

Iran's Budget for Next Year Could be Based on an Oil Price of \$40 a Barrel, the Government's Spokesman Said in His Remarks, Although He Added That the Budget Assumptions Were Not Final Yet

IRAN NEWS

Road Minister Mohammad Eslami And Head of Port and Maritime Organization Mohammad Rastad Yesterday Inaugurated 11 Projects At Anzali Port to Boost the Strategic Iranian Port in the Caspian Sea

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2

DOMESTIC

President Vows Support To Vulnerable People



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

Iran, Uzbekistan To Set Up a Joint Commercial Committee



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

UN General Assembly President Reprimands UNSC For Failing to Do Its Job



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Djokovic Thrashes Debutant Schwartzman At ATP Finals



> SEE PAGE 8

150 Cities Go Lockdown As of Saturday

TEHRAN (IP) - in a speech after the cabinet meeting, Government spokesman Ali Rabiei announced the widespread closure of 150 cities in the red zone.

Rabiei said: "In the last meeting of the National Task Force for combating Coronavirus, it was approved that about 150 cities and metropolises located in the red zone go to lockdown." He added: "This means that some will lose their jobs and economic and livelihood problems and pressures will be created. The problem was raised and discussed by the President today at the meeting of the government's economic coordination headquarters. "The spokesman said: "By the end of the week, the Ministry of Welfare will identify the people who will be affected by these closures, and the Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) will help them."

The government spokesman added: "All these decisions are to make social distance effective. Now the historical responsibility of Iranians must be shown to the world again at this juncture." Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Tuesday that some 482 more Iranians have died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 42,461.

See Page 7

Tehran Emphasizes Effective Cooperation of IAEA

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Vienna-based International Organizations has emphasized ensuring the effective implementation of nuclear-related technical cooperation programs by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Kazem Gharibabadi, who participated in a meeting of the Agency's Cooperation and Technical Assistance Committee, which was held via video conference on Monday, said that the challenges and difficulties arising from the Coronavirus pandemic should not be underestimated.

The Iranian diplomat stated that the efforts of the Agency Secretariat to ensure the effective implementation of technical cooperation programs are very important and their realization requires high solidarity and cooperation at all levels of the world.

He added: "It must be ensured that today's challenging situation does not have a detrimental effect on the implementation of the agency's technical cooperation programs, and most importantly, that these projects have sufficiently guaranteed resources."

See Page 7

Iran Plays Pivotal Role In Cementing EAEU Ties



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC NEWS

TEHRAN – The Eurasian Economic Union International Conference on the Geopolitical Role of Free Zones in Regional Development was held yesterday at Iran's northern port Anzali.

In a video message to the International Conference of Eurasian Economic Union and Geopolitical Role of Free Zones, Iranian Minister of Energy said the country can play a pivotal role in cementing cooperation among member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Reza Ardakanian added the EAEU is an emerging organization among regional bodies.

"If a higher level of regional unity, cooperation and convergence is reached at this union, it has the potential to turn into one of key economic and even political hubs of the world," said Ardakanian, who is charged with coordinating the implementation of the temporary free trade agreement with the EAEU.

"If the Eurasian Economic Union boosts its performance, it can protect its members and trade partners against the negative effects of globalization, and can also help them improve their capabilities for global competition," he noted.

He touched upon the conflict between Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic near Iran's northern borders, saying closer cooperation between regional countries and the EAEU as well as the enhancement of mutual trade can prevent further insecurity in the region.

"Given the new nature of threats and the vast number of security conflicts and challenges in the expansive Eurasia region, it is necessary to make more efforts to boost economic convergence among the regional countries; the EAEU has paved the way for this important measure," he said.

He underlined that cooperating with the EAEU should be considered as a national project in Iran, which requires coordination and cooperation among all executive bodies and the private sector.

"with a population of 183 million and a foreign trade volume of \$ 750 billion, the EAEU has a 3.2-percent share in the world GDP," he said, "The EAEU is a unique opportunity for Iran to expand its exports and reciprocal trade in favor of its economic development."

The EAEU can play a big role in improving the political and security risk factor of its member countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said.

Meanwhile addressing the conference, the head of the Iranian Association of Geopolitics referred to Iran as a strategic connecting point between Asia and Europe, saying the country has an irreplaceable and unique geopolitical position in the world.

See Page 7

Iran Ready to Respond to Any Adventurism

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The spokesperson for the Iranian Mission to the UN said that Iran has proven to be capable of using its legitimate military might to prevent or respond to any melancholy adventure from any aggressor.

Alireza Miryousefi said Iran's nuclear program is purely for peaceful purposes and civilian use and Trump's policies have not changed that.

"However, Iran has proven to be capable of using its legitimate military might to prevent or respond to any melancholy adventure from any aggressor," he added.

His comments came as a U.S. official said on Monday that President Donald Trump last week asked for options on attacking Iran's main nuclear site, but ultimately decided against taking the dramatic step.

Trump made the request during an Oval Office meeting on Thursday with his top national security aides, including Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, new acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller and General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the official said.

The official confirmed the account of the meeting in The New York Times, which reported the advisers persuaded Trump not to go ahead with a strike because of the risk of a broader conflict.

"He asked for options. They gave him the scenarios and he ultimately decided not to go forward," the official said. But officials told the paper that Trump could be continuing to eye plans to attack Iranian allies and assets, such as militias in Iraq.

Trump withdrew from the Iran deal and re-introduced economic sanctions in 2018. Iran announced a partial withdrawal from the deal in May 2019, and that July the Iranian government announced that Tehran had begun to increase uranium enrichment beyond the purity threshold it agreed to as part of a landmark nuclear deal. This is while Iran has always maintained that its nuclear program is peaceful.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Iraq Gov't, With People Or Without People

I analyze today's Iraq either in its political or economic performance and even in coordination between the parliament and the government tilting towards the demands of a U.S. Administration that the very today has turned Washington into a scene of civil war. And I see the current specific condition that is in favor of Iraq because of the U.S. weakness for its increasing pressure on the Iraqi government but it does not use it.

Almost one year since Iraqi people's staged protests and called for resignation of Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi and formation of interim government, the first priority and promise which was uttered by Mustafa Al-Kadhimi's government was to hold parliamentary election. In fact with the dominant political and security climate on Iraq and problems of the former government, holding election was a general demand from religious community, public demands of protesters, elites of the country and some fractions in the parliament. So holding parliamentary election was one of the priorities of the government. But a complicated current in Iraq, day in day, makes the climate tighter for holding election and forming commission for preparing the election. The Iraqi government with its decisions has not yet cleared its path for organizing the condition for a stable Iraq.

Serious conflict between the public and the government is on the rise day in day. The government is inattentive to public interests and demands. It is sometimes after adding the grounds for materializing the bullying goals of the U.S., and is sometimes after helping a current which is in minority, and it is totally inattentive to the public demands.

Political leaders from fractions, Islamic and national parties, and religious clerics have considered attention to the public demands as the main priority and not attention to the U.S. demands. But the government runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds, and it just seeks killing time. This expectation that it needs one year for holding the election makes the people more nervous. It is with materialization of election and formation of a strong, united and efficient government that Iraq can surmount its security woes, eradicate financial and bureaucratic corruption, and increase the amount of services and welfare for the people who have been hurt by the insecurity and lack of peace.

See Page 7

UNSC' Legitimacy At Stake

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations said the UN Security Council's weak, passive, and sometimes unlawful measures have undermined its legitimacy and credibility, calling for a reform of the council.

Addressing a Monday session of the UN General Assembly, Majid Takht Ravanchi said the UNSC is facing the crisis of faltering legitimacy and credibility because of its weak and passive performance and also illegal and extrajudicial measures in some cases.

He also bemoaned the fact that the UNSC is dominated by the Western states and being abused by certain permanent members of the council, saying the UNSC has an "undemocratic" structure because of the weak presence of developing countries as non-permanent members of the council.

Deploing the excessive and immediate use of the UNSC's authority and enforcement action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, such as the imposition of sanctions, Takht Ravanchi said such act should be a last resort option, when all other ways for the peaceful settlement of the conflict have been exercised and their impacts have been evaluated.

See Page 7



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Defense Needs Manufactured In Accordance With Threats

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Deputy Commander of Iran Army Ground Force said that defense requirements of the country are manufactured in tandem with external threats.

Brigadier General Nozar Nemati made the remarks on Monday and added, “There are countries that want to buy Iran’s advanced and sophisticated defense products.”

He reiterated that needs of country’s defense industry are designed

and manufactured in accordance with the enemy’s threats.

Brigadier General Nemati pointed to Iran’s defense authority and added, “Security, maintaining territorial integrity and independence of the Islamic Republic of Iran are our red line, so that the doctrine of the Establishment is that we do not invade any country but we are ready to defend security of the country categorically.”

