







## Iran's Industry Minister Dismissed after Soaring Car Prices

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani dismissed the minister of industry and assigned a caretaker to the ministry to handle the situation in the domestic car market and ensure a steady supply of basic commodities amid the cruel sanctions against Iran.

In a decree on Monday, President Rouhani appointed Hossein Modarres Khiabani as the caretaker of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade.

The new caretaker is replacing Reza Rahmani, who is believed to have been sacked mainly for his failure to deal with the crisis of soaring automobile prices in the country over the past months.

President Rouhani has assigned the caretaker minister five main tasks in the decree, and has called on Modarres Khiabani to pay special attention to plans for a surge in domestic production under the shadow of the cruel sanctions, IFP reported.

The president has also urged him to step up intra-organizational coordination, work in effective cooperation with the state-run and private sectors, and exploit his potential for the accomplishment of five main objectives.

President Rouhani has assigned Modarres Khiabani to focus efforts on management of the market and supply of the basic commodities, regulation of car prices, removal of the obstacles to domestic production and promotion of the homegrown products, enhancement of non-oil exports, and improvement of the business activities.

Modarres Khiabani has a good record in the mercantile sectors of the government during the past 18 years. He has also served in managerial posts in a host of companies, from the cement industry to the engine manufacturing, and also played a leading role in the formulation of a road map to the market regulation and the road map to the promotion of exports during his tenure as a deputy minister of industry.

## Iran's Airport Traffic Down 70%

Iran Airports Company registered a total of 9,249 takeoffs and landings during the first month of the current Iranian year (March 20-April 19) to register a 70% decline compared with the similar period of last year. A total of 752,767 passengers were transported during the month under review, indicating an 80% year-on-year decline.

Over 9,080 tons of cargos were handled during the same period, which shows a 79% decrease compared with the corresponding period of last year, according to IAC's latest report published on its website.

A total of 8,855 takeoffs and landings were registered by domestic flights during the one-month period, down 64% YOY. More than 728,860 passengers and 6,213 tons of cargo were transported domestically, indicating a 75% and 76% fall respectively YOY.

On the international front, 394 takeoffs and landings were registered, down by 93% YOY. A total of 23,907 passengers and more than 2,867 tons of cargo were transported to and from overseas destinations, down 97% and 84% respectively compared with the corresponding period of last year.

Similar to previous IAC reports, Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport was the busiest Iranian airport during the period under review with 3,573 takeoffs and landings, registering a 46% decline.

The airport handled 302,431 passengers and around 2,480 tons of cargo, both indicating a 52% YOY decrease.

Mashhad International Airport was the second busiest airport with 857 takeoffs and landings, indicating a 59% YOY decrease. It transported 90,521 passengers and 779 tons of cargos, down 63% and 68% respectively YOY.

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## Stocks falter as anxiety grows over second coronavirus wave

Asian shares tumbled on Tuesday on growing worries about a second wave of coronavirus infections after the Chinese city where the pandemic originated reported its first new cases since its lockdown was lifted.



European markets were set to open lower with EUROSTOXX 50 futures STXEc1 off 0.52% and FTSE futures

FFIc1 down 0.22%. E-Mini futures ESc1 for the S&P 500 slipped 0.68%.

The central Chinese city of Wuhan reported five new cases on Monday, casting doubts over efforts to lower coronavirus-related restrictions across the country as businesses restart and individuals went back to work.

"Markets have been torn between optimism on the tentative re-opening of some economies and caution on the still grim economic data," said OCBC Investment Research in a Tuesday market note.

"Any recovery in equity markets is likely to be fragile for now, as markets will watch for cracks in the financial system and elsewhere in the economy as virus infections climb." MSCI's broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside of Japan, MIAPJ0000PUS stumbled more than 1%, snapping two straight sessions of gains.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index was among the hardest hit .HSI, down 1.78% followed closely by Australia, off 1.24%. South Korea's KOSPI .KS11 faltered 0.85%. China's blue-chip CSI300 index .CSI300 was off 0.5% after the country's factory prices fell at the sharpest rate in four



years in April, worse than analysts' expectations.

