

Iran's Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari Said on Saturday That a Total of 431 More Iranians Have Died From COVID-19 Over the Past 24 Hours Bringing the Total Deaths to 44,327

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh Said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's Upcoming Trip to Azerbaijan and Russia Has Been Postponed Due to His Hectic Domestic Schedule

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Official Deplores One-Sided UN Reports on Human Rights in Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – In a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights Ali Baqeri Kani slammed the United Nations for producing "flawed" and one-sided reports on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic.

"Regardless of all the formal and substantive flaws on the issuance of the UN General Assembly political Resolution on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the current flawed and defective process, which results in nothing other than human rights abuses and distortion of the UN human rights mechanisms and politicization of the sacred concept of human rights, one should notice that according to the provisions of the Resolution A / RES / 74/167, the mandate of the Secretary-General is specifically to "report on the progress made in the implementation of the Resolution", Baqeri wrote.

"Therefore, from a logical point of view, this report should have considered both the positive and negative aspects of the human rights situation, and in addition to mentioning allegations of human rights violations, cases of protection and promotion of the human rights situation should have also been considered; but, unfortunately, the present report, regardless of the correctness or the falseness of the allegations and accusations contained in it, is completely focused on the negative cases and allegations, and the efforts, measures, and actions resulting in the promotion of the human rights situation in Iran are not included and have no place in it," he continued.

"Shiraz" Surveillance Warship to Join Iran's Navy Next Year

TEHRAN (MNA) -- A domestically-manufactured surveillance warship named "Shiraz" will join Iran's Navy fleet next year.

Commander of Iranian Navy Force Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi broke the news on Sat. and added, "This vessel has special features and would join to Iran's Navy fleet next Iranian calendar year (to start March 21, 2021)."

While expounding on the latest situation of manufacturing "Shiraz" warship, Khanzadi said, "Presently, construction operation of this surveillance warship is underway, so that construction of the structure of this new vessel, which enjoys specific features, has been completed."

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Iran-Europe Business Forum To Be Held in Mid-December



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – An Adviser to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran said that the Iran-Europe Business Forum will be held in mid-December to increase Iran's non-oil exports.

Mirhadi Seyedi stated, "With the cooperation of the International Center (ITC) and the support of the European Union, the Iran-Europe Business Forum will be held on December 14 to 16 so as to increase Iran's non-oil exports through creating the necessary platform for trade, scientific and technological cooperation.

According to Seyedi, the three-day meeting will be focused on specialized meetings on topics related to economic and trade relations between Iran and Europe, as well as special meetings on national export strategy in the fields of industrial sectors (auto parts and petrochemicals), agricultural sectors (medicinal plants, fruits, and vegetables), tourism services and services (ICT).

Emphasizing the uniqueness of this event for Iranian and European businesses, Seyedi said, "This meeting will allow Iranian and European companies to exchange ideas, expertise as well as identifying and communicating with potential business partners."

He also noted that Iran-Europe Business Forum will revive talks and build mutual trust between companies, therefore, it can lead to the restoration of Iran-Europe trade relations, strengthening economic ties between the two sides, while paving the way for broader trade and investment ties.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's foreign trade with Europe in the first seven months of the Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21) amounted to 15.9 million tons worth over \$8.8 billion.

Among European countries, the main export destinations were Turkey with \$1,489, 372,408 billion, followed by Russia, Germany, and Italy.

During this period, Iran has exported goods to 37 European countries, including Austria, Germany, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovakia, and Norway.

Over the last decade, Iran's private sector, comprised of both major enterprises and SMEs, has become an increasingly important part of the country's economy, contributing greatly to job creation and innovation.

The development of the private sector and the continued efforts of the Iranian government to facilitate privatization in major industries, has meant that the structure of the Iranian economy remains more conducive to expanded trade relations with Europe. This panel will provide an important context for policymakers and European business leaders about the composition of the Iranian private sector.

Following extensive technical cooperation funded by the European Commission, the International Trade Centre and the Iran Trade Promotion Organization have developed a new National Export Strategy (NES) for Iran. This panel markets the public launch of the new strategy.

In light of uncertainties arising from U.S. sanctions and the shock of the COVID-19 crisis, enhancing domestic competitiveness and productivity to expand trade opportunities is crucial more than ever before as Iran seeks a durable economic recovery.

Tehran Urges Int'l Community to Pressure Israel Into Joining NPT

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's ambassador to international organizations has urged the international community to keep constant pressure on the Israeli regime to make it join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) immediately and unconditionally.

Kazem Gharibabadi added all Israeli nuclear activities, installations and materials should be subjected to the safeguards agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"It is regrettable that the Israeli regime is the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East and, accordingly, prevents the treaty from becoming universal," he said in a speech at a seasonal meeting of the IAEA's Board of Directors.

The top official noted that Israel's covert nuclear capabilities coupled with the regime's full non-compliance with international rules and norms pose a serious threat to security and stability in the region and across the world.

Not being a signatory to the NPT and not having joined the IAEA's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) have apparently turned into an excuse for some countries to dodge their responsibility with regards to the full and verifiable implementation of their obligations. Accordingly, he expressed concern over Saudi Arabia's refusal to implement the IAEA's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement as well as the condition of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in that regard. "Riyadh is not fully implementing the SCA by possessing small amounts [of materials], and the UAE still officially has a protocol with the IAEA which allows the country to possess small amounts," added the top Iranian diplomat.

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U.S. Responsible for Attack On Iran Embassy in Kabul

TEHRAN (MNA) – Stating that the U.S. is responsible for the terrorist attack on Iran's embassy in Kabul, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman said the attack is an example of proxy war and the actions of U.S. terrorist allies in Afghanistan.

Condemning any terrorist act that targets the people of Afghanistan and civilian areas, Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed his sympathies with the government and people of Afghanistan, especially the families of the victims of this terrorist act.

"In today's missile terrorist attack in different parts of Kabul, including the diplomatic quarter of this city, according to the investigations carried out so far, at least one rocket landed in the precinct of the Iranian embassy in Kabul which caused minor damage to some facilities and equipment," he said.

"Fortunately, no danger has been posed to our embassy staff," he added.

Khatibzadeh cited the terrorist attack as an example of proxy war and the actions of US terrorist allies in Afghanistan, saying that the United States has direct responsibility for such attacks.

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UNICEF Hails Cooperation With Iran Convention On Rights of Child

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Iran Mandeep O'Brien hailed good cooperation between UNICEF and Iran's Convention on the Rights of the Child over the last few years.

She stressed achievements made by the Iranian government for children on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child approval, saying implementation of principles in this convention means presenting equal opportunities to all kids, girls, and boys in the field of health, welfare, food, education, and support.

Following Supreme Leader's emphasis in 2015 with regard to a maximum benefit of foreign national children from comprehensive educational facilities, grounds have been prepared for taking advantage of these facilities, she added.

This is a valuable step for children to have access to educational services.

Elsewhere in her remarks, O'Brien lauded Iran's achievements in the field of health and child immunization, saying 99% coverage against communicable diseases and also child immunization caused a reduction in the death toll.

She said that Iran's achievements in the children's field have faced challenges under the influence of the COVID19 pandemic and UNICEF is trying to decrease damages caused by the coronavirus.

U.S. Extends Waivers To Let Iraq Purchase Iran Electricity

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - The Trump administration intensified pressure Friday on Iraq and Iran by reducing the length of a sanctions waiver that allows Iraq to power its already overstretched energy grid.

The Trump administration's maximum-pressure campaign against Iran has left Iraq dependent on the rolling waivers, which exempt it from sanctions when it purchases a tranche of Iranian gas and electricity products that account for about a third of its energy needs.

A spokesman for the State Department said Friday that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had extended the waiver for 45 more days, leaving the Trump administration with a final decision on whether to extend it or cut it altogether before the Jan. 20 inauguration.

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Zarif' Trip to Armenia Probable

TEHRAN (MNA) – Foreign Ministry Spokesman informed that Iranian Foreign Minister's trip to Armenia, where he will discuss mutual ties, is probable.

Saeed Khatibzadeh said Zarif's trip to Armenia is being studied and he is probable to visit his newly appointed Armenian counterpart and other senior Armenian officials in Yerevan, in the near future.

As he added, regional issues and the expansion of cooperation between the two countries would be discussed in Zarif's visit to Armenia.

Gov't Starts Enforcing Partial Lockdown to Contain COVID-19

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iranian people from all walks of life have been urged to abide by the new restrictions enforced by the government nationwide as of Saturday to help contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Speaking in a Saturday meeting of the National Coronavirus Headquarters, President Hassan Rouhani urged citizens to feel responsible and cooperate with relevant bodies to successfully implement the partial lockdown.

