

**Deputy Navy Commander for Coordination Hamze Ali Kaviani Stated That After the Sacred Defense, The Operational Range of the Iranian Navy Has Extended to the Northern Indian Ocean and the High Seas**

# IRAN NEWS

**Iranian Math Students Won Six Medals at the 61st International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO 2020), Which Was Held on 18-28 September in Saint-Petersburg, Russia**

VOL. XXVI, No. 7055 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 2020 - MEHR 8, 1399

**2 DOMESTIC**

**"Coward" U.S. Failed In Bringing Iranians To Their Knees**



> SEE PAGE 2

**3 DOMESTIC**

**Iran Exports Construction Materials Worth \$2m to African States**



> SEE PAGE 3

**4 INTERNATIONAL**

**Clashes Between Azerbaijan, Armenia Separatists Leave at Least 23 Dead**



> SEE PAGE 4

**8 SPORTS**

**Bottas Wins as Penalties Put Hamilton Record Bid on Hold**



> SEE PAGE 8

## Leader's Wisdom Thwarts Enemies' Conspiracy

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps noted that the Leader's wise solution toward enemies' maximum pressures has thwarted their conspiracy and changed all equations at the international level.

Speaking in a ceremony, Major General Hossein Salami made some remarks over the Imposed War (1980-1988) during which the Iranian nation stood against the enemy who was supported by many countries at that time.

"With respect to the unequal military arrangement in Imposed War, Iran could have been defeated", Salami said and added, "However the victory of Iran, under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, in that unequal war changed all equations."

Iran's victory revealed that it is not the equipment that changes the equations in a war, but it is the manpower and powerful leadership that bring about changes, he explained.

"Today, after several years, hostilities against Iran have not ended yet", he continued.

Referring to the current all-out pressures and sanctions against Iran, Salami noted, "Iran's enemies in the economic war put maximum pressure on our country, however, in return Iran's Leader came up with the wise solution of resistance to foil the plots of the enemies."

Resistance, as the Leader's effective key against the pressures and sanctions, thwarted the conspiracy of the enemies and changed their equations in West Asia and in the international level, he added.

## No Negotiation With U.S. Done, Nor Will Be Done



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Foreign Ministry Spokesman rejected any rumors about Iran-U.S. negotiation in Oman and said that no negotiation has been done nor will be done with the U.S.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman said that Donald Trump has no clear understanding of the identity of international relations and his remarks on negotiations with Iran have only internal usage.

Attending his weekly press conference, Saeed Khatibzadeh responded to question regarding Trump's claim that Iran seeks agreement with the US while the situation gets more difficult after the upcoming U.S. Presidential Election.

Rejecting what has been mentioned in Kuwait newspaper "Aljarideh" regarding Iran and U.S. negotiations, Khatibzadeh said that Trump's consultants have not understood what has happened, no negotiation has been done nor will be done with the US. These claims have internal use for Trump only, he highlighted.

The U.S. must accept his fault, respect international laws and then stop the inhuman war and imposed sanctions on Iran, which later compensates all damages which have been imposed on Iran, Khatibzadeh noted.

After taking all the above steps, the US may find a place in JCPOA, Khatibzadeh added.

Iran's position has been stable, clear, and decisive, no negotiation will be done with the U.S., Foreign Ministry spokesman concluded.

In response to a question about the remarks of the Prime Minister of Kuwait and the invitation of Iran to talk and reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf, Khatibzadeh said: Iran's answer has already been given. From the beginning and in recent years, Iran has repeatedly proposed initiatives for regional talks, the most important of which is the Hormuz peace initiative which was proposed by the President.

Khatibzadeh said: "We think we can have comprehensive talks in the Persian Gulf region as soon as possible between the countries of the region for stability and peace in this region. The principles and foundations of such talks are stated in the proposed plans, and we hope that the Kuwaiti government will satisfy the countries that are not interested in these talks. We have been, are, and will be."

The Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman about the rockets hit in the 'Khodafarin' region in Iran after clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia: "Nothing good has happened. The situation in the region can no longer tolerate this violence. We immediately told our friends in these two countries to end the tensions as soon as possible. An immediate ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, and the start of bilateral talks are the only definitive solution to this issue. A military solution is not a lasting solution to this decades-long dispute."

He said: "Iran is using all its power to resolve this issue and we are following this situation with sensitivity and we are constantly talking to the parties involved."

Khatibzadeh also said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's visits to China are going on after they are finalized. Some premature speculation leads to perception.

He stated that diplomatic trips have their protocols. There is currently no immediate plan for Zarif's trip.

## Iran Foreign Trade Balance Exceeds \$24.6

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Customs Office has announced that the country's trade has surpassed \$24.6 billion in the first five months of the Iranian year (started March 20, 2020), in which 52 million tons of goods have been exported.

The report also said that Iran has exported 2.212 million tons of steel ingots with a value of 767 million dollars, which has mostly been exported to East Asian countries.

China has been the biggest customer of Iranian steel ingots with 358 million dollars.

The statistics also show that in the same period more than five million tons of metal minerals with a value of \$1.802 billion have been exported. The value of the export of the mining section has been \$2.176 billion dollars, more than 50 percent of which has been steel.

According to the World Steel Association, Iran's production of steel in August has reached 2.4 million tons, which shows a 14.6 percent rise compared to August 2019. Iran has increased production while the world production of raw steel has increased by 0.6 percent.

Also, since the beginning of 2020, Iran has produced 18.625 million tons of steel, which shows an 11.3% increase compared to the same period in 2019. Among steel producers, Iran, China, and Turkey have had an increase in their production during the coronavirus epidemic. Iran is now among the biggest 10 producers of steel in the world and is planned to be seventh in four years.

## Iran's COVID-19 Cases Near 450,000

TEHRAN (IFP)- Health Ministry spokeswoman said 449,960 patients have contracted the novel coronavirus so far, including 3,512 new cases identified in the past 24 hours.

In a press briefing on Monday, Sima-Sadat Lari said the virus has killed 190 patients since Sunday noon, increasing the overall death toll to 25,779. So far, she added, 376,531 patients have recovered from the disease or been discharged from the hospital.

Lari said 4,068 patients are also in critical conditions caused by more severe infection.

The spokeswoman noted that 3,959,783 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, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Alborz, Lorestan, Markazi, Ilam, South Khorasan, Kermanshah, North Khorasan, Semnan, Gilan, Zanjan, Qazvin, and Kerman provinces.

The "orange" zones also include Golestan, Hormozgan, Kurdistan, and Fars provinces, she added.

## China's Imports From Iran The Lowest in a Decade

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's imports from Iran have dropped to the lowest record in the past decade, with Chinese customs data showing the number falling below \$322 million in August.

In total, Iran's exports to China in the first eight months of the Iranian calendar year (beginning March 20, 2020) amounted to \$3.85 billion, which is a 62% decrease compared with the same period last year.

Meanwhile, in the first eight months of 2020, China's exports to Iran fell only by 6.7 percent to \$5.95 billion.

The current year, 2020, is the first year Iran's trade balance with China has been detrimental to Iran.

Although China's customs has not yet released its August oil import report, Beijing's direct oil imports from Iran in the first seven months of 2020 averaged 77,000 barrels per day, almost ten times less than before 2018 when the United States re-imposed economic sanctions on Iran.

See Page 7

## Iran Starts Procuring Basmati From Pakistan

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Trade with Iran remains suspended as Indian banks find it difficult to run the payment mechanism. Meanwhile, Iran starts procuring from Pakistan as U.S. sanctions disrupt Indian rice exports.

Iran has started procuring basmati from Pakistan temporarily to meet its demand. This has raised concerns among Indian exporters who have halted basmati exports to them owing to payment related issues.

However, Vinod Kaul, executive director, All India Rice Exporters' Association (AIREA) claimed that this would last for a while as India will again start exporting to the nation once its dues are cleared. Also, he noted that Pakistan's long term presence in the country would become troublesome for India as Iran accounts for 34% of India's basmati exports. Besides, he mentioned that India needs to resume trade with the nation soon as basmati produce is expected to be high this year.

The sanctions imposed by the U.S. have made it difficult for India to operate a payment mechanism with Iran. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is scheming to extend a limited line of credit to Iran via EXIM bank.

See Page 7

## Threat to Evacuate U.S. Diplomats From Iraq Raises Fear of War

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Washington has made preparations to withdraw diplomats from Iraq after warning Baghdad it could shut its embassy, two Iraqi officials and two Western diplomats said, a step Iraqis fear could turn their country into a battle zone.

Any move by the United States to scale down its diplomatic presence in a country where it has up to 5,000 troops would be widely seen in the region as an escalation of its confrontation with Iran, which Washington blames for missile and bomb attacks.

That in turn would open the possibility of military action, with just weeks to go before an election in which President Donald Trump has campaigned on a hard line towards Tehran and its proxies.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threatened to close the embassy in a phone call a week ago to President Barham Salih, two Iraqi government sources said. The conversation was initially reported by an Iraqi news website.

By Sunday, Washington had begun preparations to withdraw diplomatic staff if such a decision is taken, those sources and the two Western diplomats said.

The concern among the Iraqis is that pulling out diplomats would be followed quickly by military action against forces Washington blamed for attacks.

Populist Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who commands a following of millions of Iraqis, issued a statement last week pleading for groups to avoid an escalation that would turn Iraq into a battleground.

One of the Western diplomats said the U.S. administration did not "want to be limited in their options" to weaken Iran or pro-Iranian militias in Iraq. Asked whether he expected Washington to respond with economic or military measures, the diplomat replied: "Strikes."

See Page 7

Sokhan Gostar Institute

# IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department  
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com  
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

## IRGC Unveils Air-to-Surface Guided Rocket

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force unveiled the first homegrown air-to-surface guided rocket designed to be launched from its Sukhoi Su-22 fighter bombers.

Several new products have been put on display in the 'National Aerospace Park' in Tehran, a permanent exhibition of the achievements of the IRGC Aerospace Force that was inaugurated on Sunday. One of the new weapons on display is a guided rocket that could be carried by Sukhoi Su-22 warplanes for hitting targets on the ground.