President Vows Support To Vulnerable People

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani pledged to provide economic support to the vulnerable groups whose businesses may be damaged during a fresh lockdown to become effective in parts of the country to contain the spread of the disease as of next week.

Speaking during a meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters, the President said that the budget bill for the next year aims to improve the country’s economic conditions and bring about economic prosperity. Rouhani also said that the new budget bill is intended to help the country’s economic growth and give a boost to the livelihood of the people, the less-privileged class of society in particular.

He hailed the resistance of Iranian people against more than two and a half years of “unprecedented economic war”, saying, “Despite the severe damages done to the country’s economy, the government, with the support and cooperation of the people, did not allow the sanctioners to achieve their sinister goals.”

Rouhani also said the Iranian nation’s resistance has been fruitful in more than two and a half years of unprecedented economic war with the sworn enemies.

Referring to the economic war of the enemies against the people, Hassan Rouhani



said on Tuesday that despite the conspiracies of enemies, the Iranian government with the support and cooperation of the people, did not allow the sinister aims behind sanctions to be achieved, and the grounds for improving the economic conditions of the Iranian people have been provided.

Speaking at a meeting of the government’s Economic Coordination Board, the president elaborated on the new COVID-19 related restrictions which are due to be implemented across the country. Rouhani clarified that the Iranian government has managed to plan for the target groups and vulnerable groups whose jobs would be affected as a result of the closure, and supportive measures have been taken in this regard.

Government plans to impose severe restrictions will be implemented across the country as of next Saturday to minimize gatherings and traffic in a bid to halt a surge in the number of coronavirus infections and related deaths.

The announcement of fresh restrictions come nearly two weeks after new restrictions on public transportation and traffic were imposed in 25 provincial capitals.

Qalibaf Stresses Non-Reliance on Oil to Reform Budget Structure

TEHRAN (IP) – Majlis Speaker stressed non-reliance on oil, prevention of budget deficit, sustainable incomes, and effective spending to reform the country’s budget structure.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf referred to the reformation of budget structure and said that to do so pursuing sustainable incomes, effective spending, non-reliance on oil, and prevention of budget deficits are essential.

Qalibaf said that the issue includes such pivots as tax, which is being examined in the economic commission, or the reformation of social security system, governmental corporations’ budget, subsidies system, and budgeting system.

“What is on the agenda of the parliament today is one of the policies to reform the budget structure in order to amend and approve some budget provisions,” he said.

U.S. After Disintegration of Iraq

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh warned of the American plots to dissolve Iraq, create division between its government and people, and plunder the Arab country’s oil resources.

In a meeting with Iraqi Defense Minister Lt. General Juma Anad Saadoun, held in Tehran on Monday, the IRGC Aerospace Force commander highlighted the importance of developing defense cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

It is important for regional countries to pay due attention to plots hatched by the terrorist regime of the United States, especially for Iraq, the Iranian commander warned.

“The United States has always sought (to dominate) Iraq’s oil wells and divide the country and (it wants) to sow discord between this country’s people and (government) officials,” he added.



He also noted that the IRGC and Iraq’s Army have had decisive cooperation in educational, operational and advisory fields in the battle against Daesh Takfiri terrorism in the Arab country, Press TV reported.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has been a friend of the Iraqi nation during hard times and cares about this country’s integrity and (ways to help it) become more powerful,” the senior IRGC commander said.

He further pointed to the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Suleimani, the commander of the IRGC’s Quds Force, and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Units, along with their companions by the United States in Iraq in January and said Iran would definitely take revenge against the perpetrators of the top Iranian anti-terror commander’s martyrdom.

Hajizadeh added that the Iranian and Iraqi nations would never forget that the “terrorist” United States assassinated General Suleimani and Iraq’s national hero.

Iran-Afghanistan Railway to Become Operational Soon

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Road and Urban Development Deputy Minister Kheirollah Khademi said on Monday that the Khaf-Herat railway will become operational by end of Autumn, noting that the project is worth more than 2,500 billion tomans.

Referring to the inauguration of the Khaf-Herat project which was scheduled to open on November 19, Khademi said that the opening of the Khaf-Herat Railway was postponed to the next month at the request of Afghanistan.

In relevant remarks earlier this month, Iran’s Deputy Minister of Road and Urban Development for Construction and Development of Railways Abbas Khatibi had said that with the completion of the Khaf-Herat railway, 220km in length, the western-eastern rail corridor connects China, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan to Iran.

He said that the railway is expected to transport six million tons of goods and 1 million passengers per year.

Khaf-Herat is part of the Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project which started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran’s eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan’s western city of Ghoryan.

Iranian officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, have stressed the importance of the project in boosting

trade ties with neighboring countries, including Afghanistan.

Iran connected the eastern town of Khaf with Herat, western Afghanistan, through railway as part of Iran’s efforts to create calm and peace in Afghanistan.

Germany Continues Valuable Support to WFP Activities in Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) welcomes a supplementary contribution of €1 million (approximately \$1.2million) from the Federal Republic of Germany towards its assistance program in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This contribution is in addition to a contribution of €1 million received in April 2020. It will benefit Afghan and Iraqi refugees living in settlements in Iran. At the same time, it allows WFP to assist vulnerable Iranians affected by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, locust infestation, and the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Government and people of Germany have steadfastly supported us since 2014 with funds for our refugee assistance program,” said WFP Representative and Country Director in Iran Negar Gerami, adding: “Allowing us this year to use a portion of these funds for an emergency response to large-scale natural disasters gives us more flexibility to fulfill our mandate, and for that, we are extremely grateful.

“WFP will primarily use the funds to provide both cash and food assistance to address the most pressing nutrition needs of refugee families. A portion of the funds will be used to locally procure monthly emergency family food packs for distribution in areas hardest hit by locust infestation and COVID-19, the combination of which has jeopardized the livelihood of the tens of thousands of vulnerable people in several provinces in Iran,” she said.

“WFP has been a close partner for Germany for many years to help those who are suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important not to forget the most vulnerable,” said German Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hans Udo Muzel, adding: “That is why Germany will continue to support WFP here in Iran with another one million Euro to provide cash relief and food assistance for refugees and specially affected communities. This is part of Germany’s engagement for multilateralism.

“Over more than three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been hosting around one million refugees —the world’s sixth-largest refugee population. Iran is also one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, hit hard in recent history by earthquakes, floods, locust invasion, and COVID-19 pandemic,” Hans Udo Muzel added.

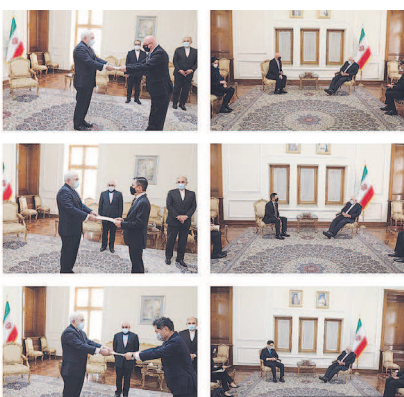
Iran Looking for Broadening of Ties With Japan, Slovakia, Thailand

TEHRAN (FNA) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underlined that Tehran favors to expand mutual cooperation with friendly countries, including Slovakia, Thailand and Japan.

Zarif made the remarks in separate meetings with the new Slovakian, Thai, and Japanese ambassadors to Tehran.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to widen its relations with world’s friendly states in all areas,” the Iranian foreign minister said while receiving copies of credentials of Japanese, Slovakian and Thai envoys to Iran.

The outgoing Japanese envoy Saito Mitsugo also met with Zarif and bid his farewell to the Iranian Foreign Minister on the same day.



Foreign Ministers Discuss Iran-UK Cooperation

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Foreign Minister of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif and his British counterpart talked about the cooperation between Tehran and London as two parties to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Zarif and British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab held a telephone conversation on Monday.

In the phone call, the two senior diplomats conferred on bilateral cooperation between Tehran and London within the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

They also exchanged views on other issues of mutual interest, including the bilateral relations and certain humanitarian issues.

60 Iranian Companies Elected to Trade With Italy

KERMAN (IRNA) - Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Milan City of Italy said that over 300 Iranian export companies have been surveyed, but only 60 Iranian companies have been selected in 10 economic and industrial categories for commercial cooperation with Italy.

Addressing a virtual meeting of survey of economic relations between Iran’s Kerman province and Italy, Dariush Sowlat said: many companies have announced their readiness to develop ties and economic relations with Italy and they have said that the quality of their products is great, but among them, only the most effective export companies based on European Union standards are identified.

During the past 40 years, Italy has been one of the most important economic partners of Iran, and in some cases, as in 2010 and 2011, it has been recorded as the first trading partner of the Islamic Republic of Iran and recorded a record of above seven billion dollars, but then because of the problems caused by sanctions on Iran and restrictions on trade again this amount decreased, Solat added.

Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Milan Italy said: “The most amount of trade ties between Iran and Italy is oil, and the amount of non-oil products is very low, and currently there is almost \$1 billion in trade dealings of 2 countries, which is 820 million Euros is for Italy and the rest, belongs to Iran.”

