

Health Ministry Spokeswoman
Sima Sadat Lari Said on Tuesday
That Some 322 More Iranians
Have Died From the Coronavirus
Disease Over the Past 24 Hours
Bringing the Total Deaths to 31,034

IRAN NEWS

In a Message on Tuesday, the
Leader of the Islamic Republic of
Iran, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei,
Congratulated the Staff of the
Islamic Republic of Iran Police (IRIP)
On the Occasion of Police Week

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Lifting of UN Arms Ban Outcome of Iran Correct Policy

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Government Spokesman Ali Rabiei has hailed the lifting of the UN arms embargo on Iran as an "achievement," saying it shows that the country adopted a "correct policy" when it chose to remain a party to the 2015 nuclear deal despite America's pullout.

Speaking at a media briefing in Tehran on Tuesday, Rabiei said that the expiry of the decade-long arms ban was the result of Iran's righteousness and its people's resistance.

"Despite political opposition and pressure as well as the excessive demands of the United States, Israel and their regional allies, these restrictions have been lifted. This is a sign for both the international community and our dear people," he added.

Iran says the United States is afraid of its tapping into the weapon export market now that Tehran has had an arms embargo lifted against it.

The embargo was removed on Sunday under UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). **See Page 7**

Iran's Overflights Show Growth Up to 23%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of the Development Commission of Iran's parliament said that despite threats, sanctions, and Iranophobia by the enemies, foreign airlines could not ignore Iran's skies.

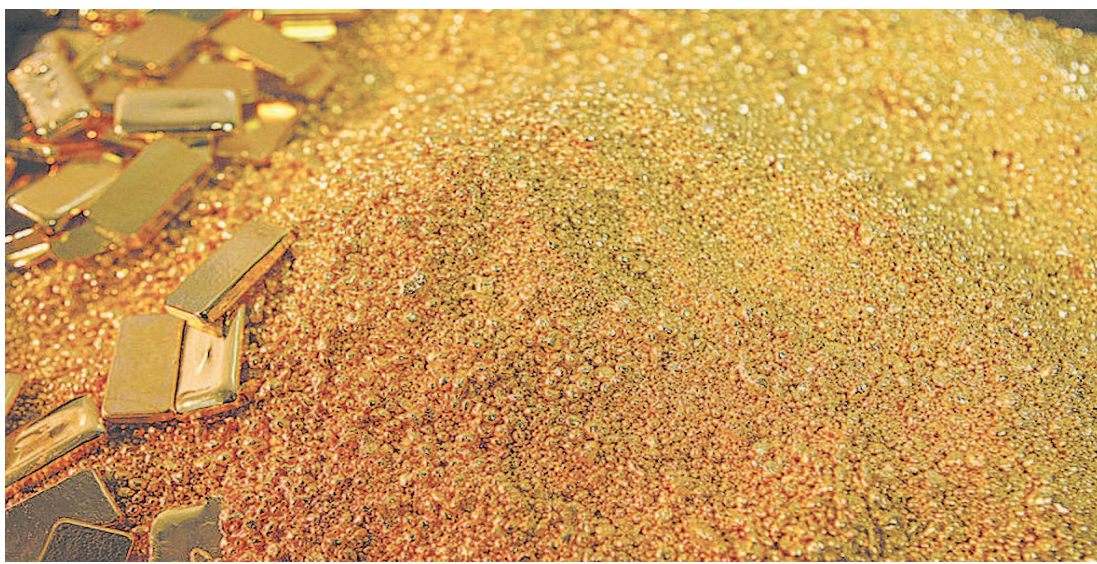
Adel Najafzadeh, a member of the Iranian parliament's Commission on Civil, stated that flights over Iran's airspace in one month (August 22 to September 21, 2020) had increased by 23% compared to the same period of the previous month (July 22 to August 21, 2020).

"A total of 10,376 foreign flights passed through Iran's airspace during the month, which figure stood at 8,431 in the previous month," he added.

Najafzadeh added, fortunately, despite all the blackout and media propaganda of the enemies to show Iran's airspace unsafe, many foreign airlines use Iranian airspace for their flights.

Emphasizing that the Iranian sky is one of the safest air routes for aircraft traffic, Mr. Najafzadeh said the country's geopolitical situation had made crossing Iran's airspace very economical for foreign airlines. **See Page 7**

Iran Finds Deposit With 8m Tons of Gold Reserves



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has made a gold discovery in southeast Sistan and Baluchestan province, where definite reserves of 8 tons of the precious metal have been found, a provincial official says.

"The discovered gold mine in Sistan and Baluchestan is one of the economic mines of the country that was recently identified and after a long time, its exploration and survey stages were completed and the license for exploration of the mine with a definite reserves of eight tons of gold was issued," the province's under-secretary for economic affairs Mandana Zanganeh said.

"For exploration, the call for attracting investors will be published by the end of Mehr (on Wednesday), so that the capacities of this zone can be used for the economic prosperity of the region and creation of jobs," Tasnim news agency quoted her as saying.

Zanganeh called Sistan and Baluchestan the "mineral rainbow" of Iran, where there are some of the most economic mines with reserves of antimony, titanium, copper and gold.

The copper mine is one of the high-grade prospects discovered in the province, which is in the phase of exploratory studies about to be completed by the end of the current Persian year in March 2021, she added.

"The copper reserves identified at the mine are expected to reach 400 million tons, but this amount can increase significantly after the exploration is completed."

According to Zanganeh, about 60 percent of Sistan and Baluchestan has been surveyed in recent years and up to 200 mineral prospects have been identified.

"Studies on large antimony, titanium, copper and gold mining projects, which are among the country's economic mines, have been completed or are in progress and will be completed by the end of the year," she added.

Zanganeh said major companies have announced readiness to invest and establish mineral processing industries in the province.

Sistan and Baluchestan is home to a titanium mine, with officials saying in the past that more than \$4.2 billion of investment was needed to bring it fully online.

Fanuj is estimated to sit on 3.6 billion tons of titanium ore reserves. It includes a cluster of 30 deposits, each able to yield 1 million tons of titanium ore per year.

Titanium is the strategic metal of the century, named after the powerful Titan gods in Greek mythology. Because of its strength, light weight and corrosion resistance, the metal is highly prized in aircraft manufacturing, with further applications in military, aerospace, marine industries, dental implants and industrial processes.

According to provincial officials, more than 80 mines of titanium, iron ore and copper have also been explored in Fanuj.

Russia Slams U.S. Over New Iran-Related Sanctions Against Chinese Firms

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has blasted the United States for adopting yet another "wrong approach" in the wake of new Iran-related sanctions targeting Chinese companies, stressing that Moscow will keep up its business ties with Tehran despite such bans.

"Wrong approach again... The United States playing a 'world policeman,' substituting the UN Security Council is an unwelcome role," Deputy Russian Ambassador to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy tweeted on Monday.

"We are doing and will be doing business with Iran and it's not up to the United States to tell us or others what they can or can't do. Stop humiliating the United States in this pointless endeavor!" he added.

The remarks came after the U.S. blacklisted two Chinese men and six Chinese entities for having dealt with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) Group and, in some cases, helping it evade U.S. sanctions.

In a statement, the U.S. State Department said Reach Holding Group (Shanghai) Company Ltd.; Reach Shipping Lines; Delight Shipping Co., Ltd.; Gracious Shipping Co. Ltd.; Noble Shipping Co. Ltd.; and Supreme Shipping Co. Ltd had "knowingly sold, supplied, or transferred to Iran significant goods or services used in connection with the shipping sector of Iran."

It also accused Reach Holding Group and its Reach Shipping Lines unit of helping IRISL and its subsidiaries, E-Sail Shipping Company Ltd. and Hafez Darya Arya Shipping Company (HDASCO), evade U.S. sanctions.

The targeted individuals include Eric Chen, also known as Chen Guoping, chief executive of Reach Holding Group (Shanghai) Company Ltd., and Daniel Y. He, also known as He Yi, the company's president.

The State Department had in June designated IRISL and E-Sail for alleged "proliferation-related conduct," warning that any stakeholder who continued trading with the pair — even in humanitarian supplies and medical items — risked sanctions. The U.S. activates the sanctions it imposed on Iran's shipping network six months ago, in a move expected to further hamper imports of food and medicine into the country. **See Page 7**

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



"The Economist" Humiliates Trump

The reliable British magazine "The Economist" was founded in 1843 by British businessman James Wilson. The circulation of this magazine whose readers are mostly educated people, managers and policy-makers has today reached around 1.5 million copies. The stand of this publication since the first day has always been to support the classical school in the liberal economy, and regarding Iran, it pursues important and moderate views.

Recently and after the White House announced imposition of its new sanctions on 18 banks of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this magazine published an interesting article. The economic information desk of The Economist in its article and report on the U.S.s news sanctions on 18 Iranian banks wrote, "We do not expect the new U.S. sanctions and restrictions against Iran to have significant growing impact on Iran's trade and economy. Accordingly, we do not change our forecast of minus 0.2 percent economic growth for Iran in 2020. This exactly means that the White House, as the old saying goes, did not look before its leap".

The Economist says President Donald Trump by imposing the new sanctions has tried to peg his power in the foreign policy scene. The report also reads, "Donald Trump by imposing these sanctions have tried to display his power in the foreign policy scene on the eve of the U.S. presidential elections. He and anti-Iranian hawkish men present in his government are all infuriated that their efforts in September to trigger the snapback and extension of the U.N. arms embargo against Iran failed and other signatories of the JCPOA and UNSC members defied this request of the U.S."

