

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif Was to Leave Here For Beijing Yesterday for Talks With Chinese Officials on the Latest Developments in Bilateral Relation and in the Region

IRAN NEWS

The Coordinating Deputy of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Said That There Are Many People In the Zionist Regime Who Have Motives for Cooperating With Iran

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Sanctions Lifting Commitments to Iran Under JCPOA Still in Place

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has reiterated his resolve to preserve the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers, emphasizing that all sanctions lifting commitments under the deal persist despite U.S. attempts to the contrary.

Speaking at the European Parliament plenary debate on Iran, Borrell said the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is "in our very own European security interest" and "continues to deliver."

He also expressed regret over the US departure from the JCPOA in May 2018 and subsequent re-instatement of severe sanctions against Iran, noting that the full implementation of the multilateral accord remains crucial to salvage efforts.

"I want to be clear: As Coordinator - because the High Representative acts as coordinator of the JCPOA - I will continue to do everything possible to ensure the preservation and full implementation of the nuclear deal by all parties," the top EU diplomat said.

"I think that this achievement of the European Diplomacy, which took a lot [of] efforts from a lot of people, from Javier Solana [former High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General of the Council of the European] to Ms Federica Mogherini [former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission], deserves to be preserved," he added. **See Page 7**

COVID-19 Kills 210 More Iranians

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Friday that some 210 more Iranians have died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours.

The health ministry spokeswoman said that with the 210 new deaths the country's total COVID-19 death toll mounted to 28,098.

Some 4,142 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 1,787 of whom have been hospitalized, Sadat Lari said.

She said that a total of 492,378 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some 401,379 of whom have been recovered or discharged from the hospitals. **See Page 7**

New U.S. Sanctions an Effort To Stop Meds, Food Purchases



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani on Friday called new U.S. sanctions on Iran's banks an attempt to prevent purchases of medicine and food, state broadcaster IRIB reported.

"The President called the U.S. effort to create serious obstacles for fund transfers for the supply of medicine and food cruel, terrorist and inhumane," IRIB said.

"Americans have so far done everything they could against the great Iranian nation and that by doing so, they cannot break the Iranian people's resistance," President Rouhani said in a telephone conversation with Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati on Friday.

President Rouhani said that the U.S. government's actions are within the framework of political propaganda and aimed at their own domestic goals.

He appreciated the efforts of the Central Bank of Iran in supplying the people's basic needs.

The Iranian president called the U.S. moves and actions in continuation of Trump's strategic mistakes in withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and said that the U.S. government, in the wrong analytical framework, believed that these sanctions would break the Iranian resistance, but the passing of the time showed that this analysis was by far from reality and was inefficient.

Referring to the U.S. failures by repeating strategic errors like the snapback mechanism, Rouhani noted that "all nations know that these actions by the U.S. government are completely against international law and regulations, besides Washington's actions are completely inhumane in the coronavirus pandemic era and human rights claimants on the world should condemn it".

Meanwhile earlier, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif expressed certainty after a frenzy of U.S. sanctions target Iran's banking sector that those starring in the leading and support roles of the inhumane anti-Iran show will eventually face justice.

"Amid Covid-19 pandemic, U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine," Zarif tweeted on Thursday right after the United States Treasury Department levied the bans against as many as 18 Iranian banks. "Conspiring to starve a population is a crime against humanity," he lamented.

The foreign minister, however, pledged that "Iranians WILL survive this latest of cruelties," adding, "Culprits & enablers—who block our money—WILL face justice."

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) specified two of the targets as Iran's Bank Maskan, and Bank Keshavarzi. The former is relied on by the biggest part of the country's 80-million-strong population for loans assisting them to buy houses, while the latter has the biggest stakes countrywide in the agricultural sector. **See Page 7**

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Assad Survival Incurs Expenses

These days the market for divulging in the media space has become the lead stories and every media, which can afford to arrange an interview with any informed person, publishes an interview with him/her worth publishing and it goes viral for some time depending on the type of the interview and disclosure, and it changes hands, and of course that is the task of media.

One of these divulgences was BBC's interview with former Qatar Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jabor bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani which was just done last week in which he unveiled some important events and events resulted by the heavy costs which were paid to heal the anger of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia in facing Iran for keeping resistance base in Syria with leadership of Syrian President Bashar Assad. In this interview with BBC, Hamad bin Jassim disclosed new secrets about Syria's crisis and the imposed war of arrogant countries on this country which broke out in March 2011 and some of them still continue in the region.

Nine years have passed since the outbreak of the imposed war and invasion against Syria and several times the destructive role of the U.S., UK and Zionist Regime with support of the countries in the region like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE and Turkey has been proved, and the role of any one of the belligerents in confronting with the Resistance Axis, in its own place, has been of the most important factors in prolongation of this crisis all these years.

Now the former Qatari Prime Minister, who had a special role in this maelstrom of corruption, today due to Britain's need has come on the stage to disclose parts of these secrets, and in his new interview has displayed another curtain of this war. On the support from Syrian opposition in the Syrian Army and encouraging them to defect the Syrian Armed forces, Al Thani says, "\$30,000 was paid too any Syrian military officer who defected the Army and we paid \$15,000 to military staff with lower rankings."

He adds, "Saudi Arabia paid \$50m reward to the then Syrian Prime Minister Riyad Farid Hijab for his opposition and weakening Bashar Assad." He then continued that since the first day of the war till now some \$137b has been spent, disclosing, "Leaders of the armed groups have used the abundance of facilities and huge budgets who were receiving and became millionaires." **See Page 7**

U.S. Speech on Human Rights; Bitter Irony of History

TEHRAN (P) - Criticizing U.S. economic terrorism against the Iranian people, Iran's representative to the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly said that the speech of the United States and its allies on human rights is a bitter irony of history.

Mohammad Zareian on Wednesday at the Third Committee the meeting of the UN General Assembly called the US insistence to continue or even intensify its policy of illegal sanctions immoral and against international law and reminded that this policy has put the lives of many people who are fighting the coronavirus around the world in danger.

"Contrary to U.S. claims, humanitarian goods, and services for Iran continue to be affected by brutal sanctions," Zareian said. "Financial institutions are afraid of retaliation from the United States, so the financial channels created to facilitate humanitarian goods transactions are ineffective having no tangible outcome."

The representative of Iran at the third committee meeting of the General Assembly of the organization also mentioned the silence of Washington allies in the face of the crime of the U.S. terrorist government in the assassination of Lt. General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic, saying "In their view, the targeted assassination of Lt. General Soleimani, who was a peace defender and a hero in the fight against terrorism, is not surprisingly a violation of human rights." **See Page 7**

FAO Wins Nobel Peace Prize

LONDON (Dispatches) - The World Food Programme (WFP) has won the 2020 Nobel peace prize for its efforts to combat hunger and to improve conditions for peace in conflict areas.

The chairwoman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Berit Reiss-Andersen, revealed the 2020 laureate at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, where coronavirus restrictions drastically reduced the usual throng of reporters in attendance.

Reiss-Andersen said the committee gave the award to the WFP because it wanted to "turn the eyes of the world to the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger". Hunger, she said, was used as a "weapon of war and conflict". The award was also a call to the international community to fund the UN agency adequately and to ensure people were not starving, she said. She said the WFP would have been a worthy recipient of the prize without the coronavirus pandemic. But the virus had strengthened the reasons for giving it to the WFP, including the need for "multilateralism" in a time of global crisis.

"It's a very important UN organization. The UN plays a key role in upholding human rights," she said, adding: "Food is one of our most basic needs." In its citation, the committee praised the WFP for its "efforts for combating hunger" and its "contribution to creating peace in conflicted-affected areas". The agency acted "as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict", it said.

The award comes with a 10-million krona (\$1.1 million) cash prize and a gold medal to be handed out at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway, on Dec. 10, the anniversary of prize founder Alfred Nobel's death. This year's ceremony will be scaled down due to the pandemic. On Monday, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize for physiology and medicine for discovering the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus. Tuesday's prize for physics honored breakthroughs in understanding the mysteries of cosmic black holes, and the chemistry prize on Wednesday went to scientists behind a powerful gene-editing tool. The literature prize was awarded to American poet Louise Glück on Thursday for her "candid and uncompromising" work.

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Coronavirus Outbreak Top Concern of Country

TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker stressed the coronavirus outbreak as the top concern of the country and emphasized prevention and diagnosis over treatment. As for diagnosis, the officials of the Ministry of Health should try to use the domestic test kits to perform the diagnosis better so that the people with their COVID-19 tests positive can be quarantined in the fastest time, Mohammad Qalibaf said. He pointed to the country's medical personnel's hardworking efforts, and stressed the substitution of new staff, noting that

new nurses should be recruited and start working as soon as possible. Qalibaf called on people to observe social distancing and other health protocols, expressing that With the morale and readiness of the universities and hospitals' heads and the officials of the Ministry of Health, the coronavirus outbreak can be controlled in the next two months. Qalibaf made the remarks in a press conference on Wednesday and on the sidelines of a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Health and the heads of the country's medical universities.

