

**IRAN NEWS Expresses Its Condolences to Its Shiite Readers on the Occasion of Martyrdom Anniversaries of Imam Reza (A) and Imam Hassan Mojtaba (A), and the Demise of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Next Issue Will Hit the News-Stands on Sunday**

# IRAN NEWS

**A “Major” Cyberattack Targeted At Least Two Government Agencies in Iran Recently, Iran’s National Computer Emergency Response Team (Maher) Announced on Wednesday**

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## Iran Entitled to Free Arms Trade as of Sunday

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Hassan Rouhani says Iran will be free to trade weapons as of Sunday after the United States failed in its attempts to secure an extension of the United Nations arms embargo against the Islamic Republic.

Speaking during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Rouhani congratulated the Iranian nation on the lifting within days of the “oppressive” 10-year arms ban on the Islamic Republic despite Washington’s struggles to keep the restrictions in force.

“We fought with the United States on this issue for four years. America was exerting itself to prevent this day (October 18) from coming, [but] that day is coming thanks to our people’s resistance. It is because of the endeavors of our diplomats that the US failed,” he said.

Rouhani also noted that the lifting of the arms embargo was a fruit of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), for the country.

The JCPOA “removed the arms embargo and as of Sunday, we can buy weapons from and sell weapons to any [country] we want,” he added.

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## Iran’s Exports to EEU Grows by 3%

### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – According to the latest report released by Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization, Iran’s exports to Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) states have grown by 6 percent.

According to report Iran’s exports to EEU from mid-November 2019 to August 21 have grown 6 percent comparing to the same period in the preceding year.

The report shows that Russia tops the EEU countries for Iran’s exports while Iran has had the lowest exports to Belarus. By the way Iran has had the most imports from Russia and the least from Kyrgyzstan.

According to the statistics of Iran Customs Administration Office, the total trade volume of Iran with five members of EEU in the first five months of the current year has stood at \$2.79b which shows 6 percent growth comparing to the same period last year (\$2.63b).

Meanwhile the total volume of Iran’s exports to EEU member states between mid-November 2019 and August 21, 2020 has been \$833.9m which shows 21 percent growth comparing to the same period in the preceding year (\$679.8m).

## IMF Predicts Iran Economic Growth to Bounce Next Year



### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In its latest report, International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday announced that Iran’s economy will grow by 3.2 percent in 2021.

The latest report of the International Monetary Fund on the state of world economy and its future outlook, which was recently published, estimates that Iran’s economic growth in 2021 will hit 3.2 percent. This estimate shows that Iran’s economy has improved 0.1 percent as compared to the Fund’s previous estimate of Iran’s economic growth outlook for next year.

According to IMF, next year’s inflation rate in Iran will reach 30%, which shows a 3% decrease as compared to the Fund’s previous estimate for next year.

IMF also pointed to the unemployment rate in Iran and added, the unemployment rate in Iran, which is predicted at 12.2 percent for this year, has been estimated at 12.4 percent in the next year.

The international body estimates that the world economy will end the current year with a negative growth of 4.4 percent, which is an improvement of about 0.8 percent as compared to its previous report and estimate.

This improvement is due to increased hopes for the recovery of developed economies after the coronavirus global pandemic as well as alleviation of restrictions due to the implementation of health protocols such as social distancing and closure of businesses.

In its another report, the International Monetary Fund estimates that world economic growth will reach 5.2 percent in 2021, indicating a recovery in the global economy after the coronavirus pandemic.

This year, the economies of European countries will also experience negative growth; France and the United Kingdom will face negative growth of 9.8 percent, Italy will experience a negative 10.6 percent growth while Spain’s economy will shrink 12.8 percent.

India will record negative growth of 10.3 percent this year, according to the report.

Among the world’s economies, only China will grow positively this year, with economic growth estimated at 1.9 percent.

## Hezbollah, Amal Oppose Lebanon’s Team in Israel Demarcation Talks

BEIRUT (Dispatches)- Delegations from Beirut and Tel Aviv have taken part in an opening round of indirect negotiations on the demarcation of Lebanon’s southern maritime border with the occupying entity, and agreed to meet again in two weeks.

They sat down for negotiations at the headquarters of the UN peacekeeping force in the southern Lebanese city of Naqoura on Wednesday. Hosted by the UN and mediated by the U.S., the meeting broke up after barely an hour, and the two sides agreed to hold the next round of discussions on October 28.

The four-member Lebanese team is headed by Deputy Chief of Staff of the Lebanese Army for Operations Brigadier General Pilot Bassam Yassin, while the six-member Israeli delegation is led by the director general of the regime’s energy ministry. According to a statement by the Lebanese army, Beirut’s delegation expressed hope during the session that the dispute with Israel would be settled within a “reasonable time.”

The talks mark a “first step in the thousand-mile march towards the demarcation” of Lebanon’s maritime frontier, he said. “Based on the higher interests of our country, we are looking to achieve a pace of negotiations that would allow us to conclude this dossier within reasonable time.” The Lebanese resistance movement says a UN-brokered rare maritime talks with Israel do not mean normalization.

Earlier on Wednesday, Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Amal movements expressed their opposition to the makeup of their country’s delegation. Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri had previously announced a framework agreement for negotiations with Israel on demarcating the maritime and land borders, saying the demarcation will help Lebanon economically.

Hezbollah and Amal released a joint statement, calling for an immediate reform of the delegation based on Berri’s framework pertaining to the border demarcation to the April 1996 ceasefire understanding with Israel and UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

They said the inclusion of civilian figures in the Lebanese team contradicts the framework agreement, which only allows military officers to attend the periodic meetings on border demarcation.

Hezbollah and Amal “announce their explicit rejection of what happened and consider that it deviates from the framework agreement, harms Lebanon’s stance and supreme interests, transgresses all the nation’s strengths, deals a major blow to its role, resistance and Arab position, and represents a surrender to the Israeli logic which aims at reaching any form of normalization.” Lebanon is locked in a conflict with Israel over an area in the Mediterranean Sea spanning about 860 square kilometers, known as Zone No. 9, which is rich in oil and gas.

Unlike land borders between, the maritime frontiers have not seen any military clashes.

## Gov’t Imposes Coronavirus Travel Restrictions in 5 Cities

### IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian president has approved a proposal to impose three-day travel restrictions in five cities hit hardest by the coronavirus outbreak, the health minister said.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session on Wednesday, Saeed Namaki said President Hassan Rouhani has accepted his proposal for travel restrictions during the upcoming three-day holidays.

The travel bans would be imposed in five cities with the highest rate of infection, namely Tehran, Karaj, Mashhad, Isfahan and Orumiye, he added.

The health minister expressed hope that the restrictions would help curb the pandemic.

This week, the two-day weekend in Iran is followed by a holiday marking the martyrdom anniversary of the eighth Shiite imam, Imam Reza (AS).

While the authorities have warned people to stay home and abide by social distancing protocols to tackle the pandemic, many people plan to go on vacation on the weekend and national holidays.

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## Iran Exports to Africa Stand at \$2m

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran exported about \$620 million worth of construction products and supplies to various countries in the past year, among which the share of the African continent was about \$2 million.

Farzad Piltan, the director-general of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)’s Office of Arabian and African Countries said on Wednesday meeting that the most important problems in exporting materials, equipment, and construction supplies to African countries are the issue of money return, regular and competitive transportation, unknown African markets, difficulty in communicating with African parties, and high risks of presence in these countries, according to the report by the Trade Promotion Organization.

Piltan added that African countries in the field of products such as wire and cable, ceramic tile, flat glass, building stone, switches and sockets, porcelain and ceramics, sanitary valves, tubs and showers, dishwashers, doors and windows, chandeliers, pipe sinks, and profiles are imported about 10 billion dollars from different countries of the world.

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## China, Russia Elected To U.N. Rights Council; Saudi Arabia Fails

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - China and Russia were elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council on Tuesday, but support for Beijing dropped by more than 20 percent compared with a 2016 vote and Saudi Arabia failed in its bid to win a seat on the Geneva-based body.

The 193-member U.N. General Assembly also elected Ivory Coast, Gabon, Malawi, Cuba, Bolivia, Uzbekistan, France and Britain to the 47-member council. Senegal, Nepal, Pakistan, Ukraine and Mexico were re-elected for a second three-year term. Council members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms.

Candidates are elected by secret ballot in geographical groups to ensure even representation. The Asia-Pacific group, which included Saudi Arabia, was the only competitive race on Tuesday with five candidates vying for four seats. The new members will begin their term on Jan. 1, 2021.

“Saudi Arabia’s failure to win a seat on the Human Rights Council is a welcome reminder of the need for more competition in U.N. elections. Had there been additional candidates, China, Cuba and Russia might have lost too,” said Human Rights Watch U.N. director Louis Charbonneau.

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# 119 Energy Projects Since March 20

TEHRAN (MNA) - Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that 119 major water and electricity projects worth 280 trillion rials (about \$6.66 billion) have been inaugurated throughout the country in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) under the framework of the ministry's A-B-Iran program.

