal immigrants preferred rugged ways along the Pakistan-Iran border to cross the border with the help of organized human traffickers.



China's Expanded Export Controls Pose Fresh Challenge to Global Tech Industry

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - The latest additions to China's list of controlled technology exports could upset a broad range of industries and raise the possibility that some global tech giants might have to split off their Chinese operations, legal experts said.

The new list of technologies under export controls announced on Aug. 28 came as an unwelcome surprise to an industry already grappling with the uncertainty posed by trade tensions between China and the United States.

The move was initially seen as a means of giving Beijing a say in any sale of video app TikTok, but advisers to Chinese and foreign firms say the potential consequences go much further.

"The rules were a surprise to many in the market, and there is a lot of tension in the tech space at the moment," said Alex Roberts, a corporate counsel at the Shanghai office of law firm Linklaters.

In addition to recommendation algorithms such as those used by ByteDance-owned TikTok, the new list of "partially restricted exports" includes drone and cybersecurity technology, voice recognition software, and handwriting scanning software.

The revisions could also affect a bevy of multi-national companies that conduct research and development inside China, adds Nicolas Bahmanyar, cybersecurity senior consultant at LEAF law firm in Beijing.

"It's very probable that a company with R&D centres in China are going to face a choice - keep their R&D centre in China, just for China, or leave China so they can use the tech they develop anywhere in the world," he said.

The Ministry of Commerce was quick to respond to speculation that the new rules were aimed mainly at TikTok, saying they were not targeted at any one company.

Lawyers that have looked closely at the changes say their broad scope means they could hit a wide range of companies across different business sectors.

They could change the thinking of companies such as Microsoft, consumer drone manufacturer SZ DJI Technology Co Ltd, video streaming service Zoom Video Communications, and Tencent Holdings, which exports games worldwide and has a fast-growing overseas cloud-service business.



A Tencent source, which has a slew of overseas subsidiaries and invested companies, said the company was waiting for clarification on what the rules would mean for technology-sharing with these units.

"In general it will impact Chinese companies' overseas businesses, mainly involving those that provide cross-border services," said Raymond Wang, managing partner at Beijing law firm Anli Partners.

Zoom, for example, employs roughly 500 people in China as engineers working on product development, according to its prospectus. Microsoft houses Microsoft Research Asia in Beijing, which has been the origin of a number of advances in AI.

Much More Work Needed to Hit Net-Zero Emissions Target



LONDON (Dispatches) - The transformation of the power sector will only get the world one-third of the way to a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by mid-century, a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Thursday.

Global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are expected to fall this year by eight percent from 2019 - their lowest level since 2010 - as slower economic growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic slashed energy demand.

However, the trend is not forecast to continue.

The transport, industry and building sectors currently account for more than 55 percent of CO₂ emissions from the energy system and that is expected to grow due to more vehicles being electrified, metals recycling and heat production for industry and homes, the IEA said.

Electricity generation would need to be around 2.5 times higher in 2050 than it is today, requiring a rate of growth equivalent to the entire US power sector every three years.

Annual additions of renewable electricity capacity, meanwhile, would need to average around four times the current record, which was reached in 2019, the report said.

The report analysed more than 800 technology options to examine what would need to happen for the world to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

The IEA said between a third and a half of cumulative emissions reductions needed come from technologies which are not commercially available today - for example, low-carbon hydrogen, which is produced by electrolysis powered by renewable energy, and technology to capture carbon emissions released to the atmosphere - and store them.

A large amount of additional power generation is needed for low-carbon hydrogen, which is increasingly being viewed as a way for industries such as steel to decarbonise.

The global capacity of electrolyzers needs to grow to 3,300 gigawatts (GW) from 0.2 GW today. To produce enough hydrogen to reach net-zero emissions, the electrolyzers would consume twice the amount of electricity which China generates, the IEA said.

UNICEF Chief Urges Firms to Fight COVID-19 With Public Sector Partners

PARIS (Reuters) - Firms should look toward public-private partnerships in the fight against COVID-19, the head of United Nations' children's agency told business leaders on Thursday.

The pandemic could provide a rare opportunity for companies and public bodies to come together to improve access to education and vaccines, UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore told the WomenCorporateDirectors (WCD) conference, a convention of corporate leaders taking place online.

