

**Health Ministry Announced On Monday That the Number of Deaths From the COVID-19 in Iran Increased to 80,156 With 217 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Disease Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Tajikistan Interior Minister Major General Ramadan Rahimzadeh, Heading a High-Ranking Delegation, Arrived in Tehran Yesterday Evening To Hold Talks With Senior Iranian Officials on Different Topics**

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## All Trump Sanctions Have to Be Removed

TEHRAN (PressTV) - As diplomats continue negotiations in Vienna, a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Tehran says U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran under any heading during the former Trump administration should be removed.

"The United States has to decide once and for all whether it wants to continue the legacy of the previous administration," Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a weekly press conference in Tehran Monday.

The spokesman stressed that Iran is not in a hurry for an agreement, even though it will not allow the negotiations to drag on.

"There is no deadlock in the Vienna talks where we are examining the key issues. We are in no hurry to reach an agreement and we will not allow the negotiations to be attritional," Khatibzadeh said.

The spokesman said the fifth round of the talks to remove US sanctions on Iran could be the last one if the "key remaining issues" are resolved.

"We proceed with the negotiations in Vienna with necessary care and meticulousness. Every round could have been the last, but because there remained some issues, they were extended to the next."

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## Production of Every Single Bitcoin Turns Off Lights in 30,000 Homes

TEHRAN (IFP) - Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian says the mining of cryptocurrencies must be regulated and punishment should be meted out to illegal miners, as the production of digital currencies consumes a lot of energy.

Ardakanian told lawmakers in a briefing session that every single Bitcoin needs 300,000 MWh of energy to be mined. He said this means the government should cut off the electricity of 30,000 homes for 24 hours for a Bitcoin to be mined. He said 2,000 people have so far requested mining permits from his ministry while only 99 of them have completed the paperwork. He said the industry needs to be regulated so that there are no power outages amid the coronavirus situation and hot weather conditions.

The minister also touched on questions raised over Iran's electricity exports amid domestic energy needs. He said the energy ministry relies on exports to provide for its foreign currency needs to maintain the vast national power grid, as the ministry has no foreign currency budget quota.

Ardakanian further explained that Iran's net electricity exports amount to 500 MW, which is only a fraction of the 85,000 MW installed production capacity of the country.

The minister also noted that the government is finalizing an agreement under which Russia will finance the second and third phases of the 1,400MW Hormozgan power plant. He said foreign funding is one of the main prerequisites to catch up with the requirements of the sixth national development plan to increase national power generation by 25,000 MW. Ardakanian said 15,000 MW of the figure has been materialized so far. He added that 25 percent of the country's current 85,000MW power production capacity has been installed under the current administration.

## Iran to Increase Oil Production to 6.5 mb/d



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's oil minister says increasing oil production brings economic and security power, said: "We can easily increase oil production to 6.5 million barrels per day."

Speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony for developing the Azadegan oil field, Bijan Zangeneh stated that despite imposed sanctions on financial, technological, and equipment, enormous steps had been taken in Iran's oil fields, one of which was West Karun oil field reaching from 70,000 to 400,000 barrels per day.

Zangeneh noted that the main points to consider for oil increase were management and technology. "Fortunately, imposed sanctions have made Iranian companies attend in oil trading at foreign markets," he pointed.

He said entrusting oil revenue to private sectors could create a big difference. Zangeneh added that the oil increase could make the country independent, underlining that the oil revenues were not just to pay salary or subsidies. With 1,500 square kilometers, located near the Iraqi border and about 80 kilometers west of Ahvaz, the Azadegan oil field is the largest joint oil field in Iran.

The in-place oil reserves of this field are estimated at 32 billion barrels. The field is shared with Iraq's Majnoon field. The ceremony was held on Monday by the Iranian Minister of Oil Bijan Zangeneh and the National Iranian Oil Company CEO for signing three documents between NIOC and 5 Iranian exploration and production firms on May 31, 2021.

Understanding the study's memoranda for developing the Azadegan oil field was inked between the National Iranian Oil Company and Iranian exploration and production companies.

In a ceremony attended by the Oil Minister Zangeneh and the National Iranian Oil Company CEO on Monday, study agreements for the development of the Azadegan joint field were signed between the National Iranian Oil Company and five Iranian exploration and production companies.

During the ceremony, the executive operation of the gas production maintenance plan of Homa, Varavi, and Tabnak fields in the area of the Central Iranian Oil Company commenced by establishing a connection with the project site in the south of Fars Province. Homa, Varavi, and Tabnak fields in the Parsian operational area of the South Zagros Oil and Gas Exploitation Company are located near the cities of Parsian, Lamerd, Khan, and Mohr.

## Indian Consortium May Get to Remain Invested in Iranian Gas Field

NEW DELHI (Dispatches)- India may continue to pursue investment opportunity in the Farzad-B gas field in Iran, even though ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) lost the development rights of the block that it discovered over a decade ago to local firm Petropars Group, highly placed government sources said.

Reports from Iran indicate that months after ejecting India from the ambitious \$1.8 billion project, Tehran has now brought in Petropars Group to develop the gas field in the Persian Gulf.

But the sources said that this would not deter the Indian entity from pursuing energy assets in the country and remain invested in the project. In fact, they indicated that Iran may formally announce a partnership with the Indian firm once development work of the field picks up pace.

Sources in the Oil Ministry said that Indian consortium including IndianOil, Oil India and OVL, which bagged the exploration contract for Farzad-B in 2002, may remained invested in the upstream project as equity partners with other local and international entities even without operatorship or development rights. They are in talks with Iranian authorities in this regard to formalize the arrangement that gets India a share in gas fields output, they said.

If this option is permitted, it will allow the consortium to get their share of gas to India at applicable rates decided by Iran. Though the exploration contract signed by the Indian consortium expired in 2009, the sources said that a deal could be negotiated so that India has a presence in the field as equity investors. Early indications Iran also favor this arrangement, they said. Farzad-B, which was discovered by OVL in the Farsi block about 10 years ago, had an in-place gas reserve of 21.7 trillion cubic feet, of which 12.5 Tcf is believed to be recoverable. If India gets a share of this gas, it could reduce its dependence on expensive LNG. Iran had been dilly dallying over grant of development right of Farzad-B for few years now. Things had come to a standstill since the US imposed sanctions in 2018 on Iran with India also moving slowly on the matter. This pushed Iran into suggesting that India was not serious about investing the project and decided to offer operatorship of the gas block to a local company.

The sources said that changes in geo-political scenario in the Covid-19 world, which suggests that Tehran may soon be out from U.S. sanctions favor more active participation of India in Iranian energy assets.

If Iran decides to offer equity holding in the project, Indian consortium claims would once again be considered. "There are two issues to Farzad-B project. Iran not giving development rights to OVL but an Indian consortium continues to have part ownership of the block and would get its share of profit whosoever develops the project," the sources said. The OVL-led consortium have invested close to \$100 million in the project.

## General COVID Vaccination In Iran to Start Next Week

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's minister of health, treatment, and medical education says that the Iranian COVID vaccine will be ready in late spring, and general vaccination will begin next week.

Saeed Namaki stated that the vaccination would be voluntary to comply with the protocols. "My colleagues and I will volunteer to be vaccinated in the first place," he said.

"The joint Iran-Cuba vaccine is one of the most privileged vaccines in the world that is being made, and the next one is the 'COV-Iran Barakat' vaccine," he noted.

Meanwhile the executive manager of the 'COV-Iran Barakat' vaccine's clinical trial said that the Iran-made vaccine's efficiency was beyond expectations.

Minoo Mohraz elaborated on the progress made on the 3rd phase of the clinical trial of the 'COV-Iran Barakat' vaccine at Eram Hotel on Sunday, saying: "With the mass production of the vaccine, we no longer need to import vaccines from abroad."

She said that the coronavirus outbreak had impacted the economic and educational aspects of the country, "so we must help everyone get vaccinated by October to reopen schools and universities."

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## "No Plans for Sixth" Round of JCPOA Talks in Vienna

VIENNA (Dispatches) - As negotiations between Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal go on in the Austrian capital of Vienna to revitalize the agreement, a senior Russian diplomat says there are no plans to extend the talks beyond the fifth round.

"The fifth round of the Vienna talks on #JCPOA is under way. As of now, there are no plans for the sixth," Mikhail Ulyanov, the Russian ambassador to the international organizations in Vienna, said in a post on his Twitter account on Sunday, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Under former President Donald Trump, the United States in May 2018 unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA. Trump also initiated a "maximum pressure" policy against Iran, prompting Tehran to take remedial measures by gradually reducing its nuclear commitments under the deal.

Trump's successor, Joe Biden, says his administration wants to rejoin the deal, but Tehran says it must first lift all the sanctions Washington imposed on Iran in the aftermath of leaving the JCPOA practically and verifiably before it can come back.

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## Houthi Slams Weak UN Response to Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis

SANAA (Dispatches) - The leader of Yemen's Ansarullah movement has decried the United Nations' "weak" response to the Saudi-led blockade imposed on Yemen, which is grappling with the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

During a meeting with UN Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths in Sana'a on Sunday, Abdul-Malik Badreddin al-Houthi referred to the UN's reaction to the Saudi siege which blocks the entry of food, medicine and petroleum products, criticizing the UN for turning a blind eye to the blackmailing of the Yemenis.