A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the previous

Iranian calendar year, during which the minister made 31 trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

One of the ministry's programs under the framework of the A-B-Iran is rewarding efficient electricity subscribers with 100 percent discount on their bills.

## States Sanctioning Iranians Cannot Claim Human Rights

*IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK*

**TEHRAN – Saying that Iranians will neither forgive nor forget the inhumane acts of some European states, Ali Bagheri-Kani said that the countries that have subjected the Iranians to the most severe sanctions cannot claim human rights.**

Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights Ali Bagheri-Kani made the remarks in his meeting with Austrian Ambassador to Tehran Stefan Schulz.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the potential for bilateral cooperation in the legal and judicial fields.

Referring to judicial innovations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bagheri-Kani announced the readiness of the Iranian judiciary to share its experiences with the Austrian judiciary.

He also referred to the behavioral and verbal contradictions of some Western governments on the issue of human rights, saying, "We call on the Western countries, which support the Zionist and Saudi regimes, to take human rights into account in their human rights policies, and not to always use their illegitimate interests as a criterion for dealing with human beings."

"The human rights approach of Western countries stems from their policies," he added, saying, "However, the principles of human rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran determine the policies of the country, and in this regard, despite the pressures of



these countries claiming human rights, Iran proudly supports the oppressed nations, including Palestine and Yemen."

"The countries that have subjected the Iranian people to the most severe sanctions, without exception, and have seriously threatened their right to life and health, which are fundamental human rights, cannot claim human rights," Bagheri-Kani highlighted.

He noted that the Iranian nation will neither forgive nor forget the inhumane acts of some European countries.

Stefan Schulz, for his part, also announced his country's readiness to expand judicial cooperation with Iran.

"Austria and Iran have an extraordinary and historic relationship based on mutual trust," he said.

"No country has the potential for rapid economic growth like Iran in the post-corona era because no country like Iran has a young and active population with rich natural resources and the will to thrive."

## Iran Becomes Rotating Head of G24

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati in the recent virtual meeting of the Ministers and Heads of the Group of 24 took over rotating chairmanship of this group for a period of twelve months.

"That's a great honor for me to be at your service as the head of the G24 in the next 12 months," Hemmati told the online meeting.

Highlighting significance of G24, he added that due to the current deep recessions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the role and importance of the group is becoming more prominent day by day.

"In pursuing the agenda of the group, we intend to follow the issues of the past as much as possible and at the same time establish more constructive interactions between the members of the group," he said.

Stressing the need for further coordination to solve virus-related problems, he said, "As a group, we must always advocate for a coordinated global solution to ensure that all countries, without exception, have access to low-cost vaccine and treatment for Covid-19 as well as financial assistance, including emergency assistance, based on their needs and humanitarian reasons."

G24 was established in late 1971 to help the coordinate the positions of developing countries on international monetary and development finance issues.

## Embassy in Belgium Rejects Western Media Claims

TEHRAN (IP) Iran's Embassy in Belgium described recent Western media allegations about Iranian diplomat Assadollah Asadi as ridiculous and attempting to undermine Iran-Europe relations.

In July 2018, while Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visiting Austria and Switzerland, Belgium claimed that it had arrested an Iranian diplomat named Assadollah Asadi based in Vienna on suspicion of attempting to bomb an MKO meeting in Paris.

Recently, some Western media outlets have made allegations that they claimed that the diplomat had threatened the Belgian government.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Belgium rejected unfounded reports concerning Iranian diplomat illegally incarcerated in Antwerp and noted that media outlets are struggling to damage Iran-Europe relations.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg follows with concern the unfounded reports concerning the Iranian diplomat illegally incarcerated in Antwerp that has been published on some websites since 9 October and is surprised at how contorted and divorced from reality such reports are, biased to say the least.

The Iranian diplomat has rejected such allegations and maintained that he never made any threats against Belgium. The case law has also rejected allegations of threats.

Any hint at reprisal made by the media is patently absurd and an attempt to take the issue beyond its case

limits with the broader aim of instrumentalizing this judicial proceeding to implicate the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Embassy advises against the media hyperbole that is aimed at torpedoing Iran-Europe relations.

A few days ago, the Western media outlets claimed that Assadollah Asadi had threatened Belgian officials that unknown groups would retaliate if he were found guilty.

## Iran to Use Common Currencies, Monetary Agreements to Neutralize Sanctions

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of the Iranian Parliament's Economic Commission Mohammadreza Pourebrahimi noted Tehran is seeking to use common currencies and monetary agreements to neutralize the U.S. sanctions on the Iranian banks.

Referring to the U.S.' imposition of sanctions on 18 Iranian banks, Pourebrahimi said that with Iran taking new steps in relations with China and Russia, and moving toward common currencies, monetary agreements, and new methods of transfer, the US does still not succeed in imposing sanctions on Iranian banks.

Pourebrahimi stated that last year (2019), the Iranian banking system exchanged about \$80 billion of the country's trade balance at the peak of the U.S. sanctions.

He noted that Iran has expert and new logical methods for banking trades.

In a report to the current U.S. government, the designer of anti-Iranian sanctions in the United States officially announced that the new sanctions have allowed Iran to have a new way of dealing with the sanctions and to be able to solve its problems when working with the world banking system. The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned 18 Iranian banks on Thursday.

## Legal Right to Buy, Sell Weapons

TEHRAN (MNA) – Deputy Chairman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Abbas Moghtadaei said that arms embargo on Iran will end soon, and Iran has the legal right to buy and sell weapons, and no one can interfere.

Stating that Iran arms embargo will end on October 18, Moghtadaei said, "In the years since the conclusion of JCPOA, the Islamic Republic of Iran has acted in accordance with international regulations, but a significant part of Iran's privileges and rights have not been realized by JCPOA participants states."

"According to the JCPOA, the arms embargo on Iran will end soon, and Iran will be able to sell arms to interested and demanding countries, and in return, will be able to buy weapons and equipment that cannot be manufactured domestically," he added. "The United States has withdrawn from the JCPOA, and under no circumstances it can comment on issues related to Iran, including the end of arms embargo," Iranian Parliament member highlighted.

Moghtadaei added, "Iran is an independent country that has always complied with its international obligations and can now implement the actions that are allowed for it under international law."

Under the 2015 nuclear deal that Iran struck with six major powers - the United Kingdom, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the US – a five-year UN conventional arms embargo on Tehran is set to expire on October 18.

## Iran, Mauritania Keen on Defense Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to Nouakchott Amir Ali Emam-Jomeh said in a meeting with Defense Minister of Mauritania Hanena Ould Sidi that Iran is willing to develop defense cooperation with Mauritania.

Both sides underlined the importance of fighting terrorism in Sahel.

Emam Jomeh expressed Iran's support for G5 Sahel and issues of mutual interests.

G5 Sahel or G5S is an institutional framework for coordination of regional cooperation in development policies and security matters in west Africa. It was formed on 16 February 2014 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, at a summit of five Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

## Japanese Iranologist Receives Farabi International Festival Award

TEHRAN (IP)- The 11th Farabi International Festival Award was handed by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tokyo in a ceremony to Professor Kondo Nobuaki, a prominent Japanese Iranologist.

Iran's Ambassador to Tokyo, Morteza Rahmani Movahed at the ceremony, referring to the successful and continuous scientific and research efforts and cooperation between prominent Iranian and Japanese professors and researchers, called the contribution of Japanese Iranologists in introducing Iran's various cultural and historical aspects and works valuable and effective.

Professor Kondo Nobuaki also thanked the Farabi Foundation and the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Japan and expressed hope that the scientific cooperation between the two countries would be further developed.

At the end of the ceremony, a plaque of appreciation of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani, along with other certificates of appreciation of the Farabi Foundation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Secretariat of Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) was awarded to Professor Kondo Nobuaki.

Kondo Nobuaki is a distinguished professor at the Institute for Persian and African Languages Research at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, an Iranologist, and a manuscript researcher.

Numerous works and researches have been published by this professor, the most important of which is "A selection of Persian documents," which was published in 2003. "Farabi International Festival" is held annually by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran in cooperation with two international organizations, UNESCO and ISESCO, and some important scientific and research centers of Iran.

The theme of this festival is to appreciate the research in the field of humanities and Islamic sciences.

## Army Air Force Capable of Confronting Any Threat

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) said that the country is capable of countering any threat.

Speaking on the sidelines of a joint graduation ceremony for students of IRGC, Army, and Police universities, held on Monday at Imam Ali Officers' Academy, Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh reiterated, "Islamic Republic of Iran's Army Air Force is able to deal with any kind of threat and have no fear of enemies."

This ceremony was a good example for all ceremonies in the Armed Forces and was held with unity, amity, empathy and synergy of forces, so that the country can confront the invading enemies with all its might, Brigadier General Nasirzadeh emphasized.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and added, "Iran's Army Air Force bears heavy responsibility in containing the disease among its staff and personnel as well as all walks of life."

Military authority is one of the main components of the national power and today, Army Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran is able to deal with any kind of threat, Brigadier General Nasirzadeh underlined.

