



UKRAINE
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13 May 2020

Ukrainian Prime Minister presents strategy of quarantine weakening

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal presented a brief strategy of gradual weakening of the quarantine for the period from early May by early July. He also promised to report a more detailed plan, which is now being drawn up, in three or four weeks. "This plan is under work, in fact we are working over it round the clock. As soon as it is ready and improved, it will be immediately presented to the public. Believe me, it would be one of the best plan among our neighboring states. It has credit holidays, and refinancing of loans, support for poor and unemployed," the premier said. According to his brief strategy, the first quarantine step called "Ukraine is going to work" is foreseen for early May – early June. It involves the creation of 500,000 jobs, credit support for small and medium-sized businesses, partial removal of restrictions on public transport and a shifted work schedule. The second stage named "New standards of social life" is scheduled for early June-early July. During this period, it is planned to complete the 2019-2020 school year, restore the operation of public transport according to the new rules, allow access to recreation areas, subject to safety standards, and to weaken isolation conditions for older people. Shmyhal emphasized that while Ukraine should adhere to the emergency regime in order to pass the epidemic according to the optimistic scenario with a drop in GDP to 5%, and not according to the pessimistic one, in which GDP fall is estimated at 15%.

HEADLINES



KYIV-BASED RAUTA DEVELOPS DESIGN OF PREFABRICATED MOBILE HOSPITALS



SOME UKRAINIAN BUSINESSMEN DEVELOPING CASINO PROJECTS



UKRAINIAN RDS GROUP READY TO PROVIDE 850 JOBS



UKRAINE INCREASES POWER EXPORTS BY 33% IN Q1



UKRAINE EXPORTS 48 MLN TONNES OF GRAIN SINCE START OF MARKETING YEAR



NOVA POSHTA GLOBAL STARTS DELIVERIES FROM CHINA'S ALIEXPRESS BY TRUCKS

Fire near Chernobyl totally extinguished

The fire beds near the resettled towns of Prypyat and Chernobyl in the exclusion zone of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant have been extinguished, there is no smoldering now, said speaker of the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Situations Service in Kyiv region Viktoriya Ruban.

"Indeed, there were fire beds near Prypyat and Chernobyl, but everything was localized, extinguished and at the moment there is not even smoldering there," she said on the Ukraine 24 TV.

Spokesperson of the regional department of State Emergency Service added that the houses of the settlers, who live in the exclusion zone, have not been damaged following the fire.

According to her, the fire really came closer to the villages where people lived, but these houses have been saved.

Ukraine and UAE agree to begin work on common investment projects

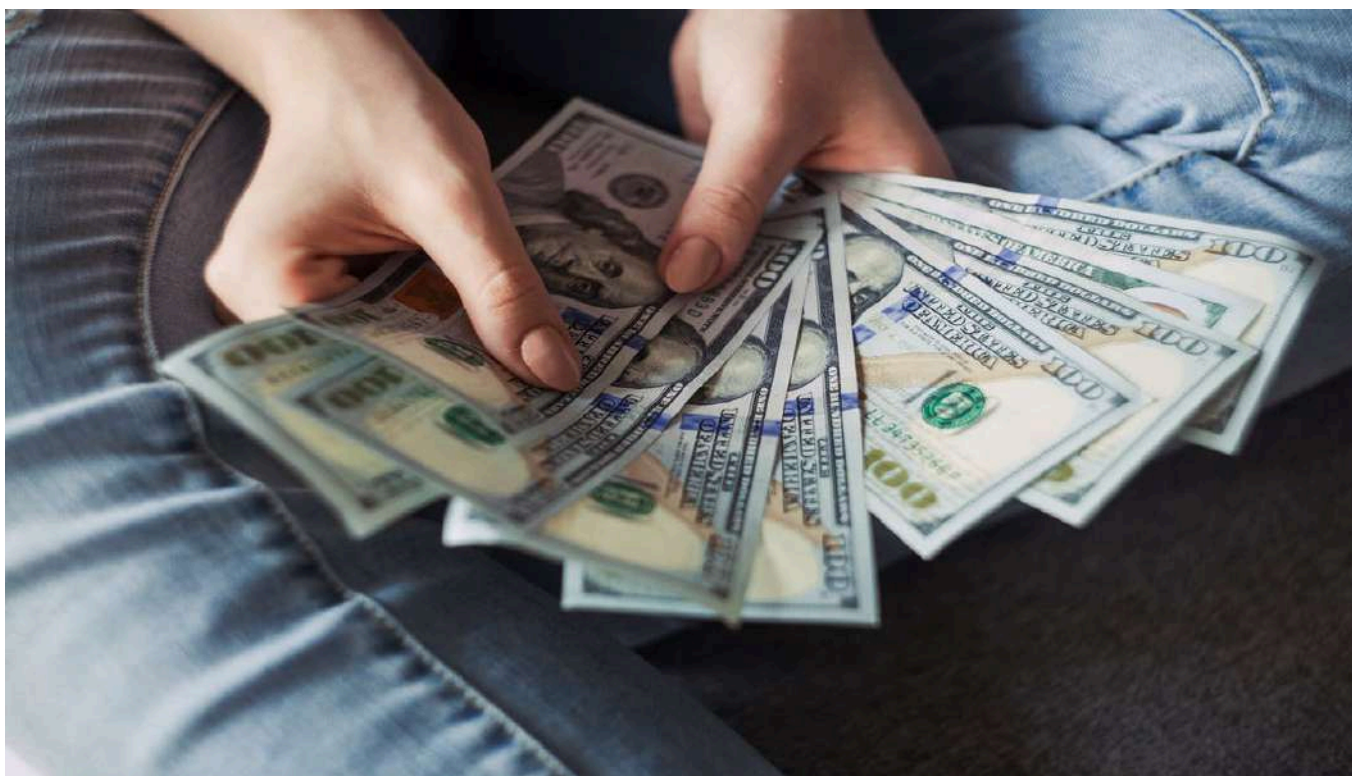
Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a telephone conversation agreed to start work on common investment projects, the Foreign Ministry reports.



