

**Health Ministry Spokeswoman Yesterday Confirmed 5,616 New Cases of COVID-19 Infection in 24 Hours While 312 Patients Lost Their Lives in the Same Period and the Overall Death Increased to 31,346**

# IRAN NEWS

**Chief of Staff of the President Mahmoud Vaezi Said U.S. Maximum Pressures May Cause Inconvenience to People But It Can Increase Government, Industry, Defense, and Economic Resilience**

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**Zarif Urges Neighbors to Choose Peace Over Tension**

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on neighboring countries to choose peace, security, stability and prosperity for all instead of remaining prisoners of the past and perpetuate instability and tension in the region.

Zarif made the remarks in an address to a virtual debate of the United Nations Security Council under the title “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Comprehensive Review of the Situation in the Persian Gulf” on Tuesday.

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**Muslims Urged Not to Accept Disdain Of Compromising With Zionists**



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said that Muslim nations will not accept the humiliation of compromising with the Zionist regime in any way.

“Muslim nations will never accept the humiliation of compromising with the Zionist regime,” said Ayatollah Khamenei according to the English Twitter account of the Leader.

“If the U.S. thinks they can solve the region’s problem in this way, they are wrong.”

“The status of any regime that negotiates with the usurping Zionist regime will be shaken before its nation.”

The UAE and Bahraini foreign ministers signed an agreement at the White House on September 15 to normalize relations with Israel in the presence of US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

An official delegation from the UAE visited Israel yesterday (Tuesday) for the first time. The Emirati Minister of Economy Abdulla Bin Touq was among the officials.

Meanwhile the president of the Islamic Culture and Relation Organization (ICRO) said, he Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should act to fulfill its duty in response to normalization of relations with the Zionist regime.

Speaking at the consultative meeting of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the ICRO President Abuzar Ebrahimi Turkaman said the OIC should fulfill its duty according to the legal opinion (fatwa) of the Muslim scholars in boycotting the normalization of relations by some Arab countries with the Zionist regime.

Ebrahimi-Turkaman, on October 20, stressed that today the Islamic world needs unity and solidarity more than ever before.

He continued that the terrorist groups, supported by the global arrogance, seek to destroy Islam’s image in the world, and distort Islamic principles.

Ebrahimi-Turkaman said remaining silent in the face of such atrocities is, in fact, partnership with the oppressors, adding that the arrogant powers try to promote the wave of Islamophobia, Muslimophobia, and Iranophobia, and that silence of the international community will result in the continuation of oppression by the arrogant governments.

Ebrahimi-Turkaman called the Palestine question as a common issue of the Islamic world, saying the silence of the international community in the face of oppression by the arrogant powers is treason committed against the Islamic Ummah and the Palestinian cause.

The liberation of Palestine through the roadmap drawn by Iran’s Leader

The president of the Islamic Culture and Relation Organization then referred to the roadmap for settlement of the Palestinian issue from the perspective of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei and said the roadmap should be followed for the liberation of Palestine.

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**Armed Forces Conduct Massive Electronic Warfare Drills**

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran’s Armed Forces have launched large-scale aerial drills involving electronic warfare units and featuring the country’s domestically-built air defense systems and equipment.

Air defense divisions of Iran’s Army and Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) are participating in the joint aerial maneuvers codenamed Modafean Aseman Velayat 99.

On the first day of the drills, the participating troops practiced a wide range of electronic warfare tactics.

During the exercises, the performance and capabilities of Iranian air defense systems were evaluated by simulating real electronic warfare conditions and exposing them to jamming generated by drones equipped with jammer devices.

Meanwhile, air defense units carried out jamming operations against mock hostile drones and successfully took control of them, preventing them from reaching the drill zone, which covers more than half of the country.

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**Three Persian Gulf Islands Are Iranian Forever**

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations has reiterated the country’s sovereignty over three Persian Gulf islands, saying those territories have always been and will always remain Iranian.

Speaking at a virtual meeting of the UN Security Council on Tuesday, Majid Takht-Ravanchi reacted to some unsubstantiated accusations raised against Iran’s regional role and attempts to dispute the country’s sovereignty over the trio.

