

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 124,075 With 199 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Senior Advisor to Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Asghar Khaji Said That Any Political Solution to Resolve the Yemeni Crisis Should Be Based on Yemeni People's Will And Rule Out Foreign Interference

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Iran Reportedly to Resume JCPOA Revival Talks on Thursday

TEHRAN (MNA) – According to Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, the JCPOA revival talks between Iran and P4+1 will be resumed in Brussels, the capital of Belgium on Thursday.

Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, explicitly stated that Iran would pursue Parliament's "Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions and Protect Rights of the People" during the nuclear negotiations, Alireza Salimi, a member of the presidium of the parliament said on Sunday.

Salimi made the remarks referring to a close session held in the presence of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Stressing that Americans must show good faith and honesty, Salimi added that Washington must take serious actions before negotiations.

Ahmad Alirezabeigi, an Iranian laws maker also referred to Amir-Abdollahian's remarks during the session, saying that the nuclear talks between Iran and P4+1 will be resumed in Brussels, the capital of Belgium on Thursday.

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Pakistan, Iran Urged To Devise Barter Trade Payment Mechanism

KARACHI (Dispatches) - President of Pakistan's FPCCI, Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo has urged the governments of Pakistan and Iran to come up with a payment mechanism based on barter trade. FPCCI chief also expressed his interest to understand the mechanism that how Iran and Iraq have achieved bilateral trade volume of \$18b annually.

Maggo stated this while meeting the delegates from Iran's business community, trade officials and ambassadorial staff at Federation House. He maintained that current level of merely \$1b bilateral trade is insufficient and the two brotherly countries can achieve \$5b mark within a short span if the right sectors are targeted and conducive policies formulated for trade facilitation.

The Iranian delegation headed by Ahmed Amirabadi Farahani, Chairman Iran-Pakistan Friendship Group put forward two proposals to enhance bilateral trade swiftly:

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Iran Trade With Neighbors Soars 52% in H1



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The value of Iran's non-oil trade with its 15 neighbors reached \$22.588 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22) and the figure showed a 52 percent rise year on year, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

The Islamic Republic traded over 47.222 million tons of commodities with the neighboring countries in the mentioned year, Ruhollah Latifi said.

According to the official, the volume of the traded goods in the mentioned period also increased by 37 percent compared to the figure for the previous year's same six months.

Iran traded a total of 79.104 million tons of non-oil products worth \$44.926 billion with its trade partners in the mentioned six months, he stated.

Trade with neighboring countries in the first half of the year accounted for 60 percent and 50 percent of the country's total non-oil trade during the said period, in terms of weight and value, respectively.

The country exported over 36.087 million tons of non-oil goods worth more than \$11.218 billion to the neighboring countries in the period under review, while importing more than 19.138 million tons of goods worth over \$11.369 billion.

Iraq was Iran's top export destination by importing \$3.840 billion worth of commodities from the Islamic Republic, while the lowest volume of exports was made to Saudi Arabia with only \$39,000, according to Latifi. Oman, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain were the other major destinations for Iran's exports.

On the other hand, the highest volume of Iran's imports from neighboring countries was made from the UAE with \$7.305 billion, followed by Turkey, Russia, Iraq, and Oman.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely UAE, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

According to IRICA, Iran currently exports non-oil commodities to 40 European countries, 21 Asian countries, 28 African countries, and 12 American countries, while importing from 41 European countries, 31 Asian countries, 12 American countries, and 11 countries in Africa.

India Has Right to 30% Stake in Iran Gas Field

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - An Indian consortium led by ONGC Videsh Ltd contractually has a right to take a 30 per cent interest in the Farzad-B gas field development in the Persian Gulf even after Iranian decision to award rights of the giant field to a local firm, top officials said.

In February, 2020, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) informed Indians about its intention to conclude the contract for Farzad-B development with an Iranian company. In May this year, it awarded a USD 1.78 billion contract to Petropars group.

"The field was discovered by the Indian consortium and naturally it was interested in bringing it to production and submitted a development plan. But Iranian government decided to go ahead with the project without a foreign participation," a government official with direct knowledge of the matter said.

This many believed was a set-back for India. "But all is not lost in the project. Contractually as the original licensee and someone who has discovered the field, the Indian consortium has a right to take a 30 per cent interest in the project involving development of reserves and production of gas," he said.

Expressing the Indian consortium's interest in the project, OVL on July 29, 2021, sought details of terms and conditions of the development contract. With NIOC not responding to this, OVL has again written a couple of weeks back seeking details, another official said.

"The contract is very strong and clear. The licensee, in this case the Indian consortium, at its election has the right to take a 30 per cent in the development project no matter who executes it," the first official said.

OVL, the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), holds a 40 per cent stake in the 3,500 square kilometer Farsi offshore exploration block in the Persian Gulf Iran. Indian Oil Corp (IOC) holds 40 per cent stake and the remaining 20 per cent is with Oil India Ltd (OIL).

The Exploration Service Contract (ESC) for the Block was signed on December 25, 2002 and OVL in 2008 made a giant discovery on the block, which was later rechristened as Farzad-B.

The field holds 23 trillion cubic feet of in-place gas reserves, of which about 60 per cent is recoverable. It also holds gas condensates of about 5,000 barrels per billion cubic feet of gas.

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ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian Zionists and the Sleeping World

It seems the Zionists feel immunity from any serious reaction from the international bodies and they continues boldly their crimes in different ways and the resistance front can be the only one which is determined to resist against these crimes and responds to them duely.

In recent weeks the Zionist regime has continued its atrocities and crimes like bombing and air raids and now it is reported this occupier regime is busy with occupying land of more Palestinians.

