

Health Ministry Spokeswoman
Sima Sadat Lari Said on Saturday
That Some 253 More Iranians
Have Died From Coronavirus Over
The Past 24 Hours as the Death
Toll Mounted to 30,123

IRAN NEWS

Abdullah Abdullah, the Chairman
Of Afghanistan's High Council for
National Reconciliation (HCNR), Is
Reportedly Due to Arrive in Tehran
Today to Meet Iranian Officials

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Iran to Trade Weapons With 'Many Friends' Once Embargo Lifted

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian diplomat says the country has "many friends" and partners to start trading in armaments with them in line with its national interests days before a decade-old United Nations arms embargo against Tehran expires.

"Iran has many friends and trading partners, and has a robust domestic arms industry to ensure its defense requirements against foreign aggression," Iranian UN mission spokesman Alireza Miryousefi told Newsweek in an interview published on Friday.

The UN restrictions are set to be lifted on Sunday under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 which endorses the multilateral nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed between Iran and major world powers in 2015.

The ban's removal will follow a largely unsuccessful campaign by U.S. President Donald Trump to convince the remaining signatories to defy the nuclear deal and the Resolution 2231 and keep the ban on Iran's arms industry in force.

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Ordinary Citizens Fall Victim to U.S. Economic Terror Amid Outbreak

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iran's representative at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly has denounced as economic terrorism Washington's "unilateral, illegal" restrictions that are hampering the country's fight against the coronavirus outbreak, saying America's growing unilateralism threatens human rights across the world.

Mohammad Zareian made the remarks while addressing a virtual meeting of the committee, which was also attended by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

The Iranian official said that the U.S.'s coercive unilateral measures pose a real threat to human rights.

He criticized affiliated human rights bodies of the UN for their inaction in the face of "this crime and genocide, which stems from mass violations of human rights" against tens of millions people worldwide.

Highlighting the case of U.S. sanctions against Iran, he said "the impact and scope of the unlawful unilateral coercive measures imposed on ordinary Iranians have even been exacerbated even during pandemic."

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Iranian Scientists Ready To Counter U.S. Coercion



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's top atomic authority says Iranian scientists will confront the United States' bullying targeting the Islamic Republic's right to peaceful nuclear energy, asserting that the country will never give up this right in the face of Washington's one-upmanship.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran nuclear scientists, following the guidelines of the Supreme Leader (of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei), are ready to face the coercion and unilateralism of the US government relating to the use of the nuclear energy," the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) tweeted.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) stresses the country's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, saying that sanctions on Iranian scientists will not hamper such activities.

Iran's strategic principles feature a far-seeing approach towards peaceful deployment of nuclear energy, the organization said, emphasizing the Islamic Republic's insistence on exercising its right in the area despite foreign pressure by noting, "Nuclear power will remain in the dominance of the Iranian nation forever."

The remarks came after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the outgoing US administration's most prominent Iran hawk, tweeted a set of antagonistic comments targeting the country's nuclear program.

Rehashing his previous remarks, Pompeo wrote, "Iran claims it doesn't want a nuclear weapon, then threatens the world with its nuclear program."

Iran has consistently and irreversibly distanced itself from the unconventional weapons on religious and humanitarian grounds. Tehran's stance in the area has been sealed by a religious decree issued by Ayatollah Khamenei.

The agreement itself, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has allowed Iran to take such countermeasures in case of non-commitment by the other signatories. Tehran only initiated the reprisal after the US illegally left the JCPOA and the Washington-allied members of the nuclear deal suspended their trade with Iran under the White House's pressure.

Ali Akbar Salehi made the remarks while inaugurating a project for the construction of a facility to produce stable isotopes using gas centrifuges.

The Islamic Republic has pledged to return to its commitments once the countries that are in default of their JCPOA obligations renew their commitment to the historic agreement.

Illegally Imported Iranian Fruit Upsets Pakistan Apple Cart

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Growers and officials in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province — where over 85 percent of Pakistan's apples are produced — say Iranian apples are being smuggled into the country through the Afghanistan border to avoid import taxes.

Smuggling has long been a feature of trade in Balochistan — which borders Iran — where there is a thriving black market in goods ranging from guns and narcotics to duty-free cigarettes and second-hand Toyotas.

Balochistan growers say Iranian origin apples — produced and sold at a lower price than the Pakistani variety — are being brought in as Afghan imports, harming local business and making it hard for them to even meet their costs.

By law, trade in Iranian goods must be conducted through the Taftan border crossing or other entry points on Pakistan's border with Iran.

But officials explained that by sending their produce through the Afghan border instead, the Iranian traders are circumventing the Sales Tax Act 1990, which states that edible goods imported from Afghanistan are exempt from taxes. All other countries pay a 17 percent per kilogram levy on exports to Pakistan.

An importer has to pay Rs56 per kilogram (\$0.34) of apples shipped through Pakistan's border with Iran, and only Rs8 through the Torkham border with Afghanistan, a customs official said.

Akhtar Kakar, vice president of the Balochistan Chamber of Commerce, said traders were evading paying higher taxes by documenting Iranian apples as imports from Afghanistan. Apples were being sent from Iran to Afghanistan and then exported by Afghan traders to Pakistan, he claimed.

Abdul Rauf, a senior official at Balochistan's Agriculture Research Department, said Pakistan had produced 564,693 tons of apples during 2017-18, of which 480,169 tons (85 percent) were produced in Balochistan.

Customs officials said 55,362.403 tons of apples were imported through the Torkham border in 2019-20.

None of the officials or growers interviewed could specify how many Iranian apples are being smuggled into Pakistan via Afghanistan.

"Growers, who are already depressed by severe climate change, are faced with huge financial losses due to the (illegal) import of Iranian apples," Samiullah Kakar, a grower in Kan Mehtarzai, a town in Balochistan, said.

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Iran Opposed to Europe's Military Presence In Persian Gulf

TEHRAN (IFP) - Deputy Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araqchi has expressed Iran's opposition to any foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf region, including the presence of European forces.

Speaking in a meeting with the new Danish ambassador to Tehran, October 14, Araqchi noted that the security of the Persian Gulf region should be provided by the countries of the region.

Araqchi said the presence of foreign troops will not only not help establish security, but will prepare the ground for the escalation of tensions as well.

The Iranian official underlined that Persian Gulf security is an issue of common interest for all regional countries. He said the establishment of sustainable security in the region is contingent upon dialogue and collective cooperation among regional countries and non-interference by foreign powers.

"Therefore, instead of deploying troops and military equipment or selling massive amounts of arms to certain regional countries, Denmark and other European countries had better tackle the root cause of tensions in the region, namely the United States' destructive and wrong policies in the Persian Gulf region," he said.

In the meeting, the two sides also exchanged views on regional and international developments, fighting terrorism, the situation in the Middle East, the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis and potential for economic cooperation between the two countries.

Tehran Warns Against U.S., Israeli, Saudi Nuclear Threats to Global Security

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iran's UN ambassador has warned against a return of the Cold War-era mentality, highlighting the nuclear threats posed by the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia to the world's security.

Speaking at a meeting of the UN General Assembly First Committee (also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee), Majid Takht-Ravanchi said the international security environment continues to deteriorate as a result of protracted conflicts and arms race while dialog mechanisms are eroding.

"The use and the threat of use of force arise in different parts of the world. Global military spending and arms competition are increasing, and the tensions of the Cold War era have returned to the world that has grown more complex. Besides the continued threat of WMDs (weapons of mass destruction) as well as the offensive policies of specific states, new threats including the possible weaponization of artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and outer space are emerging," he added.

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Iran Raps Deceptive Policies Against Its Missile Program

TEHRAN (MNA) - The rep. of Iran in the UN General Assembly underlined Iran's missiles are for defensive purposes only noting that efforts to portray Iran's ballistic missiles as a regional threat are therefore a deceptive and hostile policy.

The representative of Iran in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, Heidar Ali Baloji said Iran's missiles are for defensive purposes only and are an effective means of deterrence against foreign threats, adding that efforts to portray Iran's ballistic missiles as a regional threat are therefore a deceptive and hostile policy.

Baloji made the remarks at a meeting of the UN General Assembly's disarmament committee on Friday in response to comments made by the German envoy and resigned from the Yemeni government.

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Leader Mourns Anniversary of the Passing of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

TEHRAN (IP) - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei attended a mourning ceremony held in the Hussainiyah of Imam Khomeini on Friday, October 16, 2020, on the anniversary of the passing of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

This year, the mourning ceremony was held without public participation due to the coronavirus outbreak and in accordance with the protocols declared by the National Coronavirus Campaign and Prevention Headquarters.

World Witnessing Washington's Downfall

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Special Aide to Iran's Parliament Speaker for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that the U.S. heyday is over and the world is witnessing Washington's downfall.

Speaking at the 5th international meeting on "Warriors in Foreign Countries," Amir-Abdollahian added that the two U.S. presidential candidates showed in their debates how miserable the United States is.

"The revolt of the people of 50 U.S. states also indicates the United States' problems in the world and its sudden collapse," he stated.

Amir-Abdollahian emphasized that the former Soviet Union and the United States are no longer actors worldwide. Still, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine have played the most influential role in the region.

With more than five years of resistance by men, women, and youth, Yemen has prompted Saudi Arabia to seek a dignified escape from Yemen, he said.

The special aide to Iran's parliament speaker noted that the United States and Britain also faced many problems in the war with Yemen.

The new policy, the enemies of the region and the resistance, along with some US-led countries, tried to overthrow the Syrian government, but with the help of the Resistance, not only this goal was not achieved, but now the countries in the region are trying to establish relations with Syria, Amir-Abdollahian stated. The Iranian official went on to say that targeting a US base in Iraq with 13 ballistic missiles is just revenge for Martyr Soleimani's car, and the U.S. knows the revenge for his blood will be tougher.