Earlier at the session, Secretary General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Nayef Falah al-Hajraf had urged Iran to respond to the body’s call to resolve the dispute over the islands through negotiations.

“Since the issue related to Iranian islands has been mentioned here, I have to say that Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunb islands have always been part of Iran. These islands are Iranian and will remain so,” Takht-Ravanchi said in response.

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**APMC Traders Import 600 Tons of Onions From Iran**

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - With the price of onions increasing, traders at the APMC market in Vashi have imported around 600 tons of onions from Iran, which reached the JNPT port on Monday. While some of them have been taken to the APMC market, some will be taken to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

“Around 25 tons of the 600 tons have been brought to the APMC market. Those have been sold at 51 rupees per kg in wholesale while the Indian onions are priced between 60 rupees and 70 rupees,” Abdul Razak Memon, a trader from APMC market, said.

Mr. Memon said more onions are expected from Egypt by the last week of October. “We had ordered the onions from Iran around 25 days ago. The process from Iran is slow and the payment methods are also tedious. Instead, we would be importing onions from Egypt. Onions from Turkey are also imported. This time, the rate there is also at the higher side and hence, we are going with Egypt,” he said.

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## Khashoggi Fiancee Sues Saudi Prince in U.S.

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The fiancee of journalist Jamal Khashoggi sued Saudi Arabia's crown prince and other officials Tuesday in a U.S. court, seeking damages for his brutal murder in Istanbul two years ago.

Turkish citizen Hatice Cengiz and the human rights group Khashoggi formed before his death, Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), is pursuing Mohammed bin Salman and 28 others for damages over the October 2, 2018 killing of the US-based writer.

Cengiz claims personal injury and financial losses over Khashoggi's death, while DAWN said its operations and objectives were hampered by the loss of its founder and central figure.



## India's Coronavirus Tally Climbs to 7.65m

MUMBAI (Reuters) - India has recorded 54,044 new coronavirus infections, taking its tally to 7.65 million, health ministry data showed on Wednesday.

The world's second most populous nation also has the second highest caseload, after the United States, which has a total of 8.2 million.

India's death toll from the virus stood at 115,914, with 717 deaths in the last 24 hours, the ministry said.

Infections in India have been on the decline since a September peak, but experts have warned there could be a surge as the festival season approaches.



## U.S., Russia Edge Back Towards Talks on Nuclear Arms Pact



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia and the United States on Tuesday were edging closer to breaking an impasse in long-running talks aimed at extending a landmark nuclear arms deal, due to expire within months.

U.S. officials said they were ready to meet Russian diplomats as soon as possible, shortly after Moscow stated it could compromise on an American demand.

The two sides have struggled to find common ground over the fate over the New START treaty, which limits both sides to 1,550 deployed warheads but is due to expire next February.

While the U.S. wants to rework the deal to include China and cover new kinds of weapons, Russia is willing to extend the agreement for five years without any new conditions -- and each side has repeatedly shot down the other's proposals.

The agreement was signed in 2010 at the peak of hopes for a "reset" in relations between the two countries.

Together with the Cold War-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, it was considered a centerpiece of international arms control.

However, the United States withdrew from the INF last year after accusing Moscow of violations.

As recently as last week, the U.S. seemed unwilling to compromise on New START -- officials dismissing a proposal from Russian President Vladimir Putin to extend the deal for a year without restricting new weapons development as a "non-starter".

But with U.S. President Donald Trump trailing in polls for next month's election, his administration has indicated it would support preserving the treaty.

And Russia's foreign ministry on Tuesday signalled a willingness to compromise, saying it would agree to a U.S. demand for a one-year freeze on developing weapons.

"We appreciate the Russian Federation's willingness to make progress on the issue of nuclear arms control," state department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagaus said.

"The United States is prepared to meet immediately to finalise a verifiable agreement. We expect Russia to empower its diplomats to do the same."

Over the course of months of talks, Washington had demanded that tactical nuclear weapons be covered by the treaty and insisted China must be included -- even though Beijing had shown no interest.

## Soldiers Open Fire on Protesters in Nigeria's Capital

LAGOS (Dispatches) - Nigerian soldiers opened fire on demonstrators protesting against police brutality in Lagos and at least two people were shot, according to several witnesses, as authorities imposed a curfew and promised an investigation.

