

Spokeswoman for Health Ministry  
Sima Sadat Lari Said on Monday  
That Some 98 More Iranians Died of  
COVID-19 During the Past 24 Hours  
As the Death Toll Hit 57,481

# IRAN NEWS

Foreign Ministry Spokesman  
Saeed Khatibzadeh Said That the  
Reason Iran Cannot Pay Its  
Membership Fees to the United  
Nations Is the Obstacle Created  
By the United States

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## No Changes Seen Regarding JCPOA

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says nothing new has happened with regard to the 2015 nuclear agreement it reached with six world powers, which was later ditched by former US President Donald Trump.

"We haven't seen any new development regarding the JCPOA," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a press conference on Monday, using the official name of the nuclear deal.

He said Iran has made it clear that the US should first lift the sanctions, which were imposed under Trump, and honor the JCPOA, before Iran returns to full compliance with the accord.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action came under vicious attacks during the four years Trump was in office, but it survived nevertheless. After pulling out in May 2018, Trump intensified his efforts to kill the deal, which was signed under his predecessor Barack Obama.

In his Monday presser, Khatibzadeh underlined that as long as sanctions are in place, nothing would happen on Iran's side.

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## Iran Able to Destroy U.S. Warships

TEHRAN (MNA) - A senior IRGC commander said although the U.S. presence in the region was considered as a threat to Iran in the past, the country can now destroy the U.S. ships, thanks to its deterrent power and missiles.

General Rahim Noei-Aghdam, the commander of IRGC's Hazrat Zeinab Military Base, made the remarks in an interview with Mehr News Agency on Monday.

Referring to the recent U.S. moves in the Persian Gulf, General Noei-Aghdam said, "In the classification of world armies, the U.S. military is a naval base, in other words, the total strength of the US military to operate and carry out missions outside the U.S. is the U.S. Navy, which includes warships, aircraft carriers, nuclear and non-nuclear."

"If once the U.S. presence in the international waters near Iran was considered as a threat to the country, today thanks to our deterrent power and surface-to-surface, surface-to-air, surface-to-coast, coast-to-coast, coast-to-sea, and sea-to-sea missiles, we have the ability to destroy American ships," he added. "In contrast to the American forces in West Asia, which are unable to act, the intelligence, mobility, fighting, power, strength, cohesion, unity and morale of the forces of the Resistance Front, especially the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, are well known," he noted.

## Zarif in Baku Welcomes Aliyev's Initiative for Regional Cooperation



### IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tehran welcomes a six-party regional cooperation platform contributing to regional peace and stability.

In a meeting with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in Baku on Monday, Zarif welcomed the six-party regional cooperation initiative proposed by Baku, expressing Tehran's readiness for help and cooperation in any field contributing to regional peace, stability and calm.

The six-party initiative, put forward recently by the presidents of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan, would include Iran, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan Republic, Georgia and Armenia.

The top Iranian diplomat, who is in Baku on the first leg of a tour of the Caucasus and Turkey, also congratulated the Republic of Azerbaijan's people and government on the recent victories, stressing the need for the promotion of cooperation between Tehran and Baku.

Zarif pointed to the successful visits by Azerbaijan's minister of foreign affairs and deputy prime minister to Iran, saying the mutual cooperation, particularly in the economic fields, is ready to make a leap.

The senior diplomat also expressed delight with the results of the 14th meeting of Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, voicing Iran's readiness for participation in the reconstruction of the recently-liberated Azeri lands, particularly in the construction activities, for the export of technical and engineering services, and cooperation in the electricity and energy industries, agriculture, extra-territorial cultivation, mine-sweeping, as well as the reconstruction of mosques and historical sites.

Aliyev, for his part, praised Iran's stances on the recent developments in the region, hailed the level of cooperation between the two nations, and said there exists a positive atmosphere for the expansion of relations in all fields, specifically the economic cooperation.

Enumerating the economic projects carried out jointly by the two countries, the Azeri leader welcomed the participation of Iranian companies in reconstruction of areas in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Aliyev also expressed satisfaction with the Islamic Republic of Iran's view on the six-party regional cooperation platform, saying the initiative would benefit peace and common interests in the region.

The Azeri President also welcomed plans for holding trilateral meetings among Azerbaijan, Iran and Russia, as well as among Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey in future.

Zarif is going to visits Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey after the trip to Baku.

## Iran Oil Exports Creep Higher

LONDON (Bloomberg) -- With the U.S. campaign of "maximum pressure" now over, Iran's oil customers may be growing a little bolder.

Iranian crude remains subject to American sanctions and exports are still just a fraction of levels seen three years ago, before Donald Trump cracked down to cajole Tehran into renegotiating a nuclear pact. But as new president Joe Biden seeks to revive the existing accord, firms that monitor Iran's output -- Petro-Logistics SA, Kpler Ltd. and SVB International LLC -- have seen it creep higher. "The output and export increase is an anticipation of Biden's softer approach toward Iran," said Sara Vakhshouri, SVB's founder and president.

The estimated gains -- which remain preliminary -- aren't huge, ranging from about 30,000 to 50,000 barrels a day in January. That's far short of the grandiose announcements by Iranian officials, who last week said exports have increased "dramatically" and could return to prior levels within two months.

The picture remains opaque as Iranian vessels generally switch off transponders that would reveal their location. And the ongoing difficulty for Tehran was illustrated this weekend when Indonesia seized an Iran-flagged vessel for illegally transferring oil to another ship. Yet the incremental gains in shipments are adding up. Iranian exports are set to exceed 600,000 barrels a day for the first time since April, according to Petro-Logistics. Flows are up 45% since October, SVB estimates.

It's not clear whether the extra cargoes are actually being sold to refiners, or simply moved in anticipation of later transactions. "With Iranian exports going through numerous transshipments and other clandestine behavior, it's difficult to tell if these extra volumes will be shipped to refiners or stored for quick delivery once sanctions are loosened," said Daniel Gerber, chief executive officer of Geneva-based Petro-Logistics.

But it could well be that, in the less hostile environment, "Chinese buyers are gaining confidence that they can get away with higher imports," Gerber said. Flows to China appear to have picked up lately, according to a trader at an oil major in Asia who asked not to be identified.

Whether the trickle turns into a flood will depend entirely on a diplomatic breakthrough between Tehran and Washington, which newly appointed Secretary of State Antony Blinken says remains a "long way" off.

## Iran Military Drills Forced Enemy to Abandon Threats

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's senior military commander says the country's recent back-to-back military drills had the United States give up its threats of military action against the Islamic Republic.

The remarks came less than a week after Iran's Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) wrapped up a series of maneuvers which saw the forces test their various armed units during 15 days of exercises.

Speaking on Monday, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said Iran put its military might to display after repeated threats by the former US government.

They were a response to the "irrational US president's muscle-flexing," IRNA cited Baqeri as saying.

"The maneuvers actually displayed the power and readiness of the Islamic Republic and the Armed Forces to the world and the enemies. They heartened the Iranian nation and resulted in the enemies' despair," the military commander noted.

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## Construction of Phases 2, 3 of Bushehr Nuclear Plant Started

### IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN- Hadi Beiginejad, a senior member of the Parliament's Energy Committee, said on Sunday that Iran has started construction of phases 2 and 3 of the Bushehr nuclear power plant.

"The second and third phases of the Bushehr power plant development have been signed with the Russians under 10-year and 8-year contracts," Fars quoted Beiginejad as saying.

The foundation of the second phase of the plant is under construction and the leveling works on the area considered for phase 3 has also began, he explained.

Beiginejad emphasized the need for Iran to diversify its power generation resources, and called on the Parliament and the government to accelerate construction of phases 2 and 3 of the nuclear plant.

The Bushehr facility sits 17 kilometers southeast of the city of Bushehr along the Persian Gulf coasts in southern Iran.

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## Enemies Failed to Cut Off Iran Oil Exports

TEHRAN (MNA) - Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said that enemies failed in cutting off Iran's oil sales.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with "Almasirah" on Sunday, he said that enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran were unable to reach Iran's oil export volume to "zero level".

He pointed to the manufacturing oil equipment and parts and added that the Islamic Republic of Iran manufactures 80 percent of its fixed oil equipment in the country, no need to import equipment from other countries. Relying upon domestic capabilities and potentials, giant steps have been taken in order to frustrate and foil unilateral and unjust U.S. sanctions imposed against the country, Zanganeh reiterated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the oil minister pointed to the high capability and potential of knowledge-based firms and stated, "It is hoped that the Islamic Republic of Iran would be able to attain self-sufficiency in the sector of manufacturing gas turbines and oil pumping devices thanks to the high potential of domestic knowledge-based companies."

Former President Donald Trump withdrew U.S. from Iran's nuclear deal, JCPOA, in May 2018 and imposed tough sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran for cutting off its oil export to 'zero level' but all the malicious objectives were frustrated.



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## Iranian, German Universities to Broaden Cooperation

TEHRAN (FNA) - The University of Tehran and Hochschule Furtwangen University of Germany agreed to expand their mutual cooperation at the post-graduate level, and vowed to increase bilateral ties with exchange programs and joint projects.

The Kish international campus of Tehran University and Germany's Hochschule Furtwangen University signed a memorandum of understanding to hold a joint master's degree course in mechanical engineering.

