

Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Sunday That Some 252 More Iranians Have Died From Coronavirus Disease Over the Past 24 Hours as the Death Toll Mounted to 30,375

IRAN NEWS

Iran's National Soccer Team May Hold a Friendly Match Against Senegal in November FIFA Days As the Request Has Been Submitted by an Iranian Envoy to Senegal Football Federation

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Gov't Foils Ominous U.S. Plot to Disintegrate Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani says the Iranian government, through its calculated planning, has managed to thwart a scheme hatched by the United States to break up the country.

"Although inhumane and illegal U.S. sanctions have reduced the country's forex revenues ... more than 2.5 years after the sanctions, the government has prevented the realization of the ominous U.S. bid to have the country fall apart," Rouhani said at a meeting of the government's economic coordination headquarters in Tehran on Sunday.

Alongside the economic war, the enemies of the Islamic Republic have specially invested on domestic rifts, he added.

The president also underlined the need for Iranian authorities to exercise vigilance in the face of the enemies' conspiracies.

He further invited all officials and activists to avoid any differences and disputes, urging them to "maintain calm and political rationality and not allow certain few people with factional and temporal motives to pave the way for the fulfillment of the ominous dreams of the ill-wishers of this land."

Iran has been under a series of sanctions imposed by the U.S. since 2018, when President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran's UN Mission Hails End of "Unjust" Arms Embargo

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations hails the end of a "baseless, unjust, and unlawful" arms embargo against the Islamic Republic that has just expired.

In line with a historic 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the UN Security Council (UNSC)'s embargo on trade in conventional weapons with the Islamic Republic ended on Sunday. The nuclear accord had been endorsed by the Security Council in the form of Resolution 2231.

In a press release issued upon expiration of the embargo, the diplomatic mission said, "States are no longer required to seek in advance case-by-case approval by the Security Council to engage in the supply, sale or transfer of arms or related materials to and from Iran."

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Tehran Vows Support for Peace Process, Intra-Afghan Talks



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has expressed Tehran's support for the participation of Taliban in Afghanistan's political structure.

Zarif made the remarks in a Sunday meeting with Head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah, who is visiting Tehran at the head of a delegation for talks with Iranian officials.

The Iranian top diplomat also reaffirmed Iran's support for the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the process of peace under the leadership and management of Afghans, and the agreements among the participants in the intra-Afghan negotiations. Iran Vows Support for Taliban Presence in Afghan Political Structure 2

Appreciating Abdullah's participation in the political process and accepting the responsibility of the High Council for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan, he voiced Iran's support for the participation of the Taliban in the political structure of Afghanistan.

Abdullah Abdullah, for his part, explained the latest developments in Afghanistan, as well as the latest status related to the inter-Afghan talks.

Abdullah, the former chief executive officer of the Afghan unity government, is on a three-day trip to Iran for talks on the Afghan peace process, the intra-Afghan dialogue in Qatar, and the need for regional consensus and support for the Afghanistan peace efforts.

Afghan political experts believe that the Islamic Republic of Iran's role is crucial in the Afghan peace process and that Iran can play a decisive role in ensuring lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

He was going to meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani.

India to Lose Farzad-B Gas Field as Iran Looks at Domestic Firms

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India has all but lost the ONGC Videsh Ltd-discovered Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf after Iran decided to prefer domestic companies over foreign firms for development of the field, sources said.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), had in 2008 discovered a giant gas field in the Farsi offshore exploration block.

OVL and its partners had offered to invest up to USD 11 billion for development of the discovery, which was later named Farzad-B. After sitting over OVL's proposal for years, the National Iranian Oil Co (NIOC) informed the firm in February this year about its intention to conclude the contract for Farzad-B development with an Iranian company, sources with direct knowledge of the development said. OVL, however, continued its engagements with NIOC over the development of the field and sought terms and conditions of the proposed contract for its evaluation, they said, adding that Iran has so far not responded to the Indian firm's request. Farzad-B holds total reserves of around 21.7 trillion cubic feet of which around 60 per cent is recoverable, and production is slated to be around 1.1 billion cubic feet per day.

Sources said unconfirmed information suggests that Iran has identified a local firm for the development of the field, but OVL has not yet given up hopes and continues to chase Iranian authorities for the contract.

The 3,500 square kilometre Farsi block sits in water depth of 20-90 metres on the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf. OVL, with 40 per cent operatorship interest, signed the Exploration Service Contract (ESC) for the block on December 25, 2002. Other partners included Indian Oil Corp (IOC) with 40 per cent stake and Oil India Ltd (OIL) holding the remaining 20 per cent stake. OVL discovered gas in the block, which was declared commercially viable by NIOC, on August 18, 2008. The exploration phase of the ESC expired on June 24, 2009.

The firm submitted a Master Development Plan (MDP) of Farzad-B gas field in April 2011 to Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), the then designated authority by NIOC for development of Farzad-B gas field.

A Development Service Contract (DSC) of Farzad-B gas field was negotiated till November 2012, but could not be finalized due to difficult terms and international sanctions on Iran. In April 2015, negotiations restarted with Iranian authorities to develop Farzad-B gas field under a new Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC). This time, NIOC introduced Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) as its representative for negotiations. From April 2016, both sides negotiated to develop Farzad-B gas field under an integrated contract covering upstream and downstream, including monetization/marketing of the processed gas. However, negotiations remained inconclusive. Meanwhile, on the basis of new studies, a revised Provisional Master Development Plan (PMDP) was submitted to POGC in March 2017, sources said, adding that in April 2019, NIOC proposed development of the gas field under the DSC and offtake of raw gas by NIOC at landfall point.

However, due to imposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran in November 2018, technical studies could not be concluded which is a precursor for commercial negotiations. The Indian consortium has so far invested around USD 400 million in the block.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

U.S.-China War Getting Serious

In the U.S., no current or party recommends war with China but in order to shift the blame of the inefficiencies of the tenant of the White House in Washington both in settling up the economy and in better performance regarding the coronavirus, the condition of the presidential campaign increases the pressure against China day in day so that this climate has convinced the Chinese for prepping for a probable war with the U.S.

The issue of embroilment between this two countries started when Beijing and Washington engaged in a global blame-game over the deadly coronavirus and were at odds on almost every front, from trade tensions to the South China Sea, Taiwan, Xinjiang and Huawei, and they made their new and old differences public in the media.

Worse still, their recent wrangling over Beijing's imposition of a draconian national security law in Hong Kong has further emboldened hardliners on both sides, accelerated the downward spiral and put the world's top two economies on a headstrong - and dangerous and obstinate - collision course.

Analysts warn that the U.S.-China relations with an unprecedented pace are deteriorating, and this condition can worsen and end in a full military confrontation between both states. Last month, senior diplomats of China and the U.S. had a meeting in Hawaii after nearly one year, and despite both sides had pinned high hopes on the result of the meeting because there was a panic that the tensions between the two countries gradually prepared the grounds for military disputes and war, but the events after this meeting show the failure and effects of the meeting in their bilateral relations.

The secret meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Yang Jiechi, the top diplomatic aide to Chinese President Xi Jinping, took place - perhaps coincidentally - at Pearl Harbor, scene of a pivotal moment for the U.S. and world history when it was bombed by the Japanese nearly 80 years ago. And it seems no development has been seen in their relations.

Government officials and experts have warned that since the official and academic relations between the U.S. and China have been restricted significantly and the traditional dampers like trade, tourism and academic relations have almost become ineffective, their relations are deteriorating with an unprecedented pace.

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Bans Can No More Be Cited as Excuse to Seize Arms of Iranian Origin

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian official says with the termination of the UN arms embargo on Tehran, no one can refer to sanctions as a pretext to seize weapons of Iranian origin in other countries.

Iran's Ambassador to international organizations Kazem Gharibabadi made the comment after the UN arms embargo on Iran expired on October 18, 2020.

"From now on, governments cannot refer to sanctions or binding international restrictions in that regard when it comes to arms deals or even the existence of weapons of Iranian origin in other countries," he said minutes after the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on the expiry of the UN arms embargo on Iran.

He said the U.S. resorted to whatever means it could to prevent the termination of the embargo.

"The U.S. first put pressure on UN Security Council member states to make them adopt a new resolution to extend the restrictions, but failed and suffered a major defeat," he noted.

"Afterwards, the U.S. made every effort, on its own, to activate the mechanism to bring back former UN Security Council sanctions, which faced opposition from the member states of the council," said the top official.

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End of Arms Embargo Great Failure for U.S. Gov't

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that lifting the arms embargo on Iran was a great failure for the U.S. government and it is a victory for Iranian nation when the U.S. snapback attempt was thwarted by the United Nations Security Council. Addressing the formal session of Majlis on Sunday, Qalibaf said that the expiry of the United Nations arms embargo on Iran envisaged by the UNSC Resolution 2231 took effect today, and this is a great failure for the U.S. government and a great achievement for the Iranian nation enabling Iranian Government to buy and sell conventional weapons.