Iran has already manufactured 'Fadak' rocket, an 80 mm weapon inspired by the Soviet-made S-8 rockets carried by military aircraft. The Iranian Fadak-class rockets are equipped with high-explosive anti-armor warheads, but the new air-to-surface version unveiled on Sunday is designed with four fins near its head, used to guide the rocket to its intended target.

Fadak rockets weigh 11-16 kg, travel at a speed of 700 meters per second, and can hit the targets within a range of 2-4 kilometers.

## “Coward” U.S. Failed In Bringing Iranians To Their Knees

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that Iranian were not brought to their knees in spite of tough economic pressures exerted by the United States against the country.**

Speaking on Monday in a ceremony of honoring martyrs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the eight years of Sacred Defense, Zarif addressed US authorities and added, “You (U.S.) are criminals against humanity and today, you are claiming the human rights? You are coward and savage but could not bring Iranians to their knees.”

While respecting and honoring the families of martyrs of the Foreign Ministry and commemorating the name and memory of all martyrs of the Islamic Revolution, Sacred Defense and nuclear scientists as well as martyrs of defenders of holy shrines especially former IRGC Quds Force Commander Lt. Gen. Soleimani and his comrades who were assassinated by the US terrorist forces in Iraq, he reiterated, “In spite of tough and cruel U.S. sanctions imposed against the country, Iranians were not brought to their knees in the current economic war.”

Addressing the families of martyrs, Zarif said, “Today, in this critical regional and international situation and in spite of irregularities, martyrs with their sacrifice bestowed dignity and grandeur to the Islamic Iran and did not allow others to insult noble people of the country during these years.”

He pointed out that martyrs brought dignity and pride for Iran and were it not for their braveries and courage, the country would have given in the battlefield during the eight years of the Sacred Defense. Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif pointed to the eight years of Sacred Defense and said, “During Iran-Iraq war, former Iraqi dictator



Saddam Hussein was heavily supported by other countries both financially and militarily and today, these countries are claimant of human rights which is ridiculous.”

He added that that what has given Iran authority and dignity today, and does not allow anyone to insult the people of this country and brag about is the culture that we have from Ashura, martyrdom and self-sacrifice.”

Zarif added that it is true that the armed forces are the guardians of this border and region, but these forces came from the same people who love Imam Hussein (AS), self-sacrifice and martyrdom, stressing: “What has enabled us and made us overcome all pressures and hardships is the presence of the people, the culture of self-sacrifice and martyrdom that you are the best relics and examples of. You are the honor and dignity of Iran and the great signs of Iran. You have supported Iran.”

“If it were not for this culture and attitude, it would not have been possible to resist all the support for eight years,” Zarif elaborated, saying: “Do you know of a country that did not support the aggressor during the time of the Holy Defense? Do you know a power that has not given a weapon to the aggressor?”

“If they want to forget, we will never allow it,” he said.

He went on to say: “Some countries in the region donated \$ 75 billion to Saddam. What are they claiming? We claim. You paid \$ 75 billion to martyr and kill our people and bring the Islamic Republic to its knees, but these families did not allow it.”

## Silk Road Serves to Strengthen Cultural Ties of Nations



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Chinese Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua in a message said Silk Road has connected the civilizations of Asia, Africa and Europe, adding that the Silk Road exhibition is hoped to increase the familiarity of nations with art and to strengthen the cultural ties of the lands.

In his message which was released for the Exhibition of Silk Scripts which is slated to get underway today, Chang Hua expressed his satisfaction about the launching of Silk Scripts Exhibition, which showcases works of two Iranian and Chinese calligraphers.

“He also expressed hope that this event will play a key role in increasing cultural cooperation between the countries along the Silk Road.”

“The Silk Road has connected the civilizations of Asia, Africa and Europe. The countries along the Silk Road, despite having different scripts and arts, play an important role in shaping the world civilization,” the message reads. “I hope that this exhibition can play its role in increasing the familiarity of nations with art, strengthening the cultural ties of the lands and increasing the cooperation of the countries along the Silk Road,” Hua added.

According to his message, the Silk Scripts Exhibition will be inaugurated on Tuesday, 29 September 2020.

## Industry Ministry’s Role Decisive in Solving Economic Problem

TEHRAN (MNA) – President Hassan Rouhani said that Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade can play a very constructive and leading role in solving economic problems overshadowing the country effectively in the current situation.

Speaking in a Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Rouhani said, “We hope that the Parliament will give strong vote of confidence to the proposed minister of Industry, Mine and Trade in the current situation that the country is grappling with the economic war waged by enemies against Iran.”

He reiterated that the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade is at the forefront of economic war, so that it should be supported duly.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that today, and especially in the current year that Leader of the Islamic Revolution has notified the mission of “Surge in Production” to the government and Parliament, the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade can play a leading role in this regard which is at the forefront of the economic war.

Rouhani stressed that boom in production, whether in industrial, mineral and trade sector or in import and export sectors, has been the main goal of the US economic war with the Iranian people in the recent years.

Under such circumstances, managerial unity and cohesion in the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade is a definite and urgent necessity, so that presence of a competent and capable minister in the Ministry of Industry is vital and essential, he underlined.

## History of Resistance Cinema, New History in Art of Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - Health Minister Saeed Namaki expressed that the history of resistance cinema is a new history in the art of Iranian cinema as a complete art in the world.

Delivering a speech in the closing ceremony of the Resistance Film Festival, Namaki added that resistance does not only mean tolerating force, but also the formation of culture.

Namaki pointed to the faithful help of the people, the support of the armed forces and the Basij organization amid the coronavirus outbreak, and stated that with the coronavirus epidemic in the country, health defenders also created a new epic.

“Sacred Defense is a sign of the strong will of Iranian people,” Secretary of the Resistance Film Festival Mahdi Azimi Mirabadi expressed.

He also noted that Sacred Defense is a sign of the strong will of the Iranian people against the enemies.

Mahdi Azimi added that the Iranian did their duty in the Sacred Defense and resistance against the enemy and now they are victorious.

“Committed artists and filmmakers of the Sacred Defense around the world must try to make the nations of the world aware of the Sacred Defense,” Azimi concluded.

“130 countries participated in the call for the 16th Resistance Film Festival and 9,000 works were presented in various formats, including short films, television shorts film, and documentaries,” he reiterated.

“3700 foreign films from the United States, France, Britain, surrounding nations, and Palestine are presented at the festival.”

Azimi stressed that the media and filmmakers should portray the greatness of the common epic in the international arena at the height of sanctions against Iran and leave it as a memory for future generations.

16th Resistance Film Festival was held on last Monday in Tehran on the occasion of Sacred Defense week and yesterday (Sunday) the closing ceremony was held in the presence of artists, filmmakers, military, and national officials.

## Tehran Sympathizes With Ukraine Over Military Plane Crash

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has offered sympathy to the Ukrainian nation and government over the recent military plane crash in Ukraine.

In a statement on Sunday, Khatibzadeh also sympathized with the families of those killed in the tragic incident. Twenty-six people, most of them air cadets, have been killed in a military plane crash in Ukraine, officials say.

The aircraft, an Antonov-26, came down near the eastern city of Kharkiv. The plane was carrying 20 cadets and seven officers from Kharkiv Air Force University and was on a training flight. Only one person survived.

## FM Asks Azerbaijan, Armenia To Cease Hostilities, Hold Talks

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan to exercise restraint, agree on ceasefire and launch negotiations after a new round of military clashes between the two neighbors.

Foreign Minister Zarif held separate telephone conversations with his Azeri and Armenian counterparts on Sunday night following the outbreak of military clashes between the two countries.

In the talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov and with Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, the top Iranian diplomat was informed about the latest conditions and on-the-field situation in the disputed region.

Foreign Minister Zarif also expressed concern about a flare-up of tensions, and called on the warring sides to show self-restraint, agree on ceasefire and immediate cessation of hostilities, and begin negotiations within the framework of the international law and regulations.

He also notified the two neighboring states that the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to employ all of its capacities for the establishment of ceasefire, the start of dialogue, and restoration of peace and calm.

Heavy fighting has erupted between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, with both civilians and troops killed.

## No Bullets of Nagorno-Karabakh Tensions Must Enter Iran Soil

TEHRAN (MNA) – The deputy head of Iran’s Police Brigadier General Ghasem Rezaei warned Azerbaijan and Armenia on Monday noting that no bullets of Nagorno-Karabakh tensions must enter the Iranian soil and territory.

Rezaei announced that the Islamic Republic is closely watching the tensions and has transmitted separate messages to border guards of both Armenia and Azerbaijan sides on Monday morning.

He said that one of Iran’s serious demands as the neighbors of both countries is to resolve the issue through dialogue. The Iranian Brigadier General informed that two mortar shells have hit near the Iranian border by the present time and the country has noted both Azerbaijan and Armenia about it.

The military forces of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan have started a new round of clashes over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, as the international community calls for restraint and ceasefire.

Tehran believes that military action is not a solution to the decades-old dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

## Iran Able to Detect, Down Any Flying Object in Region

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of Army Air Defense Force noted that the country has gained the ability to detect and down any kind of flying object in the region’s sky.

Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard said that the Iranian experts in the Army Air Force have achieved good results in the field of radar-based systems that most of these achievements are not made public.

“Today, in addition to monitoring the skies of our country, we also observe the skies of the region (West Asia), Sabahi Fard asserted.

“Today we have the ability to identify any flying object in the sky of the country and the region and down it if required,” he added.

Comparing the Iran Armed Forces with other army forces in the world, he described the service offered by Iran Armed Forces as a divine gift and a sacred one.

## Three More Iranian Cities Registered on UNESCO’s List of Learning Cities

TEHRAN (IFP) - Three Iranian cities have joined the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)’s global network of learning cities.

“With the cities of Tehran, Isfahan and Khamir port joining UNESCO’s global network of learning cities, more than 10 Iranian cities now enjoy a global status,” said Hojjatollah Ayoubi, the secretary general of UNESCO’s National Iran Commission.

The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is an international policy-oriented network providing inspiration, know-how and best practice. Learning cities at all stages of development can benefit greatly from sharing ideas with other cities, as solutions for issues that arise as one learning city develops may already exist in other cities.