"All state and non-governmental institutions should join hands to enforce these restrictions," he said.

"Undoubtedly, we can implement this plan successfully by fully abiding by health protocols and avoiding family and social gatherings and reducing travel," he said.

The president noted the new measures are put in place following the third surge in the disease.

"The main objective is to contain the spread of the virus and identify and treat infected people as soon as possible and offer good healthcare to people who must be put in quarantine," President Rouhani said.

He urged people to take the danger posed by COVID-19 seriously and observe social distancing rules.

The president said monthly cash handouts will be offered to around 30 million people



for 4 months whose businesses and income have been affected by the new closures.

"Moreover, ten million households will each receive a 10-million-rial loan, which will be repaid by installment in 30 months," he said.

According to the spokesperson for the National Coronavirus Headquarters, more than 100 cities categorized as high-risk red zones are partially shut down under the new program. In these areas, which include almost all provincial capitals, restrictions are imposed on the businesses and activities of the occupation categories 2, 3, and 4 (non-essential occupations).

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.

Spokesman Condemns

Pompeo's Visit to Occupied Lands

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh in a tweet late on Friday denounced US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's trip to occupied lands, saying that he prefers Netanyahu's interests to even that of Americans.

"The #PompeoDoctrine 101:

- Put Bibi's interest above that of even Americans who put him in office;

- Formalize Israel's occupation & whitewash Israeli crimes- no matter what;

- Silence criticism with bogus 'anti-Semitism label';

- Waste U.S. taxpayers money on private family tours," he tweeted.

Iran May Hold 2-Day Presidential Election

TEHRAN (Tasnim) –Ministry of Interior has proposed holding the next year's presidential election in two days considering the coronavirus restrictions, an official said.

Deputy interior minister for political affairs said the presidential election in Iran will be held on schedule on June 18, 2021, without delay.

The Interior Ministry has proposed to lengthen the election period to two days, which requires permission from the Guardian Council and the Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters, Jamal Orf added.

Another idea for holding the presidential election under the coronavirus pandemic is to increase the number of polling stations from 60,000 to 80,000, he said.

The deputy minister also stated that the government is likely to declare a ban on public meetings of election campaigns, like the parliamentary run-off votes.

The next presidential election in June 2021 will be held simultaneously with council and midterm parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.

Candidates hoping to run in the next elections are to apply in early April for approval. The final list is to be announced by the Guardian Council in early June.



Plan to Remove Iran-Russia Trade Barriers

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iran's ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali held talks on Saturday with some Iranian businessmen, economic experts of the embassy and discussed a plan aimed at removing barriers to Iran-Russia trade.

During the meeting, Jalali said that one of the main problems of Iranian trade is that instead of being aligned and synergistic, they are at odds with each other. On the other hand, many people who enter the Russian market are exploited because of unfamiliarity with international trade.

He noted that a proposed plan by the businessmen with the embassy cooperation in trade issues will cause the aggregation of interests so that businessmen can aggregate their capabilities and reduce costs and serve from other benefits such as using the green corridor, increase their competitive power and expand their market.

The plan is a proposal that will be carried out with the cooperation and perseverance of businessmen, and the embassy will support it and facilitate this path, he added.

He further noted that accordingly, companies, separate and scattered activities of traders will be concentrated in the form of several specialized holdings so that they can import their goods into the Russian market with good returns.

These imported and exported holdings will operate in the form of specialized collections, including fruit and vegetables, wood and fibers, dried fruits and cereals, paper, petrochemical materials, handicrafts, tourism, building, and transportation medicines.

Pointing to the importance of relations between Tehran and Moscow, Jalali called for strengthening the infrastructure for the economic development of the two countries.

IRGC Impounds Vessel Over Fuel Smuggling

HORMUZGAN (IP) - The navy of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) of Iran seized a foreign-flagged Panamanian vessel during fuel smuggling in the Persian Gulf.

The vessel was carrying more than 300,000 liters of smuggled fuel.

This action of the Navy of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps has been carried out as part of fulfilling its duty in the azure waters of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

The main task of the IRGC navy in the Persian Gulf and the strategic Strait of Hormuz is to protect Iran's national interests, establish security and combat maritime smuggling.

Under maritime law, including the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, a ship can be stopped and inspected on the high seas to enforce international law in a case that a ship (civilian or non-civilian ship) does not comply with international maritime regulations.

West Politically Abusing UN Human Rights Council

TEHRAN (MNA) --- Iran's Parliament Human Rights and Citizenship Faction in a statement on Sat. strongly condemned political resolution of three European states against Iran, stating that West is politically abusing UN Human Right Council.

The full text of the statement is read as follows,

Once again, enmity and hostility of some Western governments towards the Iranian nation was revealed and Iranian nation was punished by issuing a political resolution due to its practical commitments to fulfill its rights, protecting human dignity and defending rights of independent nations.

This time, UN Human Rights Council, which is a body established for the promotion of human rights and protection of rights of nations against the tyranny and oppression of arrogant and human rights violators, became a tool of political abuse of these countries.

The great nation of Islamic Iran has no doubts about the political abuse of the UN Human Rights Council by the Western governments, because despite the explicit disagreement of 64 countries and abstention vote of 32 countries as member states of the UN Human Rights Council, it was approved by the political decision of the Western governments.

The question of freedom-seeking people of the world especially the noble nation of Islamic Iran from the Western governments, as claimant of human rights, is that the occupying Zionist regime and invading Saudi regime should kill how many more Palestinian and Yemeni children in order to deserve a serious response from international human rights monitoring mechanisms? A country that has allowed sale of weapons in its own country for economic gain in order to have the highest number of murders with firearms. How long should black Americans be oppressed by the racist regime in the United States? To what extent should Iranian people lose lives of their beloved one due to the criminal US drug sanctions? The answer is very clear.

For this purpose, Iranian Parliament's Human Rights and Citizenship Faction calls on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Rights Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran to use all diplomatic capacities to take measures to prevent hostile actions by Western governments in the field of human rights and activate the legal and political capacities of independent countries to save human rights from the political domination of Western governments in international bodies.

Iran Needs to Develop Space-Based Radars

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – An Iranian deputy defense minister called for the development of space-based radars inside the country.

In comments at a conference on radar and monitoring systems on Saturday, Brigadier General Qassem Taqizadeh said Iran will have to employ space-based radars sooner or later.

He called for the development of the space-based radar technology in the country's scientific centers and preparation of the ground for such technical know-how to prevent a "strategic" surprise.

Hailing Iran's progress in radar technologies, the general said local experts have manufactured a

broad range of phased array passive and active radars and have strengthened the country's capabilities in the electromagnetic sphere.

"We are trying to thwart the enemy's electromagnetic onslaught," Taqizadeh said.

In remarks in October, Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said Iran is one of the ten best manufacturers of military radars in the world.

He said the new radars, manufactured by the IRGC Aerospace Force, are capable of detecting stealth aircraft within a range of 350 kilometers and all other targets within a distance of above 1,000 km.

Import, Export Through Astara Port Increase by 40%

ASTARA (IRNA) - The head of Ports and Maritimes Organization of Astara, northwestern Iran, said on Saturday that the weight of exported and imported goods through Astara Port has increased by 40 percent in the first eight months of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2020-Nov21, 2020) compared to the same period of the previous year.

Kianoush Amiri said that in the eight months, 98,000 tons of goods have been exported and 37,000 tons have been imported. The figure shows that the port has had a good revenue for the country and that domestic production is active in Iran.

Astara Port is 60 hectares and it is the first port of the private sector in Iran. It is the closest and the most cost-effective way for trade and transport between Asia, Africa, and Europe. It has been designed for loading and unloading 2,500-ton freighters.

Located by the Caspian Sea, Astara has sea, land, and railway borders points with the Azerbaijan Republic.

Even during the coronavirus outbreak, the port is considered one of the main points for Iran's export and import.

An official of Gilan Province customs office Abolqasem Yousefinejad has said that 80 percent of the exports of the province are done through Astara customs.

Yousefinejad said that in the first seven months of the current Iranian year 451,000 tons of goods with the value of \$282 million have been exported via Astara customs.

He added that the number is expected to reach 600,000 tons by the end of the year (March 20, 2021).

Reproducing Soft, Hard Power Key to Removing Sanctions

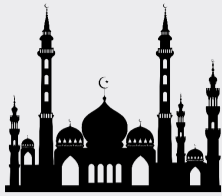
TEHRAN (FNA) – Majlis Speaker's Special Aide for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian underlined that strengthening soft and hard power is key to lifting sanctions, and said US President-elect Joe Biden is no friend to Iran.

"Removal of sanctions is top priority & to achieve it, (re)producing hard/soft power is needed," Amir Abdollahian tweeted.

