

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Will Deliver a Speech Via Video Link This Morning at the Beginning of the Sacred Defense Week

# IRAN NEWS

TEDPIX, the Main Index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Fell 47,251 Points Yesterday as the Index Closed at 1.652mPoints and Over 6b Securities Worth of Over 96.6 Trillion Rials Were Traded

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## Iran Can Set Fire To All U.S. Interests In Region

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian military commander says the country is capable of setting fire to all US interests in the region.

Speaking in a televised interview on Saturday night, Major General Hossein Salami underlined the Iranian military is strong enough to confront the U.S.

"We have thousands of military brigades on the ground which, if they move, will wreck all US interests," said General Salami, the commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). "We are capable of capturing and sweeping all US bases simultaneously," he noted.

"The Iranian nation shouldn't worry about Trump's bluffs [about waging a war against Iran]," the top general underlined. "We won't trigger wars, but we have developed the capability to chase and destroy the enemy both under the ground and in the skies," he added.

Salami also noted that if the Americans want to fight Iran, they must be in the region and they cannot fight Iran outside the region.

When they are stationed in the region, they are under Iran's sight, so Iran is able to burn and occupy all their interests and bases in the region.

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## Almost Entire Iran Listed as COVID-19 "Red Zones"

TEHRAN (IFP) - Health Ministry spokeswoman says 422,140 patients have contracted the novel coronavirus so far, including 3,097 new cases identified in the past 24 hours, the highest daily rise in new patients since June 6.

In a press briefing on Sunday, Sima-Sadat Lari said the virus has killed 183 patients since Saturday noon, increasing the overall death toll to 24,301.

So far, she added, 359,570 patients have recovered from the disease or been discharged from the hospital.

Lari said 3,898 patients are also in critical conditions caused by more severe infection.

The spokeswoman noted that 3,559,565 COVID-19 tests have been taken across the country so far.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include Tehran, Qom, Mazandaran, East Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Yazd, Ardabil, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Hamadan, West Azarbaijan, Bushehr, Alborz, Lorestan, Markazi, Ilam, South Khorasan, Kermanshah, North Khorasan, Semnan, Gilan, Zanjan, Qazvin, and Kerman provinces. The "orange" zones also include Golestan, Hormozgan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, and Fars provinces, she added.

## UN's Big "No" to U.S. Efforts To Return Iran Sanctions



### IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council on Saturday he cannot take any action on a U.S. declaration that all U.N. sanctions on Iran had been reimposed because "there would appear to be uncertainty" on the issue.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last month that he triggered a 30-day process at the council leading to the return of U.N. sanctions on Iran on Saturday evening that would also stop a conventional arms embargo on Tehran from expiring on Oct. 18.

But 13 of the 15 Security Council members say Washington's move is void because Pompeo used a mechanism agreed under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, which the United States quit in 2018.

"There would appear to be uncertainty whether or not the process ... was indeed initiated and concomitantly whether or not the (sanctions) terminations ... continue in effect," Guterres wrote in a letter to the council, seen by Reuters.

"It is not for the Secretary-General to proceed as if no such uncertainty exists," he said.

U.N. officials provide administrative and technical support to the Security Council to implement its sanctions regimes and Guterres appoints independent experts to monitor implementation. He said that "pending clarification" of the status of the Iran sanctions, he would not take any action to provide that support.

Meanwhile Iran in a statement rejected the United States' claim that international sanctions against the Islamic Republic are back in force, warning that it will show a serious reaction if Washington or its regional cronies make any move in line with its anti-Iran threats.

What follows is the full text of the statement released on Sunday, September 20, 2020:

The United States falsely claims that the UN Security Council sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran are back in effect at a time when the Council has basically rejected a demand by the US, as a non-signatory to the JCPOA, to trigger the trend of reinstating the sanctions. Moreover, such a trend never got started in the first place to produce a result today. The US secretary of state himself knows well that his claim regarding the reinstatement of UN Security Council sanctions is groundless and invalid and lacks any legal effect. Therefore, he, using his own notorious method, tries to intimidate other countries by threatening to slap international sanctions on them, which is the best testament to the United States' admission of failure in its effort at the UN Security Council.

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## Supply of Basic Goods Ongoing Despite Sanctions

### IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has said that the constant supply of basic needs of the country despite the limitations of oil-selling and currency income, is indicative of the failure of sanctions imposers on Iran's economy.

Attending a meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters on Sunday, Hassan Rouhani said that the required currency for the current year and the adopted strategic storage should be kept a priority for the central bank with the necessary facilities provided so in this regard.

The Governor of Iran's central Bank Abdol-Naser Hemmati for his part provided a report on the supply of the needed currency and import of the basic goods.

The Head of Planning and Budget Organization Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht also presented his report, explaining that despite the limitations in using some resources, the necessary allocations for the payment of household subsidies, priority items such as health-related payments, as well as the necessary resources for guaranteed purchase of wheat and rows as well as other necessary production costs, have been done.

Reacting to the U.S. failure in the United Nations Sanctions in activating the snapback mechanism, Rouhani said, "As we predicted the previous days, today, September 20, 2020 will be a memorable day in the history of our country's diplomacy."

"The Americans once again tried to form a coalition of the international community against Iran," said President Rouhani on Sunday in a Cabinet meeting referring to U.S. attempts to activate 'snapback' mechanism.

"When they left JCPOA, they thought they could affect the European Union in a short time, but fortunately the United States has failed at all stages," he added. Iranian President noted, "The U.S. maximum pressure on Iran in the political and legal sectors has become the US maximum isolation, and in the world of diplomacy, everyone saw that the U.S. has failed in the Security Council three times in the past month."

## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



## "Snapback" Triggered But Failed to Operate

The surprise which had been promised by President Hassan Rouhani regarding the White House failure in triggering the snapback mechanism and its ineffectiveness came true on Sunday, September 20.

After one month of media ballyhoo of senior officials of the White House regarding the return of the UN sanctions (stipulated in the UN Resolution 2231) against Iran, the UN was to announce its stand in a meeting but with involvement of European troika in the snapback mechanism which has been mentioned in the JCPOA, the mechanism was not activated due to official pullout of the U.S. from the JCPOA.

In order to frighten Iran, the U.S. dispatched its aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN-68) with over 5,000 navies and troops to the Persian Gulf and trumpeted that the carrier has passed the Strait of Hormuz and entered the Persian Gulf in order to squeeze the throat of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz after activating the snapback mechanism but it did not happen.

Meanwhile at the same time U.S. President Donald Trump and his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in recent days had tried to pave the ground for the return of sanctions through resorting to the intimidation but this time the U.S. was left more isolated than ever, and beside Russia and China, other Western states did not heed its order and refrained following it because UK, France and Germany on September 19 by sending a letter to the UNSC once again reiterated their own stand of defending the JCPOA, and announced that the UN embargos against Iran which had been suspended after signing the nuclear deal, JCPOA, in 2015 would not return despite the U.S. insistence.

According to the Russian news agency Sputnik, the European troika wrote a joint letter to the head of the UNSC where they stipulated, "Any decision or action regarding the return of the UN sanctions and reimposition of the U.S. sanctions after its pullout of the JCPOA in 2018 is incapable of having legal effect."

The phrase of "incapable of having legal effect" noted in the letter was both almost a humiliation to the U.S. and also an indication to the deep rift in the Western camp's stand with the U.S. In this letter, it has also been pointed to the previous UN Resolutions against Iran and it has been emphasized, "Our view was widely shared in the Council, which was reflected by the President of the Security Council in this conclusions of 25<sup>th</sup> of August." The letter concludes, "The E3 remains committed to the fully implementing UNSCR 2231 (2015) by which the JCPOA was endorsed in 2015. We have worked tirelessly to preserve the nuclear agreement and remain committed to do so." See Page 7

## Tehran Points At Goods for Barter Trade With Islamabad

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Iran is ready to export petrochemical, steel and liquefied petroleum products to Pakistan in return of rice, meat and other agriculture products in a barter trade arrangement, its top official said.

Iran is willing to start barter trade with Pakistan with energy and agriculture sectors having potential to increase exports and imports, Iranian Consul General Reza Nazeri said during a meeting with businessmen. Iranian government is ready to facilitate Pakistan's private sector to promote bilateral trade and investment, he said in a statement.

Nazeri dismayed over insignificant bilateral trade with Pakistan despite immense potential, reiterating its resolve to facilitate private sector for barter trade.

"The volume of two-way trade between Pakistan and Iran is negligible. The mutual trade of two countries does not match their respective potentials," he said. Currently, the bilateral trade stands at \$359 million including exports to Iran amounting to \$36 million against its imports at \$323 million.

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## Power-Obsessed Trump Resorting To Threat for Re-Election

TEHRAN (MNA) – Slamming U.S. anti-Iran threats, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s Presiding Board said that these Trump’s actions are just a show to attract the American peoples’ votes on the eve of the U.S. 2020 election.

Speaking at the open session of the Iranian Parliament, Seyed Nasser Mousavi Largani underlined that the Americans think that they have activated the so-called “snapback mechanism”,

but it is quite clear to everyone that Trump is busy with his campaign advertising to be re-elected in the US 2020 presidential election.

