

**IAEA Said That the Location Where the Incident Occurred at The Natanz Nuclear Enrichment Facility Does Not Contain Nuclear Materials, Adding That the Site Is Under the Agency Safeguards**

# IRAN NEWS

**Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani Described the Assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani as the U.S. Biggest Gift to Takfiri Terrorists**

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## Tehran Censures EU3's Non-Compliance With JCPOA

TEHRAN (IFP)- Foreign Minister of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif has sent a letter to EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell to denounce the EU3's non-compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement after the three European states drafted an anti-Iranian resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors, Foreign Ministry spokesperson has announced.

"Following the irresponsible and illegal measure by the three European states (Germany, the UK, and France) to initiate a draft resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors and also the continuation of non-compliance with the international commitments under the JCPOA and the resolutions passed by the (JCPOA) Joint Commission, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran yesterday sent a letter to Mr. Borrell, the European Union Foreign Policy Chief and the JCPOA coordinator, and once again referred the cases of the European countries' non-compliance according to Article 36 of the JCPOA to the Joint Commission for settlement." Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Abbas Mousavi said on Friday.

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## Gov't Makes Wearing Mask, Observing Health Protocols "Mandatory"



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani described observing physical distancing and health protocols, using masks and refusing to attend at public gatherings essential for fighting coronavirus, and stated that using masks in public places is mandatory.

Speaking on Saturday at a meeting of the National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus, President Rouhani said, "Providing services in all sectors, especially the public sector, should be subject to observing health protocols by people and of course using masks as of tomorrow (Sunday)".

The President also went on to say, "Coronavirus is a multi-dimensional and intertwined phenomenon that has affected all areas of medical, cultural, social, and economic fields, as well as international relations". Stating that coronavirus has reduced global economic growth from 2.9 to -3 percent, and 81 percent of the workforce has been affected by the disease, he said, "Like other countries in the world, the Islamic Republic of Iran took different approaches to fight it and we had a very good performance in designing and implementing these methods".

Rouhani continued saying: "During the coronavirus outbreak, about 1,500 hospital beds have been added to the country's medical system".

"I would like to appreciate different sectors of the country, especially the medical staff, who have provided great services and valuable efforts," he added.

People's healthy items must be provided by all production units across the country and everyone must observe health protocols, Rouhani said.

"After a round of public closures of unnecessary activities and the following reopening, it was emphasized that the more reopening is done, the stricter observing health protocols must be followed," he continued.

Rouhani added, "Unfortunately, we see that some consider being infected with the virus bad and hide it. If someone knows that they have been infected with coronavirus, they have religious and human duty to inform others about it".

"It is necessary that we promote the culture for countering this problem. Until the vaccine and medicine for this disease are provided, people should assume that everybody may be infected, and therefore, should take the maximum care and precaution in social relations with individuals," said Rouhani.

He also added, "From tomorrow (Sunday), using masks in crowded public places must be mandatory and if someone wants to receive services in a public department without wearing mask, they must be asked to use a mask".

Rouhani continued, "In order to overcome the difficult conditions of fighting coronavirus, the service provider and receiver must observe health protocols, and these protocols must be observed in places where service is provided".

## 2,449 New Cases of COVID-19 Infection Confirmed in Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - Health Ministry spokeswoman has confirmed 2,449 new cases of infection with the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of cases to 237,878.

Iran Confirms 2,449 New Cases of COVID-19 Infection  
Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman has confirmed 2,449 new cases of infection with the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of cases to 237,878.

Speaking at a press briefing on Saturday, Sima-Sadat Lari said 148 people have died of the virus in the past 24 hours, increasing the overall fatalities to 11,408.

She said 198,949 patients have so far recovered from the disease, and been discharged from hospital.

According to Lari, 3,136 patients are also in severe conditions of the disease.

The spokeswoman said 1,769,520 COVID-19 tests have been taken across the country.

Kermanshah, Hormozgan, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Bushehr, Khuzestan, Khorasan Razavi, Kurdistan, and Ilam provinces are considered as red zones, she added.

## N. Korea Says No U.S. Talks Plan

PYONGYANG (Dispatches) - North Korea has repeated that it has no immediate plans to resume nuclear negotiations with the United States unless Washington discards what it describes as "hostile" policies towards Pyongyang.

Saturday's statement by North Korean First Vice-Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui came after US President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, John Bolton, told reporters on Thursday that Trump might seek another summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as an "October surprise" before the US presidential election.

"Is it possible to hold dialogue or have any dealings with the US which persists in the hostile policy towards the DPRK in disregard of the agreements already made at the past summit?" Choe said, referring to North Korea by its formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"We do not feel any need to sit face-to-face with the US, as it does not consider the DPRK-US dialogue as nothing more than a tool for grappling its political crisis," she said.

Kim and Trump have met three times since embarking on their high-stakes nuclear diplomacy in 2018, but negotiations have faltered since their second summit in February last year in Vietnam.

In that summit, the U.S. rejected North Korean demands for significant sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capability. Kim entered 2020 declaring to bolster his nuclear deterrent in face of "gangster-like" US sanctions and pressure.

Choe's statement followed a series of similar declarations by the North that it would no longer gift Trump with high-profile meetings he could boast of as his foreign policy achievements unless it gets something substantial in return. Choe said North Korea has already established a "detailed strategic timetable" for managing what she described as U.S. threats.

The North in recent months has also been ramping up pressure against South Korea, blowing up an inter-Korean liaison office in its territory and threatening to abandon a bilateral military agreement aimed at reducing tensions.

It follows months of frustration over Seoul's unwillingness to defy U.S.-led sanctions and restart joint economic projects that would breathe life into the North's broken economy.

## Cause of Accident At Natanz Nuclear Site Discovered

TEHRAN (IFP) - The spokesperson for the Supreme National Security Council of Iran says expert teams have determined the cause of a recent accident at Natanz nuclear facility in the central province of Isfahan.

Keivan Khosravi announced on Friday that technical and security investigation conducted by the relevant organizations has exactly discovered the cause of the accident that occurred at 'Ahmadi Roshan' nuclear site in Natanz on July 2.

Experts from various sectors in charge of assessing and investigating the incident were present at the site of the accident immediately after it happened on Thursday morning, he added, noting, "Various hypotheses about the cause of the incident were tested with a detailed assessment of the impacts, quality and extent of the damages that have been done, and the main cause of the accident has been identified."

Khosravi said more details on why and how the accident occurred will be made public at the appropriate time "due to security considerations."

The spokesman finally emphasized that the damages to an industrial shed under construction in Natanz nuclear facility has been "limited".

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## UNSC Debate Reaffirmed Multilateralism, Rejecting U.S. Unilateralism

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Advisor to Iranian Foreign Minister said on Saturday that the UN Security Council online debate on implementation of UN Resolution 2231 reaffirmed important role of United Nations and multilateralism and almost all members opposed to the US unilateralism.

The June 30 UNSC online session was manifestation of multilateralism, Ali Najafi Khoshroodi told IRNA.

UN Security Council held an online session on Tuesday afternoon to review the latest situation of implementation of Resolution 2231 and the secretary general's report on the issue.

At the session, all permanent and non-permanent members, except for the US, gave unconditional support for the July 2015 nuclear deal signed by Iran and five permanent members of the Security Council - U.S., UK, France, Russia, China plus Germany. Of course, United States is no longer a party to the deal as it withdrew unilaterally from it in May, 2018.

He said that the U.S. measures including withdrawal from the Iran Deal and the desperate campaign to extend arms embargo on Iran contravenes the context of the JCPOA envisaged expiry of arms embargo on Iran in October are in violation of International Law and have destructive impacts on global peace and security.

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## Dispute Mechanism For JCPOA Lacks "Clear Procedure"

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov wrote on Saturday that dispute resolution mechanism to solve issues related to the July 2015 nuclear deal "lacks clear and agreed procedure."

Ulyanov made the remarks through a Twitter message.

"Iran requested the Joint Commission of #JCPOA to address Tehran's concerns regarding implementation of the deal by France, Germany and UK through Dispute Resolution Mechanism. This is the third time when JCPOA participants try to launch DRM which lacks clear and agreed procedure," Ulyanov wrote.

Iran had already referred the unfaithfulness of the US and three European states- UK, France and Germany- to the JCPOA based on the Article 36 to the Joint Commission two times.

As the dispute did not solve, it led to fifth step of Iran's move to reduce commitments to the JCPOA based on Article 26 and 36.

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## Iran Enduring Anti-Human Sanctions for 40 Years

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Paris Bahram Qasemi said on Friday that it is for over forty years that Iran has been enduring unlawful acts and unilateral sanctions that runs counter to all human rights and fundamental international rights.

He wrote on his Twitter account late on Friday that the country has tolerated the illegitimate measures and unilateral sanctions that have targeted the right for life and health of ordinary citizens.

Isn't it time for the international community, including the UN Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs, to adopt a timely and appropriate approach, in accordance with their inherent responsibilities, towards a government that commits gross human rights abuses and supports child-killing and human rights abuses?, he said.

## Coercion, Hypocrisy, Two Elements of American Human Rights

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights stressed that the United States has hijacked the human rights, saying that the foundations of American human rights are made up of two elements: coercion and hypocrisy.