Furtwangen University is a German university of applied science with its main location in Furtwangen im Schwarzwald, Baden-Württemberg, Germany and two more branch locations in Villingen-Schwenningen and Tuttlingen.

## Top Legislators Weigh Plans to Boost Iran-China Ties

**TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Li Zhanshu discussed ways for closer cooperation between Tehran and Beijing in various fields.**

In a video conference on Monday morning, Qalibaf and Li explored avenues for the enhancement of cooperation between Iran and China, particularly the parliamentary ties, and discussed the prospect of the regional and international developments.

"The friendly relations between Tehran and Beijing have not been and would not be influenced by the ties with other countries and international conditions, but will go ahead in all fields on the basis of cooperation and common interests," Qalibaf said in the webinar.

He also praised China's decisive rejection of the sanctions against the Iranian nation, saying the strategically significant relations between Iran and China are not affected by developments in other states.

The Parliament speaker also stressed the need for respecting the national sovereignty



and territorial integrity of China.

For his part, the senior Chinese official said his country's leadership believes that the friendly relations with Iran derive from a historic background of mutual cooperation in hard times and unwavering mutual support.

The government and National People's Congress of China condemn the US' sanctions against other nations and reassert their commitment to and support for international agreements, Li added.

In comments in October 2020, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Tehran and Beijing "are determined to further expand their strategic partnership," adding that China is Iran's "1st economic partner" despite the U.S. "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic.

## 4m Tons of Basic Commodities Imported

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran has imported four million tons of basic goods during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021), according to the deputy managing director of Government Trading Corporation of Iran (GTC).

Amir Talebi said that 194 ships carrying basic goods have been docked and unloaded in Iranian ports during the 10-month period to supply the country's strategic reserves.

These goods have been imported to the country from the southern and northern ports, and the share of Imam Khomeini Port is more than other ports, the official stated.

"The process of importing the basic goods, from order registration, purchase, transportation, unloading, loading and warehousing to regulating the market and providing the strategic reserves has been done in the difficult condition of sanctions and the outbreak of coronavirus, and we are in good condition in terms of the strategic reserves", he pointed out.

In early October 2020, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that \$5.267 billion was supplied for importing basic commodities in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21, 2020).

Iran imported 25 million tons of basic goods during the previous Iranian calendar year, based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

## Iran to Run 3rd Test on Quantum Transmission of Data

TEHRAN (IFP)- Iran is to carry out the third experiment on the safe quantum transmission of photons from the International Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to the Milad Tower, a landmark in the capital, Tehran.

The test will be performed using state-of-the-art equipment by experts and researchers at the AEOI's Quantum Technologies Centre.

In this transmission method, by establishing a quantum link based on the entanglement principle, messages are encrypted with a safe method and data is transmitted through a specified path between two specific points. Then the message in question is encoded using a quantum key and is sent to the destination where it is decoded, again with the help of the quantum key, which cannot be copied and hacked as it is based on quantum entanglement.

The test is to be conducted on Monday, January 25, 2021.

A host of top officials will be present at the ceremony, including Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi, ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, and Defence Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami.

The experiment is part of the infrastructure needed for the development of a quantum satellite, quantum radars/lidars, and quantum networks.

## Iran, Kyrgyzstan Eye Developing Bilateral Medical Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Islamic Republic of Iran and Kyrgyzstan emphasized on broadening and developing cooperation in medical field.

Iran's Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Saeed Kharrazi pointed to the very close relationship between Iran and Kyrgyzstan and added that producing various types of medical equipment and medicines will be turned into the main field of cooperation between the two countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran officially recognized the sovereignty and independence of the Kyrgyz government on Dec. 21, 1991, he said, "The two countries have established very close historical and cultural ties with each other since the independence of Kyrgyzstan."

Iran and Kyrgyzstan enjoy high potentials and capacities to expand and develop their interaction in the political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields, the envoy added.

He went on to say that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kyrgyzstan cooperate actively within the framework of the United Nations, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and other regional and international organizations as well.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Kharrazi pointed to the cooperation between the two countries and added, "Presently, the Islamic Republic of Iran produces more than 97 percent of medicines and vaccines at the domestic market quantitatively."

He put the current value of medicines and vaccines produced in the country at about \$3 billion, adding, "During the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, Islamic Republic of Iran has offered quality medical contributions to Kyrgyzstan."

The Islamic Republic of Iran has gained salient achievements in the field of nanotechnology, standing at the first rank in the region and 8th rank in the world, he said, adding, "Iran is ready to cooperate with Kyrgyzstan in setting up scientific and technological centers."

## World Powers Proved to Be Unreliable

TEHRAN (IP) – Majlis Speaker said that the great powers, which have the temperament of arrogance and distance from humanity, are not trustworthy.

Iran's Parliament Speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, said on Sunday: "We saw Trump's arrogant temperament at the same time as the coronavirus outbreak."

These events showed the unreliability of these

countries which their acts are a combination of anti-humanity with arrogance, Qalibaf added.

Iran's parliament speaker added: "As the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said, the United States is our enemy and the most important way to deal with this enemy is to rely on internal strength as well as work and effort."

## ICCIMA Hosts Private Sector's Meeting With Qalibaf

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s board members gathered on Sunday in a meeting with parliament (Majlis) Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, to discuss the issues and problems that the private sector is currently facing.

Chaired by the ICCIMA Head Gholm-Hassein Shafeie, the 11th board meeting of the ICCIMA was also attended by the heads of the chamber's committees, ICCIMA portal reported.

Speaking in this meeting, Shafeie underlined some of the problems that the country's private sector is currently struggling with and said that the private sector has been left out in several economic fields due to unfair competition in many areas and the country's business environment is not providing an equal platform for their activities.

The official said the solution to the country's economic problems is highly dependent on the implementation of resistance economy policies, as stated by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

Shafeie further criticized the parliament's performance regarding its programs for improving the country's business environment, saying: "Since starting its activity, the 11th Majlis has always considered issues such as improving the business environment and promoting economic indicators as its main programs, but the implementation of such programs requires tools and mechanisms, the most important of which is to adopt strict regulations and supervise their execution."

He pointed to the continuous changes in tax and tariff regulations as a major source of problems for the country's businessmen and called on the parliament not to change the country's long-term regulations regarding tax and tariffs, and major economic factors.

"Listen to the demands and suggestions of the private sector," Shafeie demanded.

The way to save the country's economy passes through production, he stressed, adding: "The way to save the production and exports is to strengthen and support the real and committed private sector."

## Iran to Receive 1st COVAX Shipment Soon

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Iran will receive first batch of foreign vaccines from COVAX, an affiliate to the World Health Organization, in the next few weeks, Secretary of national anti-COVID-19 Task Force Mostafa Ghaneie said on Monday.

Iran's required coronavirus vaccine will be supplied from sources which have so far reported less side effects in human trial and is also more economical.

They will be first given to high-risk groups namely medical staff and the elderly people. He also hailed the process of making Iranian COVID-19 vaccine on schedule.

Iranian vaccine named COV-Iran Barekat has started its human trial phase for a month and has so far been injected to 21 people, Ghaneie noted.

He said that Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute is the second producer of vaccine in Iran whose vaccine will enter human trial phase in the next few days.

Pasteur Institute of Iran will also enter human trial phase in joint venture investment with Cuba.

Earlier, spokesman of Iran's Food and Drug Administration Kianoush Jahanpour said Iran and Cuba are working together for capacity building to manufacture million doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

## Armenian Minister Discuss Trade With Head of ICCIMA

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie met with Armenian Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan on Monday to discuss ways of removing barriers to the expansion of economic cooperation.

In this meeting, the two sides underlined the capacities for bilateral cooperation and explored ways for removing the existing challenges and obstacles to the expansion of trade relations and increasing the volume of joint investments by the two sides' private sectors.

Mentioning some of the problems in the field of transportation, Shafeie proposed the establishment of a joint transit and transportation company between the two countries to overcome such problems.

The official noted that joint production by the two countries would be a successful solution for removing the existing hurdles in the way of boosting trade relations between the two sides.

He further pointed to Armenia's prominent role in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the country's convenient access to the European market, describing the Armenian market as very valuable for the Iranian private sector's trade and investment purposes.

"Iran and Armenia can reach an agreement in order to reduce trade costs by negotiating, exchanging trade delegations, and holding exhibitions," Shafeie said.

Stating that the only common land border between Iran and the EAEU region is the border between Iran and Armenia, the official stated that the fields of cooperation between the two countries are very diverse.

"Iran and Armenia can cooperate in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, processing industries, and development of relations between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)."

The Armenian minister for his part announced the dispatch of a delegation of Armenian entrepreneurs to Isfahan within the next month and proposed the dispatch of a delegation from the Iranian private sector to Armenia.

According to Kerobyan, these visits will make the two sides' private sectors more familiar with each other and their existing capabilities.

## Intercity Passenger Car Fleet to Be Renovated

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Transport and Urban Development Ministry, in collaboration with domestic firm Supplying Automotive Parts Company (SAPCO) has started a program for renovating the country's intercity passenger car fleet.

The first phase of the mentioned program was officially started on Monday in a ceremony attended by senior officials including Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami, Head of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) Abdolhashem Hassan-Nia, and the Head of Iran's top automaker Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) Farshad Moqimi.