The Network supports the achievement of all seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 4 (‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’) and SDG 11 (‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’).

The UNESCO GNLC supports and improves the practice of lifelong learning in the world’s cities by promoting policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities;

forging links; fostering partnerships; providing capacity development; and developing instruments to encourage and recognize progress made in building learning cities.

He said Iran, with a civilization going back thousands of years, is one of the founding fathers of the concept of “city” and “city-dwelling.”

“We are pleased to see that efforts by UNESCO’s National Iran Commission bore fruit, and the Iranian-Islamic experience of a city lifestyle turned into an opportunity to exchange thoughts and cultures and ideas with the world,” he noted.

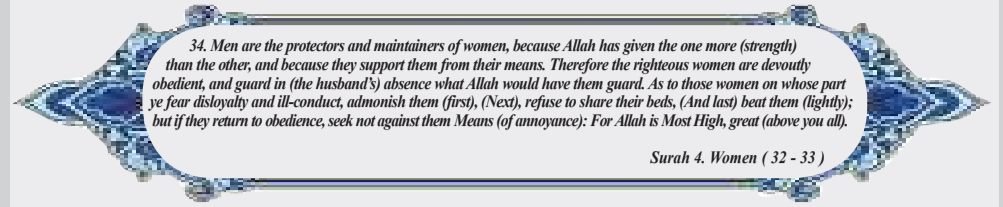
Earlier, the Iranian cities of Shiraz, Isfahan, Kashan, Yazd, and the new town of Hashtgerd had been registered on the UNESCO’s global network of learning cities.

Several Iranian cities and villages have also been named as World Craft Cities. Those include Isfahan for its creative handicrafts, Mashhad for gemstones, Lalejin of Hamadan province for pottery, Mariwan of Kurdistan province for Givoh (a type of traditional Iranian footwear) weaving, Abadeh in Fars province for wood carving, Meibod of Yazd for Zilou (a type of traditional Iranian rug) weaving, the Kalpourgan village in Sistan and Baluchestan province for its pottery art which dates back 7,000 years, and the village of Khorashad in South Khorasan province for towel weaving.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:54
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:08
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:35
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:59



## Iran Exports Construction Materials Worth \$2m to African States

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Farzad Piltan, the director-general of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries, says Iran exported construction materials worth \$2m to African states.

Speaking to Fars News Agency, Piltan talked about Iran's exports of construction materials to African continent, saying that export of construction materials and equipment like wire and cable, tile and ceramic, switches and sockets, stone, porcelain and ceramics, sanitary valves, bath and shower, door and window, pipe and profile to the world stood at around \$620m last year and Iraq and Afghanistan were the major destinations for export of Iran's construction material and Turkey, the UAE and Azerbaijan were the other destinations.

Piltan noted that last year, the volume of export of construction materials and equipment to Africa states was around \$2m last year.

He added that Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria were the top destinations for export of Iran's construction materials in Africa. Piltan reiterated that China, with exporting goods worth \$2.2b, is the top exporter to the African Continent. Spain with \$1b, Italy with \$700m, India with \$400m, France with \$365m and Turkey with \$360m are the other major exporters to this continent.



He further said that lack of interest and determination, appropriate planning by the private sector for exports to African states as well as export risks and transportation woes are the main reasons for this insignificant amount of exports to Africa.

Piltan added that banking problem and lack of acquaintance with African market's demands as well as lack of acquaintance of African traders with Iran's export potentials are the other factors behind this lackluster amount of trade.

He noted that despite concentration on developing exports with neighboring states, the TPO has not been negligent of developing trade with African states and it has held several expert meetings with officials and related bodies to boost trade with African states.

Piltan reiterated that TPO is working on introducing new markets to Iranian exporters and offering solutions for entry of businessmen into those markets, noting that African states are good markets for Iran's exports but first some problems like transportation and banking transactions should be sorted out in order to encourage Iranian exporters to trade with African states.

## Inflation rate of 22% targeted

TEHRAN (MNA) - The budget plan for the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 21, 2021) instructed to the executive bodies has targeted an inflation rate of 22 percent.

The latest report on the inflation rate in the country, which was released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), said that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on September 21, which marks the end of the sixth Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar, stood at 26 percent.

The inflation rate has risen 0.2 percent in the mentioned time span from the twelve-month period ended in the last day of the fifth month.

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) in a statement in April had announced that the annual inflation rate for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) is set to be 22 percent.

The statement published on the website of the CBI read, "Given the adopted policies and taken measures and also taking the country's macro-economic factors into account, the CBI believes that based on the realistic scenarios, the inflation rate in the current year will continue its downward trend."

## Majlis Plans to Improve Public Livelihood

TEHRAN (IP) - Spokesman of the Economic Commission of Parliament stated that there are resources in the budget law that can be used to solve people's livelihood problems to some extent.

Mahdi Toghyani in an exclusive interview with Iran Press referred to the market price fluctuations and stressed that the disadvantaged classes of society have difficult conditions to prepare the basic commodities, and the parliament tries to provide the goods needed by the low-income groups with the resources in the budget.

He highlighted that the plan to provide basic commodities for the deprived has been approved by the Plan and Budget Commission, and we hope that this plan will also be approved in the parliament so that some of the economic problems of low-income people can be solved.

On September 13, the members of the Iranian parliament, with the presence of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Farhad Dejasand, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati, examined the situation in the capital and stock markets, as well as currency rate fluctuations.

## Cage Culture Plans Backed By Agriculture Ministry

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Iran's Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi said that his ministry supports the cage culture plans.

The minister also said that the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute helps those active in the implementation of these plans.

Referring to the request of the units active in the cage culture for the development of this sector, Khavazi said, "This sector was unknown in the country at the time of its establishment; related issues and the probable problems were unclear, but now we do not have any limitation for the development of this sector and entrance of new investors in this area." Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) Head Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei has put the country's annual fishery output at 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), and said the figure is anticipated to reach 1.37 million tons in this year, and surpass 1.5 million tons in the next year.

## Tourism Playing Specific Role in Cooperation With China

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Mr. Ali Asghar Mounesan says tourism sector has played a specific role in the 25-year-old document of strategic cooperation between Iran and China.



On the definition of tourism within the framework of the Iran-China 25-year-old Strategic Cooperation Document Mounesan said that one of the most important points of the cooperation document between Iran and China is paying attention to the tourism sector.

He noted that the issue of tourism is one of the important axes of Iran's cooperation with the target countries and China, with 150 million tourists per year is one of them. "Iran's share of China's tourism market should be taken into account, and given the good relations that exist between the two countries, in the 25-year-old document of strategic cooperation between Iran and China, one of the most important parts is paying attention to tourism", outlined the minister of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism.

Before announcing the motto of this year's World Tourism Day which is "Tourism and Rural Development", the issue of rural tourism in Iran was a priority, Mounesan stressed adding that villages are one of the cultural, historical, and natural capacities and centers of Iran.

Fortunately, good measures have been taken in the field of tourism and rural development, and agri-tourism is a new sector in the tourism field, which is based on rural capacities, Ali Asghar Mounesan Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism stated.

## Top Exporters of Year To Be Announced

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has finished the process of evaluating the country's top exporting companies in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) and 50 top companies, as well as six excellent ones, have been selected, TPO Head Hamid Zadboum announced.

According to Zadboum, the process of identifying, evaluating, and selecting the country's top exporters has been carried out in collaboration with the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

Based on the agreements reached last year, for the maximum participation and cooperation of TPO with the private sector representatives (ICCIMA members) in selecting the country's top exporters, this organization has tasked ICCIMA with the selection of this year's best exporting companies on the national and provincial scale and TPO will supervise the process, the official said.

## Tehran, Doha May Connect National Grids of Electricity

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's and Qatar's ministers of energy ministers raised the advantages of connecting national grids of electricity in a video conference discussion.

Iran's Minister of Energy Reza Ardakanian and Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi also discussed the regional initiative to expand cooperation about unconventional waters, including desalination of sea water and recycled water, discussed in the meeting of the board of governors of the Regional Center for Urban Water Management in Tehran.

The Qatari party announced readiness to participate in the program.

Ardakanian, the Iranian head of Chamber of Commerce of Iran and Qatar, referred to Iran's constant trade of power with its neighboring countries, saying that Qatar has surplus production of power, which has a good market in the regional countries, such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Referring to the unconventional waters initiative, al-Kaabi said his country supports the project and suggested that the experts of hold meetings to discuss technical issues about the project.

He added the connecting electricity grids between the two countries are possible and feasible; the suggestion should be worked on.

He also said that the private sector of Iran and Qatar can have good cooperation in energy and water sectors.

## Gov't Urged to Facilitate Private Companies Listing on Stock Exchange

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called on the government to further facilitate the listing of private companies on the country's stock exchange to help them attract the necessary capital for their development.

Speaking in the ninth meeting of the ICCIMA board of representatives, Gholam-Hossein Shafei criticized the government's performance in managing the stock market and said offering the shares of government-owned companies in the stock market and awarding them to the private sector should entail changing their management as well.

According to Shafei just selling the shares of state-owned companies is not privatization if the management is not also handed over to the private sector. "It will only promote more corruption in such companies," he said.

He suggested that the government should consider putting tax on capital gains to prevent turbulence in the



stock market and to limit speculation and reduce volatility.

He further called on the government for reforming the country's banking system, saying: "Given that the country's banking system is grappling with many problems, today is an opportunity for banks to raise capital through the stock market."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shafei mentioned some of the problems that the country's production sector is faced with like the supply of raw materials for the production units, and criticized some of the regulations that have created new challenges for the mentioned sector.

"The sanctions and the problem of importing raw materials, in addition to capital and financial problems have caused many difficulties for the country's production units. In addition to the above factors, volatile forex market and high exchange rates have also increased the cost of supplying raw materials to the mentioned units so that it has become difficult for producers to continue operating."

## Gov't Allows Early Repayment of Sukuk Bonds Through Crude

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Finance ministry has issued a notice allowing the repayment of sukuk, debt bonds that are compliant with Islamic financial principles, through the use of export crude.

The ministry said on Sunday that sukuk holders whose bonds mature before May 2021 could apply to receive the equivalent of their bonds and their interest in crude cargoes.

