







## Iran stock market attracts \$ 8.3 billion in 2 months

The Iranian stock exchange has drawn 350 trillion rials (about 8.33 billion dollars) in cash since the start of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), the stock exchange's general manager told ILNA.

Stressing that the stock market welcomes the IPO of companies, Ali Sahraei said "We organized the IPO of Shasta although it was a very complicated process."

The Iranian stock market experienced its largest public offering on April 15, when the Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta) offered eight billion shares, which represent 10% of its holdings, to sell them in Tehran. Exchange.

Shasta is the investment arm of the Social Security Organization, which provides health rights and retirement benefits to large numbers of Iranian middle and working-class members.

Responding to a question about the number of IPOs planned for the current year, Sahraei added "We are trying to have more IPOs this year compared to the previous year when it is important that large and strong companies offer their actions."

While the last Iranian calendar year has been very successful for the TSE, the market also maintains its successful performance for the current year, and the notable fact is that other economic sectors are trending down due to of the coronavirus pandemic.

## Oil prices rise on supply cut hopes, easing of coronavirus lockdowns

Oil prices climbed on Tuesday, boosted by increasing faith in the market that producers will to stick to commitments to cut crude supply while demand picks up with more cars back on the road as coronavirus lockdowns are eased around the world. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures gained 3.2%, or \$1.06, to \$34.31 a barrel as of 0429 GMT, just off an intra-day high of \$34.33.

There was no WTI settlement on Monday because of the U.S. Memorial Day holiday.

Brent crude futures were up nearly 1.7%, or 59 cents to \$36.12, adding to a 1.1% gain on Monday in thin holiday trading.

The market was buoyed by comments from Russia reporting its oil output had nearly dropped to its target of 8.5 million barrels per day (bpd) for May and June under its supply cut deal with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other leading producers, a grouping known as OPEC+.

"There's definitely a feeling those cuts have come through as well as you could expect," said Daniel Hynes, senior commodity strategist at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

OPEC+ countries are set to meet again in early June to discuss maintaining their supply cuts to shore up prices, which are still down around 45% since the start of the year. The big producers agreed in April to cut output by nearly 10 million bpd for May and June. Russia's energy ministry on Monday quoted minister Alexander Novak as saying a rise in fuel demand should help cut the current global surplus of around 7-12 million bpd by June or July.

"With economies restarting, the focus definitely is on the improvement in the fundamentals, rather than what seemed like a complete collapse in demand only a few weeks ago," said strategist Hynes.

Meanwhile data from energy services firm Baker Hughes (BKR.N) showed the United States' rig count hitting a record low of 318 in the week to May 22, also indicating lower output in the future.

» License Owner & Managing director: Reza Mahzunieh  
 » Editor-in-Chief: Marzie Rabiei  
 » Assistant Editor-in-Chief of English Section: Bahare Yousefi  
 » Isfahan Office: Hoora Building, Shahid Mofateh Street, Ahmad Abad Square, Isfahan, Iran  
 » Tel: 031-32274500  
 » Public Relations: 031-32274754

» Organization of advertisement: 031-32274517, 32274518, 32274512, 32274505.  
 Fax: 031-32274507, 32274511  
 » Lithography and printing: Golriz  
 » Isfahan subscribers Office: 031-32274508  
 » website: esfahan-news.com  
 » SMS: 30007232



## Is Water Market a Panacea?

Geological studies show water shortages in Iran will get worse due to waste and rising consumption.