## End of Arms Embargo, Big Success For Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iran's Presidential Office Mahmoud Vaezi described Wednesday the Oct 18 lifting of arms embargo on Tehran as a big success for the country.

It will be a great success achieved by Iran in battle with the United States, Vaezi told reporters after the cabinet session held in Tehran this morning.

In September, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that the US President Donald Trump's efforts to hinder the removal of the arms embargo on Iran in October 2020 will bear no results as the resolution proposed to the UN Security Council by the US administration seeking an extension of the arms embargo on Iran was almost unanimously rejected by the member states.

Speaking about the recent travel of the Iranian foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to China, Vaezi said the visit was so fruitful as the two sides attach importance to regional developments.

Also about increase in price of products in Iran, Vaezi said the country is facing difficult conditions; on one hand, sanctions, and on the other hand, coronavirus pandemic have created problems for the country and the people.

Meanwhile, the government makes all-out effort to remove the problems, he stressed.

Elsewhere, he talked of the recent visit of Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati to Iraq, and said it was a good travel as the two reviewed economic questions.

In Baghdad, good agreement achieved on unblocking Iranian foreign assets, Vaezi added.

Turning to the issue of conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, the official said Iran believes that conflicts and crises should be solved through dialogue not through military solutions.

He further said Tehran welcomes Moscow's initiative to settle ceasefire in the disputed area.

Iran policy always pursues respect for countries' territorial integrity based on borders recognized internationally, he concluded.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:48
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:47
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:11

56. Those who reject our Signs, We shall soon cast into the Fire: as often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the penalty: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.  
57. But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, We shall soon admit to Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath; - their eternal home: Therein shall they have companions pure and holy: We shall admit them to shades, cool and ever deepening.  
Surah 4. Women (56 - 57)

## Iran, India to Hold Trade Relations Forum on Oct. 27

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - Iran and India are to hold a virtual forum on their bilateral trade relations on October 27 with presence of major economic activists and members of chambers of commerce of both countries.**

On Tuesday, Tehran Chamber of Commerce hosted a gathering for economic activists of India and Iran in cooperation with Indian Embassy in Tehran and India's Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), and during the meeting, the participants explored ways for expanding trade cooperation between both states.

In this specialized webinar on trade of foodstuff and agro products, Indian Ambassador Gaddam Dharmendra who was present at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce announced New Delhi's commitment for keeping and expanding its economic relations with Iran, and reminded that Indian Embassy in Tehran is ready for cooperation with Tehran Chamber of Commerce for both restoring trade relations between enterprises of both states and resolving banking challenges and problems in transfer of money among companies in cooperation with its Iranian counterpart.

The Indian diplomat further said economic sectors of both countries should be after more and new opportunities in the economic cooperation scenes, adding that Iran's geographical position in the region is of great importance for India's trade link with CIS, Eastern Caspian Sea and East European states and both countries can expand their markets in those countries through bilateral cooperation.

Mr. Gaddam also pointed to the Coronavirus pandemic in the world and emphasized the necessity for food and agro product exchanges between both countries, adding that the value of India's agro product exports to Iran is around \$2b and it can increase.

Meanwhile Chairman of APEDA Mr. Diwakar Nath Misra, for his part, as the representative of the Indian counterparts pointed to the capacities of both countries for making colorful their economic relations, adding that tea and basmati are currently two major India's exports to Iran while more products can be added to the basket of goods trade exchanges of both countries.



Secretary General of Tehran Chamber of Commerce Dr Bahman Eshghi, for his part, in this virtual meeting pointed to the \$15b trade between Iran and India at its climax and called it lower than real economic capacities of both parties. He then pointed to the population of India and China and their proximity to Iran's geographical borders and called it a good opportunity for tri-lateral cooperation for expanding economic and trade markets.

He noted that the power and capacities of governments of Iran and India in developing trade relations is limited, adding that private sector of both countries have duty to call on both governments to act as openers of trade doors for trade expansionist decisions.

Eshghi further said that Iran is one of the major foodstuff exporters in the West Asia and pointed to its climate diversity, adding that Iran can take advantage of valuable experiences of India in developing villages and using its capacities in integration and national production.

He then announced readiness of Tehran Chamber of Commerce for cooperation with Indian Embassy in Tehran in line with helping private sectors of both countries for restoring more economic cooperation and removing the walls around the bilateral trades which have been shaped by the sanctions.

He then called Asia as the future of the world, and named Iran, China and India as the three main actors of the economic relations in the world in near future.

At the end of the meeting it was announced that Iran-India Trade Relations Forum will be held on October 27 virtually.

## Tehran to Host 7th Iran-Qatar Joint Commission

TEHRAN (MNA) - Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian announced Wednesday that Tehran will host the seventh joint commission meeting on cooperation between Iran and Qatar.

Ardakanian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari have agreed to hold joint commission meeting by the end of 2020 via video conference.

At the conversation, the two stressed the importance of developing bilateral cooperation.

The two also called for finalization of mutual agreements.

Further, Qatari minister invited Ardakanian to travel to Doha in first days of November. In a related development, Ardakanian and his Qatari counterpart Saad Sherida Al-Kaab held talks through a video conference in September on cooperation in electricity network connection.

## Tehran, Kuala Lumpur Discuss Boosting Economic Ties

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iranian ambassador to Kuala Lumpur and the Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry discussed ways to develop trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Iranian Ambassador to Kuala Lumpur Ali-Asghar Mohammadi met with Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry Mohamed Azmin Ali on Tuesday evening to discuss the progress of the two sides' talks on the preferential tariff agreement, and the bilateral trade process in the current situation.

Referring to the situation caused by the coronavirus outbreak in Iran and the problems of not having access to essential items such as medicine and medical equipment due to unilateral US sanctions, Mohammadi called the deaths due to the US inhumane policies a crime against humanity. The Iranian ambassador to Malaysia also expressed Tehran's interest in developing relations with Kuala Lumpur in the areas of health and food security.

The Malaysian minister expressed his sympathy with the Iranian people in the face of US sanctions, stressing the Malaysian government's determination to strengthen and develop relations with Iran.

Azmin Ali stated that maintaining and expanding relations with Iran is one of the permanent and stable policies of Malaysia and expressed hope that a joint economic commission will be held as soon as possible with the lifting of traffic restrictions caused by the coronavirus.

## Pakistan to Import Onions, Tomatoes From Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - The government of Pakistan has allowed imports of onions and tomatoes from Iran to reduce the prices of commodity in the country.

A spokesman for the Ministry of National Food Security told media that due to the high prices of tomatoes and onions, the government decided to import them from Iran.

The spokesman said that the import of tomatoes and onions from Iran has been allowed for one month and this step has been taken to bring down the prices.

According to the spokesperson, tomato import permits have been issued to the private sector and onion import permits will be issued today. Importers can import as many onions and tomatoes as they want for a month. Import permission can be extended.

## Petchem Output Rises

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN- Petrochemical production in Iran has increased in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) despite the difficulties and limitations caused by the coronavirus outbreak, the managing director of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) noted.

Jafar Rabiei also underlined the efforts made by the petrochemical complexes for producing the products to combat the pandemic. PGPIC is the largest company listed in Tehran Stock Exchange, which is Iran's major stock exchange, and is the second-largest petrochemical company in West Asia.

The company has been ranked 40th among the world's top 100 petrochemical companies based on Independent Commodity Intelligence Services (ICIS) 2020 ranking. The giant holding has been ranked second in the region despite the maximum U.S. pressure to restrict the activity of the petrochemical industry in Iran, and without access to international funding or investment.

## Iran Waiting for Turkey's Response to Extend Gas Export Contract



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran is waiting for Turkey's official response to an offer for extending gas supply deal beyond 2025.

The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has offered Turkey to extend a gas supply contract between the two countries beyond 2025 and is waiting for Ankara's official response.

In remarks published on Tuesday, NIGC chief Hassan Montazer Torbati expressed hope that Iran and Turkey could begin "serious talks" on extending the gas export contract after a relative ease in the situation surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

Torbati said authorities from the two neighboring countries had held video talks in recent days to discuss the issue.

"We are waiting for their response although we still have enough time," said the Oil Ministry official.

A new OPEC bulletin shows Iran is now second largest in the bloc in terms of refining capacity.

He said Iran's supply of natural gas to Turkey slightly increased year on year in October despite a three-month halt caused to exports due to a pipeline explosion in the Turkish territory in late March.

Torbati said Iran was also mulling a further increase in its gas exports to Iraq, a country which he said had taken delivery of larger than expected supplies of Iranian gas over the summer.

He said a Monday trip by Central Bank of Iran Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati to Baghdad could solve problems related to Iraq's due payments on Iranian gas supplies.

Commenting on a stalled gas exports deal involving Pakistan, Torbati said Iran is still hopeful that Pakistan would move to prevent a dispute settlement on the issue by committing to its part of the deal.

"The issue of gas exports to Pakistan is being pursued from the diplomatic and legal aspects. All documents and evidences are ready but we have yet to conclude to go to arbitration," he said.