U.S. forces assassinated General Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Iraq's Hashd al-Sha'abi, and their companions by targeting their vehicles outside Baghdad International Airport on January 3.

The act of terror was carried out under the direction of U.S. President Donald Trump, with the Pentagon taking responsibility for the strike.

The special aide to Iran's parliament speaker for international affairs stressed: "We will react if the normalization of relations between the UAE and Bahrain with the Zionist regime endangers the security of the region and our allies."

The 5th international meeting on "Warriors in Foreign Countries" was held with ambassadors from some Islamic countries and representatives from Palestinian resistance movements in attendance.

Iran, Sweden To Strengthen Economic Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iranian ambassador to Stockholm and the deputy minister of industry of Sweden reviewed the state of bilateral relations between the two countries and stressed the need to strengthen economic cooperation.

The Iranian Ambassador to Stockholm Ahmad Masoumifar and the Deputy Minister of Industry of Sweden Emil Hogberg discussed ways to develop economic and trade relations between Iran and Sweden in a bilateral meeting.

The two sides emphasized the expansion of the cooperation of the companies of both countries, especially small and medium companies in the fields of technology, innovation, transportation, and environment, as well as holding a joint economic commission in the near future.

Iranian ambassador to Stockholm Ahmad Masoumifar in the past month had met with Sweden Foreign Minister Ann Linde and King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf.

Tehran Ready to Help Find Sustainable Solution to Karabakh Dispute

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Tehran is ready to help find a sustainable solution to the ongoing dispute between the Republic of Azerbaijan and neighboring Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Zarif made the remarks in a Thursday phone call with his Azeri counterpart, Jeyhun Bayramov, during which he also discussed a proposal that foresees the Islamic Republic, Turkey, and Russia boosting a standing Minsk Group that has failed to resolve decades of territorial dispute between Baku and Yerevan.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but is populated by Armenians and sought after by Armenian separatists.

Zarif's offer came as decades of mediation by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group -- a body formed among Russia, France, and the United States to supposedly remedy the conflict -- has unexceptionally fallen short of the goal.

The Iranian foreign minister reiterated the Islamic Republic's principled position concerning the conflict, insisting on the need for respect for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

For his part, the Azeri official notified Zarif about the latest field developments in the conflict.

The two top diplomats also stressed the importance and role of regional initiatives to resolve this decades-long crisis.

Zarif Expects Japan to Prevent Illegal U.S. Move to Block Access to Its Funds

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on Japan and other countries to stand up to US efforts to block Iran's access to its overseas funds needed to buy medicine and foodstuff for the Iranian people amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The top Iranian diplomat said during a telephone conversation with his Japanese counterpart Toshimitsu Motegi that the illegal U.S. sanctions prohibiting Iran from using its funds in other countries, including Japan, to buy medicine and foodstuff for the Iranian people amounted to a crime against humanity.

He called on the Japanese government and other countries to counter the U.S. move.

"We expect the Japanese government to prevent this illegal U.S. action within the framework of the general commitment of countries to implement Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 2231," Zarif said.

UNSC Resolution 2231 endorses a 2015 historic multilateral nuclear deal between Iran and major world powers, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Since pulling out the JCPOA in 2018, the US has been piling up pressure on Iran through reinstating of the sanctions that had been lifted under the agreement and imposing new sanctions.

Washington has been threatening even its allies to follow suit in cutting their trade with Iran, or face secondary sanctions.

Back in June, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati said Korean banks were preventing Iran from using billions of dollars of its oil



money to buy foods and medicines which the U.S. alleges are exempt from its sanctions.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif pointed to recent developments surrounding the Iran nuclear deal and called on all parties to live up to their commitments under

the agreement to keep the JCPOA alive.

"It is very important that we make every effort to ensure that the other parties fulfill their obligations under this agreement," he said.

He highlighted the active and constructive role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in establishing peace and stability in the region and said, "The presence of foreign forces not only fails to help the region, but also complicates and aggravates the problems."

He also congratulated Yoshihide Suga on his election as prime minister and the re-appointment of Motegi as foreign minister, and expressed hope that the previous policy of the country in contributing to stability in the region would continue under Japan's new leadership as well.

Zarif also thanked Japan for its support for Iran in the fight against coronavirus and expressed hope the two countries would further expand bilateral relations.

The Japanese foreign minister, for his part, thanked Zarif for his congratulatory messages and emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation in the fight against coronavirus.

"Japan has always supported and continues to support the JCPOA," Motegi said, stressing that Japan's position has not changed in its efforts to contribute to stability in the Middle East.

Tehran Condemns Terror Attacks On Pakistani Security Forces

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has denounced the terrorist attacks carried out against Pakistani military forces in the past two days in the country's Ormara and North Waziristan districts.

In a statement on Friday, Khatibzadeh also offered sympathy to the Pakistani nation and government.

The spokesman said all forms of terrorism are rejected, and that all regional countries must participate in the continuous fight against the perpetrators, organizers, supporters, and sponsors of such terrorist attacks.

Twenty security personnel, including six Army men, were martyred in two terrorist attacks in Balochistan's Ormara area and North Waziristan tribal district on Thursday and late Wednesday.

Fourteen security men — seven personnel of the Frontier Corps and as many civilian guards employed by the OGDCL — were martyred in an armed attack on their convoy on the Coastal Highway in the Ormara area of Gwadar district on Thursday.

Six troops, including a Pakistan Army captain, were martyred and one suffered injuries when two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) struck their vehicles in North Waziristan tribal district on Wednesday evening.

The ISPR on Thursday also confirmed the martyrdom of six security personnel, including an Army captain, and injuries to one in the Wednesday's North Waziristan attack.

The military's media wing said in a brief statement that a convoy of security forces was attacked with improvised explosive devices near Razmak which resulted in the martyrdom of a captain and five soldiers.

UN's New Representative In Iran Appointed

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The United Nations has appointed Mandeep O'Brien as the new chief of its representative office in Iran.



She used to represent UNICEF in Iran.

O'Brien joined the UN mission in India twenty years ago and served a number of missions in Asia and the south and east of Africa.

Over the past twenty years, Ms. O'Brien has served in the UN, across three agencies, both in the field and headquarters.

FM Warns About Rockets Hitting Country's Border Areas

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh condemned hitting of several rockets on the border areas, reiterating that if repeated, Iran will not remain indifferent to this situation.

Unfortunately, worrying news in this regard has been reported during the day, which is not acceptable at all, he said late on Thursday. Rejecting rumors about retaliation by the Iranian border guards, Khatibzadeh emphasized, "Maintaining the security and peace of Iranian citizens living in border areas is the redline for our armed forces and in case of repeated shelling, the Islamic Republic of Iran It will not remain indifferent."

Armenia and Azerbaijan resumed clashes on the border between the two countries on September 27 blaming each other for the violence.

Nagorno-Karabakh has been a bone of contention between the two countries over the past decades.

Global Arrogance Is Collapsing

TEHRAN (IP) - Deputy Commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Brigadier General Mohammad Hejazi said that the US presidential candidate admitted that the U.S. is declining with Trump's behaviors.

Delivering speech in the 5th International Convention of Expatriate Mujahidden meeting, General Hejazi added that racial discrimination, the suicide of American soldiers, statistics of divorce and other internal problems in the United States reflect the U.S. situation.

Pointing out to the fact that the United States is facing many domestic problems, including moral and economic decline, he clarified that the United States is also isolated in the international arena and its allies have left the U.S. alone.

He stated that criminal Trump claims that his brutal actions have led to the security of the United States, if the U.S. has become safer with the assassination of Martyr Soleimani, why are American forces scared of their bases around the world and try to flee countries like Afghanistan?

General Hejazi highlighted that the path of resistance always continues, and what has proven so far is that the resistance front will always be victorious and the enemies will be destroyed. Muslim nations are opposed to the normalization of Arab relations with the Zionist regime, and even the people of Arab countries are dissatisfied with the actions of their rulers, he stated.

Referring to the fact that the achievements of the various areas of the Resistance Front are due to the jihad and self-sacrifice of the resistance forces, Hejazi concluded that the resistance front will soon achieve victory and dignity.

Iran, Slovakia to Boost Media Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP) -The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Slovakia announced on his Twitter account that the media cooperation between Iran and Slovakia would be strengthened.

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Slovakia, Abbas Bagherpour Ardakani wrote on his Twitter account on Thursday that he had two cordial fruitful meetings with Jaroslav Raznik, Chair of Slovak Radio and Television, and Vladimir Puchala, Director General of the News Agency of the Slovak Republic.

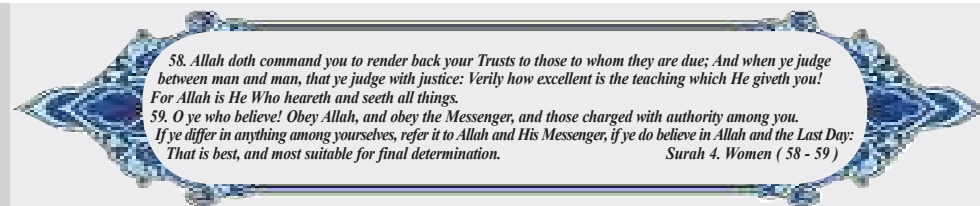
In light of good ties, we agreed to extend, explore and pursue further cooperation between relevant partners of the two sides including with IRIB and IRNA, he added.

Abbas Bagherpour Ardakani, Iranian Ambassador to Austria who was accredited to Slovakia, on 25 August met with Slovak First Deputy Minister of Economy Jan Oravetz in Bratislava and discussed expanding cooperation between the two countries.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:50
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:14



Jahangiri Calls For More Focus on Standardization of Products

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri has urged producers to focus more on standardization of their products for entering the international markets.