Iran "Resistance" Strategy Defeats U.S. "Maximum Pressure"

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

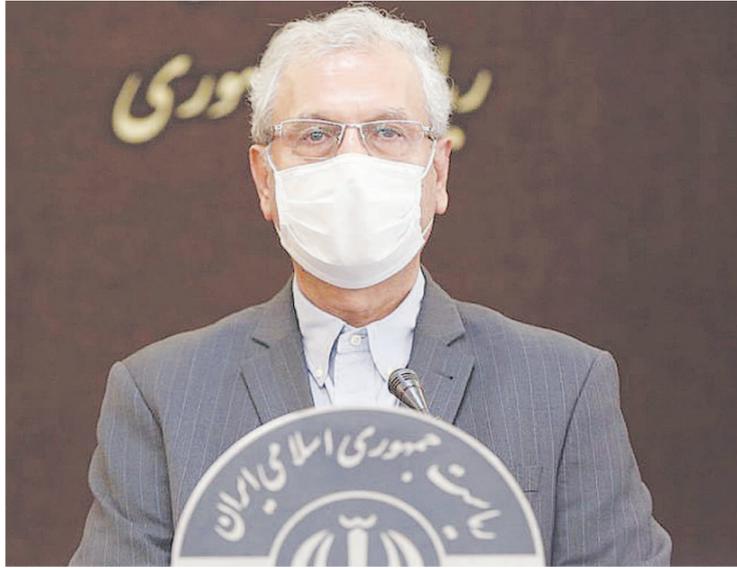
TEHRAN – Government Spokesman Ali Rabiei says, "Pushing back sanctions, reducing the effects of sanctions and increasing social resistance were the strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran to overcome the U.S. policy of maximum pressure."

The government spokesman wrote a piece of writing on the recent developments over U.S. anti-Iran maximum pressure policy as well as Iran's strategies to overcome the pressures.

A study of the history of international relations shows that when the U.S. moved from Monroe's isolationist doctrine and turned into a global hegemon, it needed an external enemy to achieve internal cohesion, and to justify global intervention, aggression, and ambition, Rabiei stated.

He went on to say, "For decades, the Soviet Union played this role for the United States. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, American strategists sought to replace Confucianism with Islam and to present it theoretically as an enemy. Eventually, the Islamic Republic of Iran was targeted as the US enemy."

Since then the U.S. hostility against Iran went through ups and downs until one of the most violent and irrational presidents of the United States came into power and pursued



a policy of maximum pressure through cruel sanctions against Iran, he added.

He also spoke about the retaliatory strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the wise guidelines of the Leader to overcome all US hostilities in terms of sanctions and the withdrawal from the JCPOA.

According to Rabiei, pushing back sanctions, reducing the effects of sanctions and increasing social resistance are the three main pillars of Iran's strategy towards U.S. maximum pressure.

Referring to the lifting of sanctions early on Sunday under the terms of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, he added "Relying on indigenous capacities and national authority were Islamic Republic's strategies to overcome the sanctions."

Zarif Discusses Bilateral Developments With Iraqi FM

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a telephone conversation with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on various regional and international topics.

In the phone talk on Saturday, Zarif and Hussein exchanged views on various issues, including Tehran-Baghdad relations.

The two sides also discussed Iraqi delegation's visit to Iran to pursue the agreements made during the Iraqi foreign minister's visit to Iran.

Iran Making Tremendous Success In Developing Domestic Jets

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Deputy Defense Minister says that the country has made 'tremendous' success in developing Kobar fighter jets and other defense equipment needed for defending the nation.

Brigadier General Ghassem Taghizadeh said the Ministry has implemented plans to boost production in the current year that has been named by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution as the year of 'Surge in Production'.

"We have carried out extensive measures in developing missile industries, especially with regards to precision missiles," he said, adding that in the field of developing cruise missiles, too, the Ministry has had many achievements.

He went on to say that 'good' measures have been adopted in other areas of defense including aerial and marine fields, adding, "We have obtained tremendous success in producing the home-made Kobar fighter jet."

"We will seriously continue this path and the Iranian nation will hear great news during the 10-day Fajr ceremonies [Islamic Revolution victory anniversary]."

Iran has gained major achievements in the defense sector during the past decades despite harsh sanctions imposed against the country. Tehran has always said that its defensive might is only the power to protect the nation and does not threaten any regional country.

WHO Delivers 150 Ventilators, 100 PCR Machines to Iran



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered 150 medical ventilators and 100 high-performance real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) thermal cyclers to the Islamic Republic of Iran to further support the country's health system in its efforts to respond to the COVID-19 health emergency.

PCR testing represents the gold standard in diagnosing COVID-19. The addition of the new devices, worth more than \$2.8 million, procured through contributions from German Humanitarian Assistance and other international partners, will increase the testing capacity of the country's laboratory network.

The network currently conducts an average of 27,000 PCR tests daily.

"Increased testing capacity is important for detecting and isolating cases at earlier stages and tracing those in contact with them, which can contribute to early control of transmission and effective treatment of patients," said Dr Christoph Hamelmann, WHO Representative in Iran.

The devices will be distributed to reference laboratories in 24 provinces including Ardabil, Alborz, Isfahan, Ilam, Boushehr, Tehran, Chahar Mahal and Bakhtiary, South Khorasan, Khorasan-e-Razavi, North Khorasan, Zanjan, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchistan, Fars, Qazvin, Qom, Kurdistan, Kerman, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Lorestan, Guilan, Markazi, Hormozgan, and Yazd.

Ventilators are vital instruments in the care of COVID-19 patients in critical care units. Of the 150 ventilators delivered by WHO, at a value of more than \$2.7 million, 50 have been funded by the Government of Japan and the other 100 have been procured through contributions from the State of Kuwait, and other international humanitarian aids. "The machines will contribute to an increased recovery rate for critically ill patients suffering from COVID-19," Dr Hamelmann noted.

The recent resurgence of COVID-19 in the country has put the national health system under stress. WHO is actively supporting Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education by providing medical supplies and equipment.

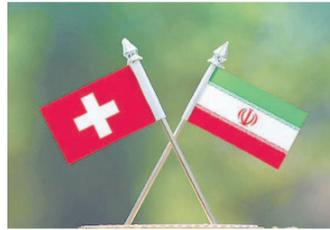
Majlis Approves Bill on Iran, Switzerland Int'l Transport Deal

TEHRAN (MNA) --Lawmakers at Iranian parliament agreed with the approval of agreement draft on the international road transport of freight and passenger between the two governments of Islamic Republic of Iran and Swiss Federal Council.

Legislators in the open session of Parliament on Sunday nodded with the draft bill of international road transport of passenger and goods between Iran and Swiss with 183 votes in favor, 11 against votes and also seven abstention votes of total 248 lawmakers attended the session.

According to the single article of the bill, the draft agreement on the international road transport of passenger and freight between Islamic Republic of Iran and Swiss Federal Council is approved as described in the appendix and its documents are allowed to be exchanged.

Hojjatolislam Alireza Silimi, in his disagreement with the bill of international road transport agreement on



goods and passenger between the two countries, said, "The Iranian parliament has only reviewed the generalities of this agreement and cannot go into its details."

This agreement includes 14 articles but only its generalities will be reviewed in the parliament, he said, adding, "In this agreement, necessary mechanism has not been predicted for the removal of probable differences."

Mohammad Alipour, a member of Parliament in his agreement with the draft on the international road transportation of passenger and goods roads between Islamic Republic of Iran and the Swiss Federal Council, said: "The transport agreement between Iran and Switzerland is being implemented in many countries. With the approval of this export bill, export of products to many countries including European countries will be facilitated. On the other hand, it will be possible to support Iranian citizens in other countries."

Iran to Build Nahid 3 Satellite for Geo Orbit

TEHRAN (FNA)- Deputy Head of Iran's Space Research Center Jafar Salehi said that the country plans to manufacture Nahid 3 (Venus 3) satellite to be placed into the geostationary orbit.

"Nahid 3 is the final step in the telecommunication satellites which will be built to pave the ground for Iran's access to geo operational orbit," Salehi said.

He added that the satellite is now in the study, feasibility and conceptual design phase.

Deputy Head of Iran's Space Research Center Jafar Salehi

Salehi also said that at present Iran has designed and built the engineering sample of Nahid 2 telecommunication satellite and has delivered it to the Iranian Space Agency, adding, "We are preparing for delivering the qualitative sample of the satellite."

Earlier this month, Salehi had said that Iran would send a new telecommunication satellite named Nahid 1 (Venus 1) into the orbit.

CBI Reports 36.2% Surge in Money Supply

TEHRAN (PressTV) - New monetary figures released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) shows the money supply multiplier, or the ratio of money held as reserves in banks to Iran's monetary base, has increased year on year in late September to 7.9 percent, the highest ever seen in the Iranian economy.

A breakdown of figures provided by the semi-official Fars news agency on Saturday showed that Iran's monetary base, which is the cash in circulation and deposits at the CBI, had reached 3,721.46 trillion rials (nearly \$12 billion) on September 21.

The report said money supply (M2) had reached 29,439.87 trillion rials (nearly \$95 billion), an increase of 36.2 percent year on year and 17.1 percent higher than figures seen at the end of the last fiscal year on March 20.

The annual expansion of the monetary base was 26.1 percent, said the report, adding that the money multiplier effect, which shows how much the monetary base could create new money in the economy, had reached an all-time high.

Some economists have dismissed claims that increased effect of money multiplier should be a sign of concern for Iran as the country struggles with high levels of inflation both because of American sanctions and the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

They insist CBI's monetary policy has helped various economic sectors to have an easier access to cash flow they need.

Earlier this month, CBI governor Abdolnasser Hemmati had defended efforts by the lender to curb a rising monetary base while dismissing reports that the bank had been funding imports of staples at an extremely low price and thereby causing an expansion in the country's monetary base.

