

Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko Has Described the Islamic Republic of Iran as One The Most Important Partners of The European Country in the West Asian Region

# IRAN NEWS

In a Ceremony Held at Tehran Municipality Exhibition Center On Monday, a Number of New Buses and Minibuses Were Added to Tehran's Public Transportation Fleet

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## Majlis Gives Green Light To Urgent Motion to Thwart Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The majority of Iranian lawmakers have given green light to an urgent strategic motion, which aims to counteract unilateral sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic by Western countries, topped by the United States.

The plan, approved during the Monday session of the Iranian Parliament, is in response to unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the country by the West, especially the administration of US President Donald Trump, and was passed with 196 votes in favor, six votes against and four abstentions.

It obliges the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to produce at least 120 kg of 20-percent enriched uranium annually and store it inside the country within two months after the adoption of the law.

According to the motion, the AEOI should start the installation, gas injection, enrichment and storage of nuclear materials up to an appropriate enrichment degree within a period of three months using at least 1,000 IR-2m centrifuges.

The motion also requires the Iranian government to stop any regulatory access beyond the Additional Protocol within two months of its enactment in line with Articles 36 and 37 of a multilateral nuclear deal -- officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- signed between Iran and major world powers in 2015.

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## Zarif Rejects Renegotiation on JCPOA

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif categorically dismissed the idea of any new negotiations on the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal during the tenure of the next U.S. president.

"Under no circumstances" would Tehran consider renegotiating the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Zarif said in an interview with the CBS News.

While Joe Biden's camp has signaled that, if he wins, his administration would attempt to renegotiate the JCPOA, the Iranian foreign minister emphasized that Tehran has no plans for any talks.

"If we wanted to do that (renegotiate), we would have done it with President Trump four years ago," Zarif told CBS News.

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## U.S. Suffering Moral, Civil Decline



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei yesterday said the United States has fallen into substantial decline and Washington's regime will not live long.

The Leader in a televised speech on the occasion of Prophet Muhammad's birthday anniversary yesterday, said the White House itself has admitted that the U.S. is nosediving.

"To be fair, the U.S. regime has gone into a dramatic political, civil and moral decline. What I'm saying is not an analysis. It is something that they themselves are saying," the Leader said.

"This is the word of their own spokespeople as well as authors and thinkers inside the United States," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "Over the past several years, they have written a number of books which have been published in high circulation inside the U.S.," he noted.

"These books shed light on some facts," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said one of these books, which has been translated into Persian, is full of evidence indicative of the "decline of the U.S. political system due to moves by the U.S. president."

"Such an empire won't last long," the Leader stressed.

"It is obvious that when a regime gets to this point, it will not last long and will explode," he said.

Anti-Islam Stances Show Wicked Nature of Western Civilization

He once again lashed out at French President Emmanuel Macron for supporting the blasphemous cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ayatollah Khamenei said "some rulers suffered humiliation by insulting the Prophet" whose cartoons were published by the French satirical weekly magazine Charlie Hebdo.

"Backing cultural savagery and the criminal act of a caricaturist is another side of the coin of support for MKO terrorists and [former Iraqi dictator] Saddam [Hussein]," said the Leader.

"The Islamic community's anger and protest at this event indicates that the Muslim world is alive," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

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## IRGC Says Iran Stance on U.S. Antagonism Remains Unchanged

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps [IRGC] described the fight against global arrogance as an inherent feature of the Iranian nation and a principle of the Islamic Revolution, saying the strategy will not be subject to change due to any shift of power between Republicans and Democrats in the United States.

"After more than 60 years of confrontation and animosity [demonstrated] by the domineering U.S. regime towards the Iranian people with Democratic or Republican presidents at the helm of power, what stands out as an irrefutable fact, especially over the past four decades, is that the U.S. arrogance and hostility towards the Islamic Republic have not changed," the IRGC said in a statement, referring to the 1953 coup d'état against the elected government of Iran's then-prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and Washington's antagonism that ensued the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The statement was published on the eve of the 41st anniversary of the occupation of the former American embassy in Tehran, dubbed the "Den of Espionage."

On November 3, 1979, a group of university students took over the diplomatic mission, which they believed had turned into a center of espionage plotting to overthrow the nascent Islamic Republic, and held 52 American diplomats hostage for 444 days. Documents found at the embassy corroborated claims by the revolutionary students that Washington had been using the compound to hatch plots against Iran.

The 13th day of the Iranian calendar month of Aban, which falls on November 3 this year, is also known as the Student Day and the National Day of Fight against Global Arrogance.

Each year, Iranians commemorate the occasion by staging rallies, but this year's events were canceled due to an increase in the spread of COVID-19 in recent week, which has driven the government to adopt measures to restrain the pandemic. The anti-U.S. sentiment grew in Iran in May 2018, when Washington left the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [JCPOA], and targeted the Iranian nation with the "toughest ever" economic sanctions. The IRGC statement underlined the need for exercising active resistance and relying on domestic strength to overcome the U.S. economic war.

"The fight against arrogance, which is rooted in the belief system of the Muslim nation of Iran and is one of the principles of the Islamic Revolution, will never be undermined by the Western psychological warfare and media propaganda or the transfer of power between Republican and Democratic parties in the United States."

The constant U.S. hostilities and pressures will definitely fail in impeding the advancement of Iran's Islamic establishment that will improve in areas beyond defense and deterrence, added the statement.

## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



## November 3: Hatred? No. It's Rancor of Innocence

Restrictions due to combatting the outbreak of Coronavirus had made observing this year's National Day of Fight against Global Arrogance, November 3, different with what was in the past. Attention to what the Supreme Leader in his remarks has stated makes completely clear the road of Iranian nation in keeping this cause alive.

Today Islamic Iran has proved its power either spiritually or materially in the world especially to its enemy number one, the Great Satan. The most important reason to accept this claim is that the Supreme Leader in his remarks says today the U.S. sees the Islamic Republic of Iran standing like a strong and unreachable mountain against it. Of course, Iranian nation has not forgotten how UK and the U.S. and their internal devoted mercenaries have behaved as traitors, with the policy and dignity of the nation during the past century. The Islamic Revolution has been able to create ray of hope in the heart of innocent Iranian nation.

In 1979, exactly 25 years after the unsuccessful 28 Mordad 1332 coup d'état (August 18, 1953 coup d'état in Iran), Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line occupied the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. This event with the approval of the late Great Imam Khomeini (R) turned into a turning point in the relations of both countries, and since then the political and economic relations of Iran with the U.S. have remained severed and even during almost 42 years, it has sometimes led to military confrontations.

Although with August 18 coup the presence of Americans in the country became more colorful, the reason behind this presence dated back to many years before the coup, and it seems with taking those factors into consideration, one can analyze the relations between these two states and the lump hidden in the throat of Iranian nation both in pre and post Islamic Revolution victory eras, and he can find the reasons behind the occupation of the spy den (U.S. Embassy) with appropriate understanding of what has happened to Iran and its people.

Addressing this fact that if the U.S. Embassy was not occupied, what could happen to the confrontation of the people and the U.S., and to the way of penetration and enjoying the penetration power. Who is that does not know after the World War II and since 1945, the U.S. hostility against Iranian people has turned into a program to minimize the British influence and to loot more oil resources of Iran. Before addressing the reason behind the U.S. enmity with Iranian nation, I should answer to this question how the U.S. has turned from a colonial country into an imperialist one.

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## COVID-19 Death Toll In Iran on the Rise

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Tuesday that some 422 more Iranians have died from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 36,160.

Sima Sadat Lari said that, with the 422 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 36,160.

Some 8,932 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 3,294 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

Lari noted that a total of 637,712 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some 495,473 of whom have recovered and been discharged from hospital.

Some 5,378 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said.

She added that 5,036,633 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

Since its outbreak in Dec 2019, the deadly virus has killed over 1,200,000 worldwide.

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# FM to Begin Latin American Tour

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is going to take a tour of Latin America that includes participation in the new Bolivian president's inauguration, a spokesman said.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh said Zarif was to begin the tour of Latin America on Tuesday evening.

The foreign minister will take part in the inauguration of new president of Bolivia Luis Arce, he noted.

Zarif will later travel to Cuba and Venezuela, Khatibzadeh added.

He also expressed Iran's readiness to restore the bilateral ties with Bolivia to a perfect level, hoping that the two nations would enhance relations in line with the mutual interests.

## American Arrogance Will Not Change With Dems. or Reps.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN - Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi said that the U.S. arrogance would not change with Democrats and Republicans.**

Hojatolleslam Ebrahim Raeisi stated at a meeting of the Supreme Judicial Council on Monday in honor of the National Day of Fighting Global Arrogance, "The message of the Iranian people against American hostility at various times, is distrusting the United States."