"Trump's & Biden's approach differs, but #Biden is not Iran's friend & master key. Change to WH is taken into account," he added.

Amir Abdollahian reiterated that Iran is a "man of action & logical, dignified negotiation".

In relevant remarks last month, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani rapped the US for its economic pressure against his country, stressing that Washington has failed in economic terrorism it has been waging against the Iranian nation for the past two years.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:13
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:20
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:47

107. Contend not on behalf of such as betray their own souls; for Allah loveth not one given to perfidy and crime:
108. They may hide (Their crimes) from men, but they cannot hide (Them) from Allah,
seeing that He is in their midst when they plot by night, in words that He cannot approve:
And Allah Doth compass round all that they do.
Surah 4. Women (107 - 108)

Iran, EAEU to Hold Talks on Free Trade Agreement by Yearend

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization says talks with Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will be held by the end of 2020.

Hamid Zadboum said that the talks for temporary free trade between Iran and EAEU started in 2016 and in 2018 it was signed by the then Iran Minister of Industry, and after the approval of Majlis in late October 2019 it came into effect.

He added that the agreement was an international one between Iran and EAEU which includes countries like Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan and of course, the number of its members may increase in the future.

Zadboum added that Uzbekistan is working to join this union and some countries like Iran will have cooperation agreement with it.

He noted that some countries like Singapore and Vietnam are not the members of the union but they have free trade agreements with it.

Zadboum went on to say that the temporary free trade agreement with EAEU was carried out for one year in the first stage and then Iran has two more years to continue its free trade talks to finalize the deal.

He reiterated that Iran succeeds in signing the free trade agreement in three years, it can be a trade partner of the union and currently there is no talk of becoming its member yet.

Zadboum reiterated before resuming free trade talks, some legal measures should be taken that the preliminary meeting with the EAEU was virtually held in November in a webinar.



He further emphasized that the talks with the union on the free trade agreement will be held by the yearend and the talks will be in two parts that the first part is about the text of the agreement and the second part will be about the goods which may see discount or zeroing their tariffs.

An online meeting of the Iran-Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) free trade agreement (FTA) taskforce, which was set up following the agreement signed between the two sides in October 2019, was held earlier this month.

The meeting was attended by the chairs of the mentioned taskforce, the Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Zadboum, and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Minister of Trade Andrey Slepnev, the portal of TPO reported.

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

The trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran's exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

The figures show that the Iranian trade with the EAEU has increased to two billion dollars, indicating a 2% surge over the past eight months of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

SP Phase 16 Platform Resumes Operation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The platform of South Pars phase 16 has resumed operation after the reconstruction of the damaged parts of the platform's offshore pipeline, Shana reported.

This platform which was damaged back in November 2019 has come back online with a capacity of 500 million cubic feet (14 million cubic meters), Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) announced.

According to Alireza Ebadi, the director of production and operations in POGC, the damaged part of this 110-kilometer pipeline was replaced and amended and was put into operation after conducting pre-commissioning tests.

The official stated that due to some limitations in supplying pipes, 72 km of the mentioned pipeline has been replaced so far.

"The remaining part of this line from the shore with a length of 40 km will be replaced in the form of a new project," he added.

Noting that the causes of the damage to the mentioned pipeline are still being investigated by the relevant experts and consultants, Ebadi said: "According to the work plan, in order to fully study the phase 16 pipeline and especially its non-replaced parts, the smart monitoring operation will be performed on this pipeline simultaneously during its normal operation and sending gas to the refinery."

Pars Oil and Gas Company which is in charge of developing Iran's giant South Pars gas field has taken preventive health measures to deal with the outbreak of coronavirus among its employees working on the platforms, and fortunately, there has been no case of this disease so far, according to the company's office of public relations.

South Pars Gas field is currently divided into 24 standard phases on the Iranian side and is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Iranian Cinema, Winner of Herat Int'l Women's Film Festival



Herat (IP) - The 6th edition of Herat International Women's Film Festival in Afghanistan ended with six awards to Iranian films.

The 6th edition of Herat International Women's Film Festival was held from November 16th to 19th, and Saeed Roustayi's 'Just 6.5' won the Golden Earring Statue for Best Feature Narrative (World Cinema).

'Hava, Maryam, Ayesha' by Afghani 'Sahraa Karimi' and produced by Iranian 'Katayoon Shahabi' won the Golden Earring Statue for Best Feature Narrative (Women Cinema).

Also, the Joint Award Certificate for the best actress went to 'Sara Bahrami' for 'Axing' made by 'Behrouz Shoebi' and 'The Visit' by 'Azadeh Mousavi' won the Bronze Earring Statue for Best Short Narrative.

The 'Tangle' directed by 'Maleha Gholamzadeh' won the Bronze Earring Statue for Best Animation and 'Khatemeh' by Hadi and Mehdi Zarei won the Bronze Earrings Statue for Feature Documentary. Afshin Hashemi's film 'Goodbye Shirazi Girl' also received a certificate of appreciation for the different view of women in his film.

The 6th edition of the Herat International Women's Film Festival was held in two sections and this year, out of 300 films submitted from 122 countries, 73 selected films from 27 countries entered the festival.

Meanwhile Iran's famous director who also is one of the members of the Jury for the 6th edition of Herat International Women's Film Festival (HIWFF) said that a wide range of Afghan youth especially women have now turned to cinema. Narges Abyar told said that despite the good customs in Afghanistan, Cinema is not that much welcomed by the majority.

Referring to existing good cultural commonalities and backgrounds between Afghanistan and Iran, Abyar expressed hope that all the products made by Afghan filmmakers including documentaries, long and short movies would be seen and the Afghan Television network would cooperate to screen them.

The 6th Herat International Women's Film Festival was held in Kabul attended by an Iranian female Juror at the historic Daralaman Palace. The event was aimed at developing an Afghan women's cinema. More than 3,000 films from different countries competed in the 6th edition of HIWFF.

Tehran, Moscow to Boost Tourism Cooperation after Pandemic

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran and Russia have discussed plans to promote mutual cooperation in the tourism sector after the coronavirus pandemic is gone.

Minister of Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and Handicrafts Ali-Asghar Mounesan said the COVID-19 outbreak has kept the two sides from moving forward with bilateral cooperation programs.

"We had drawn up a special plan for Russia, but unfortunately we were hit by the coronavirus outbreak," said the minister in a meeting with Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzhagaryan.

Mounesan said Iran wanted to hold a meeting like the one it held with authorities of China's private and tourism sectors in order to establish links between tourism agencies of Iran and Russia.

"Iranian tourists like Russia and are interested in traveling to this country. Therefore, a large number



of Iranian tourists travelling to Europe can go to Russia as well. We would like to see the number of Iranian tourists to Russia rise," said the minister.

He said trips to Iran and Russia by tourists of both countries can bring the two nations closer together and make them get more familiar with each other.

"The coronavirus outbreak restricted our programs.

We intended to ... travel to Russia with a 40-strong delegation and hold a handicrafts exhibit there and Iranian performances for several nights, so that Russian travel agencies would get more familiar with Iran's tourist potential, and so would Iranian agencies," he said.

The Russian ambassador, in turn, said he agreed with Mounesan's viewpoints on the promotion of mutual tourism cooperation.

Tehran, Muscat Eyeing Cultural Cooperation

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian Embassy cultural attache and Chairman of the cultural club of the Sultanate of Oman on Friday conferred on ways to develop cultural cooperation.

Iranian Embassy cultural attache Ali Mousavizadeh and Chairman of the cultural club of the sultanate of Oman Mahmoud al- Salimi reviewed ways to develop cultural cooperation and helping contacts between cultural and arts activists.

In the meeting held in presence of the deputy chairman of the cultural club of the Sultanate of Oman, the two sides reviewed cultural commonalities and bilateral relations.

They called for utilizing the appropriate grounds for the development of relations and cultural and artistic cooperation.

The recommended to sponsor seminars, carry out education and research studies and translation and publication of the works of prominent writers of the two countries.

Fire at Khark Petrochemical Plant Contained

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The CEO of Khark Petrochemical Plant announced the complete control of the fire in the complex, saying: "Unfortunately, one of the employees lost his life in this accident."

Gholamreza Amirshaghghi told Shana reporter about the incident this evening (Thursday, November 19) in Khark Petrochemical Complex: "The liquefied natural gas (LPG) unit of Khark Petrochemical Company caught fire around 5:00 PM today which was contained after about 15 minutes."

He attributed the fire to depleted hydrocarbons during major repairs to the LPG unit, adding: "Unfortunately, one employee died in the accident, two suffered superficial burns and another employee suffered burns who was sent outside of the island for treatment."