Iran to Export, Import Weapons Based on Its Defense Policy

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Ambassador to UK Hamid Baedinejad said that as of today, Iran will export and import weapons based on its defense policy principles.

In a Sunday tweet, Baedinejad wrote, "As of today, on the fifth anniversary of the implementation of the JCPOA, all international restrictions on the export and import of weapons, which have been imposed on our country for more than ten years, will end."

"As of today, the Islamic Republic of Iran will export or import weapons only on the basis of the principles of its defense policy and needs," he added.

In another tweet, Iranian diplomat wrote, "For more than a year, the United States has taken some actions to put pressure on other countries to prevent such a day."

"But the support of the international community and the opposition of the members of the Security Council to the actions of the United States, has caused the country to fail achieving its goals," he added.

"The United States failed miserably in its diplomacy to defeat JCPOA," Baedinejad noted.

Tehran, Kiev to Hold Second Round of Talks in Tehran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The second round of Iran-Ukraine talks on the crash of a Ukrainian airliner will be held in Tehran on October 19-21.

In the second round of negotiations, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand will host his Ukrainian counterpart and his accompanying delegation.

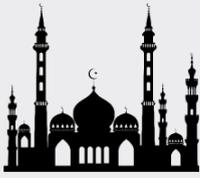
Baharvand said the National Information Agency of Ukraine three technical meetings will be held between Tehran and Kiev in this round of talks. One of these meetings is about technical discussions that the Aviation Authority will conduct. One session is about judicial matters that colleagues of the judiciary do, and one session on legal issues is about the amount of compensation for individuals and aircraft.

He stated that "after the three groups would meet and progress would be made, we would have a public meeting."

"I and my Ukrainian counterpart, as well as all the groups that negotiated together, will be present at the meeting and consider the progress," Baharvand added.

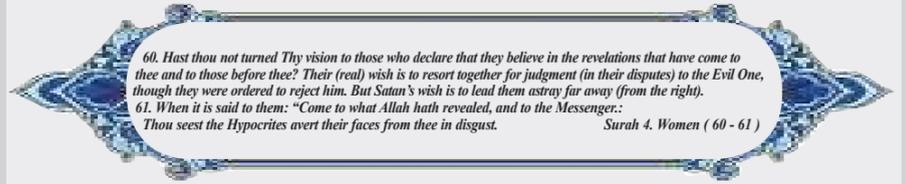
"If any guidance is needed, we will do some guidance and define the next steps that will be the next round of negotiations. We are trying to conclude negotiations as quickly as possible and in the shortest time," he noted.

The first round of talks was held on July 30-31, 2020, under the supervision of deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand, in Kiev, Ukraine.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:43
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:51
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:14



Iranian Trade Center Launched in Damascus

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi in an interview announced the launch of Iranian Trade Center in Damascus, the capital city of Syria, and delved into details of its launch.



He further said that the center by using experiences of other countries has tried to provide the deployed Iranian companies in the center with their needed facilities and services in different fields.

He noted that the center is working to hold some conferences and specialized exhibitions based on needs of Iranian companies.

Kashefi then pointed to the advantages of the establishment of the center for developing trade between Iran and Syria and expressed hope that the launch of Iranian Trade Center would boost the level of economic relations between private sectors of both countries.

He also pointed to the export target of \$1b to Syria by the end of 2020, reiterating that this center can play a key role in materializing this export target of Iran.

He concluded his remarks by announcing Iran Chamber of Commerce's readiness for providing Iranian producers and exporters with services and information.

IME Witnesses a 70% Weekly Growth in Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - While over 928,524 MT of commodities worth over \$401m were traded last week on the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the trading volume and value experienced growth of 70% and 90%, respectively.



According to the report from IME International Affairs and PR, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 522,959 MT of various products worth close to \$279m were traded.

On this trading floor, 457,162 MT of steel, 6,340 MT of aluminum, 8,125 MT of copper, 120 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 12 MT of precious metal concentrates, 51,200 MT of zinc ingot as well as 5 kg of gold bar were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 405,108 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$121m were traded.

On this trading floor, 108,000 MT of VB feed stock, 130,964 MT of bitumen, 66,115 MT of polymer products, 42,088 MT of chemical products, 18,500 MT of lube cut oil, 1,462 MT of insulation, 1,394 MT of base oil, 150 MT of argon as well as 36,525 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 457 MT of commodities were traded on the side market of the IME.

Official Says Joining FATF Had No Effect on National Economy



TEHRAN - Gholamreza Mesbahi-Moghadam, a member of the Expediency Council, has said that accepting the FATF (the Financial Action Task Force) would not have improved the current economic condition and it could even worsen it.

Speaking to IRIB, he said that so far the country has observed 39 paragraphs out of the 41 paragraphs of the FATF but the country has seen no positive action from it.

Mesbahi-Moghadam added that only two paragraphs of the FATF have been left which are about joining Palermo Convention and CFT Convention, adding it is interesting that those who claim the country should have joined the FATF do not at know or are not aware that these two paragraphs of the FATF are about what and what topics are, and they even do not know the country has implemented or ignored which paragraphs.

He went on to say that he has a question from those who claim that by joining the FATF, economic problems would almost be resolved and the question is if the country joins FATF and CFT, are they certain that foreign banks would continue cooperation with Iran?

He noted the answer is clear and they will not work with Iranians because of the U.S. threats over its imposed sanctions on Iran, and foreign banks have to choose cooperation between Iranian or American banks.

Mesbahi-Moghadam further said that by joining the Palermo and CFT conventions and accepting their obligations, the country cannot cover any financial transaction and the offence will be considered as money-laundering.

He noted that the country is currently skirting the sanctions, and foreign banks are working with Iran as the country last year imported some \$43b and exported \$41b, and all the money was transferred under covering financial transfers.

He added that the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia are among 37 executive board of FATF and they are waiting for us to join the FATF in order to monitor the country's financial transactions, and joining the FATF is some kind of self-sanctioning and it make the condition worse for the national economy.

33rd ICFF Is the First Virtual Festival in Post-Corona Era

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Female Filmmaker, Marzieh Boroumand believes, "Holding the International Children Film Festival (ICFF) virtually provides an opportunity for analyzing the conditions and weighing the options for holding film festivals virtually in post-corona times."

On the eve of opening ceremony of the 33rd ICFF, Ms. Boroumand in an interview talked about the online execution of this edition of the festival. She said, "The policy-making council decided to hold this edition of the festival virtually. There have been some meetings centered on estimating the conditions, and it was eventually decided to hold the festival online. It is a great opportunity to analyze the conditions and weigh the options for holding film festivals virtually in post-corona times."

Emphasizing that the most significant point is getting the films' messages across to the audiences, Boroumand pointed out that transferring the messages of the films to a larger number of viewers was something that she had always looked forward to. She added, "The world is changing, and we need to take every chance to move forward."



The director of "School of Mice" referred to the significance of supporting arts and artists in the world. She stressed that it was impossible to fight against anti-cultural productions without providing support for arts and artists. Boroumand explained, "Once children cinema could move forward due to the support it received. In this day and age, children cinema is to some extent supported, yet big budgets are required for filmmaking, and we cannot easily afford them."

Boroumand stated, "The younger the kids, the stronger their imaginations are, yet the older they get, the farther they will be from their imaginative thoughts. However, adults are also into such films."

Highlighting the fact that children's films have always been internationally acclaimed, Boroumand said, "Children films haven't been nationally well-received. One of the biggest weaknesses of our cinema is the lack of films for teenagers. We don't make enough films addressing the issues that teenagers mostly deal with. Filmmakers prefer not to approach teenagers and their concerns; therefore, the private sector prefers not to invest in this kind of cinema."

The festival was to officially open yesterday evening.

Iran Exports \$139m Worth of Home Appliances

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's exports of home appliances declined in the five months to late August mainly because of coronavirus restrictions and tariff issues.

An official from Iran's Trade Promotion Organization said home appliance exports in the first five months of the current calendar year amounted to 99,000 metric tons worth \$139 million. Mohsen Montazeri said exports covered a wide range of devices and gadgets including fridges, washing machines, boilers, TV sets, heaters and swamp coolers.

Montazeri said trade restrictions imposed because of the coronavirus as well as a 10-fold increase in tariffs in Iraq on electronic devices imported from Iran had contributed to declined exports over the five-month period.

However, a report by the semi-official ISNA news agency on Saturday suggested that exports of home appliances from Iran had surged significantly over the past two years mainly because a series of American sanctions caused Iran's manufacturing sector to grow at the expense of lower sales of crude oil.

The report cited an industry source as saying that total yearly exports of home appliances had amounted to nearly \$170 million in 2018-2019 and before the sanctions started to hit Iran's rial against other currencies.

Abbas Hashemi, who leads Iran's Association of Home Appliances, said exports have increased despite the fact that Iranian manufacturers are still short of targets defined to respond to a growing domestic demand.

Iran's ministry of industries (MIMT) expects annual output in home appliances sector to reach 11.6 million devices in the year to late March 2021 although domestic demand is expected to exceed 12.5 million devices against the backdrop of near-zero imports into the country.



40% Discount on Chabahar-India Cargo Movement Extended

TEHRAN (MNA) - The director-general of Sistan and Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Department said the 40% discount on the movement of cargo between the port Chabahar and India has been extended.