Speaking in a meeting on marking the World Standards Day, Jahangiri underscored the significance of paying attention to the standardization issue during producing different products, adding that standard and quality for those industrial and production units which are after entering the international markets is a very crucial issue.

He added that people in the country today attach serious attention to the standard mark on the goods and products and this sensitivity in the society has increased so that people pay attention not only to the standards of the goods but also to the brands of products.

Jahangiri added that Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI) should have special sensitivity on the standardization of domestic productions, notifying that neighboring countries like Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq and Republic of Azerbaijan are of the important export destinations of Iran and it is necessary that all organs like ISIRI should reach agreements with Iran's exporting target destinations in order to ease the process of exports for exporters.

He also hailed the head of ISIRI and all staff of the institute for their actions in the domestic and international scenes, stipulating that good achievements of the institute show that a female manager can have good records and performance in her job, and satisfaction of economic activists from ISIRI is a proof to this claim.

Jahangiri then pointed to the problems and woes ahead of the country, saying that on the one side, the country is facing with the challenges resulted by the economic war that fortunately the production cycle and national economy has not come to a halt and it is still active due to the endeavors of economic activists and producers.



He added that on the other hand, the outbreak of Coronavirus has had damaging effects both on the health of the society and on national economy. Jahangiri noted that it is painful to see that everyday some of our compatriots lose their lives, adding that it is necessary for all people and officials to observe all health protocols in a condition that Coronavirus is spiking.

He also termed exporters as the soldiers in the fronts of the economic war in the country, reiterating that the forex resulted from the non-oil exports should return to the national economic cycle. He also urged all officials in any job and post to facilitate the way for producers and exporters.

Jahangiri also pointed to the recent report released by Iran Statistical Center regarding the decline in the number of workforces in this summer comparing it to the same period in the preceding year, and noted this year 1.2m people have lost their jobs, adding this has happened in most of industrial countries and even in some countries the amount of unemployment has been ten times more than Iran's.

He added the number of unemployment in last summer was 2.9m people but this year it has been 2.477m and maybe it is because some people have preferred to stop searching for jobs due to the virus pandemic.

Iran, Pakistan Emphasize Expansion of Economic Ties



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation between Iran and Pakistan was held with the aim of strengthening bilateral economic relations.

The meeting was held on Thursday evening via videoconference, and it was chaired by Iran's Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Shahram Adamnejad, and Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance of Pakistan Azaz Dar.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on various trade, business, banking, financial, Customs, investment, industry, information and communication technology, education, science and technology, cultural heritage and tourism, port connection and relation, shipping, maritime and rail transport, and roads.

The formation of bilateral technical committees in the fields of information technology, customs, border issues, chambers of commerce, the Joint Investment and Rail Transport Committee within the next month, and the holding of the 21st Joint Economic Cooperation Commission in the next three months were important issues of understanding during the meeting.

Tehran-New Delhi Trade Declines Due to Sanctions, Pandemic



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Vice president of India-Iran Chamber of Commerce Parham Rezaei says Iran and India's trade exchange has declined due to the U.S. sanctions and outbreak of Coronavirus, adding that sanctions accounted for 50 percent of this decline.

Speaking to ILNA, Rezaei said that the decline in trade of Iran and India has had two major reasons as sanctions' share of the decline is 50 percent and some 30 percent is because of the pandemic.

He then pointed to the latest statistics and condition of trade exchanges between Iran and India, saying that although Iran's Customs Administration has not released any precise statistics on the volume of imports and exports of both countries, the outbreak of the virus has affected the trade exchange between both states in recent months and imports and exports have been declined significantly.

He added that the reason for this decline is partly for pandemic and partly for sanctions but sanctions' share is 50 percent and pandemic's is some 30 percent.

Rezaei added that Iran has talked with India to sort out its banking problem, adding that considering Iran is facing with forex problem, it also faces some challenges which had been created by the Central Bank because of changes in its policies.

He reiterated that in case Iran wants to increase the trade exchanges, the Central Bank should revise its approach towards exports and improve it, noting that in return, it should lift ban on imports of goods in order that exporters and importers themselves sort it out rather than the bank seats and waits repatriation of the forex into the country by the exporters.

Gov't to Introduce Rooftop Solar for Heavy Consumers of Electricity

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Ministry of Energy says capacity for using solar energy will increase in the country through a plan to encourage heavy consumers of electricity to take up rooftop panels.

A ministry spokesman said on Thursday that the government would pay for the interest and other costs of the loans offered to households for setting up rooftop installations to encourage take-up among more electricity customers.

Mostafa Rajabi said that heavy consumers would need photovoltaic (PV) panels that generate 400-500 watts of electricity per hour, saying those panels normally occupy 2-2.5 square meters of space and can be mounted on top of swamp coolers that are widely used in Iran for air conditioning to simultaneously serve as a shed to increase their efficiency.

"This would be a major component of our strategy to develop renewable energies in the country," said Rajabi without elaborating on the actual costs of the project which is expected to cover millions of electricity users in Iran. Iran is a major producer of electricity although renewable capacity is currently around only one percent of a total power capacity of 84 gigawatts (GW).

However, solar and wind farms keep mushrooming across Iran as the government seeks to cut back on a massive energy bill in thermal power plants where natural gas and precious fuels are burnt to move the turbines.

Expanding the rooftop solar, a field where Iran has hardly made any progress in recent years, would boost the share of the renewables in the country's power generation sector.

The new plan comes a month after the government announced it would stop charging nearly eight million customers for the electricity they use to encourage low usage of power among households.

Tehran, Muscat Call for Enhanced Cultural Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's ambassador in Muscat and Oman's minister of information called for enhanced cooperation on cultural ties including arts and media.

Ali Najafi-Khoshroudi said that Iran is willing to share all its cultural capacities and capabilities with the friendly nation of Oman.

He said the two Governments should try more to introduce the culture, arts, and tradition to the people of one another which will lead to stronger ties between the two neighboring countries.

He added that cooperation on public diplomacy and



cultural relations is one of the main ways to expand economic ties.

He expressed Iran's readiness for mutual cooperation with Oman in media, culture, and exhibitions.

Oman's Abdullah Nasser bin Khalifa al-Harrasi welcomed expansion of cultural ties with Iran and added that Iran-Oman relations are historical and

not just limited to the governments; people of Oman and Iran have strong relations.

He added that the policies of Oman are fixed and Sultan Haitham bin Tariq pursues the same policies that late Sultan Qaboos bin Said did.

Iranian Ports Operating Normally After Cyberattack

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran said it has foiled a cyberattack on the electronic infrastructures of the seaports.

The Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran announced in a statement that its information technology experts have thwarted a cyberattack targeting the electronic infrastructures of the Iranian ports.

All missions and activities of the Ports and Maritime Organization are going on normally, the statement added, noting that online services are being provided to prevent any disruption to the freight services or loading and unloading operations even for a moment.

Last month, an official said the export of non-oil commodities in the first half of the current Iranian year via the southeastern port city of Chabahar has risen by 95 percent compared to the corresponding period a year earlier.

Chabahar is the closest and best access point of Iran to the Indian Ocean and Iran has devised serious plans to turn it into a transit hub for immediate access to markets in the northern part of the Indian Ocean and Central Asia.

Iran, Russia Discuss Bilateral Trade Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Energy Reza Ardakanian and his Russian counterpart reviewed the latest status of Iran-Russia trade cooperation.

In a phone talk on Wednesday, Ardakanian and Russian minister of energy Alexander Novak conferred on the latest status of bilateral projects and trade cooperation between the two countries.

Both sides emphasized expanding the volume of trade exchanges and the implementation of bilateral projects. The Iranian and Russian ministers also agreed to hold the 16th meeting of the Joint Economic Cooperation Commission in form of videoconference this year.

Moreover, the officials further stress the need to facilitate the export of Iranian dairy products to Russia.

National Exports Day Ceremony Postponed

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – An official statement by the Iran Chamber of Commerce announced the postponement of the National Export Day ceremony which was to be held on Tuesday, October 20.

According to the statement issued by the business department of Iran Chamber of Commerce, due to the spike in the Coronavirus in the country and observing the health protocols nationwide, the ceremony for marking the National Export Day and awarding the best exporters of the year was postponed to another date.

The statement added that due to the directives of the National Anti-Coronavirus Campaign Headquarters of the country, the ceremony which is held every year on October 20 to mark the National Export Day and naming the best exporters of the year should not be held for now due to the spike in the virus and observing the health protocols.

It notified that the rescheduled date for the ceremony will be announced in another statement in due time.

100% Rise in Euro 4, 5 Gasoil Output of Isfahan Refinery

TEHRAN (Shana) -- Isfahan Oil Refining Company's Vice President of Production announced that the amount of Euro 4 and 5 diesel production of the refinery had increased by approximately 100% from 2 million liters per day to 4 million liters per day.



According to the refinery, Alireza Jafarpour said: "In order to increase the quality of diesel and increase the production of Euro 4 and Euro 5 diesel in the facility, changes were made in the operating conditions of the reactors of Isomax units and the production process was optimized."

He emphasized on the recent increase of Euro diesel production in Isfahan Oil Refining Company from 2 million liters to 4 million liters per day, saying: "Increasing the quality of this product while creating added value for the company, will have a significant impact on environmental protection and reducing environmental pollutants."

The official announced the launch of a huge diesel refining project next year, and said: "Due to the more than 85% progress of this project, the pre-commissioning stages have started and it is expected that all 20 million liters produced in the refinery will be fully refined in accordance with the international standard of Euro 5."

Swiss COVID-19 Infections Hit Another Record

ZURICH (Reuters) - Switzerland reported another daily record of 3,105 new coronavirus cases on Friday as a second wave of infection gripped the country.