The announcement marks the first time the Iranian government is using oil to repay bonds issued domestically.

A plan earlier this year to issue two-year oil-backed bonds reportedly failed after disputes emerged between various branches of the government on how the issuance would impact other financial markets, including the Tehran Stock Exchange where trade was largely booming before the plan was announced earlier in August.

Critics said at the time that backing bonds through future oil sales would create a huge financial burden for the next administrative governments.

However, head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) said on Saturday that parts of oil shipments that have been planned for sale to finance the budget in Iran's next fiscal year would be offered in the form of future contracts.

Mohammad Bagher Mobakht, a deputy president, said such future contracts could also be applicable to the current year's budget.

Iran has used bond issuance to shore up finances that have been affected by lower sales of oil mainly due to the American sanctions as well as lower demand for crude in the international markets. Recent reports have suggested that Iran's crude exports increased significantly in September to nearly 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) from lows of 0.5 million bpd seen in recent months.

## Jordan's Monarch Dissolves Parliament

AMMAN (Reuters) - Jordan's King Abdullah dissolved parliament on Sunday, officials said, paving the way for an election in November at a time of rising popular discontent over worsening economic conditions and curbs on public freedoms under emergency laws.

Under constitutional rules, the government must resign within a week. In July, Jordan's electoral commission set Nov. 10 as the date for a parliamentary election after the monarch called for countrywide polls to be held at the end of the parliament's four-year term. The king issued a royal edict ordering the dissolution of parliament, effective Sunday. The assembly comprises 130 lawmakers, mainly pro-government tribal officials, businessmen and ex-security officials.



## G20 Summit To Be Held Virtually

RIYADH (AFP) - Saudi Arabia said Monday it will hold the G20 summit virtually in November, instead of having leaders of the world's richest nations converge on Riyadh as planned before the coronavirus crisis.

The pandemic has forced all of the group's meetings to be held by videoconference since March.

In that month, Saudi Arabia's King Salman chaired an emergency virtual summit of leaders to discuss a global response to the crisis which has ravaged global economies.

"The 2020 G20 Leaders' Summit will be held virtually on November 21-22 and will be chaired by His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud," the kingdom said in a statement.



## Clashes Between Azerbaijan, Armenia Separatists Leave at Least 23 Dead



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Arch foes Armenia and Azerbaijan on Sunday accused each other of initiating deadly clashes that claimed at least 23 lives over a decades-long territorial dispute and threatened to draw in regional powers Russia and Turkey.

The worst clashes since 2016 have raised the spectre of a fresh war between long-standing rivals Azerbaijan and Armenia which have been locked for decades in a territorial dispute over the Armenia-backed breakaway region of Nagorny Karabakh.

Sixteen Armenian separatist fighters were killed and more than 100 wounded in fighting, rebel officials said.

Both sides also reported civilian casualties.

"We are tired of Azerbaijan's threats, we will fight to the death to resolve the problem once and for all," Artak Bagdasaryan, 36, told AFP in Yerevan, adding that he was waiting to be conscripted into the army.

Karabakh separatists said one Armenian woman and a child were killed, while Baku said that an Azerbaijani family of five died in shelling launched by Armenian separatists.

Armenian defence ministry spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyian claimed Karabakh rebel forces killed "some 200 Azerbaijani troops and destroyed 30 enemy artillery units and 20 drones".

Azerbaijan said it has captured a strategic mountain in Karabakh that helps control transport communications between Yerevan and the enclave.

A major confrontation between Muslim Azerbaijan and majority Christian Armenia threatened to embroil regional players Moscow and Ankara and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called on global powers to prevent Turkey from getting involved in the conflict.

"We are on the brink of a full-scale war in the South Caucasus," Pashinyan warned.

Azerbaijan's "authoritarian regime has once again declared war on the Armenian people", he added.

France, Germany, Italy, and the EU swiftly urged an "immediate ceasefire," while Pope Francis prayed for peace.

Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the military flareup with Pashinyan and called for "an end to hostilities".

"The Russian side expressed serious concern over the resumption of large-scale clashes," the Kremlin said.

But Azerbaijan's ally Turkey blamed Yerevan for the flare-up and promised Baku its "full support".

## Police Clash With Portland Protesters and Press

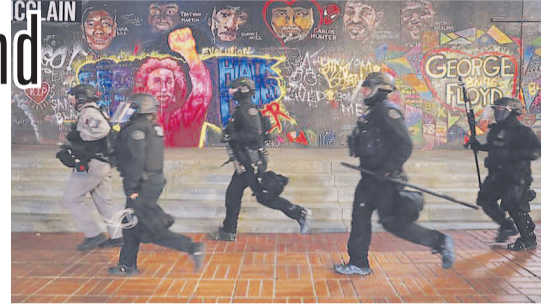
PORTLAND (Reuters) - Police clashed with anti-racism protesters and pushed back members of the press in downtown Portland, Oregon into early Sunday morning, making more than 20 arrests.

The violence followed a relatively peaceful rally by the right-wing Proud Boys group and counter protests by anti-fascist and Black Lives Matter activists on Saturday.

Videos published online showed police pushing protesters and photographers to the ground and jabbing them with batons as officers drove them out of an area near Portland's federal courthouse.

Protesters burned a U.S. flag and scuffled with police trying to arrest fellow demonstrators.

Police declared a riot after they said rocks and cans were thrown at officers, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office reported. Portland Police spokesman Kevin Allen said the bureau was committed to upholding civil rights and any use of force by officers would be reviewed. The Northwest city has seen four months of protests against police



violence and racism with escalating political violence between left and right-wing activists in the run-up to the Nov.3 presidential election.

Dressed in trademark black and yellow polo shirts and body armor, hundreds of Proud Boys supporters rallied to end what they called "domestic terrorism" in Democratic-run Portland.

"They've allowed 120 days of rioting and looting and murder happening within our streets and we're locals so we're just tired of this, that's why we're out here today," said Haley Adams, wearing an anti-stab vest and a stars and stripes bandana.

The self-declared "Western chauvinist" Proud Boys had forecast a crowd of at least 10,000 but police said fewer than 1,000 were present.

Police reported four arrests related to the rally. Online videos showed a person pushing a reporter to the ground and kicking him in the face. Police said they were investigating the assault of a person documenting the gathering.

## Trump Paid No Income Tax in 10 of Last 15 Years

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The New York Times has reported that U.S. President Donald Trump paid only \$750 in federal income taxes in both 2016 and 2017, citing tax return data.

Trump also paid no income taxes in 10 of the last 15 years, the newspaper reported on Sunday, despite receiving \$427.4m through 2018 from his reality television programme and other endorsement and licensing deals.

The U.S. president is worth an estimated \$2.1bn - down by \$1bn during the coronavirus pandemic, according to the latest estimate by Forbes magazine.

For years, Trump has refused to make public his tax records, and has fought legal efforts compelling him to do so, saying they are under audit.

According to the New York Times report, Trump was able to minimize his tax bill by reporting heavy losses across his business empire.

The Times reported Trump claimed \$47.4m in losses in 2018, despite claiming income of at least \$434.9m in a financial disclosure that year.

The newspaper reported that the president is also facing a "decade-long audit battle with the Internal Revenue Service over the legitimacy of a \$72.9m tax refund that he claimed, and received, after declaring huge losses." It said an adverse ruling "could cost him more than \$100m".

"With his financial challenges mounting, the records show that he depends more and more on making money from businesses that put him in potential and often direct conflict of interest with his job as president."

At a press conference on Sunday, Trump denied the report.

"It's fake news, it's totally fake news. Made up. Fake," he told reporters.

"Actually, I paid tax, and you'll see that as soon as my tax returns - It's under audit, they've been under audit for a long time."

Alan Garten, a lawyer for the Trump Organization, said in a statement to the New York Times that "most, if not all, of the facts appear to be inaccurate".

## Yemen Gov't, Houthis Agree to Exchange Over 1,000 Prisoners

SANAA (Dispatches) - Yemen's internationally recognised government and the Houthi rebels agreed to exchange about 1,000 detainees and prisoners, including 15 Saudis, as part of trust-building steps aimed at reviving a stalled peace process, the United Nations said.

"I am personally extremely pleased to be here to announce that you have reached a very important milestone," UN envoy Martin Griffiths told reporters on Sunday.

The Yemeni government, backed by a Saudi-led military coalition, and the Houthi movement signed a deal to swap some 15,000 detainees in 2018, but the pact has been slowly and only partially implemented.

The two sides will now free 1,081 detainees and prisoners, Griffiths said in a joint news briefing with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) after a nearly 10-day meeting of the prisoners' exchange committee held in the Swiss village of Glion above Lake Geneva.

Sources familiar with the talks and Houthi-run Masirah TV said the rebels would release 400 people, including 15 Saudis and four Sudanese, while the coalition would free 681 Houthi fighters in the largest swap since peace talks in Stockholm in December 2018.

"I urge the parties to move forward immediately with the release and to spare no effort in building upon this momentum to swiftly agree to releasing more detainees," Griffiths said.

The Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV channel quoted a rebel source as confirming a deal had been reached and both parties "express their commitment to implement the agreement".

"What matters to us is implementing the deal, not only signing it," senior rebel commander Mohamed Ali al-Houthi tweeted on Saturday.

Yemen's Foreign Minister Mohammad al-Hadhrami welcomed the deal as a "humanitarian" breakthrough, but also said in a tweet "the government demands the agreement is implemented without stalling".



## Sri Lanka Returns Containers of Illegal Waste to Britain

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka has shipped back to Britain container-loads of waste

the government said was brought to the island in violation of international laws governing the shipping of hazardous material.

The 21 containers - holding up to 260 tons of rubbish - first arrived by ship in the capital Colombo's main port between September 2017 and March 2018, customs officials told AFP news agency, adding that they departed Sri Lanka on Saturday.

The container's contents were supposed to comprise used mattresses, carpeting and rugs, but had also contained hospital waste, officials said.

"The shipper had agreed to take back these 21 containers," customs spokesman Sunil Jayaratne told AFP on Sunday. "We are working to secure compensation from those responsible for getting the containers into the country."

