

Mehdi Sanaei, Former Iran Ambassador to Moscow and Currently Top Advisor to Foreign Minister, Says Iran Has Not Placed An Order to Purchase S-400 Missile Systems From Russia

IRAN NEWS

Iraq Defense Minister Lt. General Juma Anad Saadoun Yesterday Arrived in Tehran and Met His Iranian Counterpart Brigadier General Amir Hatami and Discussed Bilateral Cooperation

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Tehran Rejects Report on Killing of Senior al-Qaeda Leader in Tehran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has categorically dismissed a US media report that one of the top leaders of the al-Qaeda terrorist group had been secretly killed by Washington-directed Israeli agents in the capital, Tehran.

Citing unnamed intelligence officials, The New York Times claimed on Friday that Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, the al-Qaeda's second-in-command who went by the nom de guerre Abu Muhammad al-Masri, had been gunned down by two armed assassins on a motorcycle in the streets of Tehran in August.

The paper said al-Masri, who was charged with helping to mastermind the 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Africa, had been killed in Iran by Israeli operatives acting at the behest of the United States.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday that the Times' report was based on "false information," vehemently rejecting the presence of any of the terrorist group's members in the country.

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COVID-19 Continues Killing More Iranians

TEHRAN (IFP) - Health Ministry spokeswoman says 552,747 COVID-19 patients have recovered from the disease or been discharged from the hospital so far.

In a press briefing on Saturday, Sima-Sadat Lari said the virus has killed 452 patients since Friday noon, increasing the overall death toll to 41,034.

She said 749,525 patients have contracted the novel coronavirus so far, including 11,203 new cases identified in the past 24 hours. Lari said 5,642 patients are also in critical conditions caused by more severe infection.

The spokeswoman noted that 5,464,191 COVID-19 tests have been taken across the country so far.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include Tehran, Qom, Mazandaran, East Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Yazd, Ardabil, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Hamadan, West Azarbaijan, Bushehr, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Alborz, Lorestan, Markazi, Ilam, South Khorasan, Kermanshah, North Khorasan, Semnan, Gilan, Zanjan, Qazvin, Kurdistan, and Kerman provinces.

The "orange" and "yellow" zones also include Golestan, Hormozgan, Fars, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces, she added.

Iran, EU Trade Surpasses \$8b



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The spokesman for Iran's Customs Administration said that Iran's foreign trade with Europe in the seven months of the current year (April to October) amounted to 15,910,816 tons worth \$8.8b.

Iran's export volume to Europe in the first seven months of this year amounted to 5,605,891 tons, the value of which is equal to \$2b, Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi said.

He added that the main export destinations are Turkey with \$1,48b followed by Russia, Germany, and Italy.

"The lowest exports were reportedly in Scotland with \$ 13,952" Latifi further explained.

The official clarified the situation of imports from Europe to Iran saying in this period, imports have been made from 44 European countries with a volume of 10, 304,925 tons of goods worth \$6.74b. The imports have been from countries like UK, France, Germany, Italy, Czech, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Croatia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, he added.

The spokesman for Iran's Customs Administration stated that most imports from Turkey \$2.2b, and Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom respectively.

The total value of the country's foreign trade in the first seven months of this year reached \$38.2b.

The total weight of traded goods during this period was 85 million tons, which shows a decrease of 17.5% compared to the same period last year.

According to the previous report released the Customs Administration, Iran's exports to 27 European Union member states increased by 39.11% to around €55.7 million in August 2020, with a leap in the Netherlands' imports from Iran.

European states collectively imported €495.56 million worth of goods from Iran during the first eight months of 2020 to register a 4.6% growth compared with last year's corresponding period.

Eurostat's latest figures show that the Netherlands imported a total of €95 million worth of goods from Iran during the eight-month period, posting a 714% increase compared with the same period of last year.

The country's imports from Iran increased by nearly 11-fold in August to stand at €15.4 million.

United States, by imposing sanctions against Iran which have been at the highest level since November 2018 according to the U.S. officials, has warned many world states against interaction with Iran.

Gov't to Further Tighten Coronavirus Restrictions

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani says stricter coronavirus restrictions will be imposed in the country starting November 21.

The announcement on November 14 comes amid a surge in coronavirus infections and fatalities in the Middle East country hardest hit by the virus.

The measures will be imposed in the capital, Tehran, and about 100 other towns and cities. "The people have to accept the bitter fact that this problem will remain with us for a long time and that we will have to live with this unwanted guest for the duration," Rouhani said.

Addressing a Saturday session of the National Coronavirus Headquarters, President Rouhani said the new restrictions for the battle with COVID-19 will come into force on November 21.

Details of the new scheme would be finalized this week and the restrictions will be in effect until the eradication of the pandemic, even in the next Iranian year, the president said, noting that the Health Ministry and the executive base of the National Coronavirus Headquarters have the main responsibility to carry out the plan.

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U.S. Maximum Pressure Will Further Isolate U.S.

NEW YORK (IRNA) - Spokesman for Iranian Mission to the United Nations Alireza Miryousefi said on Friday that the U.S. maximum pressure has failed and its continuation will further isolate the US itself.

"The policy of maximum pressure and sanctions against Iran has failed," Miryousefi was quoted by 'Associated Press' as saying.

"The U.S. effort to abuse this corrupt policy is futile and will only lead to further isolation of the U.S. on the international stage," he added.

The Trump administration's envoy for Iran Elliott Abrams had claimed that pressure on Iran will persist under Biden.

Earlier, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that it is now time for president-elect Joe Biden and senior officials in the United States to understand their nation's message well and fulfill national resolve to change their foreign policy vis-a-vis other countries and nations.

G77, China Call for Immediate Lifting of Sanctions Against Iran

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The Group of 77 (G77) and China has highlighted the negative effects of unilateral sanctions on the Iranian nation's prosperity, calling for the lifting of the inhumane measures as soon as possible.

In a declaration issued, the foreign ministers of the coalition of 134 developing countries plus China expressed their objection to the anti-Iran sanctions.

The statement followed the 44th annual meeting of the group, which was held via virtual platform.

"The Ministers reaffirmed their rejection of the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have a negative impact on the development and prosperity of the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in this regard called for an immediate lifting of those sanctions," the declaration read.

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

The U.S. unleashed the so-called maximum pressure campaign and targeted the Iranian nation with the "toughest ever" restrictive measures.

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Niger Reportedly Engaged in Secret Talks to Forge Ties With Israel

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Niger is reportedly in secret discussions with Israel about normalizing their relations, months after the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Sudan signed agreements to establish full diplomatic ties with the Tel Aviv regime.

According to a report published by the Israeli Hebrew-language Yedioth Ahronoth daily newspaper on Friday, speculations are rife in the Israeli ministry of foreign affairs that Niger - the largest Muslim country in West Africa - is likely the next Arab country to normalize ties with Israel.

The news comes in light of Israeli media reports in recent weeks that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is encouraging Niger's officials to take the measure.

The Yedioth Ahronoth noted that the Israeli ministry of intelligence believed there would be a breakthrough in secret communications to conclude the normalization agreement between Israel and Niger if former interior minister and president of the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS-Tarayya) Mohamed Bazoum won the December 27 presidential election.

The newspaper cited Israeli intelligence minister Eli Cohen as saying that the forthcoming election in Niger will be essential in terms of moving forward normalization between the Tel Aviv regime and Niamey. U.S. President Donald Trump announced on October 23 at the White House that Sudan and Israel had agreed to normalize relations.

Trump sealed the agreement in a phone call with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Sudanese counterpart Abdallah Hamdok and chairman of the Sovereignty Council Lieutenant-General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan, senior US officials said.

The UAE and Bahrain signed the controversial normalization agreements with Israel on September 15.

Sudan's acting Foreign Minister Omar Gamareldin, however, later said the accord would depend on approval from its yet-to-be formed legislative council. It is unclear when the assembly will be formed under a power-sharing deal between the country's military officers and civilians.

Earlier, Netanyahu signed U.S.-brokered normalization deals with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani during a September 15 ceremony at the White House.



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Head of Privatization Organization Resigns

TEHRAN – Head of Privatization Organization finally bowed to pressures and protests and resigned whose resignation was accepted by Finance Ministry.

According to reports, Alireza Saleh left his job as the head of Privatization Organization after his resignation was accepted by Finance Minister.

Finance Minister Mr. Farhad Dejjpasand named Hassan Alaei as the caretaker of the organization. Saleh was forced to resign after the protests flared up in some factories whose conditions deteriorated after privatization.

Karabakh Truce Deal Not to Change Iran-Armenia Transit Routes

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has rejected rumors about the consequences of the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic, saying no change will take place in the Iran's transit routes toward either of the two countries.

Seyed Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, says some forged maps are unfortunately going viral on the Internet.

"Unfortunately, wrong and misleading information coupled with fabricated maps are being spread in cyberspace. There have been claims such as the cutting off of Iran's border with Armenia, the creation of a corridor inside Armenia or even inside Iran, the change of the region's geopolitics, etc., which are not basically true and have been made with specific political and propaganda objectives," he said.

Araqchi then touched upon the main map of the agreement.

"As it can be seen in this map, the claim that a geographical strip is to be created next to Iran's border with Armenia is totally groundless," said Araqchi, the Iranian president's special envoy who presented Iran's Nagorno-Karabakh peace initiative.

"What is mentioned in the Karabakh ceasefire agreement is to create a road corridor, or let's say a transit route, inside the Armenian territory which would extend from



Nakhchivan toward the Azerbaijan Republic's mainland and whose security will be guaranteed by Russia, and whose exact course is not yet clear," he noted.