Rouhani Warns of Changing Karabakh Conflict Into Regional War

TEHRAN (MNA) – Referring to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that the conflict should come to an immediate end and not spread to the region.



Speaking in a Wednesday's cabinet session, Rouhani said, "God wanted Arbaeen to be alive day in the history. Karbala is a great historical parable that is alive for forever." "God wanted Arbaeen to be alive forever like Ashura, because Imam Hussein (AS) rose up and sacrificed to wake up the people and keep them away from deviation," he added. "In previous years, people were preparing for the Arbaeen march with love and enthusiasm, and this year they also wanted to participate in this ceremony, but in these circumstances, we must follow health protocols," PResident said. Elsewhere in his remarks, he referred to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, saying, "In talks with the officials of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia, I emphasized the significance of protecting the Iranian security." "There are other ways to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem that we are ready to help in this regard," Rouhani added. "The security of our borders is important, it is not acceptable for us that a number of artillery shells and mortars hit the territory of Iran. We ask both neighboring countries, with which we have good relations, to pay attention to this important issue," he highlighted. Referring to the entry of terrorists to the region, Rouhani said, "It is not acceptable for us and we do not let the terrorists stay near our borders."

"It is not acceptable for us that some people want to transfer some terrorists from Syria and other places to the region and near our borders under the pretext of war," the President added. "This issue has been explicitly stated to the officials of the neighboring countries of Azerbaijan and Armenia," Rouhani noted. "We must be very careful. We must not let this war turn into a regional war. This war will not benefit anyone," he said. "Everyone must accept the reality and everyone must accept the rights of nations. Everyone must respect territorial integrity and know that the solution to the problem is not war. Rather, political solution is the only solution for this issue, and of course every country must respect the rights of its neighbors," Rouhani highlighted. Emphasizing that occupation and war are not acceptable to Iran at all, he said, "Peace is the basis for the Islamic Republic of Iran and is very important to us."

Iran in Privileged Position in Region

SOUTH KHORASAN (IP) - Judiciary Chief Sayyed Ebrahim Raisi stated that today Iran is in a privileged position in the region. Speaking at a meeting in South Khorasan Province on Tuesday evening, Raisi stated that the slogan "we can" is effective in all areas and breaks many dead ends. "Today, our armed forces and defense forces are very strong. We are in a very privileged position in the region; the Islamic Republic of Iran can be manifested as a powerful country in the world," added the judiciary chief. Raisi noted that the world believes in what capabilities Iran has achieved.

Iranian Maestro Shajarian Passes Away

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian classical singer Mohammad-Reza Shajarian has passed away. The great maestro, who had been in fragile health conditions in the past year, died at the age of 80 at Tehran's Jam Hospital on Thursday. Shajarian was the undisputed master of Persian traditional (classical) singing and is regarded as a national treasure by both musicians and music lovers. He was perhaps Iran's most diverse and prolific singer of all time and has a huge repertoire of recorded works.

UAE Pays Blood Money of Two Fishermen Killed by Emirates Police

QESHM (IRNA) - Head of representative office of Iranian Foreign Ministry in this southern island said Thursday that United Arab Emirates paid blood money for two Iranian fishermen killed by the Emirati police in August. Some 600,000 dirham were paid to Iran the two fishermen's blood money, 300,000 dirham for each person, Ali Reza Mosaferi told IRNA. The money will be presented to the families of the victims after official formalities, Mosaferi said. In August, UAE coast guard shot at some Iranian fishing boats while the shooting caused death of two Iranian fishermen. Soon after the incident, Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned the Emirati chargé d'affaires and ask him to explain about the attack. The chargé d'affaires apologized for the shooting and said his government promises to pay blood money for families of the Iranian fishermen.

Armed Forces "Thorn in Side of Enemies"

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami has praised the role of the Armed forces in safeguarding the country, describing them as "a thorn in the side" of the Islamic Republic's enemies. Speaking at a meeting with senior commanders in northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi on Wednesday, Hatami said the enemies have always cast greedy eyes on Iran because of its strategic position in West Asia, its waterways as well as its rich oil, gas and energy resources. "This shows we must always focus on our defense power and increase our national authority," he added. Hatami also noted that Iran's Sacred Defense during the 1980-88 Iraqi imposed war proved to the global arrogance that the Islamic Republic will not only repel an aggressor, but will also pursue and punish them. The high level of security that the country enjoys today is rooted in the blood of martyrs and war veterans, who defended Iran's territory and dignity with their unparalleled courage and bravery, he emphasized. Iran enjoys lasting security despite cruel sanctions against the nation, the defense minister said, stressing that the close interaction among the Armed Forces, which emerged during the Sacred Defense, turned them into "a unified, steely power" 40 years later. The Armed Forces stand by the great Iranian nation as the main power-building element and the backbone of the country's progress in all areas, he underlined. "The Armed Forces are a source of encouragement and national confidence and a thorn in the side of the enemies of the Islamic Revolution ... [amid] arrogant attacks."

Iran, Pakistan Stress Parliamentary Relations Development



ISLAMABAD (IP) - The ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan and the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of Pakistan Senate stressed the need to develop parliamentary cooperation. Mohammad Ali Hosseini met with Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of Pakistan Senate, to discuss the latest developments in bilateral relations and cooperation. Hosseini announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to increase parliamentary cooperation with the friendly and brotherly country of Pakistan and invited the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan to visit Iran. Expressing satisfaction with the friendly and fraternal relations between the two countries, the two sides discussed the need to increase parliamentary and regional cooperation between Iran and Pakistan. Meanwhile in meeting with Pakistan's Minister of State for Climate Change Ms. Zartaj Gul, Hosseini announced Tehran's readiness to expand cooperation with Islamabad in the field of environment, the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan called for a joint effort between the two countries to erase desert and deal with drought. The ambassador also discussed cooperation to erase desert and fight drought. Also, during the meeting, the two sides discussed Iran-Pakistan cooperation in the environment and climate change field. Earlier Iran and Pakistan discussed the expansion of cooperation in the field of ports and seas and also the need to fight the Coronavirus and consultations continuation between the two countries.

Outgoing Syrian, Japanese Envoys Bid Farewell to Zarif

TEHRAN (MNA) – At the end of their mission, the ambassadors of Syria and Japanese to Iran met with the Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday to bid farewell to him. The Ambassador of Syria to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Adnan Mahmoud, met and bid farewell



to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif, at the end of his diplomatic mission in Iran Wednesday afternoon. Today, also, Saito Mitsugo the Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Iran held a farewell meeting with Zarif, at the end of his mission to the country.

Tehran, Moscow Stress Peaceful Settlement of Karabakh Conflict

TEHRAN (MNA) – For the second time this week, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov stressed the need to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through diplomatic settlements. The foreign ministers discussed in detail the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. They expressed serious concern over the continuing large-scale military hostilities and the involvement of militants from illegal armed units fighting in Syria and Libya in them. They urged an immediate ceasefire, de-escalation of tensions, and prevention of provocative bellicose rhetoric. Lavrov emphasized that Russia will continue its mediation efforts, both as an individual country and as one of the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, in support of settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through political and diplomatic means. The foreign ministers noted the important role that the countries in the region, especially Azerbaijan and Armenia's neighbors, can play in creating conditions for returning to the negotiating table as soon as possible. The diplomats reviewed urgent bilateral issues and agreed to keep in touch.

Iran to Use Japan's Experience in Coronavirus Battle

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran and Japan have arranged plans for collaboration in the fight against coronavirus, an Iranian official has announced, unveiling a scheme to use Japan's scientific and management experiences in tackling the pandemic. In remarks on Wednesday, president of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences said arrangements have been made to carry out a joint project with Japan in the battle with the coronavirus pandemic. Pointing to his recent meeting with the Japanese ambassador to Tehran and with the World Health Organization's representative in Iran, Alireza Zali said plans have been discussed to take advantage of Japan's experiences in preventing, diagnosing, and curing the infectious disease. Zali also said an agenda has been created to tap into Japan's capacities for research programs in the fight against COVID-19 with the purpose of containing the spread of the disease in the regions with different economic conditions. The Coronavirus Fight Headquarters of Tehran is interested to know about the health protocols enforced in Japan, he stated, saying the two sides have agrees to share all of their scientific and management experiences in dealing with the pandemic. He finally noted that Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences is going to draft a cooperation plan in consultation with the Coronavirus Fight Headquarters of Tehran and the WHO office in Iran, and will submit it to Japan afterwards.