There is no doubt that Trump’s moves are simply a show in order to draw the attention of American voters, he said and added, “Since they couldn’t take a photo with the Iranian diplomats and officials, they have resorted to the tool of threats.”

## CBI Governor Vows Improving Foreign Currency Market Conditions

**TEHRAN (FNA) - Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati said despite the U.S. maximum pressures, the country expects improving conditions for its foreign currency market due to growing crude exports and return of exporters’ foreign currency.**

“The U.S. has exhausted its entire bid and the maximum level of impact that its pressure and psychological warfare policy could produce is witnessed these days,” Hemmati said on Sunday.

He underlined that despite the U.S. attempts, Iran will improve its foreign currency market conditions, explaining that the country’s consultations with a number of countries are yielding results, exports of oil and its products are increasing and the trend of foreign currency return by exporters has been accelerated.

“And all these will leave positive impact on the foreign currency market,” Hemmati ensured.

Hemmati had also in August said that CBI’s efforts had prevented the U.S. attempts and pressures to affect Iran’s foreign currency market.

“The relentless efforts by the U.S. and its agents to destabilize money and foreign exchange markets in Iran are not something new. These efforts have aimed at sawing negative expectations and bringing the Iranian economy to its knees. Despite all



pressures and pain imposed on us, they have certainly failed to achieve their goals. Measures taken by the Central Banks have contained attempts to distort expectations and induce hyper-inflation,” Hemmati said.

He added that the temporary surge in the inflation rate, in the first months of this year, mainly due to the pandemic and adverse expectations, is being contained, noting, “The central banks is committed to achieve its announced inflation target and is utilizing all tools to do so.”

“The Central Bank has devised its plans based on continuation of illegal and unilateral US sanctions. Last minutes desperate attempts to strengthen sanctions will not deter our plans for maintaining market stability,” Hemmati said.

“The Central Bank has put all its efforts to maintain market stability and mitigate speculative fluctuations, to help sustain economic prosperity and growth. We continue monitoring macroeconomic variables and take appropriate action when deemed necessary,” he added.

## No Change in U.S. Hostility to Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – It makes no difference to Iran who the next US president will be, as Washington’s hostility towards the Iranian nation is not going to change at all, Speaker of Iran’s Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said.

Speaking at a Parliament session on Sunday, Qalibaf pointed to the U.S. government’s deep-rooted hostility towards the Iranian nation regardless of which party is in power.

There will be no shift in the US’ basic policy to harm the Iranian nation, whether Trump is elected the US president or Biden, he added.

Highlighting Iran’s recent political and legal victories over the U.S., Qalibaf warned that inaction would allow the “cruel enemy” to intensify the pressure of sanctions.

Experience shows that passiveness in the face of the US’ hostile actions would escalate the pressure of sanctions on the livelihood of people, the speaker noted.

He called on the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission to monitor Washington’s unilateral measures following its recent humiliating defeats in the political and legal arenas and devise the necessary retaliatory measures.

In comments in August, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran said the country does not care much about parties and factions in the US, adding, “What we care about is their behavior and the way they interact with us.”

## No Snapback in UNSC Resolution 2231

### IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - As stated there is no snapback in UNSC resolution 2231, Iran’s foreign minister emphasized that the United States knows its claim of reinstating Security Council sanctions against Iran is false,

Referring to the failed U.S. efforts to reverse previous Security Council resolutions against Iran, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said: “The Americans themselves know that their claim in this regard is false; and in this context, they are trying to use bullying to advance their goals and as they have claimed they will boycott anyone who sells weapons to Iran.”

He added: “This claim by the United States also shows that they themselves do not believe that they can reinstate the sanctions.”

Zarif stressed, “Americans claim that at the end of 30 days the resolutions will be reinstated, but they themselves know that their claim is false”, adding: the Americans knew this was not going to happen and thus they used their bullying method and said that we would impose sanctions on anyone who sells weapons to Iran. This statement shows that Americans do not believe that resolutions will be reinstated.

Regarding the arms embargo on Iran, Zarif said: “We in the armed forces were able to be self-sufficient in many cases, UN restrictions will be lifted from October, and from now on we will meet our needs with countries that maintain strategic relations, adding: “We have never been a major buyer of armaments as compared to that states of the Persian Gulf, even Iran can export armaments.”

Referring to some of U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo’s allegations about Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and efforts to reinstate Security Council sanctions against Iran, Zarif said: “These remarks show that Pompeo did not read JCPOA and only read the interviews as if he was waiting for nuclear deal’s film to see it and understand what JCPOA is in fact.

Referring to the U.S. threats to implement the 1929 resolution, Zarif continued: “In my opinion, the Americans’ statements in this regard are more of a political gesture, and if the Americans want to inspect Iranian ships as claimed by this resolution, we think it

is piracy and this action will be dealt with, and the United States is responsible for the consequences.”

Zarif also reiterated that such U.S. actions, if carried out by them, are piracy because there is no 1929 resolution in the eyes of the international community.

He said, “Of course, the Americans act like an extortionist bully standing on the street, who forces everyone to pay.”

Zarif stressed that the Americans have done this before on ships that were not Iranian but were carrying Iranian cargo, but the officials of those ships complained to the Americans and as I said, if the Americans want to take this action, they will definitely face the reaction of Iran, and Iran has already reacted against the unrealistic actions of the United States.

“Now the Americans are saying that the three countries are hindering our hegemony: Iran, China and Russia, and of course they are wrong. The era of hegemony is over,” Zarif said.

If these three countries do not stand against the U.S. unilateralism, there are many other factors that stand against the United States; we have entered the post-American world, and it is difficult for the United States to accept these facts.

Zarif continued his interview by emphasizing that the people are the most important factor in our power, referring to the economic conditions of the people following the U.S. pressure and sanctions and how the Iranian nation stands against these hardships.

## Just Peace Must Be Based on Human Dignity in World

TEHRAN (MNA) – Secretary General of the Islamic World Peace Forum (IWPU) said that just peace must be created based on human dignity in the world.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of the International Conference Alliance for Peace and Justice on Sat., Davood Ameri said that sincere and just peace is based on respect for human dignity. He called for efforts to spread and document this peace in international forums as well as in international scientific-research centers.

The mission of the World Islamic Peace Forum is to explain the discourse of just peace in the world based on honest and just peace according to the human dignity, he said, adding, “The World Islamic Peace Forum has been pursued with many activities at the national regional and international levels since its establishment.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ameri pointed to the studying concept and fundamentals of the theory of peace and justice with a special emphasis on the ideas of Islam and Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the pathology of peace and justice in the world, case studies in the field of peace and justice as well as implementation of just peace in the world are among the topics discussed in various panels of International Conference Alliance for Peace and Justice. While expressing his hope for the public support, he called for an alliance to pursue this great global and humanitarian cause.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Progress Well Monitored

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Biglari stated that all foreign companies’ coronavirus-vaccine progress and evidence are closely monitored by the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Biglari noted that vaccines that have reached clinical trial in which at least 30,000 to 40,000 people have been studied, will certainly receive more attention.

“The coronavirus-vaccine companies around the world are being asked to carefully study the evidence and documents that are to be considered for the purchase of the vaccine. By reviewing these documents, it can be judged whether the vaccine is approved and can be used domestically; this is a process that must be carefully monitored by specific controls,” he announced.

Biglari noted: “Any vaccine made anywhere in the world, its documentation must be carefully studied and it must be determined whether it is approved or not.”

“Fortunately, in Iran, various companies started making the coronavirus vaccine, and there is good technical knowledge in the country to make this vaccine,” he added.

He expressed hope that the human tests for the Iranian coronavirus vaccine will be conducted, after passing the animal tests with the very detailed studies that are being carried out.

## Washington Faces Unprecedented Isolation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to the UK Hamid Baedinejad in a message said the UNSC announced its opposition against the restoration of Iran sanctions, adding that the US faces unprecedented isolation.

Thirty days after the US’ first request for restoring six UN sanctions resolutions against Iran, the Security Council, without any action, declared its opposition to the US and filed that request, Baedinejad wrote in his Twitter account on Sunday.

The United States has faced unprecedented isolation and its anti-JCPOA policy has failed miserably, he added.

Britain, France, Germany, the European Union, China, Russia and other members of the UN Security Council have all described the U.S.’ recent act as void.

## No State to Join U.S. in Activating Snapback Mechanism

TEHRAN (MNA) – Referring to U.S. claim on returning UN sanctions on Iran, Top Adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for International Affairs said that no one in the world will join Washington in activating the ‘snapback’ mechanism.

“The U.S. will not be able to do anything against the Iranian people, and no one in the world will join Washington in its claim on activation of the ‘snapback’ mechanism,” told Ali Akbar Velayati to Lebanon’s Al-Ahed News.

“We do not care about the United States. Since the beginning of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, we have faced various sanctions from the United States and its allies,” he said, adding, “We have been able to protect our sovereignty, dignity and honor.”

“We are able to deal with sanctions and run the country,” he stressed. He highlighted, “We are not worried about such actions that have no effect on international issues but are merely American plays.”

“Martyr Qassem Soleimani defeated ISIL and thus defeated the American project,” he continued. “The Americans are terrorists and they have committed state terrorism”, he added referring to the assassination of top Iranian commander, Qassem Soleimani by U.S. terrorist forces in Iraq.