"This is not a new idea and was proposed long ago, and even if the plan is implemented, there will be so many ifs and buts. However, it will cause no change in Iran's transit routes toward Armenia or the Azerbaijan Republic," he said.

"Still, our consultations are going on with all sides. Just Wednesday afternoon, I had a lengthy discussion with the Russian ambassador to Tehran in this regard," he added.

Tehran, Madrid Willing to Develop Parliamentary Relations

MADRID (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to Madrid Hassan Qashqavi in a meeting with Spain's Speaker of Congress of Deputies Meritxell Batet underlined promoting parliamentary ties.

Qashqavi called for developing cooperation between two countries especially with regard to exchanging parliamentary delegations.

Ms. Batet said that Iran and Spain enjoy 400 years diplomatic relations and that exchange of parliamentary delegations is effective to develop cooperation, saying Iran's culture and civilization have significant status among the Spanish people.

She also called for enhanced cultural ties to introduce Iranian and Spanish historical civilizations to one another. Both sides also discussed the latest regional and international developments namely fighting COVID19, extremism and international campaign against terrorism.

Tehran in Contact with Cairo About Rescued Iranian Nationals in Mediterranean

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Tehran has been in contact with the Egyptian government to help Iranian nationals who have recently been rescued from a boat facing technical malfunction in the Mediterranean Sea.

Saeed Khatibzadeh said the Egyptian police and the Arab country's Foreign Ministry have called Iran's interests section in Cairo to inform the country that the Egyptian Navy forces have rescued Iranian nationals on board of a vessel in the Mediterranean Sea.

According to Egyptian authorities, the Iranian survivors are now in Marsa Matruh and were planned to

be transferred to Cairo, he added.

Unfortunately, none of the passengers had ID cards, but their identities were compatible with documents in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Khatibzadeh added.

The Iranian people were on board a vessel traveling from Turkey to Europe and have been rescued after their vessel encountered a technical failure, the Iranian spokesman noted.

They seem to be kept in quarantine in Marsa Matruh, northwest of Egypt, he added, saying Iran appreciates the humanitarian measure taken by Egypt that saved the lives of 57 passengers on board of the wrecked vessel, including 29 Iranians.

Role of U.S. in Region Diminishing

TEHRAN (MNA) – Expediency Council (EC) Secretary Mohsen Rezaei said that role of the United States is diminishing in the region.

Speaking in a local ceremony on Fri., he said, "Zionist regime knows that in future, after the weakening of the U.S. role in region, it will face a security vacuum and for this reason, it (Israel) seeks to establish relations with countries of the region."

Iran's economy and security strictly hinged on the security of the region, he said, adding, "If Iran fails to be present outside borders, it will face problems inside the country."

Secretary of Expediency Council once again pointed to the diminishing role of the U.S. in the region and added, "Zionist regime knows that it will face security gap after diminishing role of the United States in the region and for this purpose, it is seeking to mend its relations with regional countries."

Sponge Iron Production Tops 18.1m

TEHRAN (MNA) – Production volume of sponge iron in the country exceeded 18.1 million tons in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (from March 21 to Oct. 22).

Statistics showed at 18,120,190 tons of sponge iron was produced from March 21 to Oct. 22, 2020, showing a 10 percent growth as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Of total sponge iron produced in this period, Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company (EMSCO) accounted for

25.1 percent of this share.

Another statistic showed that iron ore conglomerate production volume hit 26,819,305 tons from March 21 to Oct. 22, showing a 10 percent growth as compared to the same period of last year.

Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) put the superficial consumption of sponge iron last year (ended March 20, 2020) at over 26,965,000 tons, showing a 97 percent hike as compared to a year earlier.

No Particular Tension Between Iran, Bulgaria

BELGRADE (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Bulgaria Mohammad Javad Rasouli said on Friday that bilateral relations between the two countries have always been friendly and respectful, and there has never been special tension between Tehran and Sofia.

Talking to Bulgarian National Radio on the occasion of 124th anniversary of the country's diplomatic relations between the two countries, he congratulated the two nations and government on the event, saying that relations between Iran and Bulgaria are historical and long-standing that even unofficial ties date back to centuries ago.

Iran was the first Asian country to recognize Bulgaria's independence, and Bulgaria was the first Eastern European country to officially recognize the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said.

Despite some ups and downs in relations, the two countries have always enjoyed friendly and respectful bilateral relations throughout this 124-year period, and there has never been any particular tension between them, he said, noting that at present, the relations between the two countries are being strengthened in all fields.

Asked in what areas Iran and Bulgaria could deepen their future cooperation, he said that despite the great potential for cooperation in the field of economy, trade and tourism, collaboration in these fields has not progressed to the extent it has in political and cultural relations. Despite the surge in trade between the two countries this year compared to last year, there is still a significant gap to reach the desired level of economic exchanges between the two countries, Rasouli said.

Security of Iranian Nation, Priority of Iran Armed Forces

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Deputy Commander of Iran Army Ground Force noted that maintaining the peace and security for Iranian people in border areas of the country is the red line and priority of Iran Armed Forces.

Speaking in a ceremony on Saturday, Brigadier General Nozar Nemati spoke about the latest developments in the borders of the country.

Hailing the efforts of the Armed Forces, especially the Army Ground Forces in terms of maintaining the security of all border areas of the country, he stressed that today, all Iranian borders enjoy the necessary security.

Referring to the increase of forces stationed in the northwestern borders of the country, Nemati said, "As maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of the country is the focus of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Certainly, when two neighboring countries engage in military conflict, we observe developments more sensitively."

Stating that the geopolitical situation of the region is such that the insecurity can spread to other areas, he said, "Therefore, since the security and tranquility of Iranian people in border cities are of great importance to us, we deployed forces in Northwest border areas to monitor all the exit and entry points of the country."

Last week, a peace agreement was signed between the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Three Border Guards Martyred In Clashes With Terrorists

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Three Iranian border guards have been martyred in a clash with "terrorists" in the northwest of the country after inflicting heavy casualties among them.

The incident, which also left two other guards injured, took place in the district of Targavar in West Azarbaijan Province on Friday, according to a report by the Iranian Law Enforcement Force. The clash caused major losses to the armed counter-revolutionary elements as a result of the large-scale exchange of fire.

"With the dispatch of backup forces to the area and the border guards' unparalleled resistance as well as their valor and self-sacrifice, the attack by terrorists was repelled and their penetration into the holy land of the Islamic Republic was prevented," the report said.

Given its borders with Iraq and Turkey, Iran's West Azarbaijan Province has been witnessing numerous clashes with elements of PJAK which is closely affiliated with the PKK terrorist group.

Forces of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) regularly engage in clashes with terrorists attempting to infiltrate the borders and carry out acts of sabotage across the country. The IRGC forces recently destroyed a team of terrorists in the vicinity of northwestern Iranian city of Maku in West Azarbaijan Province.

Back in May, the IRGC's Hamzeh Seyed al-Shohada Base said a number of terrorists had been killed as the IRGC forces carried out a security operation in the western province of Kordestan, which borders Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

5 Iranian COVID-19 Vaccines on WHO's List of Vaccine Candidates

TEHRAN (IFP) - Five Iranian-made COVID-19 vaccines have, so far, been put on the list of the vaccine candidates of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The news was announced in a tweet by Kianoush Jahapour, the spokesman for the Iranian Food and Drugs Organization.

Iranian researchers have been trying hard to develop a vaccine for the deadly virus since its outbreak.

They have made major breakthroughs in that regard and introduced several vaccines for coronavirus

The Islamic Republic is trying to develop its own vaccine as the US sanctions are expected to impede the country's purchase of the vaccine already developed by American and German companies, according to Health Ministry spokesman.

Fars Province Attracts \$466m Foreign Investment

SHIRAZ (IRNA) - Fars has attracted foreign investment worth over \$466m and is ranking first in Iran in this regard, the managing director of the foreign investment attraction office of the province said.

Haleh Fooladfar said the southern Iran province with \$466m, Khuzestan with \$365m and Yazd with \$346m foreign investment during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) are standing on the first to third places respectively.

She noted that 785 industrial plans worth 27,000 billion toman, providing jobs for 1,927 people, have been started in Fars.

She also referred to unprecedented and important plans like second phase of south aluminium plant (with capacity of 300,000 tons aluminium ingot per year), cement and Kaveh sodium carbonate plant and finalizing steel production circle which have been started by private sector investment or by attracting foreign investment.

She went on to say that many efforts have so far been made for attracting and encouraging foreign investment in the province.

Fooladfar reiterated that despite all limitations caused by international sanctions foreign investment has so far experienced positive growth.

Conservation Plan for 18 Wetlands Nationwide

TEHRAN (MNA) - A comprehensive management program is now being implemented for 18 wetlands of the country, Ali Arvahi, the director of the Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project, said on Saturday.

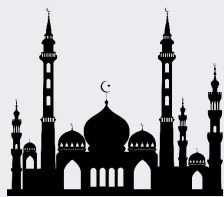
The comprehensive program for the protection of Parishan, Shadegan, Urmia, Qara Gheshlagh, Qourigol, Miqan, Choghakhor, Zarivar, Hamoon, Bakhtegan, Alagol, Gavkhoni, Noruzlu, Soldoz, Kani Barazan, Haray Minab, Ne'or and Gandoman wetlands has been approved and is being implemented, he added, IRNA reported.

Two wetlands of Goater and Hilleh are awaiting approval and a plan is being prepared for 12 others, he noted.