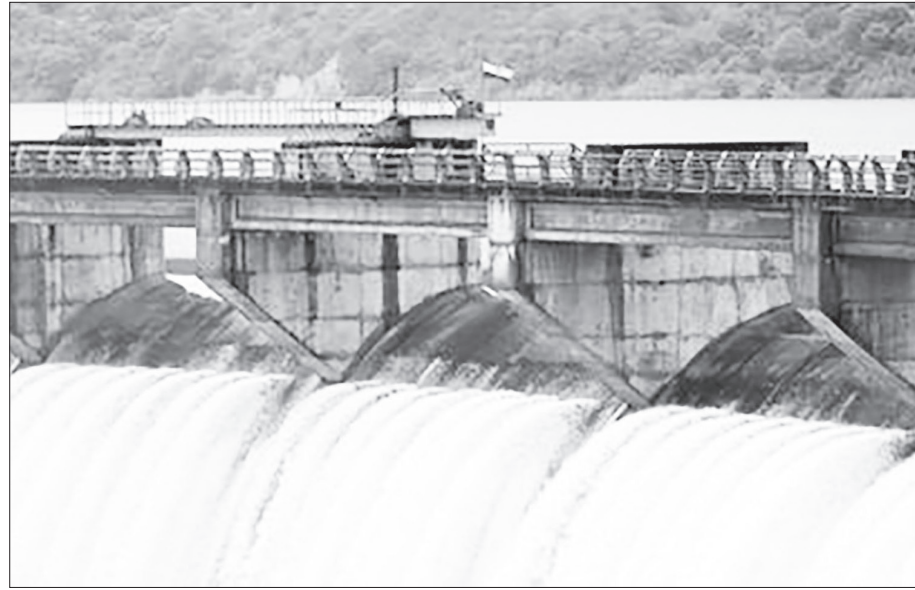


How to manage the rapidly dwindling resource has become a nightmare for policymakers and urban managers struggling to do more with less.

According to a report by the Majlis Research Center, the research arm of Iran's Parliament, a plan to deal with the shortages could be setting up water markets where buyers and sellers can trade water both through short- and long-term leases and permanent sale of their water rights, the Persian-language economic newspaper Donya-e-Eqtasad reported.

The report highlighted the pros and cons of the controversial approach. On the plus side, the system allows farmers to buy and sell water depending on actual need. Water trade has become a vital business tool for farmers in many countries including Australia (in the Murray Darling Basin, the country's largest agricultural region). Water markets can encourage efficient water use, the report said, adding that well-structured markets will augment water conservation efforts (that so far have made little, if any, progress).

Water markets can also help allocation of more water to economic sectors with high productivity rates. The agricultural sector, for instance (in Iran), uses more water relative to its economic output



than other sectors. Small wonder many environmentalists, conservationists and economic experts have openly questioned the policy of successive governments to allow framing water-intensive crops.

Qassem Taqizadeh Khamesi, director of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company of Iran (Abfa), says of the total annual consumption (100 billion cubic meters), 90% goes to farming. "Households and industries account for 7% and 3%, respectively." The government has been mulling over establishing water markets since 2016 and studies have been conducted. "The first market will soon be piloted in Khorasan Razavi Province and if the desired results are produced, the approach will be extended across the nation."

Hands-on Experience Referring to hands-on experience in other countries, the research center said in Australia's Murray Darling Basin, the government had long monitored the

distribution of water rights. However, under the controls, a selected few controlled a large share of the water.

To resolve the problem of over allocation, a free market approach was put in place in the early 1990s. Making water rights available in an open market generally had a positive outcome for the region. It ended the dysfunctional state controls that allocated water inefficiently, and created the conditions wherein demand and supply dictate prices, and farmers seem to respond efficiently.

The research center, however, notes that because the mechanism worked in other countries, it does not necessarily mean that it will be effective in Iran. This is because the country has long been suffering from over consumption and waste plus dangerous over-extraction from renewable and underground water resources (largely due to outdated farming practices).

Iran's annual water consumption tops 100 bcm, of which 49 bcm is from underground resources.

Moreover, the free market approach could lead to speculation, in which some people who have little practical use for water rights hoard it to drive up prices, leaving less (and costly) water for others in dire need.

Needless to say, long-term arrangements (leases) can entail risks for buyers if water demand does not match forecast. Furthermore, the practice also requires storage facilities for surplus water during wet years that is very costly.

The MRC concluded that as climate change takes a high toll and threatens to aggravate the mismatch between water need and availability, water markets promise a means of improving the efficiency and sustainability of water use. The free market approach, with all its pluses and minuses, should be piloted in different regions before a comprehensive roadmap is devised. Failing to do so and pushing through a half-baked plan can lead to economic, social and ecological challenges of which Iran already has too many.

Needless to say, long-term arrangements (leases) can entail risks for buyers if water demand does not match forecast. Furthermore, the practice also requires storage facilities for surplus water during wet years that is very costly.