“Barking of this American dog is fruitless,” he said.

## U.S. Needs to Stop Roguery to Return to Int’l Community

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in his weekly press conference that Tehran’s message to Washington is that the U.S. needs to stop roguery, if it wants to return to the international community.

Khatibzadeh commemorated the Holy Defense week (starting on September 21).

He said that in the recent days, Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif has talked with his counterparts from Armenia, Afghanistan, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Khatibzadeh added that Foreign Minister Zarif and President Hassan Rouhani will make speeches in the 75th United Nations General Assembly respectively on Monday evening and Tuesday evening local time, which is to be held online.

Regarding the remarks made by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claiming that the UN sanctions on Iran would return, he said that with the measures taken by the US, the world has gained nothing but insecurity, war and instability.

The fruit of U.S. ominous presence has been nothing for Western Asia except for brutal wars; what is the US seeking is another roguery to be added on the previous list.

He also said that with insisting on its historic mistake, Washington is going to have the most bitter hours.

The message of Tehran to the U.S. is that they need to honor its commitments to the international community to get out of isolation.

“If the U.S. Administration stops talking palaver and being a rogue regime, the international community will accept it.”

He said that the U.S. attempt to inspect the ships and planes indicated to what extent the US is suffering from isolation in the international community is the best sign the power of the US is flimsy.

Khatibzadeh said that because the U.S. has failed to reach its goals through legal and political procedures, it has gone back to its bullying methodology; but, they should receive the message from the international community and understand that the world order is changing and that the first victim of short-sighted policies of President Donald Trump and his partners at the White House is the US.

He added that the three European partners of the U.S. issued a statement this morning and said that the U.S. has no right for snapback invocation and its measure creates no legal effect.

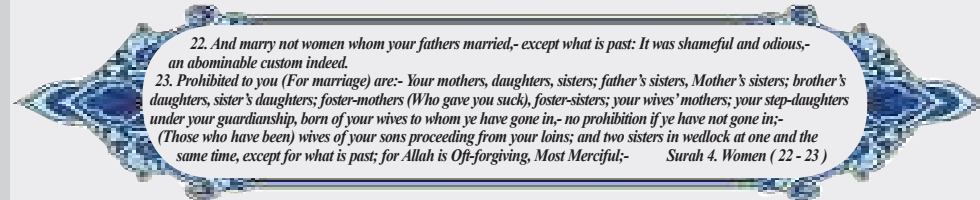
“The U.S. knows that its claim is empty, illegal, and ineffective,” Khatibzadeh said.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:57
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:20
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:28
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:52



# Electricity Export Grows by 30%

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN – Energy Minister says the ministry has put behind the summer season successfully without any major electricity outage and export of electricity has grown by 30 percent, too.**

Speaking on the sidelines of an inaugural ceremony of water and electricity project in Hamedan, Mr. Reza Ardakanian said that the ministry has fortunately passed a successful summer season without any major power outage by increasing the supply by 4 percent.

He noted that while the country is challenging with the cruel sanction which has been a great test for Iranian nation, it has passed it successfully and the world will register this resistance in the history book as a style of fight for freedom-seeking nations.

Ardakanian added that in the year of Surge in Production, the ministry has passed the summer without major power outage due to boosting the infrastructures in a joint collaboration between the government and the private sector, and through increasing the electricity supply by 4 percent.

He reiterated that electricity export has always been increased by 30 percent and people have managed their power consumption in the peak hours.

He noted that the ministry in the form of a national campaign is working on 250 mega water and electricity projects, and today the 180th mega project from this campaign is being inaugurated and the remaining projects will be completed by the



yearend according to the schedule.

He said during the inauguration ceremony in Hamedan, several water supply projects will come on stream with an investment around 400b tomans, and the projects will supply 400 villages with water, adding that 281 villages out of 400 villages will enjoy sustainable drinking water.

He expressed hope that by the yearend, 1300 villages will join the water supply network for having access to the healthy drinking water as per schedule.

Ardakanian noted that so far 45,000 irrigation networks have come on stream in the country and 488 villages have enjoyed water supply system.

He reiterated that during President Hassan Rouhani's term in office some 20,000 megawatts of power has been added to the electricity capacity which is decisive in the production and development projects.

He further said that the ministry supports smartization of the projects and in the near future some smartized projects will come on stream.

## Industrial, Mineral Productions Register Growth in 5 Months

TEHRAN (MNA) – Some 22 main industrial and mineral productions registered growth in the first five months of the current year (from March 21 to August 22) as compared to the same period of last year.

Deputy Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Saeed Zarandi broke the news on Sat. and added, "From among 38 important industrial and mineral products, 22 of which showed growth while 16 of which recorded a production slump.

He pointed to the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, in the country and added, "Specific condition overshadowing economic sector of the country as well as the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic created serious problems in production sector of the country."

Despite problems and difficulties facing ahead, mineral and industrial sector of the country could register considerable growth, he emphasized.

In this period, petrochemicals, with the production capacity of more than 25 million tons, registered over six percent growth, while home appliances, aluminum ingot, crude steel, car and cement recorded a 42, 50, 8, 18 and 13 percent growth respectively, Zarandi added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the deputy industry minister pointed to the import and export volume of industrial-mineral products and added, "About €11 and €14 billion worth of industrial and mineral products were exported from and imported into the country from March 21 to August 22, 2020 respectively."

## Plans to Convert Surplus Methanol to Propylene

TEHRAN (Shana) - Deputy Minister of Petroleum for Petrochemical Affairs Behzad Mohammadi said Iran's surplus 5 million methanol will be converted to propylene in the country.

According to the National Petrochemical Company, Mohammadi, who is also the CEO of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), said the technology to turn propylene from methanol has been localized by the Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC), and said: "5 million tons of surplus methanol in the country will become a valuable product of propylene with the implementation of new projects."

During a visit to Maroon Petrochemical Company and Mahshahr Center of Petrochemical Research and Technology Company, described the pure ethylene oxide production project of Maroon Complex as one of the valuable projects of petrochemical industry, adding the project would come online in 2026 with 45,000 tons of production capacity.

Noting that Maroon Petrochemical Plant is a supplier of a variety of items, he added: "The National Petrochemical Company supports development projects and in this direction, the production portfolio of this complex will become more important with the operation of EO project, and value chain development in Maroon is being achieved."

Mohammadi added: "Although the Petronad project has a production capacity of 110,000 tons per year, by launching 6 units in this petrochemical plant, it will make the country needless to import many products."

The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company stated that the country is facing a shortage of propylene production, adding, "In this direction, the Petrochemical Research and Technology Company has made an important achievement by localizing the savvy of converting methanol to propylene."

## Iran Indigenize Products Through Knowledge-Based Companies

KERMANSHAH (IP) - Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari visited some innovative plans by the knowledge-based companies in Kermanshah.

Sattari arrived in Kermanshah on Saturday morning and visited different parts of the province's Science and Technology Park and said that these parks are one of the pillars of scientific development in each province.

Emphasizing the importance of indigenizing the required products in the country, he added that relying on domestic power, the production of various Iranian goods has increased with the activity of knowledge-based companies.

Sattari referred to the fight against the coronavirus outbreak and said both medical and protective equipment and



medicines are produced domestically, reporting promising development to happen in making the coronavirus vaccine.

Meanwhile, the construction of the BZN2 catalyst manufacturing unit in the Kermanshah's Polymer Complex began with the presence of Iran's Vice President for Science and Technology.

The complex is located in Bisotun Industrial Park that provides the pipes needed for irrigation and gas supply projects in Iran through the activity of its expert force.

The BZN2 catalyst production unit will be put into operation next year, with 50 tons of catalysts to be produced annually in the complex.

Sattari also attended the permanent exhibition of the health equipment of Kermanshah's University of Medical Sciences and visited 25 products on display.

## No Foreign Contractor In Iran's Oil Fields

TEHRAN (IP) - Director of the Exploration Department of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said that all contractors in Iran oil field exploration are Iranian.

Salah Hendi, Director of Exploration Department of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in an exclusive interview with Iran Press said that although we had some foreign contractors 2 or 3 years ago, there are no foreign contractors right now, and Iranian experts are able to do all the process.

Referring to the programs till the end of this current Iranian year (starting on March 21), Hendi said that in seismic and non-seismic sections, tenders will be held.

6 drilling dig will increase to 8 before the end of this year, he concluded. According to Wood Mackenzie institute, Iran tops the world in oil exploration volume by exploring 4,973 Billion barrels in 2019.

## 9th Dhaka Int'l Film Festival to Review Derakhshandeh Films

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - The 19th Dhaka International Film Festival are arranging for the retrospective of famous Iranian filmmaker, producer, screenwriter, and researcher Poursan Derakhshandeh.

One of the important segments of this festival is the Retrospective segment. She has graduated in film directing in 1975 from Advanced School of Television and Cinema in Tehran. She started her professional career by making documentary films for the Kermanshah Television and subsequently for the Tehran Television.

The following films will be screened for this segment of 19th DIFF 2021: Under the Smoky Roof, Hush..... Girls Don't Cry, Serial Dreams, Little Bird of Happiness and The Eternal Kids.