During the last few years, the importance of wetlands and their protection came into consideration, and over time, the law on protection, rehabilitation, and management of wetlands was approved in the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016).

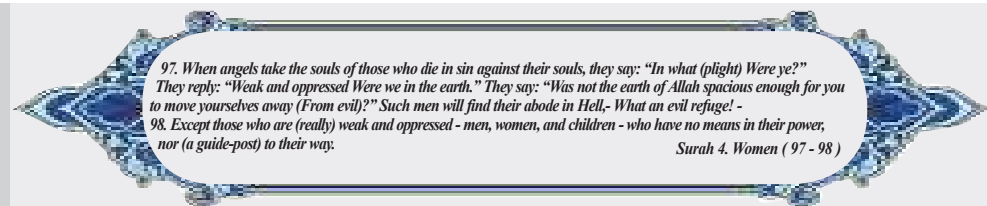
According to Article 5 of the law, the Department of Environment (DOE) is obliged to plan the ecosystem management of wetlands with the priority of critical and damaged ones with the participation of the ministries of energy, agriculture, and related bodies within two years, he explained.

In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified; of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:16
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:14
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:31



Chinese Eager To Involve in Iran Mining Sector

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Mines and Mineral Industries Commission of Iran Chamber of Commerce says Chinese are eager to invest in Iran's mining sector, adding arrival of foreign investment is a win-win interaction for the country.

Speaking to ILNA, Bahram Shakoori said that while the 25-year agreement between Iran and China is talked, Chinese are interested in investment in different sectors especially in Iran's mining and mineral industries and some lucrative projects for foreign investment in the mineral industries are to be presented to the Chinese investors.

On the probable effects of Joe Biden victory in the U.S. election and reduction of sanctions, he said it seems Democrats and Biden have promised to rejoin the JCPOA and likely with the U.S. return to the JCPOA and its commitments to the P5+1, sanctions would lessen, and ultimately foreign companies, which have experience of cooperation in Iran and left the country due to sanctions, may return to Iran market.

Shakoori added that if by Biden's presidency and his return to the JCPOA the ground is paved, some of European, Asian and other countries are keen to invest in



Iran's mining and mineral industries sector because this is an attractive sector for investors. He said the arrival of foreign investments into the country is helpful and it will definitely accelerate the country's development.

Shakoori added that it is natural that foreign investors are after their own profits but this can be a win-win interaction as our country is a developing country and it makes more profits for investors. He noted that country has many projects for investment but its resources are limited and this investment is not limited only to the financial one and the country needs import of technology which can be important for the country.

He went on to say that almost 50 percent of the mines in the country are close because of lack of sanctions and lack of machineries and equipment.

Shakoori said that almost 2.5 percent of the country is active in mining sector and it can increase to 100 percent and if it happens, the country will have no need to the oil revenues.

Over 387K Tons of Commodities Traded on IME Last Week

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Over 387,584 MT of commodities worth over \$136m were traded last week on the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

According to the report from IME International Affairs and PR, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 98,160 MT of various products worth close to \$41m were traded last week.

On this trading floor, 97,300 MT of steel, 80 MT of aluminum, 660 MT of copper, 120 MT of molybdenum concentrates as well as 16 kg of gold bar were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 288,776 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$96m were traded.

On this trading floor, 73,300 MT of VB feed stock, 73,594 MT of bitumen, 38,366 MT of polymer products, 31,249 MT of chemical products, 54,000 MT of lube cut oil, 1,665 MT of insulation, 966 MT of base oil, 150 MT of argon as well as 15,320 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 1,764 MT of commodities were traded on the side market of the IME.

MSC Wins Special Medal On Social Responsibility

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – The public relations of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) was awarded with medal for observing its social responsibility obligation in the 16th International Symposium on Public Relations which was held this year with the title of "Reviewing the Impact of Coronavirus on the Structure and Performance of public Relations."



After achieving such a success, the director of public relations of Mobarakeh Steel Company Mr. Iraj Torabi said that the management of Mobarakeh Steel Company believes commitment to the social responsibilities is one of the approaches and main tasks of the organization and this company has always put service without favor on its work agenda.

He said providing free oxygen for hospitals under cover of Isfahan Province Medical Sciences Universities and some other neighboring provinces as well as providing some part of needed equipment of universities which take care of coronavirus patients are of the main valuable actions of the company regarding its commitment to the social responsibilities.

He stipulated that the company without noticing how much it can make profit from the sales of oxygen financially decided to offer it to the dear compatriots till the end of the year and to cut the hands of middlemen and profiteers. He reiterated that the company has never left alone the officials in the province or in the country in the critical condition. Torabi said winning the special medal on social responsibilities is another golden leaf in the records of Mobarakeh Steel Company.

He then pointed to some other actions of the company regarding its social responsibility commitment.

Holding golriz (raising money) for helping the release of the needy inmates who had committed crimes without intent is of the other activities of the company regarding its social responsibility commitment, he added.

Providing some 220 shelters for permanent habitant of compatriot earthquake and flood-hit victims in recent years was of the other activities of the company, he noted.

Tehran, Rome After Formation of New Era in Cultural Relations



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Cultural Attaché of Italian Embassy in Tehran Yaroslava Romanova said on Saturday that her country tries to establish new era in cultural cooperation with Iran in post-pandemic period.

Romanova made the remarks at her visit to Niavaran Cultural Center where the 11th national biennial of contemporary Iranian ceramic art is underway in north Tehran.

During her visit, the Italian official appreciated precious art works presented in the biennial event and said she welcomes cooperation in holding art events in this cultural Iranian center.

Speaking about the history of cultural relations between Rome and Tehran, the official hoped new era of cultural cooperation to be formed between the two after the pandemic.

In a related development, advisor to Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Ebad Reza Eslami Koulaci, who hosted the Italian cultural attaché, said Tehran and Rome enjoy great capacities for cooperation.

Eslami Koulaci, also Director of Niavaran Cultural Center, stressed the need to develop cultural cooperation with Italy and other European countries as well.

He further said he is eager to sign agreement of cooperation with important cultural centers in Italy.

The 11th national biennial of contemporary Iranian ceramic art is open to public from 10:00 to 20:00 hours local time. Those who are interested in visiting the art works can do it observing Social Distancing and the health protocols.

Circumventing Sanctions for Imports of Cars

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iranian Automobile Importers Association believes the country can skirt the U.S. sanctions for imports of cars.

Speaking to ILNA, Mehdi Dadfar said Majlis lawmakers agree the idea imports of cars and they believe imports determine some part of car demands in the country and there is no need to Majlis decision on imports of cars because decision to ban the imports has been taken by the related ministry and it can be lifted by the ministry.

On the remarks about probable imports of cars, he said he hopes this would happen and it should happen but no talks have been held about the probable scenario but the association has offered its proposal.

He expressed hope that ban on imports of cars would be lifted soon, reiterating that importers do not need the forex offered by the domestic sources and the imports will be done through foreign capital. He noted that companies have announced that they do not need any forex from the Central Bank or NIMA system for imports and they can skirt the sanctions by the overseas assets.

Dadfar admitted that currently the price of foreign cars in the country is high but in case the ban is lifted, the prices will become balanced and may be halved.

He then pointed to the details of nine-paragraph proposal to the government, saying that the association is ready to import cars with the forex of Iranians abroad.

He reiterated that lifting the ban on car imports will be first to the benefit of the people and then to the companies involved in the imports, noting that some 15,000 people in 680 economic enterprises were busy in this job and now the number has dropped to 2,000 people and in case the car imports begin, 13,000 people who have lost their jobs will back to their jobs.

Petchem Industry Introduces 2 New Products

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran's Karoon Petrochemical Company (KPC) has unveiled two new products that are going to save the country \$27 million.

As reported, the production lines of two new grades of MTDI and KMT-10 were officially launched with the aim of meeting the needs of downstream sectors and completing the value chain of the country's petrochemical sector.

KMT-10 is produced by pre-polymerization of methyl phenyl isocyanate and by the formation of urethane groups. With the production of this new product, the petrochemical industry will practically eliminate the need to import similar grades which have been previously imported from China, Japan, South Korea, and Germany.

This strategic product has wide applications in the automotive, office, and home appliances industries.

Also, MTDI products include Aradur 830 CH, Aradur 850 CH, and Aradur 2963 CH. Karoon Petrochemical Company has introduced this product in order to meet the needs of downstream producers of paint, resin, and polyurethane and in order to complete

the value chain of petrochemical products.

The petrochemical industry is playing a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, so that based on official data petrochemical exports constitute the second-largest hard currency earner in Iran after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already make up nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi said the country's petrochemical products basket is going to be more diversified by the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025).

New Mask Producing Facility Opens

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has opened a mask producing facility with a capacity of turning out 500,000 three-layer face masks daily.

The production unit was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Alireza Razm-Hosseini during his trip to southern province of Hormozgan.

The facility has been constructed with a price tag of Rls. 58 billion, creating jobs for some 40 people.

The minister has travelled to Hormozgan to follow up on the clearance from customs of basic commodities and raw materials for sedimentary factories.

Iran Produces 13.9m Tons of Steel ingot in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) – Islamic Republic of Iran produced 13.9 million tons of steel ingot in the first six months of the current year (from March 21 to Sept. 22).

The preparatory statistics of steel ingot production (crude steel) in the first half of the current year showed a nine percent hike as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Some 13,929,009 tons of steel ingot was produced in the country in this period, registering a nine percent hike.