Tehran, Belgrade to Expand Trade Cooperation

BELGRADE (IP) - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Belgrade and the Minister of Trade, Tourism, and Communications of Serbia stressed the continuation and expansion of bilateral trade cooperation.

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Belgrade, Rashid Hassanpour, met with the Minister of Trade, Tourism and Communications of Serbia, Tatjana Matic, referring to the political will of the two sides to develop bilateral cooperation, said: Due to common cultural and artistic backgrounds, visas and direct flights between Tehran and Belgrade should be facilitated.

Expressing hope for the Serbian President’s visit to Iran in the near future and the opening of a new chapter in cooperation between the two countries, Hassanpour said: “Iran-Serbia trade has increased in the last two years despite unilateral and oppressive U.S. sanctions.”

The Serbian Minister of Trade, Tourism, and Communications referring to Belgrade’s readiness to develop trade and tourism cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed hope that cooperation between the two countries in the field of tourism would increase by solving the problem of the Coronavirus outbreak. Tatiana Matic also stressed the need for an agreement between Iran and Serbia on a joint payment system to continue cooperation, saying that talks on a free trade agreement and a joint commission are essential for continued cooperation between the two countries.

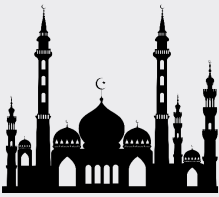


Subject : Invitation to Tender

Isfahan Fajr Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Company (Private Joint Stock) intends to purchase 60,000 tons of corn (Brazil, Ukraine or Russia) through an international tender

Eligible companies or representatives of active foreign companies interested in participating in the tender can to receive the tender documents and information about its conditions, refer to the company’s website address www.fajreisfahan.com

Deadline for Submitting Offers:
Till 9 a.m December 08.2020
Data and place for opening the envelopes:
at 10 a.m December 08.2020 at central office of the company



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)

■ Evening (Maghreb)

■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

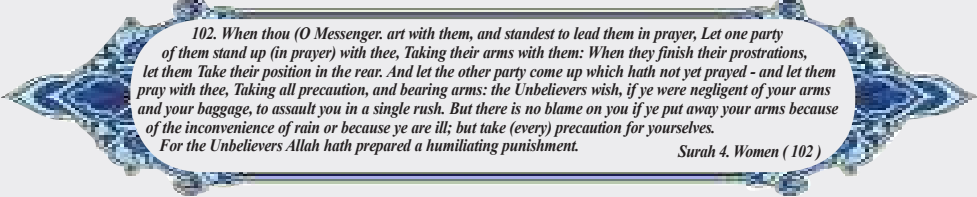
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise

11:49

17:15

05:17

06:34



102. When thou (O Messenger, art with them, and standest to lead them in prayer, Let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with thee, Taking their arms with them: When they finish their prostrations, let them Take their position in the rear. And let the other party come up which hath not yet prayed - and let them pray with thee, Taking all precaution, and bearing arms: the Unbelievers wish, if ye were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush. But there is no blame on you if ye put away your arms because of the inconvenience of rain or because ye are ill; but take (every) precaution for yourselves. For the Unbelievers Allah hath prepared a humiliating punishment.

Surah 4. Women (102)

Iran, Uzbekistan To Set Up a Joint Commercial Committee

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran and Uzbekistan yesterday in a virtual conference signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up a joint commercial committee in order to expand bilateral economic cooperation.

In a virtual meeting, Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce Gholamhossein Shafei and his Uzbek counterpart Mr. Ikramov Adkham signed the MoU.

Addressing the meeting, Shafei emphasized that bolstering the economic cooperation and increasing exchanges with neighboring states are of the major priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He added that Uzbekistan due to its cultural, historic, economic and geographical commonalities with Iran is of great importance to the country.

Shafei further said that due to the strategic position and access to the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman, Iran is considered as an important link for Uzbekistan to join the world. He noted that joint cooperation in the form of regional organizations like ECO will increase security ratio beside economic advantage in the region.

The head of Iran Chamber of Commerce added that Iran with its massive infrastructures, efficient producers, human resources and economic capacities is the center of international attention, as the country is located in a region where 70 percent of world gas and 40 percent of gas exists and for this reason it can play a considerable role in providing the world with energy.

Shafei also pointed to the capabilities of Iran in the technical and engineering services, stating that Iranian companies have brilliant records in the region in the fields of road, expressway, and construction fields, and Iran's private sector's brilliant record in the mining sector and Uzbekistan's world ranking in having gold, copper and uranium mines can also pave the ground for joint and constant bilateral cooperation.

He added that Iran and Uzbekistan further said both countries can also cooperate in other fields like agro, foodstuff, dried fruits, detergent, iron, steel, tile, ceramic and fertilizers.

Shafei noted that Iran by relying on its indigenous knowhow and experts have progressed considerably in some fields like nano and bio technologies in recent years and Uzbekistan can take advantage of it through exchange of experiences and technical knowledge.

He noted that although the trade volume of Iran and Uzbekistan has increased from \$186m in 2018 to \$411m in 2019 but they can boost it because of their capabilities through lifting hurdles.

He expressed hope that signing the MoU and setting up the joint commercial committee by chambers of commerce of both countries would increase joint and constructive cooperation for expanding bilateral economic cooperation.

Meanwhile Chairman of Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce Mr. Ikramov Adkham, for his part, referred to the commonalities of both countries, exchange of trade delegations and phone talks between presidents of both countries as the sign for the will of both countries for developing bilateral economic relations.

He also said Iran's rotating presidency in ECO Chamber of Commerce is a good opportunity for expansion of economic ties between Iran and Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile Uzbekistan Ambassador to Tehran Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, for his part, said he believes the MoU for setting up the joint commercial committee between Iran and Uzbekistan will bolster quality of their economic relations. He added that Uzbekistan's new strategy for its foreign policy is centered on boosting economic ties with neighboring states, and ties with Iran due to abundant commonalities is of great importance to Uzbek government.

He added that so far over 250 companies in Uzbekistan have been launched through participation of foreign investors as 25 of them have been launched fully with participation of Iranian investors and it is expected that by setting up of the joint commercial committee, Iranians would continue their economic activities in Uzbek market with more ease.

Coronavirus Not Hinderin Development Of Iran-Austria Cultural Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali Asghar Mounesan said on Monday that coronavirus outbreak could not hinder expansion of cultural cooperation between Iran and Austria.

In a meeting with the Austrian ambassador in Tehran Stefan Scholz, he added, "We must not allow the virus to reduce cooperation between the two countries."

Voicing readiness for keeping up cultural cooperation between Iran and Austria, he stressed, "We can continue fulfilling cultural programs by upholding health guidelines."

Complaining about not delivering test kits to Iran due to the sanctions, Mounesan said that imposing political sanctions on food and medicine is inhumane.


"In the field of education, we are interested to use the experiences of the Austrian tourism. Recently, we had a request from Germany to hold an exhibition of salt men in this country. If Austria wants, we can hold this exhibition in Austria after Germany," he said.

Stefan Scholz, for his part, said that a memorandum of understanding was signed with Kish Free Zone Organization to promote economic cooperation on Sunday.

Kish Free Zone expressed interest to host tourism educational courses by the Austrians, he said.

Scholz announced the establishment of the Blue Shield Committee in Iran, citing the establishment of the committee as the main reason for his visit, and asked the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to support setting up of the committee in Iran as soon as possible.

Noting that Blue Shield Committee is formed to protect Iran's historical and ancient monuments in times of crisis and natural disasters, Scholz said that his country is very interested in cooperating with Iran in the field and to help turning it into a training center for the protection of antiquities and historical monuments in the region.



Agricultural Support Services Co.

PERMIT NO : 55/99/57202

DATE : 18/11/2020

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

INVITATION OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below 24 items of formulated pesticides, through one step international tender.