Both inside Iran and overseas almost all experts who write on Iran or express their opinions believe, "The massive sanctions and the outbreak of the Coronavirus are two main factors which have caused Iran's minus 0.2 percent economic growth in the current year. The reason, that the new U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran's banks have been faced, on one point, with open defiance of other countries and, on the other hand, they have faced with harsh criticisms due to negative effects on the humanitarian exchanges, is that these sanctions have not been any deterrent factor and the White House and Trump have turned into the laughingstock for the international financial bodies, and even Trump is getting to the point that he loads his gun with the blank, with this notion that he can frighten Iran by triggering it. **See Page 7**

Iran Has Nothing To Hide About Ukrainian Plane Crash

TEHRAN (IFP) - Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand has highlighted Tehran's efforts to protect the rights of families of victims of a Ukrainian plane that crashed near Tehran in January, saying there is nothing to hide about details of the accident.

The second round of negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ukraine about the Ukrainian plane crash is underway in Tehran. In an event on the sidelines of the new round of talks, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Baharvand held a meeting with the families of victims of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752) on Tuesday.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran would never seek to hide details of the Ukrainian plane crash or violate the rights of families of the victims," the Iranian diplomat stressed.

He also assured the bereaved families that Iran's diplomatic apparatus will employ all of its capacities and do its utmost to safeguard the rights of victims in cooperation and coordination with all relevant institutions.

Baharvand finally expressed sympathy with the families of victims of the plane crash, pledging that he would pursue plans for a meeting between the families of victims and the Iranian Judiciary officials in order to inform the families of victims about the judicial procedures concerning the incident and to answer procedural questions and clear up doubts about the plane crash.



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Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Drone Collapses in Iran

TABRIZ (IRNA) - A drone from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict collapsed in Khoda Afarin town, East Azarbaijan Province, northwestern Iran on Tuesday, Khoda Afarin governor said.

Ali Amiri said the accident happened in Gara Goch village, Minjavan District.

He added that the collapse has brought about no casualties.

Military experts are investigating for the drone ownership and the place

from which it has taken off.

In 1994, following four years of military conflict between the two countries, some European and regional governments stepped in to end the territorial dispute between Baku and Yerevan, and a ceasefire was finally established through the mediation of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). But international efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully have so far been unsuccessful.

Gov't Focusing on Overcoming Economic Hardship With Least Damage

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN- President Hassan Rouhani said overcoming the current economic situation with the least pressure possible inflicted on the economically vulnerable groups is the main aim of the government, stressing that there are no justifications for any kind of shortages and limitations in supplying basic items.

The President made the remarks while addressing the 175th session of the economic coordination committee.

Rouhani said protecting people's health is a priority for government so it will spare no efforts for support the healthcare system.

The Iranian government is duty-bound to take advantage of capacities and economic mechanisms for supplying basic goods and raw materials for factories and for fighting enemies' cruel sanctions which are aimed at crippling production and economy, he noted.

He urged all relevant bodies working in supplying goods and medicines to facilitate patients' access to these items.

He also said that to fight the spread of the Coronavirus, any treatment may be effective, but changing the lifestyle must be at the heart of the problem as the most effective solution.

Rouhani on Monday evening at a meeting with the directors of the Ministry of Health and Corona specialists said: "If an effective vaccine has been developed or effective



treatment has been developed, the situation is different, but the measures should be based on the fact that we will continue to face this problem this year and even next year."

Iran's president said that as much as possible, electronic services should be used, adding that every government agency should provide its services electronically.

The President added: "The Leader's action to consider the approvals of the National Corona Headquarters is a great lesson for all of us, and the people must trust the medical sector and consider what they say as a reference."

Emphasizing that the literature used to warn people about the disease should come from a single source, he said: "We need to express warnings to people in different interpretations. It is important that people are convinced to comply with the policies of the Corona National Headquarters."

Tehran, Madrid Stress To Shore Up Parliamentary Relations



MADRID (IP) - The Iranian ambassador to Madrid and the Spanish Senate speaker, referring to the long-standing and good relations between the two countries, stressed the need to strengthen parliamentary relations between Tehran and Madrid.

Hassan Qashqavi, Iran's ambassador to Madrid, met with Spanish Senate Speaker Maria Pilar Cuenca on Monday, criticizing US sanctions against the Iranian people and stressing that it is currently not possible to import medical equipment to fight COVID-19 amid the global crisis.

Qashqavi said despite the Americans' claims, Washington severe sanctions target targeted humanitarian issues so it is not possible to use financial channels to purchase medicines to fight the coronavirus.

Iran's ambassador to Madrid pointed to the fifth anniversary of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), said "Global support for the implementation of Resolution 2231 and opposition to the U.S. positions in the UN Security Council showed that American unilateralism will not work."

The Speaker of the Spanish Senate also emphasized the role of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening bilateral relations and welcomed the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Spain in the area.

Maria Pilar Cuenca also stressed the need for global consultation and engagement in dealing with problems and disasters such as Corona.

Qalibaf: We Are in All-Out Economic War

TEHRAN (IP) – Majlis Speaker said that the country is in an all-out economic war, adding: "In such a war, we have to take care of what we do since it is not easy to arrive at decisions."

In a meeting with young MPs in Parliament Standing Committee for Budget Integration, Mohammad Baqer Qaliba stressed the need to form working groups among the young parliamentarians, asking them to exemplify how a devout Muslim parliamentarian should behave.

He highlighted the continuation and repetition of meetings with young members of Parliament, stating: "One of the characteristics of this meeting is the presence of all guests who follow discussions with enthusiasm. Although there are various opinions, intimacy and interaction can be well observed."

Stating that Iran is in an all-out economic war, the Parliament speaker clarified: "In this economic war, we have to take care of what we do since it is not easy to arrive at decisions."

Qalibaf underlined that solving many problems of the country lies in hands of the MPs present in this place, adding: "Reaching a common understanding in this community is the first thing we must do to solve the problems of the country to extract common priorities from this common understanding, and finally agree on the implementation method."

He asked the young parliamentarians present in the meeting to form working groups, adding: "It is better to form these working groups in cooperation with commissions and the Parliamentary Research Center, in accordance with the interest and expertise of young representatives, hence I demand that you choose issues such as budget structure reform, smuggling of commodities and currencies, energy exchange, etc., and work on these issues around the clock."

Stating that problems should not be raised during the next parliamentary sessions without presenting their solutions, Qalibaf reminded, "The young MPs should present a solution for any specific problem. Each working group should report on the work so that a common understanding and priority could be obtained."

He considered it is on the Parliament to be policy-making, saying: "Of course, this is important and time-consuming, and plans such as resolving the tax plan for vacant houses, building and producing housing, allocating a basket of commodities to people in need, a dual emergency plan related to the stock market, etc. are among the remarkable measures in the first few months since the 11th Parliament kicked off."

Pursuing the plan of transparency of the votes of the parliamentarians, determining the priorities of the 11th Parliament, planning to deal with the increase of currency, car and housing prices, protecting the Second Phase of the Revolution, transparency of the stances of the Presiding Board of the Parliament, creating media connection in the Parliament, activating the Revolution faction, field monitoring of deprived areas by the Parliament speaker and MPs, the need to reduce the economic problems of the people in a short time, etc. were among the issues underlined by young MPs during the meeting.

Iran Ready to Equip Police Force, Meet Their Needs

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Defense stated that he is always ready to equip and meet the police force's needs.

According to a report from the Ministry of Defense on Tuesday, Brigadier General Amir Hatami said, "The security created is significantly due to the efforts made by the police force, and due to the current sense of security and peace we owe them."

In a strategic meeting of the Ministry of Defense, congratulating the police force week and commemorating the martyrs of the police force, Hatami said, "Due to the continuation of the serious missions of the police force, the martyrdom takes place in different areas continuously, and this chapter is always open in the police force, and the warriors, proud and dear members of the police

force have always sacrificed their lives combating those who do evil which in some cases leads to their martyrdom."

Hatami went on to say, "Security is vital for all nations, especially to Iran, which is facing many threats from the enemies, and it is easy for our people to understand that the Sacred Defense and the imposed war have gone through the evils of the hypocrites and various events."

He stated that the Armed Forces in general and the police force, in particular, have a prominent role in creating and defending security, adding: "In internal security, the police force is at the forefront, and the main efforts to ensure and maintain security are the responsibility of the hard-working staff of the police force."

He valued the security and the sense of security created in the society, highlighting, "Achieving this is largely due to the efforts made by the police force."

Referring to the differences between police force missions and those of other armed forces, Hatami said, "Armed forces in peacetime should be ready so that others know that the armed forces are sharp and ready for the country, and their privacy cannot be violated, while the police are in the field, and their mission is continuing and running every day."

Larijani Given Role In Iran-China Deal

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Former speaker of the Iranian Parliament Ali Larijani has been assigned by the administration of President Hassan Rouhani to work on a 25-year cooperation agreement with China.

Larijani, who left the Parliament in May after 12 years, has been given the task of assisting the administration with the long-term cooperation agreement between Tehran and Beijing.

According to the chief of staff of the Iranian president, Larijani is in charge of pursuing the issues relating to the Iran-China cooperation document.

The arrangements for the 25-year agreement had been made during Larijani's tenure as the Parliament speaker.

Earlier this month, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited China with a high-ranking delegation for an official visit that included talks on mutual cooperation.

Cooperation Key to Success In Ukraine Plane Crash Talks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says cooperation among all the involved parties is key to the success of ongoing talks over the unintentional shooting down of a Ukrainian plane by the Iranian air defense in January.

Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remarks in a meeting on Monday in Tehran with the visiting Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Yevheniy Yenin. During the meeting, Zarif described the first round of talks between the two countries over the plane crash as "positive and constructive."

He expressed hope that the negotiations for the settlement of the case would reach a desirable result through cooperation and coordination between Tehran and Kiev.

With 167 passengers and nine crewmembers on board, Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 crashed outside Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on January 8, moments after take-off.

Iranian authorities acknowledged that the plane had been downed due to human error at a time when Iran's air defenses were on high alert due to increased hostile American aerial activity in the aftermath of Iran's missile strike on an Iraqi military base, which houses U.S.-led coalition forces in the Arab country.

Tehran Hails Bolivia's Peaceful Elections, Return to Democracy

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has praised Bolivia for holding peaceful presidential elections and returning to democracy following a year-long power vacuum caused by the forced resignation of ex-president Evo Morales, saying Tehran is ready to boost friendly relations with La Paz.

The Islamic Republic "congratulates the people of Bolivia and those elected on holding the nationwide elections in a calm atmosphere and with a significant turnout of voters," Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Tuesday.

He added that Iran "welcomes the return of democracy and power to the real representatives of the people after a tense year."

Khatibzadeh also extended Tehran's congratulations to former economy minister Luis Arce on his victory in the presidential race, noting that Iran "fully supports the elected government and stands ready to revive cooperation and reinforce friendly ties with Bolivia."

Bolivians cast their ballots in the twice-postponed elections on Sunday, following a year of political and social turmoil.

Officials released no formal count, but rapid counts showed Arce, of Morales' left-wing Movement for Socialism party (MAS), took more than 50 percent of the votes, with his centrist rival Carlos Mesa on around 30 percent.

Heidar-Class Boat Joins Iran's Northern Marine Police

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian border guards in the country's northern waters received a homegrown 'Heidar-class' search and rescue (SAR) vessel on Tuesday.

In a ceremony in the port city of Bandar Anzali, attended by Iran's Border Guard Chief Brigadier General Ahmad Ali Goudarzi, the new patrol boat joined the coast guard's fleet. The Iranian vessel can be used for rescue and relief operations in addition to coastal defense duties, the minister noted, saying the boat contains many advanced features that enable it to sail in rough sea.

The self-righting technology in the Iranian search and rescue boat prevents it from sinking. The aluminum-hulled vessel is 19.3 meters long and travels at a speed of 35 knots, and the technologies used in the Heidar-class boat can be used in other watercraft including water ambulances, firefighter boats, anti-smuggling ships, and even the armed military vessels.

Iran's Defense Power Based on Deterrence

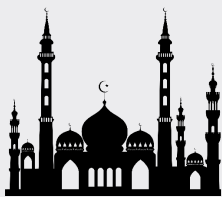
TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of Khatam-al Anbiya Central Headquarters said on Tuesday that Iran's military power is meant to deter the threats.

Speaking on the threshold of the large-scale maneuvers, code-named Modafean Aseman Velayat (The Defenders of Velayat Skies), Major General Gholam Ali Rashid said, Iran's defense power is most in line with the country's other approaches.

"According to the instructions of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the country's overall power is based on defense power, economic stability and cultural strength," he added.

The commander noted, "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran not only play an active role in these three areas, but also have organized and built the defense power with an aggressive deterrence approach."

"The defense power of our armed forces is most in line with cultural-historical components," he said.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:40
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:52
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:16

64. We sent not an apostle, but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah. If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Off-returning, Most Merciful. 65. But no, by the Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against Thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction. Surah 4, Women (64 - 65)

Iran May Import Rice From Thailand, South America

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of the Iranian Rice Importers Association Mr. Masih Keshavarz says Iran's rice imports have declined by 50 percent as the country may add Thailand and South America to the list of countries exporting rice to the country.

Speaking to ILNA, Keshavarz said that quality of Indian and Pakistani rice is high and if the rice is to be imported based on the NIMA forex rate, their price will be multiplied, adding that the country should think about new markets for imports for importing the rice with lower price.

He then talked about the latest condition of rice imports in the country, saying that unfortunately before the government banned rice import, the imports had almost been halted and according to the statistics, Iran's rice imports have declined by 50 percent comparing to the preceding year. He added that some 550,000 tons of rice has been imported into the country in the first half of the year.

Keshavarz added that ministry of industry, mine and trade had set a target for the current year and according to the target, it had been decided some 200,000 tons of rice to be imported per month and its total in five months should have been one million tons but currently the country has fallen behind by 50 percent regarding the set target.



He then noted that this decline would lead to the rise in the price of the rice in the market and would harm the households.

He reiterated that devaluation of national currency against the foreign currencies has direct impact on the price of the rice, and since the price of dollar has increased in the NIMA system, the final cost of imported rice is around 25,000 toman per kilo.

Keshavarz went on to say that all statistics and figures show that the country is 50 percent behind the schedule and the country has imported some 550,000 tons of rice in the first half of the year while its need is 1.5m tons.

He then pointed to the problem in the payment for imports of rice, adding for this reason some countries do not sell us their products.

He went on to say that if the domestic rice production can retain its share of the market and its price does not rise, the country can put behind this tough time. He reiterated that if rice price increases like other commodities and puts the public under pressure, the association will be forced to have an eye on imports and the government should cooperate with the private sector in order to import rice with cheap price from countries like Thailand and South American states.

Afghanistan Eager to Import Gas From Iran

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Afghanistan is ready to import gas from Iran," the head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR) Abdullah Abdullah said.

Speaking in an interview with ILNA, the former chief executive officer of the Afghan unity government said "Previously, the issue of gas import from Iran has been raised as a necessity and there is readiness on both sides."

Referring to the Tapi pipeline, he added that the Taliban are still gained control of parts of Afghanistan, therefore, by finding a practical solution, we must be able to implement infrastructure activities.

The Head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation has traveled to Iran after visiting India and Pakistan in an effort to build a consensus on the peace process in his country.

Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Monday that Iran and Afghanistan are scheduled to enhance bilateral cooperation in the transportation and energy sectors.

Iranian officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, have stressed the importance of the project in boosting trade ties with neighboring countries, including Afghanistan.



Iran Set to Outpace Qatar in Gas Excavation From Shared Field



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Once Iran completes the new phases of South Pars Field in southern country, it will outpace Qatar in gas excavation from the shared field by 120 mcm/d, Managing-Director of the South Pars Field Hadi Hashemzadeh Farhang said on Tuesday.

The official said that Iran finally won the "breath-taking marathon" over gas excavation in the shared field with Qatar.

Now 23 years after the South Pars development project inaugurated, the field, having 12 refineries, has turned into the biggest gas refinery complex of the world, Farhang said.

With the inauguration of phases 2 and 3 in 2001, the field used to produce some 56 mcm/d of gas which has now risen to 700 mcm/d, he added.

He said that what doubles Iran's achievement in outpacing Qatar in the excavation of gas from the shared field is that only one-third of the area of the field is located within the Iranian territory while the rest two-thirds are in the Qatari waters.

Asiatic Cheetahs Spotted In Tabas County

TEHRAN (MNA) - Two Asiatic cheetahs have been spotted in Naybandan wildlife refuge in Tabas county, South Khorasan Province.

As Ali Hatami, the head of Tabas department of environment said, the two cheetahs have been caught on the installed cameras, seen by wildlife rangers and the local communities.

He added that the Cheetahs commute among Iranian provinces of South Khorasan, Yaz, and Kerman.

Naybandan wildlife refuge is a national park, situated in 180 km south of Tabas county. Stretching to 1,500,000 hectares, it is the largest reserve in Iran, which was known to have held the highest population of Asiatic cheetahs. Since 2006, it was estimated that at least 15 cheetahs live there.

The Asiatic cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus), also known as Iranian cheetah, is a Critically Endangered cheetah subspecies surviving today only in Iran.

Expanding Economic Exchanges With Pakistan Top Priority

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of Road and Transportation Department of Sistan and Baluchestan Ayoub Kord said increasing economic exchanges at the province's border terminals with Pakistan's is a priority of his department.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of his trip to Pakistan for taking part in the 8th meeting of the Joint Border Trade Committee

between Iran's Baluchestan and Pakistan's Balochistan.

"Having land and water borders with Pakistan, Baluchestan province enjoys a special strategic and transit position," he said, "Development of trade and economic relations will bring both sides some interests."

He noted that one of the most important goals of mutual trade agreements between Iran and Pakistan is to facilitate trade for traders and investors that contribute to the economic development of countries.

The eighth meeting of Joint Border Trade Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan kicked off on Tuesday in Quetta, capital of Pakistan's Balochistan province, with an aim to develop trade relations.

During the new round of the Iran-Pakistan Border Trade Committee meeting, the representatives of the



two countries will discuss ways to increase border exchanges, strengthen trade, facilitate customs measures and implement a joint strategy to increase trade cooperation under critical situation of corona pandemic.

Mandana Zanganeh, the deputy governor of the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan for economic affairs is heading the Iranian delegation while Pakistani delegation is being led by Collector Customs Quetta Abdul Waheed Marwat in the two-day meeting. Representatives of the Pakistani Consulate General in Zahedan, the Iranian Consulate General in Quetta, Pakistani Balochistan Customs, members of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce, officials from the Ministries of Railways, Roads and Transportation and Iran-Pakistan Border Forces are also present in the meeting.

Sistan and Baluchestan province shares more than 900 kilometers of border with Pakistan, which itself has a large capacity in terms of trade and border exchanges with this large and populous country.

The province's border with Pakistan has a large capacity for trade and border exchanges with this large and populous country.