It is worth mentioning that the event will be held in mixed format comprising the virtual and physical displays.

The other segments of the festival, which are competitive, include Asian Cinema Section, Retrospective, Bangladesh Panorama Section, Cinema of the World Section, Children Films Section, Women Filmmakers Section, Short and Independent Films Section and Spiritual Films Section.

The 19th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF), organized by Rainbow Film Society, will be held in Dhaka from 16 to 24 January 2021.

## People-Oriented Economy Makes Sanctions Ineffective

TEHRAN (IP) -Mohammad Zahraei, head of Development Basij, said the people-oriented economy is a fundamental issue that can make sanctions ineffective.

Zahraei stated that Memoranda of Understanding between government, non-governmental organizations, and private companies helps the companies' business, boosts domestic production and increases the country's added values.

Basij and Development Basij Organization, which are affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), are people-oriented organizations where the Iranian youth are trained to help the people in rural areas have their own business and make hope, he added.

A people-oriented economy helps to win the economic war and make sanctions ineffective; when you have all the capacity and power, sanctions do not work, said Zahraei.

## Novel Coronavirus, Unprecedented, Complicated

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Biglari stated that the novel coronavirus is a strange and complicated virus that the world is combating.

Referring to how human knowledge is currently insufficient in curing and containing the novel ambiguous virus, Biglari added that social and economic status also contributes to spreading the virus.

Biglari pointed out that after the vaccine passes the animal test phase, it will be tested on humans, adding there is still no vaccine approved to contain the virus.

"Vaccines are injected in two stages, for getting a better result and provoke the immune system," Biglari added.

He expressed that the most effective way to combat the virus is by wearing a mask, adding: "The virus has proven that human knowledge is inadequate to combat it and is, therefore, a challenge for the whole world, including developed countries."

According to Biglari, Social training on how to behave in public and implementing all health protocols are the keys to combat the virus.

## Largest Industrial Batteries' Production Complex



TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's largest industrial batteries' production unit was inaugurated on Sunday in the presence of Iranian Minister of Defense Brigadier General Amir Hatami.

Several national projects of the Energy Resources Development Organization of the Ministry of Defense were opened and put into operation in the presence of Iranian minister of defense.

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony of the largest Industrial Batteries' Production Complex in the country and unveiling ceremony of the first wind turbine, manufactured domestically by the experts of the defense industry, Amir Hatami said, "At the threshold of the 40th anniversary of the Sacred Defense (Iraqi imposed war against Iran in 1980-1988) and in the year named after by Leader of the Islamic Revolution as 'Surge in Production', enemies of the Islamic Iran are seeking to target the livelihood of the Iranian people by imposing the toughest sanctions against the country."

"Relying upon domestic capabilities and round-the-clock efforts, experts in the defense industry of the country could take giant strides in the field of supply of energy for various defense fields and increased the production capacity of industrial batteries in the country up to 180 million ampere/hour which is a great achievement for the country in sanctions condition."

With the implementation of this giant industrial unit in the field of producing industrial batteries, a considerable portion of important domestic needs of the country in the fields of telecommunications, power plant and refinery has been met, he said, adding, accordingly, millions of dollars will be saved the country.

With due observance to the said issue, Islamic Republic of Iran could attain the capability of exporting industrial batteries, presenting technical and engineering services, increasing productivity, reducing final costs, saving foreign currency, promoting qualitative indicators, gaining customs satisfaction and preventing import of foreign products into the country, etc., Brigadier General Amir Hatami emphasized.



## U.S. Officials Say Deadly Poison Sent to White House

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - An envelope addressed to the White House contained a substance identified as ricin, a deadly poison, U.S. media outlets reported on Saturday, citing law enforcement officials.

The package was intercepted “earlier this week”, according to a CNN report citing two unnamed law enforcement officials.

CNN reported that two tests were done on the envelope to identify the lethal substance.



## Duterte Keeps One Meter Social Distancing Rule

MANILA (Reuters) - Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has decided to retain the 1 metre (three feet) social distance requirement on public transport to reduce coronavirus infections, rejecting moves to reduce it to 30 centimeters (12 inches), his spokesman said on Saturday.

Health experts have warned that reducing gaps between passengers in trains, buses and jeepneys could result in a surge of infections in the Philippines, which has the most confirmed COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia.



## Thai Protesters Challenge Monarchy



BANGKOK (Reuters) - Openly challenging the monarchy of Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn, thousands of protesters marched in Bangkok on Sunday to present demands that include a call for reforms to curb his powers.

Protesters have grown ever bolder during two months of demonstrations against Thailand's palace and military-dominated establishment, breaking a long-standing taboo on criticising the monarchy - which is illegal under lese majeste laws.

The Royal Palace was not immediately available for comment. The king is not currently in Thailand.

The marchers were blocked by hundreds of unarmed police manning crowd control barriers.

Protest leaders declared victory after saying Royal Guard police had agreed to pass on their demands to police headquarters. Police made no immediate comment.

“Our greatest victory in the two days is to show that ordinary people like us can send a letter to royals,” Parit “Penguin” Chiwarak, told the crowd.

At the biggest demonstration in years, tens of thousands of protesters on Saturday cheered calls for reform of the monarchy as well as for the removal of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader, and a new constitution and elections.

Shortly after sunrise on Sunday, protesters cemented a plaque near the Grand Palace in Bangkok in the area known as Sanam Luang, or Royal Field.

It reads, “At this place the people have expressed their will: that this country belongs to the people and is not the property of the monarch as they have deceived us.”

Police did not intervene. Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said police would not use violence against protesters and it was up to the police to determine and prosecute any illegal speech.

“Down with feudalism, long live the people,” protesters chanted.

The plaque resembles one removed without explanation from outside one of the royal palaces in 2017, after Vajiralongkorn took the throne. That plaque, which had commemorated the end of absolute monarchy in 1932, was replaced by one with a pro-monarchist slogan.

## Dozens of Taliban Men in Afghanistan Killed in Air Strikes

KABUL (Dispatches) - At least 11 civilians were killed and more than 10 others wounded on Saturday in twin air strikes on a Taliban base in the northeastern Afghan province of Kunduz, a provincial official said.

The Taliban issued a statement accusing Afghan forces of killing at least 40 civilians in the air raids. The armed group did not comment on casualties among its fighters.

Defense ministry officials in Kabul, who said more than 40 Taliban fighters had been killed in the strikes, did not confirm any civilian casualties. They said an investigation was under way into the incident, which comes as the warring sides hold peace talks.

“The first strike hit the Taliban base but the second one caused civilian casualties as they had gathered at the bombed site,” said Fatima Aziz, a member of parliament who represents Kunduz.

“This morning, Taliban fighters attacked [Afghan army] positions in ... Khan Abad district in Kunduz province,” the defense ministry said in a statement on Twitter.

The military “intercepted the attack in accordance with ‘active defense’ procedures”, the statement added, noting the dead included two commanders.

Aziz said 11 civilians were killed and five people were missing in the Khan Abad district of Kunduz province.

According to another witness, the air raids killed 12 civilians, including children, and wounded 18 others and Taliban fighters were also among the dead.

The attack came shortly before President Ashraf Ghani again called for a humanitarian ceasefire “to protect our people, prevent violence and terrorist incidents and to achieve a dignified and lasting peace”.

The Taliban has so far ignored such requests, though it has unilaterally called two short, separate truces this year in the run-up to peace talks.

Fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban has continued even as representatives of the government and the armed group gathered in Qatar last week for historic peace talks aimed at ending about 20 years of war.



## Belarus Police Detain Hundreds of Protesters in Minsk

MINSK (Reuters) - Belarusian police detained hundreds of protesters in central Minsk on Saturday, a witness said, as around 2,000 people marched through the city demanding that President Alexander Lukashenko step down.

Belarus, a former Soviet republic closely allied with Russia, has been rocked by mass street protests since Lukashenko claimed a landslide victory in an Aug. 9 presidential election that his opponents say was rigged. He denies their accusation.

Saturday's protesters, most of them women, briefly scuffled with police who then blocked their path and started picking people one by one out of the crowd, the witness said. In one location, dozens of female protesters could be seen encircled by men in green uniforms and black balaclavas outside a shopping mall as they shouted “Only cowards beat women!”

Among the detained was 73-year-old opposition activist Nina Baginskaya who has become an icon of the protest movement after scuffling with armed policemen last month. One female protester was taken away in an ambulance after lying on the ground, apparently unconscious.

After the police stopped detaining people, the remaining protesters formed a chain along one of the central streets of the capital and chanted “Long live Belarus!”

Lukashenko's crackdown on the protests has prompted the European Union to weigh fresh sanctions against his government.

Minsk reacted angrily on Saturday to reports that Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leading opposition candidate in last month's election, could soon meet EU foreign ministers. Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also criticised the EU for inviting Tsikhanouskaya to the ministerial meeting as well as for considering sanctions against Minsk, saying Brussels was trying to “rock the boat” in Belarus.

## UAE Gets American Drones As China Ramps Up Sales

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The White House's recent decision to allow the sale of advanced weapons systems to the United Arab Emirates highlights the deliberate shift in US policy towards the UAE after it signed “normalisation” accords with Israel.