Four witnesses told Reuters news agency that soldiers fired at the protesters who had gathered in the Lekki district of Nigeria's largest city in defiance of an indefinite curfew imposed hours earlier by the authorities.

Hundreds of people were at the site at the time of the shooting, which witnesses said took place around 7pm (18:00 GMT). "They started firing ammunition toward the crowd. They were firing into the crowd," said Alfred Ononugbo, 55, a security officer. "I saw the bullet hit one or two persons," he said.

Inyene Akpan, 26, a photographer, said more than 20 soldiers arrived at the toll gate in Lekki and opened fire. He said he saw two people being shot. Akinbosola Ogunsanya, a third witness, also told Reuters he saw soldiers remove bodies.

Scenes of protesters removing a bullet from someone's wound and pleading for help were broadcast in a live video on Instagram by DJ Switch, a popular disc jockey.

Amnesty International said it had received "credible but disturbing evidence of excessive use of force occasioning deaths of protesters at Lekki toll gate in Lagos", adding that it was investigating "the killings".

Another witness, Chika Dibia, said soldiers hemmed in people as they shot at them.

Video verified by Reuters showed men walking slowly in formation toward demonstrators, followed by trucks with flashing lights, and the sound of gunfire popping. Another video showed the toll gate itself, with a protester waving a Nigerian flag, as people ran amid the sound of gunfire.

In a Twitter post, the Nigerian Army said no soldiers were at the scene of the shooting on Tuesday night. Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu tweeted pictures of him visiting people in hospital who were victims of what he referred to as the "unfortunate shooting incident at Lekki".

He said 25 people were being treated for mild to moderate injuries, two were receiving intensive care and three had been discharged.



## Nearly 300K Excess U.S. Deaths Since January, Most From Virus

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The United States has seen around 300,000 more deaths than usual since late January, with two-thirds attributable to Covid-19 and the rest due to other causes, a government study said Tuesday.

The report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that overall, an estimated 299,028 excess deaths occurred from late January through October 3, 2020, with 198,081 of them (66 percent) caused by Covid-19.

Excess deaths are defined as the number of people who have died from all causes, in excess of the expected number of deaths for a given place and time. Deaths from circulatory diseases (including high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes), Alzheimer disease and dementia, and respiratory diseases all increased in 2020, the report said.

For reference, the CDC compared weekly deaths in 2020 to the average of weekly deaths from 2015-2019.

While the highest number of excess deaths (94,646) was registered among those aged 75-84, the group that saw the biggest increase was adults aged 25-44.

Their excess death rate was up 26.5 percent, while excess deaths among those under the age of 25 were in fact down by two percent.

Latinos and Blacks were hit hard, with excess deaths up 53.6 percent and 32.9 percent, respectively. Excess deaths among Asians were up 36.6 percent.

For white people, deaths were 11.9 percent higher when compared to average numbers during 2015-2019.

Some of these deaths may have been misclassified and were in fact attributable to Covid-19 -- while others may have occurred "because of disruptions in health care access or utilization," the report said.

As of Tuesday, the U.S. coronavirus death toll stood at more than 220,000, according to Johns Hopkins University.

## Germany Issues Int'l Arrest Warrant For Founders of Panama Papers Firm

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany has issued international arrest warrants for the two founders of the firm at the center of the tax haven scandal exposed by the Panama Papers data leak, German media reported.

Mossack Fonseca founders Juergen Mossack and Ramon Fonseca, suspected of tax evasion and associating with criminals, will be arrested if they enter the European Union, German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported.

A spokesman for the Cologne public prosecutor's office confirmed that two international arrest warrants had been issued in connection with ongoing investigations, but did not identify those involved.

Mossack and Fonseca hold Panamanian passports and are currently in the Caribbean archipelago, which does not have any extradition treaties, the newspaper said.

However investigators hope that Mossack, who has family in Germany, may surrender to officials in order to negotiate a reduced sentence and avoid U.S. charges.

The Panama Papers, a massive data leak in April 2016, exposed widespread tax avoidance and evasion using complex structures of offshore shell companies and caused an international outcry.