As countries around the world gradually ease restrictions in an effort to restart their economies, investors are becoming anxious about a second wave of infections.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute reported that the "reproduction rate" - the number of people each person infected with the coronavirus goes on to infect - had risen to 1.1. Any rate above 1 means the virus is spreading exponentially. The worrisome news follows a fresh outbreak in night clubs in South Korea and record number of new cases in a day in Russia. "The re-opening of the global economy will likely follow the shape of activity in China. Businesses there have restarted operations but are not necessarily at capacity," Bob Baur, Chief Global Economist at Principal Global Investors. "While businesses have mostly restarted, China's households stay cautious. Restaurants are open, but seats are empty. Vehicle sales bounced off the bottom but are well below normal. Households in the

U.S. and Europe will surely mirror this wary attitude even as activity picks up." Fund managers expect equity markets to stay the course through June and avoid retesting March lows given the massive monetary stimulus provided by the U.S. Federal Reserve and other major central banks.

Late on Monday, the Fed said it would start purchasing shares of exchange-traded funds that invest in bonds, one of several tools to improve market functioning in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Markets are also keeping a wary eye on China's trade relations with the United States as well as Australia. U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday he opposed renegotiating the U.S.-China "Phase 1" trade deal while Australian media reported that China has suspended imports from four abattoirs in an escalation of tensions. The Australian and New Zealand dollars slipped on Tuesday as risk sentiment was knocked and in part due to new Chinese restrictions on Australian beef exports.

On the policy front, investors will be looking to comments from Fed officials. James Bullard and Patrick Harker are due to make remarks at 1300 GMT and 1400 GMT, respectively, ahead of a highly anticipated speech from chairman Jerome Powell on Wednesday.

The euro EUR= slipped below \$1.08 for the first time in almost a week and the Japanese yen nursed an overnight loss of about 1% to sit at 107.39 per dollar, the bottom end of a range it has kept since mid April.

In commodity markets, oil prices climbed following an unexpected commitment from Saudi Arabia to deepen production cuts in June. Brent crude LCOc1 futures climbed to a high of \$30.11 a barrel and were up 0.2%, or 6 cents, at \$29.69 at 0447 GMT, reversing some of the previous session's losses. The benchmark fell \$1.34 on Monday.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude CLc1 futures were up 0.91%, or 23 cents, at \$24.37 after touching a high of \$24.77.

The IRICA chief further said petrochemicals made up the lion's share of exports, which indicates that the country is moving from its dependency on selling unprocessed goods toward exporting petroleum products.

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Solution: NO 484

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News

### 430K Increase in Employment Last Year

More than 24.27 million Iranians were employed in the last fiscal year (March 2019-20), nearly 430,000 more than the year before. Employment refers to an activity undertaken by persons of working age engaged in the production of goods or supply of services for pay or profit, whether at work during the reference period or not at work due to a temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangement.

Labor force participation

rate—the proportion of the population of ages 15 and above that is economically active either employed or looking for a job—stood at 44.1%, registering a 0.4% decrease year-on-year. The unemployment rate, the proportion of jobless population of ages 15 and above, stood at 10.7%, indicating a 1.5% decline compared with the year before, the latest report by the Statistical Center of Iran shows.

### Iran's priority in Iraq must be economic cooperation; Expert

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A member of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICC), Ali Shariati told ILNA on Tuesday that Iran's priority in ties with Iraq must be the growth in bilateral trade.

Speaking to ILNA news agency, the Iranian official said "In the situation that the harsh U.S. economic sanctions have caused many problems to curtail business for Iranian exporters, economic cooperation should have our priority in Iraq along with the political and military balance."