In the first phase of the said program, SAPCO, a major subsidiary of IKCO, is going to renovate 3,000 intercity passenger cars and hand them over to the owners by late August.

In this regard, 800 million rials (about \$19,000) of bank facilities with an interest rate of four percent will be provided to the owners of old cars in order for them to purchase the new cars.

As reported, during the Monday ceremony, 250 taxis were symbolically handed over to drivers in different provinces; the number will reach 450 by February 18.

The second phase of the mentioned program will be started in late August under a new contract between the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization and Iran Khodro.

Improving the services provided to passengers, improving the level of travel safety, reducing fuel consumption and car maintenance costs are among the benefits of implementing this program.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:16
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:41
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	07:07

22. Thou wilt see the Wrong-doers in fear on account of what they have earned, and (the burden of) that must (necessarily) fall on them. But those who believe and work righteous deeds will be in the luxuriant meads of the Gardens: they shall have, before their Lord, all that they wish for. That will indeed be the magnificent Bounty of Allah.

23. That is (the Bounty) whereof Allah gives Glad Tidings to His Servants who believe and do righteous deeds. Say: "No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin." And if any one earns any good, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).

Surah 42, Council, Consultation (22 - 23)

## Tehran-Doha Trade Has Not Changed So Much

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - Chairman of Iran-Qatar Chamber of Commerce Adnan Mousapour says despite having good political relation, the trade between Iran and Qatar has not changed so much.**

Speaking to ILNA, Mousapour said creation of an economic bloc among the Persian Gulf states requires resolving political disputes among the countries, adding that Qatar and Oman are friends of Iran and Kuwait is a neutral country and if a union is formed based on these countries, a 400-to-500-billion-dollar market will be shaped which can meet many needs of Iran.

On the current condition of trade between Iran and Qatar, he said the trade between these two countries is currently static and the trade volume is around \$250m that it is slightly fluctuated but it has a quiet trend which has not changed so much in the past year and as long as the general issues of the national economy are not resolved, the condition will remain so.

Mousapour noted as long as mega projects are not defined and good relations are not restored, economic issues are not prioritized and political issues in the region are not settled, one should not expect any improvement.

He went on to say that the total imports of Qatar stood at around \$29b in 2019 while Iran's share of it was a figure between 230 to 240 million dollars. He added when exports are not supported or they are restricted and when the exporters are being left alone in the very competitive market of Qatar and there is no special support of the private sector, why should everybody expect development in the trade?



Mousapour added that all exports have been done because of the capability of the private sector despite complicated domestic regulations and international sanctions.

On the bartering trade between Iran and Qatar, he said Iran's imports from Qatar are around \$50m per year so there is no barter and if there is, its amount is very insignificant and is between the private sector traders.

Mousapour also reiterated trade and economy demands good and amicable ties with the export destinations in order to enter short or long term contracts for imports and exports, adding that Qatar has resolved its dispute with its neighboring countries based on its country and people's interests and with resolving dispute with Saudi Arabia, its market will become more competitive.

He stipulated if Iran can be involved in mega projects in the region with Kuwait and Qatar as their centers and in cooperation with countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE, it will be definitely not against Iran's interests and the country can benefit it.

On the impacts of the FATF, Mousapour said the total trade of the country and therefore trade with Qatar is under the influence of the FATF because Iran's trade lacks tools that other traders have for competition in the competitive market and it is like going to war with sword against enemy armed with machine-gun.

## Persian Gulf Star Refinery Boosts Export Of Oil Derivatives



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Minister of Oil for Refining and Distribution Affairs Alireza Sadeghabadi said on Monday that the Persian Gulf Star refinery is effective to make Iran self-reliant for gasoline output and helped Iran boost export of oil derivatives as well.

"Currently, an average of 48 million liters of gasoline and 17 million liters of gas oil are produced daily in Persian Gulf Star Refinery," Sadeghabadi told reporters on Monday.

He added that thanks to inauguration of the Persian Gulf Refinery, the largest Iranian and world natural gas condensates refinery with a capacity of refining 450,000 bpd, Iran has not only achieved self-sufficiency in high-quality car fuel production despite severe western sanctions but is also exporting this product.

The deputy Minister of Oil for Refining and Distribution Affairs added that in 2012, Iran was producing only 51 million liters of various types of car fuel, none of which were qualified based on Euro standards. In the same year, Iran imported some 10 million liters of car fuel, but today, thanks to the opening of Persian Gulf Refinery and presentation of its products to the Iranian and world markets, Iran has achieved self-sufficiency and export capability in this field.

Located in the southern part of Iran, the Persian Gulf Star Refinery is a gas condensate refinery that produces gasoline, diesel, LPG, hydrogen, sulphur and jet fuel. The Persian Gulf Star Refinery broke ground in 2006, 25km off the city of Bandar Abbas.

In April 2017, the refinery's phase 1 was inaugurated with the first shipment of gasoline delivered for distribution in June 2017 and the second phase of the refinery was placed into operations in June 2018.

## Cash Injections to Continue to Stabilize Forex Market

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has injected nearly \$1 billion into a secondary exchange market in the country as it seeks to stabilize foreign currency prices amid hopes that higher crude sales and better exports could boost the country's access to hard currency.

CBI Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati said on Sunday that the bank's cash injections into the NIMA market, where exporters and importers trade hard currency, had exceeded \$150 million per day since the move began a week ago.

Hemmati admitted, however, that the injections have had a mild impact on currency prices because importers anticipate lower prices for the U.S. dollar against the rial.

The greenback sold for 235,000 against the rial on Sunday, up slightly from prices seen last week when the rial began to strengthen against foreign currencies after a change of government in the US.

## Tejarat Bank, Strategic Partner of ESCO in Improving Production

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

ISFAHAN – Tejarat Bank of Iran and Esfahan Steel Company in a ceremony signed a memorandum of understanding for rial and forex-centered cooperation.

In the ceremony which was held on last Wednesday, the CEO of ESCO Mr. Mansour Yazdizadeh and the CEO of Tejarat Bank Mr. Reza Dolatabadi signed the MoU.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, Mr. Dolatabadi said ESCO as the first steel producing company enjoys a special position in the country in different dimensions and it has been able to export its products based on the latest international standards and has repatriated the forex resulted from the exports to the country and it is considered a big achievement especially in the sanctions era.

He added that he had a good visit of different parts of the company, and announced the readiness of the bank for cooperation with this gigantic industrial complex.



He added that banks are considered as good consultants for producers and therefore, through reciprocal interaction in different fields, both sides can benefit.

Meanwhile Mr. Yazdizadeh, for his part, said that ESCO has become 56 years old and he sees as a good this MoU which was signed in less than

two weeks after the foundation anniversary of the company.

He added that banks are very effective in the cycle of production for the producers, adding that ESCO is the first producer of structural section in the country and the first rail producer in the West Asia and currently its rails with high value added are used in the national railway networks.

Yazdizadeh added that ESCO needs a strong financial supporter and Tejarat Bank which has announced readiness for cooperation can be a strategic and effective partner for ESCO for improving the quality of products by the company.

## Chadormalu Makes Dream of Ardakanis to Come True

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for repair and restoration of historic complex of Pardisan in presence of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali Asghar Mounesan, Yazd Province governor, representative of town of Ardakan to Majlis and the CEO of the company Eng. Naser Taghizadeh.

In the ceremony where several tourism and cultural heritage activists and enthusiasts were present, Tourism Minister Mounesan hailed this important action of the CEO of Chadormalu Company and his attention to the lasting heritage in the town of Ardakan and said cultural heritage in any country is symbol of its identity, civilization and culture. He then pointed to the role of Iran in shaping human civilization, adding that it is the duty of everybody and lover of national and patriot identity for safeguarding the works and heritage left from the ancestors and transfer of them to the posterity.

He went on to say that Ardakan is one of the historic and noble towns of the country and hailed the determination of Mr. Taghizadeh and other members of the board of directors of the company for stepping in revival of this historic structure and expressed hope this move would turn into a model for other industries to think of developing tourism which can lead to creation of jobs and better business climate.

Then Eng. Taghizadeh thanked the minister for his presence in the ceremony, added that Chadormalu Company is serious in observing its social responsibilities and accordingly, it has active participation in different cultural and social fields.

He reiterated that the company is committed to take action in line with social and cultural development in the region. At the end of the ceremony, the MoU was signed between Eng. Taghizadeh and the tourism ministry official.



## Active Presence of MAPNA Group at 25th Iran Show

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC NEWS**

TEHRAN – MAPNA Group had an active presence in the 25th Iran Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (known as Iran Oil Show) which started its work on Friday at the Tehran Permanent Fairground and wrapped up yesterday.



This year the 25th Iran Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition had chosen the slogan of "National Oil, Iranian Goods and Services", and MAPNA Group, which is one of the fewest Iranian companies which has been authorized by the Oil Ministry to work on exploitation and production (E&P) development of the oil and gas fields, had an active presence.

Representatives of the group by attending their pavilion at Hall 8 of the fairground were ready to answer the questions of the visitors and they had also some meetings with contractor companies and entrepreneurs active in the oil and gas field.