Iran Central Bank Launches First Repo Operation

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has provided nearly \$30 million to a commercial bank as part of a first repurchase agreement (repo) seen in the country's banking system.

The CBI said in a Monday statement that the overnight repo operation involved securities worth 8.9 trillion rials issued by the official CBI dealer and sold to an unidentified bank at an interest rate of 22 percent.

"For a first time and with the aim of financing the short-time or emergency cash flow needed by the banks and non-bank credit institutions, the CBI agreed to a borrowing request from a bank under the repo agreement mechanism," said the statement.

It said the lending was in line with government policies to expand the open market operations (OMO) to regulate the interest rate in the interbanking system through normal market mechanisms.

Iran introduced OMO policies in January in a bid to have a better control on cash flow between major banks and thereby control the rate of inflation in the country. The CBI announced in late March that it had set up rules and regulations governing repo and reverse repo agreements. Officials said at the time that repo operations would help banks access emergency cash they need while it would boost trade of government-issued bonds instead of collaterals that are normally used by the banks for borrowings from the CBI.

Under a normal repo agreement, the seller of the securities agree to buy them back from the investor at a slightly higher price normally one day after they are sold.



Medicine Transit A Common Issue

TEHRAN (MNA) - Spokesperson of Iran's Food and Drug Organization (IFDA) said that transiting medicines via the Islamic Republic of Iran to neighboring countries is a common issue which is conducted ordinarily.

Kiyanoush Jahanpour made the remarks and reiterated that transit of medicines from Iran to neighboring countries such as Iraq is a common issue.

He went on to say that 1,700 tons of pharmaceutical products have been transited from Iran to Iraq since the beginning of the current year (started March 21), adding, "In addition, Turkey, China, India and Indonesia are of the countries of origin that medicines are transited to neighboring Iraq via the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He further noted that information of these transits is available at customs offices of the country, stating, "Medicines and drugs are transited from Iran to neighboring countries including Iraq based on domestic and international transport standards."

He pointed to the recent cargo transited to other neighboring countries via Iran and added, "No Iranian medicines were available in this cargo, rather, medicines of other neighboring countries including Iraq were transited to these countries via Iran."

Home Appliances Sales Fall



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The chairman of the Iranian Home Appliances Trade Union, Akbar Pazouki, says that the decrease in Iranian citizens' purchasing power has caused a 50% drop in household device sales compared with last year.

Pazouki told Mehr News Agency that home appliance sales have fallen, and the market is "almost stagnant" due to rampant rising prices and declining purchasing power.

Referring to home appliances' skyrocketing prices, Pazouki blamed "the rise in the price of raw materials" under the soaring costs of hard currencies.

Meanwhile, the Statistics Center of Iran (SCI) claims that the annual inflation rate is only 26 percent, though reports published by Iranian media indicate a stunning increase in prices for producers and consumers.

South Korea's LG and Samsung, which previously held 80 percent of Iran's market, have ended their presence in the Iranian market beginning at the start of 2020, complying with the U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran.

Pakistan Lifts TikTok Ban

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan said Monday it would lift a recent ban on the video-sharing app TikTok after assurances that “immoral” content would be blocked.

The Chinese-owned platform, which is wildly popular among the country’s youth, was banned earlier this month over what authorities in the ultra-conservative Islamic country deemed “immoral, obscene and vulgar” content.

But the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) said Monday said it had received assurances from TikTok that the company will “block all accounts repeatedly involved in spreading obscenity and immorality”.

It warned, however, that it would be banned permanently if it failed to moderate posts.



Russia Hits Record Daily Rise in COVID-19 Cases

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia hit a record daily high of 15,982 coronavirus infections on Monday as the authorities in the capital Moscow said they would not introduce strict restrictions to contain the rapidly-spreading virus.

Russian authorities also reported 179 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the official death toll to 24,366.

The city of nearly 13 million, which recorded 5,376 new infections on Monday, has already opened temporary hospitals, ordered businesses to have at least 30% of staff working remotely and introduced online learning for secondary school students, among other measures.



French Police Conduct Raids in Crackdown After Teacher Beheading



PARIS (Reuters) - French police on Monday raided Islamic associations and foreigners suspected of extremist religious beliefs, police sources said, three days after a suspected Islamist beheaded a school teacher.

History teacher Samuel Paty, 47, was murdered on Friday in broad daylight outside his school in a middle-class Paris suburb by an 18-year-old of Chechen origin. Police shot the attacker dead.

The teenage assassin sought to avenge his victim’s use of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad in a class on freedom of expression to 13-year-olds. Muslims believe that any depiction of the Prophet is blasphemous.

Public figures called the killing an attack on the Republic and on French values.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said there were some 80 investigations being conducted into online hate and that he was looking into whether to disband about 50 associations within the Muslim community.

“Police operations have taken place and more will follow, concerning tens of individuals,” the minister told Europe 1.

A police source on Sunday said France was preparing to deport 213 foreigners who were on a government watchlist and suspected of holding extreme religious beliefs, among whom about 150 are serving jail sentences.

The deportations were already being worked on before Friday’s attack, a security source said.

Police detained 10 people in connection with the attack in the 24 hours that followed Paty’s killing. Among them, prosecutors said, were the father of a pupil at Paty’s school and another person on the radar of intelligence services, who they said had used social media to campaign against the teacher.

A judicial source told Reuters the man known to the intelligence agencies was Moroccan-born Abdelhakim Sefrioui. Sefrioui has for years used social media to fight against what he calls “Islamophobia” and to put pressure on the government over its treatment of Muslims.

In 2011, he agitated against a high school in Saint-Ouen, a working-class city with a large Muslim community near Paris, because it wanted to ban clothing used by Muslim girls to circumvent a ban on veils.

Sefrioui has been on the French intelligence services watchlist for more than 15 years, security sources told Reuters.

Darmanin said the two men’s calls for action against Paty served as a Fatwa against him.

Morales Intends to Return to Bolivia After Ally Claims Victory

LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Exiled former president Evo Morales on Monday signaled his intention to return to Bolivia after his leftist heir Luis Arce’s sweeping presidential election victory.

Arce, a former economy minister under Morales, claimed victory in Sunday’s election after exit polls suggested a crushing triumph over centrist rival Carlos Mesa.

Mesa conceded Monday, saying Arce’s 20-point margin of victory was “very forceful and very clear.”

“It is up to us, as befits those of us who believe in democracy... to recognise that there has been a winner in this election,” said Mesa, a former president.

Exit polls handed over 52 percent of the vote to Arce, with Mesa mustering just 31.5 percent -- upending predictions he would force a second round runoff in November.

Private polling companies showed Arce winning by a similar margin. Official results are expected to take days.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, a record 87 percent of Bolivians voted, according to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, exceeding the average participation of 80 percent.

Arce, 57, said his victory was a “return to democracy” for the divided South American country.

“We have recovered democracy and we will regain stability and social peace,” he said.

Much attention now focuses on Morales, whose authoritarian 14-year grip on power left a bitter aftertaste for many Bolivians outside his largely indigenous Movement for Socialism (MAS) party.

“Sooner or later we are going to return to Bolivia, that is not in debate,” Morales told a press conference in Buenos Aires.

“My great desire is to return to Bolivia and enter my region. It is a matter of time,” said Morales, who was ousted amid protests after his victory in 2019 elections was annulled over rigging allegations.

Morales resigned on November 10 after losing the support of the armed forces in the midst of the crisis that left 36 dead and hundreds wounded.



U.S., Brazil Urged to Reduce Dependence on China Imports

BRASILIA (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned on Monday the United States and Brazil need to reduce their dependence on imports from China for their own security as the two countries reinforced their business partnership.

At a virtual summit on increased U.S.-Brazil cooperation aimed at post-pandemic recovery, Pompeo underscored the importance of expanding bilateral economic ties, given what he called “enormous risk” stemming from China’s significant participation in their economies.

“To the extent we can find ways that we can increase the trade between our two countries, we can ... decrease each of our two nations’ dependence for critical items” coming from China, he said.

“Each of our two peoples will be more secure, and each of our two nations will be far more prosperous, whether that’s two or five or 10 years from now,” he added.

The Trump administration is working to boost ties with Brazil and provide a counterweight to China, keen to gain some advantage in what it sees as a new “Great Power” competition.

Brazilian far-right President Jair Bolsonaro wants to follow suit but is hamstrung by China being Brazil’s largest trade partner, which buys much of its soy and iron ore. Bolsonaro has yet to decide whether to ban Brazilian telecom companies from buying 5G equipment from China’s Huawei Technologies Co Ltd as the U.S. government has sought.

At the summit organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Bolsonaro announced three agreements with the United States to ensure good business practices and stop corruption. He said the package will slash red tape and increase trade and investment.

“In the last year and a half, together with President Trump, we have elevated

Brazil-U.S. relations to its best moment ever, and opened a new chapter in the relationship between the two largest economies and democracies in the hemisphere,” he said.

U.S. Envoy Slams Afghan Bloodshed as Car Bomb Toll Rises

KABUL (Dispatches) - A top U.S. envoy slammed Afghanistan’s “distressingly high” levels of bloodshed Monday after a car bombing at a police headquarters killed at least 16 people and wounded scores more.

The latest remarks by veteran diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad, who negotiated a withdrawal deal with the Taliban in February, come as spiralling violence across Afghanistan imperils ongoing peace talks between the Kabul government and the Taliban. “Continued high levels of violence can threaten the peace process and the agreement and the core understanding that there is no military solution,” Khalilzad said on Twitter.