Commenting on the causes of the unrest in Iraq, the member of ICC Ali Shariati added that in recent months Iraqi people have taken to the streets against corruption and unemployment; but in between, campaigns have been launched against Turkish goods and, more broadly, against Iranian goods.

He stressed that Turkey has no choice but to encourage exports to Iraq due to declining tourism revenues and that's why Ankara is looking to take over the Iraqi market.

"Iraq is an oil-rich country with a strategic position so for most countries its political future is important, and each has its own effect on this unrest," he said.

Referring to the formation of a new government in Iraq, he stated that Baghdad has a long way to go to form a powerful government, and the United States is trying to divide Iraq into five states in order to achieve its goals.

The member of ICC pointed that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has invited Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to visit the Kingdom, adding that the invitation shows that it is very important for Saudi Arabia to be present in Iraq and not to be left behind by the regional powers.

According to reports, the volume of annual bilateral trade between Iran and Iraq stands at around USD 12 billion.

### Envoy urges EU for 'practical support' to JCPOA, multilateralism

Iran's Ambassador to Croatia called on the European countries for a change of approach and adopting practical support to multilateralism and the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

In a videoconference on Monday with the non-European ambassadors to Croatia, Parviz Esmaeili referred to the challenged nuclear deal, saying "The EU has played a positive role in supporting the JCPOA and multilateralism; however, this single voice of support should be turned into a single resolve and practice."

He referred to the initial purpose of the European Union which has been "to strengthen multilateralism, ensure common interests and resolve regional and international disputes and crises," reiterating that "the world's current situation is a sign of propriety for this goal-setting."

### Iran to US: Stop Talking Rubbish, Release Our Citizens

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman called on US officials to "act responsibly", stop risking the lives of Iranian prisoners in the US and let them go.

"Stop talking rubbish! Since Sep 2018, @JZarif has put 'universal prisoners swap' on the table, urged US to act responsibly about the Iranian HOSTAGES in US & elsewhere. Your regime has reacted callously & risked their lives. World is watching your action, not your word. Let our citizens go!" Seyed Abbas Mousavi tweeted on Tuesday. The tweet came after Ken Cuccinelli, acting deputy secretary of the US Homeland Security Department, on Monday urged Tehran to send a charter plane to take home 11 Iranian nationals whom Washington wants to deport, and accused the Islamic Republic of stalling the repatriation process.

## Iran-US Prisoner Swap Requires No Talks: FM Zarif

- Any possible exchange of prisoners between Iran and the US would not entail holding negotiations, an Iranian lawmaker has quoted Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif as saying.

The exchange of prisoners and detainees between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States could be carried out without problem and will not require any negotiations, rapporteur of the Iranian Parliament's

National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Hossein Naqavi Hosseini quoted Foreign Minister Zarif as saying in a Monday session of the commission.

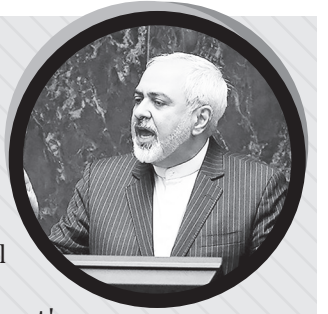
Zarif, who attended the session of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission with his deputies, has made it clear that Iran will by no means need to hold talks with the US if a prisoner swap is to take place, the MP added.

However, Naqavi Hosseini added, Zarif has noted that any exchange of prisoners would be implemented in coordination with the Interest Section of the United States in Iran.

Foreign Minister Zarif has also confirmed the recent

comments from the government's spokesperson about a prisoner swap with the US, stressing that Tehran has not shifted its policies at all, the MP stated, according to the Iranian government's official website.

Rapporteur of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission finally said that Zarif has highlighted the Islamic Republic's push for de-escalation in the region and has underlined that Tehran will do its utmost in this regard.



## Zionist regime coming close to its end: human rights activist

A human rights activist believes that the Zionist regime is coming close to its final day as the world is becoming more aware of the nature of the regime.