ITEM	Name	Formulation	Quantity (MT)
1	2,4-d+MCPA	67.5% SL	100
2	Bromoxynil octanoate+MCPA	40%EC	40
3	Bromoxynil+2,4-d	56% EC	20
4	Clodinafop propargyl	8% EC	200
5	Pinoxaden+safener	5% EC	60
6	Pinoxaden+clodinafop propargyl	5% EC	100
7	Mesosulfuron+lodosulfuron+safener	1.2% OD	100
8	Iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium+Mesosulfuron-methyl+diflufenican+safener	8.25% OD	50
9	Setoxidim	12.5% OEC	20
10	Clopyralid	30% SL	60
11	Propiconazole	25% EC	400
12	Tebuconazole	25% EW	200
13	Epoxiconazole+Tiophanate-methyl	49.7% SC	90
14	Cyproconazole+Propiconazole	33% EC	40
15	Malathion	57% EC	500
16	Deltamethrin	2.5% EC	600
17	Tebuconazole	2% DS	300
18	Tebuconazole	6% FS	200
19	Tebuconazole+Prothioconazole	40% FS	10
20	difenoconazole	3% DS	150
21	difenoconazole	3% FS	100
22	Carbendazim	50% WP	40
23	Carboxin+thiram	75% WP	100
24	Carboxin+thiram	40% FS	80

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Saturday dated 21/11-2020 until Wednesday dated 25/11/2020 (5 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran). The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 35803978226350065000000000000006.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing their offer, latest at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday dated 26/12/2020 (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelops will be held on Saturday dated 26/12/2020 at 14:00 PM with the presence of bidders representatives at our purchasing committee hall (9th floor , no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the bid bond amount should be in bank guarantee as follows:

- 1- € 16416 for 2,4-d + MCPA 67.5% SL equivalent to Iranian Rials 5192760000
- 2- € 14521 for Bromoxynil octanoate+MCPA 40%EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 4593168128
- 3- € 9299 for Bromoxynil+2,4-d 56% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 2941456800
- 4- € 40688 or Clodinafop propargyl 8% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 12870460800
- 5- € 45688 for Pinoxaden + safener 5% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 14451920640
- 6- € 48136 for Pinoxaden + clodinafop propargyl 5% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 15226272000
- 7- € 42616 for Mesosulfuron+lodosulfuron+safener 1.2% OD equivalent to Iranian Rials 13480185600
- 8- € 20829 for Iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium + Mesosulfuron-methyl+diflufenican+safener 8.25% OD equivalent to Iranian Rials 6588705600
- 9- € 8353 for Setoxidim 12.5% OEC equivalent to Iranian Rials 2642325000
- 10- € 18749 for Clopyralid 30% SL equivalent to Iranian Rials 5930616960
- 11- € 62153 for Propiconazole 25% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 19660281600
- 12- € 47623 for Tebuconazole 25% EW equivalent to Iranian Rials 15064089600
- 13- € 91616 for Epoxiconazole + Tiophanate-methyl 49.7% SC equivalent to Iranian Rials 28980000000
- 14- € 48856 for Cyproconazole + Propiconazole 33% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 15454022400
- 15- € 57395 for Malathion 57% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 18155112000
- 16- € 51986 for Deltamethrin 2.5% EC equivalent to Iranian Rials 16444296000
- 17- € 22193 for Tebuconazole 2% DS equivalent to Iranian Rials 7020000000
- 18- € 25987 for Tebuconazole 6% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 8220000000
- 19- € 12000 for Tebuconazole + Prothioconazole 40% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 3795840000
- 20- € 19234 for difenoconazole 3% DS equivalent to Iranian Rials 6084000000
- 21- € 17868 for difenoconazole 3% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 5652000000
- 22- € 11348 for Carbendazim 50% WP equivalent to Iranian Rials 3589574400
- 23- € 34699 for Carboxin+thiram 75% WP equivalent to Iranian Rials 10975963200
- 24- € 43840 for Carboxin+thiram 40% FS equivalent to Iranian Rials 13867564800

- The bid bond value should be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir on 15/11/2020 for each item.

- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & intl Affairs Dept of Agricultural Support Services Company(ASSC)

Armenian FM Quits After Unpopular Karabakh Ceasefire

YEREVAN (Reuters) - Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan resigned on Monday, the ministry said, in a sign of political fall-out in the ex-Soviet republic after a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that locked in territorial gains for Azerbaijan.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's government has faced a backlash over the ceasefire that ended six weeks of fighting, with thousands of protesters last week demanding he resign.

On Monday, hundreds of protesters rallied in the capital Yerevan.



Europe, U.S. Need to Work Together to Address Turkey

PARIS (Reuters) - The U.S. administration and Europe need to work jointly on addressing actions led by Turkey in the Middle East over the past few months, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told French daily newspaper Le Figaro.

"France's president Emmanuel Macron and I agree that Turkey's recent actions have been very aggressive," Pompeo said, citing Turkey's recent support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia as well as military moves in Libya and the Mediterranean.



UN General Assembly President Reprimands UNSC for Failing to Do Its Job



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - UN General Assembly president Volkan Bozkir on Monday criticized the Security Council, saying it was failing to respond to the world's biggest challenges due to "competing interests."

"The council has, on many occasions, failed to carry out its responsibility to maintain international peace and security," Bozkir, a Turkish diplomat, said at a debate on reforming the body.

"Competing interests among its members and frequent use of the veto have limited the Security Council's effectiveness. Even in some of the most urgent humanitarian crises, the council could not provide a timely and adequate response."

There has been growing criticism of the body, which has not been reformed in decades, with France's President Emmanuel Macron saying in a recent interview with Le Grand Continent that it "no longer produces useful solutions." Bozkir said reform of the Security Council was "an unavoidable imperative -- both challenging and essential."

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Security Council has held few meetings devoted to the virus.

It took more than three months to overcome friction between the United States and China to pass a resolution on July 1 calling for more international cooperation and to support a call by the secretary-general for a ceasefire in war-torn countries to help fight the disease.

During the debate on reform, the 193 UN members discussed the right to veto, the privilege of the five permanent members of the Security Council (United States, China, Russia, France and United Kingdom), enlarging the forum and its regional balance.

Russia, which has used its veto 15 times since 2011 on the Syrian dossier alone, and the U.S. do not wish to see that power reduced. "The United States remains open, in principle, to a modest expansion of the Security Council," said American diplomat Ngoyi Ngoyi. But "this must be pursued in a way that will not diminish the Security Council's effectiveness, or its efficiency, and will not alter or expand the veto."

Deputy Russian ambassador Anna Evstigneeva argued that "ideas leading to the erosion of the prerogatives of the permanent members of the Security Council, including the right to veto, are unacceptable."

Using the veto, or even the threat of using it, "have repeatedly prevented the United Nations from becoming associated with dubious companies," she added.

Later, Chinese ambassador Zhang Jun criticised an "over-representation of developed countries" and called for a larger presence of small and medium nations, particularly African ones.

The Security Council, which can decide on international sanctions and the use of force, has 15 members. In addition to the five permanent nations, it has 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms.

Trump Poised to Settle for Partial Afghan Withdrawal

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump's new Pentagon team has not yet signalled an imminent withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, raising expectations among U.S. officials and allies that Trump might settle for a partial reduction before leaving office.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the military was expecting formal orders in the coming days to go down to about 2,500 troops in Afghanistan by early next year from around 4,500 currently.

A NATO official also cited expectations of a 1,500 to 2,000 troop decline.

Trump fired his defense secretary, Mark Esper, and appointed other top Pentagon officials last week after longstanding concerns that his priorities were not being dealt with urgently enough at the Defense Department.

They included ending the 19-year-old Afghan engagement by Christmas, an ambitious target that opponents of the country's longest war welcomed but which Trump's critics warned could be reckless given ongoing militant violence plaguing Afghanistan. Afghanistan has featured in a flurry of introductory calls by acting Defense



Putin Approves New Naval Facility in Sudan

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin on Monday approved the creation of a Russian naval facility in Sudan capable of mooring nuclear-powered surface vessels, clearing the way for Moscow's first substantial military foothold in Africa since the Soviet fall.

The new facility, earmarked to be built in the vicinity of Port Sudan, will be capable of accommodating up to 300 military and civilian personnel and improve Russia's ability to operate in the Indian Ocean, expanding its influence in Africa.

Putin presided over a flagship Russia-Africa summit last year, an event designed to increase Russian sway on the continent, and two nuclear-capable Russian bombers landed in South Africa at the same time in a show of intent.

Putin, in a decree published on Monday, said he had approved a Russian government proposal to set up a naval logistics hub in Sudan and ordered the defense ministry to sign an agreement to make it happen.

A draft document related to the issue made public earlier this month by the government spoke of a facility that could moor no more than four ships at the same time. The hub would be used for repair and resupply operations and as a place where Russian naval personnel could take rest, it said.

The land for the base will be supplied for free by Sudan and Moscow would get the right to bring in any weapons, ammunition and other equipment it needs through Sudan's airports and ports to support the new facility.

Russia has a similar facility at the port of Tartus in Syria, a country where it also operates an air base.

Moscow is keen to increase its influence in Africa, a continent with 54 United Nations member states, sprawling mineral wealth, and potentially lucrative markets for Russian-manufactured weapons.

It is jockeying for influence and a military foothold in Africa with other nations, including China.

Moldova Vote Winner Promises Balanced Ties With West, Russia

CHISINAU (AFP) - Moldova's pro-European election winner Maia Sandu on Monday vowed balanced ties with the West and Russia as Moscow-backed incumbent Igor Dodon conceded defeat and asked his supporters to refrain from violence.

Sandu's election is seen by analysts as a major blow to the Kremlin, which had pinned hopes on Dodon winning a new term.

