

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh Has Supported Calls Within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for Continued Cuts to Global Supply of Crude

IRAN NEWS

Tehran Police Chief Brigadier General Broke the News Yesterday, Saying That Anti-Narcotics Police Have Managed to Arrest 74 Drug Traffickers and 1,315 Dealers During Intelligence Operations

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Assassinating UN Member State's Official a Dangerous Game

TEHRAN (MNA) – Slamming the support for perpetrators of Fakhrizadeh attack, the Spokesman for Iran's mission to the UN stressed that the assassination of an official of a UN member state is like opening a Pandora's Box and a dangerous game.

Addressing the Wall Street Journal Newspaper in a letter, Alireza Miryousefi, spokesman for Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York made some remarks in reaction to the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists on Friday.

The following is the text of Miryousefi to WSJ: Your editorial "Biden, Iran and the Bomb" (Nov. 28) is shameful in its inhumanity.

The unjustifiable support for a brutal assassination of a prominent scientist does nothing more than encouraging a few criminals, such as the Israeli regime and its allies, to commit more assassinations. The assassination of an official of a UN member state in its territory is a dangerous game, opening a Pandora's Box; one whose consequences only reckless, apocalyptic people would ignore. Undoubtedly, the Israeli regime's involvement in this criminal act is designed to further disrupt the turbulent situation in the region and destroy the path for diplomacy.

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IAEA Immediately Responsible for Assassination Of Iranian Scientist

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian diplomat has reacted to remarks by Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi on a recent proposal by Iranian lawmakers.

Iranian legislators had proposed stopping or restricting the IEAE's inspections of its nuclear sites following the assassination of eminent Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Iran's ambassador to international organizations Kazem Gharibabadi said the agency should adopt a clear stance on the terrorist act. "In the first place, the IAEA is expected to clearly announce its position on this act of terror and strongly condemn it," Gharibabadi said.

"The IAEA has immediate and fundamental responsibility toward a member state which has allowed the most number of inspections by the agency and had the most transparent nuclear program by living up to various commitments, but whose scientists are facing assassination threats or are assassinated, and whose nuclear facilities are threatened by assaults or are sabotaged," Gharibabadi.

In an interview the AFP news agency, Grossi had said that the agency understand the existing concern by Tehran, but that neither Iran nor anyone else will win anything by halting or restricting the IAEA's inspections of the country's nuclear sites.

As for the assassination of the Iranian scientist, Grossi said the IAEA is an international organization for peace and security and expresses its hatred of any kind of violence.

Majlis Okays Outlines of Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Majlis lawmakers have approved the generalities of a draft bill aimed at tackling sanctions imposed on the country and preventing international inspectors from accessing the country's nuclear facilities.

During an open parliamentary session on Tuesday, 251 out of 260 lawmakers present voted 'yes' to the outlines of the draft bill, which, if adopted, will require the Iranian administration to suspend more commitments under a 2015 multilateral nuclear deal.

The details of the bill will be reviewed in a second reading.

The bill instructs the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to produce at least 120 kilograms of 20%-enriched uranium annually and stockpile it in the country and use it for peaceful purposes as needed.

After the bill is signed into law, the government also has a duty to meet, fully and without delay, domestic industries' need for uranium enriched up to a purity level of 20 percent and above for peaceful purposes.

Under the bill, the government would also be obliged to raise the country's uranium enrichment and production to realize the enrichment capacity of 190 thousand separative work units (SWU).

The bill also requires the government to make use of advanced centrifuges, including IR6 and IR2M types.

The government will also be duty-bound to halt inspections of its nuclear sites which are beyond the Additional Protocol.

The double-urgency of the motion had already been approved on parliament floor. The move followed the assassination of eminent Iranian nuclear and defense scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Lawmakers adopted the motion to tackle anti-Iran sanctions following the assassination of prominent Iranian nuclear and defence scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

"The country's nuclear program must proceed according to the needs of our country. When the plan is approved, we expect that it (the nuclear program) will be strengthened and developed, and that this trend will accelerate," he added.

Speaking during Tuesday's session, Abolfazl Amooei, the spokesman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said the plan is meant to open the locks placed on the country's nuclear program and advance the goals of nuclear martyrs like Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was assassinated by suspected Israel-tied terrorists on Friday.

The plan, Amooei said, also seeks to make imposing sanctions against the Iranian people a "costly" measure for Western countries.

"The country's nuclear program must proceed according to the needs of our country. When the plan is approved, we expect that it (the nuclear program) will be strengthened and developed, and that this trend will accelerate," he added.

UN Urged for Decisive Response Over Fakhrizadeh's Assassination

GENEVA (IP) - Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN Office in Geneva, sent a letter to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, reminding her of the need for a decisive response from the UN human rights mechanisms to the assassination of Iran's prominent scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

On Tuesday, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN Office in Geneva, Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh in this letter to Michel Bachelet, referring to the serious evidence that the Israeli regime was involved in this heinous act, described it as a "gross violation of international law, human rights, and all moral values" and warned of the dangerous consequences of belligerent state terrorism on the rule of law and warned of international peace and security.

Baghaei Hamaneh in this part of the letter by explaining the scientific and research services of Martyr Fakhrizadeh, including in the production of coronavirus kits and also the management of the COVID-19 vaccine production project in Iran, called his brutal assassination as a clear sign of malice of the assassins to prevent Iran from further growth and development emphasizing that the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its path of scientific growth despite all the pressures and shortcomings imposed.

He reminded the responsibility of human rights mechanisms, especially the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for such actions, which are a real example of state terrorism and violation of the right to life of innocent human beings, all human rights, and moral standards.

The envoy also called on the High Commissioner for Human Rights to condemn the act.

Two days ago, the UN report on arbitrary killings by Agnes Kalamard, in a series of tweets, described the assassination of Dr. Fakhrizadeh as a clear example of arbitrary murder and a clear violation of international law.

Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a distinguished scientist in Iran's nuclear, was martyred in a terrorist attack in the Absard region of Tehran province on Friday evening.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Coronavirus Has Targeted Cultures

Since December 2019, and for almost one year, that the sun of Coronavirus (COVID-19) has risen in countries, this time this sun seems so scorching that anyone who does not shelter in the shade will burn. And it even has turned those who have not taken shelter into a tool in order to destroy their dynast.

I was pondering what the governments, media, religious and cultural centers or anywhere there is a tribune would say about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Would they say to observe social distancing? Do they say to wear face mask in order to prevent from transmission of your respiratory saliva to others? And also would they tell you to take care of other people's saliva not to be transmitted to you? Would they tell you to wash your hands when you touch anything? Would they tell you not to travel? Or some other recommendations? It means countries impose lockdowns on their societies in order to stop their public getting close to each other. If someone wants to recommend entirely all of these measures and protocols to the people, what he should say? Should not he say that a stranger has infiltrated among you and you should keep away him? And why do we disregard these recommendations? Why do not we take the recommendations seriously and ignore them? Has not this amount of deaths, surrounding us, been a serious sign but we still do not like our lives? In fact, with which part of today's human body associates obeying one sincere recommendation or advice?

In my opinion, today's culture of Coronavirus cannot cope with culture-oriented people but those who refrain from observing cautionary recommendations and advice will suffer from this plight. Have a look at this pandemic in the world. A glance at the number of COVID-19 infected people, at the number of its death toll and at the fluctuation of the number of deaths and infections, all tell us that all of us by ourselves individually can throw out this virus from us, our families, our cities and even our country. What does this mean? With moving in the culture-oriented direction. Moving in direction of obeying all preventive methods to contain the outbreak of this pandemic. Some countries have not essentially been affected by the virus. What does it mean? It means the degree of culture and understanding has reached a level in those countries that they have contained the virus and stopped it from spreading.

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Iran to Open Third Border Crossing With Turkmenistan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Turkmenistan would allow limited transshipment of goods through a major border crossing nine months after it was closed because of movement restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The spokesman of Iran's customs office (IRICA) said that the Lotfabad border crossing will begin to accommodate 10 truck cargoes per day through transshipment as of Tuesday.

Rouhollah Latifi said the border crossing reopens at the request of the government of Turkmenistan.

Iranian exporters and businesses use four border crossings to Turkmenistan for transport of cargoes to the country and other landlocked states in the Central Asia region.

Transport through two border crossings at Sarakhs and Incheboroun has already resumed and Iranian and Turkmen authorities mull reopening the fourth crossing at Bajgir.

A major bridge linking the namesake cities of Sarakhs on the Iranian and Turkmen side of the border came on line in June to help increase Iranian exports to Central Asia.

Iran has also installed roll-on/roll-off facilities at Amir Abad port on the Caspian Sea to raise the volume of exports to the region through Ro-Ro shipping to Kazakhstan's port of Kuryk.