"We don't make the vaccines, we can't do that without big public-private partnerships - and so we put out common bids," Fore said. The largest buyer of vaccines in the world, UNICEF said last week it would help lead efforts to procure and distribute COVID-19 vaccines as part of a plan to provide equitable access to shots.



Public-private partnerships could also help education come out of COVID-19 stronger, said Fore, noting however that many suppliers were not bidding as they did not consider selling to governments or the U.N. an option.

"We've got a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leapfrog technologies in learning," she said, flagging low-orbit satellites, fibre-optic cable and WiFi networks which have

accelerated global connectivity.

"We can do what we've done in vaccines with common bids. It's going to be a great business opportunity."

UNICEF estimates there are 1.6 billion children out of school across 190 countries - impacting workforces across the world - and aims to have 500 million children and young people connected by the end of next year, and all 3.5 billion by 2030.

Pak PM: There Is No Military Solution to Conflict in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (Pakistan Embassy) - In a Statement, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, on Intra-Afghan Negotiations warmly welcomed the announcement regarding the commencement of Intra-Afghan Negotiations on 12 September 2020 and added, "Finally, our combined efforts have brought forth the day that the Afghan people have been yearning for."

"For more than 40 years, Afghans have suffered from continued conflict and bloodshed. Pakistan has endured the fall-out, reflected in the incidence of terrorism, loss of precious lives, and huge economic cost," he added,

"I have underlined for a long time that there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that the only way forward is a negotiated political settlement," Khan said in his statement.

"Through relentless efforts, Pakistan has played a pivotal role in facilitating the Afghan peace process to this juncture. We feel deeply gratified today as we have fulfilled our part of the responsibility," Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan noted.

It is now, Imran Khan said, for the Afghan leaders to seize this historic opportunity, work together constructively, and secure an inclusive, broad-based, and comprehensive political settlement.

"The successful culmination of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process is indispensable for Afghanistan and for regional peace, stability, and prosperity," the Pakistani Prime Minister underlined.

Imran Khan said he hopes all sides will honor their respective commitments, persevere in the face of all challenges, and remain unflinchingly committed to achieving the desired outcome.

"For its part, Pakistan will continue to remain in full support and solidarity with the Afghan people as they march forward in this consequential journey for peace and development," Imran Khan concluded.

Pakistan Gov't Bans...

FROM PAGE 1

On the other hand, tomatoes under cultivation in Sindh have been lost to heavy rains last week and now the new batch will be harvested in December. What is more, the limited tomato crops cultivated in Balochistan will be consumed by October. Tomatoes from Iran meets the needs of the whole country but after the ban, there is a possibility that prices may increase up to Rs200 per kilogramme.

In the light of the upcoming shortage, officials of Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Traders Association met the secretary agriculture on Wednesday, September 9, and apprised him of the situation, after which the Punjab Agriculture Department sent an emergency letter to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research and demanded it to review the ban on import of potatoes and tomatoes from Iran.

Talking to The Express Tribune, Punjab Agriculture Department's Special Secretary Punjab Waqar Hussain said that the quarantine unit of the DPP has imposed a sudden

ban which may lead to a crisis in the availability of potatoes and tomatoes.

"We have requested the federation to lift the ban. At the same time, we are taking steps to increase the supply of tomatoes by contacting the Balochistan government," he said. "We will also contact the federal authorities on this issue."

When contacted, Anjuman e Arthian Association's General Secretary Haji Ramzan said that the suspension of import could lead to a critical food shortage in the country.

"The quarantine department has imposed an unwarranted and sudden ban and allegations have surfaced that some quarantine officials stationed at the Taftan border had made some "demands" from importers," Ramzan said. "Most of the importers rejected the undue demands of the quarantine officials due to which a ban was placed." He added that if the ban is not lifted, potato and tomato prices could rise by 100% to 150%.

Tehran Condemns...

FROM PAGE 1

"The rulers of Bahrain will from now on be complicit in the crimes of the Zionist regime, which is a source of constant threat to the security of the region and the Muslim world and the root cause of decades of violence, massacre, war, terror and bloodshed throughout the oppressed Palestine and the region."