Why would the UAE want American drones as it already has dozens of Chinese armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in its inventory? And why has the United States now agreed to these sales, overcoming its traditional reticence to sell sophisticated weapons to other countries?

Chinese armed drones have made a significant effect on the battlefields across the Middle East and North Africa. They have been used to assassinate Houthi rebel leaders in Yemen, kill ISIL-affiliated fighters in the Sinai, and for a time help Khalifa Haftar dominate the battlespace in Libya. While the US has traditionally refused to sell its latest advanced weapons systems, China is not bound by such constraints and has had no problem exporting its drones right across the Middle East and Africa.

Factories under licence to build Chinese armed drones have been set up in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Myanmar. Exports of Chinese drones are so extensive the sales have made China the second-largest arms exporter in the world.

In only a few years, China has been able to research, produce and refine its armed drones, complicated pieces of military hardware, enough to help tip the

balance of military power in a conflict.

Two main types of combat drone have been put up for export, both having achieved significant operational success. The first is the Cai Hong “Rainbow” series, made by the Chinese Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), the most popular version being the CH-4 which has been sold to Egypt, Iraq and Jordan. Earlier versions have seen action in Nigeria as the government battles Boko Haram in the north of the country.

The other main contender is the Wing Loong series of combat drones. Made by the Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group (CAIG), they for a time dominated the battlefields of Libya as they have successfully operated out of airbases in the east of the country, giving Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) a significant advantage over the embattled Government of National Accord (GNA).

Both types of drones have several desirable features in common. They have significant range, far greater than other combat drones such as Turkey's Bayraktar TB2, giving them an enhanced strike capability. They can operate from high up making them more survivable than their competitors and they can carry more bombs and missiles meaning they can pack a heavy punch should they need to. Last but not least they are significantly cheaper. A CH-4 Chinese combat drone at \$4m is a quarter of the price of a US-made Reaper MQ-9, which goes for \$16m.



## Latin American Nations Plan to Join COVAX Vaccine Facility



BRASILIA (Reuters) - Brazil and Argentina, Latin American nations seeking more time to commit to the global COVID-19 vaccine facility known as COVAX, said they intend to do so as soon as possible after missing Friday's deadline.

Peru's foreign ministry said on Saturday it managed to sign the binding agreement on Friday and will get access to 12 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX, a scheme for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of eventual vaccines.

Argentina asked for more time to prepare the required paperwork but expects to sign on Wednesday its commitment to the vaccine mechanism led by the World Health Organization, a health ministry official told Reuters.

The Brazilian government said in a statement late on Friday that it will sign up for COVAX after negotiations with the GAVI Alliance, which is the COVAX secretariat.

“The purchase of a safe and effective vaccine is a priority for the federal government,” a Brazilian statement said.

Brazil faces the worst coronavirus outbreak after the United States and India, with 4.5 million cases, and has the world's highest death toll outside of the United States.

A dozen Central and Latin American countries had informed the WHO they would request more time to sign up after the midnight on Friday deadline to formalize legally-binding documents.

Brazil's statement would appear to indicate that the GAVI Alliance has agreed to give nations more time to join COVAX.

A diplomat in Geneva said the request had been submitted in the form of a letter on Friday and sought a one-month extension. The diplomat did not give details of the reason for the delay.

He said that the countries that made the request were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.





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## Russia's Gov't Approves Three-Year Draft Budget, Macro Forecast

MOSCOW (TASS) - The Russian government approved the draft federal budget for 2021 and for the planning period of 2022 and 2023, as well as a forecast of socio-economic development, the government said on its website.

At a meeting held on September 16, the government approved the draft main directions of customs and tariff regulation for 2021 and for the planning period of 2022-2023. The document established

medium-term priorities for regulation in the customs and tariff area, increasing the predictability of the conditions for conducting foreign economic activity and allowing to improve the existing methods of customs administration.

The government also decided to approve the draft guidelines for the unified state monetary policy for 2021 and the period of 2022-2023.



## China's Economy Remains Resilient Despite External Risks

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economy remains resilient and there are ample policy tools at Beijing's disposal despite rising external risks, President Xi Jinping said in remarks published on Saturday.

The world's second-largest economy has steadily recovered from a virus-induced slump, but analysts say policymakers face a tough job to maintain stable expansion over the next several years to turn China into a high-income nation.

"The basic characteristics of China's economy with sufficient potential, great resilience, strong vitality, large space for maneuver and many policy instruments have not changed," Xinhua news agency quoted Xi as saying.

China has strong manufacturing capacity, very large domestic markets and huge investment potentials, Xi said.

Xi reaffirmed a "dual circulation" strategy that would help steer the economy towards greater self-reliance, as U.S. hostility and a global pandemic increase external risks.

China still enjoyed "strategic opportunities" in its development, although the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated global challenges as globalisation slows and unilateralism and protectionism are rising, Xi was quoted as saying at a meeting on the country's 14th five-year plan (2021-2025).

"We must seek our development in a more unstable and uncertain world," he said.

Xi urged calmness amid rising difficulties and challenges.

"The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation can never be achieved easily with the beating of gongs and drums," he said.

## Spanish Banks Merge in Sign of Hard Economic Times Ahead

LISBON (Dispatches) - Two of Spain's biggest banks said Friday they were merging, pushed together by a need to weather tough economic times that likely will cost thousands of jobs.

The tie-up between CaixaBank and Bankia will create the largest lender in the country, with assets of more than 664 billion euros (\$787 billion).

The deal comes as Europe's financial sector braces for lean times. With banks' profitability in recent years already dented by low interest rates, which squeeze their profits on loans, they are battling a steep economic downturn as well as uncertainty about the future due to the coronavirus pandemic and the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.

The deal requires approval by shareholders and regulators, and is expected to be concluded in the first quarter of next year. The Spanish government had welcomed the possibility of a merger, saying the sector needs to become stronger through consolidation.

The banks expect to make annual savings of 770 million euros (\$912 million) as they seek economies of scale and further development of online banking. Those policies are expected to bring layoffs among the combined staff of 50,000, though the statement made no mention of job cuts.

The banks' officials said it was too early to predict how many jobs might be lost.

Bankia president José Ignacio Goirigolzarri told a news conference in Valencia, in northeastern Spain, the merger offered staff the possibility of career growth within "a culture of scrupulous meritocracy."

"This is a time of disruption, and it's at these times that opportunities arise and a swift response is needed," he said.

Shares in CaixaBank were down 1.5% and Bankia dropped 4% in morning trading, while the main stock index in Madrid was 1.5% lower.

CaixaBank will have 74.2% of the new company, which will be called CaixaBank. Bankia will hold 25.8%.

CaixaBank S.A. is one of Spain's big three banks, along with Santander and BBVA. It has more than 35,700 staff and almost 4,600 offices.

With some 15.6 million customers, CaixaBank has more than 44% of the business market involving companies invoicing up to 100 million euros (\$118 million) a year. It reported a profit of 1.7 billion euros (\$2 billion) last year.

Bankia S.A. was created in 2010 by the merger of seven regional Spanish savings banks as a way of surviving the then financial crisis. It is Spain's fourth-largest bank by assets.

Following a 2012 government bailout, 61.8% of Bankia's shares are held by the state, with the rest traded on the stock market. It has around 15,600 staff and last year posted a profit of 541 million euros (\$638.5 million).

## G20 to Use All Policy Tools to Support Global Economic Recovery

PARIS (Dispatches) - Finance and health ministers of G20 nations have reiterated their commitment to support the global economy and called for a collective approach to develop vaccines and treatments to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We will continue to use all available policy tools to safeguard people's lives, jobs and incomes, support the global economic recovery, and enhance the resilience of health and financial systems, while safeguarding against downside risks," G20 finance and health ministers said in a joint statement.

"Urgent collective priority is to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic and alleviate its health, social and economic impacts."

The G20 is a group of the world's 20 largest industrialised nations that includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the EU. Saudi Arabia currently holds the rotating presidency of the G20.

The ministers urged for a collective action to accelerate the research, development, manufacturing and distribution of diagnostic tools and vaccine to combat the pandemic that has rattled the global economy.

"We remain committed to investing in an effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic to bring the spread of the virus under control ... [to minimise] the economic and social disruption," the statement added.

The G20 governments and central banks have pumped an unprecedented \$11 trillion (Dh40.37tn) into their economies to help stabilise financial markets, protect jobs and support businesses.

In April, the G20 agreed on a time-bound Debt Service Suspension Initiative for poor countries, allowing suspension of debt until the end of this year. So far, more than 45 countries have asked for assistance under the scheme, resulting in the deferral of more than \$5.3 billion in debt repayments.

The Covid-19 pandemic has plunged the global economy into the deepest recession since the 1930s, disrupted international trade and paralysed air travel. The International Monetary Fund forecasts the world economy to contract 4.9 per cent this year while the World Bank estimates it is likely to shrink 5.2 per cent.

Global coronavirus infections have exceeded 30.6 million, with 956,446 deaths reported, according to statistics from Worldometers.

G20 ministers acknowledged the need for investment in health systems and said the pandemic "has shown vulnerabilities in the international community's ability to prevent, detect and respond effectively to pandemic threats".