Azerbaijan Apologizes for Rockets Hit Iranian Territory

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a meeting between the border guards officials of Iran and Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani side apologized for the fired rockets and mortar shells into Iranian territory. The deputy head of Iran's Police Brigadier General Ghasem Rezaei, who attended the meeting, said "We had a meeting with the Azerbaijani side in the border area and we announced our requirements and they apologized." "We are in a region where there is a conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia for any reason, and we hope that this conflict will end soon and the people of both countries will be at ease again," he said, "We hope that security and peace will be established in the region." "The two countries [Azerbaijan and Armenia] have been at war in the region for about nine days and we feel sad for those who have lost their lives." "A number of artillery shells and their rockets inadvertently hit the Iranian territory, and the border guards of our country, according to their duties, have legally warned both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and they have both accepted the mistake," the Iranian Brigadier General said.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:51
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:53
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:44
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:07

47. O ye People of the Book! believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hindwards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah Must be carried out. Surah 4. Women (47)

Tehran, Caracas to Sign MoU on Tourism

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in an online meeting with Venezuelan Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade Felix Plasencia explored ways to boost cooperation on tourism.

In the meeting, Mounesan pointed to the good relations between Iran and Venezuela, saying that there is a good capacity for boosting relations on tourism which can be reinforced by bilateral efforts.

He then briefed his Venezuelan counterpart of the actions taken in the tourism sector of Iran, adding that some 8.8 million tourists entered Iran last year and the World Travel Agency named Iran the second country in terms of fast growth in attracting foreign tourists, and tourism accounted for \$11.8b of Iran's GDP in 2019.

Mounesan pointed to the 6.8 percent growth in direct and indirect jobs created by tourism and stipulated that Iran expanded its tourism beyond its cultural and historical sites by concentrating on natural, ecotourism and rural tourism capacities and the country by concentration on boosting health tourism attracted a large number of tourists from the region and Europe.

He also pointed to the huge number of villages and ethnics in the country, adding that allocating rural houses for staying of tourists was one of the initiatives that was taken by the ministry and it was welcomed by domestic and foreign tourists.

Mounesan also pointed to the construction of 498 hotels by the private sector with the government support through issuing license or earmarking banking loans,



adding that the country has some 2,400 projects in the works in the tourism sector.

He also said that direct flight between Iran and Venezuela is one of the most important potentials for attracting tourists, adding that a population around 400 million are living around Iran which is a good capacity and via the flight both countries can transport tourists.

Mounesan also accepted Plasencia's suggestion for signing a MoU, adding that the most important problem is that travel agencies of both countries are not acquainted with the tourism capacities of both states. He also suggested to his Venezuelan counterpart to hold some meetings for travel agencies on the sidelines of signing the MoU during the BtoB meeting and called for holding some tours for presenting capacities and tourism attractions of both countries.

He then pointed to Iran's successful experiences in this regard with Oman and China, adding that in the upcoming days, the ministry in cooperation with Russia will revoke group visa regime, expressing hope Russia will do it so. Mounesan noted that he is sure that with cooperation of ambassadors of both countries in introducing tourism capacities of both states, the tourism between Iran and Venezuela would flourish

Sanctions Obstructed Iran Efforts To Produce Flu Vaccine

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of Food and Drug Administration of Iran Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz said that the U.S. illegal sanctions block Iranian knowledge-based companies' access to the raw materials needed to produce the Influenza vaccine.

Shanehsaz stated on Wednesday that 97% of the required drugs are being produced in the country, adding that "Iranian flu vaccine will be produced by next year."

He further noted that the Iranian flu vaccine was supposed to be unveiled this year, but due to sanctions, some of the required raw materials were not available for knowledge-based companies in time.

The head of the Food and Drug Administration of Iran also pointed to the existing problems for importing the influenza vaccine to Iran, stating: "No medicine enters Iran easily due to the enemies' mischief."

Iran Exports 550 Tons of Non-Oil Goods to Oman

SIRIK (IP) - The governor of the city of Sirik in southern Iran announced the export of 550 tons of non-oil goods from the port of Sirik to Oman.

Speaking about this export consignment on Thursday, Ahmad Jamal al-Dini said: "The value of the exported shipment is 64 billion Rials, and it is the fifth shipment exported from Sirik to Oman."

He added: "This export cargo includes fruits and vegetables, mineral water, paving stones, nuts, canned food, beans, and straw, which has been exported with three vessels."

Sirik port complex is the second-largest wharf in Hormozgan province in southern Iran, which has a high capacity for commercial and tourism activities with 52 hectares of the hinterland and suitable ponds.

Sirik is a city and the capital of Central, in Sirik County, Hormozgan Province, Iran. It overlooks the Strait of Hormuz and contains a small harbor to the northwest of the main settlement.

Tehran, Ashgabat to Increase Private Sector's Share in Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Turkmenistan noted the need to actively involve representatives of the private sector of the two countries in joint cooperation.

This was said during a videoconference between representatives of the two countries.

The parties considered the prospects for trade and economic cooperation. In particular, the sides noted that the partnership between Turkmenistan and Iran includes a wide range of areas.

Thus, importance of regular joint business meetings for further effective interaction was highlighted.

Earlier, a new automobile bridge has opened to connect the namesake cities of Sarakhs on the two sides of the Turkmen-Iranian border. The opening ceremony was held on June 8, 2020.

This was the second joint border development project on the construction of automobile bridges between the two countries aiming to expand and develop road transportation.

Gov't to Divest More Shares in Banks, IPO Planned for Top Refinery

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The government says its remaining shares in three major banks will be listed in the local stock market while it plans to hold an initial public offering (IPO) for the country's largest gas refinery.

Iran's finance minister Farhad Dejpassand said that the government would divest its shares in Mellat, Saderat and Tejarat banks in the form a third exchange traded fund (ETF) in the near future.

The government listed a first ETF in the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) in May to sell a bloc of its stocks in the three banks as well as two insurance companies.

The listing generated nearly \$1 billion in new revenues for the government and sparked a massive boom in trade in the TSE.

A second ETF containing shares of several top crude refineries was offered in early September although the listing was not as successful as the first one mainly because of a decline in stocks trade.

Speaking to reporters after a Cabinet session, Dejpassand said the government was considering an IPO for Persian Gulf Star Refinery, the largest gas condensate refinery in the world.

"There is a discussion on the IPO for the Persian Gulf Star as one of the large-scale enterprises," he said, adding that the government's policy was to hold similar IPOs to "deepen" trade in the TSE.

TSE's main index TEDPIX rose by 1.72 percent to reach 1,540,725.98 points on Wednesday, according to an official website monitoring trade in the market.

That brought the total value of the market to 58,052.356 trillion rials (more than \$195 billion).

Tehran, Kabul Set High Goals for Khaf-Herat Railway

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iranian and Afghan road ministers discussed the details of the opening and operationalization of the Khaf-Herat railway.

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami, and Acting Minister of Transportation of Afghanistan, Mohammad Yama Shams discussed the details and different aspects of the opening and operation of the Khaf-Herat railway on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, via video conferencing.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the operational method, financial issues, insurance services, manpower training, freight and passenger transportation, customs, technical and security issues.

For his part, Eslami emphasized the need to pay attention to the details and aspects of the talks and the contract for the operationalization of the Khaf-Herat railway, stating: "High goals can be established for this railway line."

The Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development added: "The construction and operationalization of this railway line is not everything; rather, it is the starting point and the cornerstone for the development of strategic relations, the blessings of which will reach the two friendly and neighboring nations."

The 139-kilometer Khaf-Herat railway is a single-lane road connecting Khaf in Khorasan Razavi province to Herat, Afghanistan's second most populous city.

ECO Official Terms Persian Carpet as Iran's Cultural Flag

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The head of the Economic Cooperation Organization Cultural Institute, Sarvar Bakhti said that Iran is known in the world by its handwoven carpet, so Persian Carpet can be considered Iranian cultural flag.

Bakhti made these remarks in the inauguration ceremony of specialized export terminal for hand-woven carpets in Tehran.

He added that Carpet Weaving Industry in many other countries of the world has grown and, however, the world knows Iran as the cradle of hand-woven carpet.

While the world has admitted to Persian carpet originality, he noted, "At the same time, the importance of carpet business issues should also be considered.



Persian Carpet is an inseparable item from Iranian art and culture. It is one of the most distinguished manifestations of Persia with records in the Ancient Persia (c.500 BC). The "traditional skills of carpet weaving" in Fars Province and Kashan City were inscribed as "Intangible Cultural Heritage" list of UNESCO in 2010.

The pattern of carpets reminds you of the Persian garden which is full of flora, birds, and other animals. Wool, cotton, and silk are the most common materials in carpet weaving.

Traditional dyes used in Persian carpets are taken from plants and insects. As an example, red from "Madder", yellow from "onion", and black from "Oak apples".