Statistical tables of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade indicate that 12,782,003 million tons of steel ingot was produced in the first half of the last year (from March 21 to Sept. 22, 2019).

Accordingly, 2,469,003 tons of steel ingot was produced in the Iranian month of Shahrivar in the current year (from August 21 to Sept. 22), showing a 11.7 percent hike as compared to a month earlier.

In this regard, 10,599,001 tons of steel ingot was produced in the first half of the last Iranian calendar year (from March 21 to Sept. 22, 2019).

Developing Economic Ties With Neighbors Key to Fight Sanctions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Chairman of Iran-Russia chamber of commerce said developing economic relations with neighbors is the best way to fight destructive effects of sanctions.

Hadi Tizhoosh Taban said border provinces have always had significant role with regard to exports.

Today, over 54 percent of Iran's non-oil exports have been made by businessmen at border areas.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Tizhoosh Taban called for developing non-oil exports to Russia to stabilize our position as its trade partner and to take advantage of preferential trade.

He noted that the only way for promoting trade with Russia or any other country would be to solve businessmen's fundamental problems.

Libyans to Hold National Elections in December 2021

TUNIS (AFP) - Libyans at UN-led talks agreed Friday to hold national elections in December next year, the United Nations said, raising hopes for an end to a brutal decade-old conflict.

Libya has been gripped by chaos and violence since the 2011 ouster and killing of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed popular uprising.

Rival administrations in the east and west, both backed by multiple armed groups and foreign powers, have since vied for control of the Mediterranean country.



UN, AU Recommend End of Darfur Peacekeeping Mission

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - African Union leaders and the UN recommended ending their joint peacekeeping mission in Darfur Friday, acknowledging the "positive impact" that the political transformation in Sudan had on the region.

In a joint report submitted to the UN Security Council, the two bodies recommended that the mission, known as UNAMID, cease as of December 31. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and AU chief Moussa Faki, who authored the report, estimated that a withdrawal of the mission from Darfur will take six months, a timeframe that will also depend on how Covid-19 and the region's rainy season play out.



Trump Supporters Head to the Streets



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump's supporters will take to the streets to back his unsubstantiated claims of election fraud as he pushes ahead with a flurry of longshot legal challenges to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

Trump has made little headway in the courts with his lawsuits and for the first time on Friday he began to sound doubtful about his prospects, telling reporters "time will tell" who occupies the White House from Jan. 20. There have been other pro-Trump protests around the country since Biden was projected the winner on Nov. 7, but they have been small and unfolded with few incidents.

The pro-Trump demonstrations in Washington and other cities are scheduled to feature a mix of the president's backers, far-right personalities and members of the Oath Keepers militia and Proud Boys in a public display of support for his effort to stay in power. Organizers have given the rallies various names, including the Million MAGA March, the March for Trump and Stop the Steal. MAGA is an acronym for the Trump campaign slogan "Make America Great Again." Trump has tweeted his support.

Some left-wing groups are planning counter-demonstrations in Washington and other cities. Biden further solidified his victory on Friday as results from Edison Research showed him winning Georgia, giving him a final tally of 306 Electoral College votes, far more than the 270 needed to be elected president and above Trump's 232.

The 306 votes was equal to what Trump won in his 2016 victory over Hillary Clinton, which he then called a "landslide." Trump briefly appeared close to acknowledging the likelihood he will be leaving the White House in January during remarks at a White House event.

"This administration will not be going to a lockdown. Hopefully the, uh, whatever happens in the future - who knows which administration it will be? I guess time will tell," Trump said in his first public remarks since Biden was projected as the election's winner a week ago.

With the election outcome becoming clearer, Trump has discussed with advisers possible media ventures and appearances that would keep him in the spotlight ahead of a possible 2024 White House bid, aides said.

He is considering starting a television channel or social media company to compete with those he felt betrayed him and stifled his ability to communicate directly with Americans, according to several advisers. In the near term, Trump is expected to campaign for Republican candidates in Georgia ahead of two Jan. 5 runoff elections that will determine which party controls the U.S. Senate.

Trump has refused to concede to Biden and claims without evidence that he was cheated by widespread election fraud. State election officials report no serious irregularities, and several of his legal challenges have failed in court.

A Michigan state court on Friday rejected a request by Trump's supporters to block the certification of votes in Detroit, which went heavily in favor of Biden. And lawyers for Trump's campaign dropped a lawsuit in Arizona after the final vote count there rendered it moot.

Indian and Pakistani Troops Exchange Fire, at Least 15 Dead

SRINAGAR (Reuters) - At least 10 civilians and five security personnel were killed in cross-border shelling between India and Pakistan on Friday, in one of this year's deadliest days along the heavily militarised frontier separating the nuclear-armed rivals, officials said.

Indian officials said the barrage of mortars and other weapons along several parts of the Line of Control - the de-facto border - began after Indian troops foiled an infiltration attempt from Pakistan in northern Kashmir.

Pakistan's military said in a statement it had responded to unprovoked and indiscriminate firing by the Indian army. Indian officials said six civilians, three soldiers and a border guard were killed on their side. The Pakistan military said four civilians and one soldier were killed on the Pakistani side.

Both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir in full. Each rules part of the region, with New Delhi long accusing its neighbour of fuelling an insurgency, which Pakistan denies.



Death of Belarus Protester Sparks Unrest

KYIV (Reuters) - Thousands of people took to the streets of Minsk and other Belarusian cities on Friday, after a 31-year-old anti-government protester died in hospital following what demonstrators said was a severe beating by security forces.

Witnesses said Roman Bondarenko was detained after scuffling with people in plain clothes who had come to a playground to remove red-and-white ribbons representing a months-long protest movement against President Alexander Lukashenko.

The interior ministry denied responsibility for Bondarenko's death, saying he had been killed in a scuffle with civilians.

The state Investigative Committee alleged Bondarenko had been drunk. Local media reports contradicted this, citing the official medical report into his death that they said showed he had no alcohol in his bloodstream.

The death on Thursday was the latest flashpoint in months of mass protests against Lukashenko following a disputed presidential election in August. The opposition says Lukashenko rigged the vote to secure a sixth successive term. Lukashenko denies electoral fraud and, buoyed by support from traditional ally Russia, has rejected opposition calls to resign or hold new elections.

However, having previously promised to stay the course for a full term, on Friday he said he would announce the terms and conditions for his resignation at a special assembly next year.

"I will just leave this post when I need to," he said in televised comments. "Under no circumstances will we go abandon people and leave. I'm not going to run anywhere."

He offered his condolences to Bondarenko's family.

"We need to investigate everything honestly and objectively," said Lukashenko, a 66-year-old former Soviet collective farm manager who came to power in 1994. A violent crackdown after the election prompted a new round of Western sanctions on Minsk.

Dozens Wounded in Peru as Protesters and Police Clash

LIMA (Reuters) - At least 27 people have been wounded in clashes between police and protestors as thousands of Peruvians took to the streets to demonstrate against the dismissal of President Martin Vizcarra, police and rights groups said on Friday.

The unrest over the last four nights, and other more peaceful protests in the capital Lima and other cities, are piling pressure on a fragmented Congress and the new government of President Manuel Merino.

On Thursday night, police used tear gas and rubber bullets against protesters, some of whom threw rocks at police and destroyed store windows and cash machines. The demonstrations were among the largest in two decades in Peru.

Vizcarra, a politically unaffiliated centrist who is popular with voters, was ousted on Monday in an impeachment trial over allegations he received bribes - accusations he denies.

Merino, a member of the center-right Popular Action party who had been the head of Congress, swore in his new cabinet on Thursday and called for calm. Peru's National Human Rights Coordinator said 11 people wounded on Thursday, including some journalists. A Lima hospital said

at least two people had been injured by rubber bullets. - Police put the number at 27, including injured officers.

"All of Peru is fired up, we're all very angry," said Jose Vega, a protester in Lima.

Some carried banners comparing Merino to the coronavirus pandemic and saying he did not represent them.

"They treat us poorly. We've only come to protest against injustice," Vega said. "We are all feeling pain. So, I'm saying to everyone let's not give up."

Interior Minister Gastón Rodríguez denied reports that the police had used lethal weapons and said that they had only fired tear gas and rubber bullets when a protest had got out of hand.

"The reaction of the police occurs when there is an attack on public property or when there is a direct attack as happened yesterday," he told reporters.

Police said the protest had left 16 civilians injured, mostly by rubber bullets, and 11 policemen were also injured.

Vizcarra oversaw an anti-graft campaign that led to frequent clashes with Congress in a country that has a history of political upheaval and corruption. A judge on Friday ordered Vizcarra not to leave Peru while prosecutors now investigate the allegations against him.



Trust in Vaccines Vital to Halting Pandemic

GENEVA (Dispatches) - As the world celebrates advances in vaccines against the novel coronavirus, a top WHO expert warned in an interview with AFP that public distrust risked rendering even the most effective treatments useless against the pandemic.

"A vaccine that sits in a freezer or in a refrigerator or on a shelf and doesn't get used is doing nothing to help shorten this pandemic," said Kate O'Brien, director of the World Health Organization's immunization department.

U.S. pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech announced Monday that their prospective vaccine had proven 90 percent effective in preventing Covid-19 infections in ongoing final phase trials involving more than 40,000 people. O'Brien hailed the interim results as "extremely important", and voiced hope that preliminary data from a handful of other candidate vaccines in similarly advanced trials would come through soon.

If the complete data show that "one or more of these vaccines has very, very substantial efficacy, that is really good news for putting another tool in the toolbox" for fighting the pandemic, she said.