"I believe the Zionist regime is nearing its end as more and more free people in the world are awakening and the more intolerant

and aggressive they become which also shows their true weaknesses and illegitimacy," Firas Al Najim, head of Canadian Defenders For Human Rights, told Mehr News Agency.

Here is the full text of the interview:

Now after 72 years of Israeli occupation, what do you think is the current condition of the regime regarding its political, social, and identity status?

I believe this illegitimate regime has been more exposed and has revealed its true colors that are full of darkness from all sides. It is full of arrogance, injustice, and intolerance.

The Israeli regime has made every effort, including genocide and displacement of Palestinians, to establish its stance and legitimize its presence. How far do you think the regime has come near to this aim?

It has accomplished its aim of occupying, massacring, and spreading corruption in holy occupied Palestine and it has reached the world.

What does political crises, diversions between different Israeli political parties, and elimination of the depth of security and its peripheral security indicate?

I believe the overall Zionist politics is a big game that is used at times to show major divisions but they are united to divide the Palestinians and to expand their occupation to further areas such as the West Bank.

How do you assess the role of UK and US in establishing Israel to complete the project of the



Zionism government and also their financial and military aids to the regime?

I see the UK and the US as the main and key backers of this illegitimate regime and its cruel occupation and that this backing and support is embedded in the establishment and that they will continue to assist in this evil project to secure their hegemonic control of the Middle East with their military bases and puppet regimes. The global Zionist movement owns a lot of corporations and control of western politics and especially in those two countries.

How far has Tel Aviv's military efforts for creating deterrence and preventing Palestinian and Lebanese resistance through buying Iron Dome systems gone so far? Why do operations of Resistance groups still continue despite these efforts?

They have invested a mass amount of funds and efforts into the defense and systems such as the iron dome and they cannot fully protect the Zionist regime from the resistance movements attacks and missiles and this reveals the true weakness of those systems and that there will always be gaps and losses for the future. Isn't it the Israeli regime which has confined itself in many walls?

They have cornered and confined themselves in a very dangerous position and the

outcome is not looking well for them at all.

How do you see the political and military balance of Resistance groups in Palestine and Lebanon?

The resistance in those two countries has grown to become a powerful reality and that the Zionist regime and all its capabilities and allies have reached a conviction that they cannot eradicate them as they have tried over and over again and all their projects and plans have failed miserably. The Zionist regime survives by a delusional mindset.

What's your opinion about the future of the Zionist regime given the identity, social, and psychological crises and its lack of history?

I believe the Zionist regime is nearing its end as more and more free people in the world are awakening and the more intolerant and aggressive they become which also shows their true weaknesses and illegitimacy.

The trend of some Arab states' normalization of ties with Israel has accelerated and publicized. How do assess these measures of the Israeli regime?

These Arab regimes have all been UK established and then later supported by US and they are all regimes that are truly unpopular and disliked by their own nations. These regimes depend on the western support and they are all interconnected

with the Zionist illegitimate regime and in true reality, they need to back up one another and listen to the instructions of the ones that kept them in power or else they will be easily removed and the UK and US regimes have pressured them in this stage to normalize the relationships and publicize it. Unfortunately, they have accepted to be bullied and gotten immune to this system to survive and hold on to power. How far has the relocation of the US Embassy to al-Quds and proposition of the so-called 'Deal of the Century' by Trump administration changed the balance in favor of Israel and their efforts for legitimization? These are all delusional plans that will fail and it only proves the illegitimacy of the Zionist regime by pulling this sudden shocking plan and trying to lure the rest of the world governments to accept and support it. Another bullying method and plan by the Zionist lobbyist controlled congresses and parliaments of the world. This 'failure of the century' has no legitimacy and no real support and has failed even by the weak and controlled United Nations assembly resolutions. Israel is on its way to a major decline moving towards dismantlement and liberation as the resistance in the region is growing stronger with lots of experiences and determination. Palestine will be free from the river to the sea.