Resilient health systems, they said, can sustain equitable and affordable access to essential and quality health services for all, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable.

The pandemic risks wiping out gains made in education and health globally over the past decade, particularly in poorer nations, the World Bank said last week.

## Turkey Overcoming Pandemic's Economic Effects



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's production levels continued to rise in the third quarter as the country has overcome a significant part of the coronavirus pandemic's economic effects, the Turkish president said on Saturday.

"The number of people employed has been rising since April, when the impact of the pandemic was felt the hardest," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at the inauguration of a new section of the North Marmara Motorway.

Erdogan, who addressed the ceremony via video link, said Turkey's employment rate will increase further over the coming months, adding that he was hopeful that the third quarter will end with a "growth rate that satisfies every segment."

The Turkish government has set its unemployment rate target for this year at 11.8%, with the figure projected to drop gradually to 9.8% by 2022.

In a warning to elements he said were "trying to prevent Turkey's awakening," President Erdogan said the country's successes will be the best answer to "those placing Turkey in the same category as countries in the remotest corners of Africa and South America."

On the 400-kilometer (248 miles) North Marmara Motorway project, he said sections of the highway were gradually completed and opened since 2016.

"I always say that roads are [a sign of] civilization. If you are a country with no roads like this, you cannot talk about being civilized," said the president.

## Hungary Extends Loan Moratorium

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Hungary will extend a moratorium on loan repayments for some households and companies until the middle of 2021, as its finance minister warned the economy could struggle to grow next year unless a coronavirus vaccine is found.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban introduced the moratorium for all companies and private borrowers in

March as one of his government's key measures to help reduce the economic fallout from the pandemic. It was due to expire at the end of the year.

In a video posted on his official Facebook page on Saturday, Orban said the moratorium would be extended by six months for families with children, the retired, unemployed and those in public works programs.

The extension until the middle of 2021 will also apply to companies that have seen revenues drop by at least 25%.

Orban also said loan contracts for all households and companies agreed before the pandemic could not be terminated for six months.

The moves come as the government prepares to announce more steps to try to revive growth, after the economy plunged more than expected in the second quarter and prospects for a recovery next year have worsened.

The weak economic outlook could represent the biggest threat to nationalist Orban's decade-long rule as he prepares to face parliamentary elections in the first half of 2022.

Finance minister Mihaly Varga said in an interview published earlier on Saturday that if a coronavirus vaccine was not available by the middle of 2021 the economy might struggle to grow next year, based on a pessimistic scenario.

Under an optimistic scenario, the economy could grow by 4-5% if a vaccine was available in the second quarter, he told newspaper Magyar Nemzet.

A third scenario was for a protracted recovery with 3%-4% growth, also conditional on a vaccine being available, he added.

Hungary's economy is expected to shrink by 5%-6% this year.

Varga said the government was working on new stimulus measures that could include targeted tax cuts for crisis-hit sectors.

After a spike in new cases in recent weeks, Hungary reported 809 new coronavirus infections on Saturday, bringing the total to 16,920, with 675 deaths.

## Germany Plans Reform to Avoid Bankruptcy Wave Due to Corona

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany would relax insolvency rules under proposals set out on Saturday to help avert a wave of bankruptcies in Europe's biggest economy, provided companies hit by the coronavirus crisis have a robust business model.



Keen to avoid bankruptcies and mass layoffs, Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has launched a range of stimulus and relief measures as Germany braces for its biggest slump since World War Two, having shrunk by an unprecedented 9.7% in the second quarter. "Companies that can show creditors a realistic prospect of restructuring should be able to implement their concept outside insolvency proceedings," said Justice Minister Christine Lambrecht in a statement.

Under the draft reform, which would take effect at the start of 2021, the deadline for firms to file for insolvency would be extended to six from three weeks and authorities will apply more relaxed

benchmarks when examining over-indebtedness.

The government has already taken steps such as allowing firms in financial trouble due to the pandemic to delay filing for bankruptcy until the end of the year, extending an original deadline of the end of September.

Helped by these measures, the number of firms declaring insolvency in Germany fell 6.2% to 9,006 in the first half of this year from the same period last year. Critics say suspending insolvencies delays, but does not prevent, the collapse of "zombie companies" artificially kept afloat.

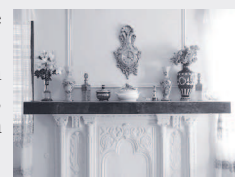
However, defenders of insolvency protection steps say they have helped to spare Germany deeper economic contraction and prevent a spike in unemployment.



## “Silent House” to Vie at DMZ Int’l Documentary Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian documentary ‘Silent House’ by Farnaz Jourabchian and Mohammad Reza Jourabchian will compete at the 12th DMZ International Documentary Film Festival in South Korea. ‘Silent House’ is about a family in Tehran whose lives are depicted in decades.

Produced by Elaheh Nobakht, the documentary is the only representative of Iran in this edition of the festival. In this section of the Docs DMZ Festival, sixteen Asian projects from Iran, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan have been selected to compete for funding.



## Fiscal Fizzle Saps U.S. Economic Recovery, a Possible Boost to Biden

NEW YORK (Reuters) - This week’s economic data offers fresh hints that the U.S. recovery will slow without new federal aid, a possible blow to President Donald Trump’s reelection bid, especially since any new spending before the Nov. 3 presidential election seems unlikely.

A slowdown in U.S. consumer spending in August provided the clearest evidence this week that as millions of Americans lost the extra unemployment benefits that had sustained their finances in the early months of the COVID-19 recession, they have begun to cut back.

In an economy where consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of the total output, less shopping means less overall growth.

The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment dropped less than expected, and applications for the week before were revised up, suggesting the labor market recovery has plateaued. Meanwhile, a Fed survey released Friday showed that American households were better off financially in July than they were in the first months of the crisis, in large part because of their access to government aid.

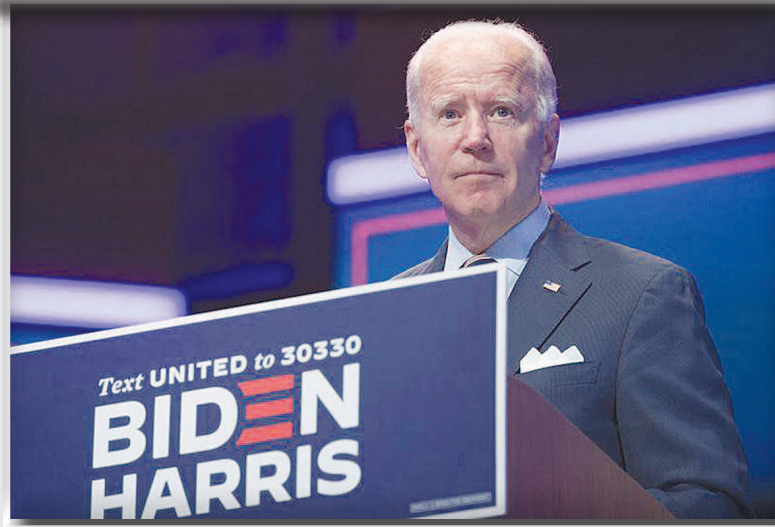
Other data this week indicate the recovery is ongoing in some parts of the economy. U.S. factory production increased for a fourth straight month in August, and confidence rose to a record among single-family homebuilders, who saw a boost to demand from low interest rates and pandemic-fueled demand for homes suited to remote work.

Broad consumer sentiment also picked up in September, a report showed Friday. Democrats grew more upbeat about the economy’s outlook while Republicans’ enthusiasm dipped, but overall consumer optimism is still down compared with before the crisis.

Next week Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is scheduled to address lawmakers at three separate hearings, where he will undoubtedly make the same observation he has repeatedly made for months, including after this week’s policymaking meeting: more stimulus “is likely to be needed” for the recovery to continue.

The House, controlled by Democrats, and the Senate, controlled by Republicans, are deadlocked on any stimulus bill, and there’s little chance of it passing before the election.

Eventually, Congress will pass some pandemic relief, no matter who wins the presidential contest. But it’s likely to be less under Trump, a Republican, than under Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden. “If Trump wins and (Republicans) retain control of the Senate and the president says he wants more stimulus, Republicans will find a way to go along with that,” said Eric Winograd, senior



economist at AllianceBernstein. “If Biden wins, you would get bigger stimulus.”

Goldman Sachs economists said they would likely boost their fourth-quarter GDP forecast if Biden wins and Democrats retake the U.S. Senate, because Democrats would approve a spending package larger than the \$1 trillion Goldman has penciled in.

Despite overall concerns about the strength of the recovery, and millions out of work since the pandemic hit, a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 45% of U.S. adults think Trump is the better candidate for rebuilding the economy. That’s compared with 36% who say Biden would be better. But the same poll showed that likely voters were much more concerned about a candidate’s ability to fight the coronavirus and restore trust in government, both issues on which voters gave Biden a lead.

COVID-19 has killed more than 197,000 in the United States since the pandemic began. New daily cases are now averaging about 40,000, about 60% of the July peak.

## Kazakhstan, Japan Sign Deals Worth \$46m



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Nur-Sultan has announced this week a series of contracts with Japanese companies after Tokyo expressed interest in developing closer ties with Central Asia’s wealthiest country.