Russia had wanted polarised Moldova to remain in its sphere of influence at a time when several Kremlin-aligned governments are rocked by political unrest and security crises.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Sandu vowed to maintain a "true balance" in foreign policy and "pragmatic dialogue with all countries including Romania, Ukraine, European countries, Russia and the United States."

"I will work for all the citizens of our country," said the 48-year-old centre-right opposition politician, who briefly served as prime minister in 2019.

Addressing Dodon's supporters, she said: "You have not lost, I will be winning your trust with concrete deeds."

Sandu, who has also promised to root out corruption, won 57.75 percent of the vote in the second round run-off on Sunday against 42.25 percent for Dodon.

In the first round vote earlier this month, she won a surprise victory against Dodon.

Some observers warned of protests after the Sunday runoff but Dodon conceded defeat and congratulated his rival.

"Preliminary results have shown that Maia Sandu has won," he told reporters.

But he also said his campaign had registered an "unprecedented amount of violations" but asked his supporters not to take to the streets.

"We don't need destabilization," he added.

Dodon had promised continued close ties with Moldova's "strategic partner" Moscow and said Russian should become compulsory in schools. He came to power in 2016, beating Sandu in the second round.

Moldova, which was part of the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1991, is one of Europe's poorest countries and as many as 40 percent of citizens are estimated to have travelled abroad to work.

Moldova has been rocked by multiple political crises and a \$1-billion bank fraud scheme equivalent to nearly 15 percent of annual economic output.

EU member Romania and pro-Western Ukraine rushed to congratulate Sandu. Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said Moldovans had chosen a "path of progress".



More People May Die If Trump Goes on Blocking Pandemic Cooperation

WILMINGTON (Reuters) - President-elect Joe Biden said on Monday "more people may die" if outgoing President Donald Trump continues blocking a U.S. transition of power as the coronavirus pandemic worsens, and he urged Congress to pass new relief legislation.

Biden said business and labor leaders had signaled willingness to work together to bolster the pandemic-battered U.S. economy but stressed COVID-19 first must be brought under control.

The Democratic president-elect delivered a speech and took questions from reporters in Wilmington, Delaware, after consulting jointly with the CEOs of top U.S. companies and labor leaders on Monday. He welcomed further progress in COVID-19 vaccine development.

Biden will inherit an economy that has suffered millions of job losses during a pandemic that has killed more than 246,000 people in the United States. U.S. COVID-19 cases are surging as Biden prepares to take office on Jan. 20.

"We're going into a very dark winter. Things are going to get much tougher before they get easier," Biden said of the pandemic.

Biden again called upon the Trump administration to cooperate with his transition team on containing the surge in cases. "More people may die if we don't coordinate," he said. He urged Congress to pass pandemic relief legislation. Talks on such legislation stalled for months before the Nov. 3 election.

Biden insisted, however, that Trump's refusal to concede was not inhibiting his transition efforts. "I find this more embarrassing for the country than debilitating for my ability to get started," he said.

On other economic matters, Biden said he plans to pursue "a fairer tax structure" with corporations paying their fair share and added that he wanted to see a \$15 hourly minimum wage nationwide. Biden said no government contracts will be given to companies that do not make products in the United States.

Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris earlier held a midday video conference with several chief executives including General Motors Co's GM.N Mary Barra, Microsoft Corp's Satya Nadella, Target Corp's Brian Cornell and Gap Inc's GPS.N Sonia Syngal.





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S, Jacuzzi
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Fully Furn

Parsian

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German Economy Stagnating or Shrinking Amid Second Wave of Virus

FRANKFURT (Reuters) - The German economy is likely stagnating or contracting as measures taken at home and abroad to contain the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic hit leisure activities as well as exports, the Bundesbank said on Monday.

With schools open and restrictions mainly affecting the catering and hospitality sectors, Germany has taken a softer approach than some of its neighbours but was still bound to

suffer from weaker demand from abroad.

“Overall economic performance could stagnate or even decline after very vigorous growth in the summer,” the Bundesbank said in its monthly report. But the German central bank said an economic slump like the one seen in the spring was unlikely and progress on the development of a vaccine against COVID-19 boosted hopes of finding a balance “soon” between containing the virus and keeping the economy open.



China's Factory Output Beats Forecasts

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's factory output rose faster-than-expected in October and retail sales sped up, as the recovery in the world's second-largest economy from its COVID-19 slump gathered momentum.

Industrial production climbed 6.9% in October from a year earlier, data from the National Statistics Bureau showed on Monday, in line with September's gain and faster than the 6.5% rise expected in a Reuters poll of analysts.

The upbeat figures came as other Asian powerhouses also climbed out from their pandemic depths with Japan's economy reporting its fastest quarterly growth on record.

China's industrial sector has staged an impressive turnaround from the pandemic paralysis seen earlier this year, helped by resilient exports. Now, with the coronavirus largely under control in China, consumers are opening up their wallets again in a further boost to activity.

“The latest data suggest that the broad-based acceleration of China's economy continued in October,” Julian Evans-Pritchard at Capital Economics said in a note. “Policy stimulus continued to boost investment and industrial output while growth in real retail sales and services activity returned to pre-virus levels.”

Across China, smelters and refineries ramped up production in October with aluminium and crude oil hitting record output levels as the reopened economy stoked demand.

Growth is expected to accelerate in the fourth quarter as the service sector recovery maintains momentum, Fu Linghui, spokesman of the National Statistics Bureau said, told reporters at a briefing. In the consumer sector, retail sales rose 4.3% on-year, missing forecasts for 4.9% growth but still the fastest growth this year.

The improved appetite for spending was seen with China's auto sales growing 12.5% in October, thanks to surging demand for electric vehicles.

Domestic tourism also saw a strong rebound over the Golden Week holiday last month, although levels were still well short of last year's.

Fixed-asset investment rose 1.8% in January-October from the same period last year, compared with the 1.6% growth forecast and a 0.8% increase in the first nine months of the year.

China's consistent run of improving data since the second quarter and recent comments from officials have prompted speculation the central bank may start to tighten policy.

But analysts say policymakers are unlikely to rush winding down existing stimulus amid persistent uncertainties about the pandemic and global demand.

Saudi Aramco Hires Bankers for Dollar-Denominated Multi-Tranche Bond Deal



RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Aramco said on Monday it had hired banks for a multi-tranche US dollar-denominated bond issuance, as the world's largest oil company seeks cash amid lower oil prices.

Persian Gulf issuers have shown no sign of slowing this year's blitz of issues on international debt markets as they work to plug finances hit by weaker oil prices and the coronavirus crisis.

Issuances from the region so far this year have already shot through 2019's record, again surpassing \$100 billion.

Goldman Sachs, Citi, HSBC, JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley and NCB Capital were hired to arrange investor calls starting on Monday before the planned transaction, Aramco said in a bourse filing.

Other banks involved in the deal include BNP Paribas, BOC International, BofA Securities, Credit Agricole, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Mizuho, MUFG, SMBC Nikko and Societe Generale, a document issued by one of the banks on the deal showed.

The oil giant, which made its debut in the international debt markets last year by raising \$12 billion after receiving more than \$100 billion in orders, did not detail the size of the latest proposed issuance.

It planned a benchmark multi-tranche offering consisting of tranches for three, five, 10, 30 and/or 50 years, subject to market conditions, the document said. Benchmark bonds are generally at least \$500 million per tranche.

“The backdrop is supportive,” said a debt banker on the deal, citing a \$1 billion Islamic bond issuance last week from Dubai Islamic Bank, which achieved record low yields.

Aramco needs cash to pay \$37.5 billion in dividends for the second half of 2020 and to fund its \$69.1 billion acquisition of 70 percent of Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC), paid by instalments until 2028. It raised a \$10 billion loan this year.

“In a world searching for yield there should be no shortage of demand. But persistent low oil prices and the threat that poses to long-term cash generation should be reflected in pricing,” said Hasnain Malik, head of equity strategy at Tellimer.

The Saudi government's finances are heavily reliant on the hydrocarbon industry.

Hungary, Poland Block 2021-2027 EU Budget, Recovery Package

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Hungary and Poland blocked on Monday the adoption of the 2021-2027 budget and recovery fund by European Union governments because the budget law included a clause which makes access to money conditional on respecting the rule of law.

Ambassadors of EU governments at a meeting in Brussels were to endorse a compromise reached on the 1.8 trillion package with the European Parliament, but could not do that because of the veto from Warsaw and Budapest.

The German EU presidency said ambassadors did vote through the link between EU money and the respect for the rule of law, because this vote required only a qualified majority and the opposition of Warsaw and Budapest could not stop it.

But when it came to voting on the 1.1 trillion euro (988.6 billion pounds) budget itself and the 750 billion euro recovery package, which require unanimous support, “two EU member states expressed reservations” the presidency said.