Ali Baqeri-Kani said at a meeting with the family of the late Deputy Chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis: "American human rights mean the assassination of the hero of fighting against terrorism, and the Iraqi people understand the inhumanity of American human rights."

He also said that racism is an integral part of the arrogant nature of the United States.

Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights added: "Historical figures and symbols of the US are all leaders of slavery and murderers of innocent people."



Iranian General and the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Qasem Soleimani, Deputy Head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis along with eight others of their allies were assassinated in an air raid by US forces near Baghdad International Airport on Friday, 3 January.

The popular mobilization, which was established in 2014 with the fatwa of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the supreme authority of the Iraqi Shiites, which has played a key role in defeating ISIS terrorism in Iraq and is now at the forefront of the fight against ISIS survivors alongside the country's security forces.

## DM Vows Firm Response To Enemy's Moves

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's defense minister says the nation's Armed Forces will firmly respond to any desperate move by the enemy.

Brigadier General Amir Hatami made the comment while touching upon widespread and desperate movements by the Americans on different political, economic and social fronts in order to trigger public discontent and break the resistance of the great Iranian nation.

"This time, too, the Americans will be defeated by the great Iranian nation," he said.

"Under the guidelines of the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces ..., the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran will powerfully and knowingly monitor and respond to any desperate move by the enemy," said the defense chief.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the top general said the progress that Iran has made on the defense sector is due to the divine and revolutionary thoughts by martyrs in that sector.

## Zarif Wishes Immediate Recovery of Pakistani FM



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wished immediate recovery of his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi reportedly curing COVID-19.

"This afternoon I felt a slight fever and immediately quarantined myself at home," Qureshi earlier wrote in his Twitter account.

"I have now tested positive for Covid 19. By the grace of Allah, I feel strong and energetic. I will continue to carry on my duties from home. Please keep me in your prayers," he added.

Meanwhile, Iran Ambassador to Pakistan Mohammad Ali Hosseini has conveyed best wishes and prays for the speedy recovery of Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mahmood Qureshi from coronavirus.

Foreign Minister Qureshi said Friday he has contracted coronavirus and that he had quarantined himself at his home.

"This afternoon I felt a slight fever and immediately quarantined myself at home," Qureshi wrote on Twitter. "I have now tested positive for Covid 19."

"By the grace of Allah, I feel strong and energetic. I will continue to carry on my duties from home. Please keep me in your prayers," the foreign minister added.

According to National Command and Operation Center the number of Covid-19 patients in Pakistan has soared to 225,280 with 125,094 recoveries and 4,619 deaths.

## Fishery Consumption Per Capita Stands at 13kg in Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMICDESK

TEHRAN- Head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei put the country's fishery consumption per capita at 13 kilograms.

Iran's fishery output reached 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei has previously announced.

The official said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The official noted that the output, which was more than the projected amount, was achieved through the help of research sectors as well as the ground laid by the private sector. He further said Iran Fisheries Organization acts in compliance with the international approach, noting that Iran ranks 33rd in the world in terms of producing fishery product and it ranks first in fishing in the Indian Ocean.

Khoun-Mirzaei added that if the government supports the fishery, this sector can boost production and materialize the slogan of Year of Surge in Production.

## Tehran, Moscow Review Energy Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian ambassador and Russian Deputy Minister of Energy met and held talks on the energy cooperation.

During the meeting held in Moscow on Friday, Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali and Russia's Deputy Minister of Energy Anatoly Tikhonov discussed the process of energy cooperation.

The two sides agreed to hold the 16th round of the Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation



between Iran and the Russian Federation in September.

Holding a working group on energy cooperation between the two countries and the implementation of several new projects in the fields of agriculture, energy, and transportation were among the topics discussed during the meeting.

Iranian ambassador appreciated Russia's recent support for Iran in political and international forums.

## IRGC Missiles Iran's Backing

TEHRAN (FNA)- Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi boasted the country's self-sufficiency in production of different defensive tools, stressing that Iran is proud of the missiles built by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a source of reliance.

"It is a good feeling when the IRGC unveils and tests a missile and it is our backing," Mousavi said on Friday.

He underlined Iran's self-sufficiency in production of different missiles, and said, "Now, we can even export them and take revenge [for enemies' attacks], target the ISIL and hit the murderers of General Soleimani."

Iran has produced different powerful missiles and missile defense shields in recent years, including Third of Khordad.

## It's Time to Fuel Fight Against U.S.

TEHRAN (MNA) - Secretary of Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaei said that given the international and domestic conditions, it's a good opportunity to fuel the fight against the U.S.

Speaking in a meeting, Secretary of Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaei made some remarks on the occasion of the anniversary of the brutal downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by the U.S. navy.

Addressing the Iranian elite as well as the masses, Rezaei said that "We want to initiate the decline of United State from our streets".

"With respect to current international and domestic conditions, the fight against the United States is prone to flare-ups", stressed Rezaei adding that there is a good opportunity to remove American approaches and thoughts from our culture, economy and our administration just like we expelled American advisers from our country."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rezaei expressed hope that by relying on the Supreme Leader's guidelines, the country would overcome the penetration of American culture, liberal economics, and thoughts.

## Abduction of Iranian Diplomats Big Crime

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's ambassador to Beirut said on Friday that kidnapping of four Iranian diplomats Seyyed Mohsen Mousavi, Ahmad Motavasselian, Kazem Akhavan and Taqi Rastegar Moqaddam in 1982 is a big crime and against all human and diplomatic norms and international treaties.

Mohammad Jalal Fiouznia made the remarks late on Friday in a ceremony marking anniversary of the abduction of the diplomats in Lebanon which was attended by representatives of Nabih Berri and foreign minister, as well as a number of MPs and ambassadors residing in Beirut. Appreciating the Lebanese government for its good interaction with Iran in pursuing the fate of the abductees, he stressed that since Iranian diplomats were abducted in Lebanon, they should have been protected on the basis of international treaties.

"We want the case to be seriously pursued and the kidnappers to be prosecuted," he reiterated.

According to some reports in 1982, Iranian diplomats were handed over to the Zionist regime's agents after their abduction, so the legal and political responsibility for this terrorist act, as well as its impacts lies with the Zionist regime, he pointed out. Iran continues to call on the United Nations and all relevant parties to do their utmost to clarify various dimensions of the issue in order to fulfill their legal and humanitarian obligations, Firouznia said.

## IRIAA Overhauls Eight Cobra, Bell 214 Helicopters

TEHRAN (MNA) - According to the commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Aviation, the force has overhauled eight Cobra and Bell 214 helicopters.

In a ceremony on Saturday at an airbase in Masjed Soleiman, Khuzestan province, Second Brigadier General Yousef Ghorbani announced that the eight overhauled helicopters have joined the force's operational fleet as of today.

He went on to say that thanks to the efforts of young experts, IRIAA has boosted its military preparedness and has also obtained the know-how to produce different parts of helicopters. Ghorbani said the

boosting of Iran's helicopter military power has been unique compared to other countries of the region.

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami had said on June 23 that Iran produces more than 70 percent of aircrafts' and helicopters' part by relying on domestic knowledge. The Islamic Republic of Iran is among the few countries which managed to attain the technology of manufacturing aircraft parts, he added.

Iran's defense sector has been under sanctions for almost four decades but the country has managed to fulfill its needs by relying on domestic knowledge and experts.

## Iran Self-Sufficient in Repairing Offshore Drilling Rigs

TEHRAN (MNA) - The CEO of Sina Energy Development Company announced Iran as self-sufficient in repairing its offshore drilling rigs.

According to Majid Oji, there are 300-foot-drilling rigs in the oil and gas fields in the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea, run by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Offshore Oil Company (IOOC).

"The rigs were previously sent to foreign countries for being repaired but Mostazafan Foundation has made it possible to repair the rigs domestically," he said, "The issue saves five million to six million dollars for Iran."

"By the help of the Iranian knowledge-based companies, Mostazafan Foundation has now the offshore drilling rigs constructed and repaired," Oji added.

Despite the coronavirus outbreak, all operations in Iran's oil and gas rigs are ongoing in full compliance with safety and healthcare standards and complying with personal and public health and hygiene principles in the workplace.

NIDC, a subsidiary of the NIOC, undertakes most drilling operations across the country and has drilled 4,489 onshore and offshore oil and gas wells in the past four decades after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Holding 70 onshore and offshore drilling rigs, as well as equipment and facilities for offering integrated technical and engineering services, the company plays a major part in drilling exploration as well as appraisal/development wells in the country.

In late February, NIDC's deputy head for drilling operation announced that the company had dug and completed the digging operation of 100 oil and gas wells during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019-February 19, 2020).

## Vice President Felicitates Belarus on National Day

TEHRAN (MNA) - First Vice President Es'hagh Jahangiri in a message on Saturday felicitated the Belarusian government and nation on the country's national day.

In a letter to Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Alexandrovich Golovchenko, offered felicitations on the country's national day, expressing hope that that the two countries could benefit the existing opportunities and capacities to develop mutual relations.

On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohamad Javad Zarif had also congratulated his Belarusian Vladimir Maki, government, and the people of this country on their National Day on Thursday.