The CEO of Khark Petrochemical Company stated that the LPG unit had become non-operational on Wednesday (November 18) for major repairs, adding: "Currently, the operational processes of Khark Petrochemical Plant are continuing normally and the methanol unit is fully operational."

Maneuver on Repairing Electricity Distribution Networks in Isfahan



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The CEO of Esfahan Province Electricity Distribution Company said the company held a two-day repair maneuver to assess the readiness of personnel in Iran electricity industry with presence of teams from the hot and cold lines in Isfahan Province.

Hamid Alaghmandan said the maneuver was held on November 19 and 20 from 8 p.m. to midnight in order to evaluate the level of readiness of personnel busy in the electricity industry in Isfahan Province.

He noted that Isfahan Province, as a major part of this national maneuver, had a colorful and serious presence in the maneuver and simultaneously it was conducted in 23 towns and cities of Isfahan Province.

Alaghmandan noted that the goal behind this jihadi maneuver of the company was the convergence and reinforcement of the internal and external organizational capacities, identifying the weak points to improve them, reducing vulnerability against the natural threats.

He further said boosting safety and standardization of the network, materialization of resistance economy policies, increasing the resistance and assurance of the network were the other goals of this two-day maneuver which was, God willing, materialized through cooperation of his colleagues.

He stated that the volume of executive operation and planned organizing medium and low voltage networks was around 107 kilometers, and 2000 points were also made safe.

Alaghmandan went on to say that in this maneuver, operational and logistic forces of the company in the form of 166 operation teams, 386 technical and executive forces and 75 coordination and logistic forces with using different equipment were involved.

Then the director of the public relations of the company Mr. Amir Ramezani said that due to the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions, all health protocols were observed in the maneuver.

Spain to Set Up Camps For 7,000 Migrants

MADRID (Dispatches) - Spain will set up emergency camps for up to 7,000 migrants as part of a plan to tackle the huge influx of arrivals in the Canary Islands, the government said Friday.

The plan also involves reinforcing Salvamento Marítimo's coastguard rescue teams in the area, alongside a diplomatic offensive as part of a concerted push to address the crisis in the holiday islands where more than 12,000 people have landed since September.

Migration Minister Jose Luis Escrivá unveiled the details at a news conference in Gran Canaria after talks with regional officials who want urgent government action given the saturation of the islands' migrant services.



Erdogan, Saudi King Agree to Solve Issues Through Dialogue

CAIRO (Reuters) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz agreed in a phone call to improve bilateral ties and solve outstanding disputes through dialogue, the Turkish presidency said early on Saturday.

Saudi state news agency SPA reported late on Friday that the king called Erdogan to coordinate efforts exerted within the work of the G20 summit, which will take place on Nov. 21 and 22.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey have been at odds for some years over foreign policy and attitudes towards Islamist political groups. The murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018 sharply escalated tensions.



Macron Blames Russia, Turkey for Bolstering Anti-French Sentiment in Africa



PARIS (Dispatches) - President Emmanuel Macron accused Russia and Turkey of seeking to promote anti-French sentiment in Africa by funding people who whip up resentment against France in the media, in an interview published Friday.

"We must not be naive on this subject: many of those who speak, who make videos, who are present in the French-speaking media are funded by Russia or Turkey," he told Jeune Afrique magazine, accusing Moscow and Ankara of trying "to play on post-colonial resentment."

Macron also said Turkey was contributing to misunderstandings over his defence of the right to caricature in the wake of last month's beheading outside Paris of a teacher who had shown his class cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

"When I decided to attack radical Islam... my words were distorted. By the Muslim Brotherhood -- quite widely -- but also by Turkey, which has the ability to influence a lot of public opinion, including in sub-Saharan Africa," he said.

Reiterating a position that has caused immense controversy in France and beyond over the last months, he added: "I am not attacking Islam, I am attacking Islamist terrorism."

Tensions between France and Turkey have risen to new levels over a range of disputes in recent months, including Syria, Libya, the eastern Mediterranean and now France's crackdown on radical Islam.

France has called for a total rethink of the European Union's relations with Turkey, which under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the last years has significantly built up its presence and influence in Africa.

Russia has also played an increasingly active role in Africa, with analysts pointing to the presence in several countries of the pro-Kremlin mercenary group Wagner.

In a wide-ranging interview, Macron also ruled out negotiating with jihadist groups in the Sahel region of Africa, where France has a thousand-strong force deployed.

"We don't talk with terrorists. We fight," Macron said, as debates intensify in France and Africa over the long-term strategy of its Barkhane force.

He said that France could talk to different political and other groups, but not terrorist entities "which continue to kill civilians and soldiers, including our soldiers."

And Macron accused Guinea's President Alpha Conde of organising a referendum on constitutional changes "solely to be able to keep power," adding that the situation in the country was "serious" following post-election unrest.

"It is for this reason that I have still not sent him a letter of congratulations," Macron said.

Macron added he hoped to visit Rwanda in 2021 despite continued tensions with the country and its President Paul Kagame over the 1994 genocide.

Yemen in Imminent Danger of World's Worst Famine in Decades

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - War-torn Yemen is in imminent danger of the worst famine the world has seen in decades, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned Friday.

"In the absence of immediate action, millions of lives may be lost," Guterres said of the country that has endured a five year war between Huthis and government forces.

The government in Yemen is supported by a Saudi-led coalition, assisted by Western powers including the U.S. Outgoing President Donald Trump's administration has made isolating its arch foe Tehran a centerpiece of U.S. regional policy.

The warning from Guterres, the latest in a series from the UN on Yemen, comes amid reports that the Trump administration is considering labeling the Huthis a terrorist organization.

That could cripple aid deliveries and make things even worse in Yemen, aid groups say.

In his statement, Guterres made only indirect reference to this possibility.



Armenia Hands Over Aghdam to Azerbaijan

BAKU (Dispatches) - Azerbaijan's president declared Friday that his forces have taken control of the Aghdam region, a territory ceded by Armenia in a cease-fire agreement that ended the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The truce, brokered by Russia last week, stipulated that Armenia hand over control of some areas it holds outside Nagorno-Karabakh's borders to Azerbaijan. Aghdam is the first one to be turned over.

"Today, with a feeling of endless pride, I am informing my people about the liberation of Aghdam," Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said in an address to the nation. "Aghdam is ours!"

Crowds of people carrying national flags gathered in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku, to celebrate the handover of the Aghdam region.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. That war left not only Nagorno-Karabakh itself but substantial surrounding territory in Armenian hands.

Heavy fighting that flared up Sept. 27 marked the biggest escalation of the decades-old conflict between the two ex-Soviet nations in over a quarter-century, killing hundreds and possibly thousands of people.

The truce last week halted the violence after several failed attempts to establish a lasting cease-fire. It came two days after Azerbaijan, which had made significant advances, announced it had seized the strategically important city of Shusha.

Aliyev on Friday noted that Azerbaijan is taking over the Aghdam region "without a single shot (fired) or losses (suffered)," and called it a "great political success" that wouldn't have been possible without military gains.

"Azerbaijan was able to achieve what it wanted on the political arena after having won a brilliant victory on the battlefield," the president said.

Protests in Brazil After Security Guards Beat Black Man to Death

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - The death of a black man beaten by white security guards at a supermarket sparked protests across Brazil Friday as the country celebrated Black Consciousness Day.

A video of Thursday night's incident in the southern city of Porto Alegre captured on a witness's mobile phone was broadcast on social networks and Brazilian media.

As the video went viral, around 1,000 protesters in Sao Paulo marched to a branch of the French-owned Carrefour supermarket chain and stoned the glass storefront before storming the premises, trashing and burning goods, according to an AFP photographer on the scene.

"Carrefour's hands are dirty with black blood," read one banner held up by demonstrators. Police in Porto Alegre used tear gas and flash bang grenades to disperse a protest that had formed in front of the supermarket where the death occurred, according to local television.

Protests also broke out in the capital Brasilia, Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro, where a crowd picketed a Carrefour supermarket to prevent customers from reaching the checkouts. "Carrefour can close, it has killed our brother, it will not work!" chanted dozens of young people carrying banners and masks with the slogan "Black Lives Matter".

The video on social media shows 40-year-old welder Joao Alberto Silveira Freitas repeatedly being punched in the face and head by a security guard while he is being

restrained by another at a supermarket. A woman stands beside them, filming with her mobile phone.

The military police in Rio Grande do Sul state said the man had threatened a female worker at the supermarket, who called security. Silveira Freitas lost consciousness during the assault and died on the spot as medics tried to revive him.

A friend of the victim who witnessed the beating told G1 news that as the security guards were beating him, Silveira Freitas "screamed that he could not breathe," a scene reminiscent of the death of George Floyd, a black man who died of asphyxiation as a white US police knelt on his neck in Minneapolis last May, a killing that sparked massive protests across the United States.