At least 150 investigations have been opened in 79 countries to examine potential tax evasion or money laundering, according to the American Center for Public Integrity.

In 2018, Mossack Fonseca said it would close due to "irreparable damage" to its reputation. Panama's government meanwhile continues to petition the international community to remove it from several tax haven blacklists.



## Luis Arce Says No Role for Morales in New Gov't

LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Bolivia's president-elect Luis Arce said there was "no role" in his government for socialist party leader Evo Morales, who governed for almost 14 years before resigning under pressure last year and fleeing the country.

Arce swept to power in a Sunday ballot, with the official count -- technically still under way -- showing him with a majority of the vote, ushering the Andean country's socialists back into office just a year after Morales left.

From exile in Argentina, Morales remains the president of Arce's party, the Movement for Socialism, or MAS, but Arce said any influence will be limited to that position.

"He will not have any role in our government," Arce told Reuters at the MAS headquarters in Bolivia's administrative capital La Paz.

"He can return to the country whenever he wants because he's Bolivian ... but in the government it's me who has to decide who forms a part of the administration and who does not."

A divisive former coca grower who is lauded by some for improving the fortunes of the poorest in one of South America's most impoverished countries, Morales has lived outside Bolivia since he fled last year following a vote shrouded by allegations of fraud. Morales disputes the allegations and says he was toppled in a right-wing coup.

Morales also faces a raft of corruption allegations, which he has denied. "Due process rights have not been respected in several cases against him (Morales)," Arce said. "I regret that politics have been judicialised, the right has judicialised politics."

As finance minister under Morales, Arce helped preside over an economy that was growing faster than almost any in the region. But when he assumes Bolivia's presidency next month, he will be taking over a country facing a crippling recession.

"We will have to have austerity measures. There's no other option if we don't have enough income to cover our current expenditures," Arce said.

The 57-year-old said the economic model he helped implement under Morales worked and will work once again.



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## Leeds Midfielder Phillips Out for Up to Six Weeks

LONDON (Reuters) - Leeds United's England midfielder Calvin Phillips will be out of action for up to six weeks with a shoulder injury, the Premier League club said on Tuesday.

Phillips sustained the injury during Monday's 1-0 defeat at home to Wolverhampton Wanderers but does not require surgery. "Kalvin began his rehab at Thorp Arch this morning and will be working hard with the medical team to return to action as soon as possible," the Yorkshire club said in a statement here.

## Roglic Wins Explosive Vuelta a Espana

MADRID (Dispatches) - Defending champion Primoz Roglic won stage one of the Vuelta a Espana on Tuesday after outprinting an elite group that had survived the steep final 5km climb to Alto de Arrate.

Team Ineos had set the pace up most of the climb and their leader Richard Carapaz was second, while Irishman Dan Martin of Israel Start-Up Nation finished third. Roglic used his trademark late kick in the final 500m to open a gap of just a few seconds for a comfortable win that puts him in the race leader's red jersey.

# Rashford Sinks PSG as Barca Send Message

LONDON (Dispatches) - Marcus Rashford once again sank Paris Saint-Germain after netting the decisive goal in a 2-1 Champions League win in the French capital on Tuesday, while Barcelona sent a message with a thumping 5-1 victory over Ferencvaros.

Rashford, who scored the winning spot-kick when United knocked PSG out in 2019, drilled home a low shot three minutes from the end which won a thrilling Group H contest at a near-empty Parc des Princes.

United had taken the lead in the 23rd minute when Bruno Fernandes slotted home from the spot at the second attempt, but Anthony Martial inexplicably headed Neymar's corner into his own net 10 minutes after the break.

The win sets United up nicely for next week's home clash with RB Leipzig, who are top of the group after beating Istanbul Basaksehir 2-0 in Germany.

Ronald Koeman got his first Champions League campaign as Barcelona coach off to a winning start with a confident win over Ferencvaros that gives them control of Group G, top but level on three points with Juventus.

Ferencvaros, the first Hungarian team to make the group stage in 11 years, started brightly and even had the ball in the net via Tokmac Nguen only for the powerful 12th-minute strike to be ruled out for offside.