Referring to the French President's (Emmanuel Macron) support for those who insult the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH), Iranian Judiciary Chief added, "Westerners themselves have created and armed the Takfiri movements when one of them enters the church in France and kills an old woman, they want to attribute it to Islam, but they themselves have caused it to happen; otherwise the one who kills an old woman has nothing to do with Islam."

Raeisi added that Islam was the only power that stands against the arrogance powers like the US and Israel, and Islam does not let the arrogant powers reach their targets, he said.

He stressed that with the unity and cooperation of Islamic counties, the coronavirus could be contained.

He also said Takfiri terrorism is a product of western powers and an effort to distort the image of Muslims in the world.



"The Westerners themselves created and armed Takfiri terrorist and made them a trouble for the regional and world people," the Judiciary chief said, "But now they are wrongly attributing an attack on a church in Paris and beheading an elderly woman to Islam".

He underscored that the attackers to the worshippers in the French church have no relation with Islam.

Raeisi added that the Islamophobia among Western rulers is the result of the spread of Islam among Western youth.

"Tendency to religion and paying attention to religious values and the Islamic Revolution as well as fighting the Takfiri currents will never stop," he said. "The youth of the Resistance Front do not let those who wrongly attribute [false issues] to the Prophet (PBUH) deceive people."

The closing ceremony of the 34th of international and Islamic Unity conference was held at the Judiciary System center with Ebrahim Raeisi, head of Iran's Judiciary System, and other foreign and Iranian figures 2nd November 2020.

## Tehran Condemns Vienna Terror Attack

TEHRAN (IFP) - Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Saeed Khatibzadeh condemned the terrorist attack that killed several people in Vienna on Monday night.

In a statement on Tuesday, Khatibzadeh condemned last night's terrorist attack in Vienna, expressing sympathy with the Austrian government, nation and families of the victims.

"Terrorism is condemned in any shape, and the deplorable incident in Vienna reveals once again that terrorism and extremism know no boundaries," the spokesman noted.

"Replacement of rationalism with promotion of hate and provocation would create a vicious cycle that only prepares the ground for the spread of radical and violent tendencies," Khatibzadeh added.

The spokesman also stressed the need for interaction and cooperation within the international community in a decisive battle against terrorism, adding, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will always be part of these efforts."

Police in Austria launched a manhunt after gunmen opened fire at multiple locations across central Vienna, killing at least four people and wounding several more in what Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz described as a "repulsive terror attack".

## Iran Not to Care About Who Wins U.S. Election



TEHRAN (IFP) - Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran says the country doesn't care about the results of U.S. elections, and what matters to Iran is Washington's policies, irrespective of the next U.S. president's party.

Speaking to reporters at a weekly press conference on Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh said, "In Iran, our stance is clear. We do not care about tomorrow (U.S. presidential Election Day) at all. We would see what policy would be adopted by the new U.S. government, from whatever party it is."

"What is obvious is that both (U.S.) parties and both camps have realized how heavily their policies have failed. They have not achieved any of their objectives (against Iran)," Khatibzadeh added.

He then reminded the U.S. government that the only framework for dialogue is what has been defined by the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"Within this framework, anybody making up for the damages, returning (to the nuclear deal) and ending such terrorist-style war against the Iranian nation will be allowed to be in that framework along with the others," he noted.

"We would monitor tomorrow's election (in the U.S.), and will then care about the next U.S. government's measures rather than the (election) results," the spokesperson concluded.

He also dismissed the accusations that Iran has sought to meddle in the U.S. presidential election.

"History shows that the country that launches coups and interferes (in other countries), the country that changes the heads of (other) states and spends money -as the CIA deploys forces (to other countries)- is the U.S.," he noted.

"Tehran has announced repeatedly that it is neither interested in meddling in the U.S. elections, nor does it deem the acts of interference to be in the interests of anybody," the Iranian spokesman stressed.

Khatibzadeh noted that the U.S. election result is based upon a decision made by the American people alone.

"Nevertheless, it appears that the U.S. election has turned into a show more than before. They (U.S. officials) try to make this show more attractive. The whole accusations (against Iran) are rejected, as they are totally baseless," he stated.

## China to Respect Int'l Rules on Arms Exports

TEHRAN (IFP) - China's ambassador to Tehran says his country will remain committed to its international obligations when it comes to the export of military equipment.

Speaking in an interview with the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA), Chang Hua said Beijing will cautiously continue its trade in weapons.

His comments come as Iran and China are expected to start their arms trade following the recent removal of the UN Security Council's arms embargo against the Islamic Republic.

The Chinese envoy said the expiration of the weapons ban on Iran on October 18, 2020, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2231 amounted to the implementation of phase one of the resolution.

He said the development is a significant moment in the implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and reflects the international community's common ground on the maintenance of multilateralism, accepting that the UN Security Council is an authority.

It also proved the effectiveness of the JCPOA, he added.

The Chinese ambassador underlined that Beijing will keep working with all signatories to move forward with the implementation of the JCPOA and UN Security Council Resolution 2231, make headway with the political and diplomatic settlement of Iran's nuclear issue, protect the international nuclear non-proliferation system and help establish peace in the Middle East and in the Persian Gulf region.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the top Chinese diplomat touched upon a peace plan for the region proposed by his country. He said China's proposals urge all sides to follow the UN Charter and the world body's objectives in order to boost security in the Persian Gulf region.

The ambassador further called on the UN to fully play its role in mediation efforts and easing negotiations.

He also underscored that China would like to see a new forum created for multilateral talks among Persian Gulf countries based on preserving the JCPOA.

The top diplomat then noted that China will cooperate with Persian Gulf states in combating the coronavirus pandemic. He said whenever his country completes the process of production and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, it will supply the medicine to Persian Gulf countries including Iran as well.



## Leader Assigns New Cleric to Guardian Council

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei appointed a new member to the Guardian Council's board of Fuqaha (Islamic jurists) after one of its long-serving members resigned because of poor health.

In a decree on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei appointed Hojatolleslam Seyed Ahmad Khatami as the new member of the Guardian Council's board of Fuqaha. He will replace Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi in the council.



The Leader also paid tribute to Ayatollah Yazdi, who has resigned from the council due to physical problems and aging after years of "valuable service" to the Islamic Republic in various posts.

The Guardian Council is a constitutionally mandated 12-member council in Iran that, among other things, is tasked with ensuring the compatibility of the legislation passed by the parliament with the criteria of Islam and the Constitution.

## Karabakh Crisis to Be Settled Despite Failure of Talks

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian president's special envoy says Tehran still hopes the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis will be settled despite the fact that negotiations to resolve the conflict have broken down so far.

Seyed Abbas Araqchi said the proposals put forward over the past thirty years to settle differences between the Azerbaijan Republic and Armenia have failed as the proposed plans were far from reality.

"Although the Karabakh talks have been inconclusive so far, Iran is still hopeful," said Araqchi, the Iranian president's special envoy who recently visited Baku, Yerevan, Moscow, and Ankara to offer Iran's initiative to help settle the crisis.

"The proposal that the Islamic Republic of Iran presented to resolve the Karabakh conflict takes the circumstances into consideration, and can be effective in settling the

crisis if both [warring] sides respect one another's rights," he said.

Araqchi said he had presented Iran's proposal to Azerbaijani officials, and that they have had a positive view about it.

"This initiative is based on a regional approach and contains principles including respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, the unchangeability of borders, the necessity of ending occupation, the need for respecting the rights of minorities' rights, the return of refugees and the pullout of foreign elements from the region," he noted.

"If both sides accept these proposals, it would be possible to settle the conflict," he said.

"Putting aside hostilities and kicking off talks with the help of influential, supportive and guaranteeing countries are among other provisions of this plan," he added.

## Iranian Diplomat, UN Special Envoy for Syria Hold Talks

TEHRAN (MNA) - The senior assistant to Iranian foreign minister in special political affairs, Ali-Asghar Khaji, and UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen held talks over the latest developments in Syria.

During the phone conversation on Monday, Pedersen elaborated on the results of his negotiations with the representatives of several regional countries over the issues.

The two sides also exchanged views on the political process and activities of the Syrian Constitutional Committee.

They also addressed the issue of the Syrian refugees. This subject will be discussed during a conference in Damascus in the coming weeks.

Khaji underlined the need for collective efforts to help resolve Syria's challenges as a humanitarian and positive move toward the people of that country.

He also called for active participation of the international community in the upcoming conference.