Both the supermarket security guards were arrested. One of them was identified as a member of the military police who worked part-time at the supermarket.

In a statement, Carrefour's Brazilian subsidiary deplored the "brutal death" of Silveira Freitas and promised to take "appropriate measures to hold accountable those involved in this criminal case."

Carrefour said it would cut ties with the security company that employed the guards.

In a series of tweets in Portuguese, the French head of Carrefour, Alexandre Bompard, expressed his condolences and said that the images posted on social media were "unacceptable."



N. Macedonia PM Laments Bulgaria's EU Blockade

SKOPJE (AFP) - Bulgaria's fresh blockade of North Macedonia's dreams of joining the European Union goes against the bloc's values and has caused a "lot of bitterness among us", Prime Minister Zoran Zaev told AFP.

Speaking during an interview in Skopje, the 46-year-old Prime Minister lamented the "unpleasant surprise" he experienced when Bulgaria used a veto to halt progress on North Macedonia's EU accession negotiations this week.

Sofia wants its small neighbour to recognise what it says are the Bulgarian roots of its language, people and history before allowing the Balkan country to move ahead in the accession process.

Zaev said any questioning of the Macedonian identity was a "red line". "That is an issue of self-determination" which is at the heart of the European project, he told AFP.

"There is the absurdity of the whole problem."

North Macedonia, a poor country home to two million people wedged into the heart of the Balkan peninsula, has been down this road before.

It became a candidate for EU membership in 2005 but was until last year blocked by Greece from moving forward.

Athens vetoed the move over the country's former name, Macedonia, which it considered an encroachment on Greek territory and heritage.

To overcome that impasse Zaev struck a tough deal with Athens in 2018 to add the geographical qualifier 'North' in order to distinguish it from the Greek province of Macedonia.

But new hurdles keep cropping up, from initial objections among EU members like France to the latest row with Bulgaria, again over history and heritage.

"We showed how much we believe in the European values," Zaev said, referencing the painful compromise of the name change.

"And now, when Europe was supposed to show its European values -- they were not there."

Bulgaria, which joined the EU in 2007, was the first country to recognise North Macedonia after it declared independence from a crumbling Yugoslavia in 1991, one reason why Zaev described them as "our biggest friend".



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J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Vanak Villa (\$4500)
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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Apt (\$2700)
Zaferanieh
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
L.balcony, J
marble floor
Fully Furn

Jordan Apt (\$1400)
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UK to Unveil Record 400 Billion-Pound Borrowing Plan

LONDON (Reuters) - British finance minister Rishi Sunak will announce the heaviest public borrowing since World War Two when he spells out his spending plans next week after the biggest economic crash in over 300 years.

With Britain in the midst of a second wave of COVID-19 cases and economic recovery on hold, Sunak has postponed longer-term plans for the public finances.

Spending on the pandemic is on track to exceed 200 billion pounds (\$265 billion) this year after the extension of job protection programmes, and other costs are likely to spill into the 2021/22 fiscal year.



APEC Leaders Call for Free and Open Trade to Drive Economic Recovery

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) - Asia Pacific leaders put aside differences over trade on Friday to endorse their first joint communique in three years, calling for free and predictable trade to help support a global economy battered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Leaders of the 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), who included U.S. President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping, also said they would not resort to protectionist trade policies.

The joint statement, issued after a virtual summit hosted by Malaysia, comes amid ongoing trade tensions between the world's two largest economies, the United States and China.

"The impact of (the U.S.-China) trade war has been eclipsed by the COVID-19 pandemic," Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin told reporters after the leaders' meeting.

"APEC has also pledged to refrain from backtracking and resorting to protectionist measures to keep markets and borders open," he said.

In the joint communique, the leaders said they recognised "the importance of a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable trade and investment environment" to drive growth during the crisis.

APEC countries failed to come to an agreement in 2018, after talks were stymied by disagreements over trade and investment between the United States and China, and last year's gathering in Chile was cancelled due to violent street protests.

Trump said nothing "controversial" in his remarks at the leaders' meeting but largely focused on domestic issues and spoke of the successes of his four years in office, according to a source who listened to his address. Xi, in his remarks, called for free and open trade and investment, and support for multilateralism.

He also said China will "actively consider" signing up for a regional free-trade pact, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Trump had pulled the United States out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, the predecessor to CPTPP.

In the run-up to Friday's meeting, several APEC leaders warned against protectionism and also expressed hope that the incoming U.S. administration of Joe Biden will engage more and support multilateral trade.

"As we confront this generation's biggest economic challenge, we must not repeat the mistakes of history by retreating into protectionism," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Friday at the APEC CEO Dialogues. "APEC must continue to commit to keeping markets open and trade flowing."

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Thursday that U.S. trade policies under Trump had caused "very slow" progress in APEC in recent years, adding that he expected "more multilateralists" in the Biden administration.

Other than the CPTPP, the United States is also absent from the world's largest free-trade bloc, the Regional Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (RCEP) - a 15-nation pact backed by China that was signed last week.

The Trump administration has been criticised for a lower level of engagement in Asia. The only time he has joined an APEC summit - held annually - was in 2017.

He also missed the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit this month.

India's Economy to Return to Normal Faster Than Expected

BENGALURU (Reuters) - Barclays lifted its fiscal 2022 growth forecast for the Indian economy to 8.5% from an earlier projection of 7%, saying the country would "return to normal" faster than expected as the COVID-19 curve in the world's second-most populous nation starts flattening.

India is nearing 9 million confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus - the second highest in the world, after the United States - but the number of new daily cases has fallen since a peak in mid-September.

"The prospect of an effective vaccine in the near future and high seroprevalence of antibodies across the population support the case for a more durable economic recovery," Barclays said in a note.

Businesses have opened up and economic activity has picked up in India after one of the world's strictest lockdowns were eased, with companies like motorcycle maker Hero MotoCorp and jewellery maker Titan Company reporting strong sales during the festive season.

The brokerage, however, revised down its GDP forecast for the current fiscal year to negative 6.4% from negative 6%. It expects GDP to fall by 8.5% in the second quarter of the current fiscal year, almost in line with the Indian central bank's forecast.

Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) projected GDP to contract by 8.6% in the July-September quarter, implying the country was likely to have entered a technical recession in the first half of the year for the first time in its history.

Barclays said on Thursday it expects growth in GDP will resume in the third quarter of the current financial year, a quarter earlier than the RBI's projection.

Last month, a Reuters poll showed the Indian economy would rebound by 9.0% in fiscal 2022, after suffering its deepest contraction on record this fiscal year.



Airlines Need Another \$80b in Aid to Survive

PARIS (Reuters) - Airlines will need \$70-80 billion in aid to survive the coronavirus crisis, or another half again of the amount already received from governments, their global industry body warned.

"We are extremely grateful to them for having injected \$160 billion into the sector," Alexandre de Juniac, director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), said on Friday at the Paris Air Forum, hosted by newspaper La Tribune.

"For the coming months, the industry's needs are evaluated at \$70-80 billion in additional aid," De Juniac said. "Otherwise some airlines will not survive."

While vaccine breakthroughs offer hope, a return to mass travel remains many months away, airlines say. Some will struggle to make it through the northern hemisphere winter, when profits are thin even in normal times.

Meanwhile a renewed surge in COVID-19 infections and travel curbs has further dimmed the financial outlook for a sector which IATA has predicted is set to lose \$87 billion this year.

"It's quite probable that we will be looking at bigger losses than the figures we announced," De Juniac said, adding that the full-year deficit would likely approach \$100 billion.

IATA has predicted a painfully slow recovery with a return to pre-crisis traffic levels only in 2024 and passenger numbers still down 30% next year.

That too could prove optimistic, De Juniac warned. "We estimate that air traffic will be at 33% of its 2019 level at the end of 2020 and then, we hope, 50-60% at the end of 2021."

Thai Rice Export Rates Hit Two-Month High on Supply Risks

BANGKOK (Reuters) - Thai rice export prices rose to their highest in nearly two months this week on concerns over supply even as demand remained sluggish, while a strong rupee kept rates for the Indian variety near an eight-month trough.

Thailand's benchmark 5% broken rice prices rose to \$475-\$485 on Thursday from \$470-\$480 last week, traders said.

"New supply hasn't yet arrived, resulting in higher prices," a Bangkok-based trader said.

Prices for top exporter India's 5 percent broken parboiled variety were unchanged at \$366-\$370 per ton, its lowest since the week of March 26.

"Demand is weak as buyers have taken a pause. Since container freight rates are going up, exporters can't reduce the prices," said an exporter based at Kakinada in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

An appreciation in the rupee is also reducing traders' margins from overseas sales, which makes securing exports deals difficult, the exporter added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's state grains agency issued an international tender to purchase 50,000 tonnes of rice this week, its first tender in three years amid dwindling supplies and a surge in prices of the staple grain.