Houthi emphasized the right of the Yemeni people to oil derivatives, medical supplies and foodstuffs, "whatever the circumstances might be".

"The blockade is a collective punishment and a procedure that violates international decisions and humanitarian norms and contradicts all laws."

He also decried attempts to link the humanitarian issue to political and military files "as an explicit confiscation" of the basic rights of the Yemeni people, stressing that it is an "unacceptable" equation.

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**AUCTION SJSCO 14007**



Hereby Sirjan Jahan Steel Complex announces selling and export 30,000 Mt of Pellet fine, fine on basis of ex-work, Interested bidders are invited to get documents with send an email to [sjscosales.info@gmail.com](mailto:sjscosales.info@gmail.com).

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## President Felicitates Croatian National Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Hassan Rouhani, in a message on Sunday, congratulated his Croatian counterpart Zoran Milanovic and the whole Croatian nation on that country's national day.

In his message, President Rouhani expressed regret that the coronavirus outbreak and the problems arising from the disease have limited the chances for bilateral meetings of officials from both sides and renewal of friendship.

Rouhani, however, said he was sure that in the wake of the improvement of the conditions and joint efforts of both sides, the two countries would witness further cooperation in all fields.

## Raeisi to Form Coalition Gov't With Manufacturers, Entrepreneurs, Workers

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Ebrahim Raeisi, the Iranian Judiciary chief, who is running for president, says he will form a "coalition government" with Iranian manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and workers, distinguishing his campaign with an explicitly economic and production-oriented agenda.

Visiting the Abbas Abad Industrial Town near Tehran and meeting with industrial workers and managers there on Sunday (May 30), Raeisi announced that his potential administration would coalesce with those active in the production sector.

"The power of the country is today dependent on the power of production," he pronounced. "Anyone striving to bring about a production boom will be contributing to national security and power."

He said workers and manufacturers were on the frontline of the Iranian economy and were "the officers and soldiers on the field of progress."

"People complain about why Iran can build missiles but not quality cars... that is because technology is not spreading from the defense to the industry sector. We will



make that happen in the 13th administration," Raeisi said.

Iran is holding its 13th presidential election on June 18. Raeisi is running together with six other candidates. All of them have been specially focusing on the Iranian economy, battered by sanctions and mismanagement in recent years.

On his first day of campaigning, Raeisi visited Tehran's Grand Bazaar, the symbolic heart of commerce in the Iranian capital, sometimes going behind counters and talking to merchants on the ground.

In his Sunday remarks, the Iranian presidential candidate also said his administration would be "active, nimble, and production-oriented," and will work to both reform its own internal structures and support production.

## Iran-Azerbaijan Relations Upgraded to Strategic Level



TEHRAN (MNA) - President's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi said the amicable relations between Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Azerbaijan have been upgraded to the strategic level in all dimensions.

He made the remarks on Monday in his meeting with Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the implementation of agreements between the two countries, ways to strengthen the level of Tehran-Baku relations and cooperation between Tehran and Baku in line with safeguarding interests of the two nations as well as accelerating the operationalization of joint projects in the fields of energy and transportation.

Iranian President's Chief of Staff described historical, cultural and ethnic commonalities as the common capital and driving force of relations between Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Azerbaijan and stated, "Today, the relations between the two countries have been raised to a strategic level with the will of the two countries' presidents."

Islamic Republic of Iran has stood by the government and people of the Republic of Azerbaijan in all sensitive situations and at different times, and strong relations have been established between the two countries and two nations in all areas, Vaezi emphasized.

Azeri Deputy Prime Minister, for his turn, pointed out that strengthening bilateral ties between Iran and Azerbaijan has been put strengthening relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran is a priority in his country's foreign policy.

The level of relations between the two countries has been at the highest level in recent years, he said, adding, "In this regard, the political will of the two presidents have been very effective."

## Parliament Ratifies Iran, Afghanistan Rail Cooperation Agreement

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Majlis on Monday passed Iran-Afghanistan Rail Cooperation Agreement that allows rail connection between the neighboring countries.

Iran and Afghanistan agreed to make direct connection through railroad to transfer passengers and goods.

According to the agreement, the two sides have agreed to provide rail vehicles and services and implement sanitary supervision in accordance with international rules, while domestic rules are valid where an issue occurs outside of international conventions.

The agreement also states that the two sides must treat passengers and goods from the other side the way they treat their own. This applies to free access to destination points, providing space for cargos in terminals, unloading and uploading of cargos, onboarding and off-boarding passengers, and using international railroad services.

Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and Afghanistan Railway Authority have been chosen in the agreement as qualified authorities to supervise implementing the agreement and to solve disagreements.

Iran and Afghanistan linked their railway through Iran's Khaf and Afghanistan's Herat.

## Tehran, Baku Celebrate Water Cooperation Anniversary

TABRIZ (IP) - The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the water cooperation between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the joint exploitation of water from the Aras and Mil Moghan dams began today, Monday, in the presence of the Minister of Energy of Iran and the Prime Minister of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Minister of Energy Reza Ardakanian and Prime Minister of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Sabouhi Mohammadov are scheduled to address the audience today, Monday, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of joint Iranian-Azerbaijani water cooperation.

Attending and visiting the photo exhibition and documents of 50 years of joint cooperation between the two countries in the operation of the water facilities of



the Aras border river are other important programs of this event.

Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, as two Muslim and neighboring countries, share a common border through the Aras River, which is considered a border of friendship, on which the main dams of Aras with a capacity of 1.2 billion cubic meters and Khodaafarin dam with a capacity

of 1.6 billion cubic meters have been built and are about to be operationalized.

Also, regulation and diversion dams 'Mill Moghan' in Ardabil province with a capacity of 32 million cubic meters and 'Qiz Qala-e-Si' dam in East Azerbaijan with a capacity of 60 million cubic meters, on the Aras border river with the aim of developing agriculture in the downstream lands has been constructed.

## Qatar Sends Rare Disease Drugs to Iran Amid U.S. Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Qatar has supplied Iran with two batches of medicines used for treatment of complicated diseases as Tehran continues to struggle with sanctions imposed by the U.S. which hamper its access to humanitarian items.

Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, who leads a special taskforce for expansion of economic ties with Qatar, said on Sunday that the consignments that had arrived in Tehran overnight and earlier in the day included numerous drugs used for treatment of rare and incurable diseases.

"The second cargo of medical aid from Qatar has arrived in the country in line with the expansion of ties between Iran and Qatar and in continuation of Qatar's supply of medical aid," Ardakanian was quoted as saying by Paven news website.

Facing a raft of illegal U.S. sanctions since 2018, Iran has been struggling to pay for urgent medical supplies needed for treatment of patients suffering from rare conditions. The bans effectively bar Iran from accessing the international banking system and prevent foreign companies from providing urgently needed supplies of medicines and equipment to the country.

Iran has used medical aid provided by allied countries in its battle against the coronavirus pandemic since February 2020 although the country has mostly relied on home-grown capacities to contain one of the largest outbreaks of the disease in the world. Qatar had supplied several consignments of personal protective equipment to Iran during the early months of the pandemic. However, battling to get round the complicated web of U.S. sanctions, the Iranian government has gone through extreme lengths to pay for supplies of coronavirus vaccines under COVAX, an international project sponsored by the United Nations health authorities.

## Iran, Sri Lanka Call for Boosting Ties

COLOMBO (IP) - The Iranian ambassador to Colombo and the Sri Lankan foreign minister stressed the need to expand bilateral cooperation.

On Monday, Hashem Ashja'zadeh, Iran's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, in a meeting with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Pinal Nishanta de Silva, emphasized the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Sri Lanka and said: "Cooperation between the two countries in the field of investment, tourism and education will be expanded."

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Pinal Nishanta de Silva also called for strengthening ties with Iran on investment, tourism and education, citing long-standing historical ties with Iran.

No Private Company Could Import Coronavirus Vaccine

TEHRAN - The head of the Food and Drug Administration affiliated with the Ministry of Health says that following the national headquarters resolution, we tried to pave the way for the private sector to import the coronavirus vaccine, but no company managed to import the vaccine.

Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz said that the world's major vaccination

### IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

companies, even Pfizer, have announced that we are working with governments and that so far no vaccines have been offered and sold to the private sector, and this is a problem for other vaccine makers around the world.

On Sunday, Mr. Combsaz said that to date, none of the introductions and consultations of the private sector have resulted in the outcome and importation of vaccines.

Health Ministry says about four million doses of vaccines have been injected so far. According to the population, more than 150 million doses of vaccines are needed.

## Iran, Nakhchivan Enjoy Strong Ties

TABRIZ (IRNA) - Prime Minister of Nakhchivan Sabuhi Mammadov said Iran and Nakhchivan have strong, friendly and brotherly relations in various fields.

Speaking in a celebration in the 50th anniversary of Iran-Nakhchivan water cooperation in exploiting water of Aras and Moghan dams, Mammadov expressed interest in developing cooperation with Iran in energy, transportation and trade fields.