I believe the Zionist regime is nearing its end as more and more free people in the world are awakening and the more intolerant and aggressive they become which also shows their true weaknesses and illegitimacy.

### NEWS

### MPs chant 'Down with Israel' after initial endorsement of pro-Palestinian motion

Iranian lawmakers approved the double-urgency of a motion which, if eventually endorsed, will oblige the Iranian government to take certain measures against hostile measures of the Israeli regime.

Earlier, MP Mohammad Javad Abtahi had earlier told Mehr News Agency that the motion, which deals with hostile actions of the Israeli regime against regional peace and security, would be addressed in Tuesday's session of the Parliament.

After being brought up in the open session, no parliamentarian voiced any opposition to the motion and its 'double-urgency' was approved unanimously. 'Down with Israel' MPs chanted after the approval.

Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani urged the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee to address the motion as soon as possible so that the Parliament could vote on that at the beginning of the next week.

MP Abtahi noted that the motion consists of 14 articles. One of the articles, he continued, maintains that the historic land of Palestine belongs to the original Palestinian people.

Also according to the motion, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be obliged to sanction all economic, commercial and financial institutions of the Zionist regime whose shares belong to Israeli citizens or which are registered in the occupied territories, he added.

### Iran urges US to correct its behavior instead of making excuses

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the US government should correct its behavior instead of making excuses.

He made the remarks on Tue. in an interview on some comments about negotiating with the United States and said, "the whole world has come to this conclusion that any agreement with the United States may be ignored by Americans at any moment. The current US administration under Trump should correct its behavior instead of making excuses."

There is no talk with US government, he said, adding, "Americans showed that negotiating with them cannot be trusted."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif said that there has yet been no talk with UK over the payment of compensation to UK government due to the damages incurred to the priceless objects kept in UK Embassy during storming its mission in Tehran in 2012 and added, "there are rules in the international law in this regard. The Iranian government also announced that protecting and maintaining foreign missions in Tehran shall be borne by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Earlier, an Iranian lawmaker had pointed to the payment of compensation, worth £1.3 million, to UK due to storming UK Embassy to Tehran in 2012.

All senior officials of the country have emphasized that two sides should negotiate on the details, Zarif added.

### News

### Iran's Top General Urges Pakistan to Help Free Abducted Border Guards

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri called on Pakistan to push for the release of three Iranian border guards who had been kidnapped at a border post and taken into Pakistan.

In a telephone conversation with Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Monday, Major General Baqeri called on the Pakistani Army officials to take decisive action for the release of three Iranian border guards who have been held hostage by the so-called Jaish-ul-Adl terrorist group since October 2018.

The top Iranian commander also stressed the need for the two Muslim neighbors to strengthen security measures along the

common border to prevent the terrorist groups and the common enemies from upsetting security at the border.

Major General Baqeri then pointed to the growing trend in the brotherly ties between the armed forces of the two countries, and voiced Iran's preparedness to enhance "defense-economic cooperation" with Pakistan.

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, for his part, gave a brief report on Pakistan's measures to construct barriers along the common border with Iran.

He also called for closer military cooperation with Iran and the exchange of experts to ensure border security and prevent the terrorist activities along the common borders.

Pakistani-based terrorists kidnapped 14 Iranian forces at a border post in Mirjaveh region in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan in October 2018.

The Iranian military forces along the southeastern border areas are frequently attacked by terrorist groups coming from Afghanistan



and Pakistan.

Tehran has frequently asked the two neighbors to step up security at the common border to prevent terrorist attacks on Iranian forces.