July 3 is the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus, and its people celebrate it every year.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:09
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:10
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:55

23. He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).  
24. Or have they taken for worship (other) gods besides him? Say, "Bring your convincing proof: this is the Message of those with me and the Message of those before me." But most of them know not the Truth, and so turn away.  
Surah 21. The Prophets ( 23 - 24 )

## Iran-China Probable Deal Should Not Be Viewed Politically

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - President of Iran-China Chamber of Commerce says the economic relations between Iran and China were good even before the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the probable 25-year strategic deal between both states should not at all be viewed politically.**

Speaking to ILNA, Majid Reza Hariari talked about the oil and gas relations between Iran and China and its outlook internationally, saying that Iran, as one of the biggest rich countries in terms of underground energy reserves and other metal and non-metal mines, has a good position in the world rankings and if the country wants to present itself in the world, it should introduce its capabilities and potentials in order to enter the international market.

He went on to say that on the other hand, China is one of biggest consumers of Iran's goods and it is natural both countries to sign trade deal, and major part of the deal is related to energy and other mineral sources.

Hariari reiterated that even if the Islamic Republic had not happened, the economic relations between Iran and China could have been like now or better than today, so the probable 25-year deal should not be seen politically.

He said in the Middle East level, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are in the opposite camp of China but their economic relations with China are more than of ours. It means Iran is the third trade partner of China in the Middle East and we always politicize the issues and overshadow the economy, he added.



Hariari said Iran and China's economies are complementary and they have nothing to do with the political issues, reiterating that Iran's relation with Russia in terms of military, security and politics is very good but the trade volume of both countries has never surpassed \$3b because their economies are the same but not complementary and for this reason, their trade volume has not improved despite incentives.

He urged politicians to avoid politicization the possible deal because it is an economic matter.

Hariari noted that Iran has no relation with world's number one economy, the U.S., and the door for potential restoration of ties with it is actually closed due to political reasons and as the result, Iran has to shift to China especially when he looks at the outlook of a long-term and 25-year deal with China, one thing is clear that China will become the first economic power in the world in the next 25 years.

Hariari reiterated that economic relations should never be politicized, adding currently, Chinese companies are developing oil fields in Iraq or they are major oil purchasers from Saudi Arabia but their economic relations have never been politicized.

He defended the long-term deals with countries, saying that this kind of deals makes the countries and companies remain committed even amid sanctions.

## FAO Shares Int'l Expertise, Knowledge With Iran

**TEHRAN (FAO) - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in close partnership with its national stakeholders in Iran and Mongolia organized a knowledge-sharing event for Iranian experts, providing a unique opportunity to transfer technical expertise and international experiences in DZUD Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) systems between the two nations.**

According to a press release published by the FAO Representation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the event focused on discussing different aspects of successful implementation of DZUD Early Warning Early Action system in Mongolia, including developing risk maps using nationwide and comprehensive meteorological network data; crafting a functional procedure for on-time disseminations of analyzed information; and developing and taking anticipatory measures by national authorities based on the latest update.

As presented in the webinar, the FAO-supported project in Mongolia not only allows national authorities to mitigate the negative impacts of disasters and reduce large-scale damages and losses caused to the agriculture sector but also, through delivering immediate assistance, it contributes to the improvement of food security in the affected rural communities and the empowerment of vulnerable population to maintain their livelihoods during the disaster and rebuild them in post-disaster periods.

In this regard, the achieved results demonstrated how such measures are cost-effective for the national government as every \$1 spent on early actions taken by authorities to help the risk-prone households, returns more than \$7 in benefits – reduced damages and losses – to each disaster-affected family.

At the outset of webinar, Mr Shukri Ahmed, FAO Deputy Strategic Program Leader on Resilience highlighted the need to strengthen the global awareness and the shift from managing disasters to managing risks. He urged the realisation of such by employing preventive and anticipatory mechanisms and put in place necessary actions and interventions to reduce risks and prevent them from turning to disasters. Capacity building at all levels, from global to communities to households is necessary to be able to absorb shocks and mitigate their impacts. He added, "having good early warning information is only one side of the equation; if we are not proactive enough in translating such information to early action, it does not fully serve its purpose."

"Early and expedited actions in the pre-disaster situation, not only can save lives and protect livelihoods from the immediate shocks caused by the natural hazard and climate induced disasters but also would protect long-term development gains by increasing the resilience of local communities over time," said Mr Gerold Bodeker, FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran in his statement during the event, delivered by FAO-Iran Programme Consultant.

Mr Gerold Bodeker also underscored the firm commitment by FAO to jointly work with Iran "to adopt and establish early warning platforms and develop indicators and evidence-based triggers to enable effective early actions against looming disasters."

Linking to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Resident Coordinator to Iran, Ms Ugochi Daniels emphasized that "access to reliable data/information and robust analysis, including early warning systems and early warning early action" is more urgent and important than ever. She added that the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the call for multi-sectoral, multi-hazard and anticipatory approaches that consistently integrate disaster and climate risk management and strengthen the resilience of people, their livelihoods and the ecosystems they depend on in a sustainable manner.

Describing the benefits of establishing Early Warning Systems, Mr Vinod Ahuja, FAO Representative in Mongolia asserted that such systems "helps anticipate the impact of the disaster and allows all stakeholders to act early to overcome the disaster with minimal losses. This has been a great step forward to being prepared and building resilience".

## JCPOA Had No Achievement for Iran's Banking Sector

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Former Central Bank of Iran's Governor Valiollah Seif says the nuclear deal between Iran and P5+1, known as the JCPOA, failed to resolve Iran's banking relations with foreign banks and criticized Iranian negotiating team for not including a banking expert in their team whom he had recommended.**

Speaking to Fars News Agency, Seif said one of the major issues which he used to raise during meetings with President Hassan Rouhani and his economic team was about retaining peace and stability in the forex market, reiterating that the rate of forex should match the inflation rate.

He criticized the government for its efforts to suppress the rate of dollar in the forex market while the inflation was rising. Seif underscored that if the long-term forex policy were adopted based on the inflation rate, the price of the dollar could be between 14,000 to 15,000 tomans now, noting that the government wanted to keep the dollar price at a rate around 4,000 tomans which was impossible.

Seif stated that practically he was the governor of the CBI till late 2017 and since then, the government was actually in charge of the CBI and he had no role, reiterating he opposed the forex policy of 4200 tomans per dollar. He said the price of dollar since the beginning of the government in July 2013 rose to 4800 tomans by March 2018, namely, it rose 60 percent in five years.

He defended his policy, saying that 60 percent devaluation of the national currency in 5 years was nothing unusual and one should not forget all anti-Iran issues like forex restrictions and U.S. President Donald Trump's massive propagations against Iran.

Seif said the government's strategic mistake in 2016 was his illogical insistence for returning the price of dollar to 3700 tomans while experts believed that the rate of dollar should have passed 4000 tomans.

He said one of the root causes of the problems in the 12<sup>th</sup> government and its affiliated bodies especially in ministries like industry was that they could not have proper and timely reactions to the U.S threat of pulling out of the JCPOA and reimposition of the sanctions.

Seif noted that till the government's decision for adopting the rate of 4200 tomans per dollar in March 2018, imports continued without any limitations and all policies were in line with support and development of imports, reiterating that imports without transfer of forex was one of the woes of the country.

He added that in early April of 2018, he submitted his resignation but the president asked him to wait till he could find a replacement.

Seif admitted that Mr. President had great expectations from the JCPOA like what he said in the early days of signing the deal that thousands of L/Cs were ready to open and it was because of misinformation.

He pointed to the banking mechanism of SWIFT which was nothing then and it is nothing now.

Seif added that after he said he thought the JCPOA had no achievement for the country, he received some calls which indicated the situation was not in his favor, emphasizing that what he said was his personal opinion and revelation of the truth and he could not change his words.



## Iran Cuts Import of Electrical Goods From Turkey

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - The volume of electrical goods exported from Turkey to Iran declined by 34.33 percent from January through May 2020 compared to the same period of 2019 and made up \$24.9 million, the Turkish Trade Ministry told Trend.**

The export of electrical goods from Turkey to Iran fell by 71.33 percent in May 2020 compared to May 2019 and amounted to \$2.8 million.

The export of electrical goods from Turkey to the world markets decreased by 18.2 percent from January through May 2020 compared to the same period of 2019, amounting to \$3.8 billion. Turkey's export of electrical goods amounted to 6.2 percent of the country's total export volume from January through May 2020.

"Turkey's export of electrical goods to the world markets amounted to \$671.8 million in May 2020, which is 35.5 percent less compared to May 2019," the ministry said. Turkey's export of electrical goods in May 2020 amounted to 6.7 percent of the country's total export volume.

Turkey exported electrical goods worth 10.4 billion from May 2019 through May 2020.

## Pakistan to Open More Border Points With Iran

**ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - In a new move, the government of Pakistan has decided to open four new border crossings with the Islamic Republic of Iran to expand trade and border exchanges in accordance with health protocols.**

The decision to keep the Gabd, Mand, Katagar and Chedgi borders open from morning to evening was taken on the recommendation of a meeting held at the National Command and Operation Centre.

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Interior, the Inspector General Frontier Corps Balochistan (South), Turbat and the Director General Federal Investigation Agency, Islamabad had been informed about the development.