## Tehran, Moscow Discuss Expanding Cooperation Within EAEU

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for the Economic Diplomacy Affairs and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister conferred on boosting relations within the framework of EAEU.

In a virtual meeting on Monday, Gholamreza Ansari and Alexander Pankin discussed strengthening bilateral ties within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

During the meeting, both sides conferred on cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Development of transport corridors, Russia-Iran Interaction in international financial institutions, the status of both countries in global energy markets, and the collaboration in the fight against COVID-19.

Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali also held a meeting with the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister last week, conferring on bilateral economic relations as well as boosting ties within Eurasian Economic Union.

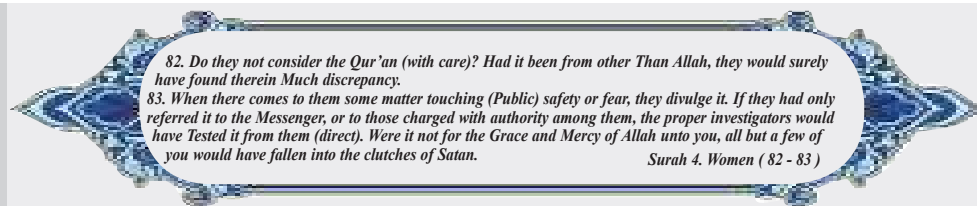
"We will see the expansion of economic cooperation between Iran and Russia, especially in the field of tourism after the containment of coronavirus," Pankin said.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:47
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:24
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:05
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:30



## Tehran, EAEU Begin Talks on Free Trade Agreement

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) in a videoconference with heads of joint work groups on temporary agreement for forming free trade region between Iran and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Andrey Slepnev, the minister in charge of Trade of the EAEU, pointed to the growth in trade between Iran and EAEU after implementing the agreement and called for more cooperation.**

In the videoconference, Hamid Zadboum said despite the outbreak of COVID-19 and decline in the global trade, the trade between Iran and EAEU has grown and it is an indication to the trade capacities of Iran and EAEU.

The conference was held on the anniversary of implementation of temporary agreement for forming free trade region between Iran and EAEU. Zadboum pointed to the great potentials in bilateral trade and necessity for developing cooperation and called for laying the appropriate ground in the EAEU member states in line with successful implementation of temporary agreement through improving the necessary infrastructures in the transportation, transit, banking and customs cooperation sectors.

Zadboum further said by converting the current agreement into the free trade, it is necessary the current infrastructures to be developed for reaching higher level of bilateral trade, or new infrastructures should be shaped because the current infrastructures do not meet the proper bilateral trade volume. He reiterated that developing cooperation in the transportation, banking and investment in the free zones is of very crucial.

He noted that the provided grounds for cooperation in form of agreement and its



development to other economic and trade sectors like cooperation in investment, trade of services, bartering, economic and free and special zones are appropriate opportunities, and announced Iran's proposal regarding developing investment cooperation and other grounds for cooperation and called for the other party's opinion on this regard.

In the conference, both sides confirmed the growth in the bilateral trade after implementation of the agreement despite COVID-10 pandemic and decline in the global trade, and thanked the other side for pursuing the issues related to the agreement.

Meanwhile Andrei Slepnev pointed to the process of getting license for beginning official talks and signing the deal by the presidents of EAEU members and predicted this could materialize by December, and it is necessary till then the preliminary and advisory talks on free trade and reviewing all of its aspects to be held.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

## Exports Declined 23% y/y in October

TEHRAN (pressTV) - Iran's non-oil exports drop by 23 percent in value terms year on year in October. The Iranian customs office IRICA says exports declined by nearly a fourth in the seven months ending late October as closures meant to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic hit the country's non-oil trade.

IRICA chief Mehdi Mir Ashrafi said that the value of exports from Iran between March 20 and October 21, 2020 had totaled \$18.2 billion, down 23 percent compared to the similar period in 2019. Mir Ashrafi said the decline in exports was 17.5 percent in volume terms year on year in October, adding that a total of 65.5 million metric tons of goods had been shipped to other countries in the first seven months of the current calendar year.

Imports into Iran reached 19.3 million tons worth over \$20 billion, the IRICA chief said, adding that nearly 14 million tons of cargoes that Iran took delivery of were basic goods, including food and medicine.

The decline in exports comes as Iran has struggled to maintain trade relations with major partners despite the spread of the pandemic both in the Middle East and around the world. Authorities believe exports will rebound in the five months to the end of the fiscal year in late March 2021 as countries gradually open their borders to allow trade to boom.

Iran's main export destinations in the seven months to late October included Iraq with \$4.8 billion worth of shipments, followed by China at \$4.4 billion and the United Arab Emirates at \$2.2 billion, said Mir Ashrafi. The official added that China topped the list of main exporters to Iran with \$5.1 billion worth of cargoes, adding that the UAE and Turkey came second and third with \$4.7 billion and \$2.2 billion, respectively.

## Trade With ECO Member States Hits \$4.5b

TEHRAN (MNA) – Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that country's value of trade with Economic Cooperation Organization's member states in the first half of the current year hit \$4.5 billion.

Speaking in an interview with IRNA on Monday, Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi said that more than 9,199,000 tons of products, valued at \$4,542,530,920, were exchanged between Iran and ECO member states in the first half of the current year (from March 21 to Sept. 22).

He went on to say that Iranian products were exported to various countries including Turkey, Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

In this period, over 6,540,295 tons of products, valued at \$2,526,018,538, were exported from the Islamic Republic of Iran to ECO member states, he said, adding, "With importing \$1,108,798,627 worth of products from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan was introduced as Iran's first export target market."

He further noted that Islamic Republic of Iran imported over 2,657,706 tons of products, valued at \$2,016,512,382, from ECO member states, most of these products were imported into the country from neighboring Turkey, valued at \$1,834,247,948.

Total weight of goods exchanged between Iran and ECO members states in the seven months of the current year hit 85 million tons, valued at \$38.278 billion, showing a 17.5 percent decline as compared to the last year's corresponding period, Latifi added.

## JCPOA Reduced Risk of Trade With Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which took effect in 2015 helped improve trade risk with Iran bringing Iran to Group 5 of risk assessment by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Iranian trade official said on Monday.

Arash Shahraini, a member of the board of directors of the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran, made the remarks in an interview with IRNA correspondent as OECD has recently released a new risk classification of the world countries.

OECD divides world countries into seven different groups in terms of risk of investment, he said, adding that the low-risk countries are put in Group one and as the risk of trade with a country increases, it is placed in the next groups.

The official said that after the end of the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran in 1988, Iran was placed in Group six and its

classification even improved at a time to be placed at Group four so that the country attracted a large amount of foreign investment to implement economic development projects.

However, in its next classifications, the OECD reduced Iran's position in the list and put the country in Group seven, Shahraini said.

Although this demotion was compensated after the JCPOA put into practice in 2016 and Iran's place improved by two steps to be placed in Group 5, the OECD once again placed Iran in Group seven in its last year risk assessment of world countries after the US unilateral exit from the multilateral accord which made it much difficult for Iran to engage in trade deal with other countries, the official said.

Iran still remains in Group seven in the new OECD classification of the counties which was recently released, he added.

He said that if Iran and the U.S. engage in a fresh round of negotiations and the U.S. decide to come back to the JCPOA in the next six months, Iran's risk assessment could improve significantly and Iran will be able to regain its place in Group five.

## Iran, Oman Discuss Health Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – The President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) met and held talks with Omani officials on the bilateral cooperation.

President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society Dr. Karim Hemmati who has traveled to Oman to follow the process of building a hospital belonging to IRCS in Muscat, met and held talks with deputy of Oman's health minister Dr. Fatima Al Ajmi.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the field of fighting against coronavirus.

## Road Minister to Inaugurate Major Port Projects in Chabahar

TEHRAN (MNA) – In an interview with Mehr news, the Director-General of Sistan-Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Department informed the road minister is to inaugurate some major projects in Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti Port today.

As the Sistan-Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Department's Director-General Behrouz Aghaei told Mehr news in a telephone conversation on Monday, the Iranian Minister Mohammad Eslami is to embark for Chabahar in southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province to inaugurate several projects in Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port.

The Iranian minister will arrive in Chabahar today heading a delegation comprised of his deputies, some Parliament members, senior officials from the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran (PMO), and some other Iranian top officials.

Eslami will launch several development projects in Shahid Beheshti port including a container terminal and a terminal for refrigerated containers, a multi-purpose warehouse, a strategic equipment building, power and water supply projects, a firefighting network project, and private sector investments projects and etc. As Aghaei said, the inaugurated projects seek several major targets.