“Violence today remains distressingly high in spite of the recent reaffirmation of the need for substantial reduction.”

On Sunday, a car bomb near the police headquarters in the western province of Ghor left 16 people dead and 154 wounded, local hospital head Mohammad Omar Lalzad told AFP on Monday.

Five children, nine women and 26 members of the security forces were among the wounded, he said.

Aref Aber, the spokesman for Ghor’s governor, confirmed the toll.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack,

but Afghan officials blamed the Taliban.

In the country’s southern province of Helmand, thousands of families have been forced to flee their homes in recent days as fierce fighting erupted between the Taliban and government forces.

The violence continues even though Khalilzad last week claimed the Taliban had assured US forces they would reduce attacks and casualties.

U.S. influence over Afghanistan’s battlegrounds is on the wane, with the Pentagon looking to withdraw all its remaining troops by next May.

President Donald Trump has said U.S. forces should return even sooner, raising questions about Washington’s insistence that its withdrawal from Afghanistan after 19 years of war is really “conditions-based”.

The Taliban have been quick to exploit the apparent lack of resolve, and began to push for fresh military gains as soon as they signed the withdrawal deal with the US.

“The belief that says violence must escalate to win concessions at the negotiating table is very risky. Such an approach can undermine the peace process and repeats past miscalculations by Afghan leaders,” Khalilzad said.



UN Stockpiling Billion Syringes For Covid-19 Vaccine

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The United Nations said Monday it would stockpile one billion syringes around the world by the end of 2021, to be used for the delivery of any future coronavirus vaccine.

UNICEF, the UN Children’s Fund, said it aims to get 520 million syringes in its warehouses by the end of this year, to guarantee an initial supply in countries ahead of the vaccine.

“The world will need as many syringes as doses of vaccine,” UNICEF said in a statement.

UNICEF said it was also buying five million safety boxes for used syringes.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide passed 40 million on Monday, according to an AFP tally based on official sources. More than 1.1 million deaths have been recorded across the globe.

“Vaccinating the world against Covid-19 will be one of the largest mass undertakings in human history, and we will need to move as quickly as the vaccines can be produced,” said UNICEF executive director Henrietta Fore.

“By the end of the year, we will already have over half a billion syringes pre-positioned where they can be deployed quickly and cost effectively.”

The syringes will be used by Covax, the international coronavirus vaccine procurement, production and distribution pool created by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Covax is run by the Gavi vaccine alliance, which will reimburse UNICEF for the syringes.

A public-private partnership, Gavi helps vaccinate half the world’s children against some of the deadliest diseases on the planet.

Syringes have a five-year shelf life and tend to be shipped by sea, rather than vaccines, which are heat-sensitive and transported more quickly by air freight.

The billion syringes come on top of the 620 million that UNICEF would purchase for other vaccination programmes against diseases such as measles and typhoid.

The WHO says 42 vaccine candidates are currently being tested on humans, of which 10 have reached the mass testing third and final stage. A further 156 are being worked on in laboratories in preparation for human testing.

Typically, only around 10 percent of vaccine candidates make it through the trials.





Jordan Apt (\$2300)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
pkg, & F.F

Shanon (adviser)

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

Parsian

(\$2200) Fereshteh
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna, J
balcony, & F.F

Niavaran Apts
(\$1700) 2bdrs, S/p, F.F
(\$2200) 3bdrs, S/p, F.F
(\$3000) 4bdrs, S/p, F.F

(\$6000) Pasdaran bldg
3storey, 10bdrs
S/pool, green yard
pkg lots, & F.F

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ECB to Maintain Accommodative Policy

PARIS (Reuters) - The European Central Bank will maintain an accommodative policy in response to the ongoing coronavirus crisis, ECB President Christine Lagarde said on Monday.

"The crisis is already transforming our economies and we can choose to make our growth path greener, more intelligent and more digital. At the ECB we are determined to support this movement and we will continue to develop

an accommodative monetary policy, as justified by economic circumstances," Lagarde said at a conference of French regions in Paris.

She also said that about 590 billion of the ECB's 1,350 billion euro asset purchase programme had been committed so far and that this programme was helping to lower long-term interest rates.



China's Economic Recovery Speeds Up as Consumption Returns

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economic recovery accelerated in the third quarter as consumers shook off their coronavirus caution, however, overall growth missed forecasts pointing to persistent challenges for one of the world's few current engines of demand.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.9% in July-September from a year earlier, official data showed on Monday, slower than the median 5.2% forecast by analysts in a Reuters poll and following 3.2% growth in the second quarter.

"The rebound in Q3 GDP was less strong than expected, but was still a decent 4.9% YoY," said Frances Cheung, head of macro strategy for Asia at Westpac in Singapore. "September data beat expectations, suggesting a pickup in momentum towards the latter part of Q3... The pickup in momentum was broad-based, which bodes well for the Q4 outlook." China's yuan and major stock indexes trimmed gains following the weak-than-expected data, with the benchmark Shanghai index trading 0.6% higher and the CSI300 index up 0.8% after rising as much as 1% and 1.2%, respectively.

The world's second-largest economy grew 0.7% in the first nine months from a year earlier, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said. 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 been steadily recovering from decades-low growth seen in the first months of the year caused by coronavirus shutdowns. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, GDP rose 2.7% in July-September, the NBS said, compared with expectations for a 3.2% rise and an 11.5% rise in the previous quarter. But several recent indicators have pointed to a broader upturn in consumption as well in the third quarter. Retail sales grew 3.3% in September from a year earlier, speeding up from a modest 0.5% rise in August and posting the fastest growth since December 2019. Industrial output grew 6.9% after a 5.6% rise in August, showing the factory sector's recovery was also sustaining momentum.

Fixed-asset investment rose 0.8% in the first nine months from a year earlier, after dipping 0.3% in the first eight months.

The government has rolled out a raft of measures this year, including more fiscal spending, tax relief and cuts in lending rates and banks' reserve requirements to revive the coronavirus-hit economy and support employment.

While the central bank stepped up policy support earlier this year after widespread travel restrictions choked economic activity, it has more recently held off on further easing. The International Monetary Fund has forecast an expansion of 1.9% for China for the full year, the only major economy expected to report growth in 2020. Premier Li Keqiang warned earlier in October that China needs to make arduous efforts to achieve its full-year economic goals, citing a complex domestic and foreign environment.

China's retail spending has lagged the comeback in factory activity as heavy job losses and persistent worries about infections keep consumers at home, even as restrictions lifted. However, the third quarter saw several signs of a consumption recovery. In September, auto sales marked a sixth straight month of gains with a solid 12.8% growth. Ford Motor Co's China vehicle sales jumped 25% in the September quarter from a year earlier.

Domestic passenger flights in September, meanwhile, beat their Covid-19 levels, indicating that the sector was approaching a full recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which caused China's first contraction since at least 1992 in the first quarter, is now largely under control, although there has been a small resurgence of cases in the eastern province of Shandong.

Japan Export Decline Slows Dramatically

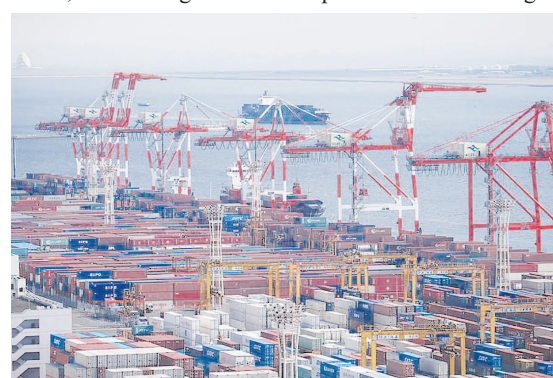
TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's exports fell in September at the slowest pace in seven months as U.S.-bound vehicle shipments rose from lows brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating easing pressure on the world's third-largest economy.

Exports fell 4.9% in September compared with the same month a year earlier, more than the 2.4% economists forecast in a Reuters poll. Still, the pace followed six months of double-digit decline, including a 14.8% drop in August.

Fewer exports of iron to Taiwan and ships to Panama left September marking the 22nd consecutive month of export decline, the longest run since the 23-month stretch through July 1987.

To help the economy through the health crisis, the government should compile a third extra budget for the current fiscal year, economists told Reuters last week. The two earlier budgets helped fund \$2.2 trillion in economic stimulus, such as cash payments to households and small business loans. Indeed, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga plans to order his government to compile another stimulus plan as early as November, to support consumer sentiment at risk from a new wave of COVID-19 infection, local media reported.

Still, the slowing decline in exports adds to other signs of gradual economic recovery such as a pickup in factory output.



"Production has recovered substantially, but as that's mostly a rebound after sharp falls, the recovery pace will probably slow," likely after year-end, said chief economist Yuichi Kodama at Meiji Yasuda Research Institute. Moreover, a recovery in exports would likely have limited impact on the size of any further stimulus package given the focus will likely be on helping firms suffering from weak domestic demand, Kodama said. By destination, shipments to the United States rose 0.7%, the first increase in 14 months, driven by stronger demand for electrical power machinery as well as passenger cars, whose numbers jumped 18%.

Exports to China, Japan's largest trading partner, rose 14.0%, the sharpest rise since January 2018. Those to Asia as a whole fell 2.0%, their slowest pace of decline since February. Imports shed 17.2% versus the 21.4% median estimate of economists polled by Reuters, resulting in a trade surplus of 675.0 billion yen (\$6.41 billion).

Damage From Trump's Trade Wars Won't Heal Quickly

PARIS (Dispatches) - After four years in office, Donald Trump has failed to achieve his promise to eliminate the U.S. trade deficit, and dealt a lasting blow to the multilateral economic system that global trade is based upon, analysts say.