Iran Has a Straight Line to Antarctica

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Roads and Urban Development said that Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the rare countries in the region in terms of accessing to the sea and a straight line to Antarctica.

Mohammad Eslami made the remarks at the Higher Council of Oceanography held at the venue of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

Eslami pointed to the 10-year delay in organizing meetings of the Council and described it as a historic delay.

As far as sea-based development is concerned, coastal points in large countries are considered as important and influential hubs in economic and social development, he said, adding, "Accordingly, centers of activity of these countries have been set up around coastal areas. For this reason, this historical shortcoming must be compensated by the effort of members of the Council in order to reach a roadmap."

He further pointed out that the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the few countries in the region and even as compared to other countries in terms of access to the sea, adding, "Iran has a straight line up to the Antarctic. For this reason, having an oceanographic station in Antarctica was a salient measure taken in this regard."

Int'l Power, Water Expos Delayed Due to Pandemic

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Energy Ministry has announced that two international exhibitions of the power and water industries, which were to kick off in late October, have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 20th Iran International Electricity Exhibition and the 16th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition, scheduled to be held from October 28 to November 1 at the Tehran International Exhibition Center, has been put off to a later time, which will be announced. The decision has been made in accordance with the guidelines instructed by the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters in Tehran to help fight Covid-19.

Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition is the biggest annual industrial and commercial event with the presence of a large number of domestic and foreign companies in this field. It displays the most innovative products and the most advanced technologies in this field. This exhibition is an opportunity for getting information on products and suppliers in a concentrated period of time. The presence of foreign companies as well as domestic producers and industrialists provide a good chance for mutual cooperation in view of the signature of contracts. It creates an ideal platform for business collaborations, deals, product launches, and brand building. The event also acts as a comprehensive source for the industry's members, potential business visitors, and prospective customers by providing exhaustive information on the industry and the latest trends influencing its progress.

Davos World Economic Forum Shifts to Lucerne

LUCERNE (Dispatches) - The World Economic Forum has been postponed until May and has been relocated to the city of Lucerne and nearby Bürgenstock, forum organizers announced.

The delay was due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The meeting will take place as long as all conditions are in place to guarantee the health and safety of participants and the host community," forum managing director Adrian Monck said in a statement.

He said the meeting would have the theme of "The Great Reset" after the pandemic and that it was aimed at building a "more cohesive and sustainable society."



Montenegro's President Asks Opposition Leader to Form Gov't

PODGORICA (Reuters) - Montenegro's president nominated Zdravko Krivokapic, the leader of a pro-Serb opposition alliance backed by the powerful Serbian Orthodox Church, to form a government on Thursday, ending three decades of socialist rule.

For the Future of Montenegro and its allies from the centre-right alliance Peace is Our Nation, and a group led by the green URA party, jointly secured a slim majority of 41 deputies in the 81-seat parliament in an election on Aug. 30. They subsequently agreed to form a cabinet. After meeting the leaders of the proposed coalition, President Milo Djukanovic said he would forward Krivokapic's name to parliament.



Kyrgyz Leader Missing as Power Vacuum Persists



BISHKEK (AFP) - The whereabouts of Kyrgyzstan's pro-Russia president were unknown Thursday as a power vacuum persisted after disputed parliamentary elections plunged the Central Asian country into a new bout of political chaos.

Sooronbay Jeenbekov has not been seen in public since unrest began over Sunday's vote which was won by his supporters but opponents as well as monitors said was marred by widespread vote-buying.

Clashes have already left at least one dead and hundreds injured, with a decision to annul the results of the polls doing little to ease the tensions.

The crisis is the latest political turbulence to sweep through the volatile ex-Soviet state bordering China which has seen two revolutions and three of its presidents either jailed or sent into exile since independence.

Jeenbekov has called for a return to a rule of law, but several lawmakers in the parliament have said that there is no way to solve the growing impasse without his resignation or impeachment.

As of Thursday, candidates from self-styled opposition parties claimed to control the state prosecutor's office, the national security committee and the interior ministry.

Kursan Asanov, who has positioned himself as acting interior minister, said that Jeenbekov's location was "unknown" but added that police were not searching for the head of state.

The government-appointed interior minister Kashkar Junushaliyev, a rival of Asanov, had "fled like a coward" when the unrest began, Asanov claimed, without offering proof.

Asanov also pledged to ensure there would be no repeat of ethnic violence that left hundreds dead following an uprising in 2010. But there was no visible police presence outside key government buildings in the capital Bishkek on Thursday. Jeenbekov's office insisted in a statement that the incumbent president was in Bishkek and "personally in talks with political forces". Yet Jeenbekov has made no public appearances since the unrest started.

Jeenbekov is believed to enjoy the support of key ally Russia, which has called for a return to stability in the republic and beefed up security at a military base it maintains not far from the capital.

He has ruled Kyrgyzstan since 2017. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Moscow that Russia was "deeply concerned" about a "situation resembling a mess and chaos". But he said it was premature to discuss whether Jeenbekov should be offered refuge in Russia.

A meeting of Kyrgyz lawmakers on Wednesday night was seen failing to resolve the deadlock, with no majority for impeachment. Confrontations between groups of supporters in Bishkek have continued as rival groups contest the prime minister position.

U.S. Troops in Afghanistan to Return Home by Christmas

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - All U.S. troops in Afghanistan should be "home by Christmas," President Donald Trump said, just hours after his national security adviser said Washington would reduce its forces in Afghanistan to 2,500 by early next year.

A landmark deal between the United States and the Taliban in February said foreign forces would leave Afghanistan by May 2021 in exchange for counterterrorism guarantees from the Taliban, which agreed to negotiate a permanent ceasefire and a power-sharing formula with the Afghan government.

Trump and other officials have said the United States will go down to between 4,000 and 5,000 troops in Afghanistan around November.

Beyond that, officials have said that a reduction will depend on conditions in Afghanistan.

On Twitter, Trump said: "We should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas!"



U.S.-Plotted Assassination Plans Self-Evident

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) - President Bashar al-Assad has rebuked his US counterpart, Donald Trump, for his earlier intention to kill the Syrian leader, saying assassination is nothing new but rather a typical policy tool of America.

He was reacting to Trump's open confession last month that he intended to have Assad assassinated after an alleged chemical attack in 2017 that Washington blamed on Damascus but reversed his decision due to purported opposition by the then-secretary of defense, James Mattis.

"Assassination is American modus operandi. That is what they do all the time — for decades, everywhere, in different areas in this world.

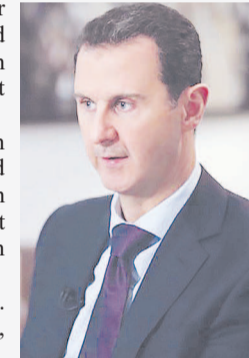
This is not something new," Assad said in an interview with Russia's Sputnik published.

The Syrian president said the existence of US-plotted assassination plans is "self-evident" and has "always existed, for different reasons."

"We have to expect this in our situation in Syria. With this conflict, with the Americans — they occupy our land and they are supporting the terrorists — it is expected. Even if you do not have any information, it should be self-evident," Assad said.

The Syrian leader noted that assassination attempts are the general behavioral specificity of the US, saying, "Nothing will deter the United States from committing these kinds of vicious actions or acts unless there is an international balance where the United States cannot get away with its crimes."

"Otherwise, [the U.S.] is going to continue these kinds of acts in different areas and nothing would stop it," the Syrian president said. Asked if he knew of any other assassination attempts during his presidency, Assad said "I did not hear of any attempt, but as I said, it's self-evident that you have many attempts, or maybe plans, to be more precise."



Azeris, Ethnic Armenians Fight as Russia, U.S., France Seek Ceasefire

YEREVAN (Reuters) - Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians fought with artillery and heavy guns on Thursday as the United States, France and Russia stepped up efforts to secure a ceasefire and avert a wider war in the South Caucasus.

Azerbaijan said the city of Ganja had come under fire, deep inside its territory. Ethnic Armenians who control the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh inside Azerbaijan said Stepanakert, its main city, had been shelled by Azeri forces.

In a sign of growing alarm in the region, the head of a six-country military alliance led by Russia and including Armenia warned that the group could intervene if Armenian sovereignty were threatened.

The continued fighting and rising tension underlined the difficulties facing U.S., Russian and French officials meeting in Geneva to try to halt fighting in which at least 400 people have been killed since it broke out on Sept. 27.

Azeri Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov was due to attend Thursday's talks in Geneva, but no direct meetings have been scheduled between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan is expected to hold separate talks with U.S., French

and Russian officials in Moscow on Monday.

Washington, Paris and Moscow are co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Minsk Group that has led mediation over Nagorno-Karabakh since 1992.

"The position of the United States has been clear and has not changed: Both sides must cease hostilities immediately and work with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to return to substantive negotiations as soon as possible," a U.S. spokesman said.