But market participants said the move would hardly have any impact on prices, which have gone up around 50% since March, as the COVID-19 pandemic pushed local prices to record highs due to panic buying.

Vietnam's 5% broken rice prices were unchanged from a week earlier at \$495-\$500 per ton on Thursday.

"Demand from the Philippines is on the rise, but rice shipments from Cambodia to Vietnam help offset domestic thin supplies," said a trader based in Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnamese export rates are likely to remain around current levels until the end of the year, traders said.

Government data showed Vietnam's rice exports in October fell 5.8% from September to 362,930 tons.

Global Economy Recovering, But May Be Losing Momentum

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The global economy is recovering from the depths of the coronavirus crisis, but there are signs of slowing momentum in countries with resurging infection rates, the International Monetary Fund said in a new report for G20 major economies.

The report, released ahead of this week's virtual meetings of finance officials and leaders from the Group of 20 countries, underscored the uneven nature of the global recovery and warned the crisis would likely leave deep, unequal scars.

In a separate blog post, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva hailed what she called significant progress in the development of vaccines to vanquish a virus that has claimed more than a million lives around the globe and resulted in tens of millions of job losses.

But she cautioned that the economic path ahead remains "difficult and prone to setbacks."

The IMF last month forecast a 2020 global contraction of 4.4%, with the global economy expected to rebound to growth of 5.2% in 2021, but said the outlook for many emerging markets had worsened. Georgieva said data received since that forecast confirmed a continuing recovery, with the United States and other advanced economies reporting stronger-than-expected economic activity in the third quarter.

But she said the most recent data for contact-intensive service industries pointed to a slowing momentum in economies where the pandemic was resurging.

While fiscal spending of nearly \$12 trillion and monetary policies had averted even worse outcomes, poverty and inequality were increasing, and more support was needed, the IMF said.

New outbreaks and more stringent mobility restrictions, and delays in vaccine development and distribution could reduce growth, increase public debt and worsen economic scarring.

Georgieva urged G20 countries to act swiftly and in a united manner to provide continued support and ensure enough vaccines were available around the world, warning that no recovery could be sustained unless the pandemic was defeated everywhere.

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Monday said G20 leaders had an opportunity to commit financially and politically to the COVAX global facility, set up to provide COVID-19 vaccines to poorer countries.

The United States, under outgoing President Donald Trump, has threatened to pull out of the WHO, and has refused to join the COVAX facility, but experts say his successor, Democrat Joe Biden, could change course after he takes office on Jan. 20.

Georgieva also called on G20 leaders to commit to increased investment in green technologies and increases in carbon prices, estimating that doing so could boost global gross domestic product and create about 12 million jobs over a decade. Biden has also pledged to rejoin the 2015 Paris climate change agreement that Trump quit.

East-to-West Flow of Gold Slows as Swiss Exports to India Rebound



LONDON (Reuters) - The flow of gold from east to west triggered by the coronavirus pandemic eased in October as Switzerland's imports of bullion from Asia fell and it exported more to India than in any month since May 2019, Swiss customs data showed on Thursday.

Switzerland's exports of gold to China remained at rock bottom, however, suggesting that demand in Asia is far from a full recovery.

Switzerland is the world's biggest gold refining centre and a transit hub, and its trade data illustrate global market trends.

China and India, the biggest jewellery markets, have for years been its biggest export destinations.

But coronavirus lockdowns collapsed demand and Switzerland began instead to import gold from Asia to send to the United States and Britain, where investors stockpiled bullion to keep their wealth safe through the turmoil of the pandemic.

This stockpiling pushed gold prices to record highs around \$2,000 an ounce but the dynamic weakened in October.

Investor demand in the west slackened, Swiss imports from Hong Kong, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates fell sharply and exports to Britain tumbled to 19.1 tons from 50.9 tons in September.

Though Switzerland shipped no gold to mainland China and only 53 kilograms to Hong Kong, exports to India swelled to 24.3 tons.

In total, Switzerland exported 90.5 tons of gold in October, down from 105.9 tons in September and the least since February.

Iranian, UN Diplomats Discuss Efforts to Settle Syria Crisis

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen and Senior Assistant to Iran’s Minister of Foreign Affairs in Special Political Affairs Ali-Asghar Khaji held talks on the latest political efforts to resolve the conflicts in Syria.

Geir O. Pedersen, who is in Tehran with a delegation for talks with the Iranian officials, held a meeting with Khaji to discuss the latest developments in Syria, including the Constitutional Committee, conference on the return of Syrian refugees, and situation in Idlib and east of the Euphrates.



Brexit Deal Still Meters From the Finish Line

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union and Britain have made better progress towards a trade deal in the last few days but there is still a lot of work to do for an agreement to be in place by the end-year deadline, the bloc’s chief executive said on Friday.

Diplomats briefed earlier by the EU’s executive, which is negotiating with Britain on behalf of the 27 member states, said Brussels and London remained at odds over fishing rights, fair competition guarantees and ways to solve future disputes.

However, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen sounded a more optimistic note on the last-ditch talks at a news conference, pointing to progress on the question of ensuring a level playing field for state aid.

“After difficult weeks with very, very slow progress, now we’ve seen in the last days better progress, more movement on important files. This is good,” she said.

“Within the frame of the level playing field, progress for example has been made with state aid, but there are still quite some meters to the finish line so there’s a lot of work to do.”

Three senior EU diplomats told Reuters that, at the briefing for ambassadors, the Commission stressed that talks were still snagged on the three core issues, but there was now momentum that made them hopeful a deal could be clinched on time.

“There really was a feeling that we are seeing a lot of momentum and that somehow we will find a way,” one said.

The chief Brexit negotiators suspended direct talks on Thursday after a member of the EU team tested positive for COVID-19, but officials continued working remotely to clinch a trade deal that would come into force in just six weeks.

UK sources who work on state aid said Britain had offered to set up a regulator for corporate subsidies, something the EU has long asked for. But the sources said that, without knowing what London’s state aid regime would look like in the future, it was hard to work out rules to guide such a regulator.

One EU diplomat said the British proposal fell short of the bloc’s demand for a body independent from the government and with a clear mandate.

Britain’s transition out of the EU following Brexit ends on Dec. 31 and quotas and tariffs would hit bilateral trade from 2021, unless the estranged allies overcome their differences and seal a new partnership agreement that would also regulate ties from energy to transport to security.

Any agreement must still be approved by all EU countries, as well as the European Parliament, to come into effect.

With most deadlines missed and time running out, France, Belgium and the Netherlands have asked the Commission to update emergency plans in case talks fail and there is an abrupt split in trading ties.

However, a senior diplomat said the Commission told envoys it would only spell out contingency plans when it was clear whether the two sides were heading for a deal or a ‘no deal’.

“Shiraz” ...

FROM PAGE 1

“Shiraz” Surveillance Warship has the necessary capabilities in the field of radar detection, telecommunications, sonar and management of various emissions in electromagnetic warfare, he said, adding, “Moreover, the Warship is equipped with other capabilities such as knowing frequency band, identifying various parameters of radar and radio waves as well as identifying enemy’s telecommunication systems which is considered an important issue in the field of information warfare.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rear Admiral Khanzadi pointed to the preliminaries of constructing “Trimaran” Vessels and added, “Construction of this vessel, which weighs more than 3,000 tons and has good offensive capabilities, is on the agenda of Iranian Navy so that its conceptual and detailed designs have also been carried out. The plan for the construction operation of this vessel will begin in the coming years.”

Turning to the high capabilities and potentials of talented manpower in the Iranian Navy Force, he said, “Today, country’s Navy force has reached a level of capability that is able to meet its needs in the country relying upon its experienced youth and competent, professional manpower.”

A trimaran (or double-outtrigger) is a multihull boat that comprises a main hull and two smaller outrigger hulls (or “floats”) that are attached to the main hull with lateral beams.

U.S. Responsible for...

FROM PAGE 1

A series of loud explosions have shaken central Kabul, including several rockets that landed near the heavily fortified Green Zone where many embassies and international firms are based, officials said.

Following this attack, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kabul informed that a rocket landed in the precinct of the embassy, adding that the incident did not leave any casualties and all the personnel is safe. Several shrapnel have hit the main office of the embassy and in some parts, windows are broken and facilities are damaged, the embassy said.

Tehran Urges Int'l Community...

FROM PAGE 1

“As long as they refuse to revoke the protocol, as the IAEA’s Secretariat has demand time and again, the UAE will not feel responsible at all to fully and effectively implement the CSA,” he said.

“As for Saudi Arabia, the reality is that the IAEA is not given the least authority to verify the country’s nuclear activities,” said the official.