## Iran's Funds in Iraq Over \$5b

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati says he is "hopeful" his visit to Baghdad on Monday and successful talks with Iraqi officials would enable Tehran to use more than \$5 billion of its funds in the country.

Money from Iran's exports of gas and electricity has accumulated and been trapped in a bank account in Iraq because of U.S. sanctions.

Hemmati secured a trade agreement with officials in Baghdad Monday to use payments from energy exports to buy essential goods from Iraq.

"The recent trip to Iraq was a success and we hope to be able to use our resources in Iraq, which are more than five billion dollars," he told reporters after a cabinet meeting in Tehran Wednesday.

"Some other countries have also responded positively to the use of foreign exchange earnings. In this regard, traders and importers will gradually realize in which areas we have access to our resources," Hemmati added.

Another country which is holding a sizable amount of Iranian funds is South Korea.

Iranian authorities have been pressing Seoul to release between \$6.5 billion and \$9 billion dollars frozen since 2018 when the United States imposed its unilateral sanctions on Iran.

In June, President Hassan Rouhani instructed Hemmati to follow up the matter through legal channels and international forums.

South Korea was the biggest client of Iranian gas condensate with 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) on top of 100,000 bpd of crude oil, but the country stopped the imports even before US sanctions on Iran's oil industry went into effect in November 2018.

## ICFF Hopes to Bring More Light to the Life of Iranian Children and Young Adults

TEHRAN - The 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth (ICFF) Director Alireza Tabesh and the Head of Public Relations Office, Mohsen Dalili, held a joint press conference on Tuesday at Kiarostami Hall, Farabi Cinematic Foundation.

Due to the pandemic outbreak and in order to maintain the health protocols, the conference was held virtually and some questions were asked on the phone while others were read from notes, the 33rd ICFF Public Relations Office reports.

Addressing the presser, Mr Tabesh expressed heartfelt condolences over the saddening death of great artists such as Mohammad-Reza Shajarian, Akbar Alami, Manouchehr Tayyab and Khosrow Sinai to the Iranian artistic society and their respective families.

"The 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth is being held while everything is drastically affected by the COVID-19 crisis. General public and students, in particular, are being bombarded with a huge amount of sad news; and as people active in the realm of culture, our responsibility is to think of ways to improve the younger generation's mental condition. I hope the first virtual festival in Iran can bring more colors and light to the life of Iranian Children and

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young adults', he pointed out.

"This Edition of the festival will be held under the motto "Every Home a Cinema, Every Child a Jury Member"', Tabesh added. He also referred to the Educational workshops which are going to be held virtually in two National and International sections from Saturday 17 October and said, 'those interested can participate in these workshops, using discount codes on the website'.

The festival director also pointed out that the Festival Library in this edition can be accessed online and the audience to this section can use it for six days to find out about different films as well as film distributors as they sign in to their accounts on the festival website. 'The 4th Youth Filmmaking Olympiad of Iran is also being held virtually, and children can participate in this event for four days', Tabesh added.

107 Films through Different Platforms and Special Screenings for the Disabled with Visual and Hearing Impairments

'In this edition, 107 films are going to be shown to the audience through different platforms some of which will be presented with audio commentaries or sign-language interpretations as a part of our duty to value our special audience', the festival director explained.





## Dozens Killed in Spate of Attacks in Mali

BAMAKO (Dispatches) - Suspected Islamist militants killed 25 people including 13 soldiers in multiple attacks in central Mali, burning down an army base and ambushing troops sent as reinforcements, the army and local authorities said on Tuesday.

The attacks were the deadliest since the Aug. 18 military coup that overthrew President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and came just days after scores of jailed militants were freed by the interim government in a prisoner swap.

Nine soldiers were killed in the first attack that took place overnight against a base in Sokoura near the border with Burkina Faso, an army statement said.



## France's New COVID-19 Cases and Deaths on the Rise

PARIS (Reuters) - French health authorities on Tuesday reported 12,993 new COVID-19 infections over the past 24 hours, up on Monday's 8,505, but still sharply down from Saturday's record of 26,896 and Sunday's 16,101.

But the seven-day moving average of new infections, which averages out weekly data reporting irregularities, stood above the record 17,000 level for the second day running, at 17,816.

French President Emmanuel Macron was to hold a press conference later yesterday, where he was likely to unveil new measures such as local curfews, to contain the disease.



## Belarus Opposition Leader Gives Lukashenko Ultimatum to Resign



MINSK (Dispatches) - Belarus's exiled opposition leader on Tuesday gave strongman President Alexander Lukashenko a deadline of two weeks to resign, halt violence and release political prisoners, warning he would otherwise face a crippling general strike.

Svetlana Tikhonovskaya, who maintains she was the true winner of an August 9 election, issued what she said was a "people's ultimatum", demanding Lukashenko quit power by October 25 and halt the "state terror" unleashed by authorities against peaceful protesters. "If our demands are not met by October 25, the whole country will peacefully take to the streets," she said in a statement released in Lithuania, where she is currently based in exile after leaving Belarus following the election. "And on October 26 a nationwide strike will begin at all enterprises, all roads will be blocked, and sales at state stores will collapse," she said. "You have 13 days."

Unprecedented protests broke out after Lukashenko claimed victory in August elections over Tikhonovskaya, a 38-year-old political novice whose husband Sergei Tikhonovsky was planning to challenge Lukashenko in the elections but was then himself jailed. Over the past weeks riot police detained thousands of demonstrators who have reported torture and abuse in custody, prompting international condemnation and Western sanctions. Several people have died in the crackdown.

On Monday, the ex-Soviet country's interior ministry threatened to fire on protesters, marking a major escalation in the two-month standoff between Lukashenko and demonstrators.

Tikhonovskaya said on Tuesday it was time for Belarusians to take a side after the authorities unleashed "state terror". "Everyone who has not yet made the decision to switch to the side of the people is an accessory to terror. Declare publicly that you no longer support the regime."

The statement also represents a change of tone for Tikhonovskaya, who has quickly won the support of western leaders including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

At the weekend Belarus authorities allowed Tikhonovskaya to speak to her jailed husband, who advised his wife she should get "tougher" on the authorities.

## White House Advances Drone And Missile Sales to Taiwan

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The White House is moving forward with more sales of sophisticated military equipment to Taiwan, telling Congress on Tuesday that it will seek to sell MQ-9 drones and a coastal defensive missile system, five sources familiar with the situation said.

These possible sales follow three other notifications first reported by Reuters on Monday that drew China's ire in the run-up to the Nov. 3 U.S. election.

China considers Taiwan a wayward province that it has vowed to reunite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

Reuters broke the news in September that as many as seven major weapons systems were making their way through the U.S. export process as the Trump administration ramps up pressure on China.

## U.S. Ready to Extend Nuclear Pact, But Rebuffed by Russia

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States said Tuesday it had reached an agreement in principle with Russia to extend New START, the last major nuclear treaty still in force, but Moscow quickly rejected U.S. conditions.

President Donald Trump's administration has been insisting without success that its nemesis China enter the treaty, which has limited the United States and Russia to 1,550 nuclear warheads each and expires on February 5.

With three weeks to go before US elections in which Trump is trailing in polls, the administration indicated it would support preserving the treaty for an unspecified period. "We are in fact willing to extend the New START treaty for some period of time provided that they, in return, agree to a limitation -- a freeze -- on their nuclear arsenal," US negotiator Marshall Billingslea said. "We believe that there is an agreement in principle at the highest levels of our two governments," he said at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.

### Police Arest 21 at Thai Pro-Democracy Rally

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Police arrested 21 protesters Tuesday during a Bangkok rally that saw dozens of people give a royal motorcade a three-fingered salute -- a show of defiance by Thai pro-democracy activists calling for reforms to the monarchy.

Since July, Thailand has seen frequent youth-led demonstrations demanding the resignation of Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a former army chief.

Some in the leaderless movement have also called for reform to the monarchy -- a once-taboo topic due to Thailand's harsh royal defamation laws.

Tuesday's protest at Democracy Monument -- a major intersection that has been the site of previous demonstrations -- drew dozens of supporters chanting and dancing in front of police. Authorities moved in to clear the road in the late afternoon for a royal motorcade ferrying King Maha Vajiralongkorn, deputy police spokesman Colonel Kissana Phathanacharoen told AFP.

"Officers tried to negotiate with the protesters who were occupying the area. They were uncooperative," he said. Charges against the 21 protesters include obstructing police and "causing disorder", said a police press release.

Demonstrators threw blue paint across the intersection -- with some splashing uniformed officers -- before the leaders were bundled into a van.

"They dragged, beat and pulled us away," prominent activist Jatupat Boonpattarasaksa -- who was among those arrested -- said on a Facebook live broadcast from inside a police truck. The royal family was scheduled to host the premier at the Grand Palace Tuesday, a public holiday to commemorate the death of the late long-serving King Bhumibol Adulyadej. When the royal motorcade eventually passed, dozens held up a three-finger salute -- taken from the popular "Hunger Games" film trilogy and harnessed as a pro-democracy symbol.