## Head of MSC Hails Operators of Annual Repairs of Pelletizing Unit



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Concurrent with launching the planned repairs in the pelleting unit of the company with 26,000 man-hours repair activities, the CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) Eng. Hamid Reza Azimian, accompanied with his assistants and senior officials of the company, paid a visit to the pelleting unit and hailed the efforts of its staff.

During the visit and addressing the staff, Mr Azimian said high safety and observing all health protocols related to the Coronavirus during this big operation as the most important achievement of it, adding that the efforts of all staff in this unit for preparing the production line during the lockdown are appreciable. He then thanked attention and efforts of all of his colleagues during the repairs process.

He went on to say that the other point is that as long as pre-planned repairs are carried out in Mobarakeh Steel Company, it means engineering and exploitation sections of the plant are doing their jobs properly but that sometimes unexpected repairs happen, it indicates there is some weakness in the job. In other words, pre-planned and predicted annual, seasonal or weekly repairs are indicators of the power of exploitation management, he added.

## More Than 400 Firms Ready To Partake in 14th IranPlast

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The director of IranPlast International Exhibition said more than 400 companies have so far pre-registered in the showcase, adding: "Registration for the 14th IranPlast exhibition continues and it is expected that the number of companies will gradually increase."

According to the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Ayub Banavi said on Sunday that this year, due to the sanctions and the spread of the coronavirus, IranPlast Exhibition will be held from December 26 to 29 with a different approach.

He said that with the permission received from the National COVID-19 Headquarters, this specialized exhibition will be held in the presence of specialists and experts.

He said: "This year, the organizer of the exhibition has changed and one of the companies approved by the Trade Development Organization will carry out executive activities. Fortunately, so far more than 400 companies have pre-registered on the exhibition's website."

Banavi added: "Registration is still ongoing and the number of companies is expected to increase gradually."

The director of IranPlast Exhibition continued: "This year, due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the IranPlast Policy Council has approved that a virtual exhibition be held at the same time as IranPlast, and companies participating in the exhibition can visit the showcase for three weeks if they wish."

In the name of God

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



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Esfahan Steel Company intends to have the project "Coke Spillage Conveyor" fulfilled for coke-production machines of its Coke Oven Battery 3 to extinguish and collect hot coke back from ovens. The current coke machines do not have the coke spillage conveyor mechanism, and a C.S.C system needs to be designed so that it can be installed and commissioned. Therefore, capable companies with the technology in the above area are invited to let us know their readiness and take further measures for a visit to the project site. A drawing of the discharging machine, the door-opening machine, and a general view of battery 3 is available at <http://esfahansteel.ir/newcmsen-farakhan>

Send your letter of readiness to [contractmanager@esfahansteel.ir](mailto:contractmanager@esfahansteel.ir)

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**Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.**



## Europe Facing Toughest Situation Controlling COVID Spike

GENEVA (Reuters) - Governments in Europe face a “very, very difficult situation” in controlling rising numbers of COVID-19 cases as their citizens grow weary with renewed restrictions on daily life, the World Health Organization’s top emergencies expert said on Monday.

“Clearly people are frustrated, and have every right to be frustrated, and they are fatigued,” Mike Ryan told a regular WHO news briefing in Geneva.

“But governments, particularly in Europe, are facing a very, very difficult situation. We need to push this virus down, take the heat out of this epidemic. Their options are limited.”



## Portugal Ponders COVID-19 State of Emergency

LISBON (Reuters) - Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa said on Monday he was pondering declaring a state of emergency as a preventive measure to fight the spread of the coronavirus at a time when infections are soaring.

Hours after Prime Minister Antonio Costa asked the president to declare the state of emergency, Rebelo de Sousa said in an interview with RTP Television he was considering the request, explaining it would include specific measures to combat the pandemic but not a “total or nearly total” lockdown. The initial COVID-19 state of emergency, which under Portuguese law is limited to 15 days but can be extended indefinitely in 15-day periods if necessary, was declared in March and lasted six weeks.



## At Least 19 Killed After Gunmen Storm Kabul University



KABUL (Dispatches) - At least 19 people were killed and 22 wounded Monday when militants stormed Afghanistan’s biggest university in an attack that ended only after hours of fighting with security forces, officials said.

“Three attackers were involved. One of them blew up his explosives at the beginning, two were brought down by the security forces,” interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian told AFP.

The Taliban said they were not involved in Monday’s incident at Kabul University, but several education centers have been attacked over the years by extremist groups such as Islamic State (IS).

Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramerz told AFP most of those killed were students.

Hamid Obaidi, a spokesman for the ministry of higher education, told AFP the attack started when government officials were arriving for the opening of an Iranian book fair organised at the campus.

Gunmen stormed the facility, sending hundreds fleeing and scrambling over walls of the campus as they tried to escape the firing, witnesses said.

Afghan security forces later surrounded the area, cordoning off all roads that led to the university, witnesses and an AFP correspondent reported.

“The attack is over, but sadly 19 people have been killed and 22 more wounded,” interior spokesman Arian said on Twitter. Students spoke of chaos and confusion.

“We were studying inside our classrooms when suddenly we heard a burst of gunfire inside the university,” said Fraidoon Ahmadi, 23, adding that he and several other students were besieged for more than two hours before being rescued.

“We were very scared and we thought it could be the last day of our lives... boys and girls were shouting, praying and crying for help.”

About 800 students were in the social sciences faculty where he was studying.

“I have no words to express how we survived today’s attack by gunmen on our university,” he added.

Last week at least 24 people, mostly students, were killed in a suicide attack on an educational centre in western Kabul that was claimed by IS.

In 2018 a suicide bomber killed dozens of people, many of them teenagers, in front of Kabul University in an attack also claimed by IS.

Sixteen people were killed when militants stormed the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul in 2016.

## Gunmen Kill Two in Vienna, Manhunt Launched

VIENNA (Reuters) - Gunmen attacked six locations in central Vienna on Monday starting outside the main synagogue, killing two people and injuring at least 14 in what Austria called a “repulsive terror attack” while hunting one or more assailants on the loose.

Witnesses described the men firing into crowds in bars with automatic rifles, as many people took advantage of the last evening before a nationwide curfew was introduced because of COVID-19. Police shot and killed one assailant.

Police sealed off much of the historic centre of Vienna, urging the public to shelter in place. Many sought refuge in bars and hotels, while public transport throughout the old town was shut down and police scoured the city.

“It is the hardest day for Austria in many years. We are dealing with a terror attack the severity of which, thank God, we have not experienced in Austria in many years,” Interior Minister Karl Nehammer told a news conference.

Austria’s capital had so far been spared the kind of deadly militant attacks that have struck Paris, London, Berlin and Brussels,



among others, in recent years. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said the “repulsive” act was “definitely a terror attack”, but he could not say what the motive was.

Oskar Deutsch, the head of Vienna’s Jewish community, which has offices adjoining the synagogue on a narrow cobbled street dotted with bars, said on Twitter here that it was not clear whether the temple or offices were targeted but that they were closed at the time.

Rabbi Schlomo Hofmeister told London’s LBC radio he was living in the compound of the synagogue. “Upon hearing shots, we looked down (from) the windows and saw the gunmen shooting at the guests of the various bars and pubs,” he said.

“The gunmen were running around and shooting at least 100 rounds or even more in front of our building,” he said.

Border checks were being reinforced, the Interior Ministry said, and children would not be required to attend school on Tuesday. Although people were urged to stay indoors Vienna Mayor Michael Ludwig told broadcaster ORF the city would run normally on Tuesday, albeit with a tougher police presence.

## Snowden Seeks Russian Citizenship Ahead of Son’s Birth

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden and his wife are applying for Russian citizenship in order not to be separated from their future son in an era of pandemics and closed borders, he said on Monday.

Snowden’s wife, Lindsay, is expecting a child in late December, the RIA news agency cited Anatoly Kucherena, his Russian lawyer, as saying.

Snowden, 37, fled the United States and was given asylum in Russia after leaking secret files in 2013 that revealed vast domestic and international surveillance operations carried out by the U.S. National Security Agency where he was a contractor.

U.S. authorities have for years wanted Snowden returned to the United States to face a criminal trial on espionage charges brought in 2013.

“After years of separation from our parents, my wife and I have no desire to be separated from our son. That’s why, in this era of pandemics and closed borders, we’re applying for dual US-Russian citizenship,” Snowden wrote on Twitter.

“Lindsay and I will remain Americans, raising our son with all the values of the America we love — including the freedom to speak his mind. And I look forward to the day I can return to the States, so the whole family can be reunited.