NO 494

Sudoku

Solution: NO 493

|   |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 3 |   |   |   |   |  |   |  | 2 |
|   |   |   | 7 |   |  |   |  |   |
| 4 |   | 1 |   |   |  |   |  |   |
| 1 |   |   |   |   |  | 4 |  |   |
|   |   |   |   | 2 |  |   |  | 8 |
| 7 | 6 |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |
| 2 | 9 | 5 | 3 |   |  |   |  |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |  | 1 |  |   |
|   |   |   | 9 |   |  |   |  |   |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 4 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| 4 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 7 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| 8 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 1 |

News

## Cross-Border Trade between Iran, Afghanistan Returns to Normal

An Iranian official said all border crossings with Afghanistan have reopened and trade exchanges between the two neighbors have returned to normal after a hiatus in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Chairman of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce Hossein Salimi said Afghanistan has lifted the restrictions on the import of Iranian products that had been placed after the novel coronavirus outbreak. The common border between Iran

and Afghanistan is now open, restrictions on trade have been removed, and the situation for the export of commodities to Afghanistan has returned to normal, he added. Salimi noted that Iranian truck drivers carrying goods to Afghanistan are easily granted entry visa. Consumer goods and foodstuff make up the bulk of the Iranian exports to Afghanistan, he said, adding that the value of annual trade between the two countries stands at around \$3 billion.

## Tehran Real-Estate Survey

Lands, home and rent prices rose by 43.1%, 43.7% and 47.9% on a year-on-year basis, as the number of land and rent deals decreased by 10.3% and 48.7% respectively while home deals increased by 12.8%. The Statistical Center of Iran has published its latest report on home and land prices as well as rents in the capital city Tehran during the fourth quarter of the last Iranian year (Dec. 22, 2019-March 19), the winter season of fiscal 2019-20.

According to the report published on the SCI website, the average price of each square meter of land or land of a rundown residential property (residential units that are considered old to a degree that only the underlying land is useful for construction) in Tehran went up by 43.1% during Q4 compared with the corresponding period of the year before. Prices increased by 11.1% compared with the preceding quarter (Q3 of the last Iranian year).

The minimum price of each square meter of land or land of a rundown property in the capital city stood at 26.48 million rials (\$150) while the maximum was at 750 million rials (\$4,249), bringing the average to 208.15 million rials (\$1,179).

## Rubber Checks Bring Bad News

The number of checks passed by banks declined sharply in the month to April 18, marking the first month of current fiscal year (March) and coinciding with the Persian New Year holiday season and when the coronavirus started hammering domestic businesses. Checkbook holders wrote 6.1 million checks worth 652 trillion rials (\$3.7 billion) during the month, down 36% in number and 56.4% decline in value compared to the month before. Apart from the virus, the disturbing decline in check payments can be explained in part by the closure of retail business in during the annual holidays. However, bad checks were expected to also fall in proportion to the overall drawn checks, but recent data from the Central Bank of Iran shows that bounced checks moved in the opposite direction and jumped in number for the second month in a row, again reflecting the economic downturn born out of the deadly disease.

### Iranian ambassador: No way for US but to abide by international treaties

Iranian ambassador to Caracas Hojjatollah Soltani said on Tuesday that the US has finally realized that it has to abide by its commitments under international treaties such as freedom of trade and sailing which he described as a good development. Writing on his official Twitter account, the Iranian ambassador said that the US should know that Iran's nuclear deal, UNSCR 2231, NPT and international treaties against terrorism are also among other international commitments that should also be respected by Washington administration. In another tweet on Monday, he said that US avoiding from any attack at the Iranian oil tankers showed that wisdom, foresight and prudence are still alive in some layers of the country's government. Soltani said that these [wise people] must make it clear to the warmongers that compliance with international regulations and treaties by governments, including the United States, will create a safer world for all countries and the United States. Although the US had warned it will prevent Iranian oil tankers from reaching Venezuela, two Iranian tankers entered territorial waters of Venezuela on Monday. Five Iranian tankers are carrying fuel for Venezuela. The next three of which are now crossing the Atlantic Ocean to go to the Latin American country.