"Gabd, Mand, Katagar and Chedgi borders will remain open 7 days a week from morning till evening as per the mutually agreed timings between both countries with effect from July 5 only for trade (imports and exports) and unlimited number of trucks will be allowed while ensuring all COVID-19 related SOPs and protocols."

On December 9, during a seventh meeting of Iran-Pakistan trade committee in Zahedan, the Pakistani side had announced that the government would set up four border markets with Iran to conduct trade and improve the livelihoods of border residents.

## Iran-Afghanistan Railway Launch Scheduled for November

**TEHRAN (IP) - The Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that November 2020 will be the deadline for completing the Khaf-Herat railways between Iran and Afghanistan.**

Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Mohammad Eslami said on Friday that the Khaf-Herat railway would be built by the joint investment of Iran and Afghanistan, adding that Iran's part is almost complete.

According to Eslami, the railway has 66 km long from the borderline to Khaf in northeastern Iran, and it will connect Afghanistan's railway to Iran's and the rest of the world's network. The connection between the two countries via railways, the possibility of goods export and import between the two countries through the network, and Afghanistan's connection to high seas are of the advantages of the construction project.

## Iran Among Top World Caviar Producers

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Iran ranks second in the world in terms of caviar production and third in terms of sturgeon farming, Chairman of the Iran Fisheries Organization Nabiollah Khon Mirzaei told IRIB.**

Iran ranks second in caviar production after China, said the shairman. Khon Mirzaei noted that earlier, Iran's place in caviar production was associated with sturgeon fishing in the Caspian Sea.

The chairman said that after sturgeon fishing was banned in the Caspian Sea 10 years ago, Iran has been raising sturgeon at farms. Currently, there are sturgeon breeding facilities and an export terminal in Iran's Mazandaran Province, the official added.

Iran plans to produce 100 tons of caviar and 10,000 tons of sturgeon a year by March 20, 2026.

## Serbia's Capital Declares State of Emergency

BELGRADE (Reuters) - Serbia's authorities declared a state of emergency in Belgrade on Friday, reimposing some restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 after a surge of infections in the capital.

Residents of the city will be required to wear masks in indoor public spaces or on public transport, opening hours of clubs and cafes will be shortened, and gatherings will be limited to 100 people indoors or 500 outdoors.

The state of emergency comes into effect immediately, city hall said in a statement on Friday. President Aleksandar Vucic announced the measures on television overnight.



## WHO Sees First Results From COVID Drug Trials in 2 Weeks

GENEVA (Reuters) - The World Health Organization expects initial results within two weeks from clinical trials it is conducting of drugs that might be effective in treating COVID-19 patients, WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a news briefing on Friday.

Mike Ryan, head of the WHO's emergencies program, said it would be unwise to predict when a COVID-19 vaccine could be ready for mass distribution. While a vaccine candidate might show its effectiveness by year's end, the question was how soon it could be mass produced, he told the briefing.



## Modi Rallies Troops At China Border



NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew on Friday into the northern border region where Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a stand-off, and said the military stood ready to defend his country. His comments prompted Beijing to call for restraint at the tense border area in the northern Himalayan region of Ladakh.

Modi, making his first trip to the Ladakh region since the Indian army lost 20 soldiers in a clash with Chinese soldiers last month, said his country's commitment to peace should not be seen as a sign of weakness.

"Today India is becoming stronger, be it in naval might, air power, space power and the strength of our army. Modernization of weapons and upgradation of infrastructure has enhanced our defence capabilities manifold," he said in a speech to soldiers near Leh, the regional capital.

India says Chinese troops have intruded across the Line of Actual Control, or the ceasefire line separating the two armies in the high altitude Ladakh region, and the clash on June 15 occurred because Chinese troops sought to erect defences on India's side of the de facto border.

China says the whole of the Galwan valley where the clash occurred is its territory and that it was frontline Indian troops that had breached the border, which is not demarcated.

China's foreign ministry said on Friday the two countries were holding talks to reduce tensions.

Spokesman Zhao Lijian, responding to a question about Modi's visit to the border region, said both sides were in communications through diplomatic and military channels to ease the situation.

"In these circumstances, neither side should take actions that might complicate the border situation," he said at a daily news briefing in Beijing.

The most serious crisis on the India-China border in years has erupted while Beijing is embroiled in disputes over the South China Sea, Taiwan and its tightening grip over Hong Kong, which have all fanned fears of an expansionist policy.

Modi referred to expansionism in his speech to soldiers, saying it caused problems.

"(The) Prime Minister said that the time for expansionism is over. This is the era of development," the Indian government quoted Modi as saying, in a press release. "He recalled that it is this mindset of expansionism that did great harm."

In a separate development, India's power ministry stipulated that Indian companies will need government permission to import power supply equipment and components from China, amid rising military tensions between the two countries.

## Macron Picks New PM To Reinvent Presidency

PARIS (Reuters) - President Emmanuel Macron named Jean Castex, a top civil servant and local mayor who orchestrated France's coronavirus lockdown exit strategy, as his new prime minister on Friday as he acted to reinvent his administration and win back voters.

Castex, 55, hails from the centre-right of French politics and served for two years as the second-highest ranking official in the Elysee Palace during Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency.

An Elysee official described Castex as a senior civil servant whose experience in local politics would help Macron connect with provincial France. Castex was a "social Gaullist", the official said in reference to the more interventionist, socially minded wing of France's centre-right. The announcement followed the resignation of Edouard Philippe ahead of a widely anticipated overhaul of the government by Macron.



## Croatia to Hold Parliamentary Vote Amid COVID-19 Uncertainties

ZAGREB (Reuters) - Croatians vote today to choose a government whose abiding challenge will be to haul the economy out of recession triggered by the coronavirus outbreak, with an awkward ruling coalition the likely outcome.

The center-right Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), led by the incumbent pro-European Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, believes it can re-emerge as the biggest party in the parliamentary election and with the strongest chance to lead a coalition.

A recent opinion poll gave the HDZ 27% of the vote, just ahead of the main opposition Social Democrats (SDP) at 25%. The nationalist bloc Domovinski Pokret (Homeland Movement), led by popular singer Miroslav Skoro, drew just over 10%.

A few smaller parties like the liberals or the conservative Most (Bridge) hoped to garner a few parliamentary seats each.

"The top two parties could find it hard to get support in the parliament for a stable cabinet, even more so as Skoro's team, with its radical right-wing rhetoric, seems a difficult potential partner," said political analyst Davor Gjenero.

Plenkovic and SDP leader Davor Bernardic have both ruled out a "grand coalition", each publicly targeting a haul of 60-plus seats in parliament, with at least 76 needed for a majority.

But Gjenero said that given the economic crunch Croatia faces in the autumn after tourism recedes and the uncertain course of the COVID-19 pandemic, a broad coalition would likely become the only realistic option.

The economy was lamed by a spring lockdown imposed to curb coronavirus contagion and could contract by up to 10% by year-end, analysts say, driven by a 60-70% downturn in tourism revenue this summer. Tourism generates almost a fifth of GDP.

But the election campaign offered little in ideas on how to tackle key economic problems such as heavy dependence on tourism, improving a business climate burdened by high taxes and red tape, or reforming the bloated public sector.

Macron is reshaping his government as France grapples with the deepest economic depression since World War Two, a sharp downturn that will shrink the economy by about 11% in 2020 and reverse hard-fought gains on unemployment.

Investors will be watching to see if Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, who has overseen reforms to liberalise the economy and spent big to keep companies like Air France and Renault afloat during the crisis, keeps his job. "The return from summer holidays will be difficult, we must get ready," Macron told regional newspapers in an interview published late on Thursday.

Macron and Philippe dined together on Wednesday and met on Thursday. The Elysee source described Thursday's discussions as warm and friendly. Both men agreed on "the need for a new government to embody the next phase, a new path," the aide said.

Macron said last month he wanted to start afresh as France embarks on a delicate and costly recovery from its coronavirus slump. Then came his party's dire showing in nationwide municipal elections on June 28.

## Trump Blasts Left Wing Cultural Revolution at Mount Rushmore

NEW YORK (Reuters) - President Donald Trump on Friday railed against "angry mobs" that tried to tear down statues of Confederate leaders and other historical figures, warning thousands of supporters at Mount Rushmore that protesters were trying to erase U.S. history.

Speaking underneath a famed landmark that depicts four U.S. presidents, Trump warned that the demonstrations over racial inequality in American society threatened the foundations of the U.S. political system. "Make no mistake, this left wing cultural revolution is designed to overthrow the American revolution," Trump said.

"Our children are taught in school to hate their own country," he added.

The event drew an estimated 7,500 people, packed tightly into an amphitheater beneath the famed landmark that depicts the images of U.S. presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Masks were offered to attendees but many did not wear them.