“Our greatest wish is that, wherever our son lives, he feels at home.”

Russia has already granted Snowden permanent residency rights, his lawyer said last month, a vital step towards Russian citizenship.

U.S. President Donald Trump said in August he was considering a pardon for Snowden. Trump is running for a second presidential term against Democratic challenger Joe Biden at elections on Tuesday.

Snowden keeps a low profile in Russia. He has praised the country’s natural beauty and the warmth of its people, while using social media to criticize government policy from time to time.

## Algerians Approve Constitutional Changes in Referendum

ALGIERS (Dispatches) - A proposal to change Algeria’s constitution won most votes in Sunday’s referendum and will become law, but very low turnout undercut the government strategy of using the poll to turn a page on last year’s political unrest.

Fewer than one in four registered voters cast a ballot, Algeria’s lowest-ever turnout, with many in the opposition “Hirak” street protest movement opposing the referendum.

Two thirds of those who did vote supported the changes, the electoral commission head Mohamed Charfi said at a news conference on Monday, adding that the coronavirus had negatively affected turnout.

However, it means that only 15.8 percent of registered voters went to the polls and cast a ballot in favour of the new constitution. Prominent members of the Hirak hailed the low turnout as a defeat for the government’s strategy.

“I hope men and women within the system will understand this lesson and do what is needed to listen to the people’s demands. The people want their own constitution and institutions,” said Mustapha Bouchachi, a lawyer and human rights activist.

The changes approved in the referendum include

presidential term limits, new powers for the parliament and judiciary and a clause to let the army intervene outside Algeria’s borders.

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who is in hospital in Germany, pushed the process of constitutional reform to try to quell mass street protests that thrust Algeria last year into its biggest crisis for decades.

The protests forced Tebboune’s predecessor Abdelaziz Bouteflika to step down after 20 years in office, and continued even after December’s election, stopping only when Algeria imposed a lockdown against the pandemic.

Tebboune had hailed the protests as a moment of national renewal, offering dialogue with demonstrators and embarking on a process of consultations to change the constitution.

Meanwhile, the authorities tried and imprisoned close Bouteflika allies and prominent businessmen in his circle on corruption charges.

Yet many Hirak members maintain their goals – replacing a governing elite that has ruled since independence from France in 1963, ending corruption and forcing the army to withdraw from politics – were only partly accomplished.



## India, U.S. Sign Key Military Deal, Symbolizing Closer Ties



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India and the U.S. signed a key defense deal late last month in a move seen as a last-ditch push by the Trump administration to score a foreign policy success just a week before the U.S. elections.

Experts say the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA) deal will bring the two countries closer to each other and help them counter China.

The deal, announced during the bi-annual so-called “two plus two” meeting in New Delhi, will give Indian military access to data that are considered vital for the firing of missiles, armed drones and other targets with precision.

Both the countries, represented by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Mark Esper and their Indian counterparts Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh respectively, termed the partnership significant.

“At a time when it is particularly important to uphold a rules-based international order, the ability of India and the U.S. to work closely in defence and foreign policy has a larger resonance,” External Affairs Minister Jaishankar said at the Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi.

“Together, we can make a real difference when it comes to regional and global challenges, whether it is in respecting territorial integrity, promoting maritime domain awareness, countering terrorism or ensuring prosperity.”

“The BECA deal is a game-changer. It is the last of the foundational defense agreements to be signed between the U.S. and India, and one that India had long resisted signing,” said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia programme at the U.S.-based Wilson Center.

India has long attempted to balance its relations with the US and China, with whom it shares a 3,500km-long (2,100 miles). But India’s military standoff in June on its western border with China seems to have pushed New Delhi towards the U.S., which has been trying to bolster allies against an increasingly assertive China.

At least 20 Indian soldiers were killed in the deadliest border standoff in nearly 50 years. Thousands of military personnel continue to remain at the disputed border near Ladakh region.

“The U.S. will stand with the people of India as they confront threats to their sovereignty and to their liberty,” Pompeo told reporters in New Delhi.





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## KLM Pilots Willing to Discuss Wage Freeze

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Pilots at KLM, the Dutch arm of Air France-KLM, on Monday said they were willing to discuss extending a wage freeze, a demand of the Dutch government in return for state aid.

The pilots' refusal to agree to the government's terms this weekend jeopardised the planned 3.4 billion euro (3 billion pounds) bail out needed to help KLM cope with the

fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

"We want to talk to KLM and the Finance ministry to find a solution as soon as possible", pilot union VNV chairman Willem Schmid told Dutch radio station BNR on Monday.

KLM did not comment on Schmid's remarks, while the Finance ministry has said it will only talk to the airline's board and not to individual unions.



## China's Manufacturing Sector Expands for Sixth Straight Month

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's factory activity expanded for the sixth straight month in October as business confidence grew to its strongest in years, a private survey showed on Monday.

The Caixin/Markit Purchasing Managers' Index for Chinese manufacturing came in at 53.6 for October, better than the 53.0 forecast by analysts in a Reuters poll. The latest reading was the highest since January 2011, the survey results showed.

PMI readings above 50 indicate expansion, while those below that signal contraction. PMI readings are sequential and indicate month-on-month expansion or contraction.

China's vast manufacturing industry has been recovering as the country's coronavirus outbreak appears largely under control. The October Caixin/Markit PMI showed that the country's manufacturing recovery has continued to pick up speed, said Wang Zhe, senior economist at Caixin Insight Group.

"To sum up, recovery was the word in the current macro economy, with the domestic epidemic under control," he said in a statement accompanying the data release.

"Manufacturing supply and demand improved at the same time. Enterprises were very willing to increase inventories. Prices tended to be stable. Business operations improved, and entrepreneurs were confident," he added.

The private survey followed the release of China's official manufacturing PMI over the weekend, which came in at 51.4 for October — the eighth consecutive month of expansion. Analysts polled by Reuters had expected a 51.3 reading.

The official PMI survey typically polls a large proportion of big businesses and state-owned companies. In comparison, the private Caixin/Markit survey features a bigger mix of small- and medium-sized firms.

The latest Caixin/Markit survey showed that both demand and supply of Chinese manufacturing goods have continued to recover as "fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic faded," said Wang.

Still, companies have remained cautious about hiring, he noted. A full recovery in employment depends on "stronger and more-lasting business confidence," he said.

Chart compares the actual reading of China's official manufacturing PMI and what's expected in a Reuters poll of analysts

## Banks Cut Europe's Economic Growth Outlook

LONDON (Reuters) - Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley cut Europe's fourth quarter economic forecasts on Monday as a surge in COVID-19 cases prompted the introduction of partial nationwide lockdowns in some countries in November, halting a nascent recovery seen during the summer.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered England back into a national lockdown from Thursday as a second wave of infections threatened to overwhelm the health service. The move brought England into alignment with France and Germany which imposed nationwide restrictions early last week.

U.S. investment bank Goldman said it expects the euro area's real gross domestic product (GDP) to shrink 2.3% in the fourth quarter, a sharp reversal from its earlier projection of 2.2% growth. Similarly, it cut UK GDP growth forecasts to minus 2.4% from a 3.6% expansion it had earlier expected.

"Looking ahead, we assume that the new restrictions will last for three months before they are gradually rolled back starting



its expectations for the euro area economy to recover to pre-Covid levels in the second quarter of 2022.

Citi economists, meanwhile, said they expected UK GDP to shrink by over 4% between October and December. "More protracted national lockdowns cannot be ruled out," Citi said in a note.

"With virus risks still likely to persist until Q2-2021, we expect output to remain more than 11-13% below Q4-2019 levels until then, with local restrictions and an acute behavioral response weighing sharply (alongside Brexit). The risk of more permanent effects is also growing."

## France Urged to Draw Up Recovery Plan for Public Finances

PARIS (Reuters) - France needs to draft plans now for restoring its public finances to order once a post-crisis economic

recovery takes hold, the International Monetary Fund said on Monday.

French gross domestic product is set to contract 10% this year and rebound 5%-6% next year depending on the pandemic's evolution and containment measures in the euro zone's second-biggest economy, the IMF forecast.

France returned to lockdown last week in the latest effort to contain spiralling new coronavirus case numbers, leading the government to estimate that the economy would contract 11% this year.

With a month of lockdown expected to cost at least 15 billion euros (13.5 billion pounds), the government now expects the overall public debt burden to hit 119.8% of GDP this year.

"A credible and ambitious medium-term fiscal consolidation plan should be prepared now to be implemented only once the economic recovery is on a firm footing," the IMF said in a statement after annual staff consultations with French authorities.