### Arrival of Iranian oil tanker, carrying gasoline, to Venezuela embarrasses US: MP

A newly-elected member of parliament said that shipping gasoline to Venezuela embarrassed and humiliated US more than ever like pounding US's Ain al-Assad military base in Al-Anbar Province in Baghdad. Hassan Hemmati made the remarks in an interview with Mehr news agency on Tue. and termed that Iran's move in sending gasoline to Venezuela as 'an accurate and completely strategic move' despite US threats and added, "We should not pay attention to the US threats." He went on to say that Islamic Republic of Iran chose a very good and principled

policy for sending gasoline to this Bolivarian country and showed that it [Iran] will stand firmly against any threat and excessive demand wholeheartedly. Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the confrontation between Islamic Republic of Iran and United States after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and emphasized, "it is for more than four decades that Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued its policies with authority and is not afraid of US threats." Despite tough sanctions imposed against the country, Islamic Republic of Iran showed that it has become stronger day by day, he said, adding "the noble nation of Islamic Iran has never paid attention to the threats and excessive demand of the United States." The United States has repeatedly humiliated itself in the face of the noble nation of Islamic Iran and sending gasoline to Venezuela stood along with smashing

their military base in Ain al-Assad in Iraq, total of which caused more humiliation of the US more than ever, Hemmati reiterated. Iranian oil/chem Handymax tanker, FORTUNE, which loaded 43 million liters of gasoline during mid-March at Port Shahid Rajaei, Iran, has now moored at berth 2 at the refinery of El Palito, Venezuela, situated west of the capital city, Caracas. As reported, the second Iranian oil tanker, the 'Forest', entered the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Venezuela early Sunday, met by the country's navy.



## Defender of Palestinian rights should be vigilant not to fall in political traps: expert

Bangkok based geologist believes that the ones are defending the Palestinian people's rights should be vigilant not to fall in political traps designed to deliberately draw out the conflict rather than end it.



To know more about the importance of defending the rights of oppressed Palestinian people

and some measures taken by some Arab monarchies to normalize ties with the Israeli regime, we reached out to Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Anthony Cartalucci. Here is the full text of the interview with him: Some Arab countries are seeking to normalize ties with the Israeli regime and they have even started producing TV series on the issue to affect public opinion. Why do you think they pursue such a normalization? In many ways nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and other Arab allies of the US have worked hand-in-hand with Israel even if shrouded behind feigned concern regarding Palestine or supposed animosity against the ruling Israeli government. But actions speak louder than words and the combined efforts of the US, Israel, and several Arab nations since 2011 against Syria speak volumes to just how deep this Arab-Israeli cooperation goes making it no surprise that in the end, a process of "normalization" is taking place. This "normalization" is a result of a dire need to consolidate political,

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been a deliberate political point of leverage with Israeli regimes going out of their way to provoke global opinion and divide people over the issue.



economic, and military power amid a losing policy of waging war against Syria, Yemen, and less directly against Iran and its allies both regional and abroad. Do you believe such measures will be fruitful at the end of the day for legitimizing the Israeli occupation? The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been a deliberate political point of leverage with Israeli regimes going out of their way to provoke global opinion and divide people over the issue. This will continue as long as the Israeli regime serves Western hegemonic interests in the Middle East rather than the best interests of the people who actually live within and along Israel's borders - including both Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Muslims, and everyone else caught in the middle of this conflict. The world marked the International Quds Day, on Friday. How do you assess the importance and role of this day in defending the right of Palestinians? Of course, no matter

what the motive is of Israeli aggression against Palestine and others in the region, it is aggression nonetheless and is threatening or destroying the lives of real people. It is important to defend the defenseless wherever they are - including in Palestine. It is important to make sure that in the process of defending the people of Palestine that those attempting to do so do not fall into political traps designed to deliberately draw out the conflict rather than end it. I think many organizations and nations realize this and have been doing so successfully, hence the inability of Israel and Washington's Arab allies' inability to continue pretending to be enemies and their need to openly consolidate their political and military power. And as the last question, the regime in Tel Aviv suffers from internal disputes between parties as it has failed to form a government. What's your take on these domestic struggles? Israel's current aggressive and self-destructive