"The mutual 40% discount between Shahid Beheshti Terminal of Chabahar Port and two major Indian ports were implemented last year to encourage trade," Behrouz Aghaei said.

He added that India has recently extended the current concessional rate of 40% discount for coastal movement of cargo and vessel-related charges, for a period of

further one year to clients for cargo being handled at Jawaharlal Nehru Port and Deendayal Port from/to Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar. Chabahar is located less than 100 nautical miles from the Chinese built port of Gwadar in Pakistan.

According to India's Ministry of Shipping, the levy of concessional vessel-related charges (VRC) will be applied proportionately, subject to vessel loading at least 50 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) or 5000 MT cargo to Shahid Beheshti Port.

Iran Unveils Yalda Gas Field So Soon

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran will unveil the Yalda gas field up to the next two weeks, Deputy Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Company for Explorations Affairs Seyed Ali Moalemi said.



The Iranian official said that in the Persian Gulf, a rig is being drilled in Yalda Square.

Referring to the lack of equipment, he said "we have obtained import licenses for all the required equipment, but we cannot import them," adding that one company was shut down for six months for failing to import equipment.

"We may be lagging behind in terms of technology, but we are ahead of other countries because of the specialized forces that we have."

He further pointed to drilling exploration wells in the Yalda gas field, starting development operations in the northern areas of South Pars field [known as North Pars], and the design and installation of gas pressure boosting platforms as the POGC's next steps in production maintenance.

Iran shares the supergiant South Pars gas field with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. Geographically, one-third of the South Pars field is in Iran's possession, while today Iran's gas production from this joint field is equal to Qatar. In fact, having just one-third of the field, we are producing an equal amount of gas with Qatar.

Iranian Experts Abroad Establish 160 Start-ups Under Cooperation Plan

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iranian experts and entrepreneurs overseas have established some 160 start-ups so far in a line with a cooperation program drawn up to set the stage for the establishment of such companies.

The 160 firms have become operational in the domains of biotechnology, nanotechnology, stem cells, information and communications technology, energy and advanced materials. Most of these Iranian entrepreneurs come from the United States, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Britain, said the Science and Technology Department of Iran's Presidential Office.

They have established the start-ups via the cooperation plan mentioned earlier. The cooperation program (connect. isti.ir) is aimed at tapping into the scientific and expert potential of Iranian researchers and experts and establishing a link with top scientific, technological and industrial centers of the country. The program has been growing well with the establishment of a vast network of specialized centers, including the best universities, research centers and knowledge-based companies of the country.

Under the latest figures, more than 120 expert centers have joined the program so far. The cooperation will lead to the development of science and technology inside the country as well as drawing on the experience of Iranian expatriates and tapping into the potential of other countries.

Turkey Raises Black Sea Gas Field Estimate

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey has raised the estimated reserves in a gas field off its Black Sea coast to 405 billion cubic metres after finding an additional 85 billion cubic metres, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said.

Erdogan said in August the field contained 320 billion cubic metres of gas, making it Turkey's biggest natural gas discovery. The Fatih drill ship made the discovery about 100 nautical miles north of the Turkish coast.

Even before Saturday's revision, analysts had said the find represents a major discovery and was one of the largest global discoveries in 2020.



Italy Posts New Daily Coronavirus Cases Record

MILAN (Reuters) - Italy registered 10,925 new coronavirus infections over the past 24 hours, the health ministry said on Saturday, up from the previous record of 10,010 cases posted on Friday.

There were also 47 COVID-related deaths on Saturday, down from 55 the day before, the ministry said, far fewer than at the height of the pandemic in Italy in March and April when daily fatalities peaked at more than 900.

Italy was the first country in Europe to be slammed by COVID-19 and has the second-highest death toll in the region after Britain, with 36,427 fatalities since the outbreak flared in February, according to official figures.



Azerbaijan, Armenia Accuse Each Other in Shelling



BAKU (Reuters) - Azerbaijan and Armenia accused each other on Saturday of fresh attacks in violation of a week-old Russian-brokered truce that has failed to halt the worst fighting in the South Caucasus since the 1990s.

Baku said 13 civilians were killed and more than 50 wounded in the city of Ganja by an Armenian missile attack, while Yerevan accused Azerbaijan of continued shelling. The fighting is the worst in the region since Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces went to war in the 1990s over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountain territory that is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but populated and governed by ethnic Armenians.

The Azeri Prosecutor General's office said a residential area in Ganja, the country's second-largest city and miles away from Nagorno-Karabakh, was shelled by missile strikes and around 20 apartment buildings had been hit. Armenia denied the claim. Baku also said that an electricity line which goes from Azerbaijan to neighbouring Georgia was damaged as a result of shelling in the town of Mingachevir. Azeri President Ilham Aliyev accused Armenia of committing a war crime by shelling Ganja.

"If the international community does not punish Armenia, we will do it," he said. Aliyev said the Azeri army has completely taken over two regions previously held by separatists, Fizuli and Jabrail.

"We are dominating the battlefield," he said, adding that Azeri armed forces never targeted civilian settlements.

Aliyev also questioned Armenia's ability to keep replacing military hardware destroyed in battles, a thinly veiled jab at Yerevan's ally Moscow.

Armenia denied the Azeri claim that it had been bringing arms illegally and accused Azerbaijan of acting to expand Turkey's influence in the region and of using pro-Turkish mercenaries - charges both Ankara and Baku deny.

In Ganja, rescuers worked at the scene on Saturday morning, picking through rubble, a Reuters photographer said. Some houses had been almost levelled. An excavator was clearing the debris. "We have been living in fear for days ... We are suffering a lot. We would rather die. I wish we were dead but our children would survive," one resident of the city, 58-year-old Emina Aliyeva, told reporters.

The Armenian defence ministry denied the Azeri claim on shelling cities in Azerbaijan and accused Baku of continuing to shell populated areas inside Nagorno-Karabakh, including Stepanakert, the region's biggest city. Three civilians were wounded as a result of Azeri fire in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian foreign ministry said.

"We woke up at 4 o'clock in the morning due to an awful blow, it was not just a strike, it was something more powerful ... We are scared, but we got used to it ... Sometimes we felt as if they were hitting directly on us," Lika Zakaryan, 26-year-old resident of Stepanakert, told Reuters.

A Reuters cameraman in Stepanakert said he had heard several explosions on Friday night and in the early hours of the morning.

Hundreds March in Lebanon to Mark Year of Anti-Gov't Protests



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hundreds marched in Lebanon's capital to mark the first anniversary of a non-sectarian protest movement that has rocked the political elite but has yet to achieve its goal of sweeping reform.

A whirlwind of hope and despair has gripped the country in the year since protests began, as an economic crisis and a devastating port explosion two months ago pushed Lebanon deeper into decay.

While the turmoil led to the resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri, politicians have since failed to form a government capable of addressing the country's challenges.

Two governments have resigned since the movement started but the country's barons, many of them strongmen from the 1975-1990 civil war, remain firmly in power despite international and domestic pressure for change.

On Saturday, hundreds of people brandishing placards and Lebanese flags gathered in Martyrs' Square in the heart of Beirut in a scene reminiscent of last year's rallies. Protesters marched past the central bank, a target of their anger over a financial crisis that has seen the Lebanese pound lose nearly 80 percent of its value.

They then marched past the parliament building before gathering near the damaged port, observing a minute of silence just short of their destination before holding a candlelit vigil near ground zero at 6:07pm (15:07 GMT).

That was the precise time on August 4 when a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate fertiliser exploded, killing more than 200 people and devastating swaths of the capital - a disaster widely blamed on the corruption and incompetence of the hereditary elite. Activists have installed a metallic monument at the site to mark the anniversary of their October 17 "revolution".

"For a year, we have been on the streets ... and nothing has changed," said Abed Sabbagh, a protester in his seventies.

"Our demand is the removal of a corrupt political class that continues to compete for posts and seats" despite everything happening in the country, he told the AFP news agency from Beirut's main protest camp.

China Warns U.S. It May Detain Americans Over Prosecutions

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Chinese government has warned Washington it may detain Americans in China in response to the Justice Department's prosecution of Chinese military-affiliated scholars, the Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.

The newspaper, citing unnamed people familiar with the matter, said Chinese officials had issued repeated warnings through multiple channels to U.S. government officials. The paper said China's message was the United States should end prosecutions of Chinese scholars in U.S. courts, or Americans in China could find themselves in violation of Chinese law.

A State Department advisory on Sept. 14 warning against travel to China said the Chinese government uses arbitrary detention and exit bans for U.S. citizens and others "to gain bargaining leverage over foreign governments."

The White House referred questions to the State Department, which said in an emailed statement that it stresses "to the Chinese government - including at the highest levels - our concern about China's coercive use of exit bans on U.S. citizens and citizens of other countries, and will continue to do so until we see a transparent and fair process." The Chinese Embassy in Washington did not respond to a request for comment on Saturday.

The Trump administration has increasingly accused China of spying on U.S. operations and espionage to steal U.S. technological, military and other know-how in a strategy to supplant the United States as the world's leading financial and military power. Beijing denies the allegations. In July, the Justice Department said the FBI had arrested three Chinese nationals for allegedly concealing memberships in the Peoples Liberation Army when applying for visas to conduct research at U.S. academic institutions.