The ultra-wealthy King Vajiralongkorn sits at the apex of Thai power, supported by the kingdom's military and billionaire clans. Some protest leaders have called for the abolition of royal defamation laws -- which shields the monarch from criticism -- and for a proper accounting of the institution's fortune, estimated to be some \$60 billion.

## U.S., Germany Demand Turkey End Provocation Against Greece

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Turkey's two key Western allies, the United States and Germany, on Tuesday urged it to pull back a ship it has returned to waters contested with Greece, with Washington denouncing the "calculated provocation."

The Turkish navy said Sunday that the Oruc Reis exploration vessel was heading back to energy-rich eastern Mediterranean waters between the Greek island of Crete and Cyprus, weeks after it left amid an agreement for talks.

In a strongly worded statement, the State Department said the US "deplores" the decision by Turkey and noted that Greece "asserts jurisdiction" over areas where the ship plans to operate through October 22.

"We urge Turkey to end this calculated provocation and immediately begin exploratory talks with Greece," State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortugus said in a statement.

"Turkey's announcement unilaterally raises tensions in the region and deliberately complicates the resumption of crucial exploratory talks between our NATO allies Greece and Turkey," she said.

"Coercion, threats, intimidation and military activity will not resolve tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean."

Turkey last sent the ship into contested waters in August backed by warships, alarming both Greece and Cyprus, which is partially occupied by Ankara.

Greece responded by staging military exercises but tensions eased when both Ankara and Athens agreed to talk through the crisis.

Greece said Tuesday there could be no diplomatic solution until the ship is withdrawn.

Greece "will not sit at the table for exploratory talks while the Oruc Reis and escorting warships are out there," Minister of State George Gerapetritis told Parapolitika radio.

He said Athens would "emphatically" raise the dispute at a European council meeting starting Thursday.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last month said that the withdrawal of the ship was a chance to give diplomacy a chance.

But Turkish officials also insisted the ship was only undergoing planned maintenance and would return to the eastern Mediterranean to continue its work.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, speaking ahead of a trip to Cyprus and Greece, said that Turkey "must end the cycle of detente and provocation if the government is interested in talks."



## Lebanon's Basil Criticizes Hariri Efforts to Form Gov't

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Lebanese Christian politician Gebran Bassil criticised Sunni former prime minister Saad al-Hariri on Tuesday for putting himself forward to lead a government that would champion a French initiative to resolve the country's deep economic crisis.

Hariri has begun consultations with the president, parliamentary speaker and Lebanese political blocs about forming a government that would implement President Emmanuel Macron's roadmap for reforms and unlock international aid.

He has said his mission was to form a six-month government of technocrats to rapidly carry out the reform plan set out in Macron's initiative.

"We were not aware, and nobody informed us, that President Macron had appointed a high commissioner... to Lebanon, and made a prefect for us to oversee his initiative and the extent of its implementation," Bassil said in a speech to supporters.

"Whoever wants to head a government of technocrats has to be a technocrat himself," said Bassil, who heads Lebanon's biggest Christian bloc, the Free Patriotic Movement. A former foreign minister, Bassil is also President Michel Aoun's son-in-law.

Aoun will hold formal consultations on Thursday about nominating a prime minister to form a new government to replace Hassan Diab's cabinet, which resigned two months ago after a powerful explosion damaged much of Beirut and killed 200 people.

Diab's nominated replacement has been unable to form a government after the powerful Shi'ite group Hezbollah and its political allies insisted on nominating the finance minister.

Lebanon is suffering its worst financial collapse since a 1975-1990 civil war. Foreign donors have made clear there will be no fresh aid unless Lebanese leaders launch reforms to tackle graft and improve governance, and engage in IMF negotiations.







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## EU Imposes Tariffs on Aluminum Products From China

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union will impose duties of up to 48% on imports of aluminium extrusions from China midway through an investigation into whether Chinese producers are selling at unfairly low prices.

The EU official journal said on Tuesday that the duties, ranging from 30.4 to 48.0%, would apply from Wednesday. The duties are provisional, meaning they will apply until the investigation's expected completion by April.

At that point, the bloc could apply duties for five years.



## IMF Warns of Lasting Damage, Long Climb out of Recession

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The global economic crisis will not be quite as grim as feared this year, but GDP will still contract 4.4 percent and the ongoing pandemic means the outlook remains uncertain, the IMF said Tuesday.

Massive injections of government aid kept economies from plunging further, but growth in 2021 is expected to be slightly slower than forecast in June and even weaker in the next few years due to the lasting damage inflicted by Covid-19, the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook.

The recession was less severe but still deep and "the ascent out of this calamity is likely to be long, uneven, and highly uncertain," IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said in the report released ahead of the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank.

The result "would have been much weaker if it weren't for sizable, swift and unprecedented" response from governments and central banks, she said, again warning of the dangers of removing support too quickly. The IMF upgraded the global GDP forecast for this year by 0.8 percentage points, but trimmed the 2021 growth outlook to 5.2 percent. In the United States, the growth estimate saw a major upgrade after \$3 trillion in stimulus spending deployed in the early weeks of the pandemic. The economy is now expected to decline 4.3 percent this year, and post growth of 3.9 percent in 2021.

China, where the virus originated, has recovered faster and will see growth of 1.9 percent this year, accelerating to 8.2 percent next year, according to the report.

However, Gopinath said that if China is excluded, global growth next year would be negative.

While most countries will see their economies return to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, some like those in Latin America will not see a recovery until 2023, she told reporters.

Countries like India, Spain and Italy will suffer double digit economic declines in 2020, while Britain just misses that threshold with a 9.8 percent contraction, the IMF said. Amid the widespread economic shutdowns, the rapid rollout of \$12 trillion in government spending worldwide "helped saved lives and livelihoods and prevented a financial catastrophe," Gopinath said.

But the depth of the crisis, which caused massive unemployment as well as more than a million deaths, means continued support will be critical, especially in the face of "unusually large" risks. "It is essential that fiscal and monetary policy support are not prematurely withdrawn," Gopinath said in a blog post that accompanied the report.

The spread of Covid-19 remains the critical factor in the recovery, she said, "and many more millions of jobs are at risk the longer this crisis continues." The IMF called for continued lifelines including wage support, cash payments and credit lines for small and medium businesses until the recovery is underway, warning that removing them too soon could lead to a wave of bankruptcies and push economies back into recession.

In addition, poor countries will need concessional financing as well as debt relief. Even once the immediate crisis has passed, the IMF warned that "most economies will experience lasting damage to supply potential, reflecting scars from the deep recession this year." Global growth is expected to slow to 3.5 percent in the medium term, a stunning \$28 trillion in lost output in the five-year period through 2025 compared to the pre-pandemic expectations, according to the report.

The World Bank said up to 150 million more people may be pushed into extreme poverty by 2021, the first time it has worsened in more than two decades, while the IMF warns the crisis will exacerbate inequality, especially for women. World trade volume is also expected to collapse 10.4 percent this year before rebounding by 8.3 percent next year. The IMF called on governments to rethink their spending priorities and direct funding to projects that will boost productivity, including green energy investments and education.

## Maersk to Lay off 2,000 in Business Shake-Up

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) - The world's biggest container shipping line, Maersk, said on Tuesday demand was recovering faster than expected and lifted its earnings outlook, while also announcing plans to cut 2,000 jobs as it streamlines to cut costs.

Maersk, which handles about one in five containers shipped worldwide, said that though cargo volumes were still down on last year they had picked up more than forecast after falling sharply at the height of the coronavirus pandemic a few months ago.

"A.P. Moller - Maersk is on track to deliver a strong Q3 with solid earnings growth across all our businesses, in particular in Ocean and Logistics & Services," Chief Executive Soren Skou said in a statement.

"Volumes have rebounded faster than expected, our costs have remained well under control, freight rates have increased due to strong demand," Skou said.

Volumes in Maersk's Ocean-division declined by around 3% in the third quarter compared to the same period last year, above an expected mid-single digit contraction, the company said.



The Danish company said it would cut 2,000 positions as a result of a major reorganization announced last month, where it seeks to integrate its seaborne container and in-land logistics businesses.

Maersk currently has around 80,000 employees.

Shares in Maersk were down by around 1% on Tuesday morning.

The company expects restructuring costs of around \$100 million in the third quarter related to the redundancies. Maersk said it now expects full-year earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) in the range of \$7.5 billion to \$8.0 billion before restructuring and integration costs, up from an earlier range of \$6.0 billion to \$7.0 billion.

Preliminary results for the third quarter showed revenue at \$9.9 billion, while EBITDA before restructuring and integration costs came in at \$2.4 billion, Maersk said.

## Struggling Countries Seek G20 Debt Freeze Extension

LONDON (Reuters) - Beneficiaries of the G20 group of major economies' multi-billion dollar debt freeze, which aims to help poorer countries survive the coronavirus pandemic, called on Tuesday for the initiative to be widely extended.

The Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) has since April seen more than 40 of 73 eligible countries defer some \$5 billion in debt payments, but with no end in sight to the COVID-19 crisis, the pressure is on to do more.