It added that the effort should target public spending, which is among the highest in the world and which successive French governments have made little progress in reducing.

## Russia Planning Major Increase In Gas Exports

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Australia isn't the only country plotting a "gas-led recovery" to rebuild the economy after the impact of the coronavirus pandemic — Russia is also planning to exploit its own enormous fossil fuel reserves amid the worsening global climate crisis.

The Kremlin has not set out a net-zero emissions target, and the energy minister Alexander Novak has said he believes after a contraction in the market due to the pandemic, Russian exports of oil and gas will continue to grow in 2021.

Russia became one of the world's top five global liquid natural gas (LNG) producers last year, and by 2035 Russia is expected to increase production from the current 29 million to 140 million metric tons of LNG per year, according to Mr Novak, who held a video conference with energy ministers from other Brics countries (Brazil, India and China), earlier this month.

In 2018, Russia exported 243 billion cubic meters of gas through pipelines to European countries along with 24 billion cubic meters of LNG. The UK is the biggest European importer of Russian gas, according to Gazprom — Russia's partially state-owned energy corporation.

LNG emits around half the amount of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide than coal, and as demand for coal falls sharply, Russia is betting on sustained demand for gas.

"I believe natural gas to be an eco-friendly energy source," Mr Novak told The Guardian.

"We believe that the share of natural gas in the global energy mix will only increase. We believe this to apply not only to Europe, but globally too."

But despite his confidence, the International Energy Agency has forecast a short lived increase in gas demand in Europe, and then a fall of up to 8 per cent from 2019 levels by the end of the decade.

Mr Novak also said Russia was aiming to become a major global producer of hydrogen — a clean-burning alternative to natural gas, which can be obtained through electrolysis of water, which splits the hydrogen atoms from the oxygen atom, and if powered by renewables, is considered clean energy. Hydrogen can also be obtained through pyrolysis, in which the hydrogen is obtained from hydrogen-containing compounds such as hydrocarbons.

With exactly a year until the UN's Cop26 climate summit in Glasgow, and five years since the Paris climate agreement came into existence, governments failing to rein in greenhouse gases are coming under increasing pressure to act.

Last week, Australian prime minister Scott Morrison refused to set out a net zero target and said he was not concerned about exports of coal and gas, despite the country's largest four trading partners adopting net zero emissions targets and the two fossil fuels accounting for a quarter of all Australian exports by value.

China, South Korea and Japan have all recently adopted net-zero targets for the middle of the century.

## UN Chief Calls for a Free Press



TEHRAN (UNIC) - United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his message on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, 2 November 2020, reiterated his call for a free press that can play its essential role in peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights.

### The full text of his message reads:

On this year's International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, the world, including the media, faces an entirely new challenge: COVID-19.

The pandemic has highlighted new perils for journalists and media workers, even as the number of attacks on their physical safety has grown. There were at least 21 attacks on journalists covering protests in the first half of 2020 — equal to the number of such attacks in the whole of 2017. There have also been additional constraints on the work of journalists, including threats of prosecution, arrest, imprisonment, denial of journalistic access and failures to investigate and prosecute crimes against them.

When journalists are targeted, societies as a whole pay a price. If we do not protect journalists, our ability to remain informed and make evidence-based decisions is severely hampered. When journalists cannot do their jobs in safety, we lose an important defense against the pandemic of misinformation and disinformation that has spread online.

Fact-based news and analysis depend on the protection and safety of journalists conducting independent reporting, rooted in the fundamental tenet: "journalism without fear or favor".

As the world fights the COVID-19 pandemic, I reiterate my call for a free press that can play its essential role in peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights.

## Baghdad, Cairo Sign Agreements to Strengthen Economy, Trade, Infrastructure

ERBIL (Dispatches) - Iraq signed 15 memorandums of understanding and agreements with Egypt in a bid to strengthen Iraq's healthcare, economic and infrastructure sectors, among others.

The two countries signed 15 agreements, memorandums of understanding and cooperation protocols in order to strengthen relations between Baghdad and Cairo in a Baghdad meeting attended by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi and Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly.

Iraq and Egypt will work closer together on a number of issues including the environment, trade and finance, healthcare and road and bridge development, according to Iraqi state media.



Kadhimi said that Baghdad is "committed" to the new agreements and is serious on boosting Egyptian business in Iraq, the PM's office tweeted on Saturday.

"The government is committed to developing the Iraqi-Egyptian partnership, and is serious about working to improve the investment environment in Iraq", his office said.

The PM also called on Egypt to help Egyptian businessmen to come to Iraq and establish business ties.

Kadhimi and Madbouly met in Amman in August to discuss strengthening bilateral relations.

Both countries agreed to strengthen ties in March 2019, when Iraq's former PM Adil Abdul-Mahdi met with the King of Jordan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo.



## Iran, Russia, India Hold Trilateral Meeting on Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of India held a trilateral meeting in Moscow to discuss the issue of Afghanistan.

During the meeting, which was co-chaired by the three countries' special envoys, the participants expressed concern over the growth of extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan.

They also voiced support for the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan, and the regional cooperation to strengthen peace in the country.



## India's October Factory Growth at Decade High

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's factory activity expanded at its fastest pace in over a decade in October as demand and output continued to recover strongly from coronavirus-related disruptions, but firms cut more jobs, a private survey showed.

Asia's third-largest economy is healing after shrinking a record 23.9% in the April-June quarter. The Indian government has removed most restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus, though infections continue to climb and now number over 8 million people.

The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index INPMI=ECL, compiled by IHS Markit, rose to 58.9 in October from September's 56.8. The reading was the highest since May 2010 and above the 50-level separating growth from contraction for the third straight month.

"Levels of new orders and output at Indian manufacturers continued to recover from the COVID-19 induced contractions seen earlier in the year," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit.

"Companies were convinced that the resurgence in sales will be sustained in coming months, as indicated by a strong upturn in input buying amid restocking efforts."

Both output and new orders, which tracks overall demand, grew at their sharpest rates in more than 12 years and foreign demand expanded at its quickest pace since December 2014.

But firms cut staff for the seventh month in a row, a streak not witnessed since the survey began in 2005, signaling a quick recovery in the consumer-driven economy may be a distant possibility.

Input and output prices increased at a faster pace last month, although most of the burden of rising price pressures was carried by firms.

That could lead overall retail inflation, which rose to an eight-month high of 7.34% in September, to remain above the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term



target of 2-6% in coming months, reducing the chances of further easing by the central bank. (Full Story)

However, business optimism about the coming 12 months increased to its highest level since August 2016.

"Confidence towards the year-ahead outlook for production improved as firms hoped that fewer COVID-19 cases and the reopening of other businesses could boost output growth," added De Lima.

## Russian Firm Seeks to Produce COVID-19 Drug Remdesivir Without Patent



MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian drugmaker Pharmasintez has asked the Kremlin to allow it to produce a generic version of U.S. COVID-19 drug remdesivir, used to treat U.S. President Donald Trump, despite lacking a patent to do so, the firm's director said on Monday.

Remdesivir is not available in Russia, Pharmasintez's director Vikram Punia said, but a generic version cannot be produced and distributed without the consent of the patent-holder, U.S. firm Gilead Sciences.

Pharmasintez wrote to the U.S. firm in July requesting its consent in the form of a voluntary licence, but did not hear back, Punia said.

The Siberian-based drugmaker is now asking the Kremlin to activate a compulsory licensing process on the basis of national security, granting it the right to produce the generic - labelled Remdeform - without Gilead's consent.

"Many people's lives could be saved using this drug. The longer this drug is inaccessible, the more people we will lose," Punia said.

The law has not been used on behalf of a pharmaceutical product in Russia before, Punia said after the Vedomosti newspaper reported on his company's letter to the Kremlin earlier on Monday.

Gilead could not immediately be reached for comment outside normal business hours on Monday. It has already granted voluntary licences to producers in 127 countries, predominantly low-income countries or those with other significant obstacles to healthcare access.

Russia registered a record high daily tally of 18,665 new coronavirus cases on Sunday, bringing the total number since the pandemic began to 1,655,038.

Remdesivir was granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in May after it was shown to shorten hospital stays for COVID-19 patients in a government-run clinical trial. It was one of the treatments given to Trump during his recent bout of the disease.

The FDA formally approved the drug this month, despite recent results from a World Health Organization-sponsored trial showing remdesivir did not improve patient outcomes.

Pharmasintez has completed a clinical trial of the generic drug on 300 COVID-19 patients across 23 Russian hospitals, according to a register entry.