Last month, the United States said it had revoked visas for more than 1,000 Chinese nationals under a presidential measure denying entry to students and researchers deemed security risks, a move China called a violation of human rights.

At the time, a State Department spokeswoman said the United States continued to welcome "legitimate students and scholars from China who do not further the Chinese Communist Party's goals of military dominance."

Thai Protesters Vow to Return To Streets After Police Clashes

BANGKOK (AFP) - Thai pro-democracy protesters vowed Saturday to again defy an emergency decree banning gatherings after days of confrontations in the capital that saw riot police use water cannon and dozens of activists arrested.

Officers in Bangkok dispersed thousands of demonstrators on Friday night by spraying water laced with blue dye and a chemical agent to mark participants for future legal action.

But the escalation in police tactics has not cowed the burgeoning youth-led protest movement, which is demanding the resignation of a premier first brought to power in a military coup and reform of the kingdom's powerful monarchy. One of the pro-democracy movement's main organising groups called on its supporters to return to the streets on Saturday afternoon. "Be prepared both physically and mentally for the demonstration and to cope with a crackdown if it happens," the online post from Free Youth said.

Another group, the United Front of Thammasat, called on activists to spread out at different stations on the city's Skytrain and subway network, prompting the operators of both rail networks to shut down services.

Police said they would shut key roads around suspected protest sites.

Thai Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha extended an emergency

decree banning gatherings of more than four people by another month on Friday.

The former army chief, who masterminded the coup in 2014 before being voted into power last year in an election protesters say was rigged in his favour, also rebuffed calls for his resignation.

At least 65 prominent protesters have been arrested since Tuesday, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights told AFP on Saturday, as authorities escalated a crackdown on months of slowly building unrest.

Eight have since been released, including activist Tattap "Ford" Ruangprapaikitseree, who was bailed on Saturday after his detention the previous night.

He was quick to go live on Facebook to denounce the use of violence against unarmed protesters.

"The government is no longer legitimate. Prayut Chan-O-Cha, you're a tyrant," he said.

Two other activists were arrested on Friday under a rarely used law banning "violence against the queen" after they joined a group Wednesday that surrounded a royal motorcade with Queen Suthida as a passenger, flashing a pro-democracy salute as the car drove by.

Both men could face life in prison if convicted. At least three protesters sustained slight injuries and five officers were admitted to the police hospital in Friday's clashes, authorities said.



Merkel Urges Germans To Reduce Contacts, Travel To Curb Coronavirus



BERLIN (Reuters) - Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Germans on Saturday to curb social contacts and keep travel to a minimum, making a personal appeal after the federal and state governments struggled to agree on ways to contain a second wave of coronavirus infection.

"We have to do everything to prevent the virus from spreading out of control. Every day counts," Merkel said in her weekly video podcast.

While Germany's infection rates have been lower than in much of Europe, they have been accelerating and hit a daily record high of 7,830 on Saturday, according to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for infectious diseases.

The reported death toll rose by 33 to 9,767. German leaders were unable this week to reach a consensus on strong new measures to contain the second COVID-19 wave. Courts in several regions have, meanwhile, overturned bans on hotel stays for visitors from infection hotspots.

Politicians and health experts have appealed to the population to take voluntary measures over and above those already prescribed - including wearing masks, avoiding close contact with others and hand washing.

"We have to go further," Merkel said. "I appeal to you: Meet with fewer people, either at home or outside."

"Please forsake any journey that is not absolutely essential, every party that is not absolutely essential. Stay at home, where at all possible."

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Fully Furn

Parsian

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Le Maire Backs Tariffs on U.S. Goods in Aircraft Dispute

PARIS (Reuters) - French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Friday he was in favour of Europe imposing tariffs on U.S. goods after the World Trade Organization (WTO) granted the European Union the right to retaliate against U.S. subsidies for planemaker Boeing BA.N. "The EU has the possibility to impose sanctions on the United States in relation to the spat between Boeing and Airbus AIR.PA ...it must decide to do so," Le Maire said on BFM TV.



OPEC+ Fears Second Virus Wave Could Lead to Oil Surplus in 2021

MOSCOW (Reuters) - OPEC and its allies fear a prolonged second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and a jump in Libyan output could push the oil market into surplus next year, according to a confidential document seen by Reuters, a gloomier outlook than just a month ago.

A panel of officials from OPEC+ producers, called the Joint Technical Committee, considered this worst-case scenario during a virtual monthly meeting on Thursday. In September, the panel had not seen a surplus under any scenarios it considered.

Such a surplus could threaten plans by OPEC, Russia and allies, known as OPEC+, to taper record output cuts made this year by adding 2 million bpd of oil to the market in 2021.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has not indicated any plan so far to scrap that supply boost.

"The earlier signs of economic recovery in some parts of the world are overshadowed by fragile conditions and growing scepticism about the pace of the recovery," according to the document used in the panel's monthly meeting in October.

"In particular, a resurgence of COVID-19 cases across the world and prospects for partial lockdowns in the coming winter months could compound the risks to economic and oil demand recovery," it said.

The document presented scenarios that included a base case that still showed a deficit in 2021 of 1.9 million barrels per day (bpd) on average, albeit less than the deficit of 2.7 million bpd forecast in the previous month's base case.

But under its worst-case scenario, the document said the market could flip into a surplus of 200,000 bpd in 2021.

This year, OPEC+ agreed to make record output cuts to support plunging prices as oil demand collapsed. It cut 9.7 million bpd from May, tapering that to 7.7 million bpd from August. From January, cuts are due to ease to 5.7 million bpd.

However, since the JTC met in September, Libyan output has climbed and a global rise in coronavirus cases has led to renewed restrictions on movement in some countries, weakening demand for crude.

OPEC-member Libya is exempt from any production cuts.

Under the document's worst-case scenario, Libyan production would rise in 2021 to as much as 1.1 million bpd, a source familiar with the details of the meeting said. Under its base case, Libyan output would be 600,000 bpd in 2021.

Under the worst-case scenario, OECD commercial oil inventories - a benchmark OPEC+ uses to gauge the market - would remain high in 2021 compared to the five-year average rather than starting to fall below that mark.

This scenario also sees a stronger and more prolonged second wave of COVID-19 in the fourth quarter of 2020 and first quarter of 2021 in Europe, the United States and India leading to a lower economic recovery, weakening oil demand.

Under the document's base case, OECD oil stocks are expected to stand slightly above the five-year average in the first quarter of 2021, before falling below that level for the rest of the year.

A ministerial OPEC+ panel, known as the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), will consider the outlook when it meets on Monday. The JMMC can make a policy recommendation.

Oil ministers from OPEC+ countries are scheduled to meet again on Nov. 30-Dec. 1.

Sweden Boosts Military Spending, Expands Draft Amid Russia Tensions

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - Sweden will boost military spending by around 40% over the next five years and double the numbers conscripted into the armed forces as it looks to beef up its defense amid growing tensions with Russia, the government said.

Sweden, which is not a member of NATO but enjoys close ties with the bloc, ran down its military after the end of the Cold War to save money.

"We have a situation where the Russian side is willing to use military means to achieve political goals," Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist told reporters. "Based on that, we have a new geo-political security situation to deal with."

Hultqvist said the new proposals would mean an increase in the military budget of 27.5 billion Swedish crowns (\$3.10 billion) by 2025.

Increased Russian activity in the Baltic Sea region has pushed Sweden into a hasty programme of rearmament, including the purchase of Patriot missiles from the United States.

Last month, Sweden protested to Moscow after two warships entered its territorial waters without permission and has repeatedly complained about Russian military planes flying too close to its own aircraft and violating Swedish airspace.

The government said the military budget would be increased successively between 2021 and 2025, and would fund an expansion of military personnel to around 90,000 from the current 60,000, including a new mechanised brigade with updated artillery. The navy will get an extra submarine, increasing the number to five, and the corvette fleet will be updated, while both the army and air force will get upgraded weapons systems.

In addition, the draft will be expanded to 8,000 a year by 2025, up from 4,000 in 2019. Sweden ended conscription in 2010, but reintroduced compulsory military service for a limited number of men and women in 2017.



Japan September Exports Fell at Much Slower Pace

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's exports in September probably fell at a much slower pace than in recent months, adding to some signs of recovery in the economy following the coronavirus pandemic, a Reuters poll showed on Friday.

Among other Japanese data releases next week, core consumer inflation in September was expected to have stayed around the lowest level in nearly four years, underscoring deflationary risks from the economic slump.

A Reuters poll of 16 economists forecast exports probably fell 2.4% in September from a year earlier, a significant easing after the double-digit falls in each of the six months through August.

Imports were projected to have fallen 21.4% in September from a year earlier, producing a trade surplus of 989.8 billion yen (\$9.40 billion), according to the poll. Imports fell 20.8% in August.

"In addition to recovery in auto shipments, those of general machineries are expected to pick up," said Koya Miyamae, senior economist at SMBC Nikko Securities.

"Consumer spending is on the recovery trend but firms' capital spending is weak due to worsening corporate earning and uncertainty over the outlook, so imports of capital goods will likely be lacklustre."

The finance ministry will announce the trade data at 8:50 a.m. on Monday (2350 GMT Sunday).

The economy has been picking up from a record contraction in the April-June quarter. Last month, the government upgraded its view of exports and industrial output has been rising for several months, but weaknesses remain. The core consumer price index (CPI), which includes oil products but excludes volatile fresh food prices, is expected to have slipped 0.4% in September from a year earlier, the poll found.