The Polish and Hungarian veto will now be discussed at a meeting of EU European affairs ministers on Tuesday and then at a video-conference of EU leaders on Thursday. But finding a solution might take longer than that, officials said.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said it was an absolute necessity to link the distribution of European funds to rule of law standards in member states, especially when the sums to be handed out were so vast.

The nationalist governments in Budapest and Warsaw are against linking EU money and respect for the rule of law because they are under a formal EU process investigating them for undermining the independence of courts, media and non-governmental organisations.

If the link, introduced by EU leaders in July and strengthened by the European Parliament, remains, both countries risk losing access to tens of billions of euros in EU funds.

“Poland is counting on a rational approach of our partners and on working out rules which would allow to reach an agreement,” a Polish government spokesman said.

“We are open to constructive solutions, as long as they are in line with the European Council conclusions and EU treaties.”

Since without unanimous consent on the 1.8 trillion euro package no EU country can get its money, Warsaw and Budapest have strong leverage to pressure others to remove the link.

But a group of countries led by the Netherlands as well as the European Parliament wanted an even stronger link and have said they would not approve the budget without it.

The blockage means money for economic recovery for all EU countries from the recession brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be delayed. It was originally planned to start flowing from mid-2021.

“Denying the whole of Europe crisis funding in the worst crisis since decades is irresponsible,” Manfred Weber, who heads the biggest group in the European Parliament said on Twitter.

OPEC+ Weighs Further Steps to Support Market

DUBAI (Reuters) - OPEC and its allies discussed weaker compliance with pledged oil output cuts on Monday and weighed further action to support the market as the second wave of coronavirus hits demand.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and others, known as OPEC+, were due to raise output by 2 million barrels per day (bpd) in January as part of a steady easing of record supply cuts implemented earlier this year.

But, with demand for fuel weakening, OPEC+ has been considering delaying that increase or even making further cuts. An option gaining support among OPEC+ is keeping the existing supply curbs of 7.7 million bpd for another three to six months, OPEC+ sources said, rather than tapering the cut to 5.7 million bpd in January as currently called for.

“Discussion on this is possible,” said an OPEC source, citing “weaker demand and rising Libyan output.” Algeria, currently holder of OPEC's rotating presidency, has backed an extension of existing cuts and top exporter Saudi Arabia has said the OPEC+ deal could be “tweaked.”

Other options include going ahead with the increase in output or cutting supply further.

Monday's JTC meeting also discussed figures showing OPEC+ compliance with pledged curbs in October was 96%, which was less than previously thought, once compensatory cuts for past excess production by some countries were included, an OPEC+ source said. The figures suggested little month-on-month progress in ensuring countries that overproduced in previous months made extra cuts now. Russia's cumulative overproduction was seen at 531,000 bpd and Iraq's at 610,000 bpd, the source said.

Oil nonetheless was trading above \$45 a barrel, finding support from hopes of a COVID-19 vaccine and for further action by OPEC+.

The full OPEC+ meets on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 to decide policy.

Japan's Economy Vaults Back From COVID-Induced Recession

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan's economy grew at the fastest pace on record in the third quarter, rebounding sharply from its biggest postwar slump, as improved exports and consumption helped the country emerge from the damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

However, analysts painted the sharp bounceback as a one-off from the depths of

recession, and cautioned that any further rebound in the economy will be moderate as a resurgence in infections at home and abroad clouds the outlook.

The world's third-largest economy expanded an annualized 21.4% in July-September, beating a median market forecast for an 18.9% gain and marking the first increase in four quarters, government data showed on Monday.

It was the biggest increase since comparable data became available in 1980 and followed a 28.8% plunge in the second quarter, when consumption took a hit from lock-down measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

“The strong growth in July-September was likely a one-off rebound from an extraordinary contraction caused by the lock-down steps,” said Yoshiaki Shinke, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

“The economy may not fall off a cliff. But given uncertainty over the outlook, I would err on the side of caution in terms of the pace of any recovery,” he said.

The rebound was driven largely by a record 4.7% surge in private consumption, as households boosted spending on cars, leisure and restaurants, a government official told a briefing.

External demand also added 2.9 percentage points to gross domestic product (GDP) growth thanks to a rebound in overseas demand that pushed up exports by 7.0%, the data showed.

But capital expenditure fell 3.4%, shrinking for a second straight quarter in a worrying sign for policymakers hoping to revitalize the economy with private-sector spending.

Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said the economy still had over 30 trillion yen (\$287 billion) of negative output gap, or spare capacity, part of which must be filled by a new stimulus package now in the works.

Bangladesh Issues First Rice Import Tender in Three Years

DHAKA (Reuters) - Bangladesh's state grains agency issued an international tender to purchase 50,000 tons of rice on Monday, its first buying tender in three years amid dwindling supplies and a surge in prices of the staple grain.

The deadline to submit offers is Nov. 26, with validity up to Dec. 10. The rice is to be shipped within 40 days of signing a contract, according to the tender document and officials at the purchasing agency.

Bangladesh plans to import 300,000 tons of rice, a senior food ministry official said, amid a potential shortfall in output after floods destroyed its crop.

Market participants, however, said the move would hardly have any impact on prices of the grain, which have gone up around 50% since March, amid the coronavirus pandemic that has pushed local prices to record highs due to panic buying.

“I don't think the government will be able to tame prices that way. It should rather cut import duty on rice,” a Dhaka-based trader said.

In 2019, the government raised the rice import duty to 55% from 28% to support farmers amid widespread protests by growers over a dramatic fall in prices.

“There is no plan to cut import duty at present. We need to protect our farmers,” Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzak said, adding the government would increase imports if required.

The rain-fed rice output or Aman crop is expected to fall as much as 15% this year, due to repeated floods and excessive rainfall, an official at the agriculture ministry said.

A recent domestic rice procurement drive by the government fell nearly 1 million tons short of the 1.95 million ton target.

Bangladesh, the world's third-biggest rice producer with nearly 35 million ton output a year, relies on imports to cope with shortages caused by natural disasters such as floods or drought.



COVID-19, Cruel Sanctions Reveal Brutality of U.S.

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri on Tuesday said that the pandemic era and the unlawful U.S.-imposed sanctions on Iran have proved the brutality of the American government.

Jahangiri pointed out that in the early days of the pandemic, where Iran had several problems in supplying the equipment

necessary for the country's medical staff, the American government prevented Iran from obtaining the supplies.

"Our country's medical personnel managed to curb the disease as much as possible, while the situation in European and American countries that are equipped with facilities is not better than Iran," he noted.



Moderna Vaccine 94.5% Effective in Second Breakthrough

WASHINGTON (AFP) – U.S. biotech firm Moderna on Monday announced its experimental vaccine against Covid-19 was 94.5 percent effective, marking a second major breakthrough in the vaccine hunt.

Moderna released early results from a clinical trial with more than 30,000 participants, after US pharmaceutical company Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech last week said their vaccine was 90 percent effective.

Both vaccine frontrunners are based on a new platform called messenger RNA, which is faster to produce than traditional vaccines and effectively turn human cells into vaccine factories.

"This positive interim analysis from our Phase 3 study has given us the first clinical validation that our vaccine can prevent COVID-19 disease, including severe disease," said Stephane Bancel, Moderna's CEO.

The company plans to submit applications for emergency approval in the US and around the world within weeks, and says it expects to have approximately 20 million doses ready to ship in the US by the end of the year.

Global infections from Covid-19 have soared past 54 million with more than 1.3 million deaths since the virus emerged in China late last year.

The Moderna vaccine, which was co-developed by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, is given in two doses 28 days apart, and the preliminary results are based on 95 volunteers of the 30,000 who fell ill with Covid-19.

Of the 95, 90 had been in the trial's placebo group, and five in the group that received the drug, called mRNA-1273.

There were 11 people who fell severely ill, all of whom were in the placebo group.

The vaccine was well tolerated, with the majority of side-effects classed as mild or moderate.

After the first dose, about three percent of people had injection site pain classed as severe.

Among side-effects classed as severe after the second dose, about 10 percent had fatigue, nine percent had muscle pain, five percent had joint pain or headaches, four percent had other pain and two percent had redness at the injection site.

New Poll Shows Turks' Confidence in Economy Drops



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turks' feelings of confidence in the economy has dropped and the culprit in their eyes is mismanagement by the ruling government.

According to new data from the Turkish polling firm Metropoll, 78% of those polled saw the direction of the economy as going badly, including a majority of voters for the ruling Justice & Development Party (AKP) and its coalition partner the National Movement Party (MHP).

Metropoll's new research shows that 58% of AKP supporters and 69.4% of MHP supporters had this view of the economy. In terms of reasons why respondents believed the economy to be poor, 60.2% blamed "wrong economic policies", 45.9% responded that it was the presidential system, and an almost equal amount attributed it to what they saw as the incompetence of government officials.

Only 22.9% of polling participants put the blame on any foreign plot against Turkey to ruin its economy.