But with the pandemic continuing to surge after already claiming some 1.3 million lives, she voiced deep concern at growing signs of vaccine hesitancy, with misinformation and mistrust coloring people's acceptance of scientific advances. "We are not going to be successful as a world in controlling the pandemic with the use of vaccines as one of the tools unless people are willing to get vaccinated," O'Brien said.

More needed to be done to boost public "confidence in the fact that the vaccines that WHO is involved in evaluating, we will not be compromising on safety or efficacy," she said.

O'Brien acknowledged that there were a number of outstanding questions about the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine candidate and its peers, including how long protection against the virus would last.

And while the vaccine candidates are being tested for how effectively and safely they protect people from developing the disease, it remains unclear whether they actually avert asymptomatic infection and transmission of the virus.



Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Fereshteh Apt (\$2300)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, S, J
L.balcony
marble fl
Fuly Furn

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

Jordan Apt (\$2000)
400sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p

Nice view Niavaran Apt
240sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
(\$3000) F.F

Darrous bldg (\$6000)
5storey, 12bdrs, S/p
yard, balcony, & pkgs

Sa'adat abad (\$1300)
160sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p

Elahieh bldg (\$4000)
3storey, 10bdrs, pkgs

Zaferanieh Apt (\$4000)
400sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J
roof garden, yard, & F.F

Elahieh Villa (\$5000)
1200sq.m, 5bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg
green yard, fireplace, & F.F

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Fax : 88506474

میدان تجریش

۶۵ متر یک خوابه نیمه فرنیس با دودرب ورودی فقط ۳۰۰ میلیون
رهن قابل تبدیل
۱۳۰ متر دو خوابه با ۱۰۰ متر روف گاردن اختصاصی ۸۵۰ میلیون رهن
قابل تبدیل

ارسال عکس های آپارتمانها در واتساپ (پرداخت کمیسیون به آژانس مسکن)

مالک: ۰۶۹۰۶۹۰۷۶۹-۰۹۱۹-۰۲۱-۲۲۷۲۴۳۱۵



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Rosneft Swings to Net Loss

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Fallout from the pandemic and a weaker rouble sent Russian energy giant Rosneft to a third-quarter net loss of 64 billion roubles (\$827 million) from net income of 43 billion roubles in the previous quarter, the company said on Friday.

Rosneft, the world's second-largest oil producer by output behind Saudi Aramco, was forced to reduce oil production in line with the OPEC+ supply pact aimed at stabilising global markets.

The company's oil and gas condensate output for the July to September period was down 3.2% from the previous quarter at 3.91 million barrels per day.

It also had to contend with the coronavirus crisis. Its headquarters was placed on a 30-hour working week and pandemic-related costs for the first nine months of the year amounted to 5 billion roubles (\$65 million).



G20 Strikes Historic Debt Pact to Help Poorer States Hit by COVID

PARIS (Reuters) - G20 countries have agreed for the first time on a common framework for restructuring government debt, in anticipation of the coronavirus crisis leaving some poorer nations struggling to pay and in need of relief.

With the COVID-19 pandemic straining the finances of some developing countries, G20 finance ministers said on Friday that more help was needed than a current temporary debt freeze, which will be extended until June 30, 2021.

Major creditors, including China, will be expected to follow the joint guidelines agreed by the G20, which lays out how debt deemed to be unsustainable can be reduced or rescheduled.

Non-governmental groups said the accord should have gone further by including middle-income countries and forcing private investors to accept cancellations.

The coronavirus crisis has exacerbated problems for the poorest countries, 50% of which are now in or at risk of debt distress and in an early sign of its impact, Zambia is on the brink of becoming Africa's first COVID-era sovereign default.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva last week said African states alone faced a financing gap of \$345 billion through 2023 to deal with the pandemic and its economic impact.

"I count on everyone's constructive spirit to ensure swift and cooperative implementation of the common framework, with several countries already asking for debt treatments, in particular in Africa," French Finance Bruno Le Maire told his G20 counterparts during an online meeting. China, which accounted for 63% of overall debt owed to G20 countries in 2019, has been reluctant to acknowledge the need for outright cancellation or reduction of debts.

Under the new framework, creditor countries will negotiate together with a debtor country, which will be expected to seek the same treatment terms from private sector creditors.

The scheme borrows heavily from the rules established by Paris Club, an informal grouping of mostly rich country governments established in 1956, that until now was the only joint forum for negotiating debt restructurings.

The G20 finance ministers said in a joint statement that the new framework aims "to facilitate timely and orderly debt treatment" for countries eligible for the debt payment freeze put in place in April, but which only included private sector creditors on a voluntary basis.

"From now on all interested parties must ensure to implement the common framework. Debt transparency is extremely important," Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso told reporters after a G20 conference call, describing the agreement as "historical". The new framework also goes further by requiring all public creditors to participate, after China was criticised by G20 partners for not including debt owed to its state-owned banks.

Wary about debt write-offs, Beijing has defined the state-owned China Development Bank as a private institution, resisting calls for full participation in debt relief.

While China signed on to the framework, it remained unclear how it would implement the measures, one source familiar with the negotiations told Reuters.

Tim Jones, head of Policy at Jubilee Debt Campaign, said in a statement that the G20 announcement allowed for, but discouraged outright debt cancellation, and did not create a mechanism to compel private sector participation.

IMF More Upbeat on Spain's 2020 Economic Slump, Wary on 2021 Rebound

MADRID (Reuters) - The International Monetary Fund said on Friday that Spain's economic contraction may be less severe in 2020 than the 12.8% it predicted earlier this year thanks to a strong rebound in the third quarter after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fourth quarter could, however, still undermine growth projections for 2021, the IMF said in a report, adding that the outlook was "highly uncertain". It said available data pointed to a slowdown or even a reversal of growth in October-December from the third quarter.

While gross domestic product expanded 16.7% in the third quarter from the second, the economy is still 8.7% smaller than a year ago. With more than 1.4 million infections and a tourism-dependent economy, Spain has been one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe by the pandemic.

The IMF also said that banks' profitability and lending capacity could deteriorate as bad loans would likely rise "disproportionately" in Spain's non-financial corporate sector upon the expiration of some borrower support measures.

It recommended that the government prioritise targeted equity support to viable firms, underscoring that without these and other measures, "social losses" stemming from the collapse of companies may prove too costly.

The Spanish government expects a record 11.2% economic contraction this year and a rebound of at least 7.2% next year. IMF Mission Chief for Spain, Andrea Schaechter, said the 2020 drop should now be closer to the government's forecast.

But the IMF said that the government's macroeconomic outlook in the draft 2021 budget, which projects growth of up to 9.8% next year with the use of EU recovery funds, was "optimistic", mainly because the IMF expects a somewhat slower absorption of the funds than the government does.

Instead, the IMF expects 7.2% growth for 2021.

"In addition to the EU funds impact, the evolution of the pandemic will shape the recovery. A weaker-than-projected fourth quarter GDP outturn would make the projected 2021 real GDP growth difficult to achieve," the IMF said, citing possible further tightening of pandemic containment measures as a risk.

"Policies need to continue to mitigate the risk of the recession morphing into financial sector stress with even higher real and social costs," it added, adding that Spanish banks could suffer more than some others in Europe due to a higher exposure to the hard-hit hospitality sector.



ECB Policymakers Cautious Despite Vaccine Progress

MADRID (Reuters) - The prospect of an effective vaccine against COVID-19 is a source of relief but the euro zone is still set to suffer from new curbs on economic activity to combat a rise in infections, two European Central Bank policymakers said on Friday.

Spanish central bank governor Pablo Hernandez de Cos and ECB board member Isabel Schnabel were echoing a cautious tone from President Christine Lagarde a day earlier, cementing expectations for fresh stimulus in December.

"The vaccine is very positive news, regarding investor confidence, consumers confidence and economic activity. But I would like to be cautious. In the short term, restrictions will continue across Europe," de Cos said.

Pfizer said on Monday its experimental COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90% effective based on initial trial results, sending its shares higher along with the broader markets.

In a TV interview with CNBC, Schnabel also said the vaccine was "excellent news" but noted new restrictions "dampened substantially, the outlook for the fourth quarter, and then also for the first quarter of next year."

Schnabel said the vaccine "puts us back in our baseline scenario", which sees the economy fall by 8.0% in 2020 and to rebound by 5.0% in 2021 and by 3.2% in 2022, while de Cos said the second wave had effects that "were not factored" into those forecasts.

The ECB said last month it would announce a new stimulus package in December and Lagarde added earlier this week this would mainly be based on fresh emergency bond purchases and subsidies to banks via loans at negative interest rates.

High Food Prices Hurting India's Poor, Pain to Persist

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India's retail inflation may stay elevated for at least three more months after hitting a six-year high in October, as excess rain has damaged standing crops and seedlings, while edible oils that the country imports have become expensive.

The high prices are a particular cause of concern for India's hundreds of millions of poor people, who have already been squeezed by the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on an economy that contracted a record 23.9% in April-June.

Food items such as onions, potatoes, eggs, meat and tomatoes have a nearly 46% weight in India's retail inflation basket. Food inflation shot

up to 11.07% in October, the highest in nine months according to data released on Thursday, sending overall retail inflation surging to 7.61%.

"We were expecting a hefty correction in vegetable prices but just before harvesting, excessive rainfall damaged crops," said Amol Ghule, a vegetable trader based in the western state of Maharashtra that dominates India's onion and oilseeds production. Parts of India's richest state was battered by untimely rain last month.