Customs did not reveal the type of hospital waste, but previous illegally imported containers had included rags, bandages and body parts from mortuaries, according to officials.

Another 242 containers from Britain, which the government said were holding illegal waste in violation of international law, remain abandoned at the same port and at a free trade zone outside Colombo. They arrived in 2017 and 2018.

The government is currently engaged in legal action against the shipper to have the 242 containers removed from the country.

A Sri Lankan investigation last year into nearly 3,000 tons of illegally imported hazardous waste found the importer had reshipped about 180 tons to India and Dubai in 2017 and 2018.

In recent years, several Asian countries have refused to be treated as the wealthy world's rubbish dump and have turned back container-loads of waste from foreign shores.



**Farmanieh (\$2700)**  
220sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/p, Sauna  
L.balcony  
marble fl  
fireplace  
pkg, & F.F

**Shanon (adviser)**

**Niavaran Villa (\$8000)**  
2000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
green garden  
Jacuzzi, pkg  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

**Gheitarieh (\$1800)** 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F  
**Kamranieh (\$2400)** 240sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F

**Darrous (\$1600)** 120sq.m, 2bdrs, balcony, pkg, & F.F  
**Sa`adat abad (\$1300)** 140sq.m, 3bdrs, balcony, pkg, & F.F

**Elahieh Apt (\$2000)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

**Cell: +989121907875**  
**Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com**  
**Tel : 88510081**  
**Fax : 88506474**

**Farmanieh bldg (\$7000)**  
3storey, 9bdrs, & yard

**IRAN NEWS ADVERTISING**

**44253401**

WEBSITE RANK, DIRECT, RISK, OPTIMIZATION, MARKETING, GROUP, KEYWORD, ONLINE, MARKET, COMMON, TARGET, WEBSITE RISK, TECHNOLOGY, SOLUTION, TRAFFIC ENGINE, MARKETING, BUSINESS, COMMUNICATE, UNLIVE, SOLUTION, PRESIDENT, MARKETING, TECHNOLOGY, MARKETING, TECHNOLOGY

**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**  
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate  
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865

**IRAN NEWS**  
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS  
**ADVERTISING**

**TEL: 44253448-50**  
**FAX: 44253234**  
**ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM**

## IMF Raises Flexible Credit Line for Colombia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised by \$6.5 billion a flexible credit line offered to Colombia to about \$17.2 billion, aiming to help the country cope with the economic effects of COVID-19. "The augmentation was approved in light of Colombia's continued qualification with very strong institutional policy frameworks, track record of economic performance and

policy implementation, and against a backdrop of higher external risks and a larger than expected adverse impact from COVID-19 pandemic," the Washington-based crisis lender said in a statement.

Colombian government gave authorisation to reactivate international flights amidst the coronavirus disease outbreak in Bogota.



## Multilateral Cooperation Key To Economic Recovery

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) finance ministers have stressed the need for coordinated multilateral cooperation to ensure a strong and sustainable economic recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic among member economies.

In a joint statement, the ministers said member economies also need to continuously exchange experiences and good practices. "In light of the severe regional economic downturn and the challenge that Covid-19 is posing to fiscal sustainability, we strongly reaffirm our commitment to promoting tax certainty and tackling tax avoidance and evasion in the APEC region," said the APEC Virtual Finance Ministerial Statement on Mitigation and Recovery of Covid-19 Pandemic.

The statement was issued following a discussion at the APEC Virtual Finance Ministers' Meeting chaired by Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz. In the statement, the ministers also emphasised the importance of the Group of 20/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) to continue advancing the work on the tax challenges arising from digitalisation with a view of reaching a global and consensus-based solution.

They also recognised that the Covid-19 outbreak would have major ramifications on the growth of world gross domestic product (GDP). "With contracting GDP growth estimates and government spending on response and recovery measures, the fiscal position of economies is under pressure.

"We acknowledge the ongoing need to advance stimulus measures to help with recovery, while underscoring the importance of improving fiscal sustainability and transparency to support long-term resilient development and future financing needs," they said.

The ministers expressed determination to continue to use all available policy tools to support the immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic and move towards a strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive recovery.

"This includes supporting the most exposed sectors and workers as well as addressing the disproportionate economic and social impact of the crisis on the more vulnerable segments of society." The ministers also recognised the importance of international financial institutions' work to facilitate public finance management in this regard.

Furthermore, they pledged their support for the development of safe and effective Covid-19 diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines, with the aim of supporting equitable and affordable access for all.

The ministers of member economies said APEC would consider the possibility of integrating future pandemics in the disaster risk financing and insurance (DRFI) agenda.

"We will continue the existing work on DRFI solutions to explore practical sources and schemes to mitigate and respond to present and future disasters or shocks, and will also consider the possibility of integrating future pandemics in the DRFI agenda," they added.

The ministers expressed appreciation for Malaysia's endeavour in seeking viable and tangible solutions from APEC member economies to improve the financial health of gig economy workers through the APEC Gig Economy Challenge, launched on March 18, 2020.

The ideas presented at the APEC Gig Economy Challenge showcase the many roles of digitalisation in helping financial inclusion including gig economy workers who have been hard hit by the pandemic.

"We welcome Malaysia's initiative in promoting digital economy, which could further boost and sustain member economies' economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic," the joint statement said.

## Kuwait to Fire 400 Expat Employees

KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) - Kuwait will terminate the employment of the remaining 400 expatriates currently working at the Ministry of Public Works, according to local media reports.

For all the latest headlines follow our Google News channel online or via the app.

The Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Housing Affairs Dr. Rana al-Fares will reportedly sign termination letters for the group of employees who hold administrative, legal, and technical positions in various departments, the Kuwait Times newspaper reported on Saturday.

"The original plan was to terminate expatriate employees gradually, and the next batch was supposed to happen by year's end... However, the minister decided not to wait and end expatriate employees' contracts immediately," Kuwait Times reported, quoting unnamed sources who spoke with the Arabic-language Kuwaiti newspaper Rai Daily.

The new terminations come weeks after 150 other employees were removed from their positions as the government moves forward with its plans to limit the number of foreign expatriate workers in Kuwait.

The combined 550 expatriate employees made up the entire expat workforce in both the Ministry of Public Works and Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, Kuwait Times reported, citing Rai Daily sources.

This move will therefore result in the removal of all foreign employees, which made up five percent of the total staff in both government entities, according to the report. About 70 percent of Kuwait's population is currently made up of foreign expatriates.

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic has spurred "Kuwaitization" schemes, with authorities announcing in August the intention to deport hundreds of thousands of foreign workers from the country.



## Russian Ruble One of the Most Attractive Emerging Market Currencies

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Goldman Sachs analysts have named the Russian ruble as one of their three top picks for emerging market currencies to back once the panic over the coronavirus pandemic eases.

In a note released earlier this week and cited by CNBC, a team of Goldman strategists said that Russia's national currency closely follows the South African rand and the Mexican peso in the list of most attractive among "high cyclical beta, high carry longs." The former reflects a currency's sensitivity to the broader economic cycle and market returns. A currency carry trade is a strategy under which a high-yielding currency funds the trade with a low-yielding currency to allow traders to capture the difference between the rates. While the peso is the bank's "top choice," given its combination of currency-supportive macro fundamentals, the report noted that two other high-yielders have more room to run compared to it. However, the bank noted that investment into those emerging market leaders should come after the coronavirus crisis eases, as the bets are currently too risky.

"Given significant domestic risks, however, including South Africa's October mid-term budget announcement for the rand, and a combination of still-volatile political headwinds and slowly fading macroeconomic tailwinds for the ruble, the key question for each currency is whether high global betas can (eventually) trump domestic headwinds," Goldman analysts said, adding they are optimistic about their prospects.

The economic fallout of the pandemic, combined with geopolitical risks and tumbling oil prices, has had a negative impact on the ruble this year. As of Friday, the Russian currency dropped to its lowest point against the U.S. dollar since March, trading at 78.21 per dollar. During the previous drop in the ruble rate, Goldman Sachs said it expected the currency to retrace some of losses, predicting it to return to 61 rubles per dollar within two years. The outlook was based on the expected gradual rise in oil prices, which may rise to \$60 per barrel over the same period, according to the bank.

## Biggest Independent Oil Trader Sees Price Gains Unlikely in 2020

LONDON (Dispatches) - Renewed curbs on travel and social gatherings across Europe, along with the tapering of state support packages for companies, are having a chilling effect on demand for crude.

Crude prices will have little room to rise in the next quarter because the recovery in global demand is slowing due to new

coronavirus-related restrictions on the economy, according to Vitol Group executive committee member Chris Bake.

"The conventional wisdom going into the fourth quarter was that things were going to improve," Bake said on a conference call hosted by Dubai consultant Gulf Intelligence. "It doesn't feel like we have a huge catalyst", and demand is more "uncertain", he said. Vitol is the world's biggest independent oil trader.

Bake's comments appear more bearish than those the company's chief executive officer made 11 days ago.

Renewed curbs on travel and social gatherings across Europe, along with the tapering of state support packages for companies, are having a chilling effect on demand for crude, just as the OPEC+ group of producers begins to consider the next easing of its self-imposed limits on output.

Oil prices fell last week, with both Brent and U.S. crude holding above \$40 a barrel. After the coronavirus pandemic crushed demand earlier this year, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries and partners including Russia agreed in April to cut production, sparking a market revival. Benchmark Brent, however, is still down about 36 percent in 2020.

The global oil-refining market is "incredibly squeezed", with large stockpiles outweighing weak demand, Bake said. Plans for additional capacity in coming months may force older refineries out of the market, he said.

China, which helped spur the recovery in energy demand, may not be strong enough on its own to drive global economic growth, Christof Ruhl, a senior research scholar at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy, said on the same conference call.

## Turkey to Unveil New 3-Year Economic Road Map

ANKARA (Dispatches) - As Ankara has boosted its efforts to erase the traces of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy, eyes this week will be turned toward Turkey's new three-year economic road map and the 2021 central government budget.

The New Economic Program (NEP), expected to be announced by Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, will feature Turkey's targets for basic macro indicators such as inflation, employment, growth, exports and current account balance for the 2021-2023 period.