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## Minister: Iran to open schools on May 16 to resolve academic problems

Iran's Minister of Education Mohsen Haji-Mirzaee said on Tuesday that the country is to open all schools to help solve academic problems of all school goers. Mohsen Haji-Mirzaee said all the staff are required to attend schools to help the students. In an interview on Tuesday on Iranian national TV, Haji-Mirzaee said all the students are allowed to go to school with masks and gloves observing social distancing. He added that the school academic council will decide if to continue the sessions according to presence of students. He said if the students have no problems with online or televised education, they do not need to attend school but the teachers need to be at their jobs, adding due to being vulnerable, preschool children and students with special needs should not go to school.



### Headlines

#### Iran-US Prisoner Swap Requires No Talks: FM Zarif

5

#### Zionist regime coming close to its end: human rights activist

5

#### Iran's priority in Iraq must be economic cooperation; Expert

4

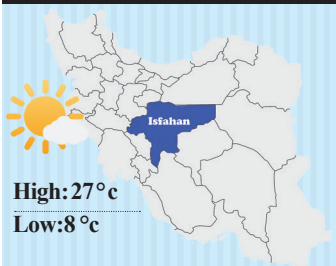
#### CALL TO PRAYER TIME IN ISFAHAN

Morning call to prayer : 04:33:18

Noon call to prayer : 12:59:41

Evening call to prayer : 20:12:46

#### WEATHER



#### Israeli regime acting against Iran's interests amid Covid19-pandemic: MP

Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Mojtaba Zonnour said on Tuesday that while the world is distracted with the coronavirus pandemic, the Zionist regime is doing its best to put Iran's interests at risk. Making the remarks in the open session of the Parliament on Tuesday, he noted that during seven decades of its formation, the Zionist regime has been making some difficulties for the Muslims in the region. Zonnour named the regime as the main axis acting against the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian nation. "Spying, terrorism, and the martyrdom of Iranian nuclear scientists, cyber and electronic warfare, and cyber-attacks on nuclear and economic centers are among the Zionist regime's actions against the Iranian nation," he said.



## Iran's Industry Minister Dismissed after Soaring Car Prices

4

## Trump Dismisses Concern over Virus Spreading in White House

US President Donald Trump on Monday dismissed concerns over the possible spread of coronavirus in the White House but said he may limit contact with Vice President Mike Pence.

Trump, speaking to masked reporters in the White House Rose Garden, suggested that Pence was in quarantine after his press secretary tested positive, though he did not say it outright.

Katie Miller, the spokeswoman for Pence, who heads the White House's coronavirus task force, tested positive for coronavirus last week along with a personal valet to Trump.

Three members of the task force have since gone into quarantine - infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci, Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Stephen Hahn, head of the Food and Drug Administration.

A Pence spokesman denied over the weekend that the vice president was also in quarantine but Trump suggested he was when asked on Monday whether he had considered limiting his contact with him.

"I would say that he and I will be talking about that," Trump said at an occasionally testy press conference, AFP reported.

"During this quarantine period, we'll probably talk," Trump said. "I have not seen him since then."

"We can talk on the phone," he said of Pence. "He tested negative, so we have to understand that, but he comes into contact with a lot of people." Trump sought to play down any concerns about an outbreak of the virus in the cramped quarters of the West Wing, where the president works out of the Oval Office.

"We want to keep our country running so we have a lot of people coming in and out (of the White House) and many of those people, most of those people, are tested," he said.

"Everybody coming into the president's office gets tested, and I've felt no vulnerability whatsoever," he said.

Trump, who is desperately seeking to reboot

the economy ahead of the November election, said the US was making "tremendous strides" in ramping up testing and the number of virus infections is "coming down very rapidly." He said it was essential to get the country reopened.

"The people want our country open," the president said.

"Some states could be moving more quickly," he said. "People are dying in the lockdown position too."

Trump abruptly ended the press conference after an exchange with a CBS News reporter who asked him why when Americans were losing their lives did he keep insisting that the US was doing better than other countries when it came to testing.

"Well, they're losing their lives everywhere in the world," Trump said. "And maybe that's a question you should ask China. Don't ask me, ask China that question, OK?"