These figures reflect poorly on the current government led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AKP-MHP coalition. In recent years, Erdogan has rejected traditional economic orthodoxy in his policy choices, particularly on raising interest rates, which has negatively affected investor confidence in Turkey.

Erdogan's refusal to raise rates, politicization of independent government institutions such as the central bank, and his reluctance to change course has had the result of weakening the Turkish lira which has risen to record highs against the dollar. The challenge of managing the COVID-19 pandemic has only added to Turkey's economic difficulties.

Frustrated by international firms downgrading Turkey's credit rating or selling off their lira, Erdogan has frequently blamed foreign forces from global banks to the United States as seeking to undermine Turkey.

Prominent social media figures supportive of the AKP champion actions such as converting the Hagia Sophia into a mosque or discovering gas reserves in the Black Sea but these victories do not appear to be translating into any bump in approval ratings because of the poor economy.

In fact, the new research suggests that this is losing its power to sway voters. For the first time, Metropoll researchers found that less than 30% of votes were for the AKP which combined with the declining confidence in the economy could signal danger for the ruling coalition in future elections.

The firm's researchers caution that this does not necessarily lend to a replacement of the AKP right away, but Erdogan has made some decisions that appear designed to regain some of the lost confidence in the economy.

Pakistan, Russia Discuss North-South Gas Pipeline

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches)

- Pakistan and Russia began three-day talks today on the North-South gas pipeline project, presented as the cornerstone of the bilateral nexus in the economic, energy, industrial and defense sectors.

Both countries will try to finalize the prerequisites to carry out the work, of approximately 2.2 billion dollars, reflected local newspaper The News.

In October 2015, Pakistan and Russia signed an agreement to build a gas pipeline from the Pakistani city of Karachi to Lahore. The initiative went through many ups and downs and is five years behind schedule, although Russia remained committed to its execution, the source said.

The North-South pipeline to bring gas from the coastal regions of Pakistan to the industrial zones in the north of the country was paralyzed by the US sanctions on Russia.

A Russian technical team arrived in Islamabad, led by the special representative of the Russian Ministry of Energy for



the implementation of the project, DL Kapnik.

The CEO of the Inter-State Gas Company, Saira Najeeb, will represent Pakistan at the talks.

Islamabad has proposed a 51 percent majority stake in the project and will offer the remaining 49 percent to the Russian side.

Russia has unrivaled experience in laying oil and gas pipelines, whether in deep water or on land. Russia's pipelines and compressors are also considered the best in terms of quality, the newspaper noted.

The project was revised upwards by changing its route and diameter. The new route between the cities of Karachi and Lahore will be about 1,700 kilometers long, said the Business Recorder portal.

The gas supply capacity will be 2.6 billion cubic feet, which would increase to three billion cubic feet in 10 years. Indigenous natural gas contributes 38 percent of Pakistan's total primary energy supply, which imports gas to cover the deficit, particularly when demand peaks in winter.

150 Cities Go...

FROM PAGE 1

Sima Sadat Lari said that with the 482 new victims, the country's total COVID-19 deaths mounted to 42,461.

Some 13,352 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 3,079 of whom have been hospitalized, she added.

Sadat Lari noted that 570,774 patients out of a total of 788,473 infected people have recovered or been discharged from the hospitals.

Some 5,691 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said.

She added that 5,586,141 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

Tehran Emphasizes...

FROM PAGE 1

Gharibabadi, referring to the proposed technical cooperation program of the Agency for 2021, emphasized: "The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring the use of financial resources contributed to the Technical Cooperation Program to effectively and efficiently achieve the objectives of the program and in line with the needs and priorities of the member states."

He emphasized the vital role of nuclear techniques in the observation, diagnosis, and control of such diseases, citing the Integrated Action for Diseases of Animal Origin project and the Agency's program for timely response to infectious diseases and assistance to countries in this area, as well as the long-term negative consequences of coronary heart disease.

The Iranian diplomat added: "We believe that this project, as a project of inter-regional technical cooperation, can provide a good basis for the leadership of the International Atomic Energy Agency and lead to a comprehensive synergy between all efforts at the national and regional levels and create a comprehensive approach to common human and animal diseases."

Gharibabadi also expressed Iran's full support for the project, saying that the implementation of disease surveillance, tracking, and monitoring systems can provide early warning and help countries' national programs to combat such diseases.

Iraq Gov't, With People...

FROM PAGE 1

Iraq parliament with electing Al-Kadhimi as premier thought that he could induce integrity and empathy between the government and the nation, and to put an end to the occupation of the country by the foreigners according to the approved law in Iraq and also to restore a logical and honorable relation with countries especially with neighboring states and especially with the Islamic Republic of Iran which has always stood by Iraqi nation and government in the tough times. But the government by providing grounds for giving time to the groups not aligned with the people reminds us of Shaban Bimokh (Shaban the Brainless) coup d'état in Iran (he was instrumental in overthrowing Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh's government in 1953 Iranian coup d'état) and the government has paved this ground.

The post- Saddam Hussein era experience in Iraq has shown us that new formed democracy in Iraq, tense political, party and tribal competitions as well as interference of aliens foment instability and insecurity resulted by occupation and terrorism.

All the parliaments and governments which have come to power and each has been forced to resign under different pretext, all and all, have suffered from this factor that national unity in Iraq and concentration on national interests are unachievable.

Shortages and problems regarding the national interests of Iraq and lack of national unity have always been a pretext for influence of aliens. Giving concession of time to the opponents also helps the framework of division in the country. The prioritized demand of majority of Iraqis is summarized in the independence of the country under national sovereignty and integrity, and reducing the interference of foreigners.

The Iraqi government even for the sake of its survival has required and will require to support Hashd al-Shaabi forces as the pillar of the national power in Iraq, and any backtrack from this patriotic and national duty will lead to more dependence of the country to the foreigners in its security, national defense and even economic arenas.

Iran Plays Pivotal...

FROM PAGE 1

Yahya Rahim Safavi noted, "Today, the power structure in the world is slowly moving towards a new order."

Stressing that the U.S. is no longer the world's only superpower, he said, "The decline of American economic, political, and cultural power at the level of internal and global scale is definite."

Referring to the failure of U.S. hegemony, the diminishing effectiveness of sanctions and other economic, political tools to put maximum pressure on independent Eurasian nations such as Iran, Russia he said, "Today we are witnessing the emergence of new economic, political, cultural and security powers on a regional scale in Oceania and Asia."

Today, the Eurasian region has got an influential role in the global economy due to the Sea of Japan, the Caspian Sea as well as the Persian Gulf in terms of having resources of world fossil fuels.

Elsewhere, Safvai hailed Iran's irreplaceable and unique geopolitical position in the world that can connect China, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and the Middle East to the Mediterranean and Europe, adding, "Transportation of Iranian goods to Russia and Europe is another economic axis that can be considered in the context of Iran relations with EAEU."

The one-day conference was to explore the role of free zones in promotion of regional relations. The problems facing economic activists for customs cooperation with the Union member states were discussed in the conference.

The Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization for regional economic integration. It has an international legal personality and is established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.

The EAEU provides for free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized, and single policy in the sectors determined by the treaty and international agreements within the union.

UNSC' Legitimacy...

FROM PAGE 1

The Iranian envoy further denounced imposition of sanctions as an improper method whose efficiency and moral legitimacy have been questioned because of affecting the vulnerable groups in the target countries.

Stressing the need for a reform of the UNSC's procedures, Takht Ravanchi emphasized that a revised council must be committed to law, abide by the UN Charter, and be responsible for its activities and decisions.



Ex-Footballer Escapes From Nigeria Kidnappers

WARRI (Dispatches) - Former Nigeria midfielder Christian Obodo, who spent over a decade in Serie A, including spells with Fiorentina and Udinese, said Monday that he had escaped from suspected kidnappers in the country's oil-rich Delta state.

Obodo was driving around the southern city of Warri on Sunday when he said two armed men forced themselves inside his car. "They pushed my girlfriend out of the car," he told AFP by phone, adding that a third gunman drove in a car behind them.

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Ireland's Doherty, McClean Test Positive for COVID-19

DUBLIN (Reuters) - Ireland defender Matt Doherty and winger James McClean have tested positive for COVID-19, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) said on Monday.

Last week, Ireland midfielder Alan Browne and striker Callum Robinson also tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

"The rest of the staff & squad tested negative ahead of the flight back to Dublin this morning before the match against Bulgaria on Wednesday," the FAI said on Twitter here.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Djokovic Off to a Flying Start at ATP Finals

LONDON (Dispatches)- Novak Djokovic produced a masterclass on Monday to launch his campaign for a record-equalling sixth title at the ATP Finals as Daniil Medvedev outfought former champion Alexander Zverev.

The world number one crushed Argentine eighth seed Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-2 in the opening round-robin match in Group Tokyo 1970 before Russia's Medvedev triumphed 6-3, 6-4. Djokovic, who has already sealed the year-end number one spot for a record-equalling sixth time, is aiming to match the absent Roger Federer, who holds the record of six ATP Finals wins.