But even if Democrat Joe Biden wins the presidential election as most opinion polls currently show, US trade policy is likely to maintain a protectionist streak and the confrontation with China to persist. One of Trump's main 2016 campaign themes was that the United States -- the world's biggest economy -- had been taken advantage of by its trade partners and he pledged to shake up global trade arrangements and eliminate the nation's trade deficit.

Trump has indeed shaken up the global trading system but the US trade deficit has grown under his presidency, and analysts say he has little to show for his efforts. "Trump's trade policies have delivered few tangible benefits to the U.S. economy while undercutting the multilateral trading system, disrupting long-standing alliances with U.S. trading partners, and fomenting uncertainty," said Cornell University professor Eswar Prasad.

While the U.S. trade deficit with China -- which was Trump's main target -- has indeed shrunk, imports from Canada and Mexico have jumped, deepening the overall deficit. The import tariff increases that Washington has imposed on many products have "protected American manufacturers", according to Gianluca Orefice, an economics professor at the University of Paris-Dauphine.

But those tariffs also "raised production costs" for US industry and demonstrated the extent of the reliance on Chinese suppliers.

The global economic infrastructure is now in a deep state of flux.

"Obviously his policy has been deeply damaging with respect to Europe, to the WTO, which will be hard to repair," said Edward Alden, a journalist and author who specialises on US trade policy and who is currently a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations think tank.

Trump's refusal to appoint new judges has paralysed the World Trade Organization's dispute resolution system, hobbling the arbitrator of the world's multilateral trading system. "Donald Trump has shown he is capable of breaking, but incapable of building," said Sebastian Jean, director of CEPII,

the main French institute for research into international economics. "When one looks at what he got from China one is tempted to say: All that for that?" he added.

The truce in the U.S.-China trade war reached in January left unsolved major points of contention such as intellectual property theft and forced technology transfers. Meanwhile, "the Trump administration's erratic statements and policy decisions have resulted in the US being perceived as an unreliable and untrustworthy trading partner," said Cornell's Prasad.

This has led certain countries to go around the U.S. and conclude bilateral or multilateral trade pacts, such as when Pacific nations went ahead with a deal after Trump pulled his country out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Turkish Central Bank to Hike Rates 175 Points to 12%



ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkey's central bank is expected to keep tightening policy in the face of a sliding lira and raise its key interest rate by 175 basis points to 12% this week, a Reuters poll showed on Monday.

The bank is seen raising its one-week repo rate a bit more by year end after it surprised last month with a 200-point hike meant to address double-digit inflation and a record-low lira. The currency has since dipped another 4% against the dollar, adding more upward pressure on import prices. That has set the stage for more tightening despite a coronavirus pandemic that severely contracted Turkey's economy in the second quarter.

The expectations of 17 economists polled by Reuters ranged between hikes of 100 basis points and 300 basis points at Thursday's policy meeting. The median put the rate at 12%, just above annual inflation. For year end, the median forecast of 15 economists was for a 12.25% interest rate, though views ranged to as high as 17%.

The central bank is also expected to continue so-called back door measures to tighten credit by raising the average cost of funding, which was 12.26% on Friday, up from a low of 7.34% in mid-July just before the lira started tumbling.

Such funding costs would rise to 13% by the end of October, according to the median poll response of seven economists. They were seen rising to about 13.50% by year-end.

The tightening cycle that began in July should help "rebalance the economy," said Blaise Antin, head of EM sovereign research at Los Angeles-based TCW. "But Turkish economic policy credibility is very low (and) it's not clear that there's a commitment to doing this in a sustained way," he said.

The formal rate hike in September reversed a nearly year-long easing cycle in which the policy rate fell rapidly from 24%, where it was set in the face of a 2018 currency crisis.

OPEC+ Weighs Options for 2021

LONDON (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia said on Monday no-one should doubt OPEC's commitment to propping up volatile markets, as it held talks with the world's other leading oil exporter Russia on Monday.

Already Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held two phone calls last week, Kremlin Dmitry Peskov spokesman said, adding regular contact was necessary as the COVID-19 pandemic has sapped oil demand.

On Monday, an OPEC+ ministerial monitoring committee (JMMC), including Saudi Arabia and Russia, held talks to discuss compliance with their oil output cuts. The panel may also debate options on whether to extend the existing curbs into 2021, OPEC+ sources said.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies, including Russia, collectively known as OPEC+, have curbed output since January 2017 to try to support prices and reduce inventories.

"This group has shown, especially in this year, that it has the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances when required. We will not dodge our responsibilities in this regard," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said.

"Nobody in the market should be in any doubt as to our commitment and our intent," Prince Abdulaziz told the opening of JMMC. For now, the group is reducing production by 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd), down from cuts totalling 9.7 million bpd maintained from May 1 to Aug. 1. OPEC+ is due to reduce the cuts by a further 2 million bpd in January.

Indonesia Looks to Strengthen Trade, Technology Transfers With Taiwan

TAIPEI (CAN) - Indonesia will work to strengthen trade with Taiwan by actively promoting exports of Indonesian goods and forging partnerships in the field of technology transfers, according to Budi Santoso, head of the Indonesian Economic and Trade Office (IETO) to Taipei.

Budi, the new de facto Indonesian envoy to Taiwan, made the comment in a letter to CNA Sunday, just days after officially assuming office on Oct. 13. He arrived in Taiwan Sept. 19, where he underwent quarantine for three weeks.

"Of course, we will intensely promote Indonesian products in Taiwan by facilitating

exhibitions and business matching," Budi said.

With international travel severely impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IETO hosted a virtual trade show in July to bring together Indonesian food and beverage companies and Taiwanese buyers.

IETO's goal to boost trade is directly linked to a directive from Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Budi said. "President Jokowi has always been emphasizing to all of Indonesia's representative offices abroad to promote the trade sector including to boost export growth," Budi said.

Taiwan is also looking to strengthen economic and cultural relations with Southeast Asian countries through its New Southbound Policy, Budi said.

The 18 countries under the NSP, which was launched by the Democratic Progressive Party government after President Tsai Ing-wen took office in May 2016, are the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, along with Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

"For us, the NSP is, of course, in line and an important fundamental for continuing economic cooperation between Indonesia and Taiwan," Budi said. In addition, Taiwan is also a good market for Indonesian products due to the significant number of Indonesian migrant workers in the country, Budi said.

There were a total of 267,260 migrant workers from Indonesia working in productive industries and social welfare in Taiwan at the end of August, down 1.59 percent from the same period last year, according to Ministry of Labor statistics.

Indonesian Economic and Trade Office to Taipei Representative Mr. Budi Santoso (front, second right) poses for photos with members of Taiwan's Indonesian community. Photo courtesy of IndosuarA Citing Taiwan's advantages in technology and its applications in agriculture, Budi also hopes to forge partnerships that involve technology transfers.

Iran's Sponge Iron Production Tops 15.5m Tons in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) – Statistics shows that sponge iron production volume increased has by 10 percent in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (from March 20 to Sept. 21).

Some 15,562,000 tons of sponge iron was produced in the first six months, showing a 10 percent growth as

compared to the last year's corresponding period.

According to the statistical tables of large companies in mining and mineral sector and subsidiaries of Iran Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), 14,185,000 tons of sponge iron was produced in the first six months of the last year.



G20 States Urged Not to Withdraw Economic Stimulus Prematurely

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia has urged leaders of G20 nations not to end their financial support programs prematurely to help ensure the recovery of the pandemic-battered global economy, while also calling for international cooperation in the development and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said a “partial and uneven” economic recovery could result in the global economy failing to reach pre-pandemic levels.

“G20 countries should avoid withdrawing stimulus too early and ensure vaccine access and availability, which are crucial to handling the pandemic and supporting economic recovery,” the finance minister said in a statement following a virtual meeting between finance ministers and central bankers of G20 countries on Oct. 14.

“Indonesia is committed to using a full range of policy tools, including a policy mix of fiscal, monetary and structural measures to spur economic recovery,” she said.

The Indonesian government is banking on the roll-out of a COVID-19 vaccine to put a stop to the virus outbreak in the country. It has secured several deals to procure approximately 300 million doses of potential COVID-19 vaccines from various developers, including China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd. It aims to start vaccinating its citizens by January next year.

The government has also earmarked Rp 695.2 trillion (US\$47.2 billion) for COVID-19 stimulus packages to spur economic growth and finance the healthcare system. The move is expected to widen the budget deficit to 6.34 percent of GDP.

Several multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, have committed to providing loans for the country.

Meanwhile, the G20, representing the world's biggest economies, has agreed to extend the suspension of debt payments by an additional six months to support the most vulnerable countries in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic.



The G20 says the extension will provide ongoing relief for the \$14 billion in debt payments that would have been due at the end of the year. The decision gives developing nations time until the end of June next year to focus spending on health care and stimulus programs rather than debt repayments.

Sri Mulyani went on to say that the newly-passed Job Creation Law was expected to help boost investment and job creation in Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

Kazakhstan, UAE Sign Deals Worth Over \$6b



DUBAI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan have signed an agreement worth \$6.1 billion during Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin's two-day visit to Abu Dhabi last week, under which the two countries will implement more than 20 projects across a wide range of economic sectors.

As a part of visit, Mamin met with Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Minister for Presidential Affairs, to discuss how to develop deeper commercial ties between the two nations.