The impact and the reflection of coronavirus-related developments on budget and economic targets will also closely be followed.

Just like around the world, the pandemic brought the Turkish economy to a near standstill in the second quarter as the country shut schools and some businesses, closed borders and adopted weekend stay-home orders after it reported its first COVID-19 case on March 11. The economy was mostly reopened in June. Leading indicators have been said to have been pointing at a strong recovery in the third quarter of the year.

Despite the pandemic, the Turkish economy has managed to do better than its peers in the second quarter of the year and fared better than forecasts, aided by the government's stimulus campaign.

The country's gross domestic product (GDP) in the April-June period shrank 9.9% from a year earlier after growing 4.4% in the previous three months.

Albayrak recently said all leading indicators showed that the worst had passed and that the recovery in the economy is uninterrupted gaining pace in the third quarter, stressing that they expect the recovery in the second half to be V-shaped. In addition to the basic economic barometers - macro policies, principles and goals will be included in the program, which is said to be prepared in accordance with the requirements of general economic conditions. The program is also projected to increase predictability for the private sector and set industry-based goals.

With the NEP's announcement, the process for the central government budget for 2021 will also be brought to a certain point. The objectives and priorities of the program will be taken as a basis for the preparation of ministry and institutional budgets.

On the other hand, the Medium-Term Financial Plan, which will include the total income and expenditure estimates for the next three years, as well as the deficit target and borrowing status, will also be published in the Official Gazette in accordance with the NEP.



## Guterres: COVID-19 Threatens 120m Tourism-Related Jobs



TEHRAN (UNIC) - United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his message on World Tourism Day, 27 September 2020, said some 120 million tourism-related jobs are at risk due to COVID-19.

*The full text of his message reads:*

In the 40 years since the very first World Tourism Day, much has changed. Demand for travel has soared. The world has opened up, allowing more people than ever to explore the globe and its different cultures.

Today, tourism is firmly established in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an engine for advancing prosperity, protecting our planet and laying the foundations for peace and understanding among peoples.

Many millions of people around the world rely on tourism for income, especially women and young people. People who might otherwise have been left behind have found decent work and the chance of a better life thanks to tourism's unique potential.

Tourism has suffered enormously during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some 120 million jobs are at risk. The impacts could lead to the loss of between 1.5 and 2.8 per cent of the global GDP. This will particularly affect the most vulnerable countries, including Small Island Developing States, the Least Developed Countries and many African nations, where tourism can represent between 30 and 80 per cent of exports.

As we look to recover from this profound crisis, the safe restart of tourism is essential, not least for rural development - the focus of this year's World Tourism Day. We have an unprecedented opportunity to transform the relationship of the tourism sector with people, nature, the climate and the economy. We must ensure a fair distribution of its benefits and advance the transition to a carbon-neutral and resilient tourism economy.

As well as providing opportunities for people, tourism can play an important role in preserving our unique and shared cultures and protecting the biodiversity and the ecosystems that sustain us.

In this most challenging year, let us focus on tourism's importance for people living in rural areas, so we can deliver on the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals to leave nobody behind.

## “The Unseen” nominated for Award at Poland’s Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Animation Documentary ‘The Unseen’ directed by Behzad Nalbandi, has been nominated for best film animation award at the International Animated Film Festival (ANIMATOR ) in Poland. Directed and written by Behzad Nalbandi, ‘The Unseen’ is about a time when Tehran hosts foreign dignitaries, the local authorities clean up Tehran’s urban image through an ‘urban beautification’ process which includes the rounding up of unsavory characters from the city streets; i.e. drug addicts and prostitutes. The men are released after a few days but the women are kept as wards of the state in perpetuity.



## Swiss Voters Refuse Immigration Cuts, Embrace Paternity Leave

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Swiss voters on Sunday rejected a bid to slash immigration from the EU, leaving free movement in the heart of Europe intact, and embraced offering paid paternity leave for the first time.

Final results showed that 61.7 percent of Swiss voters had balked at an initiative to tear up an agreement permitting the free movement of people between Switzerland and the surrounding EU.

The initiative, backed by the populist right-wing Swiss People’s Party (SVP) -- Switzerland’s largest party -- had been opposed by the government, parliament, unions, employer organisations and all other political parties out of fear it would jeopardise overall relations with the bloc.

Public support for the initiative had also waned in recent opinion polls, but the suspense had remained high since SVP has eked out surprise victories in the past in its war against tightening relations with the EU.

SVP’s initiative called for Switzerland to revise its constitution to ensure it can handle immigration policy autonomously.

The party, which has built its brand by condemning immigration and EU influence, warned that the wealthy Alpine country was facing “uncontrolled and excessive immigration”.

But the government had cautioned that if Switzerland unilaterally voided the free movement accord, a “guillotine” clause will come into force to freeze the entire package of deals with the EU, its largest trading partner.

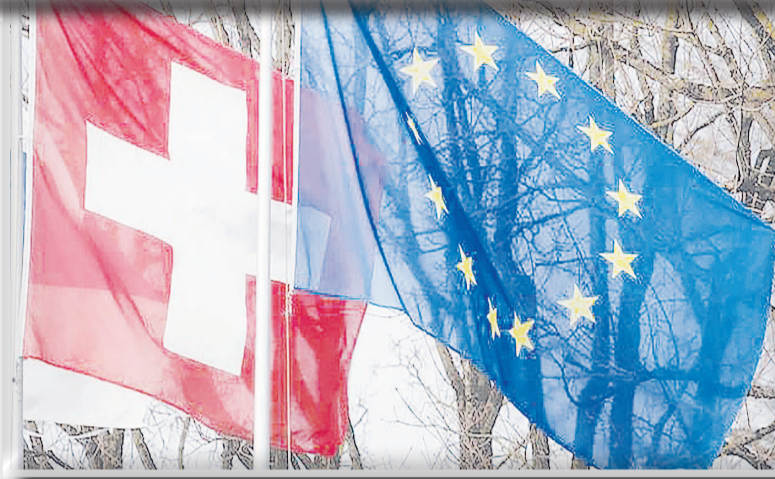
SVP lawmaker Celine Amaudruz said it was the mention of the guillotine clause that scared people away from the initiative.

EU European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen hailed the result, saying that it “upholds one of the core pillars of our relationship: the mutual freedom to move, to live and to work in Switzerland and the EU”.

The EU had been following the vote with concern. A similar SVP initiative that narrowly passed in 2014 threw Swiss-EU relations into disarray, and it has taken years to mend the damage.

Several other issues were on the ballot Sunday as part of Switzerland’s famous direct democracy system.

The voting hinted at a shift in Switzerland’s rather traditional approach to family models and gender roles, with more than 60 percent of ballots cast in favour of offering paternity leave for the first time.



Switzerland, which did not grant women the right to vote until 1971, still lags behind much of Europe when it comes to parental leave.

The country first introduced 14 weeks paid maternity leave in 2005 and has until now offered no paternity leave, with new fathers legally entitled to take only one day -- the same amount of time granted when moving home.

The Swiss parliament gave the green light for the two-weeks paternity leave last September, but SVP and other opponents had gathered enough signatures to put the issue to a referendum, arguing that taxpayers should not be asked to cover “holidays” for new fathers.

With Sunday’s vote, paternity leave will, like maternity leave, offer Swiss parents 80 percent of their salary, up to a ceiling of 196 Swiss francs per day.

Fathers can thus receive a maximum of 2,744 Swiss francs (\$3,000, 2,550 euros) during their two weeks of leave.

Adrian Wuthrich, head of the trade union federation Travailsuisse and a supporter of the paternity leave push, hailed Sunday’s result.

## Georgian Film Sweeps San Sebastian Festival Awards



MADRID (Dispatches) - Georgian film “Beginning” dominated awards at Spain’s San Sebastian film festival, taking the top Golden shell prize for best movie while Dea Kulumbegashvili won best director for her debut film.

The Franco-Georgian production centres on a community of Jehovah’s Witnesses in remote rural Georgia, and tracks the growing psychological torment of its leader’s wife -- played by Ia Sukhitashvili who picked up the best actress award -- in the wake of an extremist attack on their place of worship.

The movie, which had been set to premiere at the Cannes films festival earlier this year, which was called off due to the pandemic, also won the best screenplay prize at an awards ceremony late on Saturday.

“I want to thank the jury for this fantastic, incredible day. It means a lot to me, it’s a great honour,” said Kulumbegashvili, 34, at the ceremony.

The 68th edition of the festival held in the northern Spanish seaside resort, the biggest such event in the Spanish-speaking world, saw 13 films in competition, fewer than usual.

With Covid-19 cases rising again in Spain, a strict safety protocol was put in place requiring the use of face masks and limiting screenings to 40 percent to 60 percent of seating capacity.

The festival was originally intended to honour Spanish language films but has established itself as one of the most important film festivals in the world.

It hosted the world premiere of Alfred Hitchcock’s spy thriller “North by Northwest” in 1959 and Woody Allen’s “Melinda and Melinda” in 2004.

## Oil Heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Russia Look Ready for a Showdown

LONDON (Dispatches) - Oil producers could be set for another showdown before the end of the year, with heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Russia holding different views on how to approach the halting recovery in oil demand.

Renewed restrictions on travel and social gatherings across Europe, along with the tapering of state support packages for companies, are having a chilling effect on demand for crude, just as the OPEC+ group of oil producers, who cut production by a record 9.7 million barrels a day in May, begin to contemplate the next easing of limits on their output. We should all remember what happened last time they couldn’t agree on what to do.

The International Energy Agency and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have both resumed cutting their forecasts for this year’s oil demand. In the past two months, the IEA has trimmed its forecast by 400,000 barrels a day, while OPEC has reduced its own by 500,000 barrels. And they may have further yet to fall. Neil Atkinson, the IEA’s Head of Oil Industry and Markets Division, said at a Bloomberg event on Thursday that the agency is “more likely to make a downgrade than an upgrade” to demand forecasts in its next monthly report.

The biggest headwind to oil demand comes from reduced trade, weakened economies and the knock-on effects of business closings and job losses, Standard Chartered analysts, including Emily Ashford and Paul Horsnell, said in a report last week.