"We should focus on the implementation of investment projects with Ukraine in priority areas. We will work on a synergy of opportunities between Ukraine and the UAE to strengthen global food security," the Foreign Ministry press service said citing Kuleba.

Kuleba, according to the agreements of the leaders of Ukraine and the UAE, reached during the telephone conversation on April 13, noted his readiness to intensify cooperation in investment, trade and economic spheres between Ukraine and the UAE.

Kuleba thanked the UAE for the humanitarian aid provided, as well as for helping bring back more than 3,000 Ukrainian citizens from the UAE and in transit from other regions of the world.



Enterprises and organizations of Ukraine raise pretax profit by 26% in 2019



The enterprises and organizations of Ukraine in 2019 increased pretax profit from ordinary activities by 26%, to UAH 422.2 billion, the State Statistics Service has said. According to the service, last year Ukrainian enterprises that worked profitably received UAH 596.3 billion in profit, which is 10.3% more than in 2018.

At the same time, 21.7% of enterprises worked with a negative financial result. Their losses in 2019 decreased by 15.3% compared to 2018, to UAH 174.1 billion.

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Number of unemployed in Ukraine amid quarantine up to 2.5 mln people – UCCI

The number of unemployed in Ukraine in the first two weeks of quarantine increased by 500,000-700,000 people, over the next two weeks, in April, by another 500,000-600,000 people, to 2.5-2.8 million people, the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) has said.

“According to the estimates of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the unemployment rate today is 13.7-15.4%. This is the highest rate in the last 15 years,” the press service said citing president of the chamber Hennadiy Chizhikov.

This figure does not take into account the number of labor migrants who returned to Ukraine after the start of pandemic, he added.

About 4 million people were employed in the “stopped” industries, he said.

“A survey of companies conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry shows that 26% of them plan to reduce staff, another 30% have not made a final decision,” the expert said.

According to the agency, the total amount of support for businesses through tax exemption in March and April stood at UAH 9.3 billion, of which UAH 900 million was support for small businesses, which suffered the largest losses during quarantine.



Ukrainian Revealing Information sets up Business Support Center

Nationwide legal association Revealing Information has set up the Business Support Center. The Center will provide businesses with support to fight illegal seizures, which have become a burning issue during the emergency situation and quarantine.

According to the Justice Ministry, the number of illegal seizures through making amendments to state registers has increased by 16 times during the quarantine.

Managing Partner of the Revealing Information Law Firm Oleksandr Keyer said that today both the society and businesses experience an intensive turbulence.



"The number of fraud cases is growing in Ukraine. The Justice Ministry has officially reported an increase in the number of illegal seizure attempts by dozens of times. We also can see such a trend. The situation is getting even worse due to uncertainty about the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease and its influence on business and economy. We are doing the utmost to stay one step ahead and, in particular, for this reason our company has set up the Business Support Center right now," Keyer said.

The Business Support Center of the Revealing Information Law Firm will provide services to protect businesses by all available legal means, including security and prevention measures, represent them in court, provide them with legal support while concluding agreements during the quarantine, and so on.

Revealing Information is a nationwide legal association of broad-based experts providing services to protect the rights of victims of all types of offenses, fraud and banditry.

The association's services include legal business support, analytical and information work, security measures to counter raiding, customer support in criminal, commercial and civil disputes, and more.