Iran's Foreign Ministry also predicted that the Bahraini regime's move would result in "growing anger and lasting hatred" among the Palestinians, Muslims, and freedom-seeking nations.

It further warned against any act by the Zionist regime meant to create insecurity in the Persian Gulf region, saying Bahrain and its allied governments bear responsibility for its consequences.

On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the normalization of diplomatic relations between Bahrain and Israel.

Bahraini officials are expected to join Emirati and Israeli representatives at the White House next week for a formal signing ceremony.

All Palestinian factions have unanimously denounced the normalization agreements between Israel and the Persian Gulf Arab countries as a stab in the back of the oppressed Palestinian nation and a betrayal to their cause.

Iran Exports \$2.5b...

FROM PAGE 1

It is expected that country's exports decline will be compensated by the yearend with reopening of borders and resumption of trade exchanges in international arena, he emphasized.

Of \$24.6 billion worth of Iran's total foreign trade in this period, 38 million tons, valued at \$10.9 billion, of which is related to exports while 13.8 million tons, valued at \$13.7 billion, is related to the imports share, he added.

Zolfaghar-99...

FROM PAGE 1

In the military exercise, some of the latest achievements of domestically-produced military equipment were used in compatible with threats of enemies.

Coordination of different forces of the army under the guidance and command of Zolfaghar Base of the army and with the strict supervision of Hazrat Khatam al-Anbiya Base, benefiting from multi-layered and extensive communications and using the youth in designing and implementing operations and innovations at different levels are considered as important and salient aspects of this exercise.

Implementing amphibious offensive operations, joint batching operations by the Navy and Army Ground Forces, evacuating personnel carriers by naval vessels on the coast to capture it, using native and indigenized 'Fateh' submarine, implementing combat operations and targeting the vessel by 'Simorgh' UAV, operating Kaman-12 drone of the Air Force and firing the moving objects and targets at sea by Air Force fighters as well as successful launch of cruise and defense missiles were among the plans practiced in this military exercise.

The country's Air Defense Base under the command of Iran Army Commander Major General Seyyed Abdollah Mousavi has taken necessary measures in safeguarding air borders of the country by monitoring the area of exercise in the southern coastal strip of the country and using the army and IRGC defense systems. In addition, necessary warnings were issued to foreign and trans-regional aircrafts to leave the area of war game.

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Bottas Tops First Practice at Mugello

ROME (Dispatches) - Valtteri Bottas maintained his recent habit of being fastest on Friday when he clocked the quickest lap in opening practice for this weekend's inaugural Tuscan Grand Prix.
 The Finn, in his Mercedes, clocked a best lap in one minute and 17.819 seconds at the sweeping Ferrari-owned Mugello circuit to outpace nearest rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull by 0.048 seconds.

Osaka Beats Brady to Reach U.S. Open Final

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Fourth seed Naomi Osaka defeated 28th seed Jennifer Brady in a high quality three-setter to reach the U.S. Open final, crediting her run to a carefree attitude post-lockdown.
 The Japanese 2018 US Open champion overcame the 25-year-old American 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 6-3 in 2hr 8min under the roof of Arthur Ashe Stadium. Osaka, 22, will play either Serena Williams or Victoria Azarenka in Saturday's final.

Lakers Take 3-1 Lead Over Houston

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The Los Angeles Lakers are one win from entering the Western Conference Finals and five games away from the NBA Finals.
 The Lakers dominated the Houston Rockets on defense and offense to win 110-100 and grab a commanding 3-1 lead in their second-round Western Conference series in Orlando.
 Anthony Davis scored 29 points and had 12 rebounds, five assists, and two blocked shots, while LeBron James finished with almost a triple-double – 16 points, 15 rebounds, and nine assists — for the Lakers.
 James Harden had 21 points on 2-for-11 shooting and 10 assists for the Rockets. Russell Westbrook chipped in 25, Eric Gordon added 19, and Austin Rivers scored 14.
 Houston trailed in the fourth but Westbrook and Gordon sparked a rally to narrow the gap to seven. A free throw by Harden whittled the lead to five but a triple by Alex Caruso in the right flank from a LeBron assist pulled the Lakers to victory.
 The Lakers can secure a spot in the West Finals with a win Saturday.
 The winner of this series faces either the Denver Nuggets or the Los Angeles Clippers. The Clippers are ahead in this series 3-1.
 The NBA is investigating Houston forward Danuel House Jr. for allegedly allowing a female COVID-19 testing official into his hotel room.
 House did not play in Game 4 which the Rockets lost and put them into the brink of elimination.
 What House and the woman did in the hotel room has not been disclosed.
 He has denied the allegation and a decision was expected before Game 4.
 ESPN's Doris Burke will become the first woman to call the conference and NBA Finals for ESPN Radio.
 "Doris is a trailblazer who continues to reimagine what is possible for women in broadcasting and we know she'll thrive in this history-making radio analyst role," said Stephanie Druley, ESPN's executive vice president of event and studio production.