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One-Sided Game Over

TEHRAN (IP) - With the 'strategic action plan to nullify sanction and protect Iranian nation's rights' bill adopted in Iran's Parliament, Speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that the adoption sent a message to the enemies that the one-sided game was over.

The bill adopted on Tuesday includes 9 articles that oblige the government to operationalize 20-percent enrichment of uranium and Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (AEOI) to incorporate 6 and 8 generation centrifuges.

Blow of Sanctions On Iran Neutralized

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Hassan Rouhani has highlighted the administration's success in foiling the enemy's plot to cripple the country's economy through sanctions.

In an address to a Tuesday session of the Administration's Economic Coordination Headquarters, President Rouhani said the enemy has failed to achieve its main purpose in imposing the sanctions and economic war against Iran, namely the economic collapse of the Islamic Republic.

In spite of the harmful effects of sanctions on Iran's economy and the livelihood of people, "we can assert strongly that the impacts of sanctions have been neutralized," the president added.

The success in tackling the sanctions has been gained with resistance and prudent policies, President Rouhani stressed, saying the enemy's objective to disrupt the Iranian society's calm, psychological security and economic stability has also ended in failure.

"Those who have failed to meet the objective of halting Iran's economy during two years and a half of implementation of the anti-Iranian policy of maximum pressure are now angry about the clam and the improving course in Iran's economy, and are seeking to send negative waves to (Iran's) economy in these few weeks," the president added, pointing to the termination of the U.S. administration's term.

"People are confident that the economic resistance has borne fruit and those who have imposed sanctions will have to reverse their approach. That's why the



predictions of future have become positive, as the economic behavior in various markets attest to it," President Rouhani stated.

On the efforts to finalize the next year's national budget bill, the president said the budget bill prepared by the administration would pave the way for the country's progress and development of infrastructures.

The main strategy in preparing the next year's budget is to maintain and strengthen the process of development and support the vulnerable groups, the president explained, hoping that removal of the obstacles would accelerate the country's development pace in the next Iranian year, which begins in March 2021.

President Rouhani finally noted that oil revenues have been excluded from the next year's budget, highlighting the administration's detailed planning and accurate calculations coupled with the experience of countering severe economic sanctions.

Some 382 More Iranians Die From COVID-19

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Some 382 more Iranians have died from COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Tuesday.

The health ministry spokeswoman said that with the 382 new deaths, the country's total COVID-19 death toll mounted to 48,628.

Some 13,881 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 2,237 of whom have been hospitalized, Sadat Lari added.

She said that a total of 975,951 Iranians have been confirmed infected with the COVID-19, some 677,963 of whom have recovered or been discharged from the hospitals.

Some 5,840 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and are being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman further said.

Sadat Lari added that 6,168,673 coronavirus tests have so far been carried out in Iran.

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

Hormozgan, Fars, Golestan, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces are also regarded as an orange and yellow zone

Disappointing People, Maximum Pressure; Aims of Assassination



TEHRAN (IP) - The government spokesman called disappointing people in achieving victory in order to push back the maximum pressure, creating confusion in Iran's strategy and closing the window for peace as objectives of the assassination of a senior Iranian nuclear and defense industry scientist Mohsen Fakhri Zadeh.

Speaking at his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Ali Rabiei stated: "The government congratulates and condoles the martyrdom of the son of the Iranian scientific community to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, honorable and patient people, the scientific community of the country and his family."

He also stressed that Iran could have thwarted the assassination of Mohsen Fakhri Zadeh with a little care and observance of protection protocols.

The government spokesman added: "This brutal assassination took a father from his family, a scientist from the university community, and an honorable citizen from our nation, but there is nothing else which could be achieved beyond this."

Rabiei added: "Terrorists will definitely not achieve their goals. Our nuclear and defense knowledge is not irreversible. Our people were unaffected by the psychological operations of this assassination, and, as their behavior these days showed, they became smarter and more united in the national interest and against the real enemies of our nation."

He went on to say: "Disrupting the peace of mind of the society, disappointing the people and achieving victory and repelling the maximum pressure, creating confusion in Iran's strategy and putting force on playing on enemy's court, and finally disrupting regional security and blocking the window of peace and tranquility are amongst the objectives sought from this assassination."

Rabiei highlighted: "Contrary to what we hear in the foreign media about the assassination of our country's nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri Zadeh, terrorist and spy organizations were under our cover despite their many claims, and the place of the assassination was predicted and with a little care and observance of protection protocols, we could have thwarted this crime."

He noted: "At the same time, the security services, as always, will do their best to improve their procedures as much as possible and to ensure that these unfortunate events do not happen again."

Iranians Not to Be Deceived by Final Machinations of Int'l Terrorists, Zionist Warmongers

TEHRAN (PressTV)

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has shed light on an anti-Iran psychological operation by the Saudi-Israeli-U.S. axis that led up to the assassination of a senior nuclear scientist, saying Iranians will never be deceived by the final struggles of international terrorists and notorious warmongers.

"The architects and advocates of the failed policy of maximum pressure [on Iran] are trying to use the final days of [U.S. President Donald] Trump's regime to generate tensions and harm the environment created for the removal of repressive sanctions," Zarif said in a post on his Instagram account on Monday night.

Zarif highlighted U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent tour of the region, his tripartite meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as well as Netanyahu's recent remarks, saying the developments are all indicative of such a conspiracy, which unfortunately came to light with the cowardly and terrorist act of assassinating one of Iran's top scientists.

"A counter-intelligence campaign and purposeful psychological warfare were launched in tandem with this terrorist act, in the delusive hope that the evil plans of Pompeo, Netanyahu and bin Salman to create tensions would materialize," the post added.

As soon as the news of Fakhri Zadeh's assassination broke on Persian-language outlets on Friday, Israeli media were falsely cited as claiming that the scientist's



name had been leaked to Israel's Mossad spy agency through UN lists, Zarif said.

"In fact, it is just the opposite," Zarif said. "The IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) was notified of Fakhri Zadeh's identity in mid-2000s by the US and the Zionist regime, and his name was

mentioned in the list of individuals subject to sanctions under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747 adopted on March 24, 2007."

Zarif said an analysis of keywords of the 10,000 tweets posted within the first few hours after the assassination shows that about 79 percent of them were aimed at provoking internal divisions, namely through opposition to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal as well as cooperation with the IAEA and related negotiations.

Only 21 percent of the remaining tweets were directed at the masterminds and perpetrators of the heinous crime, he said, using charts to present the data.

More interestingly, nearly 93% of such tweets had been posted from fake and anonymous accounts with a history of less than a year and were mostly of foreign origin, Zarif said.

Nevertheless, Iranian authorities and vigilant people will never be deceived by the last struggles of international terrorists and extremist Zionist warmongers, and will maintain their solidarity and unity in the face of the economic war being waged by Trump and his allies, Zarif said.

Backing Export of Agro Products Top on Gov't Agenda

TEHRAN (MNA) -First Vice President said that supporting export promotion of agricultural products is the serious approach taken by the government.

Speaking in a Working Group session of 'Removal of Production Barriers' on Tuesday, Eshaq Jahangiri pointed to the promotion of export as a driving force of the production sector and added, "Export promotion is the most important factor behind the realization of objectives of 'Surge in Production'."

When there is an export market for a product, investors will be encouraged to invest in that product eagerly, Jahangiri emphasized.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the export promotion and added, "Promotion of export can create a positive leap in production of industrial and agricultural products."

He called on Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and other responsible organizations to support exporters and solve their problems in relevant field, adding, "CBI should devise an accurate and precise plan to support domestic exporters of target markets, so that suitable ways should be paved for Iranian exporters to compete with their foreign peers in eyeing lucrative target markets."

He further noted that supporting export promotion of agricultural products is the serious approach taken by the government and added, "Accurate planning should be compiled by concerned organizations for exporting agricultural products." He then called for identifying and removing barriers ahead of export of agricultural products.

VP Calls for SCO Members' Participation in Chabahar-Zahedan Railway

TEHRAN (FNA) - First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri invited Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states to take part in the huge Chabahar-Zahedan railway project.

Speaking at the 19th SCO virtual meeting on Monday, which was hosted by India, Jahangiri said that the importance of Chabahar port and its rail connections, along the way to Afghanistan and Central Asia, has caused Iran to start construction of the Chabahar-Zahedan railway despite illegal US sanctions.

"I appreciate the opportunity and invite other countries, especially SCO members, to participate in Chabahar-Zahedan huge project," Jahangiri added.

"In today's high-risk world, regional institutions are one of the most effective tools for managing and resolving regional, global, and even national issues," he noted, adding "To this end, SCO members can play a significant role in progress by using the vast capacities and opportunities for multilateral cooperation."