"Many farmers are having to prepare seedlings again for planting and this will delay supplies from the new season crop," Ghule said.

In the past three months, onion prices have more than quadrupled in India, while soyoil prices <NSOc1> have rallied 23%.

International prices of edible oils, meanwhile, have hit record highs due to falling stocks. India imports 70% of its edible oil from countries such as Malaysia, Argentina, Indonesia and Ukraine.

"Palm oil prices have jumped in Indonesia and Malaysia, soyoil in Argentina and sunflower oil in Ukraine," said B.V. Mehta, executive director of industry body the Solvent Extractors' Association. Poultry prices are rising as Indians flock to chicken shops for some extra protein during the pandemic, while production is low because many chicken farms were closed due to India's virus lockdown.

Also, high vegetable prices have made eggs more affordable for many poorer people, said Uddhav Ahire, chairman of poultry supplier Anand Agro Group.

Economists say the government's extra spending to revitalise the economy could also keep inflation high. This fiscal year ending March 31, the government is likely to overshoot its budgeted spending of \$407.80 billion by more than \$60 billion.

Worried about stoking inflation further, the Reserve Bank of India has paused its monetary easing since August, after cutting rates by 115 basis points since March.

For 29-year-old Karan Solanki, now the sole earner in his family after his mother lost her job during the pandemic, higher food prices mean watchful purchases of even the most basic items.

Trump Bans U.S. Investments in Companies Linked To Chinese Military

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration on Thursday unveiled an executive order prohibiting U.S. investments in Chinese companies that Washington says are owned or controlled by the Chinese military, ramping up pressure on Beijing after the U.S. election.

The order, which was first reported by Reuters, could impact some of China's biggest companies, including China Telecom Corp Ltd, China Mobile Ltd and surveillance equipment maker Hikvision. The move is designed to deter U.S. investment firms, pension funds and others from buying shares of 31 Chinese companies that were designated by the Defense Department as backed by the Chinese military earlier this year.

Starting Jan. 11, the order will prohibit purchases by U.S. investors of the securities of those companies. Transactions made to divest ownership in the companies will be permitted until Nov. 11, 2021.

"China is increasingly exploiting United States capital to resource and to enable the development and modernization of its military, intelligence, and other security apparatuses," said the order released by the White House.

The Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In a stock exchange filing, China Telecom said it estimated the executive order might impact the price of its shares, which closed down 7.8% in Hong Kong on Friday, and American depository shares, adding that it would "closely monitor" developments.

Another telecom operator, China Unicom Hong Kong Ltd, said companies affected by the order would include its parent, China United Network Communications Group Co Ltd.

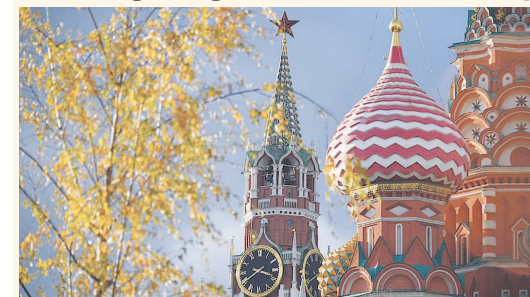
China Unicom also said in its filing, it expected an impact on its shares, which fell 6.7% on Friday, and American depository shares, adding it was "considering appropriate steps to protect its and its investors' lawful rights".

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro estimated that at least half a trillion dollars in market capitalization was represented by the Chinese companies and their subsidiaries.

"This is a sweeping order designed to choke off American capital to China's militarization," he told reporters on a call.

The move is the first major policy initiative by President Donald Trump since losing the Nov. 3 election to Democratic rival Joe Biden and indicates that he is seeking to take advantage of the waning months of his administration to crack down on China, even as he has appeared laser-focused on challenging the election result. Biden has won enough battleground states to surpass the 270 electoral votes needed in the state-by-state Electoral College that determines the next president, but Republican Trump has so far refused to concede, citing unsubstantiated claims of voting fraud.

Russian Economy Shows Strong Signs of Recovery



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Russian economy shrank 3.6 percent in the third quarter, improving by more than half from the eight-percent drop during the previous quarter, when the government shut down the economy to try to contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

The preliminary results of the July-September quarter, presented by Russian state statistics agency Rosstat, were slightly better than some of the previous government estimates. According to the Ministry of Economic Development, Russia's GDP dropped 3.8 percent over the same period.

The last quarter shows that the Russian economy has gained momentum since the second quarter, when GDP fell by eight percent year-on-year due to strict countrywide restrictions triggered by the coronavirus outbreak.

The positive trend was driven by the reopening of the economy, which allowed some of the virus-hit sectors to start recovering. According to the statistics, agriculture grew by 2.7 percent. Analysts noted that the improvements were also supported by deferred demand, as people started buying items like cars and household appliances.

Some sectors are still under severe pressure. Production decreased by five percent, while extraction of mineral resources dropped by 11.5 percent due to Russia's obligations under a deal with leading oil exporters known as OPEC+.

According to Rosstat data, retail turnover was down by 2.5 percent in the third quarter compared to the same period last year, while passenger traffic was almost cut in half.

Economists warn that the positive trend may not last and we may see a deeper slump in the last three months of the year. They say the sectors that have seen a recovery already hit a plateau, while consumer demand is still below pre-crisis levels, creating conditions for negative dynamics.

Iranian “The Hunter” To vie at Canadian HECFF

TEHRAN (MNA) – The documentary film “The Hunter” directed by an Iranian filmmaker will be taking part in Human-Environment Care Film Festival in Canada.

Directed and produced by the Iranian filmmaker Delavar Doostanian, the documentary film “The Hunter” has managed to take part in the main section of the Human-Environment Care Film Festival in Canada.

Being recorded in a plain in the Ilam Province of Iran, the documentary is a love story about the life of two lizards, that their lives are disrupted with the arrival of a hunter in their territory.

The short film, which has previously participated in international festivals in Italy, Hungary, and Russia, will be screened in the main section of the Canadian Hecare Festival.



Poorer Nations Face Vaccine Wait

PARIS (Dispatches) - Hailed this week as a pandemic game-changer, the new Covid-19 vaccine offered countries that had pre-ordered doses a potential escape from a cycle of lockdowns and new waves of sickness and death.

But while richer nations plan their vaccination programmes through the end of 2021, experts warn that poorer and developing countries face hurdles that could deny billions the first proven protection against the coronavirus.

Vaccine developers Pfizer and BioNTech plan to roll out the first doses within weeks, once they receive emergency use permissions from drug agencies. They expect to have 1.3 billion doses ready next year.

The results of phase 3 clinical trials showed their mRNA vaccine was 90 percent effective in preventing Covid-19 symptoms and did not produce adverse side effects among thousands of volunteers. At the cost of \$40 per treatment, which consists of two separate shots, richer nations have rushed to order tens of millions of doses. But it is less clear what poorer nations can expect.

“If we only have the Pfizer vaccine and everyone needs two doses, clearly that’s a difficult ethical dilemma,” Trudie Lang, director of The Global Health Network at the University of Oxford’s Nuffield Department of Medicine, told AFP.

Anticipating the outsize demand for any approved vaccine, the World Health Organization formed the COVAX facility in April to ensure equitable distribution.

COVAX brought together governments, scientists, civil society and the private sector -- though Pfizer is not currently part of the facility. A company spokesperson told AFP it had “provided an expression of interest for possible supply” to COVAX.

Rachel Silverman, a policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, said it was unlikely that much of the first vaccine batch would end up in poorer nations.

Based on advance purchase agreements signed with Pfizer, she calculated that 1.1 billion doses had been snapped up entirely by wealthy nations.

“There’s not much left for everyone else,” she told AFP.

Some countries that pre-ordered, such as Japan and Britain, are part of COVAX, so some doses are likely to reach less developed nations through their purchase agreements.

Conversely, the United States, which has 600 million doses on order, is not a COVAX member, though this may change under a Joe Biden administration.

Benjamin Schreiber, Covid-19 vaccine coordinator at the UN’s children’s fund UNICEF, said it was vital that all nations had fair access to the new vaccine.

“We really need to avoid a situation of rich nations gobbling up all the vaccines and

then there’s not enough doses for the poorest nations,” he said. Ethics aside, epidemiological data underscores the need for equitable vaccine distribution.

This month researchers at America’s Northeastern University published research examining the link between vaccine reach and Covid-19 mortality.

They modelled two scenarios. The first, the “uncooperative allocation” scenario, hypothesised what would happen if 50 rich nations monopolised the first 2 billion doses of a vaccine.

The second saw the vaccine distributed based on a country’s population rather than its ability to pay for it.

The researchers found that the rich nation stockpiling scenario reduced Covid-19 deaths by 33 percent globally. The fair-share approach prevented 61 percent.

Commenting on the study, the Gavi vaccine alliance, which co-leads COVAX, said “the modest gain for high-income countries in monopolising vaccines was far less than the devastating losses for low-income countries if countries don’t cooperate”.

Even if finance for poorer nations materialises, the logistics of getting the new vaccine to everyone remains dizzying.

Pfizer’s vaccine is based on mRNA, which tricks the immune system to produce viral proteins itself that are then neutralised. It appears to be effective at bestowing protection against Covid-19, yet is extremely fragile: it must be stored at -80 degrees Celsius (-112 degrees Fahrenheit) or else it falls apart.

“Most freezers in most hospitals anywhere in the world are -20C,” said Lang. “This is four times colder.”

Silverman said maintaining the vaccine’s “ultra-cold chain” from factory to patients’ arms constituted “an enormous logistical challenge even in the West”.