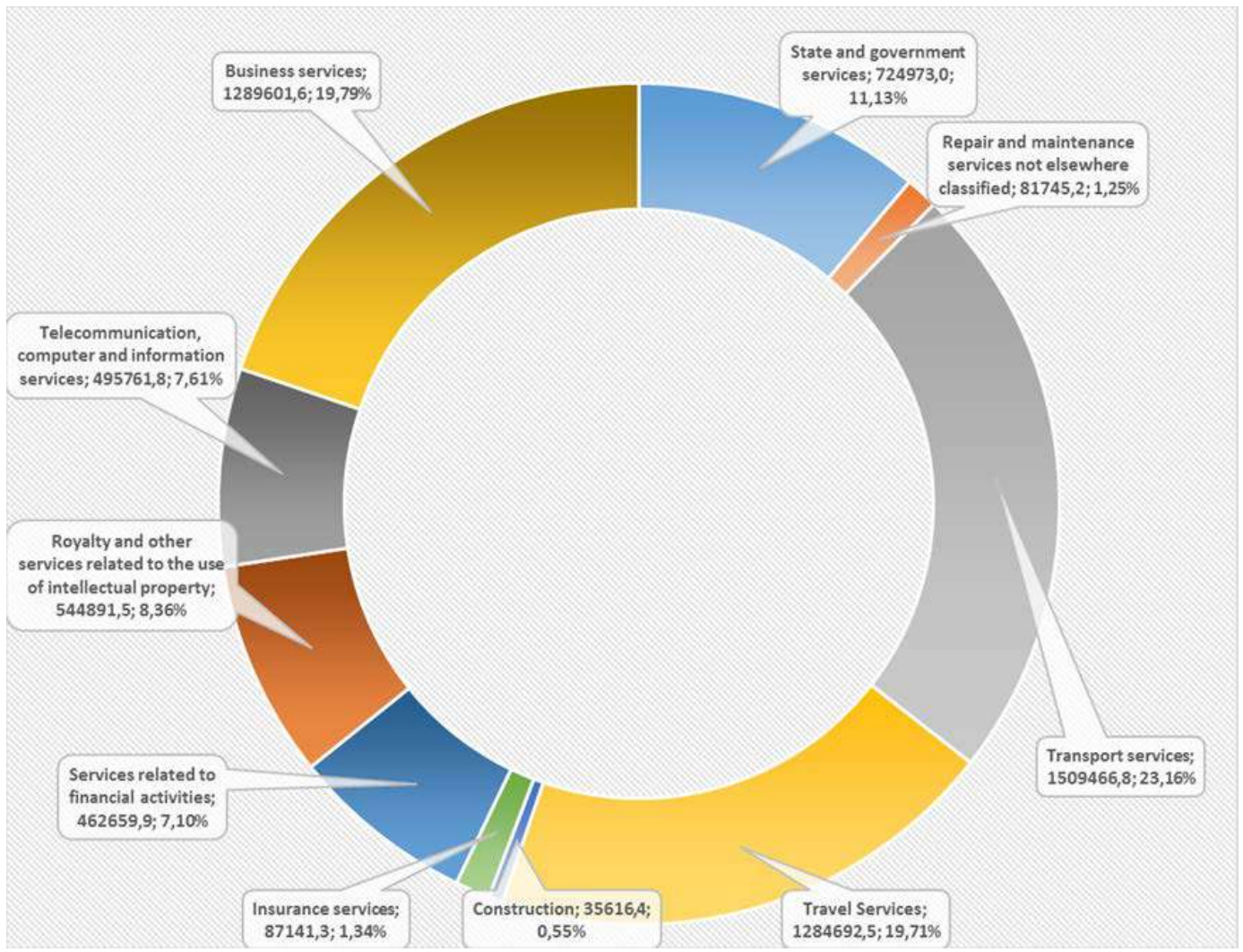
Italy allows Ryanair 28 flights between cities of Italy and Ukraine

Italian aviation authorities granted Ryanair, the Irish low-cost airline, temporary rights to operate 28 weekly flights between the cities of Italy and Ukraine until July 13, 2020, the National Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC) has said on its website.

Ryanair was allowed to fly to Kyiv from Bergamo, Bologna, Rome, and Catania; to Odesa and Lviv from Rome, Bergamo and Bologna; and also to Kharkiv from Bergamo.

Earlier, Ryanair announced the cancellation of most of its flights from March 24. At the same time, the carrier does not expect to resume flights in April and May due to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) spread and the introduction of significant restrictions on flights by various European countries.