The show was a good opportunity for displaying the technical knowhow and capacity of MAPNA Group in line with materializing the development of domestic industries and indigenizing the modern technologies and at the same time it was good opportunity for restoring close contact with entrepreneurs and holding joint meetings with them to introduce the group's achievements in the oil and gas field more than ever.

The oil and gas sector of the group started its activities officially in 2007, and with reliance on the capabilities and high managerial experience and hiring specialized and expert forces in the oil and gas sector, it grew fast in the shortest time and was expanded considerably.

The activities of MAPNA Group began in the oil, gas and petrochemicals utility field and now it is active in the upstream, exploration and development fields.

The prestigious MEED business magazine named MAPNA Group as the top contractor company of the Middle East in the oil and gas sector in 2019. According to this business magazine, MAPNA Group by signing contracts worth \$876m for developing oil fields had a brilliant performance.

MAPNA Group is a group of Iranian companies involved in development and execution of thermal and renewable power plants, oil & gas, railway transportation and other industrial projects as well as manufacturing main equipment including gas and steam turbines, electrical generator, turbine blade and vane, HRSG and conventional boilers, electric and control systems, gas compressor, locomotive and other pertinent equipment.

The company was initially named Iran Power Plant Projects Management Company, MAPNA, serving as the acronym of the Persian title.

## Cooperative Sector Ready for Meeting Demands of Armenia Market



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) Bahman Abdollahi in meeting with Armenian Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan announced the readiness of Iran's cooperative sector to meet the demands of Armenia's market.

Abdollahi in the meeting highlighted the capabilities and capacities of Iran's cooperative sector and said the cooperative sector is both ready to provide Armenian market with its demands and for exports of goods to Russia and urged Armenia for providing required infrastructures and coordination.

Kerobyan, for his part, said the economic cooperation between Iran and Armenia despite their high capacities is not currently satisfactory and said by joint production both sides can circumvent the sanctions and also to increase the current trade volume of \$400m to \$1b in six months.



## EU to Force Pharmaceutical Firms to Fulfill Covid-19 Vaccine Contracts

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union will make pharmaceutical companies respect contracts they have signed for the supply of Covid-19 vaccines, European Council President Charles Michel said on Sunday.

Pfizer Inc last week said it was temporarily slowing supplies to Europe to make manufacturing changes that would boost output. On Friday, AstraZeneca also said that initial deliveries to the region will fall short because of a production glitch.

"We plan to make the pharmaceutical companies respect the contracts they have signed... by using the legal means at our disposal," Michel said on Europe 1 radio.



## Russia Police in Spotlight After 3,500 Protesters Detained



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Nearly 3,500 protesters were arrested at demonstrations in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, a monitor reported Sunday, as authorities probed violence on the part of both protesters and police.

Police clashed with demonstrators in Moscow as tens of thousands took to the streets across the country on Saturday following Navalny's call to demonstrate against President Vladimir Putin's 20-year rule.

A number of protesters were injured, including a woman in Saint Petersburg who was hospitalised with a head injury and was in intensive care Sunday.

The West condemned the arrests and "harsh tactics" used against demonstrators, with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell saying the bloc would discuss "next steps" on Monday.

Late Saturday the Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it launched criminal inquiries in Moscow over the use of violence against law enforcement, hooliganism and property damage.

"Investigators are continuing to study and analyse a large amount of photo and video materials," the Committee said.

In a separate statement, investigators said Sunday a 36-year-old man hit two policemen at the Saint Petersburg protest and was detained.

But Saint Petersburg prosecutors also said they were probing violations "on the part of law enforcement" and the use of force against a woman.

The statement was released after local media published a video showing a middle-aged woman falling to the ground after being kicked by riot police.

In the video, a woman -- identified as Margarita Yudina -- is seen asking three policemen in full riot gear why they are detaining a young protester. One of the policemen then kicks her in the stomach. Saint Petersburg's Dzhanelidze hospital said Yudina was hospitalised with a head injury.

"She is in a serious condition," a hospital representative told AFP on Sunday. "She's in intensive care."

Moscow authorities for their part insisted that no one remained hospitalised in the capital following the rallies.

Officials said in a statement on Sunday that 29 people were taken to hospitals and received medical assistance after the protests.

"No one required further hospital treatment," the statement said.

The head of the Kremlin's human rights council, Valery Fadeyev, said most of those detained in Moscow had been released.

He also defended the detentions, saying the protests were illegal and took place during a coronavirus pandemic. "I see no violations whatsoever," he said. "These events are illegal."

He also accused TikTok, a Chinese video-sharing app beloved by teens, of encouraging minors to participate in Saturday's protests. "This calls for an investigation," he said.

## Mexican President Contracts COVID-19

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said on Sunday he had tested positive for COVID-19 amid the country's deadliest week yet in the coronavirus pandemic, which has pushed the health system of the Mexican capital to its limits.

The 67-year-old president, who was a heavy smoker until suffering a major heart attack in 2013, said in a tweet that his symptoms were light and he was receiving treatment.

"As always, I am optimistic," said Lopez Obrador, who has resisted wearing a face mask in public since the virus reached Mexico over 10 months ago.



## Portugal President Wins New Term

LISBON (Reuters) - Portugal's center-right president, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, won a second term on Sunday in an election marked by record abstention as the country battles a crippling third wave of coronavirus contagion.

The 72-year-old former leader of the Social Democratic Party, known for his warm persona and habit of taking selfies with supporters, won 61% of votes, above his 52% win in 2016.

Still, 60% of voters abstained - the highest figure in Portuguese history - in part because 1.1 million voters from abroad were added to the electoral register for the first time, but also due to hundreds of thousands of people in quarantine.

The president holds a largely ceremonial role but can veto certain laws and decree states of emergency, a power Rebelo de Sousa deployed often during the pandemic, taking parliament's lead.

"The most urgent of tasks is to combat the pandemic. This is my priority, in total solidarity with parliament and government," Rebelo de Sousa said in his victory speech.



## Suspected Jihadist Attacks on Army in Mali Kill 3 Soldiers

DJENNE (Dispatches) - Twin attacks on the army in central Mali overnight killed three soldiers while five of the alleged attackers were also left dead, security sources said Sunday.

The attacks occurred near the border with Burkina Faso at army positions that have been targeted in the past. A deadly Islamist offensive began in northern Mali in 2012 before spreading elsewhere.

"Two simultaneous terrorist attacks in the night of Saturday to Sunday [...] caused the deaths of three soldiers," a military source told AFP, detailing raids at Boulkessy and Mondoro in the centre of the Sahel country that also left five suspected jihadists dead.

A security source confirmed the attacks and death toll, adding that seven other soldiers were wounded along with a number of the suspected jihadists, who were said to have abandoned 25 motorcycles while fleeing.

The attack occurred at around 3am (0300 GMT) and fighting continued for around an hour, a local official told AFP.

In September 2019, the same army positions were targeted in one of the deadliest attacks to hit Mali since 2012, with some 50 soldiers killed.

That double attack was later claimed by the Support Group for Islam and Muslims, the main jihadist alliance in the Sahel region affiliated with Al-Qaeda. On Thursday, three other Malian soldiers were killed in a bomb blast in the Mondoro area.



## Netherlands Anti-Curfew Protests Spark Clashes With Police

THE HAGUE (AFP) - Protests against a curfew to curb the spread of Covid-19 in the Netherlands degenerated into clashes with police and looting in cities across the country Sunday, authorities and reports said.

Police used water cannon and dogs in Amsterdam, public television NOS reported, after hundreds gathered to protest the curfew which is set to last until February 10 and is the country's first since World War II.

In the southern city of Eindhoven, police fired tear gas to disperse a crowd of several hundred, regional television Omroep Brabant reported. At least 30 people were arrested there, according to police.

A number of vehicles were burned and businesses at Eindhoven's central train station were also looted, media reports said.

Dutch rail company NS called on travellers to avoid the Eindhoven station, where it said train circulation was interrupted due to the intervention of emergency services nearby.

Eindhoven mayor John Jorritsma told reporters that if the country continued "down this path, then I think we are heading for civil war."

Incidents were also reported in The Hague, Breda, Arnhem, Tilburg, Enschede, Appeldoorn, Venlo and Ruremond.

A Covid-19 testing centre was set on fire on Saturday evening in the village of Urk in the north of the country, local authorities said.

"The fire in a screening centre in Urk goes beyond all limits," Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said on Sunday.

Violators of the 9 pm to 4:30 am curfew, which Prime Minister Mark Rutte says is needed to bring case numbers down, face a 95-euro (\$115) fine.

Exemptions are possible, in particular for people returning from funerals or those having to work, but on condition that they present a certificate.

Rutte also announced on Wednesday a ban on flights from Britain, South Africa and South America, and a cut in the number of guests allowed in people's homes to one, from the previous limit of two.

New variants of the virus have led to deep concern in Europe, particularly a more infectious strain that first emerged in Britain.

The Netherlands was already under its toughest measures since the start of the pandemic, with bars and restaurants having closed in October, and schools and non-essential shops shut since December.

Dutch lawmakers on Thursday approved Rutte's curfew plan, though on condition that it begin half an hour later than the original 8:30 pm start time.

The move had faced criticism led by far-right politician Geert Wilders, who called it "careless" and "disproportionate".

"I stand here for freedom. I lost it myself," said Wilders, who has for years been under round-the-clock security after receiving death threats.