The event was held in the presence of Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

Iran and Azerbaijan have common border in Aras River and Aras and Khodaafarin dams have so far been constructed on this river.

## 4th Int'l 'Smart Tehran Congress' to Be Held Virtually

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Communications and Information Technology (ICT) of the Municipality of Tehran revealed the organizing the 4th International 'Smart Tehran Congress' with the motto of 'Digital Transformation, Digital Services' on July 5-6.

The Fourth International 'Smart Tehran Congress' with the motto of "Digital Transformation, Digital Services" will be held with a focus on smart cities during coronavirus and post-coronavirus pandemic virtually.

It should be noted that this international event will kick off on July 5 virtually due to the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, in order to observe health protocols and guidelines.

This international event will include lectures to be delivered by senior figures and managers, specialized meetings, tutorial workshops along with performing other programs on relevant issues and would be available online through the website 'Smart Tehran Center'.

Domestic- and international specialized meetings of this event were held with the presence of activists and key functionaries of 'Smart City' in Tehran, other provincial centers of the country and leading cities in the world.

In this regard, prominent domestic and international figures in the field of urban management, communications and information technology (ICT) will participate in this prestigious event.

## Tehran Sympathizes With Canada's Indigenous Community

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has expressed sympathy with Canada's Indigenous community over the newly-discovered "genocide" of Indigenous children, urging the Ottawa government to think of its dark past before claiming to be an advocate of human rights.

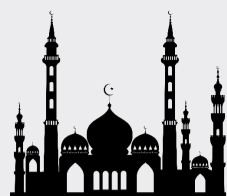
"It is a big human tragedy in Canada's history, which cannot be named anything but genocide," Khatibzadeh told reporters on Monday.

"It is a source of regret that a country which tries to hide itself behind the humanitarian mask has such disasters in its history," he added.

Khatibzadeh sympathized with the Indigenous community of Canada, and said, "The Canadian government should always remember that whenever it seeks to portray itself as an advocate of human rights, it had better first think of its dark days in the past and try to compensate for those dark days at home."

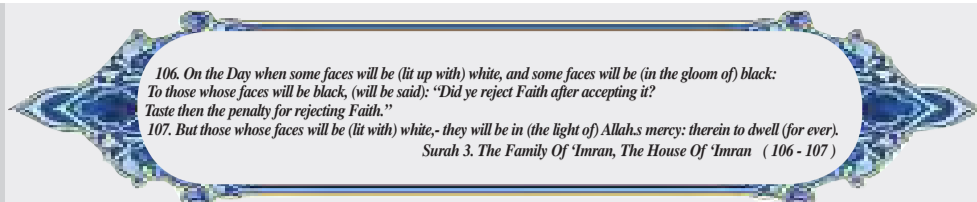
The remains of 215 Indigenous children were recently found on the land of a former boarding school that was created to forcibly assimilate children of First Nations origin into Canadian culture.

The discovery was confirmed at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School near the city of Kamloops, some 354 kilometres northeast of Vancouver.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:35
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:05
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:49



# Oil Minister Calls for Bolstering Energy Ties With Baku

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh stressed the development of trade and gas relations between Iran and Azerbaijan.**

During the Sunday meeting with Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, who had traveled to Iran with the President of State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) and a business delegation, congratulated Azerbaijan on its National Day, saying: "Iran-Azerbaijan relations have grown in all fields well in recent years, culminating in the oil, gas and energy sectors in the development of joint fields in the Caspian Sea."

The oil minister also stressed the development of trade relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

"I agree with you that our relations have developed in recent years due to the political will of the presidents of the two countries," said Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, during the meeting.



He added: "It is very important for us that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran have developed and Iran is one of our major partners in various fields."

The Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan stated: "Relations between the two countries have made significant and close progress in various fields, which can be shown through constructive talks."

Mustafayev said: "One of these areas is cooperation in the oil and gas sector, in which some successes have been achieved. We also have a long history in the field of joint gas cooperation, and since 2004 the gas required by the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic has been supplied by Iran and we appreciate that."

## Customers' Satisfaction Relying On Improving Quality of Products



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) says indigenization of production was a major factor for reducing the effects of sanctions on auto industry of the country.

Mohsen Salehnia after visiting the site of Iran Khodro car-making company in Khorasan and its auto-part making plants in Neishaboor said that the approach of automakers for increasing their shares and deepening indigenization with supervision and policy-making of IDRO is noticeable.

He also termed qualitative and quantitative development of the products as a prerequisite for increasing the share of market and meeting the satisfactions of the customers, and said that deepening the domestic production and boosting quality are emphasized by the ministry and they are among the major strategies of the ministry and the collection of these factors leads to economization of many industrial projects in the field of auto-making.

He went on to say that domestic capabilities of auto-part industry especially its synchronization with the knowledge-based companies and convergence with production capacities has made the share of domestically made auto parts in the national auto-making industry increase considerably, and noted indigenization in the auto part production will lead to this fact that sanctions has not had impacts on the auto industry and its production.

Salehnia stipulated that in the current condition, the country should move in direction of providing the parts via domestic productions with reliance on the technical knowhow and domestic expertise because domestic production not only will create value added but also will pick up the occupation.

# Hemmati Blames Sanctions for Over Half of Iran's Economic Problems

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Presidential candidate Nasser Hemmati has described the harsh sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States as one of the country's "most fundamental problems," blaming the restrictions for more than half of the economic woes facing the nation.

On a Sunday evening (May 30) TV show, Hemmati, generally viewed as a Moderate figure close to the Reformists, said more than 50 percent of the current economic issues had been caused by the sanctions, which he said had "abruptly" cut the country's foreign exchange earnings to one sixth of what they had been earlier.

Under such circumstance, "it is clear that [the sanctions] are effective. How could it be said that they are not effective?" said Hemmati, who was the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) until



earlier in the day.

Hemmati said he decided to enter the fray since he believed this would be "the last chance" to solve the people's problems, without elaborating.

"The sanctions have negatively affected the prices to a great extent. The bans have had the biggest impact on the country's economy," he said. "Some want to deny this, but they are wrong."

The presidential candidate, a senior economist, referred to pledges by his rivals to significantly increase cash handouts to people, saying such promises are only "populistic and could not be trusted."

Hemmati was apparently reacting to presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei's pledge for an increase in cash handouts to the Iranian people from the current monthly 455,000 Iranian rials (1.9 U.S. dollars) to 4,500,000 — an increase of 10 times.

He also defended his performance as the CBI chief and said, "I think I was successful. If I keep working as president as powerfully as before,.... the country's economic situation would definitely improve."

## Komijani Takes Over As CBI Governor



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Cabinet has assigned Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Akbar Komijani with the responsibility to run the bank in just more than two months remaining from the incumbent government's second term in office.

The official IRNA news agency said in a Sunday report that ministers in President Hassan Rouhani's Cabinet had reached a decision to end Abdolnasser Hemmati's tenure as CBI governor due to his decision to launch a presidential election campaign for the June 18 votes.

Ministers appreciated Hemmati's services in his less than three years in the post while insisting that his presidential campaign would bar him from fulfilling sensitive responsibilities in field of monetary and exchange policy.

The Cabinet agreed that Komijani would take over all responsibilities and powers of the CBI governor until mid-August when the current government is expected to leave office.

The new central bank chief attended a high-profile government meeting for coordination of economic affairs on Sunday, according to the IRNA.

Komijani, a graduate of economics from the US and a lecturer at the University of Tehran, has served as CBI deputy governor for the past seven years. The banker has held other senior positions in the CBI, including as deputy for economic affairs on two occasions from 1998 to 2007 and from 2013 to 2014.

## "Sepam", "Bargh-e Man", the Only References For Information on Blackouts in Isfahan

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Manager of the public relations of Isfahan Province Electricity Distribution Company Mr. Mohammad Ali Akbari says the main reference for knowing the timetable of blackouts in Isfahan is the portal of Sepam that the subscriber can have access to his required information in the portal through three ways of research based on the map, subsidy code and the blackout timetable, reiterating that the portal is just for the users in the city of Isfahan.

Speaking at a presser, Akbari denied recent release timetable on massive blackouts in Isfahan and said the timetable belongs to the blackouts in 2018 and using it as the reference will create problem for both the public and the electricity industry.

Touching upon the Sepam portal, he said after the blackouts in 2018, the company provided an infrastructure whose outcome is the Sepam portal which has been available since 2019.

He also said that Bargh-e Man (My Electricity) application is the other way of access to the information about the blackouts timetable which functions through the subsidy codes and the bill code which is available in different provinces.

On the reason behind recent power blackouts in the province, Akbari said that currently due to the considerable slump in rainfalls, the company is unable to use 35 percent of its hydroelectric power plants and the rainfalls have decreased by 37 percent comparing to 20 years ago.

Akbari said that in 2014, the amount of blackout in Isfahan was 850 minutes per each subscriber and the figure was improved to 130 minutes by the end of last year.

He said the electricity consumption in the first two months of the current year has increased between 15 to 30 percent, reiterating that electricity industry in Isfahan Province has grown significantly but the unprecedented rise in the temperature will lead to the increase of up to 2000 megawatts of electricity.