Messi won and converted the penalty to give the Catalans a 27th-minute lead and the match was as good as done when Ansu Fati clipped home Frenkie de Jong's sumptuous pass just before the break.



Pedri and Ousmane Dembele finished the scoring for the 10-man hosts as they prepare for the weekend's Clasico with Real Madrid.

Juventus looked comfortable in their 2-0 win at Dynamo Kiev in what was the Andrea Pirlo's first ever Champions League match in the dugout, with Alvaro Morata scoring twice to take the points for the Italians. It was a good night for Italy as Ciro Immobile got revenge on his old club Borussia Dortmund by scoring in Lazio's 3-1 win over the Bundesliga club in Rome, their first Champions League match in 13 years.

Immobile managed just three goals in 24 Bundesliga games for Dortmund in 2014/15, but last season's European Golden Shoe winner outshone Dortmund's star forward Erling Braut Haaland by netting the opening goal for the hosts after just six minutes.

Lazio went two ahead midway through the first half thanks to Marwin Hitz deflected Luis Alberto's whipped corner into his own goal.

Haaland pulled one back with a thumping finish but Immobile laid on an easy finish for Jean-Daniel Akpa-Akpro to hand Lazio a big win.

Simone Inzaghi's men are level on three points with Club Brugge in Group F following their dramatic 2-1 win at Zenit Saint Petersburg earned thanks to Charles De Ketelaere 93rd minute winner. Chelsea are still waiting for a £220 million (\$284 million) spending spree to pay off they began their campaign with an uninspiring 0-0 Group E draw with Sevilla at Stamford Bridge.

## Nadal to Play Paris Masters Next Month

PARIS (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal announced on Tuesday that he will compete in the Paris Masters next month, despite previously saying he might not play again this season.

The 34-year-old won a record-extending 13th French Open title earlier this month with a one-sided final victory over world number one Novak Djokovic at Roland Garros.

"It's indoor season time... this picture was earlier today practicing at @rnadalacademy," he posted on Twitter alongside a photo of him training.

"And yes... getting ready for #ParisBercy."

The Paris Masters is scheduled to run from November 2-8.

Any health rules to be implemented for the event due to the coronavirus are yet to be announced.

After moving level with Roger Federer on a men's record 20 Grand Slam titles, Nadal said: "I don't know what I'm going to do after Roland Garros."

"I can't tell you if I'm going to play again or not in the next two months."

Nadal has never won the Paris Masters in his career.

He pulled out before a scheduled semi-final against Denis Shapovalov at Bercy in 2019.



## Tratnik Wins

### Giro d'Italia 16th Stage

ROME (Dispatches) - Slovenian Jan Tratnik soloed to victory in Tuesday's 16th stage of the Giro d'Italia with Portugal's Joao Almeida holding the leader's pink jersey in the final week of the race around Italy.

Tratnik, a 30-year-old Bahrain McLaren rider, crossed the line seven seconds ahead of Australian Ben O'Connor, after the run from Udine on the border with Slovenia. Deceuninck's Almeida finished nearly 13 minutes off the pace among the peloton of favourites to keep the overall lead. The race finishes in Milan on October 25.

Colombian sprinter Fernando Gaviria was among two positive coronavirus tests announced before the stage from a batch of 492 during Monday's rest day. The second was an AG2R La Mondiale team employee. "Gaviria went straight into isolation after the test result. He feels fine and is completely asymptomatic," his UAE Emirates team announced. "All the other riders and staff members returned negative tests and will have other tests today," the team said.

Gaviria, who also tested positive for the virus in February, had been 126th out of 138 in the general classification, almost three and a half hours behind Almeida.

## Leipzig's Haidara Tests Positive for Covid-19

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bundesliga leaders RB Leipzig said on Tuesday Mali midfielder Amadou Haidara had tested positive for coronavirus after a previous test returned an ambiguous result, hours before their Champions League match with Istanbul Basaksehir.

Leipzig said the rest of their squad all tested negative for Covid-19 ahead of hosting the Turkish side in their opening game of the group stage which kicks off at 1900GMT.

The 22-year-old, who scored his first international goal in September's 3-0 friendly win over Ghana, has been isolated from the Leipzig squad since last Thursday as a preventive measure.