## W. Sahara Rebels Launch Attack

ALGIERS (AFP) - Pro-independence rebels fighting Morocco over the disputed territory of Western Sahara on Sunday vowed a military escalation, hours after launching an overnight attack.

The Polisario Front said they had bombarded the Morocco-controlled area of Guerguerat, a crossing point between Western Sahara and Mauritania in a UN-patrolled buffer zone.

AFP could not obtain independent confirmation of the reported rocket strikes, or of any possible casualties, from the remote desert region that is largely off-limits to journalists. "The war will continue and escalate," senior Polisario security official Sidi Ould Loukal told AFP by phone. "All positions of the Moroccan army are targets of this war."

A Moroccan official however told AFP there had only been "harassing fire", labelled the attack claim part of a "propaganda war" and insisted "the situation is normal". Moroccan TV channel 2M showed images of trucks in the Guerguerat area and reported the situation was "normal" early Sunday.

Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony contested since the 1970s between Morocco, which controls three-quarters of it, and the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, which demands independence for what it calls the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

A UN-backed political process has been suspended since March 2019, and the two sides remain separated by a 2,700-kilometre (1,700-mile) sand barrier.

Tensions rose sharply when Morocco on November 13 sent troops into the buffer zone to reopen the only road leading from Morocco to Mauritania and the rest of West Africa, after separatists had blocked it the previous month.

The Polisario responded by declaring the 1991 ceasefire null and void, arguing the road had not existed when the truce was signed and was therefore illegal.

The two sides are reported to have since exchanged regular fire along the demarcation line. The pro-independence rebels overnight launched four rockets toward Guerguerat, the Sahrawi press agency SPS said, also reporting attacks along the security barrier.







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# KLM to Keep Long Haul Flights

LONDON (Reuters) - Dutch airline KLM will keep operating long haul flights, including for vaccine distribution, after agreeing with the government on softer demands for returning air crews to carry out rapid COVID-19 tests. The Dutch arm of Air France-KLM said earlier in the week it would cancel all its 270 weekly long-haul flights to the Netherlands as a result of new COVID-19 rules, requiring passengers and crew to show evidence of a negative rapid coronavirus test taken just before departure. KLM at the time said this would make it impossible to keep flying to countries with a high risk of coronavirus infections, as it would risk having to leave crew behind.



## World's Economic Recovery Gets Delayed by Slow Vaccine Rollouts

LONDON (Bloomberg) - The world economy is facing a tougher start to 2021 than expected as coronavirus infections surge and it takes time to roll out vaccinations.

While global growth is still on course to rebound from the recession of last year, it may take longer to ignite and not be as healthy as previously forecast. The World Bank already this month trimmed its prediction to 4% in 2021 and the International Monetary Fund will this week update its own outlook.

Double-dip recessions are now expected in Japan, the euro area and U.K. as restrictions to curb the virus's spread are enforced. Record cases in the U.S. are dragging on retail spending and hiring, prompting President Joe Biden's new administration to seek an extra \$1.9 trillion worth of fiscal stimulus. Only China has managed a V-shaped recovery after containing the disease early, but even there consumers remain wary with Beijing partly locked down.

High frequency indicators tracked by Bloomberg Economics point to a troubling start to the year with advanced economies beginning on a weak note and emerging economies diverging. "That's a reflection of the hard reality that, ahead of widespread distribution of the vaccine, a return to normality is an unlikely prospect," said Tom Orlik, chief economist at Bloomberg Economics.

It's a stark outlook facing policy makers after \$12 trillion worth of fiscal support and trillions in central bank money printing failed to cement a recovery. Those from the Federal Reserve meet this week. Even as the economic outlook has darkened as the weeks of 2021 ticked by, financial markets have continued to rally on optimism government stimulus and the vaccine roll out will drive a recovery. Global stocks hit an all-time high last week.

The unevenness is likely to feature in remarks by global leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping, his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel and others who will speak at an online event the World Economic Forum is holding from Jan. 25 to Jan. 29 instead of its usual meeting in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

The U.S., Britain and European Union are delivering vaccines, setting up a scenario where some parts of the world reach herd immunity while others lag, hurting poorer economies. "While there is light at the end of the tunnel, there is still a long and difficult road ahead before we are out," said Erik Nielsen, group chief economist at Unicredit SpA. "So long as the pandemic terrorizes part of the world, normality will not be restored anywhere."

The optimistic outlook rests on authorities getting the vaccine out on a material scale by mid-year and neutering the threat of more transmissible variants of the virus. The ongoing provision of easy monetary policy and hope that governments won't pull back their support prematurely as some did after the financial crisis should also assist. Lockdowns and other restrictions on movement also appear to be having less of a detrimental economic impact this time than last year as consumers and business have found ways to adapt. And China's lead in the global recovery shows what's possible once the virus is controlled.

"The first quarter will be worse than we had thought," said Shaun Roache, Asia Pacific chief economist at S&P Global Ratings in Singapore. "But we see a delayed, not derailed recovery."

## Oman Bars Expats From Certain Jobs

MUSCAT (Dispatches) - Oman announced Sunday it will bar expatriates from certain jobs in an effort to create more employment opportunities for its citizens amid an economic downturn.

In a region that depends heavily on cheap foreign labor, expats in the sultanate make up about 40% of the country's 4.5 million-strong population.

Faced with an economic slump and a sharp drop in oil revenues, Oman and other Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) states have stepped up efforts to create jobs for their own citizens.

"A number of jobs in the private sector will be nationalized," the Omani labor ministry announced on Twitter on Sunday. It added the work permits of foreigners in those professions will not be renewed after their expiry date.

Various jobs in insurance companies, shops and car dealerships, including finance, commercial and administrative positions, will be "limited to Omanis only", the ministry said.

Work as a driver, "no matter what the vehicle", will also be reserved for citizens, it added.

In April 2020, Oman ordered state-owned companies to accelerate the process of replacing foreign staff with Omani nationals, especially in senior positions, to create more jobs for citizens.



## Sales of Russian Wheat Keep Surging

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has sold 26.3 million tons of wheat since the beginning of July 2020 through January 14 2021, marking a 22.6 percent surge against the same period a year ago, the latest data by the country's agricultural ministry shows.

Overall, grain exports have totaled 31.5 million tons since the beginning of the season till the middle of January, fixing a 28.8 percent year-on-year growth, according to Federal Customs Service's figures, which omit data related to mutual trade between the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Sales of barley more than doubled over the indicated period and totaled 3.7 million tons, while exports of corn soared 21.4 percent to 1.2 million tons.

Russia sold some 41.7 million tons of grain in the last agricultural season that ended on June 30, including 33.2 million tons of wheat. The Russian Ministry of Agriculture expects the grain exports to total 45 million tons, including 35 million tons of wheat in the current season. In October, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Viktoria Abramchenko said that the country's grain exports may reach 50 million tons.

Earlier this week, the Rusagotrans analytical center published a less optimistic outlook, saying that the current season may result in a sharp decrease of Russia's wheat exports. The plunge is expected due to high domestic prices along with looming exports limits and export tax for certain grains, including wheat, rye, barley, and corn.

The measure will come into force on February 15 and remain in effect till the end of the season.

## Iraq to Lower Oil Output to Compensate for OPEC Breach

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq plans to cut oil output in January and February to make up for breaching its OPEC+ quota last year, according to the state company that markets the nation's crude.

OPEC's second-biggest producer will pump around 3.6 million barrels daily for the two months, according to Ali Nizar, the deputy head of SOMO. That compares with around 3.85m in December, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Exports, including those from the semi-autonomous northern region of Kurdistan, will be slightly more than three million barrels a

day during the period, Nizar said in an interview in Baghdad, the capital. The figure for last month was almost 3.3m.

Baghdad's ability to meet these targets depends on whether the Kurdistan Regional Government agrees to reduce supplies from fields under its control, Nizar said. The central government has complained in the past that it can't control Kurdish production.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and partners such as Russia, an alliance known as OPEC+, agreed in April to slash output and bolster oil prices, which had been hammered by the spread of the coronavirus.

Saudi Arabia criticized Iraq and other members including Nigeria for pumping above their caps on several occasions and called on them to make compensatory cuts.

Iraq is still committed to the OPEC+ deal, which runs until next year, Nizar said.

Its decision to pump less oil follows a similar move by Saudi Arabia earlier this month. With the virus still raging, the kingdom said it would reduce production in February and March by one million barrels daily, a surprise move that caused oil prices to rise.

Tanker-tracking data suggest Iraq is already selling less crude. Exports slipped to just over three million barrels daily in the first 15 days of January, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Benchmark Brent crude has almost tripled to around \$55 a barrel since OPEC+ begun restricting supplies. But it's still far short of what Iraq needs to balance its budget and bolster its economy. The International Monetary Fund forecast that Iraq's gross domestic product would contract 12 percent in 2020, more than that of any other OPEC member under an output quota.

Iraq is mulling whether to build or use oil-storage facilities in Asia to reduce the risk of it not being able to send crude to its main customers, according to Nizar. Persian Gulf neighbors Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates already stockpile some of their crude in Japan, South Korea and India.