PERMIT NO : 55/00/5561      DATE : 1/06/2021      FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



### INVITATION TO RENEWAL OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER



#### AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

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

ITEM	Name	PACKING	Quantity KG
1	Fipronil Tech (18.8-21.2) pct. (premix 20%)	200 kg drum	5500

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Tuesday dated 1/6/2021 until Sunday dated 13/6/2021 (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 35803978226350065000000000000006.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday dated 17/7/2021 (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Sunday dated 18/7/2021 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidder's representatives at our purchasing committee hall (9th floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the bid bond amount should be in bank guarantee as follow:  
1- € 22713 for Fipronil Tech(18.8-21.2) pct. (premix 20%) equivalent to Iranian Rials 5672818800.

- The bid bond value will be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollar, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir. It should be noted that this site lists the currency transactions, executed in Integrated Currency Transactions System [Nima website] on 25/05/2021.

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

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

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

## Nearly 300 Rescued in Indonesia Ferry Accident

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Search teams are looking for one missing person after rescuing all other passengers from a large ferry that caught fire in Indonesia, an official said Sunday.

The KM Karya Indah was heading to Sanana, a remote port in the northeast of the Indonesian archipelago when it was engulfed in flames.

Shortly after departing, the ferry caught fire, forcing passengers and crew to jump into the sea to save themselves. There no reported casualties.



## French Police Hunt for Heavily Armed Ex-Soldier

PARIS (Dispatches) - Police backed by helicopters hunted Sunday for a heavily armed former soldier who had allegedly opened fire on officers responding to a domestic violence dispute in southwestern France.

Some 210 police officers and four helicopters were searching the forests of the Dordogne region for the 29-year-old, who has an electronic tag due to a prior domestic violence conviction.

"The man is heavily armed and around 30 years old. He is athletic and moving quickly," Francine Bourra, mayor of the village of Lardin-Saint-Lazare, told AFP.



## UN Official Urges Independent Probe Into Deaths in Colombia



BOGOTA (Dispatches) - The UN rights chief voiced alarm on Sunday at deadly clashes in the Colombian city of Cali, calling for an independent investigation and accountability for the violence.

Pointing to reports that 14 people had died since Friday amid huge anti-government protests in Colombia's third-largest city, Michelle Bachelet said a swift investigation and resumption of dialogue was needed.

"It is essential that all those who are reportedly involved in causing injury or death, including state officials, are subject to prompt, effective, independent, impartial and transparent investigations and that those responsible are held accountable," the UN High Commissioner said in a statement.

Her comments came after the Colombian army on Saturday tightened its control over Cali, a city of 2.2 million, after clashes pitted police against armed civilians.

The country is in the second month of protests against the government of President Ivan Duque.

Officials have said the month of protests has left at least 59 people dead, and that more than 2,300 civilians and uniformed personnel have been injured.

The NGO Human Rights Watch cited "credible reports" of at least 63 deaths nationwide, and called the situation in Cali "very serious". Bachelet's office cited reports that 14 people had been killed in Cali since Friday and 98 had been injured, including 54 by firearms.

The dead in Cali included an off-duty employee of the prosecutor's office who had fired his gun at two protesters blocking a street, killing one of them. Video on social media shows a crowd then pouncing on the attacker and lynching him.

The rights office also pointed to reports of private individuals firing shots at demonstrators in the presence of police officers in parts of the city.

"These events are all the more concerning given the progress that had been made to resolve, through dialogue, the social unrest that erupted a month ago, following the start of a nation-wide strike against several social and economic policies of the government," the UN rights chief said.

"I call for an end to all forms of violence, including vandalism, and for all sides to continue talking to each other, and to ensure respect for the life and dignity of all people," she said.

Bachelet, a former Chilean president, stressed that only dialogue could resolve the demands of different groups on both sides. "I welcome the commitment voiced by several actors, in Cali and at the national level, to find a negotiated and peaceful solution to the social unrest through talks," she said.

The UN rights office also said it had received information of at least 30 people arrested in Cali since Friday, and highlighted concerns about the whereabouts of some of them.

"The fair trial and due process rights of those detained need to be ensured," Bachelet said.

## Cyprus Ruling Conservatives Hold Slim Lead in Parliamentary Poll

NICOSIA (Dispatches) - Cyprus's ruling conservatives appeared to hold a slim lead in Sunday's parliamentary elections, an exit poll by state TV showed after the end of voting.

The country has faced a string of corruption scandals in recent years, and Sunday's vote was expected to show a drop in support for major parties. Cyprus was left reeling from a cash-for-passports scheme that the current administration had to abandon amid allegations of corruption.

The election will test the popularity of the administration ahead of its own reckoning with voters in 2023. The island has an executive system of government. President Nicos Anastasiades of the right-wing Democratic Rally party is in his second five-year term.

Among the parties, his right-wing Democratic Rally was expected to attract between 24-28 % of the vote, followed by Communist AKEL polling between 23-27%, the exit poll shown by the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation said. It was based on 75% of 3,200 exit poll respondents being counted.

## Qatar Sees No Reason for Normalizing Ties With Syria

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar has no plans to normalise ties with Syria, the Persian Gulf state's foreign minister said, after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad won a fourth term in office last week in an election derided by the opposition and the West as a farce.

Qatar was among several regional states including Saudi Arabia that backed rebels in Syria's decade-old civil war. Some like the United Arab Emirates have sought to normalize ties after Assad regained control of most of the country.

"So far we see nothing on the horizon for a political solution acceptable to the Syrian people ... the (regime's) approach and conduct has not changed," Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told U.K.-based Al Araby television in an interview aired. "There is no motivation for us to re-establish ties with the Syrian regime at this time," Sheikh Mohammed said. "The Syrian regime is committing crimes against its people."

Syria's government said Wednesday's election shows the country is functioning normally despite the war which has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced 11 million. Persian Gulf states downgraded or shut missions in Damascus in 2012 over attacks by the government on protests at the start of the conflict.

The UAE re-opened its mission to Damascus in late 2018 in a bid to counter the influence of non-Arab actors like Iran, which along with Russia backs Assad, and Turkey, which backs rebels.

The UAE has a charge d'affaires in Syria. Oman, one of the rare Arab countries that maintained diplomatic ties with Damascus, sent an ambassador in 2020.

The Qatari minister, who visited Libya last week, said Doha plans to reopen its diplomatic mission in Tripoli soon.

The embassy was closed in 2014 when many foreign missions in the Libyan capital shut down as the country split between warring administrations.

Since fighting in Libya ended last summer, the factions have accepted a new unity government mandated to unify institutions and prepare for elections in December.

## Ethiopians Denounce U.S. at Pro-Gov't Rally

ADDIS ABABA (Dispatches) - Ethiopian pro-government demonstrators have denounced the United States for imposing restrictions on aid over the Tigray conflict, at a huge rally organized by the authorities to show support for their positions.

More than 10,000 people attended the rally on Sunday, some carrying banners written in English, Arabic and Amharic. "Ethiopia does not need (a) caretaker," declared one banner at Addis Ababa Stadium, while others denounced "western intervention".

A placard that read "Fill the dam" was also seen, a reference to a huge Nile dam opposed by Egypt and Sudan.

"We will never kneel down. The preconditions and travel restrictions by the US and its allies are completely unacceptable. It needs to be corrected," Adanech Abebe, mayor of Addis Ababa, told the rally organized by the ministry of youth.

The demonstration was larger than typical pro-government rallies, and the public criticism of the US was rare.

Ethiopia is facing increasing international pressure over the conflict in its northern Tigray region, where

it and neighboring Eritrea sent troops last year to overthrow the regional authorities.

A week ago, the United States imposed restrictions on economic and security assistance to Ethiopia over the conflict. Washington also said it would bar current or former Ethiopian or Eritrean officials it deems responsible for the crisis.

The crisis began in November after Ethiopia accused former leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of ordering an attack on an Ethiopian army base in the region.

Troops sent by Ethiopia's leader, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, quickly overthrew the TPLF from major cities and towns, but fighting is still reported across Tigray.

Atrocities including gang rapes, extrajudicial killings and expulsions have been part of the violence in Tigray, according to victims, witnesses, local authorities and aid groups. Thousands of people are estimated to have died.

More than 2 million people have been displaced by the war.



## Hollywood Actor Joins Pro-Kremlin Party, Proposes Tougher Laws



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Hollywood actor Steven Seagal, a long-time admirer of Russian President Vladimir Putin, has joined a pro-Kremlin party, the party said on Sunday.

Seagal received a party membership card of an alliance named Just Russia - Patriots - For Truth on Saturday, a video released by the party showed. It was formed earlier this year, when three leftist parties, all of which support Putin, merged into one.

Seagal, a Russian citizen since 2016, proposed a crackdown on businesses which damage the environment.

"Without being able to arrest people, when we just fine them, they are probably making more money of the production of the things that are defiling the environment," said in his welcome speech at a party event.

The party controls a faction in the lower house of the Russian parliament and plans to take part in a parliamentary election in September.