policies benefit Washington and London, not the people of Israel. While many in the Israeli government are content in serving these interests in exchange for power and profits, the vast majority of those living in Israel do not receive any benefits at all. Not only there is no benefit for most Israelis in pursuing these policies, they run in contradiction to Israel's self-preservation as a state and its best socioeconomic interests. Thus it's little surprise that there are disputes within Israel politically and as the global balance of power shifts with the US waning and alternative centers of power growing, hopefully, those in Israel who have the nation, its people, and its neighbors' best interests in mind will have the opportunity to lead Israel away from its current, aggressive posture and function as a Western forward operating base and toward something more resembling an actual functioning nation-state.

Interview by Payman Yazdani

### No planning decided for returning foreign students to Iran amid pandemic: official

Head of Organization of Student Affairs Mojtaba Sedighi said that returning foreign students to the country, who have left the country due to the outbreak of coronavirus, COVID-19, is not yet on the agenda of the Organization until further notice. Speaking in an interview with IRNA on Tuesday, he said, "a number of international students are in the country but no planning has yet been decided for returning foreign students to the country who left Iran due to the pandemic."

"We hope to receive them from the next semester due to the conditions overshadowing the country. Presently, about 15,000 foreign students, who were studying in Iran, have returned to their home countries due to the outbreak of COVID-19," Sedighi emphasized.

Earlier, minister of Science, Research and Technology had revealed that this group of students are using e-learning packages in their home countries, he added.

Regarding the final exams of these students, he emphasized, "universities provide conditions for holding these examinations for these students with appropriate planning."

Following the outbreak of coronavirus in the country, foreign students studying in Iran left the country for their home countries as of March gradually, he said and put the current number of foreign students studying in Iran about 40,000 from 129 countries.

### Maduro says tankers symbol of Iran, Venezuela's 'courage, freedom'

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro hailed the arrival of Iranian tankers to Venezuela amid US threats.

"The 'Fortune' became this Monday #25 May a symbol of freedom and courage for two peoples: Venezuela and Iran," tweeted Maduro while posting photos of the Iranian tanker docked in a Venezuelan port.

The tweet came as oil tanker Fortune arrived and docked at its destination in Venezuela, El Palito refinery, to deliver fuel to people who are under the intense pressure of the United States. The second tanker, Forest, is also in the Venezuelan territory while three other tankers are on the way.

The five tankers deliver some 1.5 million barrels of fuel to Venezuela that despite having abundant reserves, is facing fuel shortage due to illegal US sanctions.

Tehran's decision to send Iran-flagged tankers to Venezuela amid US sanctions against both countries has infuriated those in the White House with some sources saying that Washington may adopt measures against it.

Iran has vowed to retaliate any aggression against its tankers while noting that it has the inherent right to trade with other countries.

### News

### Hezbollah deputy: Liberation of southern Lebanon turning point toward independence

Hezbollah's deputy chief offered congratulations on the anniversary of the liberation of southern Lebanon, saying the incident was a turning point in the country's history, which helped it move toward independence. "The day of the liberation of southern Lebanon was one of the most memorable days, and an Eid, for the Islamic Ummah and the oppressed people of the world. This day was a turning point in the history toward independence," Naim Qassim was also quoted as saying by the Arabic-language al-Manar TV. Noting that "the liberation of southern Lebanon changed

the political, cultural and Jihadi resistance process in the region," the Hezbollah deputy said that the incident "moved us from despair to hope, from surrender to resistance, from humiliation to honor and from defeat to victory." It also disproved the fictitious invincibility of the Israeli regime's army, he added. "The resistance and liberation of southern Lebanon have opened the door to victories against the United States, the Israeli regime and their constituents, the ISIL in Lebanon, Palestine and the region," he noted. Qassim also highlighted the fact that these events proved the undeniable support of arrogant powers, such as the US, to the Israeli regime, stressing that the solutions and compromises offered under the supervision of the United States and the West cannot be trusted because they created the Zionist regime and they are still supporting its



aggressions against the Palestinian nation.