## Double-Dip Europe Recession Increasingly Inevitable

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - A slowdown in eurozone business activity accelerated in January, making a new recession almost certain as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to batter the economy, a key survey showed Friday. The closely watched PMI index compiled by IHS Markit is considered the earliest indicator of the state of the economy and the latest reading confirmed fears that the year-old virus crisis is still going strong.

"A double-dip recession for the eurozone economy is looking increasingly inevitable as tighter Covid-19 restrictions took a further toll on businesses in January," Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, said. This meant that the economies of the 19 countries that use the single currency, dominated by Germany and France, would sink back into recession after only a very short recovery over the European summer.

The firm's closely watched PMI index fell from 49.1 points in December to 47.5 points this month, further away from the 50-point level which indicates growth. Williamson noted however that the bad start to 2021 would be less damaging than the economic collapse seen in the first wave of the pandemic last year. This was due to the "ongoing relative resilience of manufacturing, rising demand for exported goods and the lockdown measures having been less stringent on average than last year," he said. The difference between France and Germany was notable.

German exports managed to keep the country narrowly on a growth trajectory, while French business activity sank. The situation for the rest of the eurozone, accounting for a little more than half of the bloc's economy, was even worse. Worryingly, employment across the eurozone fell for an eleventh consecutive month, albeit with modest increases in France and Germany, IHS Markit said. The bleak picture confirmed a warning by European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde who saw "serious risks" still looming over the eurozone economy.

Much hope has been put in the distribution of vaccinations to reopen the economy but the campaign in the EU is going at a slower pace than hoped. The rollout of vaccines had instilled "a strong degree of confidence" but "the recent rise in virus case numbers has caused some pull-back in optimism," Williamson said. IHS Markit on Friday also posted an alarming survey result for Britain, where activity collapsed from a modest expansion in December to a low 40.6 points in January.

## Pandemic Disruption to Learning an Opportunity To Reimagine, Revitalize Education



TEHRAN (UNIC) - To mark the third International Day of Education, 24 January 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres paid tribute to the resilience of students, teachers and families in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic that, at its peak, forced almost every school, institute and university to close its doors.

*The full text of his message reads:*

When education is interrupted, it affects everyone – especially students, teachers and families.

Today, on the third International Day of Education, I pay tribute to their resilience in the face of a pandemic that, at its peak, forced almost every school, institute and university to close its doors.

Although this disruption has led to learning innovations, it has also dashed hopes of a brighter future among vulnerable populations.

All of us pay the price.

After all, education is the foundation for expanding opportunities, transforming economies, fighting intolerance, protecting our planet and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the world continues to battle the pandemic, education – as a fundamental right and a global public good – must be protected to avert a generational catastrophe.

Even before the pandemic, some 258 million children and adolescents were out of school, the majority of them girls.

More than half of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries were not learning to read a simple text. In 2021, we must seize all opportunities to turn this situation around.

We must ensure the full replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education fund, and strengthen global education cooperation.

We must also step up our efforts to reimagine education – training teachers, bridging the digital divide and rethinking curricula to equip learners with the skills and knowledge to flourish in our rapidly changing world.

Let us commit to promote education for all — today and every day.



## Iran Among 4 Top States in Blood-Clotting Technology

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian scientists have managed to produce an effective blood-clotting substance, joining the group of a few limited countries that produce this substance.

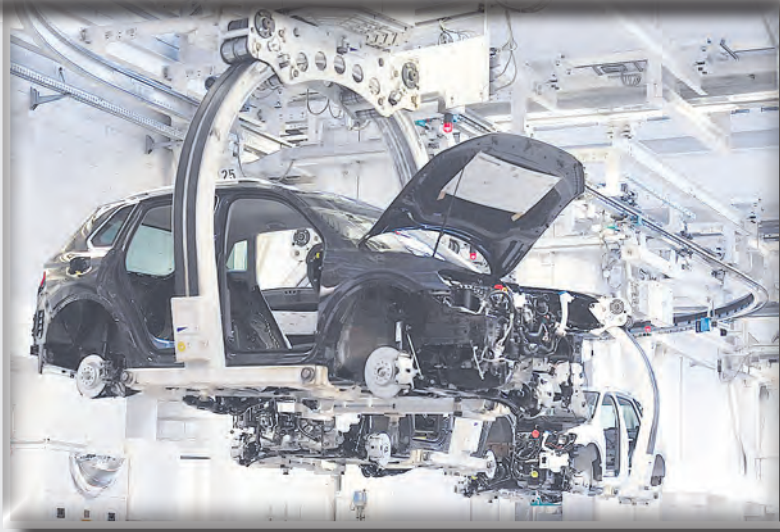
Uncontrolled bleeding today accounts for a large portion of accident deaths. In this regard, producing synthetic blood-clotting substances that lead to the cessation of bleeding in the shortest

possible time is of great importance for scientists in this field.

Two Iranian scientists Dr. Roya Salehi along with Dr. Mehdi Adalati, members of the Hematology and Blood Transfusion Medicine Department at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences have managed to design and produce a very powerful home-made blood-clotting substance.



## Germany Urges Taiwan to Help Ease Auto Chip Shortage



It said it had begun talks with domestic chip suppliers in response to requests from other countries and asked them to “provide full assistance”.

“The relevant supply and demand situation is also closely related to the plans of automotive chip factories to reduce inventory during the off-season,” the ministry said.

TSMC, in a statement, said the issue of chips shortages for auto companies was very important to them.

“It is our top priority, and TSMC is working closely with our automotive customers to resolve the capacity support issues,” it said.

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany has asked Taiwan to persuade Taiwanese manufacturers to help ease a shortage of semiconductor chips in the auto sector which is hampering its fledgling economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Automakers around the world are shutting assembly lines due to problems in the delivery of semiconductors, which in some cases have been exacerbated by the former Trump administration’s actions against key Chinese chip factories.

The shortage has affected Volkswagen, Ford Motor Co F.N, Subaru Corp, Toyota Motor Corp, Nissan Motor Co, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and other car makers.

In a letter seen by Reuters on Sunday, German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier asked his Taiwanese counterpart Wang Mei-hua to address the issue in talks with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co Ltd, the world’s largest contract chipmaker and one of Germany’s main suppliers.

“I would be pleased if you could take on this matter and underline the importance of additional semiconductor capacities for the German automotive industry to TSMC,” Altmaier wrote.

Altmaier said the aim was to enable additional capacities and deliveries of semiconductors in the short and medium term.

The German automobile industry was already in direct talks with TSMC about hiking deliveries and there had been “very constructive” signals from TSMC to solve the problem, he wrote.

A German economy ministry spokeswoman said it was monitoring the situation very closely and that it was in talks on the issue with the car industry.

To reduce dependencies from Asian suppliers and avoid similar problems in the future, Berlin is now planning to increase state support to ramp up production capacities of semiconductors in Germany and Europe, the spokeswoman added.

Taiwan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs said it has received requests through diplomatic channels to help ease a shortage of chips for the auto sector although it was not aware of Altmaier’s letter.

## Polish President Calls On EU to Step Up Sanctions on Russia

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Poland’s president Andrzej Duda has urged the EU to step up its sanctions on Russia in the wake of the summary arrest and jailing of Alexei Navalny, the anti-corruption activist who has become Vladimir Putin’s most prominent critic.

EU foreign ministers are due to discuss their response on Monday, and Mr Duda said talk of further sanctions was “absolutely justified” given both the treatment of Mr Navalny, and Russia’s continued involvement in unresolved conflicts in both Georgia and Ukraine, where it annexed Crimea in 2014. He said the EU’s high representative for foreign affairs, Josep Borrell, should also reconsider plans to visit Moscow next month.

“There is no other peaceful tool for applying pressure to a state that breaks the rules of international law. The primacy of international law is fundamental here. As long as international law is observed, there is no war. If international law is broken, the effect of this is always conflict,” Mr Duda told the Financial Times.

“The only way to [avoid conflict] is to force international law to be observed. The only way to do this without rifles, cannons and bombs is via sanctions. So we are ready to help build consensus on that issue.”

Protests flared across Russia on Saturday after Mr Navalny was detained on his return from Germany last week, where he was being treated after surviving an assassination attempt involving the Soviet-developed nerve agent novichok last year. More than 2,000 demonstrators were arrested during an often violent crackdown by Russian security services.

The U.S. state department condemned the “harsh tactics” used by the authorities. On Sunday, Dmitry Peskov, Mr Putin’s spokesman, attacked the American embassy in Moscow for publishing details of the protests in major cities, in a notice that warned US citizens to avoid them. Such actions, he said, were “indirectly, an absolute interference in our internal affairs”.

Mr Peskov also played down the scale of the protests. “Many are saying that a lot of people took part in illegal actions. No, only a few people came out; many people vote for Putin,” he said. “If you compare the numbers, you will understand how few these people are,” he told a weekly state television programme dedicated to Mr Putin’s life.

Mr Duda said targeting Russia’s state-run gas giant Gazprom would be one way of ratcheting up the pressure on the Kremlin. “I think that if we limit the possibility of Gazprom functioning economically on the territory of the EU, especially by concluding new investments, then things including respect for international law and for human and political rights in Russia would start moving forward, because that would be a serious move in the domain of Russian economic interests,” he said.