Seagal, a U.S.-born martial artist, is best known for producing and starring in action movies, while Putin, who granted him the citizenship, is a fan of martial arts.

At Saturday's ceremony, Seagal posed for pictures next to one of the party leaders, Russian writer Zakhar Prilepin, who enrolled in an army of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine and admitted to commanding a combat unit in a conflict which has killed 14,000 people in seven years.

In 2018, Russia tasked Seagal with improving humanitarian ties with the United States at a time when relations between the two countries have deteriorated to their worst level since the Cold War.

As a Russian representative, Seagal visited Venezuela earlier in May and presented a samurai sword to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

**Shanon**  
(adviser)

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300sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/p, Sauna  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
fireplace  
Fully Furn

**Elahieh Villa (\$4000)**  
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5bdrs, S/p  
S, Jacuzzi  
L.balcony  
yard, pkg  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

**Farmanieh (\$2200) 3bdrs**  
**Zaferanieh (\$2800) 4bdrs**  
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All with S/p, S, J, F.F

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## Malaysia to Enter Total Lockdown

KUALA LUMPUR (CNA) – Malaysia will close all economic and social sectors by implementing a “total lockdown” throughout the country.

The first phase of the lockdown will last from June 1 to 14. This move was announced in a media statement posted on Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's Facebook page. Only essential economic and service sectors listed by

the National Security Council (NSC) will be allowed to operate during Phase 1 of the lockdown, said the statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

“This decision was made after taking into account the current situation of COVID-19 transmission in Malaysia with daily case numbers exceeding 8,000 and active cases exceeding 70,000,” the statement read.



## World Leaders Call for Action, Inclusion at Seoul Climate Summit

SEOUL (AFP) - World leaders on Sunday called for more action and inclusion of all countries in the global drive towards a cleaner and greener planet at a climate summit hosted virtually by South Korea.

Climate change is a major threat to global growth, with perils ranging from declines in crop yields, extreme weather that devastates tourist economies, disease outbreaks and other catastrophes that would sap productivity. South Korea -- which recently announced plans to cut finance for international coal projects -- is seeking a bigger role in the global initiative to go green.

“South Korea will play a responsible role as a bridging nation between developing and advanced nations,” said President Moon Jae-in as he opened the 2021 Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030, or P4G, summit. The two-day summit is the second of its kind following the inaugural meeting held in Copenhagen in 2018, and is focused on public-private partnerships, especially in developing countries.

Advanced nations have laid out ambitious emissions-cutting goals in recent months, as well as plans to ultimately go carbon neutral by 2050.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on the countries to phase out their dependence on fossil fuels, warning climate change is threatening people's lives and the economy as much as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier this month Germany tightened its targets to reduce CO2 emissions -- including a 65 percent cut in emissions by 2030 -- after a landmark ruling by the country's top court declared a flagship climate protection law “insufficient”.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said countries must now deliver on their green pledges.

“It's a great start, but let's not pat ourselves on the back just yet because our planet and our people need more,” he said.

“We need governments that will not just make promises on climate and nature but match those words with deeds.”

World leaders committed under the 2015 Paris accord to keeping the global temperature increase to under two degrees Celsius -- and ideally closer to 1.5C -- by 2050.

Yet many of the largest emitters have so far failed to keep up their commitments and countries have not even agreed on a unified rulebook governing how the Paris agreement works in practice. The UN says that emissions must fall nearly eight percent annually to keep 1.5C in play -- equivalent to the emissions saved during the pandemic every single year through 2030. World leaders also stressed the importance of making sure that poorer countries are not left out in the global initiative to go green.

African countries should not be “locked up” in fossil fuels and be able to advance with the rest of the world, said French President Emmanuel Macron, calling for ways to draw large-scale investments in renewable energy.

“It is not a global partnership if some are left struggling to survive,” added UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. “Tackling climate change head-on will help protect the most vulnerable people from the next crisis while sustaining a job-rich recovery from the pandemic,” he said. The World Bank estimates that between 32 million and 132 million additional people could fall into extreme poverty by 2030 due to the effects of climate change.

## Greece Repacking Public Payrolls, IMF Bad Loan Worries Grow

ATHENS (AP) - As critics predicted, Greece's slow recovery from a near decade-long economic and austerity crisis that was speeding before the COVID-19 pandemic also saw governments start refilling public jobs.

The International Monetary Fund, which was one of the country's lenders in three bailouts of 326 billion euros (\$397.48 billion) that started in 2010 and ended Aug. 20, 2018, said it was anxious about Greece returning to its old ways.

For decades, governments packed public payrolls with scores of thousands of unneeded hires in return for votes, nearly bankrupting the country and leading to the rescue packages.

The IMF, said Kathimerini, was also concerned about the level of bad loans that banks were still holding after selling off as many as they could to vulture collectors hounding customers, many whom couldn't pay mortgages, loans and credit cards after being repeatedly hit with pay cuts, tax hikes, and slashed pensions. Despite the massive aid, Greece's massive debt is unsustainable and growing by the second and the country is saddled with decades of repayments although interest rates had been lowered.

The IMF, along with officials from the Troika of the European Union-European Central Bank-European Stability Fund (EU-ECB-ESF) will be monitoring the country's economy and failure to meet fiscal targets could trigger spending cuts as the country is trying to recover from lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The IMF and the lenders have become more lenient, however, with Greece struggling and receiving 32 billion euros (\$39.02 billion) in European Union loans and grants to help bring a recovery, noted Kathimerini, Greece owing the Washington D.C.-based group only 1.8 billion euros.

That was the feedback the Fund offered Finance Ministry officials in their recent contacts, in the context of the scheduled monitoring of the Greek economy. The IMF is now much more lenient toward Greece, not only because it acknowledges

## Cyprus Economic Growth to Recover Gradually in 2021-22

NICOSIA (Dispatches) - Cyprus' economic activity contracted sharply in 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis, albeit less than the EU average, but a 3.1% GDP rebound is expected this year, according to the EU Commission spring forecast.

The tourism sector has been severely affected, while temporary income support measures cushion domestic demand and the labour market. Gradual recovery in economic activity is forecast for 2021 and 2022, driven mainly by domestic demand. Public finances worsened significantly in 2020 due to the crisis but are set to improve in 2021 and 2022; these are the main findings of the spring economic forecast for Cyprus.

The report notes that public finances deteriorated significantly in 2020 due to the crisis but are expected to improve in 2021 and 2022. The Commission recorded a recession of 5.1% in 2020 but GDP growth of 3.1% and 3.8%, respectively, for 2021 and 2022.

Unemployment was 7.6% in 2020, 7.5% in 2021 and 7.2% in 2022, inflation -1.1% in 2020, 1.7% in 2021 and 1.1% in 2022, public debt 118.2% (GDP) in 2020, 112.2 in 2021 and 106.6% in 2022, the deficit was -5.7% , -5.1% and -2.0% for 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Economic activity declined due to the COVID-19 crisis and accompanying lockdown measures.

Domestic demand has been only partially mitigated by the temporary income support measures as private consumption fell by 3.9% in 2020 and investment by 2%.

Exports of goods and services dropped by 12.4%, the latter reflecting the impact of travel restrictions on tourism.

## Russia to Transfer \$500m in 2nd Tranche of State Loan to Belarus Soon

MOSCOW (TASS) - The second \$500-million tranche of Russia's state loan to Belarus has been approved, the money will be transferred in the immediate future, but the issues of additional aid to Minsk by Moscow was not raised, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on Saturday after the talks held by Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko in Sochi.

According to Peskov, the money will go to Minsk “in the immediate future.”

“At least, there are no obstacles left, everything is agreed,” the Russian presidential spokesman said.

The Kremlin spokesman pointed out that it had been announced “well before all those stories with the plane” and confirmed the deadline of late June, which had been reported earlier. Nevertheless, Peskov could not give an exact date, as that is a matter of financial authorities.” President Lukashenko did not come up with any requests for additional economic aid. The issue was not raised in this way,” the Kremlin spokesman said.

“There were mainly two major topics, namely the further development of trade and economic cooperation between Russia and Belarus as well as the fight against the pandemic,” Peskov said.

In particular, the talks touched upon “the enhancement to economic cooperation in the area of such instruments as the customs and taxation authorities.”

“[They] discussed general approaches to the basic principles of organizing the customs and taxes,” the presidential spokesman said.

The transition of Russia and Belarus to a single currency was not touched upon at the meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin with his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko in Sochi, Kremlin Spokesman told.

“No, it was not raised,” he said in response to a reporter's question.

According to the Kremlin spokesman, the two presidents held a formal summit meeting on Friday and went on to informal talks on Saturday. The leaders focused on the economy and the fight against the pandemic.

Last December, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed an order granting Belarus a \$1 billion interstate loan. It is provided in two tranches of \$500 million each in 2020 and 2021. On December 30, Belarus received the first tranche of the state loan in the amount equivalent to \$500 million. Additionally, on October 16, Belarus received a Russia-brokered \$500-million loan from the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD) for up to 10 years.

## Pakistan Vows To Make E-commerce More Sustainable Through Digitization

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - On economic strategy, Pakistan Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said that like Turkey, Pakistan needs economic growth which has been achieved through long-term economic policy.