He was absent from Saturday's 2-0 win at Augsburg which kept Leipzig top of the German top-flight after four games.



The Japanese player was scheduled to play singles and doubles in Antwerp. He has now been replaced by Federico Coria in singles. After the 2019 U.S. Open, Nishikori had suffered an elbow injury that ruled him out for

# Injury Woes Continue for Nishikori in 2020

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese favorite Kei Nishikori has withdrawn from the ATP Antwerp Open with a right shoulder injury. This is disappointing news for Nishikori as he was just recovering from a long injury prior to the tennis lockdown. Nishikori has played a handful of matches in 2020 with injuries with the pandemic halting his season.

The Japanese player was scheduled to play singles and doubles in Antwerp. He has now been replaced by Federico Coria in singles. After the 2019 U.S. Open, Nishikori had suffered an elbow injury that ruled him out for

the start of the 2020 season. The pandemic kicked in soon after, and Nishikori had to wait for his season to start. But his comeback was further delayed after multiple positive COVID-19 tests stopped him from participating in the resuming season. He missed the Cincinnati Masters and the US Open 2020.

After recovering from the coronavirus, Nishikori started his 2020 season in Kitzbuhel, Austria, but was ousted in the first round. The former World No. 4 then played in the Italian Open and the French Open but lacked his old prowess as he bowed out in the early rounds. Now, his latest injury has taken him back further.

In a recent interview, Nishikori had expressed his eagerness to play in Antwerp, but the Japanese player will now have to settle on the sidelines. He had said, "First time here in Antwerp and you know this tournament has a lot of history, great facility, so yeah I am looking forward to play."

## Japan Will Take Steps To Guard Against Olympics Cyberattacks

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan said on Tuesday it would take countermeasures to ensure next year's Tokyo Olympics are not derailed by cyberattacks after Britain and the United States accused Russia of orchestrating efforts to disrupt the Games.

Olympics organisers reported no significant impact on their operations for the 2020 Games, which were postponed until next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Britain and the United States on Monday condemned what they said were a series of malicious cyberattacks orchestrated by Russian military intelligence, including attempts to disrupt the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the allegations, attributing them to "Russophobia". He told reporters: "Russia has never carried out any hacking activities against the Olympics."

Japanese chief cabinet secretary Katsunobu Kato said Japan would make every effort to protect the Games from possible hacking attempts.

"We cannot turn a blind eye to malicious cyberattacks that threaten democracy," Kato told a news conference, adding that Japan was gathering and analysing information and in close contact with Britain and the United States.

"The Olympics are a major international event that attract attention, and cybersecurity measures are extremely important."

British officials said on Monday the hackers from Russia's GRU military intelligence agency had also conducted "cyber reconnaissance" operations against Tokyo Games organisers.

They declined to give specific details about the latest attacks or say whether they were successful but said they had targeted Games organisers, logistics suppliers and sponsors.



## Man United, Liverpool In Talks to Join New European Super League

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester United and Liverpool are in talks with Europe's elite clubs to join a new FIFA-backed competition that would reshape the sport's global soccer landscape, Sky News reported on Tuesday.

Manchester United declined to comment on the report and Liverpool did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Citing unnamed "football industry" sources, Sky said more than 12 teams from Europe's top five leagues - in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain - are in negotiations to become the founding members of the new competition, dubbed the European Premier League, with a provisional start date in 2022.

The report added the financiers are looking to raise a \$6 billion funding package to kick start the new tournament.

Sky said that FIFA, football's world governing body, is working on a new format, which is expected to feature 18 teams playing fixtures during the regular European season before a knockout phase. Sky added that neither FIFA nor UEFA had commented on the story.

A FIFA spokesperson told Reuters in an emailed statement: "FIFA does not wish to comment and participate in any speculation about topics which come up every now and then and, for which, institutional structures and regulatory frameworks are well in place at national, European and global level." European governing body UEFA, who run the Champions League, did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but their president Aleksander Ceferin has long expressed his opposition to the idea of a breakaway European league.

The idea of a European super league has been regularly floated over the last 20 years, with UEFA coming out strongly against it.