According to a statement issued by the Kazakh government, the document was signed immediately after the sides have discussed expanding collaboration in trade, transport, logistics, agribusiness, construction, petrochemistry, space and tourism. Kazakhstan has offered the UAE a series of projects, including those providing for the creation of new industries with high added value and great demand potential both in the local and foreign markets.

Officials in Nur-Sultan voiced their confidence that the implementation of these initiatives would create new jobs in Kazakhstan, as well as introduce advanced technologies and practices in Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, most of the projects to be jointly implemented by the two countries are focused on agribusiness.

“The Republic of Kazakhstan and the UAE pay special attention to implementing the potential of cooperation in the agro-industrial sector – 10 out of 21 planned projects envisage the launch of food production with high added value,” reads the statement published to the website of the Kazakh prime minister. “This will allow Kazakhstan to become an important link in the Food Security Strategy implemented by the UAE until 2051 and will further increase trade between the two countries.”

Mamin's UAE visit came after Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited Abu Dhabi in January. President Tokayev met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Several agreements were signed during the earlier visit, including those related to cooperation within trade and petrochemistry, as well as partnership between the UAE Central Bank and Astana International Financial Center (AIFC).

The UAE's direct investments in Kazakhstan over the past years amounted to more than \$2 billion, according to government data. Investments were made to more than 350 different companies, branches and representative offices. At the same time, the amount of trade between the two countries reached \$500 million in the first ten months of 2019, according to government data.

The UAE has also been involved in finances-related activities in Kazakhstan within the Astana International Financial Center (AIFC).

Facing Wave of Closures, Oil Refiners Turn to Biofuels

LONDON (Reuters) - European and U.S. oil refineries face a wave of closures due to plateauing fuel demand, tightening environmental rules and overseas competition, prompting some owners to opt for an easier alternative - converting plants to produce biofuels.

The shock of the coronavirus epidemic crushed global oil demand and as some producers, including BP, say it might never recover to pre-crisis levels, the need to close refineries has accelerated.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a recent report that by 2030 around 14% of current refining capacity in advanced economies “faces the risk of lower utilisation or closure.”

That share could grow to 50% in 2040 under a more aggressive transition away from fossil fuels to electric vehicles, the IEA said.

Shutting down refineries, some of which are 70 years old, is a costly process which requires dismantling heavy equipment and pipelines and remediating the land.

So owners are choosing alternative paths, including converting refinery sites to import terminals, putting them to other industrial uses or, in many cases, switching to cleaner biofuels by processing vegetable oil and waste oils.

BP, Total and Eni, outlined in recent months plans to grow their biofuel capacities by two to five fold by 2030 while reducing their global oil refining footprints.

The switch is part of companies' strategies to radically reshape and grow renewables and low-carbon businesses.

Other European refiners including Repsol and independent Italian refiner Saras also plan to increase their capacity. Converting refineries to biofuels “makes a lot of sense,” said Rob Turner, partner at PWC specializing in the energy sector. “It allows plans to play a role in the energy transition, creates long-term value and mitigates the costs of a full shutdown and site cleanup.” Although refiners in other developed economies face a similar challenge, it is particularly difficult for Europe where local consumption has been in a steady decline and governments have accelerated efforts to curb carbon emissions.

Already, three refineries in Europe have shut down in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic - Total's Grandpuits plant in northern France, Neste's Naantali plant in Finland and Gunvor's Antwerp refinery. Total converted the La Mede refinery in southern France into a biodiesel plant in 2019. Other refiners, whose profits have collapsed due to a sharp drop in demand due to the epidemic, are on the brink.

Europe's biofuel production capacity is expected to grow to around 8 million tonnes per year from the current 3 million tonnes per annum, according to Barclays analyst Joshua Stone. Finnish refiner Neste Oyj, which has invested heavily in renewables and has biofuel facilities in Europe and Singapore, has seen its shares soar in recent months while those of traditional refiners and energy companies dropped.

Tehran, Kabul Stress Fighting Against Drug Trafficking

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of Iran's Anti-Narcotics Police Colonel Majid Karimi and the Deputy Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Interior Ministry of Afghanistan, Mohammad Hashim Ortaq, in a meeting today here in Tehran, emphasized joint promotion cooperation between the two countries in the fight against drug trafficking and transit.

“Unfortunately, more than 500 kilometers of the border between the two countries have been abandoned by Afghanistan, and now the common borders are controlled only by Iran,” Majid Karimi, head of Iran's anti-narcotics police, said.

Referring to the high poppy cultivation and opium production in Afghanistan, Karimi said: “There is a need for more effective cooperation between the two countries' police to combat drug trafficking and transit. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to help the Afghan police.”

The head of Iran's anti-narcotics police said it was necessary to establish intelligence and operational committees between the Iranian and Afghan anti-narcotics police, adding: “The lack of Afghan border guards at the common border has caused terrorist groups to move on the two borders.”

The Deputy Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Interior Ministry of Afghanistan, Mohammad Hashim Ortaq, while acknowledging the production of 84% of the world's narcotics in his country, said: “Due to the presence of Taliban forces in some border areas and provinces of Afghanistan, the country faces some difficulties.”

Hashim Ortaq also referred to the destruction of 52 Methamphetamine laboratories. He expressed hope that by amending the anti-narcotics laws, part of the existing gaps would be eliminated, and more effective steps would be taken to deal with drug traffickers.

Iran's Overflights...

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Calling Iran as the world's logistics highway, Najafzadeh added that Iran was one of the main regional and international transportation actors.

Meanwhile Minister of Road and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami said Iranian airlines are obliged to limit tickets for 60% of available seats as of October 22 in accordance with health protocols to contain COVID19 pandemic, adding that new ticket fees will be announced soon.

The airlines association unveiled new ticket fees for flights with average growth of 80% two weeks ago.

Eslami rejected the new price list mentioned by association of airlines, saying it has been canceled.

He referred to sensitive situation of the county and enemies' economic pressure and appreciated airlines for observing health protocols.

He reiterated that airlines must observe health protocols stipulated by specialized anti-COVID19 committee.

“The Economist”...

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The world witnesses this truth that Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has recently pointed to the U.S. inhuman efforts for blocking the limited access of Iran to the medicines and food, and his stand has faced with considerable sympathies in the international level regardless of how the Coronavirus pandemic has had its effects on the lives of people, and health and medical condition in Iran.

The Economist continues, “Besides these points, the abundant anti-Iran sanctions have made traders and foreign banks be reluctant in doing even licensed businesses with Iran and the country's no-oil trade for export to those countries has declined in the past two years. So, the recent imposed sanctions against Iran's banking system will be ineffective or have the least effect.”

The British publication further says, “18 Iranian banks are the new targets of the news U.S. sanctions and they are only authorized to have financial exchanges for food and other humanitarian items. Depriving Iran's government of having access to the financial resources for developing nuclear and missile program, proliferating terrorism and support of terrorist networks are the claimed goals for imposing these sanctions. But in fact, small part of Iran's international trade is done through official financial avenues. Let's skip this point. Iran's financial system was deprived of using international financial exchange system, known as SWIFT, based on the dollar. In this February. Iran has returned to the blacklist of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF); and it has warned of any financial exchange with Iran. But it has been ineffective because not only has the country not been isolated but also it has planned new ways for its survival in the economy.”

The Economist by elaborating these points concludes, “The new U.S. sanctions against 18 Iranian banks have no special effect or so-called crippling effect on Iran's economy and trade, and in fact Mr. Trump, by imposing these sanctions on the eve of his presidential campaign, has tried to flaunt his undefeated capability in his foreign policy scene.”

Lifting of UN Arms...

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Rabiei noted that the termination of the arms embargo heralds the lifting of other oppressive sanctions against Iran in the fields of economy, finance and banking, and humanitarian goods.

“This achievement showed that we adopted the right policy despite Trump's erroneous and warmongering decisions under the assumption that Iran would follow suit when U.S. left the JCPOA,” he said.

“That correct policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran on not leaving the JCPOA showed its result today, he said. “In addition to curbing the U.S. government's plan to isolate Iran and reinstate Security Council resolutions, it (the policy) will reveal its positive outcomes over time.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, the government spokesman stressed the peaceful nature of Iran's defense doctrine.

Rabiei said that Iran never started a fight or war and always seeks peace and stability, adding: “Tehran's peaceful manner in the region has been evident to the world.”

“Iranians do not love weapons; they love peace, stability, coexistence and cooperation in the region aimed at sustainable development. Iranian weaponry serve as one of the essential components in the defense sector,” he said.

Russia Slams U.S...

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The new sanctions are in line with the “maximum pressure” campaign that the US unleashed against Iran in 2018 following withdrawal from a multilateral nuclear agreement.

Meanwhile China lauded the expiration of the UN Security Council (UNSC) arms embargo and travel restrictions against Iran, saying the development, which was stipulated in the Council's Resolution 2231, should be “faithfully implemented.”

“On October 18, arms transfer restrictions & travel bans on Iran expires, marking the completion of the 1st phase of implementation of UNSCR 2231,” tweeted China's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Vienna on Tuesday, referring to the resolution that endorsed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

“This arrangement, clearly stipulated in the UNSC resolution, should be faithfully implemented,” it added.

The mission noted that Beijing stands committed to the JCPOA and will work with all parties to continue maintaining the steady follow-up implementation of the JCPOA and Resolution 2231, in a joint endeavor to push forward the political and diplomatic settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue.



Atletico Madrid's Costa Could Miss Bayern Trip

MADRID (Reuters) - Atletico Madrid's Diego Costa is being treated for a thigh injury sustained against Celta Vigo at the weekend, the club confirmed on Monday, potentially ruling out the striker for Wednesday's Champions League tie against Bayern Munich.