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin spoke by phone with his Azeri counterpart, Ali Asadov, on Thursday to underline the importance of restarting peace talks and establishing a ceasefire, Russian news agencies reported, citing the government.

Russia's foreign ministry said earlier on Thursday that it was in talks with Azerbaijan and Armenia to organise a possible meeting in Moscow.

No news conference was planned in Geneva, and the sides did not say where in the Swiss city they were meeting, hoping to keep details secret and boost hopes of a breakthrough. Nagorno-Karabakh's defence ministry denied a ceasefire had been agreed to go into force on Thursday.



Hundreds Arrested As Indonesians Protest Against New Investment Bill

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Hundreds of people were arrested in Jakarta Thursday as tens of thousands protested across Indonesia for a third day against a controversial new law that critics say will harm labor rights and the environment.

Thousands of security personnel were deployed to block access to the capital and prevent workers and students from demonstrating in front of the presidential palace and parliament.

Jakarta police spokesman Yusri Yunus said more than 400 people -- mostly teenagers -- had been arrested in the past two days, accusing them of provoking unrest during the protests.

"We are now questioning them," Yunus told AFP on Thursday, adding the situation in Jakarta was "under control".

The government hopes a new bill -- which aims to cut red tape by amending dozens of existing laws covering taxation, labour and environment regulations -- will attract foreign investment.

But labour activists and green groups have slammed the legislation, with Amnesty International saying it was "catastrophic" for workers.

Police banned Thursday's demonstrations citing coronavirus concerns, but workers and students marched anyway in dozens of cities across the archipelago.

Violent protests have taken place in several other cities this week, including Lampung and Bandung.

Indonesians also expressed their anger online with hackers blocking access to parliament's website and changing its name to the "Council of Traitors".

They also created an account on the Indonesia e-commerce platform Tokopedia and put parliament "on sale" for a pittance, according to media reports.



Jordan Apt (\$2000)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

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

Parsian

(\$1800) Niavaran Apt
180sq.m, 3bdrs, F.F

Kamranieh (\$2400)
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J
pkg
F.F

(\$5000) Elahieh bldg
4storey, 12bdrs, pkgs

Zaferanieh Apt (\$1300)
2bdrs, S/p, yard, gym, & F.F

Farmanieh bldg (\$20000)
5storey, 20bdrs, yard, pkgs

Elahieh (\$1500) 2bdrs, S/p
Elahieh (\$2000) 3bdrs, S/p
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Common Euro Zone Debt tool Would Need Treaty Change

LONDON (Reuters) - Making joint euro zone debt issuance a permanent tool in the bloc's crisis fighting armoury would require changes to the European Union's cornerstone treaty, outgoing European Central Bank Executive Board member Yves Mersch said on Thursday.

"What we can and should take beyond the crisis are our common principles that have served us well, such as a common approach to common problems," Mersch said in a speech here published on the ECB's website. "We should use this opportunity for a clearer delineation of responsibilities and competences among the different governance layers in our supranational community."



World Food Price Index Rise 5% Year-on-Year in September

ROME (Reuters) - World food prices rose for a fourth month running in September, led by strong increases for cereals and vegetable oils, the United Nations food agency said on Thursday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 97.9 points last month versus a downwardly revised 95.9 in August.

The August figure was previously given as 96.1.

The Rome-based FAO also said in a statement that worldwide cereal harvests remained on course to hit an annual record in 2020, even though it slightly trimmed its previous forecasts.

The agency's cereal price index rose 5.1% in September from the month before and 13.6% above its value a year earlier.

"Higher wheat price quotations led the increase, spurred by brisk trade activity amid concerns over production prospects in the southern hemisphere as well as dry conditions affecting winter wheat sowings around Europe," FAO said.

Maize, sorghum and barley prices rose, while rice fell 1.4% as fresh demand slowed.

The vegetable oil price index climbed 6.0% month-on-month, thanks largely to rising palm, sunflowerseed and soy oil quotations, reaching an 8-month high.

The dairy index was little changed on the month, with moderate increases in price quotations for butter, cheese and skim milk powder offset by a fall in those of whole milk powder.

Average sugar prices fell 2.6% from August, reflecting expectations of a global production surplus for the new 2020/2021 season.

The meat index dipped 0.9% month-on-month and was down 9.4% year-on-year, with quotations for pig meat dropping on the back of China's move to ban imports from Germany following the detection of African swine fever in Europe's largest economy.

FAO revised down its forecast for the 2020 cereal season by 2.5 million tons, reflecting lower expectations for the output of global coarse grains.

However, despite this reduction, the agency still expected a record harvest this year of 2.762 billion tons, up 2.1% on 2019 levels.

The forecast for world cereal utilization in 2020/21 was put at 2.744 billion tons, down 2.8 million tons since September, but still 54.5 million tons above the 2019/20 estimate. The forecast for world cereal stocks by the close of seasons in 2021 was 890 million tons, down 5.9 million tons from the previous estimate but still representing a record high.

Lithuania to Build One of the Largest Battery Parks in the World

VILNIUS (Reuters) - Lithuania will build one of the largest battery storage systems in the world by the end of 2021, its energy minister told Reuters, to ensure smooth supply of power as it disconnects from the Russian-controlled grid.

The country plans to invest 100 million euros (90.8 million pounds) to install four 50 Megawatt (MW) batteries with at least 200 Megawatt hours (MWh) of storage capacity, said Energy Minister Zygimantas Vaiciunas.

"This will be one of the largest and the most innovative battery parks in the world," he said.

The two largest lithium ion battery projects previously announced, both in California, are the 450 MW Crimson Energy Storage and 300 MW Vistra Moss Landing Energy Storage, according to a U.S. Department of Energy database.

A 200 MW Chinese battery project in Dalian is also under construction, according to the database.

In September, French power producer Neoen SA completed a 50% expansion of its Hornsdale Power Reserve in South Australia, lifting capacity to 150 MW.

As well as providing backup to the grid, the batteries in Lithuania will support the planned expansion of renewable power generation.

Battery storage systems play a key role in the transition towards a carbon-free energy system, as they can absorb surpluses of wind and solar power and compensate for times when they are producing less power.

Lithuania expects to increase its renewable generation capacity from 1.8 gigawatts (GW) in 2019 to 4 GW in 2030, state-owned energy company Ignitis Group said.

The battery park will also help secure power during the period while the grid - which connects the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and Belarus and Russia - is still run from Moscow.

The Baltic states, Poland and the European Commission agreed a deal in 2018 to connect their power grids to continental Europe by 2025 and break their dependence on Russia.

Bank of England Warns Economy at Risk of Stalling

LONDON (Dispatches) - The Bank of England's Governor has warned the economy is at risk of stalling as he vowed to ramp up stimulus to limit any damage caused by another Covid wave.

Andrew Bailey warned the risks to the recovery were "very much on the downside", but said the Bank had enough monetary firepower to tackle a second or third wave of the virus if needed.

There was a risk that the surge in cases and more caution from consumers could hurt the recovery, Mr Bailey said. He also urged banks to use their capital buffers to inject more money into the economy despite a "natural unease" following the financial crisis. The outlook for the economy has darkened in recent weeks as local restrictions tighten with stricter measures expected to be announced next week.

"The risks are very much on the downside and that of course reflects for all us unfortunately the pattern of returning evidence of Covid. Secondly I think unsurprisingly the natural caution of people to engage in activity in view of that," he said on a panel at the Single Resolution Board conference.

The Governor added that the Bank was "not out of firepower" and said policymakers must use their tools "actively and aggressively".

Mr Bailey said banks and the economy would benefit from lenders using their "rainy day" buffer during the crisis. The Bank released the cash buffer it makes banks hold when the pandemic struck, allowing them to keep supplying credit to the economy.

Banks build up extra capital when times are good and the release of the countercyclical buffer in March unleashed up to £190bn for lending.

"Using capital buffers to support the economy is not just to the benefit of the economy it's to the benefit of the banks as well. These things are very closely linked," Mr Bailey said. However, he added that there was still a "natural unease" about using the buffers given the turbulence that struck the banking sector during the financial crisis.

Swiss Franc Stability Not at Risk From Ultra-Loose Policy

ZURICH (Reuters) - The Swiss National Bank's ultra-loose monetary policy poses little risk to the Swiss franc's stability and can be reversed at any time should demand for the safe-haven currency weaken, SNB Chairman Thomas Jordan said on Thursday.

"The unprecedented expansion in the monetary base in recent years does not pose a particular threat to the stability of the Swiss franc's value," Jordan said in remarks prepared for a conference on sound money.

"With the increase in money supply, the SNB has simply reacted to rising demand, and its focus in doing so has been firmly on its mandate to ensure the stability of the Swiss franc and thus the supply of sound money," he added.

The SNB is ready to buy more foreign currency, he said last month while keeping policy on hold, citing political risks which could heap appreciation pressure on the franc and stall economic recovery.