Addressing a budget webinar in Islamabad, he said that apart from the 1960s, Pakistan has never had a sustainable economic policy.

“When I took over the portfolio, I added a few economists and there is an economic advisory council,” he said.

“I have asked other stakeholders, including the council, to find out why we do not have a sustainable economic policy and what economic losses it has suffered,” Tareen said. He said that work is being done to rectify the flaws and this will be indicated in the report next week.

“I have asked the advisory council to work with the government in 12 areas,” the finance minister said. “We have long-term and short-term policies, not enough resources to work together in all sectors,” he said.

Shaukat Tarin said that in the '60s there was a Powerful Planning Commission and it had the status of the pillar of the government but later governments made the commission ineffective.

He said that extraordinary incentives would be given in the agricultural sector in the budget.

Stressing on the importance of exports, the Finance Minister said that exports were essential for sustainable development and important steps would be taken in this regard.

“We will provide incentives in sector services and make e-commerce more sustainable through digitization,” he said.

The Finance Minister said that all our attention is focused on improving the growth rate.

He also said that if Prime Minister Imran Khan made big decisions for the economy, the economy would face a severe crisis.



He said that priority measures have been taken to increase the value of the rupee.

He added that more than 40 industries related to the construction sector were also activated.

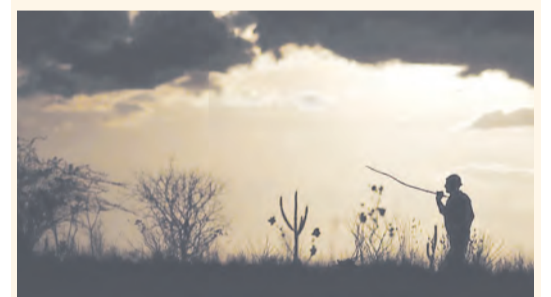
The Finance Minister said that this International Monetary Fund (IMF) program was very difficult, when inflation was 7% then the discount rate was increased to 13.25%. “The fact is that I have a problem with the program because the discount rate does not actually control the price of essential commodities,” he said.

Shaukat Tarin said that billions of dollars were lost to the national exchequer because of that.

The Finance Minister said that the rupee had depreciated and electricity tariffs had been drastically increased to reduce the revolving credit.

He said that when the growth rate declined and then after the COVID-19 pandemic, the growth rate entered negative.

## Brazil on Drought Alert, Faces Worst Dry Spell in 91 Years



BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil's government agencies warned of droughts this week as the country faces its worst dry spell in 91 years, increasing fears of energy rationing, hitting hydroelectric power generation and agriculture while raising the risk of Amazon fires.

Late on Thursday, the Electricity Sector Monitoring Committee (CMSE), which is linked to Brazil's Mines and Energy Ministry, recommended that the water regulator ANA recognize a state of “water scarcity,” after a prolonged drought hit Central and Southern parts of Brazil along the Paraná river basin.

Separately, a weather monitoring agency linked to the Agriculture Ministry issued its first “emergency drought alert” for June to September, saying rains are likely to remain scarce in five Brazilian states during that period.

The lack of rain across much of Brazil has negative implications for grain cultivation, livestock and electricity generation, as Brazil relies heavily on hydro dams for its power. The dry weather could lead to severe fires in the Amazon rainforest and Pantanal wetlands, scientists said.

The CMSE said the lack of rain makes it important to relax restrictions on some hydroelectric plants to allow greater energy generation or more storage in certain regions. That will require difficult talks with politicians, the ANA and environmental protection agency Ibama.

“Energy rationing is not envisaged, but if there is no relaxing of restrictions, there is no other way,” said a source with knowledge of the situation.

The Ministry of Mines and Energy said on Friday that it has sought to expand the supply of energy in Brazil, but ruled out carrying out an emergency process for hiring new capacity.

“The current situation is challenging,” it said in a statement, citing lower than usual reservoirs.

“There is no provision for emergency energy contracting,” it added.



## Iran, Indonesia Ink MoU on Librarianship

TEHRAN (IP)- In order to expand the field of librarianship and information science, the heads of the national libraries of Iran and Indonesia signed a memorandum of understanding cooperation. "Ashraf Boroujerdi," the head of the National Library and Archives of Iran, on Monday at the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the libraries of Iran and Indonesia, which was attended by

"Mohammad Syarif Bando," the director of the National Library of Indonesia said: "Technical details of this memorandum refers to the various topics that can pave the way to increase the development and exchange between the two countries." Boroujerdi added: "In this memorandum, bilateral measures in the field of manuscripts and training for maintenance and development of librarians' knowledge have been considered."



# World's Rich Floor It in Post-Pandemic Luxury Car Rush

PARIS (Dispatches) - The global rebound from the coronavirus pandemic is revving luxury carmakers' sales to never-before-seen heights, as order books at the likes of Lamborghini, Ferrari and Rolls-Royce burst with demand from the world's wealthy. Just like regular earners around the world, the richest cut back on consumption during 2020, with "double-digit" falls in sales for makers of the most coveted cars, says Felipe Munoz of market research firm Jato Dynamics.

But "customers for these cars were not as exposed as others" to the crisis' financial fallout, he adds.

For the wealthy, "most of the problem was that they couldn't get out of their houses," Munoz says. "They postponed their purchases."

The rebound for exclusive cars was already underway in the final quarter of 2020 as they reached for their platinum credit cards again, cushioning the pandemic blow by comparison to mass-market manufacturers.

Annual sales last year at Volkswagen-owned Lamborghini sped past their 2019 record to 7,430 vehicles, driven by the Italian manufacturer's hefty Urus SUV clocking in at around 200,000 euros (\$220,000 in the US).

Closed factories meant sales at Ferrari tumbled 10 percent last year, to 9,119.

But bosses say the black-horse brand now has an "order book at record levels", powered by the 450,000-euro SF90 Stradale -- the carmaker's first plug-in hybrid -- as well as the windscreen-free two-seater Monza, believed to cost around 1.7 million euros.

Ferrari hopes to top the 10,000-unit mark next year, when it becomes the final luxury producer to offer an SUV with the "Purosangue".

"The luxury market still has very specific rules and customers," Deloitte car industry analyst Guillaume Crunelle says.

"Behaviour is much more linked to personal situations, how their wealth is developing, rather than market trends."

After a year with less consumption, "there is quite some money around to be spent," Rolls-Royce chief executive Torsten Muller-Otvos tells AFP.

Nevertheless, the BMW subsidiary's boss also sees the aftereffects of the pandemic in people's buying patterns.

"Quite a lot of our clients said that Covid taught them that life can end easily tomorrow and now is time to enjoy your life."

This week the historic British brand launched a yacht-inspired model, the "Boat Tail", of which it has so far built just three units -- and won't reveal the price.

Muller-Otvos says that the new car is "much more refined" than its last custom build, the Sweptail, which cost in the region of \$13 million.



Rolls-Royce's one-offs notwithstanding, most even among the priciest manufacturers swept along in trends like the unstoppable march of the SUV -- and an environment-conscious turn to electrification, Deloitte's Crunelle points out.

Jato Dynamics' analysis showed that sports cars made up just five percent of luxury sales last year, while SUVs' market share outpaced coupes for the first time.

In Britain, Bentley and McLaren laid off thousands of workers as the virus outbreak began -- only for Bentley to book record sales of 11,000 units driven by the 200,000-euro Bentayga SUV.

Rolls-Royce saw its best-ever quarter in early 2021, powered by its New Ghost coupe and 2.6-tonne, 350,000-euro Cullinan SUV -- the most expensive on the market.

And James Bond favourite Aston Martin has returned from the brink of bankruptcy with its almost equally chunky DBX.

Looking ahead, "production for this year is fully booked," Rolls-Royce's Muller-Otvos says. Europe and North American remain solid markets for luxury brands, but China is where most of the growth can be found.

"It's the world's top region for wealth building, and cars are still a very potent mark of status," Crunelle says.

Munoz predicts that "with more and more millionaires and billionaires (in China) each year, the trend is likely to continue".

## Horses Starve to Death As Pandemic Hits Bangladesh Tourism



DHAKA (Dispatches) - More than 20 horses have died of starvation in just one month at Bangladesh's most popular resort district, the animals' owners said Sunday, as the country's tourism industry reels from the pandemic's economic fallout.

The South Asian nation of 168 million people is battling a fresh wave of coronavirus infections that has stretched its healthcare system and triggered a nationwide lockdown.

The horses' owners said they were struggling to afford fodder for their animals, which are used for tourist rides at Cox's Bazar beach -- one of the world's longest.

"Once coronavirus hit, tourist numbers... sharply dropped to a trickle," Farida Begum, spokesperson of the Cox's Bazar Horse Owners Association, told AFP. "We are struggling to make ends meet. How can we feed the horses?"

Tourists had briefly returned to the district from December to February when infections slowed, but visits dried up under the fresh lockdown imposed from April 14.

At least 21 horses out of up to 90 used for tourists at the beach died over the past month while others were emaciated, Begum said.