"Since the imposition of U.S. unilateral sanctions is a measure against global free trade and could be repeated for any of its political or economic rivals, the SCO should take proper measures to confront such illegal measures," the Iranian official went on to say.

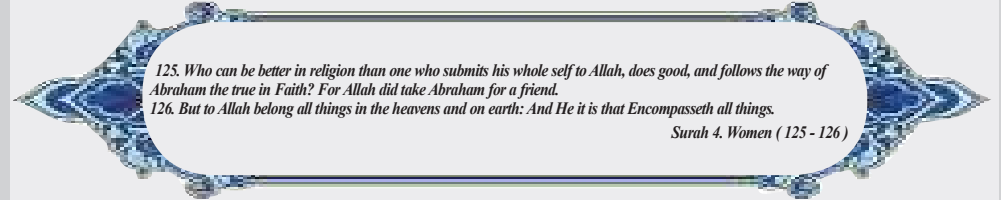
"The Islamic Republic of Iran, due to its special geographical, historical, and economic location, which links various regions including Central Asia, the Caucasus, and West Asia," Jahangiri said and added, "It is ready to be one of the rich energy hubs and highways of the region with the SCO member states for transfer and export of energy and transit of goods."





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:53
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:10
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:28
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:57



30% of Imported Medicines Are From U.S.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Health Economy Commission of Tehran Chamber of Commerce Mr. Nasser Riahi says COVID-19 vaccine produced by two American companies will definitely arrive in Iran, saying that currently 30 percent of Iran's monthly imported medicines are from the U.S. as one should consider this point that vaccine is not under the U.S. sanctions.

Speaking to ILNA, Riahi explained the latest development on imports of COVID-19 vaccine to Iran, saying that according to reports, two American COVID-19 vaccine producers have applied for getting license for distribution of the vaccine and it is expected the vaccine to be distributed in the U.S. in a week.

He noted that production of COVID-19 vaccine in India is in its last stages and some countries have pre-purchased the vaccine.

Riahi went on to say that except the U.S. which does not follow the World Health Organization directives, other countries according to the directives of the WHO, are allowed to first vaccinate their health staff and three percent of their total populations and then gradually vaccinate the remaining population.

He said he is not optimistic Iranians to have access to the vaccine before the New Year (late March), reacting to some reports that Iran air navigation is getting ready



for imports of the vaccine and said if it is true, he is not aware of it.

Riahi reiterated that issues like sanctions or transfer of money cannot hinder imports of the vaccine, noting that sanctions cannot be an obstacle for importing the COVID-19 vaccine.

He also said that in the condition that the country imports medicines worth of 100m euros monthly, the expense of importing the COVID-19 vaccine is lower but one should not forget that the producers do not sell entirely the vaccine to any country.

He said Indian-made COVID-19 vaccine is the cheapest one that each dose of it will cost around \$4 while the vaccines produced by American companies will cost between 20 to 30 dollars per dose.

On the price of China-made vaccine, Riahi said each dose of Chinese vaccine may cost between 30 to 70 dollars.

Zamaninia Elected as Chairman of OPEC Executive Board

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading Amir-Hossein Zamaninia who is the country's governor at the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has been elected as the new chairman of the OPEC executive board for 2021.

The decision was made during the 180th meeting of the OPEC Conference which was held on Monday.

The mentioned board is the executive body of OPEC which directs the Organization's affairs, implements the decisions made at meetings, reviews and decides on the reports submitted by the Secretary General, submits reports and recommendations to the ministerial meetings, prepares the budget for each calendar year and submits it to the ministerial meetings for approval and etc.

In the meeting, extending the oil output cut of 7.7 million barrels per day was discussed. Although some OPEC members complained that some members had not complied with the previous decisions, there was a consensus that the organization's complaint was not in a way that could prevent an extension of the existing deal.



Majlis Seeks Boosting Economic Cooperation With Friendly Countries



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran-Romania Parliamentary Friendship Group Mohammad Mehdi Mofatteh says Majlis approach is to boost economic cooperation with friendly countries like Romania and supports any cooperation on course to developing bilateral cooperation.

Mofatteh on Monday met Romanian Ambassador to Tehran Adrian Kozjaski and during the meeting, both explored ways for boosting cooperation.

In the meeting, Mofatteh pointed to the old and historic relation of Iran and Romania and said Majlis supports boosting cooperation with neighboring and friendly countries especially Romania. He reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran has made its relations with friendly countries based on mutual respect and this will be the same regarding ties with Romania.

He then pointed to the capabilities and capacities of both countries, saying that parliamentary cooperation and exchanges of delegations in the level of the parliamentary friendship group as well as specialized commissions of parliaments of both countries are considered strong backing for bilateral relation.

Mofatteh then pointed to the U.S. and Zionist regime hostile approaches against Iran, saying that experiences from the eight-year imposed Iraq war and sanctions imposed by the Western countries have taught Iranians to rely on their domestic capabilities for defending their land and providing security.

The Majlis lawmaker also pointed to the assassination of Iranian scientist and accounted Zionist regime for this horrible crime and urged European countries to condemn it.

Kozjaski, for his part, termed Iran-Romania relation an old and friendly one, saying that so far there has been no dark point in the bilateral relation and this amicable relation provides a bright outlook for future interactions between the two nations and governments.

He further said that continuation of economic cooperation between both countries in the post-JCPOA era indicates the deep relation between both countries without considering any event happening in the international scene.

Kozjaski noted that parliaments of both countries are symbols of national ideals of their own people and parliament plays a key role in bolstering bilateral ties.

He also condemned the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh.

Iran Urges Muslim Nations to Revive Tourism

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has called on Islamic countries to work together closely and exchange experience in the domain of tourism amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Iranian Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Vali Teymouri said cooperation among international institutions to keep tourism alive during the coronavirus pandemic is of utmost significance.

Teymouri was speaking at a virtual meeting of tourism ministers of member states of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC).

He touched upon possible changes in the general structures of travel in the post-corona era, and highlighted the need to review target markets, redefine tourism products and improve electronic services.

The webinar event focused on "reaction to COVID-19" and "improvement of entrepreneurship for competition in the tourism industry."

The Iranian minister presented a report on Iran's measures to manage tourism amid the coronavirus crisis, including support for those working in the tourism industry by offering rescue packages to them, writing off their debts, granting them low-interest loans and long grace periods, introducing health protocols and issuing regulations for smart travel.

He said the tourism industry has suffered considerable losses, urging Islamic nations to share ideas and exchange experience to help tackle the coronavirus crisis in the tourism sector.

Aluminum Export Tops \$100m in 7Mmonths

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran exported 61,147 tons of aluminum worth \$101.1 million in the calendar seven months to October 21.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the figures indicate an 84% and 56% rise in terms of tonnage and value respectively in comparison with the corresponding period of last year.

The IRICA data illustrates that the country imported 102,091 tons of aluminum products worth \$154 million during the seven-month period, registering a 102% and 11% rise in volume and value respectively year-on-year.

Iran's total mineral exports reached 21.17 million tons worth \$3.49 billion during the period under review, which constitutes 16.7% of the country's total non-oil exports.



"Spotlight on Italian Cinema" in Iran Kicks Off

IRAN NEWS ART DESK

TEHRAN - "Spotlight on Italian Cinema", an exclusive initiative by the Italian Embassy in Tehran, is online starting yesterday (Tuesday) until Saturday December 5. The program features a selection of some of the most significant Italian contemporary movies. It was launched last February in three Iranian cities – Tehran, Kish and Shiraz – but it was interrupted after three days due to the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The initiative will take place only online on the interactive platform hashure.com in cooperation with Istituto Luce-Cinecittà and Iran's "Art and Experience Cinema" institute. The online screenings will enable a potentially unlimited Iranian public to watch Italian films directly from home, on an evening of their choosing between two available dates and at no cost.

The movie selection opens today at 5:30pm (Tehran Time), with the screening of a video message by the Italian Ambassador in Tehran Giuseppe Perrone, followed by written remarks by Managing Director of Art and Experience, Jafar Saneie Moghadam. The opening ceremony will be followed by a unique selection of



Italian contemporary art movies, which have been awarded major international recognitions.

The movies are: "Happy as Lazzaro" by Alice Rohrwacher, winner of the best script award at the Cannes Film Festival (2018); "Where the shadows fall" by Valentina Pedicini, presented at the 74th edition of Venice Festival (2017); "The Path of Oil" by Bernardo Bertolucci, restored in 2007 and winner of Golden Lion for the last 75 years of the history of cinema at the Venice Film Festival (2007); "Martin Eden" by Pietro Marcello, presented at the 76th edition of the Venice Film Festival (2015); "My Mother" by Nanni Moretti, shown at the Cannes Film Festival (2015). The screenings will be accompanied by exclusive masterclasses by Alice Rohrwacher (Lazarus Happy), Tiziana Lo Porto (The Path of Oil) and George Gosetti (Where the shadows fall).