The public health agency reported a total of 74,422 confirmed cases in Switzerland and neighbouring principality Liechtenstein. The death toll rose by five people to 1,823. Since phasing out most emergency measures in June, the country of 8.6 million people has so far held off from new nationwide restrictions, urging residents to follow existing social distancing and hygiene guidelines.

Switzerland has added to its list of places from which travellers must enter quarantine, while neighbouring Germany warned against visiting 10 Swiss cantons.



European Powers Condemn Israel's Settlement Approvals



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - European powers on Friday condemned Israel's decision to approve thousands more settlements in occupied Palestinian territory, calling it a "counterproductive" move that undermines regional peace efforts.

"The expansion of settlements violates international law and further imperils the viability of a two-state solution to bring about a just and lasting peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," said a joint statement from the foreign ministers of Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain.

"As we have emphasized directly with the government of Israel, this step furthermore undermines efforts to rebuild trust between the parties with a view to resuming dialogue," they said, urging an immediate halt in settlement construction.

This week, Israel approved the construction of more than 3,000 settler homes across the occupied West Bank, ending an eight-month lull in settlement expansion.

Under international law, settlements are considered illegal. Palestinian officials and much of the international community view them as the main obstacle to a viable two-state solution.

The latest approvals raised the number of settlement homes to be advanced this year to more than 12,150, according to Peace Now, the settlement watchdog group.

"These approvals make 2020 the highest year on record in terms of units in settlement plans promoted since Peace Now began recording in 2012," the watchdog said in a statement.

The European ministers said pushing ahead with more settlements would be a "counterproductive move in light of the positive developments of normalization agreements reached between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain". The UAE and Bahrain in mid-September set aside decades of enmity with Israel to sign a US-brokered deal to normalize ties.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also urged Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel, in what would be a strategic boost for the country.

But Riyadh said the focus should remain on the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks before any formal rapprochement between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Western powers had hoped the deals would bring regional stability and give a boost to hopes for peace.

But the Palestinians have branded the shift by the Persian Gulf nations as "betrayal". Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeinah said Israel had exploited improving relations in the Persian Gulf and "blind support from the Trump administration".

Palestinians claim all of the West Bank, captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, as part of a future independent state. They say the growing illegal Israeli settler population, approaching 500,000 in the West Bank, has made it increasingly difficult to achieve their dream of independence.

Kyrgyz Acting Leader Moves To Consolidate Power

BISHKEK (Dispatches) - Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister and acting president Sadyr Japarov appointed a close ally as national security chief Friday, as he consolidated control over the Central Asian country rocked by unrest following a parliamentary vote.

Japarov appeared in parliament along with outgoing leader Sooronbay Jeenbekov, who resigned Thursday in a move that cleared a path for Japarov to assume the post of head of state as well as premier.

Jeenbekov became the third president of the volatile ex-Soviet state to resign since 2005 -- a move he said he hoped would spare the country further bloodshed.



Yemen War Foes Complete Two-Day Prisoner Swap

SANAA (Reuters) - Yemen's warring parties exchanged hundreds more prisoners on Friday on the second and final day of an operation to fly about 1,000 men home and help build momentum for a new push to end a catastrophic war.

A Saudi-led military coalition, backing the internationally recognised Yemeni government, and its adversary, Yemen's Houthis movement, agreed last month to exchange 1,081 prisoners, in the largest swap of its kind in the five-year-old conflict.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said 1,056 in total were returned home, adding it hoped this would lead to further detainee releases and transfers. Men descending from a plane when it landed in Aden, temporary capital of Yemen's government, prostrated their foreheads to the tarmac. Some embraced waiting friends and relatives.

Landing in Sanaa, released detainee Ahmad Abd al-Wahhab saw his father after three years of absence, having been taken prisoner on Yemen's west coast. "I am experiencing indescribable happiness and feelings beyond imagination," Wahhab said after disembarking.

In Sanaa on Thursday night, celebratory fireworks crackled in the night sky as buses carrying returned prisoners moved down a road lined with people cheering in welcome. On Friday 352 prisoners were exchanged after more than 700 were swapped on Thursday -- including a plane carrying Saudis and Sudanese to Riyadh -- said the ICRC, which managed the process.

ICRC planes shuttled twice between Aden city and the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa on Friday, taking 151 detainees to Aden and 201 to Sanaa.

U.N. Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths told the Security Council on Thursday the swap was an "airlift of hope", adding that both parties remain in negotiations for a permanent ceasefire, which he hoped could be agreed by the end of the year.

The warring sides had agreed in 2018 to swap 15,000 detainees split between both sides to pave the way for political negotiations to end the conflict, but progress has been slow. Ahmed Hamed, the Houthi-appointed head of the Presidency Office in Sanaa, told Reuters he hoped more progress on prisoners would be made, given the U.N. push on this issue.



Greece, Cyprus Told to Wait for EU Action on Provocative Turkey

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Greece and Cyprus pushed for a tougher European Union response to Turkey's natural gas exploration in contested Mediterranean waters at an EU summit on Friday but were essentially told to hold off until another leaders' meeting in December.

Two weeks after their last summit where leaders discussed economic sanctions, the EU has so far failed to persuade Ankara to stop exploring in waters disputed by Greece and Cyprus.

Turkey said on Wednesday it was restarting operations of a survey ship that it withdrew last month.

"We plan a summit in December. And we have planned, indeed, to tackle again and to assess the situation in the eastern Mediterranean and in Turkey," European Council President Charles Michel told a news conference after the summit.

France and Germany said earlier this week that Turkey had only "weeks" to revise its stance and stop what they also said were provocations, but declined to give a strong ultimatum as Athens and Nicosia would like.

French President Emmanuel Macron said after the summit that leaders had reaffirmed support for Greece and Turkey, but were also open to talks with Ankara.

EU leaders had agreed on Oct. 2 to give Turkey until early December before considering economic sanctions and Germany, which has so far led diplomatic talks with Ankara, wants to give dialogue a chance because of close EU-Turkey trade ties.

Cyprus is frustrated that, in addition to the Turkish exploration ship off a Greek island, Turkey has sent another vessel to Cyprus's economic zone to conduct seismic surveys.

EU member Cyprus is also furious that Turkish Cypriot authorities have partially reopened the beach town of Varosha, a former resort area fenced off and abandoned in no-man's land since a 1974 Turkish invasion that split the island.

"Turkey remains consistent in its provocative and aggressive behaviour," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Thursday in Brussels.

Thai Police Turn Water Cannon on Defiant Protesters

BANGKOK (Reuters) - Thai police fired stinging liquid from water cannon at thousands of Thai protesters on Friday in the most violent escalation of three months of demonstrations against the government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader.

Protesters, defying a government ban on gatherings for a second day, pushed back against helmeted police who advanced with batons and riot shields.

Youth-led protests have grown into the biggest challenge in years to a political establishment dominated by military figures and the Royal Palace of King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

"The dictatorial government is using violence to disperse the people's movement," said Tattap Ruangprapaikitseree, one of the protest leaders.

The king has made no direct comment on the protests, but in comments broadcast on state television, he said Thailand "needs people who love the country and love the monarchy".

Until now, police had not used major force to suppress peaceful protests that have drawn tens of thousands of people, although more than 40 demonstrators - including several leaders - have been arrested in the past week.

The government banned political gatherings of more than five people on Thursday. "We've issued warnings against illegal acts," police spokesman Yingyot Thepchamnong told reporters.

Reuters journalists said water turned on the protesters

contained chemicals making them sting. Organisers told protesters to disperse more than three hours after they gathered.

"I am not afraid for myself. I fear more for the future of the country," said one protester Poom, 31, who did not want to give his full name.

Prayuth first took power as army chief in a 2014 coup. Critics say he engineered a general election last year to keep hold of power as a civilian prime minister.

He says the election was fair.

Protesters also want a new constitution, to replace one drafted under military rule.

"I'm not quitting," Prayuth told reporters after an emergency cabinet meeting, adding that emergency measures would be in force for up to 30 days.

Calls have also built up among protesters for reforms to the monarchy, which is accused by protesters of helping to entrench decades of military influence in politics.

The only specific incident cited by the government for the imposition of emergency measures was one in which Queen Suthida's motorcade was jeered, but it also said protests were damaging the economy and national security.

Police said on Friday that two men would be charged with attempted violence against the queen, which carries a possible death sentence if her life is thought to have been threatened. Even if not, the charge can mean life in jail.



Pompeo Says Turkey Makes Situation Worse in Nagorno-Karabakh

YEREVAN (Reuters) - Armenian and Azeri forces fought new clashes on Friday, defying hopes of ending nearly three weeks of fighting over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

blamed Turkey for inflaming the situation by arming the Azeris.

The worst outbreak of violence in the South Caucasus since Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war over the enclave in the 1990s, the fighting risks creating a humanitarian disaster, especially if it draws in Russia and Turkey.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but populated and governed by ethnic Armenians.

Turkey has increased military exports sixfold this year to its close ally Azerbaijan. Russia, is close to both sides but has a defence pact with Armenia. News agency RIA reported the Russian navy had started planned military exercises in the Caspian Sea.

There were further signs on Friday that a Russian-brokered ceasefire agreed last Saturday to allow the sides to swap detainees and the bodies of those killed had all but broken down. Armenia and Azerbaijan each accused the other of launching attacks, and each said it had the upper hand.

Armenian defence ministry official Artsrun Hovhannisyan said Azerbaijan had conducted artillery bombardments of Nagorno-Karabakh from the north, "with total disregard for the humanitarian truce". He added that Azeri forces had been repelled and had suffered significant losses. Azerbaijan's defence ministry said Nagorno-Karabakh forces had been forced to retreat and Azeri forces retained the advantage along the line of contact that divides the sides.