Burke has been part of ESPN's coverage since the network resumed televising the NBA in 2003 and became the first woman to serve as a full-time network NBA game analyst in 2017.
 She will join Marc Kestecher and fellow analyst Jon Barry when the conference finals begin.
 Kevin Durant said he signed with the Brooklyn Nets because he doesn't want to be the savior of the New York Knicks.
 "No, I never planned on it – going to the Knicks. That was just the media putting that out there... I think the media just hyped it up and wanted to create drama around our team so much and around me that they made up this Knicks thing," Durant said on J.J. Redick's podcast with Tommy Alter.
 Russell Westbrook led the Rockets with 25 points and James Harden had 21, though his record of 2-from-11 from the field will trouble Houston's coaches.
 A Lakers win in Game 5 today would ensure they progress to the conference finals for the first time since 2010, the last year they also won a championship, where they will meet either the Los Angeles Clippers or the Denver Nuggets.

Leeds Confirm One-Year Contract Extension for Bielsa

LONDON (Dispatches) - Leeds confirmed that manager Marcelo Bielsa signed a one-year deal on Friday ahead of the club's first Premier League game for 16 years.
 "Leeds United are pleased to confirm Marcelo Bielsa has signed a new one-year deal with the club to remain as head coach for the 2020/21 season," Leeds said in a statement.
 After finally leading Leeds back into the top-flight, Bielsa's side faced the daunting task of beginning their Premier League campaign away to champions Liverpool.
 The Argentine has a history of walking out early in the campaign after leaving Marseille just one game into the 2015/16 season and lasted just two days in charge of Lazio a year later.
 However, he eased Leeds fans' fears on Thursday by signalling his intention to remain at Elland Road for another season.
 "I will be working next season with Leeds United," he said.
 "Everything has been sorted and it's definite that I will be here next season."

Serena to Continue Record-Equaling Chase At French Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Serena Williams plans to dust herself down after the disappointment of another failed attempt at a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam singles title and continue her chase at Roland Garros this month.
 Williams crashed out of the U.S. Open semi-finals on Thursday, blowing a set lead to lose in three hard-fought sets to former world number Victoria Azarenka.
 "It's obviously disappointing but at the same time I did what I could today," a weary-looking Williams told reporters.
 "It feel like other times I've been close and I could have done better and today I felt like I gave a lot," she added.
 It has been more than three years since Williams won her 23rd singles tennis major title at the 2017 Australian Open -- when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia.
 The 38-year-old has come close since, reaching four major finals only to come away empty handed, and needs one more to match Margaret Court's record of 24.
 Many commentators suggested that this week at Flushing Meadows presented her with her best opportunity due to a depleted field caused by the coronavirus pandemic.
 A bevy of top players, including world number one Ashleigh Barty, world number two Simona Halep and Canadian Bianca Andreescu -- who stunned Williams in last year's final -- skipped the event because of coronavirus concerns or injury.

James Rodriguez Backs Everton to End Trophy Drought

LONDON (Dispatches) - Everton new-boy James Rodriguez believes the Premier League club are ready to end their 25-year trophy drought.
 James joined the Merseysiders from Real Madrid on Monday as the Colombia midfielder reunited with Toffees manager Carlo Ancelotti.
 The 29-year-old, who previously worked with Ancelotti at Real and Bayern Munich, is the most high-profile of the manager's close-season signings and his arrival has raised expectations at Goodison Park.