At a time when oil demand was meant to be recovering, it now seems to be going into reverse again. A new round of work-from-home advice and restrictions on social activities, triggered by a rise in virus infections in Europe, are set to collide with a reduction in economic support measures. U.S. oil consumption faces similar obstacles, with government support under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act coming to an end on September 30. Even Asia isn’t immune, with Thailand the only country that’s close to seeing a V-shaped recovery in oil demand, according to Standard Chartered.

Of course, it’s not all about demand. The room available for additional supply from the OPEC+ countries also depends on how much oil is coming from elsewhere. And



there is at least as much uncertainty on this front as there is with demand.

There are fears — or hopes, if you’re a rival oil producer — that output from U.S. shale deposits is set for another big drop in the coming weeks and months. Well completions in the U.S. are now so low that large monthly declines in production may be imminent,

Emily Ashford warned last week.

More robust monthly data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration show that this year’s drop in domestic crude production has been both steeper and deeper than their preliminary weekly data suggested. Another drop in U.S. production would leave more room for the OPEC+ group to raise its own output.

But there are problems within the group itself, as I wrote here. While overall compliance with the promised output cuts has been unusually good — thanks in part to the no-nonsense attitude of Saudi Arabian energy minister Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman — a few countries are still struggling to implement their cuts in full.

And then there’s Libya, which remains outside the group’s supply deal and is creating another big source of uncertainty. The political truce in the OPEC member’s long-running civil war could allow it to boost exports, adding to global supply at an inconvenient time for the rest of the group. The state oil company is predicting supply could quickly rise to 260,000 barrels per day from about a third of that level. Goldman Sachs reckons exports could reach double that by the year’s end.

Even the world’s biggest oil traders — including Vitol Group, Trafigura Group and Mercuria Energy Group — don’t have a united view on the outlook for oil over the coming months. Mercuria co-founder and CEO Marco Dumand says “we do not need the extra oil” that the OPEC+ group is planning to pump from January. Trafigura executives are also downbeat. But Vitol has a starkly more bullish view than its rivals.

With so much uncertainty, it’s little surprise that tensions are emerging within the OPEC+ group.

Saudi Arabia wants, above all, to prevent oil prices from slipping, and its energy minister says the OPEC+ producer group will be “proactive and preemptive” to stop supply from running ahead of demand. He wants to make oil traders “as jumpy as possible.”

## French Investigators Check Paris Knife Attack Video Claim

PARIS (Dispatches) - French investigators were Sunday studying a video claiming responsibility for the meat cleaver attack in Paris that targeted satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo as the government condemned an act of “Islamist terrorism”.

Nine people were still under arrest, including the suspected perpetrator of Friday’s attack that left two badly wounded outside Charlie Hebdo’s former offices in Paris.

The man is an 18-year old born in Pakistan named as Hassan A, according to a source close to the investigation. He told investigators he had carried out the attack to avenge the republication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed by Charlie Hebdo, which was the target of a January 2015 massacre by Islamist gunmen.

The investigators were now seeking to authenticate a video which they believe could show Hassan A. announcing he was about to carry out the attack.

“We see him crying, chanting. He claims in advance his act by evoking the republication of the caricatures,” said the source, who asked not to be named.

“It is a kind of manifesto, he announces he is going to act,” explained the source, adding: “It is not a claim of allegiance to an organization.”

The suspect was born in the Pakistan town of Mandi Bahauddin and while he speaks a little French he has needed a translator during questioning, the source close to the investigation said.

### China’s Imports...

FROM PAGE 1

At the same time, China’s total foreign trade in the first eight months of 2020 was \$2.85 trillion, meaning that Iran’s share of China’s foreign deals total less than half a percent.

The United States is China’s largest trading partner, with \$344 billion in bilateral trade during the period, down 3.5 percent from the same period last year. China’s total foreign transactions also fell by 3.6 percent.

However, China’s exports increased 9.5 percent in August compared with August 2019, indicating that Beijing is swiftly recovering the drop in its exports caused by the coronavirus’ global quarantine and restrictions earlier this year.

### Iran Starts...

FROM PAGE 1

Ajay Sahai, DG, and CEO, FIEO pointed out that India’s basmati exports have taken a hit this year. Iran and India have been discussing initiating a barter trade system for a year now. Iran said it would buy rice, sugar, and medicines from India in exchange for fertilizers. However, the Indian government pointed out that because India has stopped buying crude oil from the nation, buying fertilizers worth the number of basmati exports will not be cost-effective for the country.

Data by CRISIL reveals that Iran imports around 1.3 million tons of basmati from India annually. However, the trade will decline by 20% this year, owing to payment issues. Exporters halted their shipments to the gulf nation due to the non-payment of their dues worth Rs 1,700 crore.

India has pulled out from developing a rail link from the port to Zahedan in the Sistan-Baluchistan province for now. To this, an official from Iran stated that India must invest port-related ancillary projects. Further, he mentioned that though China is eyeing for making massive investments, Iran wants India to be part of its lucrative projects. In all, India is expecting 8 million tons of basmati this year and hence will need a broader market to sell its produce.

### Threat to...

FROM PAGE 1

The U.S. State Department, asked about plans to withdraw from Iraq, said: “We never comment on the Secretary’s private diplomatic conversations with foreign leaders ... Iran-backed groups launching rockets at our Embassy are a danger not only to us but to the Government of Iraq.”

In a region polarised between allies of Iran and the United States, Iraq is the rare exception: a country that has close ties with both. But that has left it open to a perennial risk of becoming a battle ground in a proxy war.

That risk was hammered home in January this year, when Washington martyred Iran’s most important military commander, Qassem Soleimani, with a drone strike at Baghdad airport. Iran responded with missiles fired at U.S. bases in Iraq. Since then, a new prime minister has taken power in Iraq, supported by the United States, while Tehran still maintains close links to powerful Shi’ite armed movements.

Rockets regularly fly across the Tigris towards the heavily fortified U.S. diplomatic compound, constructed to be the biggest U.S. embassy in the world in central Baghdad’s so-called Green Zone during the U.S. occupation after a 2003 invasion.

In recent weeks rocket attacks near the embassy have increased and roadside bombs targeted convoys carrying equipment to the U.S.-led military coalition. One roadside attack hit a British convoy in Baghdad, the first of its kind against Western diplomats in Iraq for years.

Two Iraqi intelligence sources suggested plans to withdraw American diplomats were not yet in motion, and would depend on whether Iraqi security forces were able to do a better job of halting attacks. They said they had received orders to prevent attacks on U.S. sites, and had been told that U.S. evacuations would begin only if that effort failed. Iraqis are concerned about the impact of November’s presidential election on the Trump administration’s decision-making.

While Trump has boasted of his hard line against Iran, he has also long promised to withdraw U.S. troops from engagements in the Middle East. The United States is already drawing down its force sent to help defeat Islamic State fighters in Iraq from 2014-2017. Some Iraqi officials dismissed Pompeo’s threat to pull out diplomats as bluster, designed to scare armed groups into stopping attacks. But they said it could backfire by provoking the militias instead, if they sense an opportunity to push Washington to retreat.

“The American threat to close their embassy is merely a pressure tactic, but is a double-edged sword,” said Gati Rikabi, a member of Iraq’s parliamentary security committee. He and another committee member said U.S. moves were designed to scare Iraqi leaders into supporting Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, who has tried to check the power of Iran-aligned militia groups, with scant success.

**Switchboard:**  
(+98) (21) 44253448  
**Public Relations Tel:**  
(+98)(21) 44253450  
Editorial Board: 44253449  
**Public Relations Fax:**  
(+98)(21) 44253395  
**Advertising Department:**  
Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234  
**Website:**  
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

**E-Mail Address:**  
info@irannewsdaily.com  
**ISSN 1024-6053**  
**P.O. Box:** 15875-8551  
**Address:** No 13, Pajouhesh St.,  
Golestan II St, Golestan St. Marzdaran  
Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
**Printed by:** Honar Sarzmin Sabz  
**Distributed by:**  
Cities of Iran Cultural and  
Artistic Institute  
**Managing Director:** Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

## Quartararo Wins Third Race of Year

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - France's Fabio Quartararo produced a thrilling and perfect ride to claim a resounding victory at the Catalonia MotoGP on Sunday, his third of the season which sends him top of the world championship standings. Joan Mir came through to take second and is now eight points behind Quartararo in the standings while Alex Rins completed the podium. The race began in dramatic fashion with Andrea Dovizioso, who led the title race by a single point from the Frenchman and Maverick Vinales, taken out in the opening lap after tangling with Johann Zarcho.

## Alaphilippe Wins World Road Race Title

ROME (Dispatches) - France's Julian Alaphilippe won the men's world road race title at Imola on Sunday. Alaphilippe crossed the line ahead of Belgian Wout van Aert and Swiss Marc Hirschi after more than six and a half hours in the saddle in the 258km race through the hills of Romagna. The 28-year-old became the first French rider to claim the world title since Laurent Brochard in 1997. Alaphilippe attacked on top of the final climb less than 12km from the finish line for a solo ride home, 24 seconds ahead of his rivals at the Imola racetrack.

## Bottas Wins as Penalties Put Hamilton Record Bid on Hold

SOCHI (Reuters) - Valtteri Bottas won the Russian Grand Prix for Mercedes on Sunday after team mate and Formula One championship leader Lewis Hamilton picked up time penalties for infringements before the race had even started.

Hamilton, who had started on pole position in Sochi hoping for a 91st victory to equal Ferrari great Michael Schumacher's all-time record, finished third behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

He accused stewards of trying to stop him winning and said the "ridiculous" sanctions were excessive but to be expected: "They're trying to stop me, aren't they?" the Briton told Sky Sports television.

The Briton's lead over Bottas shrunk to a still healthy 44 points after 10 of 17 races, with the Finn collecting a bonus point for fastest lap.

"Never give up. It's a good day," said Bottas, who addressed his critics in more basic terms over the team radio as he took the chequered flag.

"It's nice to get a win, it's been a while and I need to try and keep the momentum... there's still quite a few races to go, so you never know. I'll keep pushing, I won't give up and we'll see how it ends up."

The win -- by 7.729 seconds -- was the Finn's second of the season, and first since the Austrian opener in July.