The initiative follows the Italian Embassy's participation in the European film week in Iran in early November, with the screening of Fellini's movie "The Clowns", on the occasion of the centenary of the Italian director's birth, and a masterclass by Gianfranco Angelucci, viewed by over 2,000 users.

Foreign Investment in Aras Free Zone Rises

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign investment attracted in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone (AFZ) in Iran's northwestern province of East Azarbaijan has risen 78 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), compared to the first half of the past year, according to a provincial official.

Safar Shasfand, the deputy head of Aras Free Zone Organization's for investment and economic affairs, announced that the zone attracted \$25 million of foreign investment in the six-month period of this year, while the figure was \$14 million in the same time span of the past year.

The official said that domestic investment has also risen 81 percent to 21.892 trillion rials (about \$521.2 million) in the zone during the first half of the present year, from 18.102 trillion rials (about \$431 million) in the first half of the previous year.

Reiterating that Aras Free Zone has been successful in attracting investment, and has a better performance in this due compared to the other free zones of the country, Shasfand said that the result is obvious in job creation and promotion of exports from the zone.

He further announced that 16 projects with the investment making of 8.97 trillion rials (about \$231.5 million) will be inaugurated in the zone in the eleventh month of Bahman (January 20-February 18, 2021), creating direct jobs for 405 persons.

The official has previously announced that AFZ exported commodities valued at \$240 million to 10 countries during the first six months of the current year.

He mentioned dried fruits and nuts, plastic products, steel ingots, and production lines machinery as the main exported products and Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Czech Republic, and Uzbekistan as the export destinations during the mentioned period of time.

Iran, Georgia Vow to Broaden Mutual Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's new ambassador to Georgia Akbar Qasemi and GeoForeign Minister David Zalkaliani in a meeting in Tbilisi on Monday underlined the need for enhancing bilateral relations.

During the meeting the Iranian ambassador submitted a copy of his credentials to the Georgian foreign minister.

Also during the meeting, Zalkaliani congratulated Qasemi on his appointment as Iran's new ambassador to Georgia.

He hoped that Iran-Georgia relations would be further improved in future.

Qasemi, for his part, called for a new approach from Tbilisi in order deepen relations based on common interests.

Explaining the new atmosphere created in the in the Caucasus region following recent developments, he assessed Iran's prominent role in achieving security, transportation, trade and energy as an effective element in increasing convergence towards development and peace and prosperity of all countries in the region.

Croatian PM Tests Positive for COVID-19

ZAGREB (Dispatches) - Croatia's Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic has tested positive for the coronavirus but is "feeling well", his cabinet has said, as the country hit a new record COVID-19 death toll.

Plenkovic, 50, who has led Croatia since 2016 as head of the right-wing HDZ party, started isolating two days ago after his wife contracted the coronavirus.

He had initially tested negative but a new test on Monday was positive, the cabinet said in a statement, adding that he would isolate for 10 days. "The prime minister is feeling well at the moment, continues his activities and carries out his duties from home, following the instructions of doctors and epidemiologists," the statement added.



Hungary Summons Ukrainian Ambassador

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Hungary summoned the Ukrainian ambassador and accused its neighbor of intimidation on Monday after Ukraine's state security service (SBU) raided the offices of ethnic Hungarians, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said.

The two countries have repeatedly clashed in recent years over what Hungary said were curbs on the rights of around 150,000 ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine to use their native tongue, especially in education, after Ukraine passed a law in 2017 restricting the use of minority languages in schools. Last month Ukraine barred entry of two Hungarian government officials over what it called meddling in local elections, an accusation Hungary denied.



UN Sees Emergency Aid Needs Exploding Due to Pandemic



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The UN said Tuesday that \$35 billion would be needed for aid in 2021, as the pandemic leaves tens of millions more people in crisis, and with the risk of multiple famines looming.

The world body's annual Global Humanitarian Overview estimated that 235 million people worldwide will need some form of emergency assistance next year -- a staggering 40-percent increase in the past year.

"The increase arises almost entirely because of Covid-19," United Nations emergency relief coordinator Mark Lowcock told reporters. Next year, one in 33 people worldwide will be in need of aid, the report found, stressing that if all of them lived in one country, it would be the world's fifth largest nation.

The annual appeal by UN agencies and other humanitarian organisations usually presents a depressing picture of soaring needs brought on by conflicts, displacement, natural disasters and climate change. But now, it warned, the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 1.45 million people worldwide, has disproportionately hit those "already living on a knife's edge."

"The picture we are presenting is the bleakest and darkest perspective on humanitarian need in the period ahead that we have ever set out," Lowcock said.

The money requested in the appeal would be enough to help 160 million of the most vulnerable people across 56 countries, the UN said.

For the first time since the 1990s, extreme poverty is set to rise, life expectancy will fall and the annual death toll from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria could potentially double.

"Possibly the most alarming thing... is the threat of the return of famines, potentially in multiple locations," Lowcock said.

With only one true famine so far in the 21st century -- in Somalia nearly a decade ago -- mass starvation had appeared to have been "assigned to the dustbin of history," he said.

But now, he warned, "the red lights are flashing and the alarm bells are ringing."

By the end of 2020, the number of acutely food-insecure people worldwide could swell to as much as 270 million -- an 82-percent increase over the pre-Covid-19 number.

Conditions in Yemen, Burkina Faso, South Sudan and northeastern Nigeria indicated they are already on the brink of famine, while a range of other countries and regions, including Afghanistan and the Sahel, were also "potentially very vulnerable," he said.

"If we get through 2021 without major famines, that will be a significant achievement."

Tuesday's appeal shows that war-ravaged Syria and Yemen top the list of the countries most in need of humanitarian assistance.

The UN is seeking close to \$6 billion to help millions of Syrians inside and outside the country wracked by a decade of conflict. And it is asking for nearly \$3.5 billion to help nearly 20 million Yemenis caught up in the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Australia, U.S. to Develop Hypersonic Missiles to Counter China

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australia and the United States will jointly develop hypersonic cruise missiles, the Australian defence minister announced on Tuesday, pledging to invest in "advanced capabilities" that will give the country's military "more options to deter aggression" against its interests.

The weapons are capable of travelling at more than five times the speed of sound and the combination of speed, manoeuvrability and altitude makes them difficult to track and intercept.

Linda Reynolds, the Australian defence minister, called the bilateral project with the US a "game-changing capability", but did not reveal the cost of developing the missiles or when they would be operational. "Investing in capabilities that deter actions against Australia also benefits our region, our allies and our security partners," she said.

"We remain committed to peace and stability in the region and an open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific."

The United States' Acting Under Secretary of Defense Michael Kratsios said the project, officially known as the Southern Cross Integrated Flight Research Experiment (SCIFIRE), builds on 15 years of collaboration between the U.S. and Australian military.



French Gov't Drops Draft Law Curbing Filming of Police

PARIS (Dispatches) - The French government has dropped a controversial security bill that would have curbed the right to film police officers in action after growing opposition and mass protests against it.

"The bill will be completely rewritten and a new version will be submitted," Christophe Castaner, head of President Emmanuel Macron's governing party in the French parliament, told a news conference on Monday.

Tens of thousands of people in cities across France marched against the draft law on Saturday, with dozens wounded during clashes with police in Paris.

The proposed legislation was passed by the National Assembly earlier in November, though it still required approval from the Senate. One of its most controversial elements has been Article 24, which sought to criminalise the publication of images of on-duty police officers with the intent of harming their "physical or psychological integrity".

Under the article, offenders faced sentences of up to a year in jail and fines of 45,000 euros (\$53,760) for sharing images of police officers.

Protesters called for the article to be withdrawn, claiming that it contradicts "the fundamental public freedoms of our Republic".

Media unions also said it could give police a green light to prevent journalists -- and social media users -- from documenting abuses. The controversy was intensified by a video showing the beating and racial abuse of a Black man last week.

The case of Michel Zecler shocked France, with celebrities and politicians alike condemning the officers' actions.

Macron on Friday called the incident an "unacceptable attack" and asked the government to come up with proposals to "fight against discrimination".

The images of the beating of Zecler emerged days after police were already under fire over the forcible removal of a migrant camp in central Paris, where journalists on the ground recorded police brutality.

Pakistan's Opposition Holds Multan Rally Day After Arrests

MULTAN (Dispatches) - Despite a government ban and arrests of hundreds of activists, Pakistani opposition supporters rallied in a central city on Monday, calling on Prime Minister Imran Khan to resign for alleged poor governance and incompetence.