Trump has held three public events that have drawn thousands of supporters over the past three weeks, despite warnings from public-health officials who have urged Americans to avoid large gatherings as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage the country. Seven states

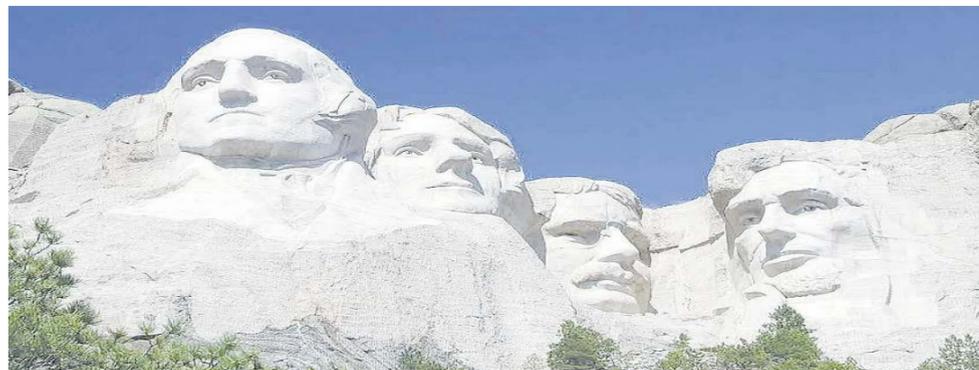
posted a record number of new COVID-19 cases on Friday.

The virus has even reached Trump's inner circle. Kimberly Guilfoyle, a senior campaign official and the girlfriend of Donald Trump Jr., tested positive in South Dakota before attending the Mount Rushmore event, according to a source familiar with the situation. Trump Jr. has tested negative, the source said.

The president has come under criticism for his "law and order" reaction to nationwide protests sparked by the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died in police custody in Minneapolis.

Mount Rushmore has not hosted a fireworks spectacle since 2009 because of environmental concerns. Trump advocated for a resumption of the display, and the state says the surrounding Black Hills National Forest has "gained strength" since then and that fireworks technology has advanced.

Native American protesters were arrested after blocking a road to the South Dakota landmark, according to video livestreamed on social media. They have criticized Trump's visit for increasing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus and for celebrating U.S. independence in an area that is sacred to them.



## China Rejects U.S. Criticism of Military Drills in South China Sea

BEIJING (Reuters) - China on Friday rejected criticism by the U.S. Defense Department of its plan to hold military exercises in the South China Sea, and suggested that Washington was to blame for increased tensions in the region.

The Pentagon said in a statement on Thursday that conducting military exercises over disputed territory in the South China Sea was "counter-productive to efforts at easing tensions and maintaining stability".

China announced last week it had scheduled five days of drills starting July 1 near the Paracel Islands, which are claimed by both Vietnam and China.

"The military exercises are the latest in a long string of PRC actions to assert unlawful maritime claims and disadvantage its Southeast Asian neighbors in the South China Sea," the Pentagon statement said, referring to the People's Republic of China. Vietnam and the Philippines have also criticized the planned Chinese drills, warning it could create tension in the region and impact Beijing's relationship with its neighbors.

Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin warned China on Friday "it will be met with the severest response, diplomatic and whatever else is appropriate" should the exercises spill over to Philippine territory.

"To be sure, China is just as entitled, as any other power, to invoke freedom of navigation in its military exercises. But that freedom, it bears reminding, requires a straight and uninterrupted voyage," Locsin said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian, asked about the Pentagon's comments during a daily briefing in Beijing, said the military exercises are within the scope of China's sovereignty and said that certain "non-regional countries" conducting military exercises in the South China Sea are affecting the region's stability.

Zhao did not name any countries, but the United States has conducted multiple freedom of navigation operations by sending its warships through the area to assert the freedom of access to international waterways.

The United States accuses China of militarizing the South China Sea and trying to intimidate Asian neighbors who might want to exploit its extensive oil and gas reserves.



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## Spain Readies 150b Euro Coronavirus Investment Plan

MADRID (Reuters) - Spain is preparing a 150 billion euro (135.32 billion pounds) investment plan to be financed by European Union funds that will help the country's economy recover from the coronavirus, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Friday. "It will be a public investment plan that will also mobilize private resources," he said during a speech at the Moncloa Palace government headquarters. According to an EU plan, Spain would receive about 140 billion euros from a special recovery fund.



## Iraq Seeks IMF Loan, Saudi Investments to Boost Economy

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a loan and is seeking Saudi investments in its natural gas fields, as Baghdad tries to bolster its battered economy in the face of the coronavirus and low energy prices.

The IMF and Iraq are in "intensive" negotiations about a loan that would probably be a maximum of \$5 billion, Ali Allawi, the OPEC member's finance and deputy prime minister, said in an interview in Baghdad on Tuesday night. He didn't specify if Iraq wanted a rapid credit facility, which would come with few strings attached, a conditional line or both.

"There is no formal proposal from the Iraqi government and there is no formal response from the IMF, but we are moving in that direction," he said. Saudi Arabia has expressed interest in Iraqi gas projects, Allawi said. Iraq's government has proposed that the Saudis put

money into the gas field of Akkas in the west or Mansuriya in the east. They could also invest in capturing gas from the southern oil deposit of Ratawi, according to Allawi.

"Saudi Arabia has a high readiness to back our energy projects," he said. "At the end of the day, they will pick one field. They are also interested in solar energy."

Allawi, who travelled to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in late May, ruled out getting budgetary support from either country. Iraq still owes Kuwait about \$2 billion in reparations for invading it during the Gulf War of 1990-91, and has sought debt relief in the past.

The IMF and Saudi talks come as Iraq tries to shore up its finances. The economy will probably contract 7% to 9% in 2020, Allawi said. That's more than the IMF's forecast of 4.7%.

Riyadh is pressing Iraq to cut oil production sharply to meet its OPEC+ quota, adding more pressure on Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, who came to power in May. Baghdad initially refused to curb output as much as other OPEC+ members, but relented after intense lobbying from Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Iraq exported 3.32 million barrels a day of crude last month, down 7% from May, according to Bloomberg tanker tracking. Still, that would have left only about 270,000 barrels daily for domestic refineries if it was to meet its overall production cap of 3.59 million barrels. In May, Iraq kept 600,000 barrels a day for its local market. The production quota was agreed between the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and their partners in April.

Iraq's monthly oil revenue is around \$2.7 billion, Allawi said. That's down from \$7 billion in 2019. The budget deficit will hit 22% of gross domestic product this year, higher than anywhere else in the Middle East and North Africa, according to the IMF. The government will not issue new Eurobonds to fund the gap because it would be too expensive, according to Allawi.

Yields on the nation's \$1 billion of notes maturing in March 2023 dropped almost 60 basis points on Wednesday after the news of the potential IMF loan. But at 9.54% they're still the highest of any Eurobond issuer in the Middle East aside from Lebanon, which is in default.

"We're not ready to pay 10%," Allawi said.

## Turkey Faces Fresh Market Concerns Over Economic Policy

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Concerns over Turkey's policy direction and transparency are disrupting the country's finances, and have led to the depletion of its foreign reserves, increased dollarisation and a renewed fall in the lira's value, according to Moody's Investors Service.

Turkey, the largest economy in the Middle East, has further eased fiscal and monetary policy in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, announcing an initial fiscal package worth about 100 billion Turkish lira (Dh53.5bn, \$14.6bn). This is in addition to monetary measures that included the central bank cutting its policy rate by a cumulative 250 basis points to 8.25 per cent in May, as well as open market bond buying.

However, the coronavirus has "exacerbated the sharp deterioration in domestic demand" and the state of the country's finances will continue to have a "material impact" on its growth prospects over the next two years, the ratings agency said.

"Our forecast includes an economic contraction of 5 per cent in 2020, with the downturn concentrated in the first half of the year, followed by a relatively slow recovery by Turkish standards of around 3.5 per cent in 2021 as a consequence of various structural restraints," it said. The International Monetary Fund also estimates the country's economy will shrink 5 per cent this year after expanding 0.9 per cent last year. The economy is forecast to rebound and expand 5 per cent in 2021, according to the IMF.

Moody's currently has a B1 rating on Turkey's foreign and local currency bond debt, with a negative outlook.

The country faces pressures on several fronts, with high unemployment, elevated levels of inflation and a loss of tourism revenues as a result of the pandemic. Tourism accounts for about 11 per cent of the country's GDP, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. The IMF estimates Turkey's fiscal deficit is set to widen to 8.4 per cent of GDP in 2020, from



## Historic Slump Among UK Companies Levels Off in June

LONDON (Reuters) - The historic slump across British businesses levelled off last month as some of the economy reopened following an easing of the coronavirus lockdown, a business survey showed on Friday.

The IHS Markit/CIPS UK Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 47.1 from 29.0 in May, slightly higher than a preliminary reading of 47.0 but still below the 50 threshold for growth.

"Encouragingly, more than one-in-four service providers reported an expansion of new business during June, which was commonly attributed to pent-up demand and the phased restart of the UK economy," said Tim Moore, economics director at IHS Markit, which compiles the survey.

"However, lockdown measures continued to hold back travel and leisure, while companies across all main categories of service activity commented on subdued underlying business and consumer spending in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic." The survey showed 33% of services businesses, which account for the vast bulk of Britain's economy, reported a drop in activity, down from 54% in May, while 28% reported a rise.

The composite PMI, which combines the services and manufacturing sector, rose to 47.7 in June, up from 30.0 in May and again slightly higher than a preliminary reading of 47.6.