Lebanon marks the Resistance and Liberation Day on May 25 each year. In May 2000, the Israeli regime was forced by Hezbollah to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, ending nearly two decades of occupation of the country's south.

# ISFAHAN NEWS

The First Bilingual Economic Newspaper In Isfahan Province

20000 Rials

Wednesday, May 27, 2020, No. 508

## Twitter closes Iran Embassy's account with no reason

Twitter has closed account of Iran's Embassy in Russia without any reason, media department at the embassy announced on Monday night. Twitter has not yet responded to Iran's request to know about why the company has shut the Iranian Embassy's twitter account in Russian language. In the meantime, Twitter has already blocked accounts of several Iranian news agencies unreasonably. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) had announced recently that account of Jam-e-Jam newspaper has been made inactive. More than a year ago, French news agency had quoted Twitter as claiming that such closure is due to dispatch of messages from Iranian accounts against the US policies. Two years ago, Twitter and Facebook shut for no reason hundred of pages and accounts linked to Iran. Iran believes that such moves are in violation of "freedom of expression," a principle which the West pretends to advocate.



### Headlines

**Maduro says tankers symbol of Iran, Venezuela's 'courage, freedom'**

**Defender of Palestinian rights should be vigilant not to fall in political traps: expert**

**Iran stock market attracts \$8.3 billion in 2 months**

CALL TO PRAYER TIME IN ISFAHAN

**Morning call to prayer:**

04:21:37

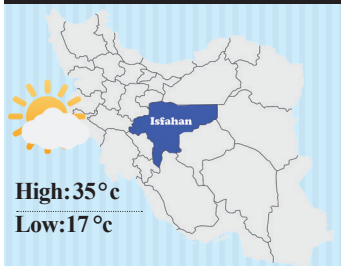
**Noon call to prayer:**

13:00:34

**Evening call to prayer:**

20:22:52

### WEATHER



High: 35°C

Low: 17°C



**Resistance strategy the only option against terrorism, occupation: Iran**

Iran's Foreign Ministry stressed that resistance strategy is the only option against terrorism, occupation, and hegemony and will be a path for liberation of Quds. "Congratulations to Lebanese government and people on the 20th anniversary of victory over Zionists, and their expulsion from south of Lebanon. Resistance strategy is the only option against terrorism, occupation, hegemony and will be a path for liberation of Quds and all other occupied territories," Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a tweet on the Eid of resistance and the anniversary of the victorious liberation of southern Lebanon from the Zionist aggressors.



## Oil prices rise on supply cut hopes, easing of coronavirus lockdowns

## Novavax Begins Human Trials with Potential COVID19- Vaccine in Australia

A US biotechnology company began injecting a coronavirus vaccine candidate into people in Australia on Tuesday with hopes of releasing a proven vaccine this year.

Novavax will inject 131 volunteers in the first phase of the trial testing the safety of the vaccine and looking for signs of its effectiveness, the company's research chief Dr. Gregory Glenn said. About a dozen experimental vaccines against the coronavirus are in early stages of testing or poised to start, mostly in China, the US and Europe. It's not clear that any will prove safe and effective. But many work in different ways, and are made with different technologies, increasing the odds that at least one approach might succeed. "We are in parallel making doses, making vaccine in anticipation that we'll be able to show it's working and be able to start deploying it by the end of this year," Glenn told a virtual news conference in Melbourne from Novavax' headquarters in Maryland. Animal testing suggested the vaccine

is effective in low doses. Novavax could manufacture at least 100 million doses this year and 1.5 billion in 2021, he said. Manufacture of the vaccine, named NVX-CoV2373, was being scaled up with \$388 million invested by Norway-based Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations since March, Glenn said. The results of the first phase of clinical trials in Melbourne and Brisbane are expected to be known in July, Novavax said. Thousands of candidates in several countries would then become involved in a second phase. The trial began with six volunteers being injected with the potential vaccine in Melbourne on Tuesday, said Paul Griffin, infectious disease expert with Australian collaborator Nucleus Network. Most of the experimental vaccines in progress aim to train the immune system to recognize the "spike" protein that studs the coronavirus' outer surface, priming the body to react if it was exposed to the real virus. Some candidates are made using just the genetic code for that protein, and others use a harmless virus to deliver the protein-producing information. Still other vaccine candidates are more old-fashioned, made with dead, whole virus.