Bottas said he had been lucky but he might have won anyway, with Hamilton starting on the higher-wearing softs after a fraught Saturday qualifying while the Finn was on the mediums -- the better long-term strategy.

Hamilton's hopes were in any case dashed when stewards issued two five-second penalties for making practice starts outside the designated area as he headed to the grid.

"I'm pretty sure no-one's got two five second penalties for something so ridiculous before," said the Briton, who had won six of the nine races before Sochi and had been authorised by the team to practise a start.

## Azarenka Wins Roland Garros Opener

### Roland Garros Opener

PARIS (Dispatches) - Former world number one Victoria Azarenka believes the biting cold and steady rain at Roland Garros could cause serious injury after being forced to "sit like a duck" in weather conditions she blasted as "ridiculous" in her French Open first round tie.

The 31-year-old 10th seed eased past Danka Kovinic, the world number 74 from Montenegro, 6-1, 6-2 in just over an hour in a tie played out on an almost crowd-free Court Suzanne Lenglen due to coronavirus restrictions.

The U.S. Open runner-up had been unhappy when rain fell steadily in the first set, adding to the misery of playing in 10 degrees (50F). "This is getting a little ridiculous. It's eight degrees. I'm not waiting," said Azarenka, refusing to hang around courtside "sitting like ducks" as the supervisor came out to inspect conditions.

"It's too cold. I live in Florida, I'm used to hot weather." After just 15 minutes, play was suspended.

However, the Belarusian regained her composure when the match resumed even if she did complete it wearing black leggings and a tracksuit top. She will face 40-year-old Venus Williams or Anna Karolina Schmiedlova for a place in the last 32.

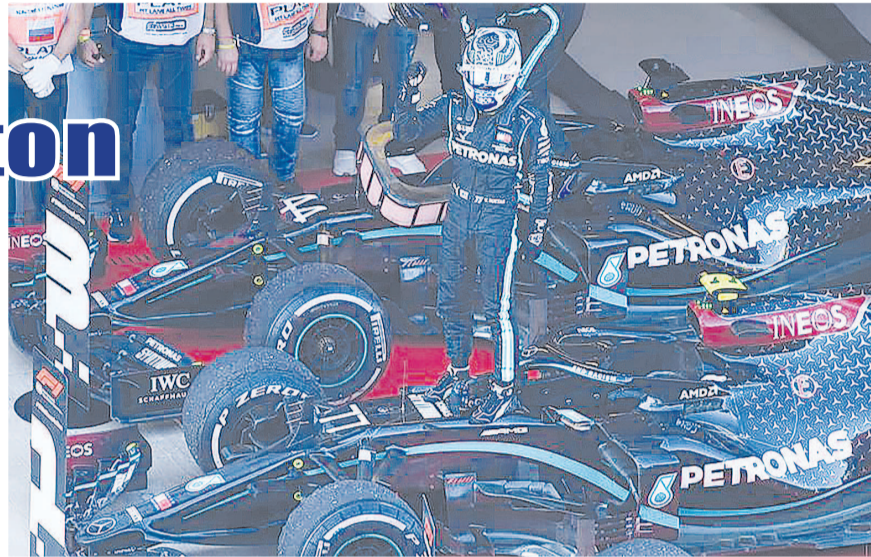
"I am glad to get it finished so I can watch the others struggle in this weather and rain," said Azarenka.

## Italian Teen Sinner Crushes Goffin

PARIS (Dispatches) - Italian teenager Jannik Sinner demolished Belgian 11th seed David Goffin 7-5, 6-0, 6-3 in the first round of the French Open on Sunday.

The 19-year-old Sinner, last year's NextGen champion, reeled off 11 games in succession as he defeated Goffin for the second time in as many meetings.

Sinner, making his first appearance in the Roland Garros main draw, recorded just his second Grand Slam win having also reached round two at the Australian Open in January. He also carved out a slice of history at the first player to triumph under the new retractable roof on Court Philippe Chatrier on a chilly, rainswept opening day of the tournament.



"I didn't put anyone in danger. I've done this at a million tracks over the years and never been questioned on it.

Hamilton also collected two penalty points on his licence, leaving him just two away from a one-race ban triggered if a driver gets 12 in a 12-month period.

In a dull race after two exciting rounds in Italy, with lonely races for the top three, Mercedes continued their record of winning every Russian Grand Prix since the first held on the streets around the 2014 Winter Olympics venue.

Mexican Sergio Perez was fourth for Racing Point with Australian Daniel Ricciardo fifth for Renault and Charles Leclerc sixth for Ferrari.

Frenchman Esteban Ocon took seventh for Renault with Russian driver Daniil Kvyat eighth and pleasing the first real crowd of the season after the first eight races were held behind closed doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

AlphaTauri team mate Pierre Gasly, a surprise winner at Monza, was ninth and Red Bull's Alexander Albon took the final point in 10th.

The safety car was deployed for four laps after the start when McLaren's Carlos Sainz went off and misjudged his return to the track, hitting the wall hard.

Leclerc also tagged Lance Stroll's Racing Point, with the Canadian spinning out.

Hamilton served his two penalties at the same time, returning in 11th place but moving up to third after others pitted. "This is just ridiculous, man," he said over the radio.

## Schalke Sack Wagner After Worst Start

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Schalke 04 announced on Sunday they have sacked head coach David Wagner after going 18 league games without a win, which includes the worst to a start to a season in Bundesliga history.

After 15 months in charge, time finally ran out for the 48-year-old former Huddersfield manager following Saturday's 3-1 defeat at home to Werder Bremen which left Schalke without a league victory since January.

Having kicked off 2020/21 with a humiliating 8-0 loss at Bayern Munich last weekend, Schalke's record of 11 goals conceded with one scored in two defeats is the worst start to a season in the league's history.

"We hoped that we could turn things around. Unfortunately, the first two matches did not produce the necessary performances and results," said Schalke's sports director Jochen Schneider.

"We have therefore decided to take the path of a new start in terms of personnel," he added.

"Despite the disappointing results, this decision was anything but easy for us."

## Suarez Scores Twice, Gets Assist



MADRID (Reuters) - Luis Suarez had a stunning impact on his debut for Atletico Madrid following his move from Barcelona, scoring twice and providing an assist as his side crushed Granada 6-1 at home in their first game of the La Liga season on Sunday.

Suarez, who only completed his switch from Barca on Friday, started on the bench and came on midway through the second half with his side already three goals up thanks to strikes from Diego Costa, Angel Correa and Joao Felix.

The Uruguayan instantly made his mark by releasing Marcos Llorente with an exquisite first touch and the Spaniard produced a first-time finish to score the fourth.

Suarez then directed a towering header into the net in the 86th minute after a cross from Llorente before scoring again in added time, after Jorge Molina had struck a late consolation goal for Granada.

Atletico had taken control of the game when Diego Costa headed home a cross from Correa in the ninth minute.

They should have doubled their advantage soon after when Joao Felix earned a penalty but midfielder Saul Niguez had his spot kick saved and then volleyed the rebound off target.

Granada had gone into the game on a run of four straight victories in all competitions but Atletico soon put the game out of their reach after the interval.

Record signing Felix picked out Correa and the Argentine superbly controlled before finishing into the far corner in the 47th minute while the Portuguese showed his class to score the third goal soon after.

## Ronaldo Double Rescues a Point For Juventus

ROME (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice to salvage a point for 10-man Juventus in a 2-2 draw at Roma as Napoli hammered Genoa 6-0 in Serie A on Sunday.

Champions Juventus were trailing 2-1 and a man down after an hour at the Stadio Olimpico after a Jordan Veretout brace for the hosts and Adrien Rabiot's sending off.

But a towering Ronaldo header grabbed the equaliser in the 69th minute to avoid handing new Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo a first defeat.

"Going behind complicated things but we got an important point," said Ronaldo.

"We're at the start of the season, with a new coach. But the team are working well, I'm confident for the future.

"Pirlo? It's still early days, but we're working with a smile, that's important."

Edin Dzeko was back in the Roma front line after his move to Juventus fell through, the Bosnian having missed last week's trip to Verona which ended in a forfeit defeat for the capital side for fielding an unregistered player.

Instead new Juventus signing Alvaro Morata got his first start after his move from Atletico Madrid earlier this week.

"Ronaldo gives us a lot, not just for the goals, in the end when we were down a man he ran a lot," said Pirlo.

"We have taken a step back but we are a team under construction.

"Unfortunately, we didn't have time to test game solutions in the pre-season, so we have to do these tests during these matches. "Nevertheless, it is a point gained."



## Bayern Munich's 23-Match Winning Streak Ends

BERLIN (Dispatches) - European champions Bayern Munich suffered their first defeat since December when their 23-match winning run was ended by a shock 4-1 Bundesliga defeat at Hoffenheim on Sunday.

Hoffenheim, the current league leaders, raced into a 2-0 lead with early goals by defender Ermin Bicakcic and striker Munas Dabbur.

Although Joshua Kimmich gave Bayern a lifeline just before the break, Croatia international striker Andrej Kramaric netted a second-half goal and converted a late penalty to seal the win.

It was the first time Bayern have lost under head coach Hansi Flick in any competition since going down 2-1 to Borussia Moenchengladbach on December 7, 2019.

Hoffenheim coach Sebastian Hoernes is the nephew of Bayern's honorary president Uli Hoernes and left Munich's reserves in July to take over at the new Bundesliga leaders.

Bayern looked tired in Hoffenheim, showing the effects of being taken to extra time in the UEFA Super Cup on Thursday before beating Sevilla 2-1 in Budapest.

The defeat brings to an abrupt end Bayern's run of 23 consecutive wins, a record for a club in one of Europe's five main leagues, surpassing Real Madrid's 22 straight wins between September and December 2014. With Robert Lewandowski rested ahead of Wednesday's German Super Cup showdown at home to Borussia Dortmund -- the chance to win a fifth title in 2020 -- his 19-year-old understudy Joshua Zirkzee struggled to spark Bayern's attack.

Hoffenheim took full advantage of Munich's lethargy with Bicakcic giving them the lead on 16 minutes when he out-leapt Corentin Tolisso at a corner and headed past Manuel Neuer.