In June, the Bank of England said Britain's economy looked on course to have shrunk by around 20% in the first six months of 2020 - a smaller decline than it had first feared, but still one of the biggest annual drops in 300 years. British finance minister Rishi Sunak is due to announce his next steps for steering the economy back towards recovery on July 8.

## India's Economic Growth Will Recover Next Year

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - We know from past financial crises that they leave a permanent scar, said Andy Haldane, the chief economist from Bank of England post the 2008 global financial crisis. In all likelihood, this time won't be different.

An already-slowing Indian economy has been derailed from its growth track after a stringent shutdown was imposed in March to halt the spread of Covid-19. The jury is still out on whether the lockdown dented the progress of the virus, but it has certainly

damaged the economy. India's GDP is set to contract anywhere between 5% and 10% this year - for the first time in four decades.

Obviously, some of the damage will be long-lasting. Assuming that India's economy grows at 7% between 2022 and 2024, the permanent loss would be 10%, according to a recent report from Mumbai-based credit ratings agency CRISIL. "To catch-up would require average GDP growth to surge to 11% over the next three fiscals, something that has never happened before."

While that enormous challenge looms, some experts and economists believe a recovery could be on the cards in the next six to nine months. It just won't be straightforward.

With industries, transport, shops, and malls shut, economic activity came to a grinding halt in India from the end of March. Domestic consumption, which makes up around 57% of GDP, was almost wiped out. Pay cuts and layoffs, combined with the lack of shopping, completely eroded demand.

The Indian government's decision to remove most of the restrictions has provided much-needed relief to businesses, large and small. Despite this, the demand scenario is expected to remain weak for most of the current financial year. But it could make a comeback next year. "The resumption of normal economic activity will drive much of the growth," said Vishrut Rana, an economist at New York-headquartered S&P Global Ratings. "Households will spend more normally as opposed to cautious and limited spending amid the Covid-19 outbreak. Firms will also restart delayed investments." And as consumption revives, credit rating agencies expect India's economic growth to rebound.

The revival in consumption, meanwhile, will be driven by discretionary as well as non-discretionary spending. Non-discretionary spending refers to things like groceries and other essential items. Unsurprisingly, this category remained largely unscathed during the lockdown.

## Global Banks Seeking Details of U.S. Sanction Threat Against China Individuals

HONG KONG (Reuters) - International banks were seeking details on Friday of the scope of U.S. legislation that would penalize them for doing business with Chinese officials who implement Beijing's sweeping new national security law on Hong Kong.

The U.S. Senate passed the bill unanimously on Thursday, a day after it saw full support in the House of Representatives, in a rare example of bipartisan support that reflects politicians' concern over the erosion of the Hong Kong's autonomy following China's imposition of the law on Tuesday. The bill calls for sanctions on Chinese officials and others who help violate Hong Kong's autonomy, and financial institutions that do business with those who are found to have participated in any crackdown on the city.

But it does not lay out which individuals might be included, nor what they would be forbidden from doing. Banks including Citigroup and Bank of America were among those holding calls on Friday with U.S. colleagues to discuss the potential fallout from the legislation, but few conclusions could be drawn at this stage, sources said.

Spokesmen for the banks declined to comment.

President Donald Trump has not yet indicated if he will sign the bill into law.

"Financial institutions are concerned about the legislation principally because of uncertainty about how the sanctions will be used," said Nick Turner, a lawyer specializing in sanctions and anti money laundering at Steptoe and Johnson in Hong Kong.

Turner said the main area of uncertainty was around what would constitute a significant transaction, and whether that would prevent a bank providing retail or private banking services to a sanctioned person, as well as which individuals might be named.

The bill calls for the Secretary of State to report to Congress within 90 days of the law's passage and identify any foreign person who has, or is, materially contributing to undermining Hong Kong's autonomy. Within 60 days, the Treasury Secretary must then submit a report identifying those banks that have knowingly conducted a significant transaction with someone named.

"Internally, it's very difficult for us to take a call on this now and think about its impact without seeing the names of the people and the entities that would be targeted," said a trade finance banker at a large European bank, who also discussed the bill with colleagues on a call.

## U.S. Economy Adds 4.8m Jobs in June



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. economy added a record 4.8 million jobs in June, according to federal data released Thursday, but a surge in new infections and a spate of new closings threatens the nascent recovery.

Two key federal measurements showed the precarious place the economy finds itself in three and a half months into the pandemic as the country struggles to hire back the more than 20 million workers who lost their jobs in March and April.

While companies have continued to reopen, a large number of Americans are finding their jobs are no longer available. The unemployment rate in June was 11.1 percent, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said, down from a peak of 14.7 percent in April but still far above the 3.5 percent level notched in February.

And another 1.4 million Americans applied for unemployment insurance for the first time last week and more than 19 million people are still receiving unemployment benefits, stubbornly high levels that show how many people are struggling to find or keep work.

The Congressional Budget Office on Thursday said the coronavirus pandemic gave such a shock to the labor market that it would not fully recover for more than 10 years.

President Trump touted the jobs that were added at a news conference called shortly after they were released, saying they were a sign that "America's economy is now roaring back to life like nobody has ever seen before."

"All of this incredible news is the result of historic actions my administration has taken," Trump said.

But his top aides acknowledged there was still a long way to go. "There is still a lot of hardship, and a lot of heartbreak, in these numbers," National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow said. "I think we have a lot more work to do."

## Over 1 Ton of Illicit Drug Seized in Southern Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – A judiciary official of Hormozgan Province announced that the anti-narcotics police have confiscated 1087 kilograms of illicit drug and dismantled four trafficking bands in Southern parts of the country. Ali Salehi, head of justice department of Hormozgan Province announced that through the cooperation of anti-narcotics police

and judicial officials, four trafficking bands have been dismantled and 1,087kg of illicit drugs including opium, hashish, and crystal have been confiscated via separated operations in southern parts of Iran.

In these operations, three smugglers have been arrested and four vehicles used for carrying drugs have been seized, he added.



# World's E-Waste Unsustainable

GENEVA (Reuters) - Across the river from Delhi's Red Fort, the grim neighbourhood of Seelampur lives off what consumers in the modern world throw away - their broken or obsolete electronic and electrical goods.

Home to one of the world's largest markets for e-waste, Seelampur exemplifies the challenge highlighted in a U.N.-led report released on Thursday.

The Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report found that the world dumped a record 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste last year. Just 17.4% was recycled.

"Even countries with a formal e-waste management system in place are confronted with relatively low collection and recycling rates," the report said.

China, with 10.1 million tons, was the biggest contributor to e-waste, and the United States was second with 6.9 million tons. India, with 3.2 million tons, was third. Together these three countries accounted for nearly 38% of the world's e-waste last year.

While the overall damage done to the environment from all the un-recycled waste may be incalculable, the message from the report was conclusive: "The way in which we produce, consume, and dispose of e-waste is unsustainable."

Global warming is just one issue cited by the report as it noted 98 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents were released into the atmosphere as a result of inadequate recycling of "undocumented" refrigerators and air conditioners.

This year's coronavirus lockdowns have exacerbated the e-waste problem.

People stuck at home are de-cluttering, and because of the lockdowns there are few workers collecting and recycling the junk, Kees Balde, a senior programme officer with the sustainable cycles programme at the United Nations University, another contributor to the report, told Reuters.

What is happening in India and China is symptomatic of a wider problem in developing countries, where demand for goods like washing machines, refrigerators and air conditioners is rising rapidly.

"In middle- and low-income countries, the e-waste management infrastructure is not yet fully developed or, in some cases, is entirely absent," the report said.

Dinesh Raj Bandela, deputy program manager at the Centre for Science and Environment, a New Delhi-based research and advocacy body, said India's focus on e-waste had to go beyond collection, and manufacturers should be encouraged to produce consumer goods that last longer and are less toxic.

Although India is the only country in South Asia to draft legislation for e-waste, its collection remains rudimentary.

In Seelampur, the maze of filthy lanes are filled with scrap shops where thousands



of people work, picking apart whatever is salvageable from the junk gathered from across north India.

Outside each shop there are piles of old monitor screens, desktop computers, broken landline telephones, mobile handsets, televisions, voltage stabilisers, air-cons, refrigerators, microwaves, vacuum cleaners and washing machines.

Vines of old electric cable are strewn or rolled over the mountains of electronic trash.

Shopkeepers and workers are extremely suspicious of any outsider walking through the narrow lanes, especially journalists. Mohammed Abid, a scrap e-waste dealer, who was willing to speak, denied that ways of handling e-waste in Seelampur broke any laws or posed any dangers.

"There are certain jobs that create a lot of problem for the environment, but in this market no such work is done that affects the environment or increases the pollution - nothing of that sort is done here," he said, while the stench from a nearby open drain filled the air.

## Turkish President Welcomes Promising Economic Figures



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's economic figures showed promising developments in June amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, the nation's president said.

"Initial figures for June signal promising developments in this respect," Recep Tayyip Erdogan told his ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party's extended meeting of provincial heads via video link.

He added that July would bring a "much higher jump" for the economy.

Erdogan said all commercial activities had gradually been resuming with the country's normalization process from strict social distancing and isolation measures implemented during the pandemic, adding that the government would allocate all its resources to support production and employment.