Structure of import of services to Ukraine in 2019



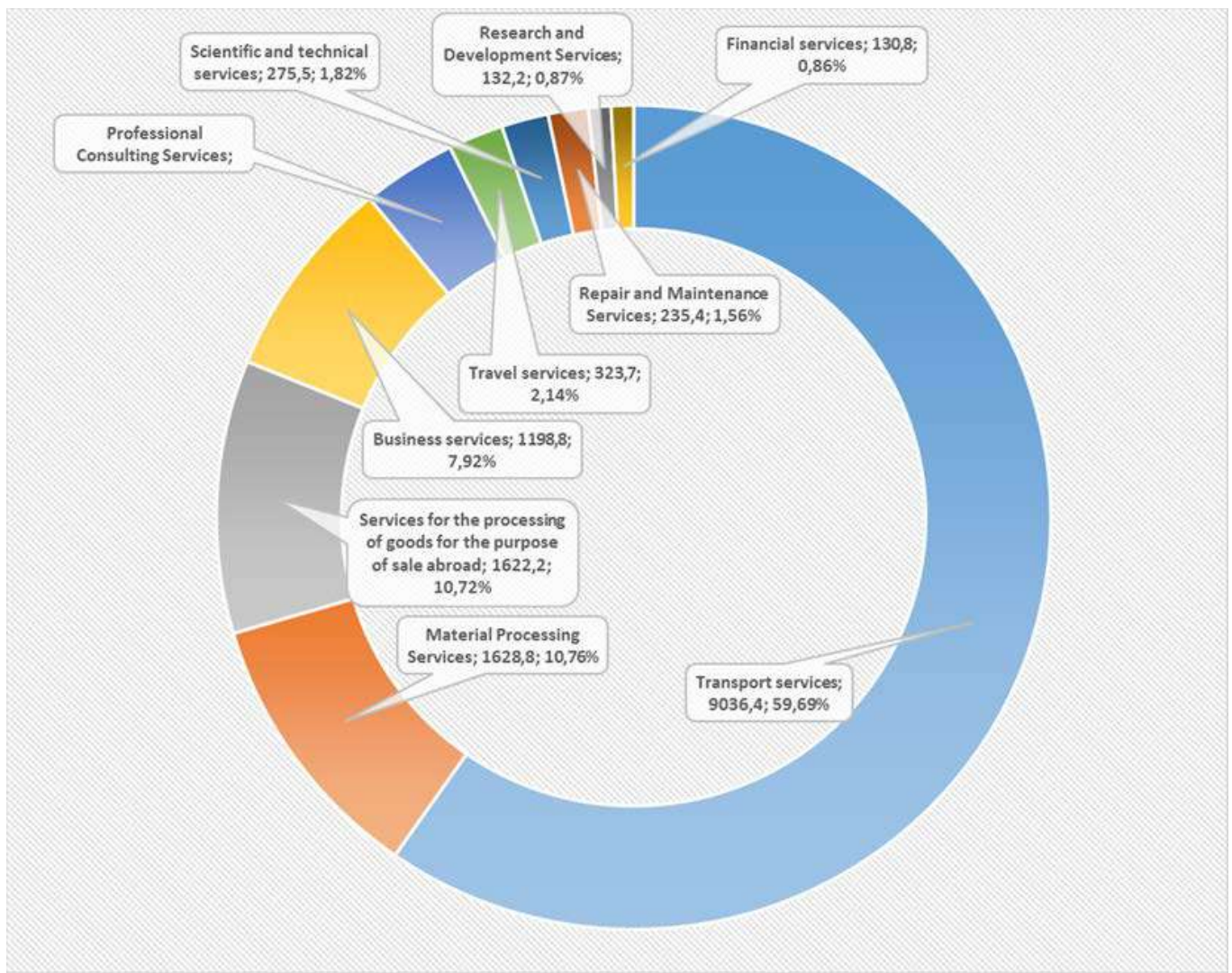
Biosphere plans to launch diaper production in Ukraine

Biosphere Corporation has postponed the launch of the diaper production line with Italian equipment for a month, but plans to start the mass production of diapers in May, the corporation's press service has told Interfax-Ukraine.

"Despite the quarantine and the impossibility of the Italians to visit our factory in Dnipro, our specialists remotely learned how to assemble, understood the process and assembled the equipment within a month. It will be launched a few weeks later than planned, but we are already preparing to launch it," the press service said. The corporation invested in Italian equipment for that line, the installation of which was postponed due to quarantine in Italy.



Structure of export of services from Ukraine in 2019



Ukrainian Microkhim wants to start production of generic to treat coronavirus disease

Ukrainian pharmaceutical company Microkhim (Rubizhne, Luhansk region) is ready to start production of a generic antiviral drug to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by the end of the year, Microkhim Director General Ihor Pohromsky has said in an interview with the Uriadovy Kurier government's newspaper. "Now the key point is that we are transporting the substance. In the near future we will expose it to comprehensive analytical control, develop a dosage form and establish and conduct bioequivalence clinical trials. There is a lot of work ahead. There is a lot of professional work that we can do, but it has terms and limitations. However, the situation is such that, despite quarantine, we are ready to work to provide the country with a domestic drug this year, and I am sure that we will be first among national manufacturers, who will develop it," he said, adding that it comes to the production of generic Avigan.

According to Pohromsky, "the drug was developed in Japan against several influenza viruses in 2014, and in 2015 it passed the third phase of clinical trials in the United States. It happened so that it was tested during an epidemic in Wuhan, and later allowed for experimental use in Italy against COVID-19".



Kyiv-based Rauta develops design of prefabricated mobile hospitals

Kyiv-based Rauta Group LLC, in cooperation with the Confederation of Builders of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Steel Construction Center, has developed a design of prefabricated mobile hospital, which can be constructed within two weeks.