While some other EU countries, notably the three Baltic states, share Poland’s hawkish stance, the bloc is deeply divided on policy towards the Kremlin. But the clampdown on protesters has raised the stakes of the foreign ministers’ talks on Monday.

The EU has already imposed sanctions on six top Russian officials over their alleged involvement in Mr Navalny’s poisoning. While the bloc could move towards further targeted sanctions on individuals and institutions, more sweeping economic countermeasures — such as those imposed after Moscow’s annexation of Crimea — are likely to be contentious.

## Turkey Hopes Mediterranean Talks Can Calm Choppy Waters With EU



BRUSSELS (Reuters) - After a five-year hiatus marked by grievances over their rival claims to Mediterranean waters, Turkey resumes talks with Greece on Monday in the first test of its hopes to reverse deteriorating relations with the European Union.

While diplomats say that rebuilding trust will be a hard slog, the talks follow Turkey’s decision to stop its search for gas in disputed waters which angered Greece and Cyprus and a cooling of rhetoric around Ankara’s hard disputes with the EU.

They could also pave the way for an imminent visit to Turkey by EU leaders.

Both sides say there is political will to improve relations, but after years of rancour over refugees, human rights, maritime claims, Turkey’s military interventions and the divided island of Cyprus, rapprochement appears a distant prospect.

Expressing guarded optimism, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told Reuters he saw a “window of opportunity” but that Ankara needed to “abandon this line of confrontation” and seek dialogue.

President Tayyip Erdogan, who has accused the bloc of “strategic blindness” towards Turkey, told EU ambassadors in Ankara this month he was ready to improve ties.

Diplomats say it will need more than a shift in tone and the withdrawal of Turkey’s survey vessel from disputed waters to silence calls from some EU states for sanctions on Ankara, which EU leaders will discuss in March.

“I don’t see any great reconciliation to move us off the trajectory we are on. It is going to take a significant gesture from Turkey,” one diplomat in Brussels said, adding there was no reason to be optimistic.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, in Brussels this week on a mission to maintain what he called the “positive atmosphere” between Ankara and the EU, said on Friday talks on Cyprus would be held in New York in the next two months.

Erdogan’s effort to build bridges with Turkey’s main trading partner comes as his government struggles with an economic slowdown. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been the main brake on growth, international tensions have also weighed on the economy.

Setting out a new economic path in November, Erdogan also promised reforms of Turkey’s judiciary after repeated criticism from Western allies who say the rule of law has eroded in Turkey after a 2016 coup attempt and subsequent crackdown.

Turkey has ignored several rulings by the European

Court of Human Rights calling for the release of the country’s most prominent detainees, Kurdish politician Selahettin Demirtas and businessman Osman Kavala.

Erdogan has yet to spell out what measures will be taken, but has ruled out releasing the two men.

“How much Turkey will be able to meet its expectations from the EU without taking

any (reform) steps is doubtful,” said Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat and head of Istanbul-based Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies.

Better ties with Europe may also depend in part on how much Ankara can address differences with the new administration in the United States, after Washington imposed sanctions on Turkey last month over its purchase of Russian defence systems.

A day ahead of President Joe Biden’s inauguration, incoming Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington would review whether further sanctions were necessary and accused NATO partner Turkey of not acting like an ally.

At a summit in December the EU said it would coordinate its response to Turkey with the United States, meaning that Ankara’s relations with Washington will be “a determinant factor in Turkey’s ties with the West as a whole”, Ulgen said.

Even before the talks with Athens start, the two sides disagree over what they should cover, with Greece insisting they should be limited to demarcating maritime territorial limits and Exclusive Economic Zones.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told parliament on Wednesday Athens would not discuss issues it considered sovereign rights and would approach the talks with optimism but “zero naivety”.

Greece has ruled out discussion on other issues Turkey has raised, including demilitarization of eastern Aegean islands, saying that was an issue to do with sovereign rights.

Turkey has also been working on a roadmap to normalise ties with NATO partner France. French President Emmanuel Macron has been a vocal critic of Turkey’s military intervention in Libya and its challenge to Greek and Cypriot maritime claims.

Erdogan in return has accused Macron of harboring an anti-Islamic agenda and questioned his mental state.

Turkey has appointed a new envoy to Paris - a former university classmate of Macron’s - and a diplomat said the two leaders had exchanged letters in which Macron proposed a video call.

### No Changes Seen...

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“Naturally, as stated before, Iran’s reduction [of its commitments] is reversible if the other side honors its obligations and the conditions are restored to the pre-JCPOA withdrawal era,” he said. “We’ve heard a lot of talk, but now it is time to act.”

The spokesman emphasized that a return to the JCPOA should be done “responsibly.”

“That a government whimsically decides to exit an agreement endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution and then decides to re-enter it is not feasible,” he said, noting that Iran’s stance, unlike that of the United States, is based on legal grounds.

He further said the U.S. cannot do whatever it wants and then return to the previous conditions, suggesting that the U.S. should make up for the damage inflicted upon Iran by its illegal withdrawal from the JCPOA and its subsequent sanctions.

Asked to comment on the Iranian Parliament’s recent push for accelerating the development of the country’s nuclear program, Khatibzadeh said if the European parties to the deal do not honor their commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, Iran should naturally stop the International Atomic Energy Agency’s safeguards inspections and implementation of the Additional Protocol.

He warned the European parties to the deal that this is their “last chance to return to honoring their commitments and salvage the JCPOA.”

“The Americans should also know that we will implement the Parliament’s law word by word,” the spokesman added.

“Whenever the other side rectifies its steps, we will reverse our measures as well, including the 20 percent enrichment,” Khatibzadeh said.

He also stated that although a few days have passed since Biden’s inauguration, “we haven’t seen any measure from the European side.”

In reference to the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), a financial mechanism proposed by Europeans to circumvent U.S. sanctions, Khatibzadeh suggested that the mechanism has failed to meet its purpose.

“INSTEX was created to neutralize unilateral, extraterritorial and illegal US sanctions, not to conduct limited exchanges in some areas under the sanctions,” he said.

Reacting to recent remarks by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who blamed Iran for INSTEX’s failure to be effective, Khatibzadeh said the remarks were intended to divert attention from their failure to fulfill their obligations.

“Some of the parties in the JCPOA think that history can be erased with their remarks or that Iran will forget their commitments,” he said. He also said Tehran is waiting for an explanation from the Indonesian government for the capture of an Iranian oil tanker.

Khatibzadeh said Iran is waiting for the government of Indonesia to provide more information about an Iranian oil tanker seized in Indonesian waters.

“We have received some contradictory information. We are waiting for its reason, and will make it public if we achieve a result,” the spokesperson added.

He refused to comment about any connection between the capture of the Iranian ship and the recent seizure of a South Korean vessel by Iran, which he described as a technical issue.

Indonesia said its coast guard seized the Iranian-flagged MT Horse and the Panamanian-flagged MT Freya vessels over suspected illegal oil transfer in the country’s waters on Sunday.

He also noted that Iran and its allies will not allow Daesh terrorist group to reorganize itself in Iraq and elsewhere in the region once again.

He said that in negotiations between Iranian foreign minister and his Irish counterpart over the past few days, the Irish side expressed interest in reopening Ireland’s embassy in Iran.

### Iran Military...

FROM PAGE 1

Having witnessed the Iranian show of force, the commander said, the enemy “announced on several occasions that it had no intention of any invasion, that its actions were defensive, and that it was concerned about the actions that could be taken by Iran’s allies on the martyrdom anniversary of General Soleimani.”

Last January, the IRGC fired volleys of ballistic missiles at two American bases in Iraq in retaliation for the US assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, head of the Quds Force, in Baghdad.

General Soleimani, admired as the region’s most popular anti-terror commander, was targeted in an American drone attack during an official visit to the Iraqi capital.

### Construction of...

FROM PAGE 1

It started operating in 2011 and reached its full capacity the following year.

Rosatom, Russia’s state atomic energy corporation, started site preparation of the two new units of the power plant with a combined capacity of 2100 MW in September 2016. On March 14, 2017, construction formally started. Phases 2 and 3 are scheduled to be completed in 2024 and 2026 respectively.

In November 2019, the concrete-casting operation of phase 2 was launched in a ceremony attended by Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) chief Ali Akbar Salehi, a number of state and provincial officials, parliamentarians, and manager of Russian companies active in the site.



## Hatton Claims Abu Dhabi Title

ABU DHABI (Reuters) - England's Tyrrell Hatton fired an error-free final round to finish at 18-under overall and win the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship by four strokes on Sunday after overnight leader Rory McIlroy faltered to finish third.

Hatton kept his composure and carded 66 in the final round with six birdies to stave off a late surge from Australian Jason Scrivener, who also carded a 66 with a strong showing on the back nine to move up five places and finish second.

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## Yastremska Denied in Bid to Lift Suspension

LONDON (AP) — The International Tennis Federation on Saturday denied a bid by 29th-ranked Dayana Yastremska to lift a suspension for failing an out-of-competition doping test.

The ruling can be appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport by the 20-year-old Ukrainian.

Players at Grand Slam tournaments and events sanctioned by the ITF, ATP and WTA are tested for substances prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency.