World Bank President David Malpass said on Monday that only a six-month extension beyond the end of 2020 may emerge this week, rather than a year as some had hoped.

Angola's Finance Minister Vera Daves said an extension of the DSSI would be "very useful".

Speaking at an online forum organised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, she added that Angola would have a conservative budget to try and keep its debt, expected to top 140% of annual GDP, under control.

At an Institute of International Finance (IIF) online panel, policymakers from Kenya and Costa Rica also expressed support for the scheme, as well as for countries like China and Russia - not currently part of the Paris Club government debt relief architecture - to provide more help.

"The desire to rope in all creditors, and particularly China and Russia, I think it is great," said Patrick Njoroge, Governor of the Central Bank of Kenya.

"China has never really been there and that has always been one of the weaknesses of the Paris Club."

## Saudi Aramco, BlackRock, Others, Discussing Deal Worth Over \$10b

DUBAI (Reuters) - Saudi Aramco is in talks with BlackRock BLK.N and other investors on a planned deal worth over \$10 billion to sell a stake in its pipeline business, sources said.

The deal, internally dubbed "Project Seek", is still in its initial phase and there is no formal decision on the investors yet, one of the two sources familiar with the matter said.

The transaction would be similar to

infrastructure deals signed this and last year by Abu Dhabi's national oil company ADNOC.

Those raised billions of dollars by leasing its oil and gas pipelines assets to investor partners.

The deal would provide Aramco with cash at a time of low oil prices caused by the coronavirus crisis.

It also faces a \$75 billion dividend it has pledged to investors during its initial public offering last year. "There's more work to be done. No buyers have been lined up, but there are talks," said the first source, speaking anonymously as the discussions are private.

Another source familiar with the matter said Brookfield Asset Management BAMA.TO was also involved in the discussions.

Aramco did not immediately respond to a request for comment. BlackRock and Brookfield declined to comment.

JPMorgan JPM.N and Japan's have been hired to advise the company on the deal, sources have previously told Reuters.

Talks are continuing regarding the type of financing investors would raise to back their acquisition, the first source said, adding it could involve a syndicated loan and a bond issuance linked to revenue from the assets.

ADNOC signed a \$10 billion deal for its gas pipeline infrastructure this year with investors including Toronto-based Brookfield Asset Management, which manages around \$550 billion in assets.

That deal was backed by an \$8 billion two-year bridge loan, which the group of investors plan to replace with a bond issuance at or before its maturity, sources have told Reuters.

BlackRock, the world's biggest asset manager, along with buyout firm KKR & Co, last year bought a 40% stake in ADNOC Oil Pipelines for \$4 billion.

## OPEC Cuts 2021 Oil Demand Forecast Again

LONDON (Reuters) - World oil demand will rebound more slowly in 2021 than previously thought as coronavirus cases rise, OPEC said on Tuesday, adding to headwinds faced by the group and its allies in balancing the market.

Demand will rise by 6.54 million barrels per day(bpd) next year to 96.84 million bpd, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said in a monthly report. The growth forecast is 80,000 bpd less than expected a month ago.

A further weakening of demand could threaten plans by OPEC and allies to taper in 2021 the record oil output cuts they made this year. OPEC is keeping an eye on the situation but currently has no plan to cancel the supply boost. "We believe that this is the calculated volume to cater for the demand coming back," United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei told the Energy Intelligence Forum on Tuesday, referring to the 2021 output increase.

Oil prices have collapsed as the coronavirus crisis curtailed travel and economic activity. While in the third quarter an easing of lockdowns allowed demand to recover, OPEC sees the pace of economic improvement slowing again. "While the 3Q20 recovery in some economies was impressive, the near-term trend remains fragile, amid a variety of ongoing uncertainties, especially the near-term trajectory of COVID-19," OPEC's report said of the economic outlook.

"As this uncertainty looms large, amid a globally strong rise in infections, it is not expected that the considerable recovery in 3Q20 will continue into 4Q20 and in 2021." OPEC has steadily lowered its 2021 oil demand growth forecast from an initial 7 million bpd expected in July.

The group also cut its estimate of world oil demand in the current quarter by 220,000 bpd. It left its estimate of the scale of this year's historic contraction in oil use steady at 9.47 million bpd.

To tackle the drop in demand, OPEC and its allies including Russia, a group known as OPEC+, agreed to a record supply cut of 9.7 million bpd starting on May 1.

The cut was tapered to 7.7 million bpd in August and OPEC+ plans further tapering next year by boosting supply by 2 million bpd from January.

In the report, OPEC said its output fell by 50,000 bpd to 24.11 million bpd in September. That amounted to 104% compliance with the supply cut pledges, according to a Reuters calculation - up from August's figure of 103%. OPEC also forecast demand for its crude will be 200,000 bpd lower than expected next year at 27.93 million bpd.

Assuming global demand rebounds as expected, this in theory leaves room for OPEC members to increase output in 2021 by over 3.8 million bpd from September's rate without causing a glut.

## EU Wins Tariff Clearance on \$4b of U.S. Imports in Boeing Case



BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union on Tuesday won the right to impose tariffs on \$4 billion of U.S. goods in retaliation against subsidies for planemaker Boeing BA.N, deepening a record trade spat that has already prompted Washington to slap duties on EU imports.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) tariff award, which confirms a decision first reported by Reuters on Sept 30, threatens to intensify transatlantic trade tensions just three weeks ahead of the U.S. presidential election.

However, negotiators on both sides say it could also lead at last to discussions to resolve a 16-year legal battle over subsidies to aircraft manufacturers Boeing and Airbus AIR.PA.

Both the United States and the EU have signalled interest in settling the dispute over planemaker subsidies, while accusing the other of refusing to talk seriously.

Tuesday's decision, delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, follows a WTO ruling last year allowing Washington to impose tariffs on \$7.5 billion in EU goods over state support for Airbus, which has sites in Britain, France, Germany and Spain.

Combined, the two cases represent the world's largest ever corporate trade dispute.

Consuming thousands of pages of testimony and an estimated \$100 million in costs since 2004, the aircraft spat has tested the resolve of the WTO, which is busy selecting a new leader.

The state of Washington has since repealed an aerospace tax break that benefited Boeing, while Airbus has announced it will increase loan repayments for the A350 plane to France and Spain in bids to settle the matter.

The U.S. government said there was no legal basis for the European Union to impose tariffs since the contested measure had been eliminated, a view echoed by Boeing, which said it had already complied with WTO findings.



## “Careless Crime” Goes to Vinennale Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian film, Jenayat-e Bi Deghat (Careless Crime in English) has been accepted into the 2020 edition of Viennale Film Festival in Austria.

The fiction-drama, directed by Shahram Mokri, will go on screen at the 58th edition of the event, which will be held in the Austrian capital, Vienna, from October 22 to November 1.

The Iranian film has recently won an award in the 77th Venice International Film Festival in Italy.

Written by Nasim Ahmadpour and Shahram Mokri, ‘Careless Crime’ won an award for the Best Original Screenplay in the International Film Critics’ Week (SIC) during the 77th Venice International Film Festival.



## China's Imports, Exports Surge as Global Economy Reopens

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's imports grew at their fastest pace this year in September, while exports extended strong gains as more trading partners lifted coronavirus restrictions in a further boost to the world's second-biggest economy.

Exports in September rose 9.9% from a year earlier, customs data showed on Tuesday, broadly in line with analysts' expectations and up from a solid 9.5% increase in August.

The strong trade performance suggests Chinese exporters are making a brisk recovery from the pandemic's hit to overseas orders.

As the global economy restarts, Chinese firms are rushing to grab market share as their rivals grapple with reduced manufacturing capacity.

“The big picture is that outbound shipments remain strong, with easing demand for COVID-19 related goods such as face masks being mostly offset by a recovery in broader demand for Chinese-made consumer goods,” Capital Economics Senior China Economist Julian Evans-Pritchard said.

“A jump in imports suggests that domestic investment spending remains strong.” China's factory activity has also picked up as international trading gradually resumes.

But some analysts warn exports could peak soon as the demand for Chinese-made protective gear recedes and the base effect of this year's massive declines wears off.

Imports surged 13.2% in September, returning to growth from a fall of 2.1% in August and much stronger than expectations for a 0.3% increase. The import strength was broad based for almost all of China's main trading partners.

Imports from Taiwan surged 35.8% in September from a year ago, while purchases from the United States rose 24.7% on-year. Imports from Australia, however, fell 9.5%.

Wang Jun, chief economist at Zhongyuan Bank, said the data showed government support for the economy has kicked in as the epidemic comes under control.

“This has boosted domestic demand, especially investment-led demand, which buoyed imports,” Wang said, adding that the yuan's recent appreciation was positive for imports and people's spending power.

The rise in imports pushed the trade surplus for September down to \$37 billion (28.4 billion pounds), compared with \$58.93 billion in August and lower than an expected \$58.00 billion.



Across products, China bought more soybeans, grains, semiconductors, copper and steel products in September, customs data showed. Analysts expect imports to stay on an improving trend, underpinned by strengthening domestic demand.