The company said that a mobile hospital has enough space for accommodation of 72 patients and comfortable conditions for work of medical staff. The construction contains two autonomous zones with wards for patients in moderate and critical condition, as well as an intensive care unit, offices for the chief doctor and head nurse, rest rooms for the staff and other premises.



The hospital structure consists of prefabricated sandwich panels which meet all construction standards, sanitary requirements, safety regulations and energy efficiency standards. The design of the building provides a possibility to use renewable energy sources such as solar panels and heat pumps.

Technologies and materials which are highly resistant to viruses, bacterium and frequent sanitation are used in the structure.

The life-time cycle of such a building is more than 30 years.

General Manager of Rauta Group Andriy Ozeychuk said that the project is highly optimized for using ready-made solutions that can be mounted manually without use of wet processes and welding.



“If necessary, such a modular hospital can be easily disassembled and moved to another region, as well as expanded or converted for other purposes,” he said.



Ozeychuk also stressed that “the project of a domestic company should draw attention of the Health Ministry for systemic response to challenges of the pandemic, as well as for the elimination of negative influence of any epidemics and disasters on Ukrainian citizens in future.”

Rauta Group was set up in 2014. Its core business is the design of constructions, supply and assembly of construction materials. The company has a license for the construction of facilities with medium (CC2) and high (CC3) consequences.

Some Ukrainian businessmen developing casino projects

Kharkiv Palace five-star hotel belonged to businessman Oleksandr Yaroslavsky and Vertex Hotel Group, which operates President Hotel in Kyiv and Bristol, Londonskaya and Formula Wellness Spa in Odesa, are developing projects to launch casinos in their premises.

"The casino project we have been working for a long time, it is necessary that the legislative framework has come to a logical conclusion. We have experience on the use of our premises with potential investors. And this crisis does not stop these plans," General Manager of Kharkiv Palace Hotel Atis Zaharans said during the online conference entitled "Hotel Market in Crisis."

The facility has 171 rooms, three restaurants, and large conference rooms.



"At present, we continue to work, but we have removed part of the rooms to save money. We have saved only those rooms that are necessary. We serve all guests through the room service, since all the restaurants and bars are closed, as well as the spa center... Only several rooms are occupied, no more than a dozen or two," Zaharans said.

According to Regional Director of Vertex Hotel Group Olena Varivoda, the company is also working on a project to open a casino in the hotel's area, without indicating which one.

"We have the opportunity to open a casino in the hotel. There is a project that we are working on, an additional service – a casino – in our area. Project work is underway to prepare this part of the hotel," she said.

She also added that since the beginning of quarantine in Ukraine, Vertex Hotel Group immediately closed hotels such as Londonskaya and Formula Wellness Spa. At the end of March, the President Hotel in Kyiv was closed, and at the beginning of April, the Odesa Bristol was closed too.



Ukrainian RDS group ready to provide 850 jobs

The RDS group of road construction companies is ready to provide 850 jobs to Ukrainians returning from abroad, as well as to all people who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, co-owner of the group Yuriy Shumakher has said.

"Our team has more than 1,200 employees. And we will be glad to welcome about 850 new specialists to work in eight regions of Ukraine, where we build roads and important infrastructure facilities," he told Interfax-Ukraine.

According to him, the coronavirus not only threatens the health of people, it also robs them of their work, confidence in the future.



"The construction industry is not quarantined! And we want to provide jobs for those who need it most," he said.

The Ukrainian group of companies RDS includes Kyivshliakhbud and Rostdorstroy. Its core business is construction, modernization and maintenance of roads and bridges, construction of airfield complexes.

The company is building concrete road H-14 Kropyvnytsky-Mykolaiv. As part of the reconstruction of the H-31 Dnipro-Reshetylivka highway in Poltava region, RDS is building an overpass over the railway and the section of the first concrete road in Ukraine. In 2019, the company won a World Bank tender for work on the first category highway M-03 Kyiv-Kharkiv-Dovzhansky.

As of April 2020, the company operates in eight regions of Ukraine and has ten production facilities.

The ultimate beneficial owners of RDS are Ukrainian citizens Yuriy Shumakher and Yevhen Konovalov.



DTEK plans to construct energy storage system at Zaporizhia thermal power plant

DTEK energy holding intends to implement a pilot project to construct the Energy Storage system at Zaporizhia thermal power plant (TPP) by the end of 2020, DTEK CEO Maksym Tymchenko has said.

"Now, we have actually started the pilot project on energy storage at Zaporizhia TPP. Even despite of the current crisis, we believe that this is a very important direction. I hope that this project will be implemented by the end of the year and we will develop energy storage technologies," he said.

Tymchenko said that containerized solutions for gas power generation based on DTEK's TPPs are also being considered, which will be able to meet the needs of balancing.

Donbasenergo increases payments to budget by 2.3 times

PJSC Donbasenergo transferred UAH 69.7 million of taxes and other obligatory payments to the national and local budgets in March 2020, which is 2.3 times (by UAH 30.1 million) more than in March 2019.