Although Pfizer and some governments have been preparing delivery protocols for months in anticipation of trial results, “none of that has taken place in low- and middle-income countries”, she said.

Pfizer has designed its own “thermal shipper”, a briefcase-sized container that can keep the vaccine supercool for up to 10 days.

For others, there may be ways around the problem. Food storage containers, for example, are regularly cooled to close to the temperature required by the vaccine before being shipped long distances.

And the Ebola vaccine, which like those in trial for Covid-19 was developed and delivered at warp speed following a string of deadly outbreaks, has a similar temperature profile to Pfizer’s.

Tehran Rejects Report on...

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Underlining that the al-Qaeda has been the brainchild of the United States and its allies’ wrong policies, Khatibzadeh said, “From time to time, Iran’s foes — the United States and Israel — try to shirk responsibility for the criminal acts of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups in the region and link Iran to such outfits by lying and leaking false information to the media.”

Advising the American media not to fall into the trap of what he referred to as Hollywood scenarios of American and the Zionist regime’s officials, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said such accusations are undoubtedly made in the context of an all-out economic, intelligence and psychological warfare against the Iranian people, and that the media should not be a platform for spreading agenda-driven White House lies against Tehran.

“Although the United States has in the past spared no effort to level false accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, this approach has become a routine in the current US administration and the White House has tried to take further steps to implement its scare-mongering tactic against Iran by repeating such accusations,” Khatibzadeh noted.

A political expert says despite frequent claims by US about covert ties between Iran and al-Qaeda, documents obtained during the raid on Bin Laden’s residence in Pakistan prove otherwise.

According to the Times, al-Masri, who was on the FBI’s list of most wanted terrorists, was killed on August 7 along with his daughter, Miriam, the widow of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden’s son Hamza bin Laden.

A highly classified document provided by the US National Counterterrorism Center in 2008 described 58-year-old al-Masri as the “most experienced and capable operational planner.”

Gov’t to Further...

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President Rouhani reiterated that the only option for people is to take care of themselves, their families and friends.

Although the restrictions entail closure of certain businesses and punishments, this is indeed a warning to people that the circumstances are delicate, he said.

In separate comments, the spokesperson for the National Coronavirus Headquarters said more than 100 cities will be categorized as high-risk red zones under the new program, meaning restrictions on the businesses and activities of the occupation categories 2, 3, and 4.

The limitations enforced in the orange zones would apply to 150 cities, while at least 155 other towns will come into the category of yellow zones with low risk of coronavirus, the spokesperson added.

According to the new restrictions in the areas categorized as red zone, only a third of the employees will be allowed to leave home for work purposes, and road travels (entering and leaving the zone) would be also limited.

Nonessential businesses and services will be shut and cars will not be allowed to leave or enter cities in a bid to restrict travel, Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi said in a media briefing.

“The goal is not to shut down people’s businesses, but we have to set limits,” Raisi said.

Iran’s official death toll from the pandemic currently stands at more than 41,000, while the number of coronavirus cases confirmed to date is nearing 750,000.

The government on November 10 imposed restrictions for one month in major cities, requiring all nonessential businesses to close at 6 p.m.

Malaysia Calls on ASEAN and South Korea to Strengthen Cooperation to Propagate digital Economy

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia has called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to continue to enhance cooperation in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector with South Korea to further accelerate digital economy in the region.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said cooperation between South Korea and ASEAN in the propagation of digital economy would provide the technology-savvy masses with the means to engage in digital economy and ultimately enhance the productivity and economic output of ASEAN Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), despite the current economic slowdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

“As South Korea is highly regarded as a world-leader in the provision of ICT goods and is making use of the digital economy to further drive productivity, ASEAN is very keen to adopt some of South Korea’s best practices,” he said in his intervention during the 21st ASEAN-South Korea Summit, held on Thursday.

The summit, which was held as part of the 37th ASEAN Summit, was hosted by Vietnam via video conference due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

It was also attended by South Korea’s President Moon Jae-in and Country Coordinator of ASEAN-South Korea Dialogue Relations, Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

Muhyiddin said with a population of more than 650 million people and a combined gross domestic product of more than US\$2.6 trillion while the MSME accounts for more than 60 per cent of employment in the region, Malaysia believed that ASEAN is becoming a magnet for expanding businesses and startups looking to test their novel innovations, particularly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. “The region has long been an area of interest for traditional businesses due to its strategic trade routes and general proximity to the world’s two largest markets, China and India, and is really progressing in this digital era with its fast-growing, mobile-first, rapidly expanding tech-savvy middle class,” Muhyiddin added.

He also hoped that the signing and implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) would send a strong message on the importance of strengthening regional economic integration and further spur economic growth between ASEAN and South Korea.

RCEP, which is scheduled to be signed on the last day of the 37th ASEAN Summit and related meetings this Sunday, consists of 10 Member States of ASEAN as well as Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand.

He said the establishment of the South Korea-Maritime Southeast Asia Cooperation Fund with an initial contribution from South Korea of US\$1 million underpin efforts in enhancing ASEAN Connectivity and further accelerate economic growth in the BIMP-EAGA (Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area) area.

Mustafa (PBUH) Prize Laureate: Hero of COVID-19 Vaccine Development

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - On Monday it was announced that the COVID-19 vaccine developed by the 2019 Mustafa (PBUH) Prize laureate has shown more than 90% efficacy.

The COVID-19 vaccine developed by BioNTech, co-founded by the 2019 Mustafa (PBUH) Prize laureate Ugur Sahin, and Pfizer, is found to be more than 90% effective based on initial trial results, said Pfizer’s CEO on Monday, November 9.

This is the first positive result in independent analysis of any COVID-19 vaccine in phase 3 trials.

It is estimated that the shot will be available for use by the end of this year, if drug authorities give their stamp of approval to this vaccine.

If emergency use authorization is granted to this mRNA vaccine, the companies estimate they can roll out up to 50 million doses by the end of 2020, which is enough to protect 25 million people, and then produce up to 1.3 billion doses in 2021.

According to the data, out of the 43,000 trial participants, the independent evaluators were able to calculate the efficacy of the vaccine after two doses.

“To me, this is the best possible outcome,” said Ugur Sahin, co-founder and CEO of BioNTech.



The BioNTech vaccine results far exceed the FDA’s criteria for approving a COVID-19 vaccine. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), no vaccine is 100% effective.

Sahin said he expects the vaccine’s immune response to last for “at least one year,” adding that the vaccine-induced antibodies were shown to block about 20 different mutations of SARS-CoV-2.

“There’s a very low likelihood that a [mutation of] the virus can overcome the immune response,” he maintained.

The BioNTech and Pfizer vaccine uses messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, which is designed to trigger an immune response without using pathogens.

Ugur Sahin was awarded the 2019 Mustafa (PBUH) Prize in Life and Medical Science and Technology for his achievements in “Development and Clinical Testing of mRNA-based Cancer Vaccines that are Tailored to the Mutation Profile of a Cancer Patient.”

At the 2019 Mustafa (PBUH) Prize award ceremony, BioNTech’s senior vice president of RNA biochemistry and manufacturing, Andreas Kuhn, stated: “Rarely have I met anyone as smart as Mr. Sahin, he is always one step ahead of people. If you come up with a new idea, he has already reached that stage and anticipated it.”

OPEC Cuts Oil Demand Outlook Again

LONDON (Dispatches) - Renewed spike in coronavirus cases in major economies slowing down the oil demand recovery has forced OPEC to revise expectations.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has revised down its expectations for global oil demand for yet another month, as the renewed spike in coronavirus cases in major economies is slowing down the oil demand recovery.

This new forecast is disclosed in the monthly report of OPEC which was released on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, and is hampering the efforts by the group and its allies to support the market.

In its closely watched Monthly Oil Market Report (MOMR), OPEC cut its global oil demand forecast for this year by 300,000 barrels per day (BPD) compared to last month’s estimate, and now sees global oil demand at slightly above 90.0 million BPD this year, down by 9.8 million BPD compared to 2019.

The major reasons for the expected lower demand for this year is due to the recent new lockdowns and curfews in many major European economies, including the UK, France, Germany, and Italy, as a result of the second wave of coronavirus outbreak, as well as weaker-than-expected demand in the developed economies in the Americas in the third quarter of 2020.

OPEC’s report said moves by European governments to close down restaurants and encourage working from home would hit fuel demand for the rest of 2020, with the pandemic’s impact on the oil market lingering until the middle of next year.

The monthly report from OPEC also states that the weaker oil demand recovery is expected to continue into 2021, which cut its estimate for global oil demand next year too.

G77, China Call for...

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In recent months, Washington has been tightening its oppressive sanctions against the Islamic Republic, defying warnings from Tehran and international human rights organizations that the restrictions are severely hampering the Iranian health sector’s fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

Elsewhere in their statement, the G77 and Chinese foreign ministers hailed the JCPOA as an example of “a successful multilateral action for resolving outstanding global issues.”

“The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of supporting and strengthening multilateralism, and, in this regard, recognized that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the other parties is a concrete case of a successful multilateral action for resolving outstanding global issues, stressed that such model sets a real example for further accelerating the achievement of sustainable development including by strengthening international cooperation, through enhanced means of implementation,” they said.

President Rouhani says the result of the US election is not important for Iran, and Tehran wants Washington to return to international pacts and respect the Iranian nation.

The ministers further exchanged views on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic as well as the recent developments in the world and the particular challenges faced by developing countries in the economic, social and environmental areas.