The rally in the city of Multan was held a day after police, on orders from the government, carried out the arrests and banned the gathering, defending the move as necessary to combat the coronavirus pandemic in Pakistan.

The government announced a ban on public rallies earlier this month as COVID-19 cases in the country surged. Since February, when the outbreak started, Pakistan has reported more than 398,000 cases and 8,025 deaths.

The rallies are a part of a campaign to remove Khan, whom the opposition parties have accused of being installed by the military in a rigged 2018 election.

Earlier in the day, police acknowledged arresting more than 370 people, while opposition groups put the number at about 1,800. Authorities in Multan also

switched off the area's mobile phone network.

On Sunday night, security forces placed shipping containers on major roads to block the path to a public park where the opposition planned to hold the protest. But opposition leaders defied authorities to march to the park anyway, setting off clashes that led to the mass arrests.

Among those arrested was Ali Musa Gillani, son of former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani.

Before the rally, government spokeswoman Firdous Ashiq Awan accused the opposition of "doing politics at the cost of people's lives".

Maryam Nawaz, daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who lives in exile in London despite being sought on corruption charges by a Pakistani court, attended the rally.

Earlier in the day, she told reporters she was not afraid of arrest and the rally would take place at all costs.

"There is no doubt that this government will no more be in power in the coming days, God willing, and I have no doubt about it," she said.



Saudi Arabia Allows Israeli Commercial Planes To Use Its Airspace



RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia agreed to let Israeli airliners cross its airspace en route to the United Arab Emirates after talks between Saudi officials and White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, news agency Reuters and Israeli media outlets have reported.

Kushner and Middle East envoys Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook raised the issue shortly after they arrived in Saudi Arabia for talks. "We were able to reconcile the issue," an official from the administration of United States President Donald Trump told Reuters on Monday.

The agreement was hammered out just hours before Israel's first commercial flight to the UAE was planned on Tuesday morning. The Israel flight was at risk of being cancelled with no overflight agreement.

The direct flights are an offshoot of normalization deals Israel reached this year with the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan.

The UAE has already reaped benefits from normalization, including the White House pushing forward with arms sales, including an advanced fighter jet, to the Persian Gulf country.

"This should resolve any issues that should occur with Israeli carriers taking people from Israel to the UAE and back and to Bahrain," the White House official told Reuters.

Kushner and his team were to meet the emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the emir of Kuwait later this week.

One goal of the trip is to try to persuade Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) countries to end a three-year blockade of Qatar.

Qatar has been under an air, land and sea blockade imposed by PGCC members Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, and non-PGCC member Egypt, since June 2017.

They cut ties with Doha after claiming it supported "terrorism".

Qatar has vehemently rejected the allegations, saying there was "no legitimate justification" for severing relations.

Budget carrier says it will operate twice daily services between Dubai and Tel Aviv starting this month.

State Department informs Congress it plans to sell 18 armed MQ-9B aerial drones to Abu Dhabi, sources tell Reuters.



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Fully Furn

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Tajrish Villa (\$4000)
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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

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S/p, S, J, pkg
(\$1800)

Farnmanieh (\$2200)
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Sa'adat abad (\$1500)
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German Inflation Falls Deeper Into Negative Territory

BERLIN (Reuters) - German annual consumer prices fell further in November, pushed down by a VAT cut introduced as part of the government's stimulus push to help Europe's largest economy recover from the coronavirus shock, data showed on Monday.

Consumer prices, harmonised to make them comparable with inflation data from other European Union countries,

fell 0.7% year-on-year after shrinking by 0.5% in the previous month, the Federal Statistics Office said.

November's preliminary data compared with a Reuters poll forecast of a 0.5% decline.

"The inflation rate is influenced, among other things, by the reduction in value-added tax that came into force on July 1, 2020," the office said in a statement.



OPEC Oil Output Rises for Fifth Month on Libyan Recovery

LONDON (Reuters) - OPEC oil output rose for a fifth month in November, a Reuters survey found, as increased Libyan production offset full adherence by other producers to cuts agreed in an OPEC-led supply deal.

The 13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has pumped 25.31 million barrels per day (bpd) in November, the survey found, up 750,000 bpd from October and a further increase from the three-decade low reached in June.

OPEC, Russia and their allies, a group known as OPEC+, are gathering virtually on Monday and Tuesday and will consider whether to extend existing curbs due to weak demand or increase output gradually from January, sources say.

"OPEC+ seem unable to reach agreement, at least in the run-up to today's meeting," said Eugen Weinberg of Commerzbank.

"That said, the oil market firmly believes that the current production cuts will be maintained for at least another three months," Weinberg added.

Libya, an OPEC member exempted from OPEC+ cuts, has seen a recovery in output that was largely shut down for months. This poses a headache for other producers trying to manage supplies as coronavirus lockdowns prevent a revival in demand.

Meanwhile, OPEC states are bound by the supply deal continue to cut more than agreed, the survey found. Compliance with the cutbacks stood at 102% in November, steady from October.

Libya, a nation politically split between east and west, has boosted production since eastern Libyan commander Khalifa Haftar said in September his forces would lift their eight-month blockade of oil exports.

The survey found output increased by almost 700,000 bpd in November, a faster rebound than some analysts and OPEC officials expected.

Iran and Venezuela, the other two OPEC members exempt from the supply cut, also posted a rise in output, the survey found.

The United Arab Emirates raised supply by 90,000 bpd, the highest rise among those OPEC countries bound by quotas. However, it was still pumping below its target.

Among countries lowering output, the biggest decline was in Nigeria because of involuntary shutdowns following pipeline explosions, while Iraq also pumped slightly less.

Top exporter Saudi Arabia kept output steady, as did Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia May Raise Asia Crude Prices in January

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia is expected to raise its official selling prices (OSPs) for Asian buyers in January, tracking stronger benchmark prices as some refiners increase output to meet higher winter demand, a Reuters survey showed.

Six sources at Asian refiners expect the January OSP for Saudi flagship crude grade Arab Light to rise by 65 cents a barrel on average, with their forecasts ranging between an increase of 50 cents and 85 cents.

Two of the sources forecasted bigger price increases for Saudi lighter grades than heavier ones, as they contain more middle distillates, gasoil and jet fuel, which were more profitable for refiners this month.

Strong demand for spot crude pushed up November's average differentials to Dubai swaps for benchmarks cash Dubai and DME Oman by around 80 cents a barrel from last month, data compiled by Reuters showed.

Refiners such as Indian Oil Corp stepped up crude purchases in November as fuel demand recovered while weather forecasts were pointing to a harsher winter.

For other oil products, Asia's cracks for very low sulphur fuel oil margins also strengthened in November, while gasoline and naphtha weakened due to ample supply.

Saudi crude OSPs are usually released around the fifth of each month, and set the trend for Iranian, Kuwaiti and Iraqi prices, affecting more than 12 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude bound for Asia.

State oil giant Saudi Aramco sets its crude prices based on recommendations from customers and after calculating the change in the value of its oil over the past month, based on yields and product prices.

Saudi Aramco officials as a matter of policy do not comment on the kingdom's monthly OSPs.



Bitcoin Hits All-Time Record as 2020 Rally Power On

LONDON (Reuters) - Bitcoin hit a record high on Monday of \$19,864, breaking its prior record set in Dec. 2017 as its 2020 rally powered on.

The world's biggest virtual currency was last up 7.3% at \$19,524.

Bitcoin has gained more than 170% this year, fuelled by a demand for riskier assets amid unprecedented fiscal and monetary stimulus, hunger for assets perceived as resistant to inflation, and expectations that cryptocurrencies would win mainstream acceptance.

Smaller coins ethereum and XRP, which often move in tandem with bitcoin, gained 3.2% and 6.7% respectively.

Bitcoin's 12-year history has been peppered with vertiginous



gains and equally sharp drops. Compared to traditional assets, its market is highly opaque.

Analysts say the bitcoin market has evolved since 2017, now boasting a functioning derivatives market and custody services by major financial firms.

The shifts have made it easier for professional investors from hedge funds to family offices to seek exposure to crypto, and as a result markets are, in general, more liquid and less volatile.

Bitcoin's march to its prior peak - reached after frenzied buying by retail investors from Japan to the United States - saw the cryptocurrency gain over 250% in just 35 days before losing 70% of its value in less than two months after its December 2017 high.

Global Funds Make U-Turn, Favor Equities on Vaccine Hopes

BENGALURU (Reuters) - Global funds made a U-turn this month and recommended the highest equities exposure since February on recent COVID-19 vaccine progress, with a majority predicting the stock market bull run would last more than six months, Reuters polls found.

Recovering from last month's sell-off, global stocks hit repeated record highs in November, with the MSCI's broadest gauge of world stocks on track for its best month ever - up nearly 13%.