The deals are worth \$46 million, according to a statement issued by the Kazakhstan embassy in Japan last week.

Speaking at the meeting, Kazakh Ambassador to Tokyo Erlan Baudarbek-Kozhataev voiced confidence that despite economic turmoil caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic, “the favorable investment climate created in Kazakhstan is of great interest to Japanese investors.”

Under the agreements signed between the two nations, Japanese companies, including Smart Eco System, Number 1 Solution, S Objects, and Nippon Investment Operating Company will launch in Kazakhstan the project to introduce blockchain technologies in such industries as manufacturing, agriculture, infrastructure and communications.

The project will be implemented using Japanese technologies, such as Wi-Sun, a wireless communication standard that enables seamless connectivity between smart-grid devices. In addition, cryptocurrency experts from Japan will help Kazakhstan launch a crypto currency stock exchange based on the Security Token Offering platform. Both initiatives are aimed to develop the Astana International Financial Center (AIFC), a regional financial hub based on English common law. The initial stage is expected to cost investors \$13 million.

Umirzak Service signed partnerships with Nippon Investment Operating Company and Snin EiTec for the construction of a plant that will manufacture metal goods for the local oil, mining, and construction industries. The facility worth \$8 million will be located in Kazakhstan’s Atyrau region, known for its petroleum.

At the same time, Kazakhstan will receive \$25 million in Japanese investments for a series of projects aimed at the development of the country’s healthcare system. Under one of the agreements, Japan will build a multifunctional diagnostic center with the latest Japanese medical equipment in Atyrau. In addition, Medical Excellence Japan and Nippon Investment Operating Company will organize training and internships for Kazakh healthcare experts.

Japanese interest in the Caspian and Central Asian state is nothing new.

## Canada Shelves Free Trade Negotiations With China

TORONTO [Dispatches] - Canada is abandoning free trade negotiations with China amid a host of disagreements on a range of topics, Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne said in an interview.

“I do not see the conditions being present now for these discussions to continue at this time. The China of 2020 is not the China of 2016,” Champagne said about trade negotiations as quoted by The Globe and Mail. Canada’s top diplomat said Ottawa will review its policy towards Beijing and will do so through the “lens of China of 2020”.

The comments mark a major policy shift towards China that brings Canada more in line with the hardline posture adopted by the United States, Australia and parts of the European Union. When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took office in 2015, his government signaled an interest in fostering deeper economic ties between the two countries.

Trudeau visited Beijing in 2016 and soon after discussions began about a possible free trade agreement. Subsequently, Canadian and Chinese delegations charged with the negotiations met three times throughout 2017.

### Iran Can Set Fire...

FROM PAGE 1

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salami referred to the assassination of Lt. Gen. Soleimani, and said that when the US assassinated Iran’s great General Soleimani the whole world protested to their actions and noted that the harsh revenge of the Iranian nation is yet to be fulfilled and this will be materialized only in the form of the annihilation of the hegemonic powers.

Referring to the outstanding and brilliant character of the martyred general Soleimani, he outlined his unrivaled role in fortifying the wave of resistance and defeating the U.S., the UK and Israel regime’s policies and said that his martyrdom indeed injected new life into the body of resistance in a way that youngsters all across the Islamic world are now after revenging his assassination.

IRGC commander also referred to the normalization deals underway between some Arab states and the Zionist regime, saying that such moves only add to the hatred of the regional nations towards Israeli regime.

The normalization deals which served as part of the election campaign by Donald Trump put ropes around the necks of some Arab states in the absolute absence of Palestinians, he added.

### Tehran Points...

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“Pakistan and Iran have the potential to cater to each other’s needs provided the businessmen have the exposure to the available opportunities,” he said. “The business community in the two countries would have to increase interaction to share their experiences in the larger interests of the people of two brotherly nations.”

The envoy said the chambers of commerce in the two countries would have to focus on expansion of trade by holding single-country exhibitions and through trade delegations to each other’s country. “Dissemination of sector-specific and trade-related information would go a long way in achieving the goal.”

The Iranian consul general said agriculture, tourism and metal industries of Iran have opportunities of investment and Pakistani business community should come forward.

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Anjum Nisar said reasons for low volume of trade include ignorance about each other’s’ potential and non-utilisation of the territorial connectivity.

“Tariff and non-tariff barriers are major obstacles in the way of trade enhancement,” Nisar said. “All the four traditional transportation modes are available for bilateral trade between and Pakistan and Iran including air, sea, road and rail but unfortunately none of these modes of transportation are efficiently and economically utilised at present.”

Nisar said transport licenses should be issued to allow vehicles move freely across the border.

“Through this step the exporters of both the countries would be able to get direct access to the consumers,” he said. “The other step is to provide proper and complete information about the products, which can be done by organising single country exhibitions.”

FPCCI president said various decisions regarding the expansion of trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Iran have been taken up previously. “Unfortunately, due to the instable and unpredictable international and regional political processes, nothing has been in practicality.”

Nisar said Iran and Pakistan are member of emerging regional trade blocks. “Geographical locations of both the countries affect their neighbouring countries,” he said. “Both countries should seek various avenues of cooperation for penetration of their products in these markets. We should study and review our bilateral preferential trade agreement and incorporate various avenues of investment that has been emerging due to changing regional dynamics.”

FPCCI president reassured the Iranian consul general that the apex chamber of the country would continue to play its role for increasing bilateral trade and economic relations.

### “Snapback” Triggered...

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Although the U.S. Department of State by issuing a statement has claimed it has activated the snapback mechanism and they believe that the world will follow this system but the UN and European diplomats have different views.



According to the French news agency, AFP, a European diplomat on Saturday and regarding the activating the return of international sanctions against Iran said, “Americans will pretend they have activated the snapback mechanism and sanctions will return and come into effect. But this action has no legal basis, and as the result it can have no legal consequence.” A UN diplomat also said, “I don’t see anything happening. It would be just a statement. It’s like pulling a trigger and no bullet coming out.”

To complete this theory that the snapback mechanism does not function, Russian officials have recently warned that the U.S. unilateralism against Iran would lead to the disgrace of the UNSC.

What is observed in the U.S. behavior is that the U.S. in the emotional condition of the White House is trying to provide grounds to compensate President Trump’s previous failures on the eve of the presidential election as he is in dire need of a success but fortunately, the world is not with him and any stone he has thrown has missed the target.

### UN’s Big “No” to...

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As the Islamic Republic of Iran has reiterated time and again, the US regime is the biggest threat to world peace and security. This reality had never been exposed as much it has today when the US is overtly threatening and intimidating the world and ignores UN Security Council resolutions.

In 2018, when the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in breach of clearly stipulated international regulations, and waived any right to use the mechanisms inserted in the accord and in Resolution 2231, it (the US) hoped it would bring Iran to the dilemma of submission or collapse by using the so-called ‘maximum pressure’ strategy.

However, two years on since then, the US is now more isolated than ever in advancing the project of portraying Iran as a security threat. Frustrated at having failed to build a consensus against Iran, the US has turned to bullying and holding the international community to ransom. At a time when almost all members of the UN Security Council have straightforwardly rejected the United States’ ludicrous approach vis-à-vis UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the US regime is, in line with its unilateral and force-oriented policy, threatening to impose sanctions against world countries for their compliance with international regulations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran regards the US secretary of state’s wrathful statements as measures which are only good for domestic political use and which are the result of weakness and disappointment and hearing repeated “No’s” from the international community in recent months as well as back-to-back defeats against Iran’s active diplomacy. Iran recommends the US president not isolate himself and his country at the international level any further by consulting people who are unfamiliar with the global situation.

The approach adopted by the current U.S. regime amounts to a big danger to international peace and security as well as an unprecedented threat to the UN and the Security Council. This time, the US secretary of state has not only ridiculed all principles of international law and the UN Charter, but also challenges the international community officially and openly, and converts his government’s bullying and recalcitrance from behind-the-scenes actions into an openly flagrant move.

The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes that if the US makes any move in line with these threats, whether alone or in cahoots with the few cronies of its own, it will be met with serious reaction and will be responsible for all the dangerous consequences of its move.



## Chelsea Loan Zappacosta To Genoa

LONDON (AFP) - Chelsea defender Davide Zappacosta joined Italian side Genoa on a season-long loan on Saturday. Italy international Zappacosta has moved back to Serie A after his loan to Roma last season was interrupted by a knee ligament injury. He recovered from surgery in time to make six appearances in the Italian top-flight before the end of the season. The 28-year-old right-back, who joined Chelsea in 2017, has been a fringe figure with the Premier League club, making 34 starts and a further 18 substitute appearances.

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## Villa Sign Lyon Forward Traore

LONDON (Dispatches) - Aston Villa signed Burkina Faso forward Bertrand Traore from Lyon for a reported £17 million (\$21 million) on Saturday. Traore returns to the Premier League after starting his career with Chelsea, where he spent three years with Villa's current assistant manager John Terry. The 25-year-old's signing is another boost to Villa's attacking options after the arrival of Ollie Watkins from Brentford for a club record £28 million earlier this month.