Punia said the company could market its drug at a significantly lower cost of around \$540 for a 6-vial course. A five-day course of Gilead's remdesivir, marketed under the brand name Veklury, has been priced at \$3,120.

## U.S. Suffering Moral...

FROM PAGE 1

The Leader noted a lesson should be learned from this development.

"The French government links the event to human rights and freedom of expression. This is the same policy that is associated with the world's most violent terrorists, i.e., terrorists who [in the past] killed our president, judiciary chief, prime minister and a number of officials as well as 17 thousand people in our country," the Leader noted, referring to the MKO terrorist group.

He said France is one of the governments which helped Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein during the eight-year Iraqi-imposed war on Iran in the 1980s.

"They claim they favor freedom and human rights and the like," said the Leader.

"The Quran and the Prophet Muhammad have been insulted several times so far. They cannot besmirch the Prophet Muhammad's dignity and honor at all. Such move show the wicked nature of the West's civilization," he added.

Noting that presidential rivals are accusing each other of extensive fraud in the election, he said the U.S. political system is suffering a serious decline. He also said that Iran enjoys calculated policies that will not change with a change in U.S. Government. "No matter who wins the U.S. elections, it won't affect our policy toward the U.S. Some people talk about what will happen if this or that one is elected. Yes, certain events may happen but they don't concern us. Our policy is calculated and clear."

"The U.S. regime suffers from severe political, civil, and moral deviations. This is what their own analysts say. Such a regime won't last long. Of course, if certain people hold office, they speed up its destruction, while with others it may take a little longer."

Highlighting the need to focus on domestic capabilities to boost the country's economy, he noted that the economy should not be tied to the developments of another country and the solution to problems is not outside the country.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei called for an immediate end to the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. He noted that Azerbaijan is 'entitled' to liberate its occupied territories while highlighting that the security of Armenians living in the region should be ensured.

Terrorists should not be stationed near Iranian borders and that if Iran feels a threat, it will adopt a decisive response, he warned.

"The war between our neighbors, Azerbaijan and Armenia, is a bitter event and must end as soon as possible. Of course, Azerbaijani land seized by Armenia should be freed and the safety of its Armenian residents must be secured. If terrorists approach the Iranian border, they'll be dealt with severely."

The Leader who was delivering his speech on the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversaries of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the sixth Imam of Shias, Imam Jafar al- Sadiq (AS), stated: "The entire humanity has been addressed by the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). One can say that more than any other time in history, humanity is undergoing immense suffering. Inequalities, warmongering, extremist materialism are more prevalent in the world today. These days, they use science and technology in order to exercise these satanic powers."

He emphasized: "The U.S. is the very Pharaoh and the tyrant of our time."

## Zarif...

FROM PAGE 1

"The statements by the Biden camp have been more promising, but we will have to wait and see," he noted.

Zarif stressed, however, that it's not what the new U.S. administration says during the campaign that counts, but what it does in office.

"What is important for us is how the White House behaves after the election, not what promises are there, what slogans are made. The behavior of the U.S. is important. If the U.S. decides to stop its malign behavior against Iran, then it will be a different story no matter who sits in the White House," the top Iranian diplomat added.

"We can find a way to reengage, obviously. But reengagement does not mean renegotiation... It means the U.S. coming back to the negotiating table," he underlined.

Zarif also noted that the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign had failed.

"It has hurt Iran. But it hasn't brought the type of political change that the U.S. desired — be it regime change, which was the desire of a certain segment of the current U.S. administration, or what President Trump wanted, which was to bring Iran to its knees so that he could dictate his terms of negotiations," he noted.

"I know that Vice President Biden understands that that won't happen (renegotiate the terms of the nuclear deal), and may act differently," Zarif stated.

Zarif then categorically denied the allegations raised by US intelligence agencies that Iran obtained US voter registration information and used it to try to erode confidence in the American election process.

Rejecting any interference by Iran, Zarif called Trump "the single person who is making the most important and effective affront against the U.S. electoral system."

Anyone interested in undermining U.S. democracy "will just ask President Trump to continue talking about forgeries and inconsistencies in mail-in ballots and all sorts of other stuff," Zarif added.

## COVID-19...

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She pointed out that Provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardabil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamadan, Yazd, and Kordestan are regarded as red zones.

Hormozgan, Fars, Golestan, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces are also regarded as orange and yellow zones.

Meanwhile minister of health and medical education stated that there are still many ambiguities in the world to make the COVID-19 vaccine, one of which is the genetic mutation of the Coronavirus. Saeed Namaki announced that knowledge-based companies and vaccine manufacturing companies such as 'Razi' and 'Barakat' foundations have started a huge work to make vaccines. He continued: "We formed a national vaccine committee. Out of the 12 groups that worked on this issue, 3 groups had good success, and out of these 3 groups, 2 groups have completed the animal test phase and will enter the next stage of preparing the vaccine this week."

## November 3: Hatred?...

FROM PAGE 1

The U.S. was an introversionist country and was busy with its own domestic disputes but after the World War II and the Cold War ended in favor of the West, it coveted West Asia region (Middle East) and stepped in challenging with Russian and British interests.

The most important factor which dragged the U.S. into this region can be summarized in oil and what you understand is the very oil.

If I can dare to say how the U.S. was dragged into the oil and the region, I blame the then Iran Prime Minister Dr. Mosaddeq and his simplistic thinking about the world arrogance. When Mosaddeq was disappointed with the British and Freemasonry, he turned to the U.S., and the U.S. took advantage of the open gate and entered.

The U.S., after Mohammad Reza Pahlavi took power, adopted a special approach towards Iran. Before then, the British used to dominate all rulers and statesmen of Iran but according to the documents, with the beginning of the movement for nationalizing the oil industry, the U.S. tried its efforts to attain its oil interests in Iran. Americans with the intention to enjoy Iran's oil, which was used by the British, entered Iran and expanded their influence. After this, a serious competition between the U.S. and UK heated up for gaining more profits and interests from Iran's national resources, and after the August 18 coup, the key turned in favor of joint cooperation between these two states.

Here it is necessary to point to the appointment of Fazlollah Zahedi as Iran Prime Minister. According to the existing and revealed documents, at first the British opposed this appointment because they had imprisoned and exiled Zahedi because of being unreliable but Zahedi was a trusted person of Shah as the kingmaker and for the U.S. as a mercenary.

In 1948 and 1949, implementation of U.S. President Harry Truman's Point Four Program in Iran began, and political, cultural and economic advisors with American programs arrived in Iran. Hence, a joint commission between Iran and the U.S. was set up that Zahedi presided it for two to three years. Americans found Zahedi a loyal and trusted person and for this reason after the August 18 coup, they brought him to power. The catastrophe of Iranian people's innocence and converting the British-Russian colony into the American-British colony introduced Iran as the integrated colony state of the West while people kept this innocence inside themselves and considered this presence as a means for loot of their wealth, and in 1979 Iranians put an end to it. The irreplaceable role of the late Imam Khomeini (R) in directing the country towards putting an end to the U.S. presence in Iran cannot be ever forgotten.

## Majlis...

FROM PAGE 1

Within three months after the motion is made into law, the government will have to stop voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if Iran's banking relations with Europe and the volume of the Iranian oil purchased by the European countries do not return to normal and satisfactory conditions, it added.

Based on the motion, if the European parties to the JCPOA start observing their obligations within three months following approval of this law, the Iranian administration should submit a proposal to the parliament on Iran's reciprocal measures for restoring full implementation of its JCPOA obligations.

Trump, a stern critic of the JCPOA, unilaterally pulled Washington out of the historic deal in May 2018, and unleashed the "toughest ever" sanctions against the Islamic Republic in defiance of global criticism in an attempt to strangle the Iranian economy, particularly in the oil sector. Following its much-criticized exit, Washington has been attempting to prevent the remaining signatories from abiding by their commitments and thus kill the JCPOA, which is widely viewed as a fruit of international diplomacy.

In response to the U.S.' unilateral move, Tehran has so far rowed back on its nuclear commitments five times in compliance, but stressed that its retaliatory measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the mutual trade from the US sanctions.





## Bayern Defender Suele Tests Positive for COVID-19-Club

BERLIN (Reuters) - Bayern Munich defender Niklas Suele has tested positive for COVID-19 and gone into home isolation, the club said on the eve of their Champions League match at Salzburg. The 25-year-old Germany centre back is the second Bayern player to be pulled out of action after Serge Gnabry's false positive test in October. Gnabry has since returned. "I will think about the lineup for Salzburg after the final training this evening," coach Hansi Flick told a news conference. "Niklas will not be available. It is not nice and it is one option less for us."