Jordan said the SNB had the tools it needed to reverse course if necessary.

"If the demand for Swiss francs weakens, the supply of money can be reduced at any time, thus ensuring that the currency retains its value," he said.

"However, one important condition for a successful reduction in money supply is that the SNB must have unrestricted control over its balance sheet. And in particular, it must, if necessary, be able to sell foreign currency for Swiss francs, in the same way as it has been able to make foreign currency purchases in recent years.

"We therefore must also firmly reject any ideas aimed at channelling our assets into a sovereign wealth fund, even though we may be highly sympathetic to the matters in question, such as securing pension provision."

Jordan warned against making central banks an instrument of state financing amid the coronavirus pandemic, insisting that they remain independent actors.

"Switzerland has been able to manage the additional debt well thus far thanks to the fact that its public finances were in good order when the crisis hit," he said.

U.S. Oil-Export Projects Stall as Output Slips

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The coronavirus pandemic has stalled a once-furious race among energy companies to build deepwater oil export terminals off the Texas coast, amid permitting delays and rising environmental opposition.

Only three out of an initial dozen offshore U.S. Gulf Coast oil export proposals remain before federal maritime regulators. They are being slow-walked as the coronavirus slashed global fuel demand and the gusher from U.S. shale fields ebbed, said analysts.

"While these projects may be on the drawing board, they are more or less in a state of limbo given that in the current crude oil price environment, there's more than ample export capacity already available," said Andrew Lipow, president of consultancy Lipow Oil Associates.

U.S. oil production has declined 18% and crude prices have tumbled 35% this year, lessening demand for new export ports. Daily U.S. crude exports slowed to 8% gain through July, down from 46% last year, according to U.S. data.

Bluewater Texas Terminal, a joint venture of oil refiner Phillips 66 and trader Trafigura, remains far from a final go-ahead by the partners. The companies are continuing to supply information for needed approvals, Phillips 66 spokesman Rich Johnson said.

Sea Port Oil Terminal, backed by Enterprise Product Partners LP and Enbridge Inc, also no longer expects to secure federal permits this year, said Enterprise spokesman Rick Rainey.

Permit reviews for Texas GulfLink deepwater port, proposed by Sentinel Midstream LLC and Freeport Commodities LLC, also was suspended. Sentinel was not immediately available to comment.

While crude export increases have slowed, environmental opposition to the major proposals has soared. Environmentalists have petitioned federal regulators to halt reviews until the pandemic fades and public hearings can be held.

Sierra Club recently submitted a letter signed by 22,400 people to regulator Maritime Administration opposing the Bluewater terminal. It and other groups also have rallied opponents to Enterprise's SPOT terminal.

"There is huge community opposition around these projects," said Sierra Club attorney Deborah Ancel, who said many of those opposed to the projects are Texas residents. The groups oppose the projects saying they could lead to ocean oil spills and are unneeded.

There is no Texas export terminal capable of directly loading supertankers, vessels able to carry 2 million barrels of oil. Smaller ships are loaded with oil that is transferred to larger vessels farther out at sea, a method that proponents of the deepwater ports argue is costly and increases ship traffic.

UN Chief Thanks Postal Workers And Operators for Their Efforts



TEHRAN (UNIC) - United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his message on World Post Day, 9 October 2020, thanked postal workers and operators for their efforts, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full text of his message reads:

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every aspect of our lives, testing us all.

Throughout these difficult times, I have found inspiration in the essential workers who have kept our communities and societies running smoothly in extremely difficult circumstances.

I offer my sincere thanks to the world's postal workers who have continued to deliver during days of trial and challenge.

These workers have risked much, and they have delivered more than mail.

Postal workers have launched innovative community services, tending to older people and those who are socially isolated. They have delivered life-saving medicines and equipment, and helped ensure that food parcels and funds reach those in need. Their dedication, innovation and creativity has undoubtedly helped save lives.

On World Post Day, I thank postal workers and postal operators for your efforts, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United Nations will continue to build on our partnership with you and the Universal Postal Union in our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Iran Allows Iraqi Airways To Hold Restricted Flights

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian civil aviation authority (CAO.IRI) has issued a certificate for Iraq's flag carrier to conduct restricted flights from Iran to evacuate nationals amid a renewed surge in the number of coronavirus cases in the country.

However, the permit comes days after Iranian authorities said they had revoked flight certificates for Iraqi Airways after the company violated the rules and carried visa-holding passengers from Iran. It also comes amid an outright ban imposed on any flights by Iranian airlines to Iraq as the government has been seeking to stop the flow of Iranian pilgrims into the Arab country to mark a special religious occasion.



India's Economy to Contract 9.6% in FY21

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The World Bank expects India's economy to contract 9.6% FY21, steeper than 3.2% shrinkage projected earlier.

South Asia as a region is set to plunge into its worst ever recession with a sharper than expected contraction of 7.7%, the World Bank said in its half-yearly South Asia Focus update released on Thursday.

India's growth is projected to rebound to 5.4% in FY22, mostly reflecting base effects, assuming Covid19-related restrictions are completely lifted by 2022. As per the bank, weak activity, domestically and abroad, is also likely to depress both Indian imports and exports.

India's economy shrank an unprecedented 23.9% in the first quarter.

"India's economy was already slowing before the pandemic. (Though) we are impressed by the government's response with limited resources and fiscal space... the big problem is that the informal sector has no coverage. There are no systems in place to support those people," said Hans Timmer, World Bank Chief Economist for the South Asia Region.

The report highlighted that informal workers are not generally covered by social insurance and few have savings or access to finance, and three-quarters of all workers in South Asia depend on informal employment.

"While the poor have faced rising food prices, the Covid-19 crisis has also affected informal workers in the middle of the income distribution who experienced sharp drops in earnings," the bank said.

"The impact is not only on the poor but also people above the poverty line who have been hit hard," said Timmer, adding that the self-employed and those in the



services sector earlier had ways of absorbing the shocks but are unable to do so now. Noting that there are serious vulnerabilities in India's banking sector and solvency of firms, which are not being helped by the pandemic, he said the region will witness muted recovery as a whole and the case is the same for India.

Kuwait's New Crown Prince Sworn In at Parliament

KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) - Kuwait's new crown prince, Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber Al-Sabah, took his oath of office before parliament on Thursday, after being nominated by his half-brother, the new emir.

Sheikh Meshal, 80, a long-serving top security official, was unanimously approved by the National Assembly.



He swore to "defend the liberties, interests and properties of the people" and to safeguard the country's independence and integrity.

Kuwait's new emir, Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, was appointed on September 30 after his own half-brother, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, died at the age of 91 while being treated in hospital in the U.S.

Sheikh Meshal, 80, has been deputy chief of the Kuwait National Guard since 2004, largely staying out of the political scene and away from disputes within the royal family.

Its appointment, rather than the selection of a next-generation candidate, is seen as a conservative choice that provides much-needed continuity.

"It's also a conservative selection in terms of ruling family politics. It avoids choosing among public rivals," Kristin Diwan of the Arab Persian Gulf States Institute in Washington said in a tweet.

"It avoids the transition to the next generation." In recent years, the ruling family has been exposing its differences, with lurid accusations of corruption and political conspiracies flying between some of its members.

Unlike other oil-rich Persian Gulf states, Kuwait has a lively political life with an elected parliament that enjoys wide legislative powers, and political disputes are often fought out in the open.

The succession comes at a time when the country is facing some key issues, including whether to establish ties with Israel and how to respond to a slump in oil prices amid the coronavirus pandemic.

COVID-19 Kills...

FROM PAGE 1

Some 4,392 other COVID-19 patients are in critical conditions and are being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said. She pointed out that Provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azerbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal, and Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azerbaijan, Markazi, Kerma, North Khorasan, Hamadan, and Yazd are regarded as red zones. According to the Health Ministry Spokeswoman, provinces of Kurdistan, Hormozgan, Fars, and Golestan are on alert. Meanwhile yesterday the government announced that non-emergency patients would not be admitted to hospitals due to large numbers of coronavirus patients as the governor of Tehran extended the closure of public places in the capital, which has been the hardest hit. It was not clear if the hospitals directive, which was announced by deputy health minister Iraj Harirchi, applied to the whole country or just Tehran. "Due to the large number of coronavirus outpatients and patients, hospitalization of non-emergency patients is not allowed until further notice," Harirchi was quoted as saying by Iranian media.

Sanctions Lifting...

FROM PAGE 1

Borrell also stressed that Iran is the most monitored country in the world by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with now almost 400 inspections per year.

Following its unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA, the U.S. unleashed the so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran and targeted the nation with the "toughest ever" economic sanctions.

Washington has also been pushing to dissuade the other signatories from remaining in the deal.