# Man Utd Stunned By Palace, Arsenal Grab Late Winner

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United suffered a miserable start to their Premier League campaign as Wilfried Zaha fired Crystal Palace to a shock 3-1 win at Old Trafford, while Arsenal struck late through substitute Eddie Nketiah to beat West Ham 2-1.

On a day of high drama Leeds edged Fulham 4-3 to earn their first top-flight victory since 2004 on Saturday and Everton went top of the table as Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored a hat-trick in a 5-2 destruction of 10-man West Brom.

On the second weekend of the new campaign, United were playing for the first time after being given an extra week of rest due to their involvement in the latter stages of last season's Europa League.

But Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's lethargic side were well below their best and Palace took full advantage thanks to Andros Townsend's seventh minute strike and Zaha's double against his former club.

There was a hint of controversy about Zaha's first goal as VAR ruled Victor Lindelof had handled Jordan Ayew's shot even though the ball was hit with force at him from close quarters.

David De Gea saved Ayew's spot-kick, but VAR intervened again to order a retake as United's keeper had strayed off his line and this time Zaha converted from the spot.

United's only close-season signing Donny van de Beek came off the bench and the former Ajax midfielder reduced the deficit with a debut goal in the 80th minute.

But Zaha, who endured a difficult spell at United before rejoining Palace, showed why the Eagles are so keen to keep him amid speculation over his future as the Ivory Coast winger lashed home in the 85th minute.

For the first time in six years, United were beaten in their opening league game.



It was a chastening start to the season for United, who have come under fire from fans frustrated at their relatively modest transfer outlay compared to their title rivals.

Arsenal capitalised on the chance to open up a six-point gap over United in the battle for a top-four finish despite a poor performance of their own.

Alexandre Lacazette headed the Gunners into a 25th minute lead from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's cross.

But Mikel Arteta's men were largely outplayed by the Hammers, who faced stinging criticism after a 2-0 home defeat to Newcastle on the opening weekend.

Michail Antonio levelled just before half-time and came close putting the visitors' in front when his header came crashing back off the crossbar.

But Arsenal grabbed all three points five minutes from time when Dani Ceballos broke the West Ham offside trap and squared for Nketiah to tap home.

At Elland Road, promoted Leeds were involved in another eye-catching encounter in their first top-flight home match for 16 years.

After losing 4-3 at champions Liverpool on the opening weekend, Helda Costa fired Marcelo Bielsa's free-scoring side ahead in the fifth minute.

Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic equalised from the penalty spot but Leeds soon retook the lead with a spot-kick of their own, converted by Mateusz Klich.

Patrick Bamford and Costa's superb strike looked have Leeds cruising to their first win back in the top-flight by the hour mark.

But Fulham pulled one back in the 62nd minute through Bobby Decordova-Reid and Mitrovic's towering header four minutes later set up a tense finale.

Leeds' opening games have seen 14 goals, which is the most for a top-flight side's first two matches since Wolves in 1962-63.

## Suarez Unlikely To Join Juve Because of Passport Delay



MILAN (AFP) - Andrea Pirlo said Saturday that Barcelona striker Luis Suarez's move to Juventus was unlikely to go ahead because of delays in the Uruguayan's bid to get an Italian passport. "Suarez? It is difficult given the time factor, it is complicated for him to be the Juve centre forward," Pirlo told a press conference before Juventus open their campaign against Sampdoria on Sunday.

Former Liverpool forward Suarez, 33, arrived in Italy on Thursday to pass his Italian language test required to receive a passport, according to media reports.

Juve cannot recruit him because they have already reached their quota for non-EU players. And bureaucratic delays mean he may not receive it before the transfer window in Italy shuts on October 5.

Juventus are looking for a replacement for Argentinian Gonzalo Higuain who has left for David Beckham's MLS side Inter Miami after being told by Pirlo his time in Turin was up. "We are all waiting for the number nine but things take a long time in the market. But we are in no hurry," continued Pirlo.

Juventus have also been targeting Bosnian Edin Dzeko, who will play with Roma in Hellas Verona on Saturday.

Juve start with Cristiano Ronaldo and Dejan Kulusevski up front in a 4-4-2 lineup against Claudio Ranieri's Sampdoria.

## Halep Into Italian Open Semifinals

ROME (Dispatches) - Top seed Simona Halep took the first semi-final berth at the Italian Open on Saturday when Kazakh rival Yulia Putintseva retired during their match on Saturday.

The world number two was leading 6-2, 2-0 in the quarter-final clash on clay in Rome when Putintseva signalled that she was retiring after 45 minutes of play with a lower back injury.

Putintseva, ranked 30, had reached the quarter-finals of the recent hard court US Open, a tournament which Halep skipped because of coronavirus concerns.

Halep next meets either Belarusian Victoria Arzenka or Spaniard Garbine Muguruza for a place in the final of the clay-court tournament.

It is the fifth time that former French Open champion Halep has reached the last four in Rome.

The Wimbledon champion was runner-up to Elina Svitolina in 2017 and 2018 finals. Matches from Sunday's semi-finals will be played in front of 1,000 spectators with the action up to now in front of empty stands at the Foro Italico.

## Pogacar Poised For Tour Glory

RONCHAMPS (Reuters) - Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar pulled off a major upset at the Tour de France by stunning compatriot Primož Roglič to claim the overall leader's yellow jersey with a monumental victory in the final individual time trial on Saturday.

The 21-year-old won the 36.2-km solo effort against the clock as Roglič, who had started the day with a 57-second lead in the general classification, cracked in the uphill section, a 5.9-km climb at an average gradient of 8.5%.

"I don't know what to say, it's a dream," said Pogacar, who now leads second-placed Roglič by 59 seconds ahead of Sunday's final stage, a largely processional ride to the Champs Elysees in Paris where only the final sprint is contested.

# Aguero Could Miss Two Months of Man City's Season



The striker has not played since undergoing knee surgery in June.

There had initially been hope the 32-year-old would be fit for the latter stages of the Champions League in August but that date passed and the target became the start of the new Premier League season.

However, Guardiola said that Aguero is still yet to return to training and will take time

to get up to match fitness.

"We knew that the injury was difficult. In maybe one month or two months he will be ready," said Guardiola.

"He has to come back on the pitch and regain the physical condition. Sergio was out for a long time and Sergio is not a guy who regains the physical condition quick."

After missing out on the signing of Lionel Messi from Barcelona, Aguero's absence leaves Guardiola with only one fit striker in Gabriel Jesus.

City open their Premier League campaign on Monday night looking to bounce back from a disappointing 2019/20 season as they finished 18 points adrift of Liverpool in second place.

## Bayern Munich Won't Break Bank To Keep Alaba

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich board member Oliver Kahn has warned that the European champions will not agree a new contract with David Alaba at any price as the defender is stalling over signing a contract extension having been linked to Manchester City.

With a year left on his current deal, the 28-year-old Austrian international is reportedly insisting on a huge pay rise with the European champions.

"You have to look at the situation, we no longer live in the same football world as it was before the coronavirus. It's completely different," Kahn told broadcaster ZDF.

"We are well advised to keep calm," Kahn added after honorary president Uli Hoeness branded Alaba's agent Pini Zahavi a 'money-greedy piranha' last weekend.

Alaba is said to want a pay rise to 25 million euros (\$29 million) per year to out-earn Bayern stars Manuel Neuer and Robert Lewandowski. "We are still in conversation with him and he knows how much we appreciate him as a person and player," assured Kahn.

Alaba sat out Friday's 8-0 demolition of Schalke with a leg injury.

Holders Bayern earned their 22nd straight win to kick off the new Bundesliga season just 26 days after winning the Champions League final.

The Bavarian giants are chasing a ninth straight Bundesliga title this season.

Having already seen Thiago Alcantara sign for Liverpool on Friday, Bayern are eager to keep another key member of their Champions League-winning squad.



## Nadal Crashes Out, Djokovic Wins

ROME (AFP)- Clay court king Rafael Nadal crashed out of the Italian Open on Saturday, falling to a straight sets defeat to Argentine Diego Schwartzman in a tournament the Spaniard had won nine times.

Eight-seeded Schwartzman meted out a punishing 6-2, 7-5 loss in Nadal's final warm-up before his bid for a 13th French Open, and record-equalling 20th Grand Slam in just over a week.

Top men's seed Novak Djokovic also stumbled on the Roman clay but recovered to win through 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 against German qualifier Dominik Koepfer.

"It was not my night at all," said Nadal, who had won all nine previous meetings against 28-year-old Schwartzman, but could not match his rival's stunning game on the red clay of the Foro Italico.

"He played a great match, not me, when this happens you have to lose," continued the 34-year-old. "It's not a moment for excuses. I've spent a long time without competing, I played two good matches."

The two-time defending champion was making his comeback after a six-month coronavirus-enforced break having skipped the US Open ahead of Roland Garros with its first round on September 27. "Losing as many serves, you can't expect to win a match, it's something that I have to fix, I know how to do it," he warned.

"It's a special and unpredictable year, I'll probably go back home and let's see."

Schwartzman next plays Canadian 12th seed Denis Shapovalov for a place in the final.

"Today I played my best tennis," said the Argentine.

Djokovic, meanwhile, let his frustrations spill over in a two-hour battle with his 97th-ranked German rival.