# Fernandes Gem Knocks Liverpool out of FA Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Bruno Fernandes' superb free-kick sent troubled Liverpool crashing out of the FA Cup as Manchester United beat their bitter rivals 3-2 in the fourth round, while Tammy Abraham's hat-trick eased the pressure on Chelsea manager Frank Lampard in a win over Luton on Sunday.

Fernandes struck with 12 minutes left at Old Trafford to cap a thrilling clash that left Liverpool searching for answers after another painful defeat.

Jürgen Klopp's side took the lead through Mohamed Salah's first-half goal, but Mason Greenwood equalised before the interval.

Marcus Rashford put United in front after the break and, although Salah equalised, Portugal midfielder Fernandes came off the bench to fire his free-kick past Alisson Becker.

After slumping to fourth in the Premier League following Thursday's shock 1-0 defeat against Burnley -- their first league loss at Anfield since 2017 -- Liverpool have to lick their wounds again.

The English champions, who trail leaders United by six points, have won only one of their last seven games in all competitions and that lone success came against Aston Villa's youth team in the FA Cup third round.

Liverpool struck in the 18th minute when Roberto Firmino threaded a pass to Salah, who lifted his shot over Dean Henderson.

United levelled in the 26th minute when Rashford sent Greenwood clear for a low strike past Alisson Becker.

Ole Gunnar Solskjær's men netted again in the 48th minute as a mistake from Liverpool's young defender Rhys Williams allowed Greenwood to race clear and score.

Firmino's cross was converted by Salah for Liverpool's 58th-minute equaliser, but Fernandes won it with his sublime set-piece after Fabinho fouled Edinson Cavani.

United will host West Ham in the fifth round as their momentum continues to build.

## Root's 186 Helps England Close in on Sri Lanka

GALLE (AFP) - Skipper Joe Root was run out shy of a second successive double century as England scored 339 for nine in reply to Sri Lanka's 381 on day three of the second Test in Galle.

Root was out to a direct throw from Oshada Fernando on 186 in the final over of the day, and stumps were called with England trailing by 42 runs.

Sri Lanka's Lasith Embuldeniya claimed seven wickets and broke a key seventh-wicket stand of 81 between Root and Dom Bess, who fell to the left-arm spinner for 32.

Root, who completed his 19th Test ton in 99 matches before lunch, kept pushing in the marathon knock of 309 balls.

The captain, who hit a match-winning 228 in his team's opening win, was helped along by wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler in a partnership of 97 runs.

"Quite an amazing innings," Buttler said of his skipper.

"To back up his double hundred in the first Test... both physically and mentally to show the application to go and do it again to their spinners. A masterclass really.

"It has been a great education for all of us really watching it from the sidelines."

Buttler added: "I think we just have to praise not just the technical and tactical aspects of his game, but the physicality and concentration to apply himself for so long is quite amazing."

Debutant Ramesh Mendis took his first international wicket when he dismissed Buttler for 55 after the batsman's reverse sweep hit his boot and the ball lobbed for an easy catch to short leg.

Buttler survived a similar call in the morning session when replays showed his shot had hit the boot and ground, and he went on to register his 18th Test fifty.

Embuldeniya, who registered his third five-wicket haul, struck twice early in the day with his left-arm spin, including the key wicket of Jonny Bairstow, to break a 111-run third-wicket stand with Root.

Bairstow, who added just four more to his overnight 24, was given not out by the umpire but Sri Lanka successfully reviewed the call as replays suggested the ball had grazed the bat before hitting the pad and being caught second slip.



Liverpool have never got past the fifth round in Klopp's reign, but that will be the least of his concerns as he tries to spark a revival from his spluttering team.

"There was a lot of good things and some mistakes around the goals. If you want to win here you have to be absolutely top and we were not," Klopp said.

Lampard has been under the spotlight, but there was some relief for the Blues boss as Abraham's finishing helped seal a 3-1 victory against Luton.

The England striker struck twice in the opening 17 minutes, first firing into the far corner before heading home from close range for his 10th goal of the season.

However, it was not all plain sailing for Lampard's men as goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga was at fault for another sloppy goal, while Timo Werner's lack of confidence will not have been helped by missing a penalty.

Jordan Clark's low shot crept past Kepa's woeful attempted save to give Luton a lifeline and the world's most expensive 'keeper had to make a much more difficult stop to deny Harry Cornick an equaliser in the second half.

A brilliant team move finally killed the tie off 16 minutes from time as substitute Callum Hudson-Odoi crossed for Abraham to tap home from point-blank range.

Werner had a chance to score just his second goal in 16 games when he was tripped by Clark, but his dreadful spell continued as his tame penalty was saved by Simon Sluga.



# Arsenal Outcast Ozil Joins Fenerbahce

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil has joined Fenerbahce on a three-and-a-half year deal after last playing for the Gunners in March, both clubs announced on Sunday.

The 32-year-old German was omitted from Arsenal's Premier League and Europa League squads this season and his reported deal on a weekly salary of £350,000 (\$475,000) was set to expire at the end of the current campaign.

"I'd like to thank the club for this amazing journey over the past seven-and-a-half years," Ozil, who won the World Cup with Germany in 2014, said in a statement.

"Together we won trophies for the first time in years and created memories that will last a lifetime," he added.

Ozil, who is of Turkish origin, was heavily criticised in Germany for posing for a photograph with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2018.

Erdogan was also the best man at the player's wedding in Turkey.

Ozil ended his international career after what he described "racist" attacks following the holders' first-round exit at the 2018 World Cup.

Fenerbahce, one of Istanbul's three big clubs, are currently third in the league behind Besiktas.

Ozil joined Arsenal from Real Madrid in 2013 and lifted the FA Cup on three occasions under then-coach Arsene Wenger.

After starting the first 10 games of Mikel Arteta's reign as boss in north London, Ozil's last appearance came in a win over West Ham last March before the coronavirus pandemic saw football grind to a halt last year.

## Juve Beat Bologna To Put Pressure On Milan Teams

MILAN (AFP) - Brazilian midfielder Arthur scored his first goal for champions Juventus in a 2-0 win over Bologna on Sunday to pile the pressure on the Milan teams.

Andrea Pirlo's side bounced back from last weekend's 2-0 league defeat by Inter Milan, and followed on from their morale-boosting Italian Super Cup triumph over Napoli midweek.

AC Milan held top spot in Serie A on Saturday despite falling 3-0 at home against Atalanta after second-placed Inter were held to a goalless draw at Udinese.

Roma are third after a 4-3 win over Spezia on Saturday with Juventus moving fourth ahead of Atalanta into the Champions League berths, seven points behind AC Milan with a game in hand.

Juventus dominated 13th-placed Bologna in Turin with Arthur breaking through after quarter of an hour with a shot that took a big deflection off Bologna defender Jerdy Schouten.

It was the first goal for the ex-Barcelona player in 19 appearances since joining Juventus last summer from the Liga side in a transfer worth up to 82 million euros (\$99 million).

U.S. midfielder Weston McKennie got the second on 71 minutes nodding in off a corner.

Bologna could have suffered more but for goalkeeper Łukasz Skorupski.

The Pole kept out a quick-fire double in the first half from Cristiano Ronaldo and Federico Bernardeschi off the rebound.

Juan Cuadrado sent over after half an hour with Skorupski getting a hand to a Weston McKennie effort three minutes before the break.

Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt returned from coronavirus, coming off the bench for the last quarter of an hour.

As Juventus pushed for a third, Skorupski denied two more off Adrien Rabiot and Ronaldo in the final minutes.



## Nuggets Overcome Suns In Double OT

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Nikola Jokic had 29 points and 22 rebounds, Jamal Murray scored 26, and the visiting Denver Nuggets beat the Phoenix Suns 120-112 in double overtime on Saturday night.

Michael Porter Jr. had 14 points and 11 rebounds, JaMychal Green scored 16, Monte Morris added 13 and Gary Harris finished with 10 for the Nuggets, who swept the two overtime games in Phoenix on successive nights.

Chris Paul had 21 points, 13 assists and nine rebounds, Jae Crowder also scored 21 points and Deandre Ayton had 17 points and 13 rebounds for the Suns before fouling out in the first overtime.

Cameron Johnson scored 19 points and Mikal Bridges had 11 for Phoenix, which played without leading scorer Devin Booker, who suffered a left hamstring strain in the Suns' overtime loss on Friday night.

Philadelphia 76ers 114 - Detroit Pistons 110

Meanwhile Philadelphia 76ers defeated Detroit Pistons 114-110. Joel Embiid had 33 points and 14 rebounds to lead Philadelphia past host Detroit, which was without Blake Griffin and Derrick Rose on the second night of a back-to-back.

Ben Simmons supplied 20 points, nine rebounds, seven assists and three steals, while Tobias Harris tossed in 17 points for the Sixers. Seth Curry added 14 points as Philadelphia won its third straight game.

Wayne Ellington led seven Pistons in double figures with 17 points. Svi Mykhailiuk contributed 15 points and Sekou Doumbouya had 13. Jerami Grant was limited to 11 points on 3-for-19 shooting. Grant had scored 20 or more points for 14 consecutive games.

In Brooklyn Kevin Durant scored 31 points as Brooklyn Nets never trailed and survived multiple fourth-quarter comeback attempts by Miami Heat to win 128-124 and a career-high 41-point night by Bam Adebayo in a victory at New York.