Rising COVID-19 cases, historic recessions and expectations for fragile economic recoveries

notwithstanding, investors' sentiment was boosted by vaccines making headway, a descending dollar and predictions capital markets would remain flooded with cheap cash.

That buoyancy in stocks and the search for better yields pushed fund managers and chief investment officers in the United States, Europe and Japan in the Nov. 12-30 poll to make a dramatic shift in recommendations - with equity allocations raised at the expense of every other asset.

"We have stayed on the sidelines previously, pointing to the growing disconnect between market moves and economic fundamentals. But it is now clear the global economic recovery will be supported by the vaccine news," said a chief investment officer at a large U.S. fund management company.

"It is also clear equity markets will be cheered on further and the October sell-off provided us with the opportune moment."

Stocks allocations accounted for an average 46.7% in November of their model global portfolio, up over 5 percentage points from 41.4% in October - the highest month-on-month jump since records began over a decade ago.

Bond holdings accounted for 42.1%, compared with 45.5% last month, the lowest since February. The suggested cash buffer, property investments and alternative assets holdings were also lowered.

That shows a move away from the cautious approach fund managers have maintained this year, with a 3.4 percentage points drop in suggested bond holdings from October's decade-high - the steepest fall since late 2017.

Those recommendations were based on recent progress of COVID-19 vaccines, according to all 19 fund managers who answered an additional question, with nearly 80% of them predicting the stock market rally would run for at least another six months.

Euro Zone May Need More Fiscal, Monetary Support

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Euro zone governments and the European Central Bank may need to provide more fiscal and monetary support than initially expected because of the effects of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Monetary Fund said on Monday.

The overall value of fiscal and monetary support on offer, combined with access to trillions of euros of cheap loans and new EU-level funding still under debate, already exceeds 10 trillion euros.

The IMF said that while that response is impressive, more might be needed if the economic outlook deteriorates further. "Risks ... remain clearly to the downside through early 2021 given the ongoing second wave," the IMF said in a regular review of the euro zone economy.

"With the ongoing second wave, national fiscal policies will likely need to provide broad-based support for longer than initially envisioned." In an unprecedented show of solidarity, European Union governments have agreed to jointly borrow 750 billion euros over the next few years against the security of the EU budget. They will disburse the money amongst themselves as grants and loans to help the economy recover from the effects of the pandemic. The IMF said the impact of that scheme would depend on the scale, quality and efficiency of national spending it supports and structural reforms aimed at transforming economies to be greener and more digital.

The Fund praised the monetary policy response of the ECB to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic as appropriately bold, but said further support was likely to be needed, possibly including more cheap TLTRO loans and other help for banks.

"Expanding asset purchases will be the first line of defence, but other options -- including further relaxation of Targeted Longer-Term Refinancing Operations' terms and a deposit rate cut -- should also be considered," it said. "Even greater accommodation would be needed to counter deflation risks and ensure smooth monetary transmission in a downside scenario," the IMF report said.

Euro zone consumer prices have been falling year-on-year since August for the first time since 2016, further challenging the ECB which wants to keep inflation just under 2% in the medium term but has for years failed to reach that target.



Trump to Add China's SMIC And CNOOC to Defense Blacklist



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration is poised to add China's top chipmaker SMIC and national offshore oil and gas producer CNOOC to a blacklist of alleged Chinese military companies, according to a document and sources, curbing their access to U.S. investors and escalating tensions with Beijing weeks before President-elect Joe Biden takes office.

Reuters reported earlier this month that the Department of Defense (DOD) was planning to designate four more Chinese companies as owned or controlled by the Chinese military, bringing the number of Chinese companies affected to 35. A recent executive order issued by President Donald Trump would prevent U.S. investors from buying securities of the listed firms starting late next year.

It was not immediately clear when the new tranche, would be published in the Federal Register. But the list comprises China Construction Technology Co Ltd and China International Engineering Consulting Corp, in addition to Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp (SMIC) and China National Offshore Oil Corp (CNOOC), according to the document and three sources.

SMIC said it continued "to engage constructively and openly with the U.S. government" and that its products and services were solely for civilian and commercial use. "The Company has no relationship with the Chinese military and does not manufacture for any military end-users or end-uses." Shares in SMIC closed 2.7% lower on Monday.

CNOOC's listed unit CNOOC Ltd, whose shares fell by almost 14% after the Reuters report, said in a stock market statement that it had inquired with its parent and learnt that it had not received any formal notice from relevant U.S. authorities.

China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said, in response to a question about Washington's planned move, that China hoped the United States would not erect barriers and obstacles to cooperation and discriminate against Chinese companies.

Later on Monday, Bernstein Research downgraded CNOOC Ltd's stock to 'market perform' by applying a 30% discount to share price targets, citing sanction risks that range from a ban on U.S. funds owning CNOOC stock to prohibiting U.S. companies from doing business with CNOOC.

The DOD and the Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

SMIC, which relies heavily on equipment from U.S. suppliers, was already in Washington's crosshairs. In September, the U.S. Commerce Department informed some firms that they need to obtain a license before supplying goods and services to SMIC after concluding there was an "unacceptable risk" that equipment supplied to it could be used for military purposes.

Iranian “E Like Elvis” to Vie at Color Tape Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Directed by Iranian filmmaker Sepideh Mir Hosseini, the short film “E Like Elvis” will participate at the Color tape International Film Festival in Australia.

The short film “E Like Elvis”, written and directed by Iranian filmmaker Sepideh Mir Hosseini, has managed to enter the competition section of the 6th Color tape International Film Festival in

Australia and has been nominated for Best Short Film in this festival. Color tape International Film Festival will be held on December 14 in Brisbane, Australia.

This short film narrates the love and affection of a little girl for the famous American singer Elvis Presley who does strange things in the world and in his childish imagination.



Britain, EU Warn That Time Is Running out for Brexit Trade Deal

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Britain and the European Union warned each other on Monday that time was running out to reach a Brexit trade deal, with big differences still to be bridged on state aid, enforcement and fishing.

The United Kingdom leaves the EU's orbit on Dec. 31, when a transition period of informal membership ends following its formal departure last January, and the sides are trying to secure a deal to govern nearly \$1 trillion in annual trade.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is also tackling Europe's worst official death toll from COVID-19, says a deal would be preferable but that Britain, which joined the EU in 1973, would flourish without one.

Talks in London over the weekend were “quite difficult” and “massive divergences” remained on elements of fisheries, economic fair play and settling disputes, an EU source said.

“We are running out of time here,” Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said.

Echoing his remarks, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said some EU member states were losing patience.

“We don't need a deal at any price and we have made this clear... A deal is in everyone's interest,” she said.

Johnson's spokesman said there had been some progress but “there still remains divergence on issues (such as) fisheries and the level playing field.”

“We want to try and reach a free trade agreement as soon as possible but we've been clear we won't change our negotiating position,” the spokesman said.

A trade deal would not only safeguard trade but also buttress peace in British-ruled Northern Ireland, though some disruption is almost certain at the busiest EU-UK border points.

Failure to secure a deal would snarl borders, spook financial markets and disrupt delicate supply chains that stretch across Europe and beyond -- just as the world grapples with the vast economic cost of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Talks between EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier and British chief negotiator David Frost continued on Monday. The EU team were expected to stay in London for two or three more days.

Asked whether there was reason for optimism, Barnier told reporters: “There are reasons for determination.”



Coveney told Ireland's Newstalk Radio that a failure to agree on fishing rights could wreck a deal.

“If there isn't an agreement on this, the whole thing could fall on the back of it and that's the worry,” he said.

Fishing alone contributed just 0.03% of British economic output in 2019, but it is an emotive subject as many Brexit supporters see it as a symbol of the regained sovereignty they hope leaving the EU will bring. Combined with fish and shellfish processing, the sector makes up 0.1% of Britain's GDP.

Britain wants “zonal attachment” to agree a total allowable catch for its waters - giving it a much larger quota share than if the fish maths were worked out on the EU's proposals.

EU sources said Barnier had offered Britain a 15-18% bigger catch after Jan. 1 but London had demanded 80% and annual quota talks, which the bloc rejects.

Biden Taps Janet Yellen As Treasury Secretary



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President-elect Joe Biden on Monday formally tapped ex-Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen to lead the Treasury, as he named officials to try to revitalize the world's largest economy.

The United States is struggling with a massive Covid-19 outbreak that's caused tens of millions of layoffs while sharply slowing annualized growth, and with cases surging again and Congress deadlocked over more aid.

If confirmed by the Senate, Yellen, 74, will be the first female Treasury head in its history, and likely be tasked with breaking the deadlock over aid in Washington, should lawmakers not come to an agreement before Biden's January inauguration.