“With regards to the UAE, although the country is, in Emirati officials’ own estimation, implementing the CSA and the Additional Protocol, the country still maintains a protocol which authorizes them to possess small amounts; hence, they can stop fulfilling their commitments whenever they wish,” he said.

Gharibabadi noted failure to implement the IAEA’s safeguards agreements allows Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to conceal some of their nuclear activities without allowing them to come under the IAEA’s supervision. He criticized the so-called advocates of non-proliferation, who have sealed their lips in the face of these countries’ non-compliance. He also slammed some IAEA member states for cooperating with non-compliant countries to help them develop their nuclear capabilities.

U.S. Extends...

FROM PAGE 1

Usually, the waivers last 120 days, allowing Iraqi and U.S. official’s time to establish how to keep Iraq’s lights on. After Pompeo intensified pressure on Iran, that period was reduced to 60 days in the summer.

“The secretary has renewed the sanctions waiver for Iraq to engage in financial transactions related to the import of electricity from Iran,” the spokesman said. “The waiver ensures that Iraq is able to meet its short-term energy needs while it takes steps to reduce its dependence on Iranian energy imports.”

In practice, the decision deepens pressure on an Iraqi government already under strain from the Trump administration’s threat to withdraw its U.S. Embassy from Baghdad.

The United States has used the sanctions waiver and embassy pullout as leverage to push Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to reduce his government’s dependence on Iran and weaken the influence of militias in Iraq.

With the aim of improving rural water networks;

The “300-100” development project is being implemented in Isfahan province

The CEO of Isfahan ABFA Company announced the beginning of the improvement of 300 km of the rural water network of this province in a period of 100 days in the form of a project entitled “300-100”, which will be operational from December to March 2020. Explaining the achievements of urban and rural water and sewage integration, Hashem Amini stated that the purpose of implementing the “300-100” project is to provide safe and sustainable drinking water and increase its quality. He stated that the cost of the project is 57 billion Tomans and added: “This project will complete the water supply projects in 96 villages, including several rural water supply complexes.” The CEO of ABFA Isfahan Province also stated that with the implementation of this project, in addition to 948 villages covered by the company’s water supply, 18 new villages will also be covered. Amini stated: In this project, 22 water supply systems and facilities will be shared and integrated. Increasing the quality of water supply capacity to 17 villages that previously had nitrate problems in the water is another benefit of the plan. A slight increase in water supply capacity to villages is one of the company’s priorities. In fact, 136 villages will benefit from this plan and 70 villages will have access to sustainable and safe water resources. The CEO of Isfahan Water and Sewerage Company further said: the elimination of mobile water supply for 20 villages and the reduction of mobile water supply to 12 villages are other results of this project. The amount of water loss reduction after the project is about 2% and equivalent to one million cubic meters per year. Amini stated: After the integration of urban and rural ABFA companies, which was done with the aim of downsizing and streamlining, the field of joint use of equipment and facilities was obtained. This will increase productivity and improve the quality of services, especially for rural areas. He added: “Another result of this integration is the reduction of the burden of current expenses and the transfer of preserved capital to the construction sector, as well as spending on other projects. He said: The issue of integration of urban and rural ABFA companies as an important project of the mechanisms of scanning A-B in Iran, was on the agenda of the Ministry of Energy and Water and Wastewater Engineering Company. After conducting preliminary studies and holding expert meetings in late 2019, in order to implement the general policies of Article 44 of the Constitution and after the approval of the Supreme Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers, the integration of these companies began. Then 35 urban water and sewage companies with 31 rural water and sewage companies across the country had an integrated structure in the provision of urban and rural services. The CEO of ABFA Company of Isfahan Province considered the increase of productivity in providing services to subscribers as the most important advantage of the integration plan of urban and rural ABFA companies. One of the most important benefits of integration is managing the distribution of drinking water resources in an area, improving the level of services in rural areas and reducing the distance from urban areas. In

addition, water supply facilities in rural areas have been upgraded to prevent different decisions about water distribution in an area. Integration leads to complete mastery of all water resources in an area and the availability of a single statistic and information. This leads to better and more efficient management of drinking water distribution. He noted the importance of increasing electronic and distance learning, especially during the corona. He added: in order to maintain the health of the villagers and reduce face-to-face communication, many measures are taken in absentia and with high quality, such as cities for villages. This action also increases satisfaction. The CEO of ABFA Company in Isfahan Province pointed out the importance of increasing leak detection and preventing water wastage: water without revenue is estimated at 16.1%. This rate is higher in rural areas compared to cities, which we also reduce by implementing various projects. Hashem Amini said: Isfahan province has been a leader in the integration plan of water and sewage companies. This year, the province’s water and sewage complex was recognized as one of the top devices in the field of electronic services at the Shahid Rajaei Festival due to the creation of the 1522 system. The 1522 system is also set up for the villages of the province so that the villagers do not need to visit companies and cities in person to receive small services such as renaming, duplicate bills or even basic services such as requesting water and sewage. He continued: “Setting up the 1522 rural system required infrastructure and all rural water and sewage files had to be scanned and electronically archived. Fortunately, in the last eight months, 95% of the more than 230,000 rural subscribers have been electronically archived and can now Receive water services through this system. Despite the fact that 17% of the province’s water subscribers are rural branches, by performing these remote electronic measures, the share of subscribers’ remote calls to the 1522 system is equal to 23% of the total calls. This shows the success of the integration plan and the remote services of the subscribers in the province. The CEO of Isfahan Province Water and Sewerage Company mentioned Operator 122 as another 24/7 service of the company. “Operator 122 is the way people and water and sewage companies communicate,” he said. Subscribers can report incidents in the watershed, such as burst pipes, water diversions, and problems with the distribution and transmission network, as well as problems in the sewerage area, such as clogged sewers, missing valves, or broken lines. Using an integrated relief system throughout the province, this center has provided the possibility of addressing the water and sewage problems of the subscribers as soon as possible. 122 ABFA operator in Isfahan province is responsible for subscribers in 98 cities and 948 villages. Currently, about 5 million people in the province have a sustainable water supply network. This network consists of 2 million 325 thousand 843 subscribers. There are also 1,450,203 common sewage units in the province.

اجرای ۳۰۰ کیلومتر لوله گذاری در ۱۰۰ روز آذر تا اسفندماه ۹۹

دستاوردهای یکپارچه سازی شرکت آبفا

- مدیریت یکپارچه و حفظ پایداری منابع آبی با تکمیل مجتمع های آبرسانی روستایی
- پوشش کامل شبکه توزیع آب با حذف آبرسانی سیار روستاها
- دسترسی روستاها به منابع پایدار و سالم آب شهری
- حفظ ذخایر آبی و کاهش آب بدون درآمد
- ارتقای کمی و کیفی سطح خدمات آبرسانی به روستاییان
- بهره مندی مشترک از تأسیسات آبرسانی

Zarco Quickest in Practice Ahead of MotoGP Finale

LISBON (Dispatches) - France's Johann Zarco claimed the fastest time in practice on Friday ahead of Sunday's final MotoGP race of the season in Portugal.

Zarco on the Avintia Ducati was pushed hard by Spaniard Maverick Vinales at Portimao but was just slightly quicker with a time of 1min 39.417sec. Vinales will be happy with an encouraging showing though as he looks to win a six-way battle for second place in the standings, after his compatriot Joan Mir secured the World Championship last weekend in Valencia.

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FIFA's The Best Awards Rescheduled for December 17

ZURICH (Dispatches) - FIFA's The Best awards ceremony is now slated to take place December 17, where the successors to Lionel Messi and Megan Rapinoe will be announced.

The winners are voted for by the national team captains and coaches, 200 journalists as well as an online ballot of fans. There are prizes for the best men's and women's player, coach, goalkeeper, best 11, best goal and best fans. The original awards ceremony was postponed in September due to coronavirus and the new ceremony will be a 'virtual' event.

Djokovic Beats Zverev to Reach Semis at ATP Finals



LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic out-battled Alexander Zverev to qualify for the last four at the ATP Finals on Friday, staying on track to match Roger Federer's record of six titles at the end-of-season event.

The Serbian top seed, who was beaten comprehensively by Daniil Medvedev in his second round-robin match, was again below his best at London's O2 Arena but did enough to win 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

The five-time winner finishes second in Group Tokyo 2020 behind Medvedev and will play third-seed Dominic Thiem in the semi-finals.

Second-seed Rafael Nadal, seeking his first win at the elite eight-man event, will face Medvedev in the other semi-final after finishing second in Group London 2020.

Djokovic broke Germany's Zverev at the first time of asking in the empty stadium and raced into a 3-0 lead, threatening to run away with the match -- a repeat of the 2018 final, which Zverev won in straight sets.