China's Consumers Likely Gave Economy a Boost in Q3

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economic recovery likely stepped up in the third quarter as consumers returned to shopping malls and large trading partners reopened for business, shaking off the record slump seen earlier this year.

The world's second-largest economy is expected to have grown by 5.2 percent in July-September from a year earlier, faster than the second quarter's 3.2 percent expansion, according to a poll of economists by the Reuters news agency.

A similar survey by the Bloomberg news agency predicts a 5.3 percent growth rate.

The International Monetary Fund has forecast an expansion of 1.9 percent for China

for the full year, the only key economy expected to report growth in 2020.

Policymakers globally are pinning their hopes on a robust recovery in China to help restart demand as economies struggle with heavy lockdowns and a second wave of coronavirus infections.

"China has become the first major economy to return to its pre-virus growth path, thanks to its rapid containment of COVID-19 and effective stimulus response," said analysts from Capital Economics. However, they warned a renewed slowdown is likely from late 2021 as stimulus measures fade.

China's retail spending has lagged the comeback in factory activity as heavy job losses and persistent worries about infection kept consumers at home, even as restrictions lifted.

However, that is expected to have changed in the third quarter.

In September, auto sales marked a sixth straight month of gains with a solid 12.8 percent growth. Ford Motor Co's China vehicle sales jumped 25 percent in the September quarter from a year earlier.

A rebound in domestic passenger flights in September indicated that sector was approaching a full recovery.

But the rebound in spending appears to have been uneven, relying on richer Chinese spending on luxury goods and holidays, with many poorer people still hit hard by job and income losses due to the pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic, which caused China's first contraction in the first quarter since at least 1992, is now largely under control, although there has been a small resurgence of cases in the eastern province of Shandong.

Year-on-year forecasts by 51 analysts polled by Reuters ranged from 2.5 percent to 7.2 percent for the third quarter.

On a quarterly basis, gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to have grown by 3.2 percent in July-September compared with a rise of 11.5 percent in the previous quarter.

South Korea Pushes Back Against U.S. Pressure on Huawei

SEOUL (Dispatches) - A teleconference call between Lee Tae-ho, South Korea's second vice foreign minister, and Keith Krach, the U.S. under-secretary of state, apparently didn't go entirely smoothly.

According to Yonhap news agency, a South Korean foreign ministry official indicated that the meeting got a little frosty when the subject of Washington's Clean Network initiative cropped up, which calls on "all freedom-loving" countries - in the words of US secretary of state Mike Pompeo - to ban Chinese suppliers from their critical telecom infrastructure.

"We made it clear that whether a private telecom company uses the equipment of a specific enterprise is up to that company to decide," said the South Korean official.

The official added, in a diplomatic fuzzy way, that "regarding the general security risks posed by the 5G technology in the telecommunication market, we agreed to work closely with the US side and cooperate in terms of technological issues."

In another nod to U.S. sensibilities, but unlikely to satisfy Pompeo or President Donald Trump, the two nations reportedly "talked about the importance of the Clean Network and the issues requested by the U.S."

How long Seoul can maintain its position is "debatable," according to unnamed South Korean officials, especially if economic relations between the two countries become strained.

Lee Tae-ho and Krach were speaking during the annual Senior Economic Dialogue between Seoul and Washington.

Of South Korea's "big three" mobile network operators, the smallest one, LG Uplus, is the most vulnerable to these renewed US calls for a Huawei ban.

The U.S. state department says rivals SK Telecom and KT are "clean," because they don't use Chinese suppliers in their 5G networks (although the two carriers use Huawei equipment for landlines).

LG Uplus, on the other hand, is up to its eyes in Huawei's 5G kit.

Robert Strayer, during a press event in July - when he enjoyed the lengthy job title of U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for cyber and international communications and information policy - urged LG Plus to partner with "trusted vendors" and kick Huawei into touch.

Huawei has always vehemently denied that it's at the beck and call of the Chinese state and that its 5G equipment poses a threat to national security.

India Allows UAE's ADNOC To Export Oil From Strategic Reserve



NEW DELHI (Reuters) - The Indian cabinet allowed Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC) to export oil from its Mangalore strategic petroleum reserve (SPR), a minister said, marking a policy shift that could enhance foreign participation as India seeks to expand its storage capacity. Allowing ADNOC to export its oil mirrors a model adopted by countries such as Japan and South Korea which allow oil producers to re-export crude storage. India does not allow oil exports.

"The move will facilitate trade for ADNOC," Prakash Javadekar, minister of environment, told a news briefing.

ADNOC had been seeking permission from the Indian government for the export of its oil from the cavern as it was finding difficult to sell to Indian refiners, some of which have cut crude processing due to falling demand.

ADNOC can now export oil stored in the Mangalore SPR in foreign flagged ships. So far Indian flagged ships were used for coastal movement of the oil from the cavern.

Indian companies will have a first right of refusal in case of any re-exports by ADNOC, a government source said.

India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, imports about 80% of its oil needs and has built strategic storage at three locations in southern India to store up to 5 million tons oil to protect against supply disruption.

India also plans to build strategic storage at Chandikhol in Odisha and Padur in Karnataka for around 6.5 million tons of crude.

The Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Ltd has leased half of the 1.5 million tons capacity in Mangalore storage to ADNOC, while ISPR has retained the remainder.

The previous lease allowed ADNOC to sell only 35% of its oil stored in Mangalore to Indian refiners and another 15% with permission from the government. The remainder was kept for India's needs.

Air Pollution Returns to Tehran as Winter Looms

TEHRAN (IFP) - The citizens of Tehran should now wear their face masks not just to contain the spread of the COVID-19, but also to protect themselves against the air pollution which annually hits Tehran as the winter looms.

Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year, Tehran's weather has been 'good' in 15 days, 'moderate' in 155 days, 'unhealthy for sensitive groups' in 39 days, and 'unhealthy' in two days.



U.S. Gun Sales Soar Amid Pandemic, Social Unrest, Election Fears

LONDON (Reuters) - Andreyah Garland, a 44-year-old single mother of three daughters, bought a shotgun in May for protection in the quaint middle-class town of Fishkill, New York. She joined a new and fast-growing local gun club to learn how to shoot.

She has since applied for a pistol permit and constantly hunts for increasingly scarce ammunition - making three trips weekly to a local Walmart. "They're always out," she said.

Like legions of other first-time buyers who are contributing to record sales for the U.S. gun industry this year, Garland's decision to take up arms is driven in part by disturbing news about the coronavirus pandemic, social unrest over police killings of Black people and a potentially contested election that many fear could spark violence.

"With everything going on around us," she said, "you see a need."

Surges in U.S. firearm sales have in recent decades been predictably driven by events sparking fears of impending gun-control legislation, such as the election of a Democratic president or a spate of mass shootings, federal gun background check data show. Industry experts and academics who study gun ownership say such surges came largely among the gun-industry's core base of white, male and politically conservative customers who often already owned one or multiple guns.

That market is widening this year to include a new rush of first-time buyers, including many women, minorities and politically liberal buyers who once would not have considered gun ownership, according to Reuters interviews with more than a dozen industry experts, academics and gun store owners.

"People who don't normally think about firearms are being forced to contemplate something outside their universe," said Dan Eldridge, owner of Maxon Shooter's Supplies and Indoor Range in the Chicago suburb of Des Plaines, Illinois.

The number of first-time buyers has skyrocketed this year, according to industry analysts, trade groups and the CEO of major gun manufacturer Smith & Wesson Brands Inc, Mark Peter Smith. In a Sept. 3 conference call with investors, Smith estimated that firearms neophytes accounted for about 40% of sales this year, an estimate he called conservative and "double the national average" in past years. In a Sept. 2 call, Sportsman's Warehouse Holdings Inc CEO Jon Barker said the company estimated that 5 million people purchased firearms for the first time across the industry in the first seven months of the year, which matched a recent figure put out by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, a trade group, based on a national survey of retailers.

In a statement to Reuters, Walmart Inc acknowledged supply shortages in outdoor products including hunting but provided no details of its gun and ammunition sales or inventory. "We are working with our suppliers to make product available for our customers as quickly as possible," the company said.

Among the first-timers is Bailey Beeken, 61, who lives in Riverdale, New York and describes herself as a white, politically liberal, middle-class woman. She started taking shooting lessons this summer, she said, because "whichever way this election goes, it could get really scary, and it could get bloody."

With the pandemic pitting mask-wearers against mask protesters, and police-brutality protests sparking violent street clashes, "I just feel like it's a powder keg," she said. "I want to be armed and dangerous."

Neither gun companies nor the government releases detailed data on firearm sales or the demographics of buyers. The FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check



System (NICS) - a widely accepted proxy - shows a 41% increase in activity during the first nine months of this year, compared to the same period in 2019, which was a record year. With 28.8 million background checks through the end of September, this year's surge has already surpassed last year's all-time high of 28.4 million.

Background checks verify that buyers do not have a criminal record or another issue that might make them ineligible to buy a weapon, such as an arrest warrant or a documented drug addiction. Less than 1% of applicants are denied, according to FBI figures.

Eight of the top 10 all-time weeks for background checks have happened this year, according to NICS data that goes back to 1998. The top week came in March, when the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus crisis a pandemic. The top month this year came in June, following the late-May killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police.