“We face great challenges as a country right now. To recover, we must restore the American dream -- a society where each person can rise to their potential and dream even bigger for their children,” Yellen tweeted.

“As Treasury Secretary, I will work every day towards rebuilding that dream for all.”

Other officials announced on Monday include veterans of former president Barack Obama's administration, several of which the Biden transition team noted would break racial barriers in their positions.

“As we get to work to control the virus, this is the team that will deliver immediate economic relief for the American people during this economic crisis and help us build our economy back better than ever,” Biden said in a statement.

Yellen's nomination was first reported last week, and Biden and Vice president-elect Kamala Harris will formally unveil the nominees today.

Biden's other nominations include Neera Tanden, president of liberal think tank Center for American Progress, as head the Office of Management and Budget. If confirmed, she would be its first South Asian head.

Nigerian-born Wally Adeyemo, a former deputy national security advisor and current president of the Obama Foundation non-profit, will serve as deputy Treasury secretary, the statement said. He would be the first African American in that role.

Also tapped was Dean of the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs Cecilia Rouse as chair of the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA), the first African American in that post.

Jared Bernstein, who previously advised Biden when he was vice president under Obama, will join the CEA, as will Washington Center for Equitable Growth President Heather Boushey.

China to Force Firms to Report Use of Plastic in New Recycling Push

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Restaurants, e-commerce platforms and delivery firms will be forced to report their utilization of single-use plastics to the authorities and also submit formal recycling plans, China's commerce ministry said in proposals published on Monday.

The Ministry of Commerce said it had established a nationwide system for retailers to report their plastic consumption as part of trial scheme to encourage recycling.

Plastic pollution has become one of China's biggest challenges, with vast amounts buried in landfills or dumped in rivers. The rise in home food deliveries has also caused volumes to surge.

In September, the ministry said single-use plastic bags and eating utensils would be banned from major cities by the end of the year, while single-use straws would be banned nationwide.

Wang Wang, chairman of the China Scrap Plastic Association, said the bans would “only resolve the most visible types of plastic pollution” and were just one part of the country's efforts to tackle waste.



From September, China has also prohibited some types of agricultural-use plastic film used to keep crops warm and moist. Chinese farmers use around 1.5 million tons a year, but it leaves residues that damage the soil.

A new “solid waste law” also came into effect in September, raising fines tenfold for those who break rules and mandating the construction of new recycling infrastructure.

Though there have been complaints China is moving too fast, Wang said the business impact of the measures would be limited, with firms aware in advance that some products would be banned.

China produced 63 million tons of plastic in 2019, with a recycling rate of around 30%. It produces around 20 million tons of single-use non-biodegradable material annually, including 3 million tons of shopping bags.

Antoine Grange, chief executive for recycling at SUEZ Asia, said the bans were welcome but China would also need to improve its entire recycling capability.

“The single-use plastic ban is good for education, good for awareness, but it is only part of the big picture,” he said.

Moderna Seeks U.S., European Regulators Approval

LONDON (Dispatches) - Moderna Inc. said it would ask U.S. and European regulators Monday to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine as new study results confirm the shots offer strong protection — ramping up the race to begin limited vaccinations as the coronavirus rampage worsens.

Multiple vaccine candidates must succeed for the world to stamp out the pandemic, which has been on the upswing in the U.S. and Europe. U.S. hospitals have been stretched to the limit as the nation has seen more than 160,000 new cases per day and more than 1,400 daily deaths. Since first emerging nearly a year ago in China, the virus has killed more than 1.4 million people worldwide.

Moderna is just behind Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech in seeking to begin vaccinations in the U.S. in December. British regulators also are assessing the Pfizer shot and another from AstraZeneca.

Moderna created its shots with the U.S. National Institutes of Health and already had a hint they were working, but said it got the final needed results over the weekend that suggest the vaccine is more than 94% effective.

Of 196 COVID-19 cases so far in its huge U.S. study, 185 were trial participants who received the placebo and 11 who got the real vaccine. The only people who got severely ill — 30 participants, including one who died — had received dummy shots, said Dr. Tal Zaks, the Cambridge, Massachusetts, company's chief medical officer.

When he learned the results, “I allowed myself to cry for the first time,” Zaks told The Associated Press. “We have already, just in the trial, have already saved lives. Just imagine the impact then multiplied to the people who can get this vaccine.”

Moderna said the shots' effectiveness and a good safety record so far — with only temporary, flu-like side effects — mean they meet requirements set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use before the final-stage testing is complete. The European Medicines Agency, Europe's version of FDA, has signaled it also is open to faster “conditional” clearance.

The FDA has pledged that before it decides to roll out any COVID-19 vaccines, its scientific advisers will publicly debate whether there's enough evidence behind each candidate.

First up on Dec. 10, Pfizer and BioNTech will present data suggesting their vaccine candidate is 95% effective. Moderna said its turn at this “science court” is expected exactly a week later, on Dec. 17.

If the FDA allows emergency use, Moderna expects to have 20 million doses ready for the U.S. by year's end. Recipients will need two doses, so that's enough for 10 million people.

Coronavirus Has...

FROM PAGE 1

Some countries due to the level of culture of their people have let this pandemic target their social scenes and inflict its devastating effect on them. Today let's have a look at the rankings of the countries affected by the virus with the U.S. at the top of the list.

Let's call the place of country in the ranking as the level of the unculturedness. The U.S. ranks first and such-and-such country is the last in the standings. In other words, one can claim that the COVID-19 pandemic not only has engaged countries with the health and hygiene crisis in the society but also has turned into the major issues of the governments and nations like economy, livelihood, and lack of facilities. The more the number of the countries are engaged in this virus increases, the more these complications will increase.

Just in the past two months, the number of the COVID-19 infected in the world has doubled and it has reached tens of millions. Suppose people in the world have observed all medical and health prescriptions and recommendations and have not let the virus have spread. Could the statistics have been like what they are today? Ancestors have always reiterated that culture is above all but who has given a damn to it.

Someone in his article had called for treatment of the unculturedness with dictatorship and he had given some examples for his claim that those countries which have a centralized government (like China) have an easier task because they order the businesses to shut down or they order the businesses to resume and people obey it and get used to it.

Of course in those countries, the transparent information and data is less released and we do not know what costs and benefits of such decisions are. But in the free societies, the decision for lockdown and keeping the people at home or resumption of businesses are very difficult and assessing the costs and benefits of it faces a lot of troubles. In other words, one can say when people live more freely they cause more costs. In other words, it imposes its level of culture on its citizens.

At the end of this article I should raise this issue that the goal behind writing this article is not at insulting the common sense of the society but it is aimed at awakening and filling the minds of any one of us.

These days, the home quarantine has not happened as we liked and it is imposed on the public unwillingly. Suppose all people of a city take recommendations seriously. They refrain from traveling, ...etc. Well. The city will return to the white condition. And if people in the world all act this way, sooner or later, it will include all humans of the world. So let me say that COVID-19 has taken the microphone in his hand and yells that it will not enter the center of a united nation who is boosting culture but the unculturedness in any level and degree will open the way for the presence of virus.

Assassinating UN...

FROM PAGE 1

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was an eminent scientist and national hero for all Iranians. His last service to the country was the production of a coronavirus diagnostic kit, as well as the management of a project to produce an Iranian Covid-19 vaccine—one that had reached the human-testing stage. Assassinating him will do nothing to Iran's completely peaceful nuclear program, as the assassinations of our nuclear scientists in the past few years have not affected the advancement in our peaceful nuclear activities.

Iran to Open...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran's growing exports of goods to neighboring and nearby countries came to a halt this year following the spread of the coronaviruses.

Borders came to a near-total closure in late May when government figures showed that movement of goods and passengers had plummeted to only three percent of the normal capacity at major crossings.

Iranian authorities hope reopening of the borders while observing strict hygiene protocols could help boost trade at a time the country is increasingly relying on non-oil exports as a major source of earning hard currency.



Grosjean Out of Next F1 GP

MANAMA (Dispatches) - French driver Romain Grosjean will sit out next weekend's Formula One race after escaping a fiery crash in the Bahrain Grand Prix with just burns to his hands, his team Haas said on Monday.

Grosjean walked away from the wreckage after he collided with Daniil Kvyat's Alpha Tauri on the first lap of Sunday's race, causing the Haas car to split in half and burst into flames as it smashed through the safety barriers.

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Warner a Doubt For India Tests

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Star opening batsman David Warner faces a battle to be fit for the India Test series after Cricket Australia said Monday he will miss the last one-day international and the three-match Twenty20 series next month.

Warner limped out of Sunday's one-day international against India after straining his groin while fielding as Australia secured the series 2-0 in Sydney.

After a typically swashbuckling innings of 83 on Sunday, Warner fell awkwardly and had to be helped from the field.