Zhang Jun, chief economist at Morgan Stanley Huaxin Securities, said higher purchases of U.S. agricultural and energy products as China implemented the Phase 1 U.S.-China trade deal, and the resumption of logistics services in the United States and Europe contributed to China's import strength.

Top U.S. and Chinese trade officials reaffirmed their commitment to a Phase 1 trade deal in a telephone call in August.

China's trade surplus with the United States narrowed to \$30.75 billion in September from \$34.24 billion in August.

## EU Eying Carbon Border Fees Plan for Steel, Cement and Power



BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union's plan to impose carbon border fees on polluting imported goods would initially apply to steel, cement and electricity, but could expand to more sectors later, a senior official said on Tuesday.

As part of its aim to cut EU greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, the European Commission is drafting plans to levy the fees on goods coming into the 27-country bloc.

The policy, which the Commission will propose next summer, aims to protect EU industry from being undercut by cheaper imports from countries with less stringent climate policies. But it is not yet clear how authorities will measure the level of pollution, or carbon intensity, of goods or how variable the fees will be.

The Commission, the executive body of the European Union, plans to roll out the policy by 2023 in a few sectors with relatively low international trade flows, to help simplify what is expected to be a legally and technically complex mechanism.

“The core sectors are indeed steel, cement and electricity,” Diederik Samsom, head of the Commission's climate cabinet, told an online event organised by Politico on Tuesday.

This could be extended later to aluminium, fertilisers and chemicals, he said.

Samsom said the world's least developed countries and those with equivalent carbon-pricing policies to Europe could be exempted from the levy.

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, is preparing to launch a national carbon market. U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has also said he would impose carbon fees on imports.

Legal experts have warned of the challenges of designing the policy within World Trade Organization rules. One option would be to seek an exemption from these principles, on grounds that the policy is an environmental tool, and not one to give EU industry a competitive edge.

Jennifer A Hillman, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, said the European Union could strengthen this argument by ensuring cash raised by the policy goes to climate action.

“The more evidence you have on the side of the table that says this was done for environmental reasons ... the better off you're gonna be,” Hillman said.

## India Claims Cow Dung Chip Protects Against Radiation

NEW DELHI (AFP) - An Indian government unit established to develop soaps and medicinal products from cow dung has branched out with a “chip” it claims can protect people from cellphone radiation.

Without explaining how the technology works, the head of the National Cow Commission -- set up last year -- said the device could simply be placed inside a mobile phone's protective cover. “We have seen that if you keep this chip in your mobile, it reduces radiation significantly,” chairman Vallabhbhai Kathiria told a news conference.

“Cow dung is anti-radiation, it protects all, if you bring this home your place will become radiation-free... All this has been approved by science,” he said.

Kathiria provided no further details on what research had been done, and the announcement sparked



considerable ridicule on social media.

Cows are considered sacred by the country's majority Hindus and eating beef is banned in many states.

Kathiria told the Indian Express newspaper the chips were being manufactured by more than 500 cow refuge shelters and cost around 100 rupees (\$1.36). “One person is exporting such chips to the US, where it is sold at about \$10 each,” he was quoted as saying by the English-language daily.

Since coming to power in 2014, Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party has earmarked millions of dollars for research into products using cow dung and urine.

Although there is no scientific evidence, several politicians from Modi's right-wing party have advocated using the dung and urine to cure the coronavirus.

## EU Extends Leniency Towards COVID-19 Support Deep Into 2021

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Commission said on Tuesday it was extending deep into 2021 its more flexible approach towards state aid and recapitalisation to support companies struggling due to coronavirus restrictions.

As COVID-19 cases spike across Europe, the Commission, which coordinates competition policy in the 27-country European Union, said its “Temporary Framework” allowing states to support businesses would be extended by six months until June 30, 2021.

The period for recapitalisation measures, currently allowed until June, would be prolonged by six months until September 30, 2021.

The Commission adopted its flexible approach to state aid on March 19, as the coronavirus first swept through the continent, plunging it into a deep recession.

The approach is designed to allow more than normally permitted under state aid rules while not overly distorting competition. Five types of aid have been allowed - direct grants of up to 800,000 euros (\$943,200), guarantees for loans, subsidised public loans, safeguards for banks and short-term export credit insurance.

## Pakistan Wins Election to the UN Human Rights Council

TEHRAN (Pakistan Embassy) - Pakistan has been re-elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) with an overwhelming majority securing 169 votes in the 193-member UN General Assembly. Elections were held in New York earlier today. Among the five candidates from the Asia-Pacific region vying for four seats, Pakistan secured the highest number of votes.

Pakistan is currently serving on the HRC since 1 January 2018. With its re-election today, Pakistan will continue as a member for another three-year term commencing on 1 January 2021. Since the HRC's establishment in 2006, this is the fifth time that Pakistan has been elected to the United Nations' premier body on Human Rights.

The international community has once again reposed confidence in Pakistan, recognizing our contribution to the national and global human rights agenda and strong credentials as a consensus builder in the HRC. Pakistan remains firmly committed to upholding, promoting and safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Pakistan will sustain its efforts towards ensuring that the HRC's work is guided by the principles of universality,

impartiality, dialogue and cooperation. In line with Pakistan's commitment, we will prioritize advancement of tolerance, respect and constructive engagement in the HRC.

The HRC has been a prominent forum for discussing the gross and systematic human rights abuses being perpetrated in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The human rights violations committed with impunity by the Indian occupation forces in IIOJK have been extensively documented in the various reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the independent Special Procedure Mandate Holders. Pakistan will remain actively engaged with the Council as well as its related processes to continue to highlight the plight of Kashmiris and other oppressed people all over the world.

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body based in Geneva within the United Nations system responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. It comprises 47 States and discusses all thematic human rights issues and specific situations requiring attention, such as those in IIOJK.

### Iran Entitled to...

FROM PAGE 1

The embargo will be lifted under UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA.

The United Nations Security Council has rejected a US resolution to extend an arms embargo on Iran that is due to expire in October.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump tried and failed to renew the ban through an anti-Iran resolution at the Council in mid-August.

The draft was supported only by the Dominican Republic, leaving it far short of the minimum nine “yes” votes required for adoption. The following month, Washington suffered another embarrassing loss as it failed to trigger the so-called snapback provision in the JCPOA aimed at re-imposing all UN sanctions against Iran.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian chief executive stressed that the U.S. has made no foreign policy achievements over the past four years in dealing with Palestine, Syria and Iraq. The U.S. resorted to bullying and used impolite language against the Iranians, Rouhani said, adding, “It is clear that the great nation of Iran has outraged them (the Americans) and brought them to their knees.”

Rouhani was referring to Trump's expletive-ridden rant during a conversation with conservative American radio host Rush Limbaugh last week as he once again threatened Iran. He said that Iran had better not “f--- around with us” or the US would “do things to you that have never been done before.”

### Gov't Imposes...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Wednesday that some 279 more Iranians have died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 29,349.

Sima Sadat Lari said that, with the 279 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 29,349.

Some 4,830 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 2,237 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

Sadat Lari noted that 414,831 patients have recovered or discharged from hospitals.

Some 4,609 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said. She added that 4,398,723 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

She pointed out that the provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azerbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardabil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, 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.

### Iran Exports to...

FROM PAGE 1

According to IRNA, the introduction of services and facilities provided by Iran Trade Promotion Organization, ways to identify and how to enter the market of the mentioned products in African countries, the topics and problems of private companies in the field of entering the African market, and the introduction of services provided by shipping companies to merchants and the possibility of setting up a regular line to the ports of South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, and West Africa in the near future were among the issues discussed at the meeting.

### China, Russia...

FROM PAGE 1

Saudi Arabia received 152 votes when it was last elected in 2016 to be a council member from 2017 to 2019, but on Tuesday only 90 states voted for Riyadh - a 40 percent drop. While China was elected on Tuesday with 139 votes, its support fell more than 20 percent compared to the last time it won a seat in 2016.

Both countries have been criticized internationally for their human rights records. Most recently China has been condemned by Western countries for its treatment of Uighur Muslims in the country's Xinjiang region and handling of pro-democracy protests in Chinese-ruled Hong Kong. U.S. President Donald Trump's administration quit the Human Rights Council in 2018 - half way through its term - over what it called chronic bias against Israel and a lack of reform. “The U.N. General Assembly once again elected countries with abhorrent human rights records,” U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Tuesday. “These elections only further validate the U.S. decision to withdraw and use other venues and opportunities to protect and promote universal human rights.”

Russia was elected on Tuesday four years after it was surprisingly ousted after one term, losing by two votes. Former U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power, under President Barack Obama, revealed last year in her memoir that she had been directed by Washington to vote for Russia in the secret ballot, but did not.



## Cavani Unavailable for Newcastle Clash Due to COVID-19 Rules

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester United's Edinson Cavani will have to wait to make his Premier League debut after the club confirmed on Tuesday that the Newcastle United game this weekend comes too soon for the Uruguayan striker who is still self-isolating.