Shares of Smith & Wesson and Sturm Ruger & Co Inc, the two top U.S. manufacturers, have soared 131% and 59%, respectively, this year. Both companies did not respond to requests for comment.

The historically high sales are adding millions of weapons to a nation that already has more guns than people. The Geneva-based Small Arms Survey estimated the number of U.S. guns at 393 million in 2017. That dwarfed the next highest totals of 71 million in India and nearly 50 million in China - countries that both have populations four times the size of the United States.

Aside from rising concerns over street violence related to political unrest, surging gun sales can translate to more routine gun deaths, researchers say. Harvard University professor David Hemenway said there is overwhelming evidence that buying a gun greatly increases a household's risk of suicide, shooting accidents and violence against a domestic partner.

"It's pretty clear that more guns is more death," said Hemenway, director of the school's Injury Control Research Center, which studies injury prevention.

U.S.-China War...

FROM PAGE 1

Graham Allison, American political scientist and the Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at Harvard University, says, "The remainder of 2020 could pose as severe a test for the US and China as the final five months of 1941 did for the United States and Japan."



He has said, "Japan's surprise air strike on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 - which dragged the U.S. into World War II - had been beyond Washington's imagination, that 'a nation less than one-quarter the size of the U.S. would launch a bolt from the blue against the most powerful nation in the world'."

Malcolm Davis, a senior analyst in the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, says, "China has seen the coronavirus as an opportunity to exploit U.S. weaknesses, and so China might be tempted to resolve territorial disputes through force. I think there's a real possibility of miscalculation by Beijing in assuming the U.S. won't or can't respond militarily." I think very likely China's calculations that the U.S. has no will or capability for having a military action would turn out wrong.

Yuan Peng, president of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, a government-linked think tank in Beijing, drew parallels between the post-coronavirus world and the situation after World War I more than a century ago.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi refuted claims that China was a revisionist power seeking to expand its sphere of influence at the expense of the U.S. He said, "China never intends to challenge or replace the U.S., or have full confrontation with the U.S."

Any military action between both countries, even in the lowest scale, can totally overshadow world economic condition. The processes ahead for escalation in tension between these two big economic and political powers are so high that each one by itself can be the base for a tumult and strategic mistake between both states. But in this condition, the U.S. economy, with mammoth volume of debts on the shoulders of the U.S. government, shows this country is more fragile than China.

Hence, in this condition the role of the United Nations especially its Secretary General and ultimately the UNSC's becomes more important and it warns of an unwanted mission. Today with the great danger which is threatening the world and smells the preparations for the Third World War, all joint and united organizations are tasked with responsibility to lessen this huge amount of tension through talks.

The imposed poverty resulted by the downward economic growth because of the Coronavirus pandemic and its compulsory management has today created a global disaster that emergence of the second one like the war between two economic and military superpowers would be something beyond the world's endurance and all should work together and not to let the course of daily growing bitterness between these two states expand the perils.

Iran's UN...

FROM PAGE 1

"It should be emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always maintained that all sanctions and restrictive measures introduced and applied against the people of Iran have been baseless, unjust, and unlawful," the statement noted.

The development came in spite of months-long attempts by the United States to keep the arms embargo in place.

At the UNSC, the US faces a rebuke from world powers, including its own allies, over its hostile push to secure an extension of the anti-Iran UN arms embargo.

In June, the U.S. circulated a draft resolution among the Security Council's 15-strong membership, urging prevention of the embargo's expiration. Only the Dominican Republic voted in favor of the draft that was voted against by China and Russia and abstained by the rest of the UNSC's members.

The U.S. campaign was in contravention of the JCPOA and Resolution 2231 as Washington had left the nuclear accord in 2018, thus losing all of its rights as a signatory. Iran's mission reminded likewise how Washington's drive had hit a dead end as the Security Council rejected its "illegal" move.

"As a responsible member of the international community, the Islamic Republic of Iran engages in legitimate trade—in accordance with international law and on the basis of its national interests—with other countries, including in the realm of arms trade," the press release concluded.

The U.S. also fell short of a consensus in a subsequent push to restore all UN sanctions against Iran. Tehran has described the dual failures as historic defeats for Washington.

Delhi Residents Worry About Toxic Mix of Pollution, COVID-19



NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Families in Delhi with pre-existing health conditions such as asthma are stocking up on oxygen cylinders and pulse dosimeters, fearing that the city's worsening air quality will make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus.

After months of relatively clean air because of a lockdown imposed to fight the virus, pollution levels have spiked to their worst in two years for October, caused by farmers burning crop stubble in surrounding states and cooler weather.

On Friday, haze hung over the capital of 18 million people and the air quality level was at 235 on a scale of 500.

Rupesh Gupta, 45, who has recovered from COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, said he was an asthmatic and having difficulty breathing the city's dirty air.

"I am neither able to walk, nor get out of the house. Even if I try and get out of the house, it takes me an effort to breathe," he said. He lost his mother to COVID-19, so his anxiety levels are high.

"There is paranoia that you never know from what source we might get infection again in our home," his wife, Neelam Gupta, told Reuters at their residence in a congested west Delhi suburb.

The family has bought a 15 kg oxygen cylinder for emergency use and a portable pulse oximeter to measure oxygen levels in the blood each day.

They are also keen to stock up on air purifiers that most well-heeled families own in Delhi, one of the world's most polluted cities. The Air Quality Index (AQI) has remained in the "very poor" category all week due to slowing wind speeds that allow deadly pollutants such as PM2.5 particles to remain suspended in the air.

Japan to Release Fukushima's Contaminated Water Into Sea

TOKYO (Reuters) - Nearly a decade after the Fukushima nuclear disaster, Japan's government has decided to release over one million tonnes of contaminated water into the sea, media reports said on Friday, with a formal announcement expected to be made later this month.

The decision is expected to rankle neighbouring countries like South Korea, which has already stepped up radiation tests of food from Japan, and further devastate the fishing industry in Fukushima that has battled against such a move for years.

The disposal of contaminated water at the Fukushima Daiichi plant has been a longstanding problem for Japan as it proceeds with an decades-long decommissioning project. Nearly 1.2 million tonnes of contaminated water are currently stored in huge tanks at the facility.

The plant, run by Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc 9501.T, suffered multiple nuclear meltdowns after a 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

On Friday, Japan's industry minister Hiroshi Kajiyama said no decision had been made on the disposal of the water yet, but the government aims to make one quickly.

"To prevent any delays in the decommissioning process, we need to make a decision quickly," he told a news conference.

He did not give any further details, including a time-frame. The Asahi newspaper reported that any such release is expected to take at around two years to prepare, as the site's irradiated water first needs to pass through a filtration process before it can be further diluted with seawater and finally released into the ocean.

In 2018, Tokyo Electric apologised after admitting its filtration systems had not removed all dangerous material from the water, collected from the cooling pipes used to keep fuel cores from melting when the plant was crippled.



It has said it plans to remove all radioactive particles from the water except tritium, an isotope of hydrogen that is hard to separate and is considered to be relatively harmless.

It is common practice for nuclear plants around the world to release water that contain traces of tritium into the ocean.

In April, a team sent by the International Atomic Energy Agency to review contaminated water issues at the Fukushima site said the options for water disposal outlined by an advisory committee in Japan - vapour release and discharges to the sea - were both technically feasible. The IAEA said both options were used by operating nuclear plants.

Last week, Japanese fish industry representatives urged the government to not allow the release of contaminated water from the Fukushima plant into the sea, saying it would undo years of work to restore their reputation.

South Korea has retained a ban on imports of seafood from the Fukushima region that was imposed after the nuclear disaster and summoned a senior Japanese embassy official last year to explain how Tokyo planned to deal with the Fukushima water problem.

Bans Can No More...

FROM PAGE 1

He said Washington's failure to portray Iran as a security issue and move forward with its unilateral measures among its allies at the UN Security Council led to its isolation, which is an important issue.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will closely monitor the U.S. behavior and measures in that regard, and will take the necessary action in accordance with the existing mechanisms if the lifting of the arms embargo faces any obstacles in practice," he said.

He also urged the European countries to live up to their commitments under the Iran nuclear deal.

Former Man City

Defender Zabaleta Retires

LONDON (Dispatches) - Former Manchester City and Argentina defender Pablo Zabaleta announced his retirement on Friday.

Zabaleta left West Ham at the end of last season and has decided to bring the curtain down on his successful 18-year career.

The 35-year-old full-back joined City from Espanyol in 2008 and played his part in an era of unprecedented glory for the Premier League club. Zabaleta spent nine years at City, making 333 appearances and helping them win the Premier League in 2011-12 and 2013-14.

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Quartararo Storms To Aragon GP Pole

ARAGON (Reuters) - Championship leader Fabio Quartararo of Petronas Yamaha shrugged off a crash in practice to clinch pole position at the Aragon Grand Prix on Saturday.

The Frenchman lost control of his bike at turn 14 in Free Practice 3 (FP3) and was thrown off, landing hip first on the tarmac before being taken away on a stretcher.

X-rays showed he had not broken any bones, however, and the 21-year-old ensured he would start on the front row ahead of Yamaha's Maverick Vinales and LCR Honda's Cal Crutchlow.

Late Blitz Saves Man Utd Blushes as VAR Denies Liverpool

LONDON (Dispatches) - Bruno Fernandes atoned for a missed penalty as Manchester United blitzed Newcastle with late goals on Saturday while VAR denied Liverpool a cathartic victory against Everton on another day of breathless drama in the Premier League.