Some candidates are made using just the genetic code for that protein, and others use a harmless virus to deliver the protein-producing information.

## World Health Organization Warns of 'Second Peak' in Areas Where COVID19- Declining

Countries where coronavirus infections are declining could still face an "immediate second peak" if they let up too soon on measures to halt the outbreak, the World Health Organization said on Monday.

We may get a second peak in this wave.

The world is still in the middle of the first wave of the coronavirus outbreak, WHO emergencies head Dr. Mike Ryan told an online briefing, noting that while cases are declining in many countries they are still increasing in Central and South America, South Asia and Africa. Ryan said epidemics often come in waves, which means that outbreaks could come back later this year in places where the first wave has subsided. There was also a chance that infection rates could rise again more quickly if measures to halt the first wave were lifted too soon. "When we speak about a second wave classically what we often mean is there will be a first wave of the disease by itself, and

then it recurs months later. And that may be a reality for many countries in a number of months' time," Ryan said, Reuters reported. "But we need also to be cognizant of the fact that the disease can jump up at any time. We cannot make assumptions that just because the disease is on the way down now it is going to keep going down and we get a number of months to get ready for a second wave. We may get a second peak in this wave." He said countries in Europe and North America should "continue to put in place the public health and social measures, the surveillance measures, the testing measures and a comprehensive strategy to ensure that we continue on a downwards trajectory and we don't have an immediate second peak." Many European countries and US states have taken steps in recent weeks to lift lockdown measures that curbed the spread of the disease but caused severe harm to economies.

## Asia Replacing US as Center of Global Power: Top EU Diplomat

The European Union's top diplomat called for the 27-nation bloc to have a "more robust strategy" toward China amid signs that Asia is replacing the United States as the center of global power. The EU foreign affairs chief, Josep Borrell, told a gathering of German ambassadors Monday that "analysts have long talked about the end of an American-led system and the arrival of an Asian century." "This is now happening in front of

our eyes," he said, according to AP. Borrell said the COVID-19 pandemic could be seen as a turning point in the power shift from West to East and that, for the EU, the "pressure to choose sides is growing." He said the bloc "should follow our own interests and values and avoid being instrumentalized by one or the other." Although China's rise is "impressive," Borrell said, current relations between Brussels and Beijing weren't always based on trust, transparency and reciprocity. Borrell said, "We only have a chance if we deal with China with collective discipline," noting that

an upcoming EU-China summit this fall could be an opportunity to do so. "We need a more robust strategy for China," he added, "which also requires better relations with the rest of democratic Asia." Speaking at the same conference, held by video-link this year because of the coronavirus, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas echoed Borrell's call for greater transparency from China, an issue that has come to the fore over Beijing's information policy during the early stages of the virus outbreak. Germany takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the EU in July.

## Iranian delegation due in Afghanistan to probe Harirud incident

A high-ranking Iranian delegation will arrive in Kabul today to conduct investigations on Harirud incident, which led to the death of a number of Afghan migrants near the Iran-Afghanistan border in early May. The delegation comprises deputy foreign minister Mohsen Baharvand, foreign ministry Director-General for West-Asia Seyyed Rasoul Mousavi and the

representative of Iranian border guards. On May 1, some claims surfaced in media reports that Iranian border guards had tortured and thrown as many as 57 Afghans into the Hari River (Harirud) in western Herat province to prevent their illegal entry into Iran. The Khaama Press News Agency said at least 23 of them drowned in Harirud. Tehran has roundly rejected the claims, saying the incident took place on the Afghan side of the border and Iranian forces had no role in the incident. Iran has extensive evidence that the incident has not happened on its borders. According to Iran's Foreign

Ministry Spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi, the confirmed reports received from the border guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran show that such an incident has not occurred on the mentioned date and location. He noted that Iran has not been associated with Afghan migrants and the claims of transferring people to camps or inhumane treatment are completely baseless. He added that due to weather conditions of the region, not a single Afghan citizen entered the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran on that date. The two countries have agreed to hold joint meetings to discuss the matter.