"When we reach the year-end, we will close 2020 -- which is seen as a loss in the world, especially in Europe -- hopefully with a growth rate that is surprising for everyone," Erdogan said.

Despite the epidemic, Turkey had a busy schedule of opening ceremonies of various different facilities across the country, which he said was a "sign of potential and strength of Turkey."

He added that in the coming days, hospitals and hydroelectric power plants would also be opened.

Noting that Turkey had overcome the coronavirus pandemic, he said this success would be crowned with strict compliance to hygiene, mask-wearing and distance rules.

In his speech, Erdogan once again reiterated Ankara's support for the Libyan government in its fight "for the unity, integrity and future of the country" against renegade general Khalifa Haftar.

"Turkey will not leave the Libyan nation to the mercy of putschists and will continue to act within the limits of international legitimacy," he noted.

Libya has been torn by civil war since the ouster of late ruler Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The country's new government was founded in 2015 under a UN-led agreement, but efforts for a long-term political settlement failed due to a military offensive by Haftar's forces.

The UN recognizes the Libyan government headed by Fayeze al-Sarraj as the country's legitimate authority, as Tripoli has battled Haftar's militias since April 2019, a conflict that has taken over 1,000 lives.

## World Takes Stock of COVID-19 Drug Remdesivir After U.S. Snaps Up Supplies

LONDON (Reuters) - Some governments in Europe and Asia said on Wednesday they have enough of Gilead's COVID-19 anti-viral remdesivir for now despite fears of shortages since the U.S. drugmaker pledged most output to its home market for the next three months.

The pharmaceutical company's move stirred the global debate about equitable access to drugs and brought concerns about accessibility, especially in regions where coronavirus rates are still high or there have been new outbreaks.

Remdesivir is in high demand after the intravenously-administered medicine helped shorten hospital recovery times in a clinical trial. It is believed to be most effective in treating COVID-19 patients earlier in the course of disease than other therapies like the steroid dexamethasone.

Still, because remdesivir is given intravenously over at least a five-day period it is generally being used on patients sick enough to require hospitalisation.

Britain and Germany said they had sufficient reserves for now, though they were weighing options for when those might be exhausted.

South Korea, for its part, has started distributing stocks, but plans talks to purchase more supplies in August.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) this week said it had secured all of Gilead's projected production for July and 90% of its production in August and September, in addition to an allocation for clinical trials.

The European Union (EU) said on Wednesday it was in negotiations to obtain doses for its 27 member nations.

"The buying-up of remdesivir is disappointing news, not necessarily because of the shortages it implies for



other countries, but because it so clearly signals an unwillingness to cooperate with other countries, and the chilling effect this has on international agreements about intellectual property rights," said Ohid Yaqub, senior lecturer at the Science Policy Research Unit of Britain's University of Sussex.

Jonathan Van-Tam, deputy chief medical officer and lead for Britain's Department of Health and Social Care, told a parliamentary hearing on Wednesday that new drugs such as remdesivir were likely to be in "relatively short supply in the first instance" versus existing generic ones like dexamethasone.

The German health ministry said that the conditional market approval Gilead is expected to receive from the EU's executive Commission this week carries an implied obligation to deliver sufficient quantities in the future.

"We trust Gilead will meet this obligation," it said.

Gilead has said it linked up with generic drugmakers based in India and Pakistan to supply remdesivir in 127 developing countries, but it has not discussed in detail its supply strategy for developed nations outside the United States.

"The issue is the high demand for a drug that is still an investigational medicine and probably had not been scaled up to a manufacturing level when the outbreak occurred," said Gino Martini, the UK Royal Pharmaceutical Society's chief scientist.

"The U.S. action means clinical supply chains will be under strain. It will be down to manufacturers Gilead to boost production in order to satisfy demand for the use of remdesivir."

## UN Concerned Afghan Violence Aimed at Derailing Peace Talks

KABUL (AFP) - More than 800 people were killed or wounded in "deliberate attacks" targeting civilians in Afghanistan during the first half of 2020, the UN said Thursday, raising concerns the rising violence was aimed at derailing planned peace talks.

While violence dropped in the run-up to the signing of a deal between the U.S. and the Taliban in February, and immediately after a three-day ceasefire in May, attacks have since been increasing across the country.

"In the first six months of 2020, preliminary figures indicate more than 800 civilians were killed and injured in deliberate attacks against civilians," the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a statement.

The mission said the Taliban were responsible for half of those casualties.

The insurgents and Afghan forces have regularly clashed across provinces, but in recent weeks attacks have targeted prosecutors, religious leaders, worshippers, journalists, healthcare and human rights workers.

In May, a brazen daylight assault on a hospital in Kabul saw armed men rampaging through a maternity ward, killing 25 people including 16 mothers.

The Taliban have denied responsibility for this and many other attacks, but acknowledge fighting government forces in the provinces.

The bloodshed comes as the Taliban and Afghan authorities prepare to launch much-delayed peace talks aimed at ending the country's nearly two-decade-old war.

"It's taken enormous work and some brave decisions for Afghans to reach the point of being on the eve of unprecedented intra-Afghan negotiations," UNAMA chief Deborah Lyons said. "There are spoilers who do not wish to see an end to war. No matter what tactics they employ to de-rail the peace process, they cannot be allowed to succeed."

UNAMA urged the Taliban and Afghan authorities not to target civilians and push on with efforts to de-escalate the conflict ahead of upcoming talks.

Under the U.S.-Taliban deal, the insurgents were originally supposed to begin peace talks with the Kabul government in March. No start date has been announced.

## Tehran Censures...

FROM PAGE 1

Foreign Minister Zarif has emphasized in the letter that "any interference in the ongoing Safeguards cooperation between Iran and the IAEA would run counter to the JCPOA and could have negative effects on the principles of the existing Safeguards cooperation," Mousavi added.

The spokesperson further reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared for the maintenance and full implementation of the JCPOA by all parties to the agreement, stressing the need for Iran to fully enjoy the economic results of the sanctions removal regime as defined by the JCPOA.

Iran will take the necessary and proportional measures in response to any excessive demands and irresponsible behaviours, and firmly calls on the three European states to prepare the ground to save and fully implement the JCPOA by honouring their commitments instead of following the United States' policy of maximum pressure, the spokesperson concluded.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has already referred the cases of non-compliance of the U.S. and the EU3 with the JCPOA according to Article 36 of the JCPOA to the Joint Commission twice in the past. Considering the failure to settle the disputes, Iran reduced commitments to the JCPOA in five steps.

## Cause of Accident...

FROM PAGE 1

"There have been no nuclear materials at the site of the incident, and the issue of leak of radioactive materials in the wake of the incident is categorically dismissed," he noted.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said on Thursday that an open-air warehouse under construction at Natanz nuclear facility has been damaged in the accident, but no casualties have been reported.

AEOI spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said the accident had no casualties and did not disrupt running operations at the facility. He also noted that there was no cause for concern over possible contamination as the warehouse was not operational.

## UNSC Debate...

FROM PAGE 1

UNSC members expressed their unconditional support for the JCPOA and this may be a reason for why the U.S. secretary of state left the session after his address.

Censuring the approach taken by three European countries- UK, France and Germany- for issuing anti-Iran statement, Khoshroodi said that Europe should be more independent of the U.S. policies.

Iran believes that insistence on issuing such a statement raises a question that a political move has been taken in line with the U.S. stance on putting pressure on Iran. Khoshroodi stressed that Europe should think about its interests because the US President Donald Trump does not care about what will happen to the region.

The three European states as members of the JCPOA should take the US withdrawal from the July 2015 deal into consideration and know that such an exit was in contradiction with the spirit and context of the deal, Khoshroodi noted. He added that Europe should know that if the EU interlink its foreign policy with the United States, it will lead to negative consequences for prospects of European security.

He further expressed hope that all influential countries across the world would help preserve the International Law and agreements. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, said in the UN session that "the 2015 agreement - which the Council endorsed through resolution 2231 - remains crucial to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and to regional and international security," according to the UN website.

At the end of his remarks, Khoshroodi referred to clear stance picked by China and Russia on their relations with Iran, saying that Iran will take different alternatives into consideration when dealing with different conditions as Beijing and Moscow have not linked their ties with Tehran with that of the US.

## Milan Baros Set To Retire at 38

PRAGUE (Dispatches) - Former Liverpool, Aston Villa and Czech Republic striker Milan Baros said Friday he would call time on his playing career at the end of the season.

"My head would like to go on, but the body has said stop," the 38-year-old Baros said on Banik Ostrava's club website.

"I've had health issues for a long time and the body doesn't simply work the way it used to and the way I need," he added, complaining about his Achilles tendons.

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## Ferrari Hope Mugello Can Host their 1,000th F1 Race

LONDON (Reuters) - Ferrari are talking to Formula One about holding the Italian team's 1,000th grand prix at their own Mugello circuit, principal Mattia Binotto said on Friday.

Formula One has so far released only a partial calendar of eight races ahead of Sunday's delayed season-opener in Austria but is hoping to issue a full version in the coming days or weeks.

It is expected to include some circuits not on the original schedule, which has been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, with Ferrari-owned Mugello and Portugal's Portimao circuit the leading contenders.