The club have not put a timescale on Costa's return to action, but local media reports suggest he will miss the next three weeks, starting with the visit to face the European champions in Munich.

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Newcastle Fans Switch Off to Boost Charity

LONDON (Dispatches) - Newcastle supporters have raised £19,000 (\$24,700) by choosing to give to charity rather than watching their team play Manchester United on pay-per-view TV, according to a fans' group.

Premier League matches in October that have not been earmarked for regular televised coverage can only be watched live via Sky Sports or BT Sport for a fee of £14.95. Fans already pay regular subscriptions to broadcasters and for season tickets to watch their team in person, something the coronavirus pandemic prevents them from doing.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2020

Nadal Is the Greatest Spanish Athlete of All Time

MADRID (Dispatches) - Nadal is the greatest Spanish sportsman of all time, says former world number two Alex Corretja.

Nadal won the French Open earlier this month to draw level with Roger Federer with a record 20 Grand Slam singles titles.

It was also his 13th crown at Roland Garros – a feat of dominance unmatched by anyone in tennis history.

All of that combines to set Nadal apart from anyone in his country's sporting past, says Corretja.

"When Rafael Nadal wins, we all win," Corretja told sport.es.

"It is very difficult for me to summarize in a single page what Rafa Nadal means for all of us"

"This last week, everyone has returned to talk about Nadal. And in these times, I do not find anything better than to value and appreciate the records that day by day, he can break.

"For me, he is the best Spanish athlete of all time (with absolute respect for everyone else)"

"I want to remember that Rafa is human, even though he acts like a machine.

"That he is sensitive, even if he looks like iron, and that his game can be as overwhelming as lava from a volcano."

Meanwhile Russian star Andrey Rublev recently won the title in St. Petersburg after beating Borna Coric in the final. It was an amazing victory for him as he won his 4th title of 2020. As per the young Russian prodigy, he was inspired by Nadal. In a recent interview, he said,

"I cannot imagine how — I'm not even talking about [just at] the Grand Slams — it is possible what he is doing. To be mentally that strong all your life and all your career, I don't know how it is possible."

The Russian compared Rafa with his rivals, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. He said,



"Every player, even Roger [Federer] or even Novak [Djokovic], they had one moment in their career when they were mentally a little bit down or they could get a little bit emotionally down during the match and, if something happens, they could lose or something."

Rublev said a lot of great things about Nadal. However, he did not stop there as he went on to compliment the Spaniard even more. He said,

"In tennis, if you are having a really bad day... it is really tough to find a way [to win] and compete like nothing happened. He has done this during all his career. For me he is the best athlete, not even in tennis, the best athlete in history."

A lot of Rafa fans will agree with what Rublev has said here. The Spaniard is one of the greatest competitors ever and that is why he is a 20-time Grand Slam champion. He is probably going to win more in the future and we are all waiting for him to achieve that.

Spain's Jaume Munar was happy with his victory at the Lisbon Challenger but also gave credit and showed appreciation for the tournament organizers. Munar, seeded at No. 1, handed a straight-set defeat to Portuguese No. 2 seed Pedro Sousa 7-6 (3) 6-2 to win it all at the Lisbon Challenger.

"I'm happy with my title, but the real winners are the ones who make tennis tournaments possible in this tough times. Very grateful to be playing," Munar said after the final, per Jose Morgado. Munar, 23, said it's a "privilege" to be a friend of Nadal and revealed he spoke with the record 13-time French Open champion before the Lisbon Challenger final.

Murray Pulls Out From Cologne Event



LONDON (Reuters) - Andy Murray has suffered another injury setback and has pulled out of this week's ATP Tour event in Germany due to a lingering pelvic problem, the former world number one said, raising doubts over his participation for the remainder of the year.

The Briton returned from a second hip surgery in January 2019 to win the Antwerp title seven months later - his first since 2017 - raising hopes of a return to the top echelons of men's tennis.

But the 33-year-old again suffered complications with his hip following the Davis Cup in November and only returned to the circuit after the lengthy COVID-19 pandemic break. Murray played the first of back-to-back events in Cologne, where he was knocked out in the first round by Fernando Verdasco last week.

He said he was suffering from tendonitis in his left psoas, the muscle which connects the lower back to the top of the leg.

"It's been kind of on and off since the U.S. Open," Murray said in a video message on Facebook posted on Sunday. "I've been trying to deal with it in training, and in the matches, and unfortunately after my match here this week it's flared up again."

"I've been practising the last few days and trying to manage it, but after playing some points today, I decided that it was not going to be good enough to play."

Sumit Nagal Bows Out of Bett1Hulks Championship

LONDON (Dispatches) - The top-ranked Indian tennis player endured a three-sets loss to world No. 39 Miomir Kecmanović in the opening round of the ATP 250 event.

The top-ranked men's singles player in India, Sumit Nagal, bowed out of the Bett1Hulks Championships following his opening-round loss to Serbia's Miomir Kecmanović on Monday. Up against the world No. 39 Kecmanović, Sumit Nagal started well to take the opening set but the Serb came back strong to register a 4-6, 7-6 (4), 6-1 win on the hard courts in Cologne.

Making the main draw as the lucky loser, Sumit Nagal was quick to get into the act as he broke his opponent in the second game to take a 2-0 lead.

From there on, the Indian tennis player steadily built on his performance as another break followed in the fourth.

Things seemed to go well for the world No. 130 Sumit Nagal, as he consolidated the break soon after and then came close to serving Kecmanović a bagel.

This time the Serbian held on to his serve and then went on to break Sumit Nagal twice before the Indian could wrap up the opening set.

That, however, proved to be the turning point as Kecmanović started the second set on a positive note to break his opponent in the opening game.

Guardiola Challenges Aguero To Earn New Man City Deal

LONDON (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola says Sergio Aguero must earn a new contract at Manchester City even though he is the club's all-time record goalscorer.

Aguero, who returned from a four-month spell out with injury in Saturday's 1-0 win over Arsenal, has entered the last 12 months of his existing deal.

The Argentine has scored 254 goals for City and been a major part of four Premier League title triumphs, including his famous last-gasp winner in 2012.

However, Guardiola, who is also in the final season of his deal, believes the 32-year-old needs to prove his fitness and form in the coming months.



Rooney Angry After Being Forced to Self-Isolate

LONDON (Dispatches) - Wayne Rooney says he is "angry and disappointed" that he will miss matches for Championship side Derby due to a period of self-isolation despite testing negative for coronavirus.

The former Manchester United and England captain, now player-coach at Derby, was visited by a friend who had been instructed to be tested for Covid-19 and was later found to have the disease.

In a statement on Twitter, Rooney said: "Just received the news that my Covid-19 test has shown I do not have the virus."

"Delighted for myself and family but obviously angry and disappointed that I now have to self-isolate and miss vital games for @dcfcofficial."

The Sun newspaper reported on Sunday that the 34-year-old was angry after his friend visited him at his home on Thursday to give him a watch even though he should have been self-isolating. The friend later returned a positive test.

Rooney was unaware of any Covid-related concerns and played in Derby's 1-0 home loss to Watford a day after the visit, on Friday.

Barca Not Among Champions League Favorites

BARCELONA (Reuters) - Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman believes his side are not among the favorites to win this season's Champions League with the Catalans having made a stuttering start to the new season.

Speaking ahead of visit of Hungarians Ferencvaros in their Champions league Group G opener, Koeman played down media talk that the Catalans could be European champions. "When you're at Barcelona you always want to be there fighting for trophies, be it in La Liga or Europe. We aren't the favorites, but we can go far," he told a news conference.

Barca's recent Champions League failings - they have just one semi-final appearance since last winning the competition in 2015 - were cited by many as talisman Lionel Messi's main reason for attempting to leave the Nou Camp in the transfer window.

The Argentina forward has frequently voiced his desire to lift the trophy again and this season could be a final chance to do it with Barca as his current contract expires next year.

"Right now, you could maybe say his performances could be better," Koeman said of his 33-year-old captain after Barca lost 1-0 at unfancied Getafe in la Liga on Saturday.

"But when you see him on a day-to-day basis, he's happy and wants to play and be the team's captain. I don't have any complaints or doubts about his effort."

The Ferencvaros game comes four days before the first Clasico of the season at home to Real Madrid but Koeman said his side are only focusing on the Champions League for now.



Klopp Promises to Wait on Van Dijk Like a Good Wife

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said supporting Virgil van Dijk is his priority after the talismanic Dutch defender suffered cruciate knee ligament damage that will likely end his season.

Van Dijk was on the end of a shocking challenge from Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford in Saturday's 2-2 draw in the Merseyside derby that will bring to an end his run of starting the last 94 Premier League games.

The 29-year-old's arrival from Southampton for a then world record £75 million fee for a defender in January 2018 has transformed Liverpool's fortunes. The Reds won the Champions League in 2019 and the Premier League for the first time in 30 years last season.

"We are there for him, he knows that and we will wait for him like a good wife is waiting when the husband is in jail and will do, meanwhile, all what we can do to make it as easy for him as possible," Klopp told Liverpoolfc.com. The club have refused to put a timeframe on Van Dijk's return, but Klopp acknowledged he was facing up to a prolonged period without one of his most important players.

"He now will be out for a while, that's clear. We don't want to set any timeframe, to be honest, because each player is different and each individual is different," he added.

"So we feel now in this moment extremely, extremely for him because most of us were in a similar situation and we know that these situations are absolutely rubbish."

"You don't need it. You don't need it but you have to get over it and Virgil will get over it, 100 per cent, and today is already the first day, if you want, of the recovery."