During last year's lockdown, 41 horses -- including eight of Begum's own -- died, she added.

Some owners have set their horses free, hoping they can survive by eating grass or foraging for food.

The horse owners say they have been struggling to feed their own families, with many taking out loans from microlenders just to make ends meet.

"Officials from the microlender come to my home every week and badger me to pay back the loan in instalments. But unless the tourists start arriving in Cox's Bazar, I can't pay back the money," Begum said, adding that she had borrowed 100,000 taka (\$1,200).

Dozens of horse handlers usually hired by the owners to help tourists with the rides have switched to driving rickshaws or construction work.

The resort town usually attracts more than two million mostly domestic tourists every year.

But under the nationwide lockdown, offices and markets are shut and public transport has been halted.

## Agri-Food Sector Vital to the Philippines' Post-Pandemic Recovery

MANILA (Dispatches) - COVID-19 has been the test of the century, and like many countries in the region the Philippines has not been spared. More than a year in, governments are increasingly pressured to address fiscal imbalances exacerbated by the pandemic.

In the Philippines, this has started to take shape for the agri-food sector. Notably, the Department of Agriculture is poised to get less than P67 billion for its 2021 budget -- a considerable difference from its initial ask of P280 billion.

As we plan for recovery, we need to remember the crucial role agri-food plays in supporting the economy. According to a recent study by Oxford Economics, the Philippines' agri-food sector contributed P6.1 trillion to the nation's GDP in 2019 and was responsible for 42.7% of the entire workforce, making it the single most critical source of employment. The sector also contributed a total of P829.5 billion in tax revenues.

The sector is undeniably an economic powerhouse; and ensuring proper support for the sector to recover is crucial in unlocking Philippines' growth potential post-pandemic. On top of the priority to contain community cases, we need to boost the agri-food sector in order for the Philippine economy to pull itself out from the depths of the pandemic.

In the same study, the Philippines showed important vulnerabilities due to its dependence on tourism to revive its food industry, placing second worst across 10 countries when it comes to the sector's expected economic recovery. As we continue to see uncertainties in international tourism, the agri-food sector and Philippine government will need to work closely to identify key areas to address so that it can thrive in the new normal.

Firstly, there is a need to create a conducive trade



environment to ensure food supplies remain open, transparent, and predictable. This means a reliable, secure food network for everyone -- both on a consumer and production level. However, policymakers need to be mindful that as imports increase, this will create greater uncertainty amongst local players in terms of the competitive landscape.

Policymakers will also need to work closely with the agri-food industry on potential policies that seek to restore the Philippines' fiscal position. It is important that any new fiscal measure introduced be well designed, targeted, consulted, and efficiently regulated; otherwise, they risk widespread disruption across the sector and subsequently, the wider Philippine economy.

To illustrate, an abrupt reduction in subsidies would harm agricultural producers and impact the rest of the agri-food value chain. With around half of all inputs into the Philippines' food manufacturing sector coming from domestic agriculture, this could then impact local consumers.

Measures like excise taxes on sugar and plastic should also be considered carefully. While they seek to address health and environmental problems and generate revenue, historically such interventionist policies have backfired, hurting consumers and businesses without delivering the intended benefits.

It is also critical to deepen investment in innovation so as to strengthen the resilience and efficiency of a labor-intensive food value chain in the Philippines. Industry 4.0 is a key part of the Philippines' growth agenda, and should continue to be the focus for food and beverage manufacturing, which underpins the country's agri-food sector. Pursuing an Industry 4.0 revolution can guarantee greater flexibility, food safety, quality, and increased productivity, allowing the industry to better meet consumers' demands, and in turn drive industry growth.

## No Plans for Sixth...

FROM PAGE 1

Representatives of Iran and the other five signatories to the nuclear agreement, namely Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China, have been engaged in the Vienna process since early April with the purpose of finding ways to bring the United States back to the deal and prepare the ground for its full implementation.

In his tweet, Ulyanov spoke about the likelihood of the last round of talks in Vienna and said, "The negotiators proceed from the understanding that the current round should be final." On Wednesday, Tehran and the other participants in the Vienna talks said there had been some progress, but that differences still remained.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says he is still not confident a conclusion would be possible for talks on the revival of a 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We have made some progress on them," Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who is the top negotiator of the Islamic Republic, said during an interview with Press TV on the sidelines of the discussions. "But we are still not in a position to say that we have a clear answer for them and a clear solution, actually, for these key issues."

## All Trump Sanctions...

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Khatibzadeh made the remarks in response to a question on the latest remarks of Russia's top negotiator, Mikhail Ulyanov, who wrote in a tweet on Sunday that there are no plans for the sixth round of talks in the Austrian capital.

"The negotiators proceed from the understanding that the current round should be final," Ulyanov said.

"If the remaining key issues are resolved, this can be the last round, otherwise, [the talks] will continue," said Khatibzadeh.

"The negotiations in Vienna have had good and noteworthy progress in the three working groups, but there remain key issues" which should be dealt with carefully, he added.

So far, the talks have not led to a tangible outcome, but Tehran says the US has already agreed to remove the main sanctions targeting Iran's oil industry and financial sector.

Khatibzadeh said the ball is in Washington's court to decide whether it wants to pursue the failed legacy of former president Donald Trump -- namely the maximum pressure policy -- or turn over a new leaf and return to its obligations under the JCPOA, which tasks the U.S. with the removal of anti-Iran sanctions.

"If that happens, Iran's response will be the full implementation of the JCPOA," he asserted.

Asked to comment on US officials' growing call to "lengthen and strengthen" the JCPOA, Khatibzadeh said the only solution on the table is the 2015 deal.

"Instead of trying to appease the sworn enemy of the JCPOA, they'd better return to their commitments under [UN Security Council] Resolution 2231 and the JCPOA," he said, making a reference to US officials' consultations with Israel over the JCPOA.

"The only option and solution on the table is the JCPOA and the same JCPOA that was signed in 2015 ... This is the best thing that the current US administration can think of," the spokesman added.

If other issues are to be discussed, Khatibzadeh continued, "there is a rather lengthy list of destructive measures by the U.S. and its allies in the region" that can be brought forward.

He added that the U.S. should undertake many actions if it is ready to negotiate about those issues.

On a recent report over U.S. threats to two Iranian naval vessels reportedly headed to Venezuela, Khatibzadeh said Iran has always been present in international waters and is entitled to such right under international law.

"No country can violate this right," he warned.

Khatibzadeh warned the U.S. against any miscalculation, saying, "Those who are sitting inside glass houses should be careful."

## General COVID Vaccination...

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In further remarks, Mohraz pointed out: "Everyone should be vaccinated," adding that given the shortage of vaccines globally, we must help people get vaccinated and get back to daily activities."

Mohraz noted: "COV-Iran Barakat's vaccine is effective and immune, and we hope that our vaccine would have the highest percentage of efficiency and immunity."

Also, as the next keynote speaker, Hassan Jalili, the head of the vaccine production project in the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO), stated that the third phase of vaccine production would be launched in late spring.

Jalili said: "The production capacity of 'COV-Iran Barakat' is more than 10 million doses per month."

Speaking on Sunday at the press conference of COV-Iran Barakat vaccine, he said that the third phase includes industrial production, adding: "In fact, this phase will be mass production, and we predict that this site will be launched in late spring and the vaccine production capacity will be more than 10 million doses per month."

## Houthi Slams...

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Houthi also urged the UN to take action to allow access to basic needs for the Yemenis, stressing that addressing the humanitarian issue is "the actual entrance to all files".

He said if the Saudi-led coalition thinks that its siege on Yemen would strengthen its position, "then it is delusional", noting that the ongoing blockade reveals the kingdom's true intentions and proves that it doesn't want peace.

The war was launched to eliminate Ansarullah and restore the former regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi to power in Yemen. Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

The Saudi-led military aggression has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions of people.

## Bernal Wins Giro d'Italia

ROME (Dispatches) - Colombia's Egan Bernal of the Ineos Grenadiers team won the Giro d'Italia on Sunday after retaining his overall lead in the final stage, a 30.3-km individual time trial around Milan.

Filippo Ganna, also of Ineos Grenadiers, won the time trial. Italy's Damiano Caruso (Bahrain Victorious) took second place overall, with Briton Simon Yates (Bike Exchange) finishing third.

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## Osaka Fined \$15,000 For Media Boycott

PARIS (Dispatches) - The French Open plus the three other Grand Slam tournaments issued a joint statement on Sunday, announcing that world No. 2 Naomi Osaka has been fined \$15,000 for skipping her media obligations following her Round 1 win against Patricia Maria Tig at Roland-Garros.

Osaka was also warned about the consequences of continuing to skip media sessions, which could be a whole lot worse than a \$15,000 fine.

# Milwaukee Bucks Sweep Miami Heat

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Giannis Antetokounmpo managed his first NBA playoff triple double and the Milwaukee Bucks defeated Miami 120-103 to sweep the Heat out of the post-season in the opening round.

Greek star Antetokounmpo had 20 points, 12 rebounds and 15 assists to spark the Bucks, who were led by 25 points from center Brook Lopez and 22 more off the bench from Bryn Forbes. Khris Middleton added 20 as the Bucks rallied from a 12-point first-half deficit to win the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series 4-0. They await the Brooklyn-Boston series winner in the second round.