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

### Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

### Public Relations Tel:

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Editorial Board: 44253449

### Public Relations Fax:

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Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234

### Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

### E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

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## Aguero Set to Make Manchester City Return

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero is set to return to action after this month's international break, manager Pep Guardiola has said. City's record goalscorer could even have a chance of facing champions Liverpool in the Premier League this weekend but, with Guardiola saying no risks will be taken, that seems unlikely. Aguero, who missed the start of the campaign after undergoing knee surgery in June, suffered a hamstring injury just three matches into his comeback against West Ham on October 24.

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SPORTS

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# Hamilton's Future Looks Less Clear Than His Seventh Title

LONDON (Reuters) - Lewis Hamilton stands on the brink of becoming the most successful Formula One driver of all time but a record-equalling seventh world title looks more certain than his racing future.

Speaking after he won the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at Imola on Sunday, the 93rd victory of his F1 career, and his Mercedes team took a record seventh successive constructors' championship, the Briton raised doubts.

"I would like to be here next year but there's no guarantee of that, for sure," Hamilton told reporters after going a mighty 85 points clear of team mate Valtteri Bottas with four races remaining. "There's a lot that excites me of the after (F1) life so time will tell."

His words could be seen as an early shot in negotiations with Mercedes over a new deal -- worth many tens of millions -- rather than a serious statement of intent, yet they still shook assumptions.

Hamilton is out of contract next month and, in this strangest of seasons, teams are having to contend with new financial realities and pressures amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I guess if Lewis were to decide to step out of Formula One, which I don't think will happen, we are going to have a frantic driver market out there," said team boss Toto Wolff, who did not sound too concerned. "But I think it's the moment and the emotions, we are all happy but very tired also. It's the same for me."

It would be a major shock if the Briton followed the example of former team mate Nico Rosberg, who retired immediately after winning the 2016 title.

Speaking to Sky Sports last month, Hamilton said a new deal was 'probably' a formality, that he had yet to hit his peak and planned to race on.



He has also spoken about using his platform to push for change in society, on questions of racial injustice and diversity.

Mercedes want him to stay but the question is how much they are prepared to pay and how long Hamilton wants to commit for, particularly with Wolff intending to stand back from the day-to-day running of the team. The Austrian, a shareholder in the team, has said he is working on the succession and a new, undefined executive role.

Hamilton described Wolff on Sunday as "the best boss you could have."

The Briton's future will become clearer once he wins the championship, with the stage set for title celebrations in Turkey in two weeks' time, but it is hard to see him not staying for a shot at an eighth title and 100 wins and poles.

The cars are staying the same next year and Hamilton has said he is keen to see how 2022 pans out with a major revamp of the regulations.

Hamilton, winner of nine races so far this year, will equal Ferrari great Michael Schumacher's record seven titles in Istanbul if Bottas fails to score seven points more than him.

Bottas, now Hamilton's sole rival, has managed that only twice this season.

## Eleven Ajax Players Test Positive for COVID-19

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Ajax Amsterdam could be without several key players after 11 squad members tested positive for COVID-19 ahead of Tuesday's Champions League clash at Midtjylland, broadcaster RTL reported.

Ajax travelled to Denmark on Monday with only 17 players, listed in the squad on their website. The club would not release the names of players with the virus due to privacy rules.

Skipper Dusan Tadic, goalkeeper Andre Onana and midfielders Davy Klaassen and Ryan Gravenberch were all expected to start the Group D match at Herning but were left out of the party.

Reserve goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg has also been omitted, leaving one keeper, Kjell Scherpen, for the trip.

Coach Erik ten Hag is due to hold a news conference later on Monday (1745GMT).

Dutch media said secondary tests were being conducted on Monday for those affected in the hope that the results might turn out negative and more players would be able to travel to Denmark but they would need permission from UEFA to do so.

Under the rules of Europe's soccer governing body, Ajax must play the game if 13 or more players on its A-list are available.

Ajax are third in Champions League Group D with one point from two matches, five points adrift of leaders Liverpool and three behind Atalanta. Midtjylland are bottom having lost their first two games. The top two qualify for the knockout stage.

## French Open Could Reschedule Again

PARIS (Reuters) - French Open officials would not hesitate to move the Grand Slam again next year if the health situation demands it, tournament director Guy Forget has said, although they would make more of an effort to consult with the other stakeholders this time.

The French Tennis Federation (FFT) drew heavy criticism in mid-March when it unilaterally moved the French Open to end September from its scheduled May start amid the COVID-19 crisis, placing it in the middle of the hardcourt season.



# Ancelotti Urges Everton's Players to Take Their Opportunity

LONDON (Dispatches) - Everton boss Carlo Ancelotti has called on his whole squad to pull together and help the club achieve their goals this season.

The Toffees travel to Newcastle on Sunday having been top of the Premier League table heading into the weekend.

Defeat at Southampton last time out ended a fine run of form for Ancelotti's men -- who will be without summer signing and talisman James Rodriguez for the trip to the north east.

The Colombia international will be rested, while fellow forward Richarlison is suspended -- as is full-back Lucas Digne following his dismissal in the loss at St Mary's.

With captain Seamus Coleman also absent due to a hamstring complaint, Ancelotti will have to shuffle his pack against Newcastle.

That could see the likes of 19-year-old Anthony Gordon come into the side and, when asked about the midfielder, Ancelotti insisted all of his players have to be ready to play their part -- no matter how small their role may be.

"The fact we have players out -- it is important to know the quality of the squad," said the Italian.

"There is an opportunity for other players to play and show their quality to help the team stay at the top."

"Anthony Gordon has the same possibility to play as the other players in the squad."

"I have to nominate the first XI and I say to the players all the time 'it is not important to be in the first XI. It is important to be involved, to play'. 'It doesn't matter if you play five minutes, you have to help the team in those five minutes. This is what really matters, not to be in the first XI."

"For sure, I am not going to finish with this first XI, it never happened that I started with XI and finished with XI -- I am used to using all three substitutions."

Ancelotti did confirm Rodriguez would return to face Manchester United next weekend, with Everton hoping to be at least six points clear of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side heading into the contest.

## Russia Battles Four-Year Doping Ban

LAUSANNE (AFP) - Russia's attempt to overturn its four-year ban from international sport got under way in Lausanne Monday, the latest chapter of a long-running and controversial saga over state-sanctioned doping.

Global anti-doping body WADA in December last year declared the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) to be non-compliant after being accused of manipulating testing data.

The ban meant the country would miss the re-arranged Tokyo Olympics next year as well as football's 2022 World Cup in Qatar and the 2022 Winter Olympics in China.

A hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), which opened Monday and is expected to last until Friday, has already caused division.

WADA had requested that the proceedings be held in public, but following disagreement between all parties, the three CAS judges eventually opened the first session behind closed doors via teleconference.

A decision will only be made public on an undisclosed date.

Russia considers its ban to be legally indefensible.

Former Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev described the suspension as "chronic anti-Russian hysteria".

The hearing is being billed as a landmark week for Russian sport and global anti-doping efforts.

WADA, formed in 1999, also has plenty on the line after the US threatened to pull its annual \$2.7 million financing.

U.S. lawmakers accused WADA of failing to implement governance reforms and have criticised the handling of the Russian scandal.



## Swiatek Settles Into Celebrity Status

WARSAW (Reuters) - Iga Swiatek went from being a largely unknown teenager to suddenly acquiring celebrity status after winning the French Open in October - and the Pole is now confident she can go on to win all the Grand Slam titles in her career.

Swiatek was ranked no. 54 in the world when she entered the rescheduled French Open in September, but went on to secure an upset by beating Sofia Kenin in the final to become the first Polish player to win a Grand Slam singles title.

Now, the 19-year-old has had to adapt quickly to her new-found fame with new sponsorship deals, training offers and a deluge of media requests.

However, she remains grounded - even if her dream of winning all four majors is now a real possibility.

"I now have faith that I could win all four Grand Slams in my career, it always seemed so far away before... I'm happy I achieved this but on the inside I still feel the same," she told Reuters in a phone interview on Saturday.

Although the focus has been quite intense since her triumph at Roland Garros, Swiatek said the COVID-19 restrictions in place in Poland have helped.

"My whole life has been turned upside down, so I needed some time to get used to it," she said.

"The pandemic helps a bit in this aspect because it happens that people on the street who want photos and autographs, they are now less pushy."

The teenager, whose father was an Olympic rower and mother a doctor, was the first Polish woman to reach the final at Roland Garros in 81 years and the first at any major since Agnieszka Radwanska at Wimbledon in 2012.

So far, she said she is handling the pressure well, getting by with a little help from her friends.