In September, the administration of US President Donald Trump tried and failed to trigger the so-called snapback provision in the nuclear deal aimed at re-imposing UN sanctions against Iran.

The three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal say a claim by the U.S. that it has restored Iran sanctions through the so-called snapback mechanism has no legal effect.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Borrell referred to the U.S. efforts to bring back UN measures against Iran, saying such approach was rejected by almost all UNSC member states and thus all sanctions lifting commitments under the agreement remain in place.

"Here I want to be very clear also, once more: bringing back these sanctions would have meant the end of the JCPOA. 13 members of the Security Council, including all European members, rejected this approach and underlined the importance to keep the agreement in place - this way supporting the understanding that the U.S. is no longer part of the JCPOA because they freely decided to withdraw from it," he underlined.

"They were also very clear that - after leaving the agreement in 2018 - the United States was not in a position to initiate the so-called 'snap back' process of bringing back United Nations sanctions under the UN Security Council resolution 2231. As JCPOA Coordinator, I thus want to reiterate that all sanctions lifting commitments under the agreement remain in place."

The EU foreign policy chief further underlined the need to boost trade with Iran, saying sanctions should not obstruct humanitarian support for the country amid the virus outbreak.

"We keep strongly advocating together with the UN Secretary General [Antonio Guterres] that sanctions must not impede humanitarian trade. Together with European Union member states we also keep looking at ways to encourage more legitimate trade between the EU and Iran, including through INSTEX [the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges]. But we need to do more," he pointed out.

Unemployment: The Biggest Risk Facing the World

LONDON (Dispatches) - Unemployment is seen as the biggest worry over the next 10 years for business executives around the world, closely followed by concern about the spread of infectious diseases, according to a survey by the World Economic Forum.

Unemployment rates have rocketed due to lockdowns and other restrictions to combat the coronavirus pandemic, with fears of worse to come in countries which have furloughed workers.

"The employment disruptions caused by the pandemic, rising automation and the transition to greener economies are fundamentally changing labour markets," said Saadia Zahidi, managing director at the World Economic Forum (WEF).

"As we emerge from the crisis, leaders have a remarkable opportunity to create new jobs, support living wages, and reimagine social safety nets to adequately meet the challenges in the labour markets of tomorrow."

The Regional Risks for Doing Business survey, which surveyed 12,012 business leaders from 127 countries, makes up part of the WEF's global competitiveness report, to be published next month.

The study surveyed respondents' views of 30 risks in total. Worries about the spread of infectious diseases have also come to the fore, rising 28 places from last year's survey.

Fiscal crises, cyberattacks and profound social instability were the third, fourth and fifth biggest risks, the survey showed. But climate change risks are also rising up the agenda, WEF said, while worries about militant attacks fell.

The survey has been released ahead of WEF's first Jobs Reset summit later this month. It was published by WEF together with Marsh & McLennan, SK Group and Zurich Insurance.

Assad Survival...

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"The operation for encouraging the military staff from the Army and Syrian Armed forces was often carried out with financial promises and incentives as I said before, \$30,000 was paid to the senior military men and \$15,000 to the lower military ranks. Riyadh Hijab's defection from the Syrian establishment was in coordination with his cousin who had been living in Jordan years ago and after defection, Saudi Arabia also paid him \$50m reward," the Qatari said.



Al Thani also talked about Manaf Tlass, an elite former Brigadier General of the Syrian Republican Guard and Assad's close friend, saying, "Defection of Tlass happened after coordination between France's intelligence system and Tlass's sister Nahed who was widow of famous Syrian-born Saudi businessman merchant Akram Ojeh who had resided in France years ago and had been granted the French citizenship."

Former Qatari Prime Minister in his interview also points to the then Lebanon Prime Minister Saad Hariri, claiming Hariri had received \$100m as reward for defections of military men and the then Syrian officials.

Al Thani further said, "Hariri played an important and effective role in Syria war and he had handed over his office in the city of Gaziantep of Turkey to Okab Sakr, the then Lebanon parliament member, to run it. Sakr also received \$10m as reward for his services because he disclosed the role of the then Lebanon Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Syria's crisis," and reminded, "Najib Mikati is one of the other Lebanese personalities who played an important role in Syria's crisis through Lebanon's Police Chief Brigadier General Ashraf Rifi and received \$50m as reward for playing this role."

The former Qatari Prime Minister in his interview with BBC also touched upon the very important role of Iraqi Kurds in war against Syria especially to the very important role of Masoud Barzani's in this regard. In the last part of his interview, Al Thani admits that they have played a great role in destroying popular revolutions of Egypt, Libya and infrastructures of Syria and Yemen and all these actions and measures have been carried out in coordination with the U.S. and its order.

What is very evident is that all-out activities of anti-Resistance Axis camp has suffered heavy costs but they have not even achieved the least success. It is wonder that this divulgence by the former Qatar Prime Minister is one of the hundreds of cost processes and uselessness for exerting pressure on the Resistance Axis that all of them with the \$7,000b, revealed and mentioned, dimension by U.S. President Donald Trump has been doomed to absolute failure.

New U.S. Sanctions...

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Bank Refah Kargaran that is favored by the country's laborers and technical workers, Bank Gharzolhasaneh Resalat that is reputed for its small and low-interest loans, and entrepreneurship-focused Karafarin Bank were three others of the financial institutions.

The rest of the sanctioned institutions were named as Pasargad Bank, Saman Bank, Sarmayeh Bank, Tose'e Ta'avon (Cooperative Development) Bank, Tourism Bank, and Amin Investment Bank. The OFAC alleged that the relatively across-the-board measure was in line with the U.S.' general policy of targeting the Iranian entities that "may" be used to support Iran's nuclear program, missile program or, what it called, its "terrorist" activities and "malign regional influence."

Meanwhile Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman blasted the latest round of U.S. sanctions against over a dozen Iranian banks, saying those who favor the Israeli prime minister's interests over the Americans' are luring the U.S. president into targeting ordinary Iranian people.

In a post on his Twitter account, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh referred to the Post report and said, "Frustrated by humiliating failures and futility of 'maximum pressure', Bibi-Firsters lure Trump into doubling down on inhumane targeting of ordinary Iranians."

"The same gang has carelessly gambled with America's interests and reputation for past 4 years. Once again, they'll lose," he added. In defiance of Europe's humanitarian objections, the U.S. Treasury Department announced sanctions on 18 Iranian banks on Thursday.

The Trump administration took the punitive action with an aim to cut off the Islamic Republic from the world's financial system.

U.S. Speech on...

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Zareian concluded by emphasizing Iran's commitment to the balanced and non-political cooperation of UN mechanisms: saying "Mechanisms such as the Comprehensive Periodic Review which should be seen as a viable solution and the only mechanism that addresses the human rights situation in all member states as well as paying attention to them on the same basis, must be strengthened."

The representative of Iran in the third committee of the General Assembly of the Organization considered human rights as the common heritage of humanity and added that the firm commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in promoting and protecting human rights is deeply rooted in the rich civilization and religious teachings of the country.

Goetze Joins PSV Eindhoven

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German World Cup final hero Mario Goetze, who was a free agent after Borussia Dortmund allowed him to leave, has signed a two-year contract with PSV Eindhoven.

Goetze, scorer of the extra-time goal that gave Germany a 1-0 victory over Argentina in Brazil in 2014, made only five Bundesliga starts at Dortmund last season. The club decided not to offer him a new contract and, at 28, he became a free agent which meant he could sign after the transfer window shut and after reported negotiations with Hertha Berlin went nowhere.

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Shaqiri Finally Negative for Covid-19

LONDON (Dispatches) - Switzerland's Liverpool forward Xherdan Shaqiri has finally returned a negative Covid-19 test, but that of Borussia Dortmund's Manuel Akanji came back positive, the Swiss football federation announced on Thursday.

Shaqiri had joined up with the national set-up at the start of the week hoping to make his first appearance for his country since June 2019. The federation, however, initially announced on Tuesday he had tested positive, but the written results received Thursday in fact showed a negative.

France Shine, Ronaldo Rattles Spain in Europe

PARIS (AFP) - France's 7-1 thrashing of Ukraine was the pick of the European friendly on Wednesday as Spain clung on for a draw in Lisbon and Turkey saved pride with a late goal against Germany in Cologne.

At the Stade de France it was teenager Eduardo Camavinga and veteran Olivier Giroud inflicting much of the damage for Didier Deschamps' world champions on Covid-19 hit Ukraine.

The 17-year-old Camavinga put himself on the map becoming the youngest man to score for France in over a century with an audacious overhead flick for the ninth minute opener.

Deschamps made Giroud captain for his 100th appearance and in return the Chelsea forward scored a first-half brace that left him on 42 international goals, just nine short of Thierry Henry on 51.

"Well that's two more in the bag and it was already quite a significant haul wasn't it," said Deschamps, who has persisted with Giroud over the years when France seemed to be coming down with top strikers.