Reuters could not independently verify the reports.

Baku also accused Yerevan of a missile attack on Ordubad in Nakhchivan autonomous province, a region which belongs to Azerbaijan but is surrounded by Armenia and Iran. Armenia denied such an attack.

The Nagorno-Karabakh defence ministry reported 29 more military casualties, bringing to 633 the number of servicemen killed since fighting broke out on Sept. 27. Azerbaijan does not disclose military casualties. The Azeri prosecutor-general's office said 47 civilians had been killed and 222 wounded.



Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Velenjak Apt (\$2500)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Fereshteh Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
green yard
Nicely Furn

((\$1400))
Zaferanieh Apt
140sq.m, 2bdrs
S/pool, S, J, pkg
balcony, & F.F

Farmanieh Apts
(\$1600) 2bdrs, S/p, F.F
(\$2000) 3bdrs, S/p, F.F
(\$2600) 4bdrs, S/p, F.F

((\$20000))
Andarzgoo bldg
5storey, 30bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkgs
balcony, & yard

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Jordan (\$1800) 3bdrs, S/p
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U.S. Issues Sanctions Warning to Banks Over Hong Kong Crackdown

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. State Department warned international financial institutions doing business with individuals deemed responsible for China's crackdown in Hong Kong that they could soon face tough sanctions.

In a report to Congress, the State Department named 10 people, including Hong Kong's chief executive Carrie Lam, all of whom have already been sanctioned, and said within 60 days

it would identify financial institutions that conduct significant transactions with them.

It was the latest U.S. response to China's actions in Hong Kong, including enactment of a new national security law this year that Washington has called an unacceptable breach of China's "one country, two systems" commitments toward the former British colony.



G20 Agrees to Additional 6-Month Debt Suspension for Poor Nations

RIYADH (Dispatches) - The Group of 20 nations, representing the world's biggest economies, have agreed to extend the suspension of debt payments by an additional six months to support the most vulnerable countries in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

The G-20 says the extension will provide ongoing relief for the \$14bn in debt payments that would have come due at the end of the year otherwise. Wednesday's decision gives developing nations until the end of June 2021 to focus spending on health care and emergency stimulus programs rather than debt repayments.

The G-20 announcement was made initially on Twitter during a meeting of the group's finance ministers and central bank governors and later confirmed at a news conference. The virtual discussions are being held at the start of this week's meetings of the 189-nation International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are also being conducted virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic.

International aid groups expressed disappointment that more debt relief isn't being provided by extending the moratorium on debt payments for a full year or by forgiving part of the debt rather than merely suspending payments. "This pandemic has laid bare a glaring and unjust double standard: The world's wealthiest countries play by one set of rules, and the world's poorest by another," said David McNair, executive director for global policy at ONE, an international aid group. G20 officials argued that the relief that is being provided is helping 46 of the 73 countries eligible, with efforts under way to expand. Some critics have also complained that China objected to portions of the debt relief plans that have been advanced.

"It is unfortunate that the pressing need for broader debt relief for poor countries is being stymied by the apparent recalcitrance of China, which has become a major creditor," said Eswar Prasad, an economics professor at Cornell University and a former head of the IMF's China division. "China has proven a reluctant participant in multilateral debt relief efforts, putting its narrow economic and geopolitical interests ahead of a collective approach to easing the burden on poor countries."

"We still need to do more," Mohammed al-Jadaan, finance minister of Saudi Arabia, this year's chair of the G-20, acknowledged at a news conference after Wednesday's meeting. "We must ensure these nations are fully supported in their efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. ... We have agreed to extend the debt service suspension initiative by six months."

Al-Jadaan said there will be further discussions during April's meetings to decide whether the suspension should be extended for an additional six months. He stressed that the pandemic has threatened the fiscal stability of many countries, particularly the poorest. Al-Jadaan said another virtual finance ministers' meeting was planned for next month, before the leaders' summit on November 21-22, and that it would aim to agree on a framework that goes beyond even the current debt suspension initiative. He did not elaborate.

Transparency International, Amnesty International and a collective of groups called CIVICUS had written to the G-20 finance ministers ahead of their meeting to warn that the world is facing a crisis unlike any in the last century and that debt suspension is only a first step. Though the global economy has begun a gradual recovery with the reopening of businesses and borders, the recovery has been sharply uneven. The groups urged the G-20 nations to suspend debt payments at least through 2021, saying many of the poorest countries are still spending more on debt payments than on life-saving public services. Some countries, like Pakistan, have called for an outright cancellation of debt payments.

Oxfam International said it believes that the six-month extension was "the bare minimum the G-20 could do." "The failure to cancel debt payments will only delay the tsunami of debt that will engulf many of the world's poorest countries, leaving them unable to afford the investment in healthcare and social safety nets so desperately needed," said Jaime Atienza, an Oxfam official who manages debt policy. Oxfam and other groups are also calling on private lenders and investment funds to make similar concessions for the poorest countries by suspending their debt repayments. The G-20, in a final communique, also urged private lenders to join its initiative for debt suspension. "We are disappointed by the absence of progress of private creditors' participation" in the debt relief, "and strongly encourage them to participate on comparable terms when requested by eligible countries", it said.

Turkish Arms Sales to Azerbaijan Surged Before Nagorno-Karabakh Fighting

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's military exports to its ally Azerbaijan have risen six-fold this year, with sales of drones and other military equipment rising to \$77 million last month alone before fighting broke out over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, according to exports data.

The figures compiled by the Turkish Exporters' Assembly, which groups more than 95,000 exporting companies in 61 sectors, show Azerbaijan bought \$123 million in defense and aviation equipment from Turkey in the first nine months of 2020.

Most of the purchases of drones, rocket launchers, ammunition and other weapons arrived were after July, when border clashes between Armenian and Azeri forces prompted Turkey and Azerbaijan to conduct joint military exercises.

Sales jumped from \$278,880 in the month of July to \$36 million in the month of August, and \$77.1 million in just September, the data showed. Military sales to Azerbaijan in the first nine months of 2019 totaled \$20.7 million.

Fighting between Azeri and ethnic Armenian forces broke out on Sept. 27 over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountain enclave which is recognized internationally as part of Azerbaijan but is governed and populated by ethnic Armenians. "Azerbaijan clearly turned to Turkey for help ... and wasted no time realizing that the threat would grow," said Istanbul-based defense analyst Turan Oguz.

"Ankara is very determined in providing Baku with its needs," he said. "The strong defense cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey is getting stronger by the day." Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has backed Azerbaijan and said Armenians must withdraw from Nagorno-Karabakh.



Ankara, which wants a role in ceasefire talks, says it is not directly involved in the fighting. But Azeri officials have touted their use of Turkish armed drones, which have spearheaded Ankara's military operations in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

The surge in arms sales reflects Turkey's growing cross-border influence in the region, and is one measure of how quickly Azerbaijan embraced Ankara before the flare-up of the decades-old conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Asked about the data, a Turkish defense ministry representative referred to statements by Minister Hulusi Akar, who said late last month Turkey will support Azerbaijan "with all our means."

IEA Says Balancing Oil Market Difficult Amid Second Wave

LONDON (Dispatches) - Global oil stocks which rose during the height of the pandemic are being steadily reduced, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said, but a second wave is slowing demand and will complicate efforts by producers to balance the market.

OPEC+ producers -- OPEC members and others including Russia -- plan to boost supply by 2 million barrels per day (bpd) from January and the IEA predicts a ceasefire in Libya will raise output there to 700,000 bpd in December from 300,000 bpd currently. "There is only limited headroom for the market to absorb extra supply in the next few months," the IEA said in its monthly report. "Those wishing to bring about a tighter oil market are looking at a moving target."

OPEC+ producers are currently cutting output by 7.7 million bpd.

The IEA said "the efforts of the producers have shown some success," noting relatively stable oil prices and a strong draw on storage, with implied global stocks falling by 2.3 million bpd in the third quarter and by a predicted 4.1 million bpd in the fourth. However, the agency added that a demand rebound over the summer was now slowing due to a second wave of coronavirus cases and new movement restrictions.

"This surely raises doubts about the robustness of the anticipated economic recovery and thus the prospects for oil demand growth," the IEA said. Global oil supply fell in September, the IEA said, as OPEC+ countries improved their compliance with output cuts and aided by maintenance and outages which reduced flows from Brazil, Canada and the North Sea.

Fall in USD Generally Positive for U.S. Energy Sector

LONDON (Dispatches) - A fall in the U.S. dollar is "generally positive" for the US energy sector, which comprises companies in oil and gas exploration, transport and storage and product refining, says PhillipCapital analyst Yeap Jun Rong.

That said, Yeap sees a "longer-term" shift towards clean energy, and one that has been

underway since 2004. He also believes that the trend towards sustainable energy will continue.

"Since 2004, renewable capacity investments in the U.S. have been increasing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.5%. This is the second-largest growth globally, behind China. Despite deregulation of the energy sector during Trump's term, renewable capacity investments continue to grow at a 2-year CAGR of 15.6%. This suggests an inexorable shift," he writes in a report dated Oct 14.

Yeap also believes that an oversupply on oil production may persist as its cuts of 6.1% in 2020 may be insufficient to offset a greater 8.5% fall in demand caused by Covid-19.

"Based on Energy Information Administration (EIA) projections, global oil demand as at end-2021 will still fall short of pre-Covid levels, by around 2.4%. Likewise, surplus production capacity could remain 36% higher than pre-Covid levels as at end-2021. If this comes to pass, the glut will drag beyond 2021, capping oil prices," he warns.

Furthermore, a second wave of Covid-19 infections may trigger another round of partial lockdowns, prolong travel restrictions, cripple the economic recovery, and cause US GDP for 2020 to fall by 8.5% compared to the current dip of 7.3%.