The 33-year-old looked focused after his uncharacteristic mauling by Medvedev, serving himself out of trouble when he found himself trailing 15-40 in the seventh game.

That proved to be the last chance for Zverev in the set and 17-time Grand Slam winner Djokovic hammered a backhand winner down the line to take it 6-3.

Djokovic handed Zverev a break point in the fourth game of the second set after double-faulting but the German could not capitalise.

The 23-year-old fifth seed saved two break points on his serve in the following game, letting out a roar as he kept his nose in front.

The set went to a tie-break. Zverev earned an early mini-break but Djokovic levelled and the pressure was back on the German, who faltered to hand the Serbian victory.

The top seed said he had managed to find the right shots at the right time, in contrast to his performance against Medvedev, saying it was "anybody's game for most of the match".

He said Thiem, who won his first Grand Slam at the US Open in September, would be a tough opponent.

"Obviously earlier in his career he played his best on clay but of course being one of the hardest workers on the tour, the most dedicated players, Dominic found his 'A' game on all other surfaces," added Djokovic.

"His first Slam came on hard courts earlier this year in New York. I played him last year here -- I lost 7-6 in the third set. It was really a thrilling match. Hopefully we can have another great match but this time with a different outcome."

Djokovic, who recently equalled Pete Sampras's record of six year-end world number one finishes, has the chance to end the coronavirus-truncated 2020 season on a high by joining the absent Federer on six titles.

Medvedev will take on eighth-seed Diego Schwartzman, in the evening match, which is a dead rubber.

The O2 Arena is hosting the event for the 12th and final season before the championships move to Turin.

On Thursday, Nadal kept alive his hopes of a first ATP Finals title, beating defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in London to qualify for the last four.

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.

The 34-year-old has qualified for the ATP Finals for a record 16 consecutive years but has been forced to withdraw on six occasions.

Ramos Misses Three Games With Hamstring Injury



MADRID (Dispatches) - Sergio Ramos is likely to miss three games after Real Madrid confirmed on Thursday the defender has sustained a hamstring injury.

Ramos came off towards the end of the first half of Spain's 6-0 victory over Germany in the Nations League on Tuesday.

He is expected to be out for 10 days, which would mean Madrid being without their captain for their Champions League group game away at Inter Milan, as well as La Liga matches against Villarreal and Alaves.

It represents a significant blow for Madrid, who could also be without Raphael Varane away at Villarreal this weekend.

The club have confirmed Varane is struggling with a shoulder problem and will have to be assessed on Friday.

Zinedine Zidane may have to turn to Nacho Fernandez in defence and Eder Militao, who has tested negative for coronavirus.

Eden Hazard has also returned a negative test, meaning the Belgian will also be available to play at La Ceramica. Karim Benzema returned to training on Thursday after a groin strain. Real Madrid will be hoping to bounce back this weekend after a 4-1 defeat by Valencia before the international break.

Flick Seeking Kimmich Replacement for Bayern Half Century

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Hansi Flick needs to settle on a replacement for Bayern Munich's injured midfield dynamo Joshua Kimmich ahead of his 50th game as head coach.

The 25-year-old Kimmich is recovering from knee surgery after limping off in the 3-2 win at Dortmund a fortnight ago which kept Bayern top of the Bundesliga.

Bayern boss Flick was "relieved" that Kimmich should be able to return in January, but in the meantime must find a midfield replacement for Saturday's match at Werder Bremen.

Veteran Javi Martinez, 32, is the prime candidate as Corentin Tolisso returned from France duty carrying a knock.

Having taken over when Niko Kovac was sacked last November, Flick steered Bayern to the Champions League title last season as part of the treble.

The 55-year-old has the best record of any Bayern coach going into his 50th match in all competitions.

Under Flick, Bayern have won five titles by also lifting the Bundesliga, German Cup, UEFA Super Cup and German Super Cup as well as the Champions League.

They can add a sixth title in February at the FIFA Club World Cup in Doha.

His record of 45 wins, one draw and three defeats puts Flick ahead of former top Bayern coaches Pep Guardiola and Jupp Heynckes, who steered them to the 2013 treble.

Mid-table Bremen are unbeaten in their last six league games since losing to Hertha Berlin on the opening day of the season, but Bayern have won their last 19 league games against Bremen dating back to 2010.

Reyna Extends Dortmund Deal Until 2025

BERLIN (Dispatches) - U.S. teen midfielder Giovanni Reyna has extended his Borussia Dortmund contract until June 2025, it was announced Friday, a week after his 18th birthday.

"Dortmund are a big club that can challenge for titles and are in all the important competitions. Young players in particular have the chance to develop here," said Reyna.



Koeman Uncertain About Messi's Future at Barca

MADRID (Dispatches) - Ronald Koeman has admitted he has no idea if Lionel Messi will leave Barcelona next summer and said it is not his job to persuade the Argentinian to stay.

Messi made an attempt to leave Barcelona this summer before backing down. He can talk to other clubs in January and leave for free when his contract expires in June, with Manchester City expected to make a renewed attempt to lure the 33-year-old away from Camp Nou.

"Messi still has a contract and in my opinion he has to stay here," said Koeman in a press conference on Friday, ahead of Saturday's crunch La Liga game away at Atletico Madrid.

"But I am not the person that has to try to make him stay here. We will see about his future, still he is a Barcelona player. Nobody knows what will happen with the future of Messi."

After returning from a 15-hour trip back to Barcelona on Wednesday morning following international duty, a frustrated Messi faced questions about his relationship with French forward Antoine Griezmann.

A former agent of Griezmann's had claimed Messi was difficult to play with at Barca, to which Messi said: "I'm tired of always being the problem with everything at the club."

When the comments were put to Koeman, he said: "I can understand why Leo was fuming. People should show a lot more respect to people like Lionel Messi."

"After such a long trip, to ask Messi about Antoine is a lack of respect, once again to create controversy."

"I have not seen any problem between the two of them, not in the changing room on the training pitch. There are enough pictures who showing them working well together."

"Someone has said something and that someone has not been a client of Griezmann for three years. It's bullshit."

Klopp Sympathetic Over Social Pressure on Salah



LONDON (Dispatches) - Jurgen Klopp insisted his players have been "incredibly disciplined" with coronavirus restrictions despite Mohamed Salah testing positive after attending his brother's wedding in Egypt.

Salah was pictured dancing at the celebration without a mask on while back in his homeland during the international break.

Klopp confirmed Liverpool's top scorer this season is asymptomatic and could return to England on Friday, but Salah will miss Sunday's Premier League clash against Leicester.

"He is probably back today, that's what I've heard. We are in close contact with him all of the time," said Klopp. "At the moment he is in a good place, he feels well, no symptoms, that's all fine."

Klopp said he had to resist the temptation to attend a birthday party when home in Germany over the summer and understands why Salah had to attend the wedding.

"In other countries, in other situations, there is more social pressure on you and a brother's wedding is a very special moment," he added.

"What I can say about my players is they are incredibly disciplined. Football players in general were incredibly disciplined."

"There were some cases of course, but they really know about the situation."

Salah's absence is just the latest blow for Klopp as he tries to patch together a team to face top-of-the-table Leicester. Liverpool's defence has been decimated by injury with centre-backs Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez expected to miss the rest of the season with serious knee injuries.

Trent Alexander-Arnold will be out for another two weeks due to a calf problem, while Captain Jordan Henderson will also miss Sunday's clash due to a muscle problem.

FIFA Accused of Failing To Ensure Player Safety On National Team Duty



ATHENS (Reuters) - Greek club Olympiakos Piraeus have accused FIFA of paying little attention to concerns about player welfare after two more of their team contracted COVID-19 while on international duty in Africa.

In a letter to world soccer's governing body seen by Reuters, Olympiakos also said that the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and its member associations were not able to efficiently protect their players' health during the October and November international windows.

The club, who play Manchester City at home in the Champions League next week, said that football stakeholders had asked FIFA to ensure that safety protocols would be applied in the recent international breaks.

"Sadly, FIFA paid little attention to those concerns," Olympiakos said in the letter.

The club are angry that their striker Youssef El Arabi, the top scorer in the early stages of the Greek league season, is still in quarantine in Cameroon after testing positive for the novel coronavirus having travelled with Morocco for an African Cup of Nations qualifier.

The club said their Egypt international Ahmed Kouka had also tested positive after returning from a qualifier in Togo, which was confirmed by the Egypt Football Association.

"Their recovery and their time of absence, as well as their return to Greece, is for the time being unknown without considering in what state they are going to return and if they will face further health consequences of any kind due to their illness," the club said.

Reuters has contacted FIFA for comment.

The letter accused certain African countries of not protecting their players' health while they were on national team duty.