"I'll just carry on and see how far it goes," said Giroud, 34.

PSG's Kylian Mbappe, Bayern Munich's Corentin Tolisso and Barcelona striker Antoine Griezmann were also on the mark with fine strikes.

Ukraine's team had been so ravaged by injury and the coronavirus they included a 45-year-old coach as second 'keeper for the night. European champions in 2016 Portugal return to the Stade de France in the Nations League on Sunday and used a friendly with their Iberian rivals Spain to warm up.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Renato Sanchez both struck the woodwork for Portugal, who then should have won it in injury-time only for Joao Felix to miskick at the back post.

Spain were the better team early on at the Jose Alvalade stadium and also went close.

"I think we were better than Portugal," said Spain coach Luis Enrique.

"For sure they had two shots on the break that hit the bar and one that Kepa saved but we had chances as well."

Infantino Praises Qatar For Defying Pandemic With WC Preparation

ZURICH (Dispatches) - FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Wednesday praised Qatar for pushing ahead with 2022 World Cup preparations despite the coronavirus pandemic, while the rest of the world "stood still".

On a visit to Doha, during which he got into football kit to play a seven-a-side-match at the striking tent-style Al Bayt stadium, Infantino said he was "very pleased" with Qatar's progress ahead of the tournament.

"We have seen the plans, but when you see the reality, it is even more impressive," he said in a statement which added that all eight venues will be completed "well in advance" of the event. "Qatar has been able to continue to advance during the last six months while the world stood still -- from infrastructure preparations to important developments such as the recent labour reforms announced by the government," he said.

Qatar has made a series of reforms to its employment regulations since being selected to host the 2022 World Cup, which has required a vast programme of construction dependent on foreign workers.

However, rights campaigners say that widespread abuses persist. The Persian Gulf state will kick off the World Cup at the Al Bayt Stadium, which takes its shape from the traditional tents used by nomadic peoples in the Persian Gulf region.

Roma Blame 204m Euro Loss on Coronavirus

ROME (Dispatches) - Roma recorded losses of over 204 million euros (\$240 million) for the financial year up until June 30 largely as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the Italian club revealed on Wednesday.

"The loss for the 2019-20 financial year is estimated at 204 million euros," the Serie A side said of preliminary figures released at the request of Consob, the Italian stock market regulatory authority for accounts up to June 30. AS Roma changed ownership in August with US businessman Dan Friedkin taking over from fellow American James Pallotta in a deal valued at nearly 600 million.



Germany coach Joachim Loew bemoaned his side's inability to hold on to a lead after they conceded a last-gasp equalizer in a thrilling 3-3 draw against Turkey.

Stuttgart-born Kenan Karaman bundled in a late leveller against the country of his birth as Turkey fought back from behind three times to snatch a draw and leave Loew scratching his head.

"I'm disappointed and frustrated. We have had this problem for a while, and the same thing happened in other games," the Germany coach told broadcaster RTL.

The draw was Germany's third in three games, and the third time in a row that they have failed to win after taking the lead.

Veteran striker Francesco Caputo scored on his Italy debut with Stephan El Shaarawy adding a brace as an experimental Azzurri side crushed Moldova 6-0.

Roberto Mancini lined out with Italy's 'B' side without their stars as the Italians build towards next year's European championships, having failed to reach the 2018 World Cup.

Against the modest Moldovans the Italians extended Mancini's unbeaten run to 17 consecutive games, with 14 wins and three draws.

"I've seen so many interesting things," said Mancini, whose side were five goals up at the break.

Italy, top of their Nations League group with four points, play in Poland on Sunday and the Netherlands in Bergamo next Wednesday, with both on three points.

Djokovic Survives Scare to Beat Carreno Busta

PARIS (Reuters) - World number one Novak Djokovic reached his 10th French Open semi-final but suffered an injury scare before beating Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta 4-6 6-2 6-3 6-4.

A month after being defaulted for inadvertently striking a line judge with a ball while playing Carreno Busta in the U.S. Open fourth round, the 33-year-old Serbian found himself in trouble once again.

This time it was nothing more sinister than apparent physical problems with the top seed wearing tape on the back of his neck and his upper arm requiring treatment.

Carreno Busta, who lost in the U.S. Open semi-final after leading Alexander Zverev by two sets, took advantage to win the opening set -- the first conceded by Djokovic in the tournament.

Djokovic looked flat and had to save break points early in the second set before raising his game at the important moment to win the next two sets.

Carreno Busta hung on gamely but Djokovic was superior when it mattered and one break in the fourth was enough to set up a last-four clash with Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, the Serb's 38th Grand Slam semi final.



The Premier League giants had been criticized for their lack of activity in the transfer market after only bringing in Donny van de Beek from Ajax ahead of the new season.

Cavani Joins Man United

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United made a splash in the final hours of transfer deadline day, bringing in Edinson Cavani and Alex Telles and agreeing a deal with Atalanta for Amad Diallo, while Arsenal spent big on Thomas Partey.

The Premier League giants had been criticized for their lack of activity in the transfer market after only bringing in Donny van de Beek from Ajax ahead of the new season.

A 6-1 humiliation to Tottenham on Sunday seemingly sparked the Old Trafford boardroom into action a day later, though, with the club sealing an eye-catching move for Cavani, who had been unattached after leaving Paris Saint-Germain at the end of last season.

The Uruguay international has signed a one-year deal with the option to extend for another 12 months and joined Telles in the North West after the Brazilian signed from Porto.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side also announced a reported £37million deal for Atalanta's 18-year-old Diallo, who is expected to join in January, and brought in teenage winger Facundo Pellistri from Uruguayan club Penarol for a reported £9 million.

Azmoun, Taremi Fire Iran to Victory In Tashkent

TASHKENT (Dispatches) - Goals from Sardar Azmoun and Mehdi Taremi proved decisive as Islamic Republic of Iran beat Uzbekistan 2-1 in an international friendly at Pakhtakor Stadium on Thursday.

In a long-awaited first outing under new coach Dragan Skočić, Team Melli's star attacking duo each found the back of the net -- Azmoun with a 25-yard rocket just before half-time, Taremi with a second half penalty -- before Eldor Shomurodov pulled a goal back for the hosts in the 53rd minute.

Uzbekistan will meet United Arab Emirates in another friendly in Dubai on Monday, while Iran will face Mali in Antalya, Turkey the following day.

With access to their overseas-based players for the first time in the best part of a year, both Skočić, and Uzbekistan boss Vadim Arbamov named strong starting line-ups, but it was a local, Bunyodkor's Sanjar Kodirkulov, who came closest to opening the scoring when his volley rattled the woodwork just before the half-hour mark.

It was Azmoun, whoever, who made the biggest impact in the first-half, punishing some hesitant Uzbek defending to rifle the Iranians into the lead with a terrific strike from outside the penalty area in the 44th minute.

The visitors went into the interval in front, and they duly doubled their advantage in the 51st minute, with FC Porto's Taremi easing a spot-kick past Eldor Suyunov, having being felled by the Uzbek goalkeeper when through on goal moments earlier.

Uzbekistan pulled a goal back through their own star striker Shomurodov just two minutes later; the 25-year-old celebrating his signing with Italian Serie A outfit Genoa by expertly placing the ball into the bottom corner of the net on the turn after being supplied by Kodirkulov.



Raikkonen Happy to Swerve Wide of Record

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Kimi Raikkonen is set to start a record 323rd Formula One race at this weekend's Eifel Grand Prix but is happy if his landmark in longevity is overshadowed by the names Hamilton and Schumacher.

The 40-year-old Finn, who is the oldest driver on the grid, famously loathes publicity and any invasions of his family or private life so if Lewis Hamilton succeeds in equalling Michael Schumacher's record of 91 victories, he will be delighted.

"It's not something I care about, not really," he said of his own record. "If someone asked me about the number of races, I would have no idea. I'm here because I like to drive. I still enjoy it."

As 'The Iceman' defies his advancing years, the fresh-faced son of seven-time champion Michael Schumacher will make his F1 debut alongside him on Friday in the Alfa Romeo garage.

Mick Schumacher, 21, leader of the Formula Two series, will run in opening practice for the Ferrari powered team and will probably take tips from the team's taciturn senior man.

Raikkonen equalled Rubens Barrichello's record of 322 starts two weeks ago in Russia and believes he knows his way around the circuit.

"I've been here a few times and I think I should have won a couple of races, but we've been unlucky -- that's how racing goes," he said, with a familiar shrug.

Fernando Alonso is third on the list of Grand Prix starters with 311 with Michael Schumacher just behind him on 306, winning five times at the Nurburgring Mick was with his father when he suffered a skiing accident in 2013 which caused severe brain injuries. He is a member of the Ferrari junior academy and is widely tipped to join Alfa Romeo next year -- possibly alongside Raikkonen.