These factors, he says, would make a sustained recovery in the energy sector "highly questionable".

Touching on the US Presidential Elections that will happen in November, Yeap adds that a second Trump term will likely to be positive for the energy sector as monthly mining, quarrying and production of crude oil increased close to 45% to a record high at end 2019 under his first term, partly due to aggressive rollback of climate and environmental policies.

IMF Warns of Rich-Poor Recovery Gap Between, Within Countries

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The global economy is "coming back" the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday, but warned that the road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will likely be long and uncertain with "uneven recoveries" in emerging and developing economies significantly worsening the prospects for redressing income inequality within and between nations.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF revised its forecast for global growth to negative 4.4 percent this year -- a less severe contraction than the negative 5.2 percent it had forecast in June, but still on track for the worst performance since the Great Depression.

"We are projecting a somewhat less severe though still deep recession in 2020, relative to our June forecast," said chief economist Gita Gopinath in a foreword to the October revision of the World Economic Outlook. "The revision is driven by revision in second-quarter GDP outturns in large advanced economies, which were not as negative as we had projected," she added, citing China's stronger-than-expected return to growth as a key driver. But a lack of fiscal space and ballooning debt has left less wealthy countries -- where most of the world's people live -- in economic shambles.

"The poor are getting poorer with over 90 million people expected to fall into extreme poverty just this year," said Gopinath during a virtual presentation on Tuesday. "Policies for the next stage of the crisis must see lasting improvements and create a prosperous future for all."

Inequality within countries is growing as well, with low-skilled workers, women and young people being hit harder than others. Preventing the divergence will require ending the health crisis, said Gopinath, and getting countries to work together to ensure the rapid development of coronavirus treatments and vaccines. The IMF upgraded its economic outlook for the United States due to stronger than expected performance in the second and third quarters.

"In the second quarter the recovery in the US came sooner than expected [and] quarter three has been strong as well," despite a resurgence in coronavirus cases, Gopinath said, adding that the projection still remains in negative territory of minus 4.3 percent. But even a partial recovery in the US economy has positive spillover to other parts of the world. Action taken by the US Central Bank, the Federal Reserve, early in the pandemic has helped stabilise the global market, she said.

In sub-Saharan Africa, 20 million people are projected to fall into extreme poverty this year. These countries simply do not have the fiscal space and policies to deal with a crisis of such magnitude.

India, where the hit on the economy has been large and broad based, is seeing a significant growth downgrade of minus 10.3 percent. "There's been some efforts to improve medium-term prospects with some progress on labour reform bills," Malhar Nabar, Division Chief at IMF Research, said during the virtual briefing.

Extraordinary fiscal and monetary support is critical for least developed, developing and emerging economies in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East that rely heavily on tourism and oil exports, said the IMF officials. Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are the worst-affected regions, respectively.

Global Oil Demand Fully Recovering From Coronavirus by 2022



RIYADH (Dispatches) - Oil demand is set to recover to pre-coronavirus levels by 2022, once a vaccine is developed by the end of next year, said Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser, at the Energy Intelligence Forum.

"The worst is definitely behind us," he said at the event held on Tuesday. "We are seeing a recovery."

In an interview with Energy Intelligence, speaking about the downturn as a result of the pandemic, Amin remarked: "My generation hasn't seen anything like this. I don't think the world has seen anything like this... But we have been able to manage this downturn while executing one of the biggest acquisitions in the world, the \$69 billion Sabic acquisition. We are confident that things will be better in the future."

For more coronavirus news, visit our dedicated page. Nasser was voted Energy Intelligence's Energy Executive of the Year and the award was presented during the consultancy firm's inaugural Energy Intelligence Forum, being held virtually.

The Saudi Aramco chief said the current global oil demand was 90 million bpd, and was "picking up," led mainly from east Asian countries, with China close to pre-pandemic levels.

Nasser's outlook was more optimistic than the International Energy Agency (IEA) which had said in a report released earlier in the day that the oil market's full recovery will take until 2023.

The Aramco CEO at the same time warned of a looming supply gap because of dwindling investment throughout the global upstream sector. "The quantum of upstream investment this year is 33 percent lower than last year. If this continues for another five years, 9 million bpd of supply will disappear. This will have a significant impact."

Nasser said there should be a correction in the level of investment, otherwise a supply crunch could arise in middle to long term.

Truckloads of Medicines Seized In Iraq Not of Iranian Origin

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Food and Drug Administration of Iran says the 19 truckloads of medicines seized in Iraq were not Iranian, and had only been transferred via Iran.

The government body underlined that all profiteers who seek to cash in on the current situation to make huge profits, especially amid U.S. sanctions on Iran’s medical sector, will be dealt with.

The food and drug authority reiterated that Iranians are under tough and unfair sanctions imposed by Washington, which claims to be an advocate of human rights, but is ironically targeting Iranian people’s health.

The Food and Drug Administration said the U.S. chants demagogic slogans that it has not imposed sanctions on food and drugs, but has, in fact, blocked the supply of some medicines and medical equipment.



China Raises \$6b in Dollar-Bond Sale

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China raised \$6 billion with its latest international bond sale, matching a record set last year, ahead of economic data that is likely to show growth is recovering toward pre-pandemic levels.

Despite heightened tensions with the U.S., this was China’s first bond sale in recent years targeted partly at investors in America. U.S. buyers snapped up large chunks of the four-part deal, including 47% of a \$500 million offering of 30-year debt, according to one of the banks that handled the sale.

Economic indicators like retail sales and export data show China is shaking off the effects of the coronavirus. Gross domestic product figures due Monday are likely to show growth rose to 5.3% from a year earlier in the third quarter, according to economists polled by The Wall Street Journal. That is up from 3.2% a quarter earlier and approaching the 6.1% rate for all of 2019.

China’s Ministry of Finance said in a deal document the country was “exhibiting restorative growth and a steady recovery.”

This month the International Monetary Fund said China, where the pandemic originated, will be the only major economy to grow this year, expanding 1.9%.

The deal drew a strong reception from institutional investors in the U.S. and elsewhere, said Samuel Fischer, head of China onshore debt capital markets at Deutsche Bank. It was aided by the IMF’s upgraded forecast, a Chinese stock-market rally and improving consumption data, he said. Central banks in the U.S. and elsewhere have cut interest rates and bought huge quantities of government debt, helping push sovereign bond yields to very low or negative levels. That in turn has boosted the appeal of even slightly higher-yielding debt sold by emerging countries.

China’s four-part deal included bonds due in three, five, 10 and 30 years, according to a term sheet. The shortest dated was priced to yield 0.25 percentage point over corresponding U.S. Treasuries, while the bond due in 2050 offered an extra yield of 0.8 percentage point.

China has solid investment-grade credit ratings, with an A-plus grade from S&P Global Ratings and an equivalent A1 from Moody’s Investors Service. Those ratings are in line with Japan’s.

The cost of insuring China’s dollar debts against default, as measured by credit default swaps, has also fallen in recent years, showing investor concerns about China’s creditworthiness have waned. It now costs less than \$40,000 a year to insure \$10 million of Chinese debt against default for five years, Refinitiv data shows. Asia has been one of the best-performing regions this year for investors in dollar-denominated sovereign bonds, said Alan Siow, fixed-income portfolio manager at Ninety One. Mr. Siow said this was thanks in part to the way China and its neighbors “have dealt with the economic and health impacts of Covid-19.”

If the global economic recovery continues, the gap between yields on Asian sovereign bonds and Treasuries should continue to narrow, said Julio Callegari, a portfolio manager at J.P. Morgan Asset Management. This is the fourth year in a row that China has raised billions of dollars with an autumn sale of international bonds. The new bonds were sold in both a 144a format, which allows debt to be sold to investors in the U.S., as well as under the less onerous Regulation-S framework for international debt sales.

Building Rural Women’s Resilience in the Wake of COVID-19

TEHRAN (UNIC) – United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his message on the International Day of Rural Women, 15 October 2020, called for building rural women’s resilience in the wake of COVID-19.

The full text of his message reads:

Rural women play a critical role in agriculture, food security and nutrition, building climate resilience, and managing land and natural resources. But many rural women suffer from discrimination, systemic racism and structural poverty.

The COVID-19 pandemic has now affected more than half the world’s women farmers with restrictions on movement, the closure of shops and markets,

and disruption to their supply chains. Combined with challenges including increased unpaid care and domestic work and rising rates of gender-based violence, rural women are bearing some of the heaviest burdens of the pandemic.

Digital channels can offer a lifeline in rural areas, providing information on access to healthcare as well as agricultural updates. However, the gender digital divide is particularly wide for rural women, who make up just a quarter of users of digital agricultural solutions.

Helping rural women through the pandemic and building their resilience for the future will require solidarity and support from all.

Together, we must invest in rural women so that they have access to the healthcare, social protection and agricultural information services they need. We must close the digital divide and provide essential services to respond to the shadow pandemic of violence against women. And we must tackle the discriminatory land and inheritance laws and practices that make rural women vulnerable to losing their sources of income.

On the International Day of Rural Women, let us renew our commitment to rural women in all their diversity; increase our efforts to support them through the COVID-19 pandemic; and work with them to build their resilience to future crises.

Iran to Trade...

FROM PAGE 1

During the 15-member Security Council vote on August 14, the US received support only from the Dominican Republic for its anti-Iran resolution, leaving it far short of the minimum nine ‘yes’ votes required for adoption.

Trump, a hawkish critic of the JCPOA, unilaterally withdrew Washington from the agreement in May 2018, and unleashed the “toughest ever” sanctions against the Islamic Republic to strangle its economy in defiance of global criticism.