Mahomes Magic Leads Chiefs Past Brady's Buccaneers

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Patrick Mahomes threw for 462 yards and three touchdowns to outplay Tom Brady and lead the Kansas City Chiefs to a 27-24 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Tyreek Hill scored on receptions of 75, 44 and 20 yards, backflipping into the end zone on his second TD, and finishing with 13 catches for 269 yards the last an eight-yard catch on third-and-7 to give Mahomes an opportunity to run out the clock

The Chiefs (10-1) won their sixth straight game and clinched their seventh 10-win season in eight years under coach Andy Reid. The reigning Super Bowl champions improved to 6-0 on the road and have won nine straight away from home going back to last year

Brady was 27 of 41 for 345 yards, three touchdowns and a pair of second-half interceptions in falling to 2-2 in four career meetings against Mahomes, who built an early 17-0 lead and also had the Chiefs up by 17 entering the fourth quarter.

The Bucs made it close, with Brady throwing TD passes of 31 and seven yards to Mike Evans, the latter trimming Tampa Bay's deficit to 27-24 with 4:10 remaining. The Bucs never got the ball back.

New Orleans Saints 31-3 Denver Broncos

Taysom Hill's two touchdown runs led the New Orleans Saints to a 31-3 win over the Denver Broncos, who were thrust into a quarterback quandary when their passers failed to wear masks as mandated by the NFL's Covid-19 protocols.

In a grind-it-out slugfest that resembled pro football's early days, the Saints (9-2) won their second straight game with Hill subbing for the injured Drew Brees. Hill wasn't nearly as sharp as a week earlier against the Falcons, when



he completed 18 of 23 passes for 233 yards and a 108.9 passer rating. This time, he was nine of 16 for 78 yards, no touchdowns, an interception and a paltry passer rating of 43.2. He also ran 10 times for 44 yards. Broncos QB Kendall Hinton, a rookie receiver and former Wake Forest quarterback from their practice squad, had an understandably shaky NFL debut, going one for 9 for 13 yards, no touchdowns and two interceptions.

Broncos starting quarterback Drew Lock, backup Brett Rypien and practice squad veteran Blake Bortles were disqualified over the weekend when the NFL discovered the three weren't wearing masks Wednesday, the day before No.3 QB Jeff Driskel tested positive for the coronavirus.

San Francisco 49ers 23-20 Los Angeles Rams

Robbie Gould made a 42-yard field goal as time expired, and the San Francisco 49ers snapped their three-game losing streak with a 23-20 victory over the Los Angeles Rams, sweeping their season series for the second straight year.

Nick Mullens passed for 253 yards and led two late scoring drives in his first victory as a starter since September for the defending NFC champion Niners (5-6), who stoked their flickering playoff hopes and became the first team to beat the Rams (7-4) at the new SoFi Stadium.

Las Vegas Raiders 6-43 Atlanta Falcons

Deion Jones returned an interception 67 yards for a touchdown, Matt Ryan threw a pair of short scoring passes, and the Atlanta Falcons thoroughly dominated Derek Carr and the bumbling Las Vegas Raiders.

Loew to Remain Germany Coach Through Euros in 2021

BERLIN (Reuters) - Joachim Loew will remain as Germany coach through next year's Euros after the country's soccer federation said on Monday that a 6-0 loss to Spain this month was not held against him.

Germany suffered their worst defeat in a competitive game as Spain ran riot in their Nations League clash in Seville.

A stunned Loew was at a loss to explain the capitulation, which scuppered qualification for the semi-finals.

The 60-year-old coach has been in charge for a Germany record of 14 years, having taken over in 2006 and led his country to their 2014 World Cup triumph.

But Germany have exited the last three tournaments -- the 2018 World Cup and two consecutive Nations Leagues, at the group stage despite an overhauling of the team, that included dropping world champions Thomas Mueller, Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng.

Germany's team director Oliver Bierhoff said at the time of the Spain defeat that one game would not change their minds about Loew's credentials and that sentiment was echoed by the members of the Presidential Committee who met Loew on Monday.

"The Executive Committee agreed that what counts is the high-quality work of the coaching staff, the intact relationship between the team and the coach and a clear concept for the previous and future procedures," the DFB said in a statement.

"The defeat of the national team against Spain was also discussed in the conversation with the national coach and in the following telephone conference of the DFB board.

"A single game cannot and must not be a yardstick for the general performance of the national team and national coach."

The DFB said Loew had met the goals of qualifying for the Euros, maintaining Germany's status in League A of the Nations League and ensuring the national team would be in the first pot for the World Cup Qatar 2022 qualifying draw.



28th minute of Saturday's shock home defeat by Alaves and has endured a torrid time with injuries since joining the club in 2019.

"Following tests carried out today on our player, Eden Hazard, by Real Madrid Medical

Hazard Sidelined With Thigh Injury

MADRID (Reuters) - Real Madrid have confirmed that their Belgium forward Eden Hazard has suffered a thigh injury, with local media reporting that the problem will keep him out for at least three weeks.

Hazard had to be replaced in the 28th minute of Saturday's shock home defeat by Alaves and has endured a torrid time with injuries since joining the club in 2019.

"Following tests carried out today on our player, Eden Hazard, by Real Madrid Medical

Services, he has been diagnosed with an injury in the rectus femoris muscle of his right leg. His recovery will continue to be assessed," said a club statement on Monday.

The 29-year-old Hazard has missed 36 games through injury for Real with a number of different issues and only made his first appearance of the season at the end of October due to an ankle issue. He then tested positive for COVID-19 this month.

He will likely miss next month's Liga matches with Sevilla and Atletico Madrid, as well as the Champions League games with Shakhtar Donetsk on Tuesday and Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Real will reach the knockout stage if they beat Shakhtar.

Liverpool Don't Have Enough Players to Rotate

LIVERPOOL (Reuters) - Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp says his mounting injury list ahead of Tuesday's Champions League clash with Ajax Amsterdam means he does not have enough fit players to rotate his squad.

The latest player to be sidelined at Anfield is utility man James Milner who suffered a hamstring injury in Saturday's 1-1 draw at Brighton & Hove Albion.

Klopp said Spanish midfielder Thiago Alcantara remains out for a few more weeks and full back Trent Alexander-Arnold has not yet been given the green light to return to full training.

Central defenders Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez both remain out with a long-term injuries while forward Xherdan Shaqiri and midfielder Naby Keita are also missing for Tuesday's game.

Asked if the busy schedule meant he would have to prioritise between European and domestic competition, Klopp said he never made such choices and that in any case he was in no position to rotate his squad.

"I don't have enough players to prioritise. It's not about the competition it's about the players. On Saturday the fittest players played," he said.

Liverpool will go through to the knockout stage from Group D if they avoid defeat by Ajax and will be group winners if they win and Atalanta fail to beat Midtjylland.

Asked about dealing with a fixture pile-up while facing a lengthy injury list, Klopp said he had no choice but to cope with the circumstances.

"It's not a perfect situation but obviously not enough people want to offer us any kind of help (with the fixture scheduling), not only for us but for (all) football people. We just have to deal with it," he said.

"I said it always - as long as we can line up with 11 players, we will fight with all we have and that's still the case," he added.



Cavani Apologizes For Misunderstood Social Media Post

LONDON (Dispatches) - Edinson Cavani apologised on Monday after his joy at scoring twice for Manchester United against Southampton was dampened by an investigation by the Football Association into a social media post he subsequently deleted.

The 33-year-old Uruguayan striker sent an Instagram post thanking a friend for his congratulations after scoring twice as United came from 2-0 down to win 3-2 on Sunday that included the Spanish word "negrito" (small black person).

United said the word was clearly used in an affectionate manner and has different connotations in South America.

The former Paris Saint Germain forward had been informed such terms are viewed as derogatory in Britain and he subsequently deleted the post.

"The message I posted after the match on Sunday was intended as an affectionate greeting to a friend, thanking him for his congratulations after the game," Cavani said in a statement.

"The last thing I wanted to do was cause offence to anyone. I am completely opposed to racism and deleted the message as soon as it was explained that it can be interpreted differently. I would like to sincerely apologise for this."

The FA issued guidelines pre-season clamping down on racist and discriminatory language and behavior, with offences on social media carrying a minimum three-game ban.

Manchester City's Bernardo Silva and Dele Alli of Tottenham were both suspended for one-match last season after posts that breached the guidelines.

"It is clear to us that there was absolutely no malicious intent behind Edinson's message and he deleted it as soon as he was informed that it could be misconstrued," United added in a club statement.

"Edinson has issued an apology for any unintentional offence caused. Manchester United and all of our players are fully committed to the fight against racism."

Cavani will be free to play against his former club PSG in the Champions League on Wednesday.