The CBS reporter, Weijia Jiang, who is of Chinese-American origin, then asked Trump "Sir, why are you saying that to me specifically?" "I'm telling. I'm saying it to anybody who would ask a nasty question like that," Trump replied before abruptly ending the press conference.

Though it may appear spacious in movies and TV shows, the West Wing is actually rather cramped, making social distancing difficult.

It houses not just the president's office but also those of some of his closest advisers, the press briefing room and the desks of White House correspondents, who work elbow to elbow.

Kevin Hassett, a senior economic advisor to the president, told CBS over the weekend that it is "scary to go to work."

"I would be safer sitting at home in my house than going into a West Wing that with even all the testing in the world and the best medical team on Earth, is a relatively cramped place," Hassett told another network, CNN.

In a memo issued on Monday, the White House instructed all staff to wear a mask when inside the West Wing, except when at their desks.

Unlike a number of other world leaders, the 73-year-old Trump has not been wearing a mask in public.

## UNICEF More than Doubles Coronavirus Appeal to 1.6\$ bln

United Nations children's agency UNICEF appealed on Monday for 1.6\$ billion, more than doubling its initial request for money two months ago to help children already suffering through humanitarian crises and now hit with the coronavirus pandemic.

UNICEF said it has so far received \$215 million since late March.

The new coronavirus, which causes the respiratory illness COVID-19, has infected some 4.1 million people globally and more than 282,000 have died, according to a Reuters tally. The virus first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

"We have seen what the pandemic is doing to countries with developed health systems and we are concerned about what it would do to countries with weaker systems and fewer available resources," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore.

UNICEF is focusing its pandemic response on countries with existing humanitarian crises by working to prevent transmission and lessen the impact of the coronavirus on access to health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and protection.

"The pandemic is a health crisis which is quickly becoming a child rights crisis," Fore said. "These funds will help us respond to the crisis, recover

from its aftermath, and protect children from its knock-on effects."

A UNICEF analysis found that some 77 per cent of children, or 1.8 billion, are living in one of the 132 countries with some form of movement restrictions in place.

The United Nations last week more than tripled its appeal to help vulnerable countries combat the spread and destabilizing effects of the coronavirus pandemic, asking for \$6.7 billion to help 63 states mainly in Africa and Latin America.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has raised concerns about inadequate support for poor countries and lamented a lack of leadership by world powers and a divided international community in the fight against the coronavirus.

Despite more than six weeks of negotiations the 15-member UN Security Council has been unable to agree on a draft resolution that ultimately aims to back a March 23 call by Guterres for a ceasefire in global conflicts so the world can focus on the pandemic.

Talks have been stymied by a stand-off between China and the United States over whether to mention the World Health Organization. The United States does not want a reference, China has insisted it be included, while some other members see the mention - or not - of WHO as a marginal issue, diplomats said.

## Iranian researchers attain knowledge of producing corona drugs

An official with the Health Ministry said that Iranian researchers managed to attain the technical knowhow and knowledge of producing the novel coronavirus drugs. "As soon as the positive results of the clinical trial are confirmed by the relevant authorities and final approval of the Iranian Food and Drug Administration [IFDA],

preliminary steps will be taken for producing raw materials and coronavirus drug," Hossein Vatanpour, director-general of Health Technology Office at the Health Ministry, told IRNA on Tuesday. The mass production of these drugs strictly hinges on the approval of the Scientific Committee of the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters as well as getting a license from Iranian Food and Drug Administration, he said, adding, "this issue is being pursued." Elsewhere in his remarks, Vatanpour pointed to

the Health Ministry's support for some pharmaceutical production companies which have the technical capacity of producing coronavirus drugs and added, "in line with the macro policies of the country, companies with high capacity of producing medicines will be backed wholeheartedly." In addition to the pharmaceutical companies, other companies that enjoy high capability in the field of producing face masks, corona diagnostic kits, ventilators, disinfectants and other medical supplies will be backed, he said.