Following its much-criticized exit, Washington has been attempting to prevent the remaining signatories from abiding by their commitments and thus kill the historic agreement, which is widely viewed as a fruit of international diplomacy. “In accordance with the timeline stated in Resolution 2231, Iran will be relieved from arms restrictions as early as Oct. 18. Naturally, from that date, we’ll trade, on the basis of our national interests, with other countries in this field,” Miryousefi said.

He added that the lack of support for Washington’s initiatives was telling of its position vis-à-vis the international community.

Miryousefi added, “It is abundantly clear that the UN—and the overwhelming majority of its member states—reject the US’ so-called maximum pressure policy on Iran,” and that “its attempts to even further violate the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231 have led to its isolation.”

Although Iran has not yet formally announced any specific country to start trading arms, Miryousefi said Tehran had options beginning as of today.

Speaking during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the country will be free to trade weapons as of Sunday.

The Islamic Republic has achieved self-sufficiency in most areas of its defense sector and is itself an exporter of arms. Tehran says it can meet its strategic needs through the countries it interacts with like Russia and China once the UN embargo is lifted.

The Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said on Thursday that Moscow will consider military technical cooperation with Iran in line with mutual interests after the expiration of the United Nations arms embargo on Tehran.

Ordinary Citizens Fall...

FROM PAGE 1

“The U.S. government has targeted, for political gains, my fellow citizens, in particular, the most vulnerable among them, including women, children, the elderly and those in need of medical attention. This is nothing but an act of economic terrorism,” the envoy said.

Since pulling out of a historic multilateral deal with Iran and other major powers in 2018, the US has been piling up pressure on Iran through reinstating the sanctions that had been lifted under the agreement and adding new bans.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) later ordered the US to lift the sanctions it has illegally re-imposed on humanitarian supplies to Iran.

Defying the ruling as well as international criticism, Washington has even further tightened its economic sanctions against Iran since the coronavirus began spreading across the country in March. The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump claims the sanctions do not target the delivery of humanitarian items to the Iranian people, but that has actually been the case as the bans have made foreign banks and companies extremely wary of engaging in any trade with Tehran.

Tehran Warns...

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Iran’s envoy further enumerated impediments to nuclear disarmament, including an arms modernization race and a lack of political will by countries to reject a nuclear weapon option.

“Over 14,000 nuclear weapons, costing \$100 billion annually to modernize, maintain and deploy, remain in the arsenals of the nuclear-armed states, and the possibility of their use can result in a catastrophic impact on humanity and the planet. Fifty years after entry into force of the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), and against the clear obligation of NWS (nuclear weapons states) on nuclear disarmament, that nominal commitment is yet to be implemented,” he noted.

Takht-Ravanchi also warned that the U.S., which is the largest holder of nuclear weapons globally, keeps modernizing its tremendous arsenal.

Washington’s withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as well as its lack of the will to extend the New Start Treaty have caused immense damage to international efforts towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, he said.

“Just in 2019, the U.S. spent \$36 billion on its nuclear arsenal and confirmed that the latest variant of a low-yield warhead- has been ‘fielded.’ It uses this arsenal to threaten other non-nuclear-weapon states and irresponsibly lowers the threshold of the use of nuclear weapons.”

Referring to Israel’s threat of nuclear annihilation against Middle Eastern countries, the Iranian diplomat urged the international community to compel the regime to promptly accede to the NPT without any precondition and place all of its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)’s full-scope safeguards.

“This regime is the only regional obstacle to the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear weapons, a first-ever proposal initiated by Iran in 1974,” he said.

Moreover, Takht-Ravanchi cautioned against Saudi Arabia’s incomplete implementation of the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement and Washington-Riyadh nuclear collaboration.

“Failure to implement the IAEA’s safeguards could allow the Saudi Arabia to hide certain nuclear activities without being subject to IAEA inspections. However, Washington has reportedly given green light to seven US firms to engage with Riyadh in preliminary work on nuclear power ahead of any deal, without any prior-agreement for enforcing non-proliferation norms,” he underlined.

Illegally Imported...

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Muhammad Salim, a collector of customs appraisalment in Peshawar, admitted that Iranian apples may be being smuggled into Pakistan, but said growers might be exaggerating the extent of the problem.

“The illegal flow of Iranian apples cannot be ruled out due to the significant exemption of duty/taxes available to Afghan-origin apples,” Salim said, adding that the origins of agricultural produce, including apples, could not be ascertained through visual or physical examination or even through a lab test.

Salim said the high tax on apples brought in from the Iran border compared to through Afghanistan “provides attraction to unscrupulous elements to push the illegal flow of Iranian apples into Pakistan using different modes.”

He urged the Commerce Ministry to formulate “rules of origin” and prescribe a credible certification mechanism.

“The duty and other import levies structure on apples (should) be reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders so that the huge difference (in taxes) on Afghan-origin apples may be curtailed and balanced to avoid the illegal flow of Iranian apples into Pakistan.”

Kakar at the Balochistan Chamber of Commerce demanded that the government stop Iranian produce from being imported via the Torkham border at once.

“We demand that this be stopped immediately, as the country’s own produce is also available,” he said.

Kakar said it cost a grower Rs800 to produce a crate of apples in Pakistan, which would sell for Rs1,600.

“But when apples arrive from Iran, where it costs far less to farm, the prices drop to Rs1,000 for mountainous apples and as low as Rs400 for apples being grown in plain areas,” he said.

Iran Raps...

FROM PAGE 1

He said, “I will not delve deeply into the absurdities that representative of Yemen mentioned Iran. As they do not warrant serious consideration and we reject them. Just I want to remind that nothing can justify this degree of breach of international human rights and International Humanitarian Law and it is a great regret that they acknowledge they have invited another country to intervene militarily in their country and they are not asking them to stop bombing and imposing economic pressure which has caused the most severe humanitarian crisis in the history to happen in Yemen.

In addition, I want to reflect on another issue that in the course of our deliberations, a few countries including Germany have raised concerns about Iran’s ballistic-missile program. They have also argued that Iran’s ballistic missile launches are inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015). I am therefore taking the floor to make some comments to clarify that issue. In fact, our defensive posture stems from the sober geostrategic calculation and moral and religious convictions and also based on significant historical experience. During Saddam Hussein’s aggression against Iran, he rained missiles on our cities, some of which carried chemical components that were provided by certain Western countries including particularly the United States and Germany. As a result of these attacks, other than tens of hundreds of innocent Iranian people who died directly, 100000 fell victims who are still suffering. Germany must be held accountable for its role in assisting Saddam to equip with chemical weapons and committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

However, Iran was actively prevented from purchasing even the most rudimentary means of self-defense to at least deter the aggressor. The application of such restrictions against Iran by all Western countries still continues. In addition to Saddam’s aggression, which was effectively backed by the United States and its regional allies, Iran has been subject to American military interventions on a few occasions over the past 40 years. During those decades, we were also faced with persistent United States threats, especially through its outdated mantra that all options are on the table. We should also

recall that for many years, certain countries in the region have been calling on the United States to attack Iran. Further, we also like to refer to Israel’s decades of threats against Iran, the most recent of which was using nuclear weapons and threatening Iran with nuclear annihilation. That is definitely wishful thinking. We have therefore learned our lesson by having to deal with persistent restrictions on obtaining essential defensive weapons, on the one hand, and defending our nation against continued foreign threats on the other. We learned that no Iranian Administration can leave its people defenseless in a region as volatile as the Persian Gulf. Our main responsibility is to protect our citizens. We have therefore developed our own indigenous missile defense system, which is a legitimate and lawful program and our inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is worth mentioning that our entire defense expenditure is a fraction of that of United States clients in our neighborhood, who race to buy hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of the most sophisticated weaponry, including long-range missiles. With regard to the role of missiles in its defense posture, Iran’s missile program is a conventional defensive capability. Its missiles are for defensive purposes only and are an effective means of deterrence against foreign threats. Iran’s conscious decision to focus on precision rather than range has afforded us the capability to strike back with pinpoint accuracy. Nuclear weapons do not need to be precise, but conventional warheads do. The only use that Iran has made of missiles since the beginning of the eight-year war imposed on us has been a limited and measured military action in legitimate self-defense. Efforts to portray Iran’s ballistic missiles as a regional threat are therefore a deceptive and hostile policy.

Finally, with regard to the arguments about the relationship between resolution 2231 (2015) and Iran’s ballistic-missile launches, the resolution only “calls upon” Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles “designed” to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Iran has repeatedly stated that none of its ballistic missiles have been designed to have such a capability. We respect resolution 2231 (2015) and we respect our international commitments.”

Bale in Line to Make Spurs Return

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham boss Jose Mourinho said Friday that Gareth Bale will “probably” play against West Ham in the Premier League today, in what would be his first Spurs appearance after rejoining the club on loan from Real Madrid. The Wales international has spent the past two weeks training after a knee injury delayed his return to the Spurs side after seven years in Spain. “Of course he wants to play,” Mourinho said. “He wanted to play since the day he arrived, but it was not possible.

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Querrey Accused of Quarantine Breach

LONDON (Reuters) - American Sam Querrey was placed in quarantine by the Russian authorities after returning a positive COVID-19 test but the former Wimbledon semi-finalist left the country on a private plane, organisers of the St Petersburg Open said. The tournament organisers said Querrey, his wife and baby son tested positive for the novel coronavirus on Sunday, a day before the main draw started. The world number 49 was withdrawn from the competition and the family was asked to isolate together at a hotel.