"We've got to focus on ourselves, try to get better," Antetokounmpo said. "We want to get better defensively and whoever we get in the next round, we're going to be ready."

Antetokounmpo became only the third Bucks player with a playoff triple double after Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1970, when he was known as Lew Alcindor, and Paul Pressey in 1986.

The Heat, who lost to the Los Angeles Lakers in last year's NBA Finals, ousted Milwaukee in five games in the second round of last season's playoffs.

"We just tried to focus a game at a time," Antetokounmpo said. "We didn't want to play with our food."

Miami had not been swept in a playoff series since falling to Chicago in the first round in 2007. The Heat dominated early, with Antetokounmpo missing his first six shots and Miami grabbing its biggest lead of the series at 58-46.

But Milwaukee opened the third quarter on a 24-6 run and the Heat could never match them after that.

"They played us really tough," said Antetokounmpo. "We kept our composure, we kept moving the ball, we kept defending and we were able to get a win."

Bam Adebayo led Miami with 20 points and 14 rebounds while Jimmy Butler had a triple double in a losing cause with 12 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.



Antetokounmpo said it was difficult to stay in a role and try to help his team through versatility instead of just pushing for a big scoring night.

"If you want to be great, it's going to hurt a little bit. It's not going to be easy," Antetokounmpo said. "I'm blessed I can do a lot of things to contribute to our team. I can score. I can pass the ball. I can rebound."

It was the first game for the Bucks without guard Donte DiVincenzo, who was knocked out for the remainder of the playoffs by a torn left ankle ligament suffered in Milwaukee's game three victory at Miami on Thursday.

DiVincenzo averaged 10.4 points, 5.8 rebounds, 3.1 assists and 1.1 steals a game for the Bucks this season.

"He's a big part of our game," said Antetokounmpo. "It's going to be tough not having him going forward but a lot of guys are going to step up for us."

Portland's Norman Powell matched a career playoff high with 29 points, hitting 11-of-13 from the floor to power the Trail Blazers over visiting Denver 115-95 to level their Western Conference series at two wins each.

CJ McCollum scored 21 points and Bosnian center Jusuf Nurkic added 17 for Portland while Serbian center Nikola Jokic led Denver with 16 points.

The Trail Blazers led 57-47 at half-time and dominated the third quarter to pull away for good.

Elsewhere, Joel Embiid scored a playoff-career high 36 points as the Philadelphia 76ers breezed to a 132-103 victory over the Washington Wizards to seize a 3-0 lead in their Eastern Conference series.

The 76ers shot 58.6 percent from the floor and 51.5 percent from three-point range and can close out the eighth-seeded Wizards tonight.

In the late game, Utah visits Memphis with that series deadlocked 1-1.

## Tuchel Set for New Deal and Hungry for More



PORTO (Dispatches) - While Manchester City had been building towards what they thought was their moment in the Champions League for five years under Pep Guardiola, Chelsea showed with their victory in Saturday's final in Porto what can be achieved in just four months.

That is how long has elapsed since Thomas Tuchel became coach, replacing Frank Lampard with Chelsea ninth in the Premier League.

The German oversaw an immediate transformation in their fortunes, dragging them into the top four, taking them to the FA Cup final which they lost to Leicester City, and now winning the Champions League.

They have beaten Guardiola's City for the third time in six weeks thanks to Kai Havertz's goal, and they are champions of Europe for the second time.

Tuchel is set to reap the rewards with a handsome new contract, although whether he will be allowed to put down roots in west London remains to be seen given how managerial cycles tend to go at Stamford Bridge.

Once again a mid-season managerial sacking has worked out perfectly for Chelsea, whose 2012 Champions League triumph came following the decision to sack Andre Villas-Boas and appoint Roberto Di Matteo.

## Quartararo Wins Italian MotoGP

ROME (Dispatches) - Fabio Quartararo dominated the Italian MotoGP on Sunday at a Mugello circuit shaken by the death hours earlier of Moto3 rider Jason Dupasquier.

Yamaha's French world championship leader held up a Swiss flag on the podium in honour of his 19-year-old "friend" whose promising young career was cut short in brutal fashion.

The Swiss teenager's death was announced around midday by MotoGP organisers after he succumbed to injuries sustained in a multi-bike crash in qualifying on Saturday.

Quartararo crossed the line with over two and a half seconds of daylight back to Portugal's Miguel Oliveira in second, with reigning world champion Joan Mir completing the sombre podium after losing a place because of penalties incurred.

The sixth leg of the season was preceded by a minute's silence for Dupasquier - the sport's first fatality since Luis Salom died in practice at the Catalonia Moto2 Grand Prix in Barcelona in 2016.

As the MotoGP roadshow persevered despite the tragic circumstances, it was Quartararo, who had set a new lap record when securing pole on Saturday, who emerged with his third win of the season to tighten his grip on the riders' standings.

He now has a 24-point cushion over Zarco with Francesco Bagnaia, an early faller Sunday, a further two points back in third and Australian Jack Miller, winner of the two races before Mugello, in fourth.

## Brentford End 74-Year Wait for Promotion to Premier League

LONDON (Dispatches) - Brentford were promoted to the Premier League for the first time in 74 years as they beat Swansea 2-0 in a Championship play-off final worth around £180 million (\$255 million) to the winners.

Thomas Frank's side completed their fairy tale rise thanks to first-half goals from Ivan Toney and Emiliano Marcondes at Wembley.

Swansea's Jay Fulton was sent off midway through the second half to put the result beyond doubt in what is widely regarded as football's single most lucrative game, mainly because of the broadcast revenues that Premier League clubs receive.

# De Bruyne Faces Race to Make Euro



LONDON (Dispatches) - Kevin De Bruyne Lis a major doubt for Belgium's Euro 2020 campaign after suffering two facial fractures in Manchester City's Champions League final defeat to Chelsea on Saturday.

De Bruyne was helped off the field in tears after colliding with Antonio Rudiger on the hour mark in Porto.

The midfielder's left eye immediately appeared swollen. Without his creativity, Chelsea comfortably held out for a 1-0 win to keep City waiting for Champions League glory.

"Just got back from the hospital," De Bruyne posted on his Twitter account on Sunday. "My diagnosis is acute nose bone fracture and left orbital fracture. I feel okay now. Still disappointed about yesterday obviously but we will be back."

Belgium's first match of the Euro is in 11 days' time against Russia in Saint Petersburg. Roberto Martinez's team then face Denmark and Finland in what should be a comfortable group for the number one ranked side in the world.

## Osaka Into French Open 2nd Round

PARIS (Dispatches) - World number two Naomi Osaka let her racquet do the talking at the French Open on Sunday, resolutely maintaining her media boycott but briefly telling a TV interviewer that her clay court game is "a work in progress".

Osaka opened the first day of action at Roland Garros with a 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) victory over Romanian world number 63 Patricia Maria Tig.

The 23-year-old Japanese star, a four-time Grand Slam title winner, has refused to carry out media obligations at the tournament, claiming news conferences are detrimental to her mental health.

She believes traditional post-match inquests are akin to "kicking people when they're down". On Sunday, Osaka only agreed to take part in a cursory on-court television interview but still faces a fine of up to \$20,000 for skipping mandatory news conferences.

"For me, playing on clay is a work in progress," said the reigning US and Australian Open champion on a sun-kissed Court Philippe Chatrier.

"Hopefully the more I play, the better I will become. It's a beautiful court. I've only played two matches here, one before the roof and one now so hopefully I'll keep it going."

And that was that from a player who has now strung together 15 successive Grand Slam match wins.

Osaka, who has never got past the third round in Paris, fired 39 winners but committed 35 unforced errors against Tig to set up a second round duel against another Romanian player, Ana Bogdan.



## Sterling, Walker Receive Racist Abuse After Defeat

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City's Raheem Sterling and Kyle Walker were racially abused on Instagram after the team's 1-0 loss to Chelsea in Saturday's Champions League final, and the social media firm has removed the accounts of those guilty.

Sky Sports reported that the pair were sent monkey emojis on their Instagram pages after the game. Sterling was also targeted following City's semi-final win over Paris St Germain, shortly after English soccer's social media boycott campaign came to an end earlier this month.

"The racist abuse sent to these players last night is abhorrent and we don't want it on Instagram," a representative of Facebook, which owns Instagram, said in a statement on Sunday.

"We swiftly removed a number of comments and accounts for breaking our rules and we're continuing to review and take action against those that violate our policies."

It added that: "No single thing will fix this challenge overnight but we're committed to doing what we can to keep our community safe from abuse."

Several players at Premier League clubs have been targeted in the past few months, including United's Anthony Martial, Liverpool's Trent-Alexander Arnold and Sadio Mane and Chelsea's Reece James.

Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said that he had been subjected to "at least 70 racial slurs" on social media after Wednesday's defeat by Villarreal in the Europa League final.

In February, English football bodies sent an open letter to Facebook and Twitter, urging them to block and swiftly take down offensive posts, as well as to improve the verification process for users.