Cavani, a deadline day signing who joined United on a free transfer from Paris St Germain last week, must self-isolate for 14 days after arriving in the United Kingdom due to the guidelines in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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## Liverpool Star Keita Tests Positive for Virus

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool midfielder Naby Keita is among more than a dozen African stars who have tested positive for coronavirus as teams play friendly internationals across Europe to prepare for Cup of Nations qualifying.

A spokesman for the national football federation confirmed to AFP that Keita had contracted the virus and was self isolating.

A spate of positive tests have forced two internationals scheduled for Tuesday -- Guinea v Gambia and Mali v Iran -- to be cancelled.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

THURSDAY OCTOBER 15, 2020

# Neymar Hat-Trick Fires Brazil Past Peru, Argentina Labor

RIO DE JANEIRO (Dispatches) - Neymar scored a hat-trick to become the second highest scorer in Brazil's history as the Copa America champions won 4-2 away to 10-man Peru in a World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

The goals took Neymar to 64 international strikes, two more than Ronaldo but still well behind Pele's record of 77.

Elsewhere, Joaquin Correa scored the winner 11 minutes from time as Argentina labored to a 2-1 victory over Bolivia to maintain their 100% record after two matches.

Peru twice took the lead through Andre Carrillo and a heavily deflected strike from Renato Tapia, but two controversial Neymar penalties, an injury time third and a close range strike from Richarlison maintained the Selecao's winning start to qualifying for Qatar 2022.

Carrillo opened the scoring on six minutes with a dipping volley from 20 yards after latching onto Marquinhos's weak clearance.

Peru Goalkeeper Pedro Gallese then denied Firmino from point blank range after he seemed certain to tap home from Richarlison's cushioned header.

Brazil dominated the ball but Peru's pacey forwards looked dangerous on the counter-attack and visiting goalkeeper Weverton had to be alert to keep out a shot from Christofer Gonzales.

But Neymar sent Gallese the wrong way from the spot after Yoshimar Yotun was penalised for tugging his shirt in the box.

Out of nowhere, Tapia's speculative long-range strike took a wicked deflection off Rodrigo Caio and wrong-footed Weverton on 59 minutes.

The lead lasted only a few minutes before Richarlison touched a Firmino header from a corner over the line to restore parity.

The winner came seven minutes from time as Carlos Zambrano was harshly adjudged to have fouled Neymar.

Worse was still to come for Zambrano as he was sent off minutes later for a stray elbow that caught Richarlison and Neymar drilled home the final nail in Peru's coffin after Gallese spilled a shot from Everton Ribeiro.



Lionel Scaloni's Argentina earned a second narrow victory in a row following Thursday's 1-0 win over Ecuador. Marcelo Moreno Martins had given hosts Bolivia a deserved lead but Argentina scored a fortuitous equaliser through Lautaro Martinez.

Bolivia should have been ahead on six minutes when Argentina goalkeeper Franco Armani was caught off his line but Moreno Martins sent his header from an angle onto the roof of the net.

Moreno Martins made amends on 24 minutes as he rose between Argentina's center-backs to power home a header from eight yards after Alejandro Chumacero was allowed to run from halfway into the visitors' box before crossing from the left.

Argentina's equaliser came in comical fashion as Jose Carrasco tried to clear the ball out of his six yard box after cutting out Martinez's cross, but he shanked the ball off the forward's shin and past goalkeeper Carlos Lampe.

Lionel Messi, who had an otherwise quiet game, and Martinez then combined to tee up Correa to thrash home the winner.

Ecuador totally dominated Uruguay in a 4-2 victory in Quito.

They took the lead on 15 minutes as Moises Caicedo flicked home a header from an Angel Mena cross.

Both sides had a goal ruled out following a VAR review before Michael Estrada doubled the advantage on the stroke of half-time, rifling home from inside the box after a mistake by veteran Uruguay center-back Diego Godin.

Uruguay were denied again by VAR before Ecuador went straight up the other end where Estrada cracked home Valencia's backheel from 20 yards.

## Alonso Sees New Beginning With Renault F1 Test

LONDON (Reuters) - Double world champion Fernando Alonso said he was ready for a fresh start as he tested the latest Renault Formula One car in Barcelona on Tuesday.

The Spaniard, a two-times Le Mans 24 Hours winner, has not competed in a grand prix since he left McLaren at the end of 2018 but is returning next year as replacement for departing Australian Daniel Ricciardo.

"It's going to be like a new beginning, getting surprised about the speed of the car, the braking performance, the corner speed, a lot of things that will surprise me once again," the 39-year-old said before the filming day.

The test in the RS20 car came 20 years after Alonso first tested with Benetton -- the team that then became Renault -- at the same circuit.

Alonso said preparing for the limited mileage outing had been complicated by COVID-19 restrictions, with fewer days in the simulator to adjust, but the run was worth it.

"The feeling was good. I think the car is obviously outperforming me at the moment, because I cannot extract the maximum from the car," he said after completing the maximum 100km allowed.

"Getting back to the F1 speed is not so easy. I was improving lap after lap, and trying to give feedback to the engineers. Also we had some filming to do, so there were cameras, there were drones following on track."

Team boss Cyril Abiteboul said after Sunday's Eifel Grand Prix at Germany's Nuerburgring, where Ricciardo finished third for Renault's first podium since their return as a constructor in 2016, that Alonso was championing to return.

"We received a message before, during and after the race," said the Frenchman.

"I think Fernando is like a big shark. And as soon as he starts to feel the blood he wants to attack. That's what I see - I see a shark very hungry."

The Spaniard, who won his titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006, has competed in the Dakar Rally and Indianapolis 500 since he was last in Formula One.



"We have not yet spoken (with Hoeness). For me it is in the past. What happened, happened and it is done. I think this issue is finished," Costa told reporters.

# Costa Shrugs Off Past Comment on Bayern Return

MUNICH (Reuters) - Bayern Munich winger Douglas Costa on Tuesday shrugged off having been called a mercenary by former club president Uli Hoeness when he left the Bavarians in 2017, saying he did not live in the past and was happy to be back in Munich.

Costa returned last week on a one-year loan from Juventus.

"I think I have matured in Italy. But apart from that I have not changed," he added.

The 30-year-old Brazilian had played for Bayern from 2015 to 2017, before leaving to join Juventus initially on loan and then on a permanent deal.

Hoeness had said at the time it was Costa's character that was to blame.

"It did not work with Costa because he was a bit of a mercenary and we did not like his character," Hoeness, who stepped down from his post in 2019, had said at the time of Costa's departure.

Bayern, who have won five titles this year, including the domestic double as well as the Champions League, are looking for a record-extending ninth consecutive Bundesliga crown.

## Nadal's Paris Record Will Never Be Beaten

LONDON (Dispatches) - Andy Murray predicts Rafael Nadal's record of 13 French Open titles will never be beaten as the British former world number one looks to bounce back in Cologne this week from his own Roland Garros disappointment.

Murray, 33, the reigning Olympic champion, crashed out of last month's French Open in straight sets with a lop-sided first round defeat to Stan Wawrinka as he works his way back from hip surgery.

On Sunday, the Scot watched in awe as Nadal, 34, demolished Novak Djokovic 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 in the final at Roland Garros to win his 13th French Open title.

The Spaniard has also equalled the all-time record of 20 Grand Slam titles held by Roger Federer, who hailed Nadal's victory as "one of sport's greatest achievements".

Murray echoed the Swiss legend and doubts anyone will even get close to Nadal's record in Paris.

"It's an amazing achievement. I don't think that what he has done at Roland Garros will ever be beaten. I just don't see it being topped," Murray said in Cologne.

"He is one short of winning the same amount of Grand Slams as (Pete) Sampras did just at one tournament. It's incredible.

"I don't think it'll be repeated and I don't think anyone will be close."

Murray reached the second round of the US Open in his first Slam since hip resurfacing surgery and Roland Garros was his third tournament this year after rehab.



## UEFA Considering Options for Euro 2020 Finals

BERLIN (Dispatches) - UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin says he is optimistic that the Euro 2020 finals, postponed until 2021, can be played with fans in stadiums across Europe next June, but admits several scenarios are being explored due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"For the moment, we are planning the Euro exactly as we want it to be," Ceferin told German broadcaster ARD when asked about fans attending games at 12 host stadiums despite numbers of Covid-19 positive test cases rising across Europe.

"Of course, I would have told you in February that the Euro would take place as normal with full stadiums this summer, but everything changed within a month.

"If you had asked me in February if I was prepared for a pandemic that would stop the world, I would have said you were crazy.

"But now we're well prepared. We're smarter and stronger than last year as we now know that anything can happen."

However as a precaution, the Slovenian UEFA chief said European football's governing body is "well prepared" to use different scenarios for the finals, postponed until June 11-July 11 2021.

He also said the tournament could be slimmed down from 12 host venues, stressing "we're not thinking about it at the moment, but we could implement different things.

"We are considering how to do it with fans, without fans, or with 30, 50 or 70 percent (of capacity in stadiums)," he added.

"But theoretically, we could hold the Euro in twelve countries, in eleven, in ten, in three countries or in one."