According to the company's press release, UAH 69.5 million was transferred to the national budget (VAT, environmental tax, fee for special use of water resources, other taxes of the national level), and UAH 300,000 (land tax, immovable property tax, etc.) were paid to the local budget of Donetsk region.

Donbasenergo owns Starobesheve (located in the occupied territory) and Sloviansk thermal power plants (TPP) with the total installed capacity of 2,880 MW, in particular the capacity of Sloviansk TPP is 880 MW. At the end of March 2017, the generation company announced the loss of control over the operation of Starobesheve TPP, as well as part of structural units located in the temporarily uncontrolled territory.



Ukraine increases power exports by 33% in q1

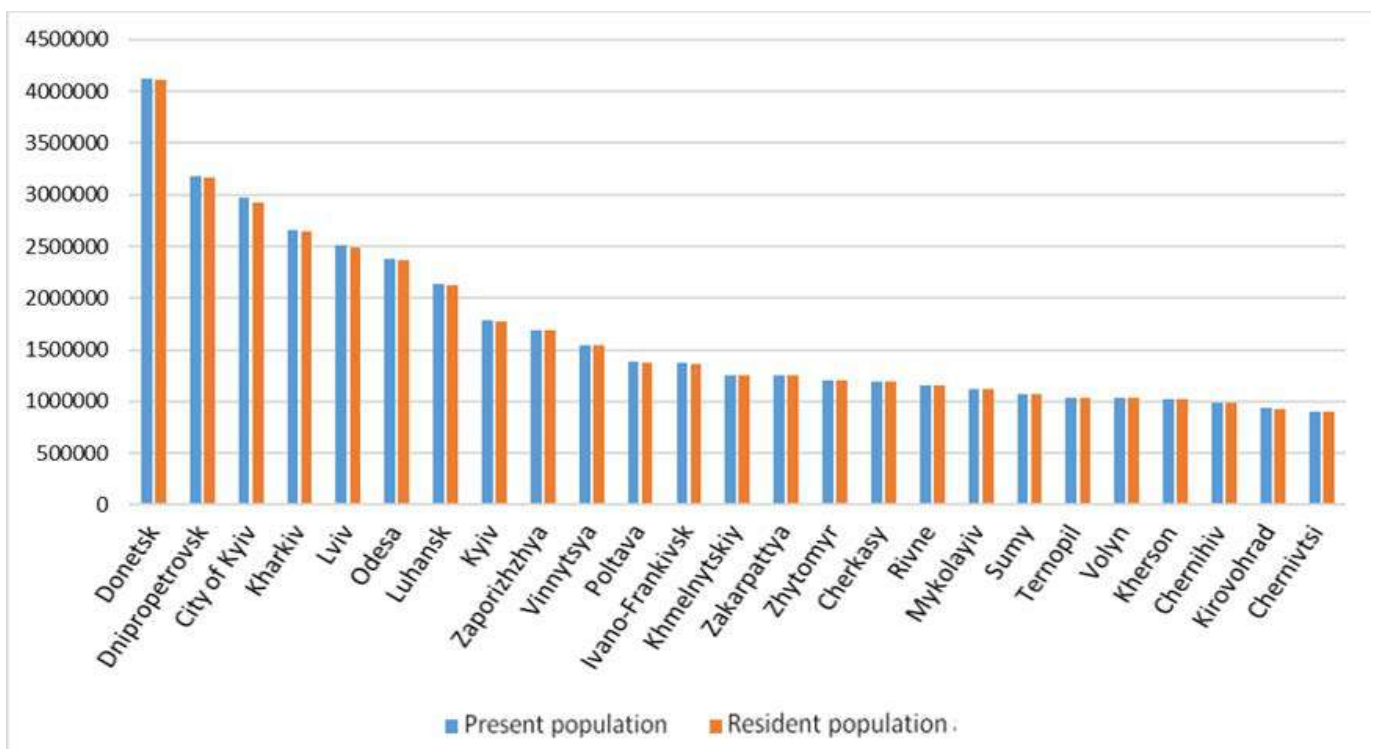
Ukraine in January-March 2020 increased its electricity exports by 33% or 548.9 million kWh year-over-year, to 2.211 billion kWh, the Energy and Environmental Protection Ministry of Ukraine has told Interfax-Ukraine. Electricity supplies from the Burshtyn TPP energy island to Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania rose by 57.9%, to 1.622 billion kWh.

Exports to Poland grew by 11.9%, to 459.2 million kWh. Exports to Moldova fell by 42.1%, to 130.3 million kWh. Ukraine imported 1.554 billion kWh of electricity in January-March 2020, including 909 million kWh from Slovakia, 371.8 million kWh from Hungary, 149.6 million kWh from Belarus, 70.2 million kWh from Romania, and 53.4 million kWh from the Russian Federation.

Due to crossflows related to the parallel work of the Integrated Power System (IPS) in Ukraine and systems in bordering countries (accounted for under contracts signed by Energomarket), Ukraine imported 14.5 million kWh of energy from Russia and 200,000 kWh from Belarus.