They also stressed that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions remains the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

Miller Fastest in Valencia MotoGP Practice

MADRID (Dispatches) - Australian Jack Miller delivered the best time in practice ahead of the Valencia MotoGP as Joan Mir crashed to fall outside the top 10, with the Spaniard's first world title in sight this weekend. Mir suffered a late blip at the Ricardo Tormo circuit when he came off at Turn 4 with 11 minutes to go, an error that saw him drop to 11th in the standings. But after clinching his maiden premier category victory on the same track in the European Grand Prix last weekend, Mir will become world champion on Sunday if he finishes on the podium.

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Manangoi Gets Two-Year Ban For Anti-Doping Violation

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Kenya's former 1,500 metres world champion Elijah Manangoi has been handed a two-year ban for anti-doping violations after missing three tests under whereabouts rules, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) said on Friday. Manangoi, who will be ineligible to compete at next year's Tokyo Olympics, was provisionally suspended in July and the AIU said his ban comes into effect from Dec. 22 2019 which was the date of the third "whereabouts failure".

Nadal Desperate to Prove Himself Indoors At ATP Finals

LONDON (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal says he is determined to improve his poor record on indoor courts as he bids to win the ATP Finals for the first time in his illustrious career. The Spaniard, whose haul of 86 singles titles includes just one on indoor hard courts, is chasing the biggest prize missing from his resume at the eight-man elite event at London's O2 Arena. Nadal has qualified for the ATP Finals for a record 16 consecutive years but has been forced to withdraw on six occasions. Speaking on Friday, he said there were a number of factors for his failure to shine indoors, including fatigue at end-of-season events and a preference for other surfaces. "We can find excuses or reasons but at the end of the day the numbers are the numbers," Nadal said. "I think I have played less indoors than in other places without a doubt." The second seed, who drew level with Roger Federer on 20 Grand Slams by winning last month's French Open, said his game was not ideally suited to fast courts. "The indoor surfaces have been not ideal surfaces for my tennis game since the beginning of my career," said the 34-year-old. "I think I am able to play a little bit better the last couple of years indoors than what I did at the beginning of my career without a doubt but that's the numbers and I can't say something different. I hope to change that this week."

The 50th anniversary of the first staging of the ATP Finals has been marked with the naming of two round-robin groups, Tokyo 1970 and London 2020. Nadal will compete in Group London against defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas, US Open champion Dominic Thiem and Andrey Rublev.



World number one Novak Djokovic, who is bidding for a record-equalling sixth title, will face Daniil Medvedev, Alexander Zverev and Diego Schwartzman in Group Tokyo. Nadal opens his title bid on Sunday against Russia's in-form Rublev, who is making his tournament debut. "I don't know how close I am to the perfect preparation," said the Spaniard, who was beaten by Zverev in the semi-finals of last week's Paris Masters. "I tried to fight hard in every single match in Bercy. That put me in a position that I already played four matches on this surface and hopefully that can help me here." Nadal said the absence of crowds due to the coronavirus pandemic meant conditions would be radically different this year as London prepares to play host for the final time after a 12-year run. "Sad playing with no crowd in this amazing stadium," he said. "It is something that is not perfect but we can play tennis so we can't complain at all. We are very lucky." He said the experience of playing the finals in the British capital had been "one of the best" but backed the decision to move the tournament to Turin from next year. "I think tennis needs to keep moving," he said. "At the same time it's not fair to finish the world tour finals here without crowds, with this situation but that's the thing that is happening today in this world."

Salah Tests Covid-19 Positive

CAIRO (AFP) - Liverpool star Mohamed Salah has tested positive for Covid-19 but without showing any symptoms, the Egyptian Football Association announced Friday. Medical swabs on the national team "showed that our international player, Mohamed Salah, Liverpool star, was infected with the coronavirus", it said in a tweet, adding he was "not suffering from any symptoms". The announcement comes as Egypt prepare to tackle Togo at home on Saturday in Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers. The tweet said other members of the Egyptian national team tested negative. Salah was observing medical protocols agreed in consultations between doctors in Egypt and Liverpool, a coronavirus hotspot, and self isolating in a Cairo hotel room. The two-time African Footballer of the Year will undergo further tests in coming hours, the federation said.

Chile Coach Rueda Blasted by Inter In Sanchez Row

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - Chile coach Reinaldo Rueda was embroiled in a row with Inter Milan on Thursday after complaining about the physical condition of forward Alexis Sanchez ahead of a 2022 World Cup qualifier with Peru. Colombian Rueda said that "we're no longer in the colonial era" as he fumed at Inter playing Sanchez for "45 minutes and then 90" in recent club matches despite the physical problems the 31-year-old had during his last spell with his national team in October. Rueda infuriated Inter by saying that they hadn't "take care of him, like we have", leading the Italian club to call his comments "unacceptable, offensive and not based in reality". Inter said that they "always give the maximum possible collaboration and have excellent relations with the staff of international teams". "In Sanchez's case the player has suffered physical problems during nearly all his international call-ups. In one of these he picked up a serious injury that kept him out of action for three months," Inter added. Chile go into their match with Peru on Friday with just one point from their first two World Cup qualifiers. They play Venezuela four days later.

Verstappen Heads Albon in Damp Opening Turkey Practice

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen led the times ahead of team-mate Alex Albon as Red Bull slithered to top the times in the morning's cold and damp opening practice for the Turkish Grand Prix. The Dutchman produced a best lap in 1min 35.077sec to outpace the London-born Thai driver by 0.241sec in difficult conditions that saw nearly all of the drivers spinning and grumbling. Six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton ran for only the final 30 minutes and contented himself with 15th place. He is bidding this weekend to seal his seventh drivers' world championship, equalling Michael Schumacher. The Istanbul Park circuit has not hosted Formula One cars at a Grand Prix since 2011 and the 'skating rink' experience produced little to signal what may lie ahead.



Tsitsipas in Nadal's Group at ATP Finals

LONDON (Reuters) - Defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas was placed in the same round-robin group as Rafa Nadal when the draw for the ATP Finals was made in London. The Greek will also face Austria's U.S. Open champion Dominic Thiem, who he beat in last year's final, and Russian debutant Andrey Rublev in the London group. World number one Novak Djokovic,

bidding for a record-equalling sixth title at the event, is in the Tokyo group with Russian Daniil Medvedev, Germany's Alexander Zverev and Argentine first-time Diego Schwartzman. The ATP's elite year-end, celebrating its 50th edition, is being staged at London's O2 Arena for the final time having moved their in 2009. Next year it will move to Turin. The draw was broadcast on BBC Radio Five Live and included American great Stan Smith who beat Rod Laver to win the first edition in Tokyo in 1970. Usually a hugely-popular week for tennis fans, this year's tournament will be staged without fans due to the surging COVID-19 pandemic which has forced another lockdown in London.

Man Utd Absolutely Committed to Soloskjaer

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward insisted on Thursday that the club remain committed to manager Ole Gunnar Soloskjaer despite a poor start to the season. United are languishing in 14th in the Premier League table and a fine start to their Champions League campaign came unstuck with a 2-1 defeat to Istanbul Basaksehir last week. "While there is still hard work ahead to achieve greater consistency, we remain absolutely committed to the positive path we are on under Ole as the team continues to develop," said Woodward as United revealed their first quarter financial results for 2020/2021. The English giants posted an operating loss of £27 million (\$36 million), largely due to the loss of matchday revenue with games being played behind closed doors. Commercial revenue was also down 25 percent due to the club not being able to go on a pre-season tour and a fall in merchandising sales from no fans on matchdays. However, Woodward maintained that United are committed to helping lower league clubs through the coronavirus crisis. Proposals for widespread reform of English football led by United and Liverpool were dismissed by other Premier League clubs for what was deemed a power grab by the biggest clubs. "We recognise that not all football clubs are in as robust of a financial position and that the Premier League has a responsibility to support the wider English football pyramid," added Woodward. "We will continue to push for this support, both through emergency assistance during the pandemic, and through longer-term reforms to ensure that the success of the Premier League is reinforced for the benefit of the national game as a whole."



Hamilton Hails W Series Tie-Up With F1 From 2021

LONDON (Reuters) - Six times world champion Lewis Hamilton called for more women in motorsport after the all-female W Series announced on Thursday it will be supporting Formula One at eight grands prix next season. There are no female drivers in Formula One, with Italian Lella Lombardi the last to compete in a race in 1976, and women racers are a rarity in the junior series that feed into the top category. Hamilton said the partnership with W Series, which uses Formula Three cars and aims to help women up the motorsport ladder, was a positive step. "When people talk about diversity, people often think that we're talking about having more people of colour," said Hamilton, Formula One's only Black driver. "It's not just that. It is having more women involved. At the moment it is a male-dominated sport and that does need to change." No details were given about which grands prix the W series would race at, although founder and chief executive Catherine Bond Muir told reporters F1's season-opener in Australia in March was probably too early. This year's cancelled W Series championship would have supported grands prix in Mexico and the United States in October and that could again be a possibility. The series started up in 2019 but cancelled racing this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "When we promised that W Series would be bigger and better in the future, partnering with Formula One was always our ultimate objective," said Bond Muir. "There is no doubt that, now that W Series will be run alongside and in collaboration with Formula One, our global reach, impact and influence will be increased significantly." Britain's Jamie Chadwick was the inaugural champion of the series, which featured six rounds supporting the German Touring Car Championship (DTM) and paid out \$500,000 to the winner. Top drivers in the series will be eligible for points towards an FIA super licence needed to race in Formula One.