Guardiola Hails De Bruyne as World's Best Midfielder



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has hailed Kevin De Bruyne as the best midfielder in the world as he prepares for the new Premier League campaign.

City playmaker De Bruyne was named the Professional Footballers' Association's player of the year this week after an outstanding 2019/20 campaign in which he clocked up a Premier League record-equaling 20 assists.
 "He is a masterclass player, one of the best players I have ever trained in my life," said Guardiola in a new documentary about De Bruyne's career, "Made in Belgium", by City TV.
 "Right now, he is the best. Right now, in the midfield position, he is the best."
 Former City captain Vincent Kompany believes Guardiola has been the perfect

manager for De Bruyne.

City have won two Premier League titles and four other major domestic trophies since the Catalan, renowned for his high-intensity, fluid style of play, took charge at the Etihad Stadium in 2016.

Kompany, also a former team-mate in the Belgium national side, said: "I think to get the best out of Kevin you need to play in a certain way. You'll never get the most out of Kevin if you aren't an attack-minded team, and I mean attack in every way -- pressing, possession."

"So in terms of Kevin coming to City and Kevin meeting Pep, the paths that crossed were a perfect blend for him. I don't think he'd have got the most out of his career unless he worked with Pep."

De Bruyne, who joined City from Wolfsburg a year before Guardiola's arrival, also feels the team's style suits him well.

Thiem, Zverev Into U.S. Open Final

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Dominic Thiem of Austria will play Germany's Alexander Zverev in the U.S. Open final for their first Grand Slam titles after they won their last-four matches in contrasting styles Friday.



Second seed Thiem ousted third-seeded Russian and last year's runner-up Daniil Medvedev in a closely fought three-setter that was packed with powerful baseline rallies and impressive serving.
 The 27-year-old Thiem won 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) 7-6 (7/5) in 2hr 56 min inside Arthur Ashe Stadium to reach his fourth Grand Slam final.

Earlier, Zverev came from two sets down to complete a remarkable comeback against 20th-seeded Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta and reach his first tennis major final.

The 23-year-old German won an error-strewn, scrappy encounter 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 in 3hr 23min, also on the famous Ashe court.

It marked the first time in Zverev's career that he came from two sets behind to win.

"I actually looked at the scoreboard when I was down two sets to love," Zverev said.
 "I was like, 'I can't believe it. I'm playing in a semi-final, I'm supposed to be the favourite and I have no chance, I'm playing that bad.'" Zverev made 36 unforced errors in the first two sets compared to just 12 for Carreno Busta as the nerves of the occasion seemed to get the better of him.

But Zverev began to cut down on his mistakes in the third set, upping his service game and taking control of rallies with more powerful, accurate groundstrokes. "I started taking the ball more on the rise. I started giving myself the chance to be the one that is aggressive," said the German, adding: "I'm through to my first Grand Slam final and that's all that matters."

Nadal Finding His Feet on Roman Clay

MADRID (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal, absent from the U.S. Open, is preparing for his return to competition after a six-month break at the Foro Italico in Rome, the organisers of the Italian Open tweeted on Thursday.



"Rafa Nadal is already here, doing his first training sessions," said the tournament's official account with a photo of the Spaniard, while videos posted by fans showed Nadal hitting on the statue-lined clay court with Stan Wawrinka.

Nadal posted a photo of the clay with the statues in the background on his Instagram account with the caption "Here we are!"

The Spaniard has won the Roman clay court tournament, normally played in May, a record nine times. This year's event begins on Monday.

"It will be my first tournament after a very long period without playing," Nadal said on Tuesday.

His last tournament was in Acapulco at the end of February, where he won. He opted out of the ongoing U.S. Open citing concerns over the coronavirus and slamming tennis's "barbaric" revised calendar.

The Rome tournament finishes six days before the French Open, which reigning champion Nadal has won 12 times and begins of September 27.

It features a stellar line-up of players including world number one Novak Djokovic, who was dramatically disqualified from the US Open on Sunday after striking a female lines judge with a ball.

Organizers said on Thursday that the men's entry list featured 19 of the world's top 20 players, with the only major absence the injured Roger Federer.