Ukrainian population by regions as of Jan 31, 2020



Ukraine increases cheese import by 2.5 times in q1

Ukraine in January-March 2020 exported 1,210 tonnes of cheese, which is 26.5% less than in the same period in 2019.

According to the State Customs Service, in monetary terms exports decreased by 20.3% and amounted to \$4.67 million.

The import of cheese in the first quarter of 2020 grew by 2.5 times, to 10,210 tonnes, in monetary terms 2.4 times, to \$45.2 million.

Export of Ukrainian butter decreased by 47.4%, to 3,100 tonnes, in money terms by 39.3%, to \$14.48 million. Import of the products in the reporting period amounted to 2,790 tonnes (\$12.03 million) compared to 211 tonnes (\$1.44 million) for the first quarter of 2019.



Сирне коронівство

Ukrainian Ovostar enters Israeli market

Ovostar Union, a leading egg and egg products manufacturer in Ukraine, supplied 466,000 eggs or 40 tonnes to Israel in April, which is 0.003% of its monthly production volume, the company's press service has told Interfax-Ukraine.

"Israel is a country with high requirements for safety and quality of food, and we are proud that our products passed the control of the Israeli veterinary service, and we have the opportunity to supply eggs to this market. Israel is currently experiencing a shortage of this product, and, in addition to Ukraine, buys eggs in other European countries. On April 1, 2020, the Israeli Veterinary Service allowed producers of table eggs from Ukraine to export them to the country," the company said.

Ovostar Union said that the company has been consistently implementing its export development strategy since 2015.



MaxEvents presents a new online speaking club and business English course

Kyiv-based company MaxEvents, which specializes in public event and communications management, presents a new format of learning business English during the quarantine.

The course titled "Nothing Personal, Just Business English" will be held in the format of a speaking club according to the 90/10 principle, which means that students will get 90% of speaking opportunities during the course and 10% will be given to the teacher.

Marketing and public relations, recruiting and HR management, retail and real estate market trends, online sales, pitch decks for investors and many other important issues will be discussed during the classes.

The course will become a platform for intensive training of speaking skills in business English, vocabulary development and learning how to keep up any business conversation with foreign colleagues.

The speaking club is open for new active students. The groups will consist of a maximum of ten people so that each student can have a speaking opportunity during a live business discussion.

If you are not ready for speaking yet, you can join the classes as a listener with access to all materials of the course and an opportunity to upgrade to the status of speaker.

The course includes 20 online classes on the Zoom platform.

The course will be held by Maryana Kushnir, a business English teacher and communications specialist with 20 years of work experience in international companies and organizations.

The course fee is UAH 3,900.

Payments are accepted from both legal entities and individuals.

www.maxevents.info

+38(67)9705259

prmaxevents@gmail.com



Discount shop chain ATB plans to open 100 stores in 2020

TB-Market LLC (Dnipro), owning the discount shop chain in Ukraine and part of the ATB Corporation, is not intending to adjust its plan to open new stores for 2020, Director General of ATB Corporation Borys Markov has said in a statement. "We do not change the plans for the opening of stores in 2020 we are working according to plan. However, everything will depend on the depth of the economic crisis and the quarantine period. Our plan is to open 100 stores. We have a different cycle [than other retailers], 90% of the stores that we planned to open this year were purchased in 2019 and are in different state of preparation of documents, repair, or construction," he said during the retail company anti-crisis management online webinar.

"We have 10% of the stores for rent and almost 100,000 square meters of vacant space that we lease. Thus, we operate responding to the current situation, without waiting for any decisions from Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry or laws, we negotiated with everyone and tried to make compromises," he said.



According to Markov, 90% of ATB's retail space is owned by the company, part of the vacant space is rented by the retailer, thus, when quarantine was introduced, the company negotiated with the landlords and its tenants about the rental benefits. Markov also said that one of the main challenges when quarantine was introduced was to cope with large fluctuations and falling in demand of buyers.

Ukrainian MHP increases net profit by 1.7 times in 2019 to \$215 mln

MHP
MYRONIVSKY HLIBOPRODUCT

The net profit of Myronivsky Hliboproduct agricultural holding (MHP) in 2019 increased by 1.7 times compared to 2018, to \$215 million. According to a company report on the London Stock Exchange's website, its revenue last year increased by 32%, to \$2.06 billion, due to the increased sales of chicken, vegetable oil and semi-finished products, as well as the purchase of PP. Export revenue amounted to \$1.19 billion, which is 58% of total revenue (60% in 2018). Export revenue increased by 28% compared to 2018 due to the growth in sales of grain, vegetable oil and meat products.

Last year, MHP's gross profit decreased by 6%, to \$398 million, operating profit by 31%, to \$216 million. The agricultural holding's EBITDA in 2019 decreased by 16%, to \$376 million, EBITDA margin to 18% from 29%. This was due to low prices (both for crops and chicken), adverse weather conditions and the significant strengthening of the hryvnia.