Elsewhere, Chelsea conceded late to draw 3-3 at home to Southampton while Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola got the better of former assistant Mikel Arteta in a 1-0 win over Arsenal. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men went into their match at St James's Park desperate to restore pride after a 6-1 hammering by Spurs before the international break but were immediately in trouble when Luke Shaw turned the ball into his own net.

United were back on level terms midway through the first half when captain Harry Maguire met Juan Mata's corner with an unstoppable header, just days after the misery of a red card for England against Denmark.

The visitors were handed a golden chance to take the lead from the spot after VAR awarded them a penalty for Jamal Lewis's challenge on Marcus Rashford but Karl Darlow dived to his right to save Fernandes's 58th-minute spot-kick.

However, the Portuguese made amends for his miss with a superb 86th-minute strike and there was still time for goals from Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Rashford, who made it 4-1.

"Great result and great character to come back, led by a very inspirational captain," Solskjaer told Sky Sports. Jurgen Klopp's champions were desperate to re-establish their authority after their 7-2 mauling against Aston Villa but were forced to settle for a 2-2 draw after Jordan Henderson's late strike was chalked off for offside.

Everton, who have not beaten Liverpool since 2010, remain three points clear of their Merseyside rivals at the top of the table after a number of controversial calls went their way at Goodison Park. Klopp was mystified that Henderson's potential winner in added time



against 10-man Everton was ruled out for a barely perceptible offside decision against Sadio Mane.

He was also at a loss to explain how Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford had not been dismissed and had not conceded an early penalty for a knee-high challenge on Virgil van Dijk.

Everton showed their new-found mettle by twice coming from behind, with Michael Keane and the prolific Dominic Calvert-Lewin cancelling out goals from Mane and Mohamed Salah. But the pivotal moment in the match came when Van Dijk was on the receiving end of a dangerous late lunge from Pickford early in the game, which forced the Dutchman off.

However, no penalty was awarded after a VAR review because Van Dijk had been marginally offside and Pickford was lucky to avoid a red card.

Richarlison was shown a straight red card for a dangerous tackle on Thiago in the 90th minute before the VAR drama in the final seconds. Van Dijk and Thiago both went to hospital for scans on their knee injuries after the game. Chelsea looked to be in total control after cruising into a 2-0 lead against Southampton at Stamford Bridge, courtesy of new signing Timo Werner's first Premier League goals. But a goal from Danny Ings shortly before half-time and a second-half strike from Che Adams wiped out their lead.

Frank Lampard's side rallied immediately to regain the lead, Werner teeing up Kai Havertz, only for Jannik Vestergaard to power home an added-time equaliser. City returned to winning ways after an indifferent start to the season, courtesy of a first-half goal from Raheem Sterling, who condemned Arsenal to their seventh straight defeat in league matches between the two sides.

Man Utd Trigger Pogba Contract Extension



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United have triggered the one-year option on Paul Pogba's contract in a move that will keep the France midfielder at Old Trafford until 2022.

Pogba was due to be out of contract at the end of this season and recently ramped up speculation that he could leave United by admitting it would be a "dream" to play for Real Madrid.

But, according to reports on Friday, United have moved to secure Pogba's services until at least the end of next season by taking advantage of the extension clause in the World Cup winner's contract.

United have not officially announced the deal, but boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer appeared to let slip the details at his press conference on Friday.

"Paul's our player, he's going to be here for another two years and I'm sure he is focused on doing his best for us and we want to see the best of Paul," Solskjaer told reporters.

"So, in the next couple of years I'm sure we'll get the best out of him."

Pogba rejoined United from Juventus in a then world-record deal in 2016, but has been hampered by injuries and inconsistent form for much of his second spell in the Premier League.

Portugal Reconsiders Allowing Fans To Attend F1 Race

LISBON (Reuters) - Portugal's health authority said on Friday it was reconsidering whether to allow fans into sports events, including next week's Formula One Grand Prix for which thousands of tickets had been sold, as it is trying to contain a surge in COVID-19 infections.

Without providing further details, the head of the DGS authority, Graca Freitas, told a news conference another option under consideration was to reduce the number of spectators.

The director of the circuit in Portimao, in the country's southern Algarve region, said in August around 28,000 tickets had already been sold but warned fans would not be allowed in if the pandemic worsened.

Formula One announced in July the Portimao circuit would host a grand prix for the first time as part of a revised calendar after some other races were cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

The Oct. 24-25 race is also due to mark the return of the exclusive Paddock Club hospitality for VIP guests for the first time this season.

Freitas said the decision will take into consideration the epidemiological situation in the region where an event is happening and the type of event in question.

There was no immediate comment from Formula One.

The start of the Formula One season was pushed back to July from March due to the pandemic. Races have been held with teams operating in isolated bubbles and with regular testing.

The total number of races was cut to 17 from the record 22 originally envisaged and the first eight of the season were held without spectators. Portugal will be round 12.

Portugal, a nation of just over 10 million people, initially won praise for its quick response to the pandemic, recording a comparatively low 95,902 confirmed coronavirus cases and 2,149 deaths, but cases have crept up lately.

On Friday, the country hit 2,608 daily cases, the highest number of infections in a single day since the pandemic started, according to DGS, although testing rates have also increased.

Rashford Backs New Arrival Cavani to Shine



LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester United striker Marcus Rashford believes new signing Edinson Cavani can play an important role in helping the fallen giants of English soccer compete for trophies again.

The 33-year-old forward joined United earlier this month on a free transfer from French Ligue 1 side Paris St Germain and will don the club's iconic number seven jersey, worn in the past by Cristiano Ronaldo and David Beckham.

Rashford welcomed the competition the Uruguayan will provide to United's front line that includes himself, Anthony Martial, Mason Greenwood, Daniel James and Odion Ighalo.

"As a forward line (the arrival of Cavani) is something to look forward to. Hopefully he

comes in and scores goals, because he can definitely help us win games and points. He can be a massive player this season," Rashford told Sky Sports.

United had strong results towards the end of last season to secure third place in the Premier League and a Champions League spot while their Cup campaigns fell just short with semi-final losses in the League Cup, FA Cup and Europa League.

"To win two or three trophies in a season you need a squad, it's not possible if you don't have people who can score goals one week and the next week. It's not possible without three or four forwards in a team," Rashford added.

"Growing up, United always had four or five forwards who could score goals at any time. The closer we get to that, the more strength we'll have."

Cavani must wait to make his league debut after the club confirmed he will miss the Newcastle United game later on Saturday since he is still self-isolating as per United Kingdom guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Rublev, Coric Reach Final

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Andrey Rublev boosted his hopes of reaching the ATP Finals as he came from behind to defeat Denis Shapovalov, setting up a St Petersburg Open final with Borna Coric.

Rublev trailed Denis Shapovalov by a set but fought back to prevail 4-6 6-3 6-4 and ensure there will be a home hope in the final.

He saved five of six break points in the process of earning victory over the Canadian, the win moving Rublev ahead of Diego Schwartzman into eighth place in the battle to qualify for the season-ending tournament in London.

His opponent will be 2019 finalist Coric, who will be looking to go one better than last year after he staged a turnaround of his own.

Coric, beaten by Daniil Medvedev in his previous appearance in the final, saw off Milos Raonic 1-6 6-1 6-4.

Alexander Zverev progressed to his second final since the resumption of the ATP Tour at the Cologne Indoors.

Zverev overcame Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 7-5 7-6 (7-3) but was full of praise for the NextGen ATP Finals contender.

"He played much better tennis and I think he's somebody who is going to go up the [FedEx ATP] Rankings very quickly," Zverev said.

"For me he's a great guy as well. He's very talented, extremely good with the hands. I think he's somebody who's going to find his way up and it's going to be interesting to see what the future weeks [hold for him] this year and next year as well."



Barcelona, Real Madrid Both Lose Ahead of Clasico

MADRID (Dispatches) - Real Madrid and Barcelona will each head into the Clasico next weekend on the back of a defeat after La Liga's two title favorites were punished for slack performances on Saturday.

Zinedine Zidane made four substitutions at half-time but could not spark a lethargic Madrid into life as his team fell 1-0 at home to newly-promoted Cadiz.

Then two hours later on the opposite side of the city, Ronald Koeman tasted his first competitive loss as coach of Barcelona as they followed Madrid's example by being beaten 1-0 by Getafe at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez.

Madrid's was perhaps the more concerning display, the reigning champions managing just two shots on target against Cadiz, who could have scored more after Anthony Lozano's early strike.

But Barca were not much better, with Lionel Messi strangely quiet and the team failing to rebound after Jaime Mata's penalty gave Getafe the lead in the second half.

For Madrid, there was an injury concern too as Sergio Ramos spent the second half in the stands with ice strapped around his left knee.

Madrid said the injury was not serious but it puts in doubt Ramos' involvement in their first Champions League game against Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday, as well the Clasico three days later. Even if Barcelona were unable to capitalise, Atletico Madrid had earlier beaten Celta Vigo 2-0, with Luis Suarez opening the scoring at Balaidos.

Getafe were never really hanging on either, even if Barcelona went close to an equaliser, Messi hitting the post and then driving a loose ball wide in injury-time. Antoine Griezmann also ballooned over when put through in the first half.