Rublev to Meet Nitto in St. Petersburg Semifinals

ST PETERSBURG (Dispatches) - Andrey Rublev and fellow Nitto ATP Finals contender Denis Shapovalov will meet in the St. Petersburg Open semi-finals. Third seed Rublev moved into the final automatic qualification spot for next month's Nitto ATP Finals, to be held at The O2 in London from 15-22 November, after he beat Great Britain's Cameron Norrie 6-2, 6-1 in just 63 minutes. The 22-year-old Russian rises to No. 9 on 3,109 points, 34 points ahead of 10th-placed Matteo Berrettini (3,075), in the battle to clinch one of the two remaining singles spots at the season finale. Rublev trails Shapovalov 1-2 in the ATP Head2Head series, with his lone win coming in five short sets at the 2017 Next Gen ATP Finals in Milan. The global COVID-19 pandemic has not halted Rublev's momentum this season. He has a 32-7 match record in 2020 — 15-3 with two titles (the Qatar ExxonMobil Open and Adelaide International) prior to the five-month suspension, and 17-4 with one title (the Hamburg European Open) since the ATP Tour resumed on 22 August. Shapovalov now sits just 30 points behind No. 11 Gael Monfils (2,860 points) in the FedEx ATP Rankings after he battled past fifth seed and 2016 St. Petersburg Open finalist Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland 6-4, 7-5 in one hour and 41 minutes. Shapovalov won 84 per cent of his first-service points, but won just seven of his 25 second-serve points. The 21-year-old Canadian is now 17-11 on the season, which includes a run to the Internazionali BNL d'Italia semi-finals in Rome (l. to Schwartzman). Looking ahead to playing Rublev, Shapovalov, who has Russian heritage, admitted to fans, “Please, take pity on me!” Meanwhile After a slow start, Borna Coric raised his game to beat Reilly Opelka



7-6(3), 6-3 and return to the St. Petersburg Open semi-finals. Last year's runner-up trailed 2-5 in the first set and saved three set points at 3-5 by moving up the court with aggression, before turning the tables on his opponent. Coric converted both break points he created and withstood 16 aces to reach his second semi-final this season. “In the first set, I didn't start very good,” said Coric in an on-court interview. “I was very nervous coming into the match. I didn't know what to expect... I was not playing good and then I obviously found my rhythm and started to play much better. I started to read his serve a little bit as well and on my serve, I was very solid.” Coric will aim to improve his 6-2 record at the ATP 500 when he faces Karen Khachanov or Milos Raonic for a spot in the championship match. The Croatian leads Khachanov 2-1 in their ATP Head2Head series and lost his only previous match against Raonic at the 2017 Delray Beach Open. “It is going to be a tricky match. I don't have any preference, to be honest... Against Karen, [who is] obviously playing on home soil, it is going to be very tricky. Against Milos, one of the best servers on the Tour, it is not going to be an easy match. I am just looking forward now to my recovery and also [to] watching the match.”

Ronaldo “Violated” Covid Protocol

MILAN (AFP) - Cristiano Ronaldo could have violated Italian coronavirus measures by returning to Turin from Portugal after testing positive, Italy's sports minister Vincenzo Spadafora said on Thursday. “Yes, I think so, if there were no specific authorisations from the health authority,” Spadafora told Radio Uno when asked whether the 35-year-old Portuguese star's return had breached COVID-19 rules. Ronaldo left the Portuguese team camp near Lisbon on Wednesday to fly back to Northern Italy on his private jet. “Cristiano Ronaldo returned to Italy with a medical flight authorised by the competent health authorities at the request of the player and will continue his isolation at his home,” Juventus said. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was “asymptomatic” after testing positive on Monday, the day after Portugal drew 0-0 with France in Paris. However, the incident renewed controversy over his departure from Turin the previous week, which local health authorities said breached virus protocols after two Juventus staff members tested positive.



Juventus Report Losses of 89.7m Euros

MILAN (Dispatches) - Juventus recorded losses of 89.7 million euros (\$105 million) for the financial year to June 30, the Italian league champions announced on Thursday. Club president Andrea Agnelli chaired the Ordinary Shareholders' Meeting in Turin through video conference because of the coronavirus pandemic. And the nine-time reigning Serie A champions reported a deficit which included the 39.9m euro shortfall from the previous financial year. “The Ordinary Shareholders' Meeting approved the financial statements as of 30 June 2020, reporting a loss of 89.7 million euros (compared to a loss of 39.9 million euros in 2018/2019), which was covered by using the share premium reserve,” Juventus said in a statement. The Turin giants also announced a new organisational structure with Federico Cherubini taking over as new football director. Juventus’ “new organisational structure envisages the concentration of the club's activities in two macro-structures: the Football Area and the Business Area”. “Federico Cherubini assumes the role of Football Director, directly reporting to Fabio Paratici, who maintains the direct responsibility of the First Team,” the team added.

Rossi Tests Positive For Coronavirus

PARIS (Dispatches) - Seven-time MotoGP world champion Valentino Rossi said Thursday he has tested positive for coronavirus and will miss this weekend's Grand Prix of Aragon. The 41-year-old Italian said he could also miss next week's Teruel Grand Prix at the same circuit in Spain. “Unfortunately, this morning I woke up and I was not feeling good. My bones were sore and I had a slight fever, so I immediately called the doctor who tested me twice,” said Rossi in a statement. “The quick PCR test result was negative, just like the test I underwent on Tuesday.



second half of Belgium's Nations League defeat against England last Sunday and did not play against Iceland in midweek. While Guardiola is optimistic De Bruyne will not be sidelined for too long, the Spaniard refused to put a timescale on his recovery. Speaking ahead of Saturday's game against Arsenal, Guardiola said: “Unfortunately Kevin is out but the rest of the players they have come back well.

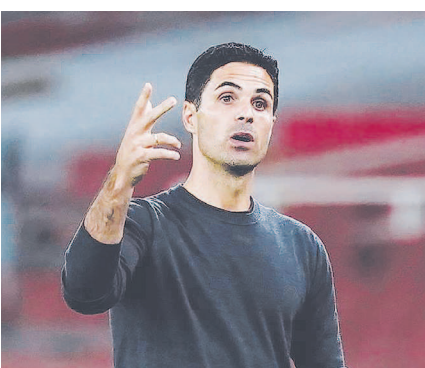
De Bruyne Faces Spell on Sidelines for Man City

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola revealed on Friday that Kevin De Bruyne would miss this weekend's visit of Arsenal after picking up an injury while on international duty. The City playmaker was withdrawn in the second half of Belgium's Nations League defeat against England last Sunday and did not play against Iceland in midweek. While Guardiola is optimistic De Bruyne will not be sidelined for too long, the Spaniard refused to put a timescale on his recovery. Speaking ahead of Saturday's game against Arsenal, Guardiola said: “Unfortunately Kevin is out but the rest of the players they have come back well.

“I don't think it's much but the next games I think he will be out. But we'll see day-by-day how it's going on.” Guardiola also said Sergio Agüero, who has been out of action since June, was training well and he was “happy to see him back on the pitch after a long, long time”. The Catalan praised his former City assistant Mikel Arteta, who has impressed at Arsenal since taking over as manager last December. “We should clarify who is the master and who is the apprentice,” he said. “We didn't have any doubts about what he is doing in a short period of time. “He settled really well and the special way his team Arsenal is playing right now, he suits perfectly the quality they have. He was able to get Arsenal back to the position they were a long time ago.” Guardiola, whose side are 14th in the table, with four points from their first three games, said he expected the “crazy” results in the Premier League to tail off.

Premier League Has Obligation To Lower Clubs

LONDON (Reuters) - Premier League clubs have an obligation to protect those further down the English soccer pyramid, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said, after top-flight clubs voted against Project Big Picture. Touted by the American owners of Liverpool and Manchester United, the plan called for the Premier League's six biggest clubs, plus three long-term members, to have “special voting rights” that would effectively put them in command of the world's most commercially successful league. Many Football League (EFL) clubs welcomed the project that promised a 250 million pounds (\$322.80 million) rescue fund and Arteta says that whatever the rights and wrongs of the proposals, lower league clubs should be protected. “I think we have to protect the lower leagues as well, this is our obligation,” Arteta told reporters ahead of his side's trip to his old club Manchester City. “We want to produce grassroots and opportunities for everybody in this industry. I think it's fair to assess the situation and find the best possible way to achieve that. This is our responsibility as well.” Arteta said he believed unity was vital in any decisions regarding a re-structuring of the Premier League. “I think that's a massive strength so as much as we can, we can maintain that unity and sustain our way of doing things,” Arteta said. “I think that's very valuable and the image that we project to the outside world is really, really strong. “I hope that we can maintain that.”



Djokovic Plans to Finish Season as World Number One

LONDON (AFP) - World number one Novak Djokovic said Thursday he planned to play two more tournaments until the end of the season -- in Vienna and London -- and keep his top ATP ranking. “I'm going to play the Vienna tournament that wasn't originally on my schedule,” Djokovic told AFP. He was speaking on the sidelines of a visit to a wellness park in Bosnia where he came to recuperate after losing Sunday's French Open final to Rafael Nadal. “I haven't played in Vienna for 15 years so I'm happy about that,” Djokovic added. The 33-year-old Serb said that the London Masters, starting on November 15, is the second and final tournament that he still intended to play for the remainder of the season. “This season, which was very intermittent, different and weird, at the same time brought me a lot of success and I'm very satisfied with my game, points, ranking. “I hope that, after the month and a half that's left in this season, I will finish it as world number one. That's my professional goal and I'm going to work on it. It's mostly up to me,” he added. Topping the world's rankings since February 3, Djokovic is 1,890 points ahead of Nadal on the ATP list. After the straight sets defeat in Paris, the Serb went with his wife to the park in Bosnia to recuperate. “I have played a lot of games for two and a half months... I could not go out because of the restrictions and rules (due to the coronavirus pandemic) and it has mentally exhausted me a lot,” said the 17-time Grand Slam champion. “This is the last of my three days here and I feel recovered and regenerated.”