Spring field works in Ukraine in line with schedule

Economic advisor to the Ukrainian President Oleh Ustenko and representatives of the Ukrainian agricultural and chemical industries at a Tuesday meeting discussed the situation in agriculture during the spring sowing campaign and ways to achieve high harvest figures in Ukraine in the conditions of the emergency situation caused by the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

President of the Ukrainian Agrarian Confederation Leonid Kozachenko said that now spring field work is in line with the schedule. Representatives of the agricultural sector said that many agricultural segments now need support from the state.

According to the president's press service, Ukrainian president's envoy for land affairs Roman Leschenko said that there are three key things that could be achieved for Ukrainian farmers this year.

"The first is that government support in the amount of UAH 4 billion is left, despite the budget outlay reduction plan. The second is the adoption of a basic land law, on the basis of which a series of regulatory legal acts will be adopted in the coming months that will restore order in land relations. The third is that the president of Ukraine is quickly responding to the situation with food security," the press service said.

According to Leschenko, Ukraine has sufficient volumes to fully ensure its own grain consumption and the implementation of export contracts.



Ukraine exports 48 mln tonnes of grain since start of marketing year

Ukraine since the beginning of the marketing year 2019/2020 (MY, July-June) and as of April 15, 2020 had exported 48.14 million tonnes of grain and legumes, which is 8.45 million tonnes more than on the same date past MY.

According to the information and analytical portal of the agro-industrial complex of Ukraine, to date, the country has exported 18.35 million tonnes of wheat, 24.6 million tonnes of corn, and 4.52 million tonnes of barley.

As of April 15 of this year, some 285,920 tonnes of flour had been also exported.

As reported, Ukraine in the 2018/2019 MY exported a record 50.4 million tonnes of grain, legumes and flour, which is 23% more than in the previous MY.

Nova Poshta Global starts deliveries from China's Aliexpress by trucks

Nova Poshta Global, a part of the Nova Poshta Group, has started delivering parcels from China's AliExpress trading platform to Ukraine by trucks. The press service of the company said on Tuesday that last week a truck with parcels from AliExpress departed from the Chinese city of Urumchi and overcame the distance of around 6,000 kilometers before reaching the sorting center in Kyiv on May 12.

The truck delivered 7,467 parcels from AliExpress for Nova Poshta clients.

"The pilot shipment showed that it is possible to meet the planned time of delivery by truck. In general, the journey from Urumchi to Warsaw took six days and the two more days to Kyiv. The transit and customs did not take a long time. We continue introducing the multimodal delivery services and testing new means of transport and routes in order to make delivery time as short as possible for our customers," the press service quoted Nova Poshta Global CEO Yuriy Benevytsky as saying.

Now the company can deliver parcels from AliExpress by air, railway and motor vehicles.

As reported, Nova Poshta Global noted a 28% increase in Ukrainians' orders from AliExpress compared to April last year.

Nova Poshta Global (formerly Nova Poshta International) has been providing international express delivery services since 2015, and is part of the Nova Poshta group of companies. Nova Poshta Global is developing the NP Shopping service – the delivery from online stores in the United States, China, Britain and Poland, provides import and export services for businesses and the ability to ship from any Nova Poshta branch to most countries of the world.

This digest is a mutual project of the Interfax-Ukraine News Agency and the Open4business.com.ua. Maksim Urakin is a project director of the Biweekly news digest of Open4business.com.ua.

Contact Info: urakin@interfax.kiev.ua, info@open4business.com.ua <https://www.facebook.com/ukraineopen4business>, <https://twitter.com/uaopen4business>

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Major sugar producer in Ukraine increases sales by 44% in q1

Astarta agricultural holding, major sugar producer in Ukraine, increased its sugar sales by 44% in January-March 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, to 77,560 tonnes, the company said at the Warsaw Stock Exchange on Tuesday, April 14.

According to the data, sales of wheat for the indicated period decreased by 68%, to 3,400 tonnes, corn by 17%, to 236,000 tonnes, sunflower oil by 99%, to 69 tonnes, soybean oil by 22%, to 11,140 tonnes, milk by 9%, to 23,640 tonnes.

Sales of soybean meal last year remained at the level of 2019 and were 46,860 tonnes.

According to the agricultural holding, average prices for sugar during the period decreased by 1%, wheat by 22%, corn by 6%, sunflower by 7%, soybean meal by 14%.

Government proposes to abolish import duty on cereals, vegetables

The Cabinet of Ministers proposes to the Verkhovna Rada to adopt the bill "On Amending the Customs Tariff of Ukraine regarding the temporary application of import duty rates on certain types of grain crops." Relevant bill No. 3310 was registered in parliament on April 7, 2020. The text of the bill is not yet available on the Rada's website. However, an informed source on the market, explained in a comment to Interfax-Ukraine that it was about canceling duties on the import of vegetables and cereals before July 1.

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