# Zverev May Withdraw From Berlin Tournament

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The organizers of an exhibition tennis tournament in Berlin said on Friday he is considering withdrawing Alexander Zverev from the line-up and has insisted there would be "zero tolerance" if the German does play, but again ignores social distancing guidelines.

Zverev, 23, has been heavily criticised after viral footage emerged of him partying in a busy bar despite pledging to "follow self-isolating guidelines" after playing in Novak Djokovic's coronavirus-hit Adria Tour.

Zverev took part in last month's exhibition event in Serbia organised by Djokovic, who last week tested positive for Covid-19 along with Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki.

Although Zverev tested negative, he vowed to self isolate but was purportedly filmed at a busy bar last weekend in southern France, leading Nick Kyrgios to slam his "selfish" behaviour.

Australia's Kyrgios then got into a spat on social media over Zverev's behaviour with legend Boris Becker, who is the chief of the men's game at the German Tennis Federation. Zverev and Kyrgios are scheduled to play in the Aces exhibition tournament from July 13-19 with world No. 3 Dominic Thiem also in the line-up.

However, the competition's boss Edwin Weindorfer has taken a dim view of Zverev's recent behaviour and is considering refusing to allow him to play.

"I could say 'Sascha (Zverev), I take your behaviour as a breach of contract'. I have not yet decided," Weindorfer told Munich-based newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

"The second option is that I say: 'Sascha, you will get another chance from us, but here (in Berlin) you have very clear rules of conduct'."

Weindorfer said he is in talks with the management of Zverev.



However, any player caught partying in the German capital can expect to be kicked out of the tournament.

"We have zero tolerance. If a player misbehaves and thinks they can party that week, we will remove that player," Weindorfer insisted.

Meanwhile American tennis player Coco Gauff can improve the world, 18-time Grand Slam champion Martina Navratilova has said, lauding the teenage tennis prodigy for her role in the Black Lives Matter protests against racial injustice.

Gauff, 16, released a video on social media protesting killings of African-Americans in the United States amid widespread outrage across the country following the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man in police custody in Minneapolis.

"She is just so poised on and off the court, she was really brought up with great qualities and it shows how she plays and it shows how she's active now politically," Navratilova told BBC Radio.

"I smile so much when I see the reach she already has now, and she will have in the future. She's one of those people that can change the world for the better, and she seems to want to do that."

The death of Floyd sparked worldwide protests against racism and calls for reforms of U.S. law enforcement. Last month, Gauff appeared at a protest in her hometown of Delray Beach, Florida.

Naomi Osaka, the world's highest paid sportswoman, and 23-times Grand Slam winner, Serena Williams, also made themselves heard regarding racial injustice.

Navratilova, who is openly gay, said it was vital for sports stars to speak out.

## Pandemic Sealed Vettel's Departure

LONDON (Reuters) - Sebastian Vettel was Ferrari's first choice to stay and partner Charles Leclerc in Formula One next year until the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything, team principal Mattia Binotto said on Friday.

The four-times world champion, who won his titles with Red Bull, will now be replaced by Spaniard Carlos Sainz who joins from McLaren at the end of the season in a decision announced in May.

Vettel, who celebrated his 33rd birthday at the Austrian Grand Prix on Friday, had expected to remain and said on Thursday he was surprised by Ferrari's decision.

The German revealed also that there had never been an offer on the table.

"Certainly we have always said during the winter time privately and publicly that he would have been our first choice, which I confirm," Binotto told reporters in a video conference at the Red Bull Ring.

"It's normal that during winter time many drivers have asked us if there were any opportunities to drive for Ferrari, so we have certainly been contacted. That didn't change our position, so Seb was our first choice."

"What happened since then? I think virus and pandemic situation, which changed the entire world not only our motorsport, our F1."

Binotto pointed also to the consequent decision to postpone sweeping new regulations from 2021 to 2022, meaning the same cars will be raced next year, as well as the introduction next year of a budget cap.

## Mourinho Questions Tottenham's Mental Strength

LONDON (AFP) - Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho has questioned his team's mental strength after their dismal 3-1 loss at Sheffield United delivered a potentially fatal blow to their chances of qualifying for the Champions League.

Harry Kane had an equaliser disallowed by VAR after Lucas Moura was adjudged to have handled the ball in the build-up to the goal, in what proved to be a pivotal moment in Thursday's match.

The Portuguese boss said he had learned a lot about his players by their poor reaction to the decision.

"You have to be ready to cope with negative moments and go until the last minute," he said. "In spite of my efforts in the dressing room, now I feel I know more about the profile of my players."

"I felt that in the second half we wouldn't be strong enough to cope with a team that when they're winning just defends and counter-attacks. So congratulations to them."

Mourinho has also called on his side to show their motivation in the remaining six games to finish as high as they can.

The Champions League spots, even if they go down to fifth, look to have gone and a place in the Europa League is not in the bag.

Mourinho said when a professional player needed external motivation "he is in trouble".

"The motivation should be self-motivation, directly related to your professionalism, directly related with respect for your job, your club, the fans," he said. "That is the most important thing."

"The manager can just help but the nature of the player as a professional is the most important."

"Clearly if these boys don't care about results and don't care about the position we finish at the end of the season we'll be in big, big trouble for the future."

The disallowed goal was one of the most controversial VAR calls of the season and Spurs winger Steven Bergwijn was left scratching his head.

"In my opinion it is a goal," the Dutchman said. "He (Moura) can't put his hands anywhere. They also pushed him in the back, so there are two things wrong."



# Sane Completes Move to Bayern

BERLIN (Reuters) - Leroy Sane has completed this move to Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich from Manchester City, the German club announced on Friday.

Sane, 24, had signed a five-year deal with Bayern that would keep him at the club until 2025, the club said on their website here

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, but British and German media reported last week that Bayern would pay 45 million euros (\$50.52 million) plus add-ons for the winger.

"We're very happy to welcome Leroy Sane to FC Bayern," CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said. "He is an outstanding player who has proven his qualities over the

past few years, especially in the national team.

"Our goal is to gather the best German players at FC Bayern and the signing of Leroy emphasises this goal."

Sane joined City from Schalke 04 in 2016 and had 39 goals and 45 assists in 135 appearances in all competitions. He was an integral part of their league title winning squads in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

He has also made 21 appearances for the German national team, scoring five goals.

"FC Bayern is a great club with big goals - and these goals suit me as well. I'm looking forward to the new challenge and can't wait to train with the team," Sane said.

"I want to win as many trophies as possible with FC Bayern, and the Champions League is the top priority."

## Special Prosecutor to Examine Allegations Against FIFA Boss

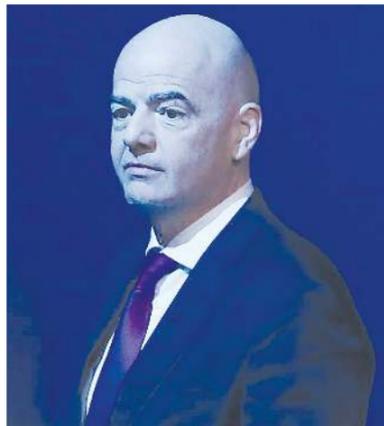
ZURICH (Reuters) - Switzerland named a special prosecutor to review criminal complaints against FIFA chief Gianni Infantino and Attorney General Michael Lauber after the men held undocumented meetings while Lauber's office was investigating suspected graft surrounding the global soccer body.

Lauber last month became the first national official since modern Switzerland's founding in 1848 to undergo an impeachment process relating to his handling of the soccer inquiry.

The watchdog overseeing Swiss federal prosecutors - Lauber's office - placed him under investigation last year after he held three closed-door meetings with FIFA President Infantino regarding the status of the corruption inquiry.

On Friday, the watchdog announced that lawmakers conducting the impeachment process had asked it to review Infantino's conduct too in the investigation after three criminal complaints were filed against both men and other unnamed persons with prosecutors in the capital Bern.

As a result, Stefan Keller, a presiding judge at one of Switzerland's cantonal courts, had been appointed as "extraordinary prosecutor" on June 29 to review the complaints and determine whether criminal charges should be brought against Lauber.



## Lampard Wants Collective Sit-Down Over VAR Controversies

LONDON (Reuters) - Apart from Liverpool wrapping up the Premier League title the only other inevitability about the restart of the season has been VAR controversy, and this week has provided it in spades.

West Ham United manager Davis Moyes was "spewing" after Tomas Soucek's strike was chalked off for an offside decision that took close to four minutes for VAR to sort out.

A day later it was Jose Mourinho's turn to look flabbergasted after Harry Kane's equaliser at Sheffield United was wiped off as VAR official Michael Oliver decided that Lucas Moura's arm had made contact with the ball in the build-up.

Brazilian Moura had actually been fouled, and was sliding headlong across the turf when the Sheffield United defender blasted the ball against him from point-blank range, the ball then spinning to Kane who shot home.

Sheffield United manager Chris Wilder, who has had plenty of grievances with VAR this season, including a disallowed goal at Tottenham, sympathised, calling the decision a farce.

Former Liverpool and Tottenham player Jamie Redknapp, working as a Sky Sports pundit, said it was the worst decision he had ever seen and that common sense had gone out the window.

The forensic use of VAR to apply current offside and handball laws has been the biggest gripe.