The Serbian, 33, has enjoyed another sparkling season despite the coronavirus interruption, winning four titles including the Australian Open.

He came into the match at an empty O2 Arena with a 5-0 record against the diminutive Schwartzman but the debutant started impressively, breaking Djokovic in the third game.

However, the top seed broke back immediately and took his game up a notch, breaking again and converting his first set point with a powerful serve down the T.

Two more breaks in the second set were enough to take Djokovic to a comfortable win against his outclassed opponent. The Serbian admitted he had started slowly but said he was pleased with his game as the match wore on.

"In the second set I started swinging through the ball a bit more, bit less hesitation from both corners and I was very pleased with the way I played in the second set especially," he said.

The five-time champion said he was missing the fans, who usually pack the cavernous O2 Arena for the elite eight-man event.

"I've been playing the ATP Finals in this arena for many years and I've been blessed to experience some incredible matches and atmospheres and it feels very strange to play in front of empty stands," he said.

The evening contest between Medvedev and Zverev was a rematch of last week's Paris Masters final, where the Russian came out on top.



Both players struggled to hold serve in an intense start to the contest on Monday, swapping breaks as they struggled to catch their breath. Fifth-seed Zverev hit four double faults in his first two service games to set the tone and struggled to find a rhythm behind his second serve throughout the whole match, losing 15 out of 19 points.

Medvedev, who lost all three matches on his first appearance at the ATP Finals last year, broke again in the sixth game to take the first set. The pair settled into more of a rhythm on serve in the second set but 2018 champion Zverev blinked first, broken in the seventh game as his shoulders slumped.

Medvedev, spotting the German far back behind the baseline, slipped in an underarm serve in the following game, holding serve before closing out the match to love, completing his triumph with a leaping backhand winner. There were 15 break points in the match, Medvedev saving five of the six he faced.

The Russian fourth seed said his win at the Paris Masters had given him confidence, describing Monday's battle as exhausting. "The intensity of the match was one of the most I had in my career so actually second set for both of us was easier to make some winners because we were both tired so we couldn't run any more," he said.

"There were some amazing rallies. I'm happy that I came out on top of this battle."

World number two Rafael Nadal, chasing his first ATP Finals crown, won his first match in Group London 2020 on Sunday, along with US Open Dominic Thiem. The O2 Arena is hosting the ATP Finals for the 12th and final season before the year-end championships moves to Turin next year.

East Asian Clubs

Close in on Return of COVID-Hit ACL

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Withdrawals, weakened squads and worries over the ongoing pandemic have overshadowed the build-up to the return of the Asian Champions League, but on Wednesday East Asia's leading clubs will finally resume their quest for the continental crown.

Fifteen of the region's top teams will converge on Qatar in a centralized tournament after the global coronavirus outbreak forced the suspension of the competition in March with only a handful of matches played.

At stake is a place in the final against Iranian side Persepolis, who advanced to the competition's deciding game in October after the west Asian half of the draw was played out in a biosecure bubble in Doha.

Now it is the turn of the half of the continent that has dominated the tournament for more than a decade to determine who will go head-to-head with the club from Tehran in the decider on December 19.

The outcome, though, is far from clear as teams travel to Doha in varying states of flux.

Malaysian champions Johor Darul Ta'zim have already withdrawn from the competition after being told by their government they would not be permitted to leave the country due to strict restrictions brought in to combat the pandemic.

Japanese clubs, led by J-League champions Yokohama F Marinos and also featuring Andres Iniesta's Vissel Kobe and FC Tokyo, will be forced to juggle commitments with squads split to permit involvement in continental competition while action continues at home.

Chinese clubs, too, have obstacles to overcome. Two-time champions Guangzhou Evergrande will be without influential midfield duo Paulinho and Zheng Zhi, who are both ruled out due to injury, although Fabio Cannavaro will be able to welcome 2015's leading scorer Ricardo Goulart back into his squad.

Beijing Guoan will be missing Cedric Bakambu, the Chinese Super League's top scorer for 2020, after he joined up with the Democratic Republic of the Congo to play in qualifying for the African Cup of Nations and, as a result, has not been included in the squad for the Asian Champions League.

Henderson Injury in England Game Adds to Liverpool Woes



Sunday which ended the visitors' hopes of reaching the finals.

"Jordan had a bit of tightness at halftime and felt he couldn't carry on," Southgate told reporters, adding that he was not sure if it was a hamstring issue.

Southgate said the Liverpool skipper will be assessed when they return to England.

LONDON (Reuters) - England midfielder Jordan Henderson was withdrawn at halftime against Belgium due to tightness in his leg, manager Gareth Southgate said, casting doubt on his availability for injury-hit Liverpool this weekend.

Harry Winks replaced Henderson in the second half of England's 2-0 loss in their Nations League group stage match on Sunday.

Liverpool have had a number of regulars in their starting lineup sidelined with injury, losing defenders Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez after both underwent surgeries while Trent Alexander-Arnold withdrew from the England squad with injury.

The defence is threadbare with left back Andy Robertson also a doubt with a hamstring issue while Liverpool's midfield is without Thiago Alcantara and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain as both players recover from knee injuries.

Meanwhile, forward Mohamed Salah is set to miss Sunday's match against Leicester City as he isolates after testing positive for COVID-19.

Southgate said Manchester City winger Raheem Sterling would miss their final group stage match against Iceland with a calf injury but would be available for the weekend.

The England boss, 50, also confirmed he had tested positive for COVID-19 last month. "I did have the virus but I was fortunate," he said. "It was not as serious as so many people in our country. It was not pleasant but it is all fine now."

Strong Atletico Start Has Suarez Dreaming of Title

MADRID (Reuters) - Atletico Madrid striker Luis Suarez has talked up his side's La Liga title chances ahead of next week's showdown against former club Barcelona, saying his side's strong start to the campaign could give them an edge.

Atletico have won five of their first seven games and are the only unbeaten side in the top flight, while champions Real Madrid and Barca have already lost two games each.

Real Sociedad are top of the standings with 20 points while Atletico are third on 17 but have two games in hand. Real Madrid are fourth, while Barca are eighth.

"It looks like being a very close league, and whoever makes the fewest mistakes from the start could win it," Suarez said in an interview with Marca on Monday.

"From being at Barcelona I know if you start the season badly and drop points it's very hard to catch up with the leaders. If you want to win the league you have to be solid and convincing from the start.

"Things haven't gone well for Barca but we know they'll be fighting until the end. If we keep believing in ourselves and keep up this exciting start, why can't we dream of winning it?"

Suarez has helped lead Atletico's early charge with five goals since switching from Barca on a free transfer in September.

His Portuguese strike partner Joao Felix has also scored five times, hitting form after a difficult first season in Spain.



Bach Projects Confidence In Tokyo Games as Virus Cases Surge

TOKYO (Reuters) - International Olympic Committee (IOC) chief Thomas Bach expressed confidence on Monday that the Tokyo Games will be held successfully next year, even allowing spectators to attend, as the world grapples with a sharp rise in coronavirus infections.

Bach's two-day visit to Tokyo is likely to bolster Japan's efforts to stage the Olympics, but will do little to assuage the concerns of a public deeply worried about the spread of the virus.

The IOC president spent the day with the Tokyo organisers discussing how to stage the massive sporting event during an unprecedented pandemic and ensure safety for a gathering of more than 11,000 international athletes.

The visit is Bach's first to the Japanese capital since he and former prime minister Shinzo Abe decided in March to postpone the 2020 Games to next year.

On Monday, Bach fist-bumped with Japan's new premier, Yoshihide Suga, and told Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike they could be confident a vaccine would be available by next summer.

The IOC will arrange to ensure vaccination of both participants and visitors before they arrive in Japan, he added.

"In order to protect the Japanese people, and out of respect for the Japanese people, the IOC will undertake great effort so that ... the Olympic participants and visitors will arrive here vaccinated if, by then, a vaccine is available," he said. At a news conference later, Bach said he would not make vaccination a requirement for Games participants, however.



De Bruyne in Talks to Extend Man City Contract



LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne has said he is in discussions with the Premier League club regarding a contract extension.

The Belgian international's current deal expires in 2023 but the 29-year-old, who joined City from German side Wolfsburg in 2015 for a then-club-record 55 million pounds, said he is keen to extend his stay.

"I'm happy in Manchester, I'm at a good club (with) good owners," De Bruyne told VTM Nieuws before Belgium beat England 2-0 in Sunday's Nations League encounter.

"We are a bit in talks, not advanced. At the moment I am doing the talks myself. "I would like to stay with the club, so it's easy. If I didn't want to stay, it would take someone to mediate. But when you want to stay, it's not so difficult."

De Bruyne has won the league title twice with City and was named the PFA player of the year last season after scoring 13 goals and providing a league record-equalling 20 assists.