The American news agency the Associated Press (AP) in its recent report claimed, "Israel is quietly advancing illegal settlement construction projects in and around the city of al-Quds as the occupying entity remains wary of the administration U.S. President Joe Biden."

On Wednesday, Israeli foreign minister Yair Lapid met with U.S. officials in Washington, with discussions according to a regime official focusing primarily on Iran and Tel Aviv's ties with Arab states.

The Israeli official acknowledged that the Americans had raised the Israeli settlements issue, but stressed that Palestine was "not the dominant theme in the region" during the discussions.

On the same day, a local planning committee in al-Quds approved the expropriation of land for Givat Hamatos settlement, which would largely cut the city off from Palestinian communities in the southern West Bank.

The same committee also advanced plans for the construction of 470 homes in the existing East al-Quds settlement of Pisgat Zeev.

Additionally, a hearing would be held next month for another project to build 9,000 settler units in the Atarot area of East al-Quds, according to Ir Amim, an Israeli rights group that closely follows developments in the occupied city.

A military body has meanwhile scheduled two meetings in the coming weeks to discuss a planned settlement of 3,400 units on a barren hillside outside al-Quds known as E1.

Critics warn that the land grab policies would largely bisect the West Bank, making it impossible to establish an independent Palestinian state with East al-Quds as its capital and leaving millions of Palestinians living under permanent Israeli apartheid rule.

A body affiliated to the Israeli ministry of military affairs approves plans for 31 construction projects in West Bank settlements, the first such move under the occupying entity's new ruling coalition. **See Page 7**

Iran, Venezuela Continue Exchanging Oil Despite U.S. Sanctions

CARACAS (Dispatches)- Iran and Venezuela continue exchanging oil products despite U.S. sanctions on both countries, without any visible action by U.S. which tries to engage with both.

An Iran-flagged supertanker has sailed from Venezuelan waters carrying 2 million barrels of heavy crude provided by state-run oil firm PDVSA, according to documents seen by Reuters and vessel tracking services.

The shipment is part of a deal agreed by PDVSA and its counterpart National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) that exchanges Iranian condensate for Venezuela's Merey crude. The swaps aim to ease an acute shortage of diluents that has cut Venezuela's oil output and exports, Reuters reported last month.

In August 2020, the United States confiscated four Iranian fuel shipments that had been bound for Venezuela, disrupting at the time a key supply line for both Tehran and Caracas as they defied U.S. sanctions. In October 2020, US announced that it had sold the gasoline and refined oil.

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President to Address Iranian Nation Tonight

TEHRAN (IP) - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi will speak to the people in a live television program tonight after the 9-PM news of state TV Channel 1.

President official website said that Ebrahim Raisi will speak live to the people in his second televised address since the inauguration of the 13th administration tonight after 9 pm Tehran local time.

In this live TV program, the President will talk to the people about the important issues of the country as well as the plans of the 13th administration to solve the problems.

Europe Remains Inactive After U.S. Exit From JCPOA

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs said in a meeting with visiting secretary general of the Austrian Foreign Ministry that Europe did not make any effective move after the US exit from JCPOA

The fifth round of Iran-Austria Political Talks was held today (on Saturday) in Tehran, jointly headed by Ali Baqeri, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs and Peter Launsky-Tieffentha, Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs in the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister referred to the long record of the two countries' relations, considering it a precious asset for both Iran and Austria.

Baqeri also reviewed the latest developments in the region, including the situation in Afghanistan and Yemen, as well as Iran's contributions aimed at decreasing tension.

"The people of Yemen have been living under the most severe military invasion during the past five years and from the humanitarian point of the view it is expected that the European countries will take serious moves aimed at putting an end to the ongoing catastrophe there," said Baqeri.

The deputy foreign minister said that Iran is committed to its entire responsibilities, adding, "Although Europe did not exit from the JCPOA after the US irresponsible exit, but the EU did not make any effective and practical move to remain committed to its own responsibilities."



Launsky-Tieffentha, for his part, reiterated that the Iran-Austria ties are quite age-old, and said that the mutual respect and both sides' will for cooperation have made these relations fundamental for both nations.

He said that there are noticeable capacities in the economic ties of the two countries, announcing the Austrian companies' will for having presence in the Iranian market.

On Afghanistan, the Austrian diplomat emphasized that he understands Iran's worries regarding his country's hosting of the Afghan refugees, and appreciated Tehran's humanitarian concern.

On Yemen, he said that Austria by forwarding humanitarian aids as much as possible tries to ease the pains of Yemeni people as much as it can.

Majlis Passes Bill on Environmental Protection of Caspian Sea

TEHRAN (IP) - The parliamentarians on Sunday approved the protocol on the protection of biodiversity accession to the Convention on the Framework for the Protection of the Environment of the Caspian Sea.

The Lawmakers on Sunday's open session of the parliament during the review of the protocol for the protection of biodiversity accession to the Convention on the Caspian Sea Environment Protection Framework, with 193 votes in favor, 2 against, and 2 abstentions from a total of 241 MPs present approved the general points and details of the bill.

According to Article 1 of this bill, the Additional Biodiversity Protection Protocol to the Convention on the Caspian Sea Environmental Protection Framework was ratified and authorized to be exchanged.

In defense of the bill, MP Somayeh Rafiei said: "The Caspian Sea has 44 species, 24 of which are exclusive to Iran. Although about 2,000 tons of caviar can be harvested from this sea, in most cases this number has reached several hundred kilograms."

The MP stated that biodiversity in the Caspian Sea had faced many problems, even in Kilka fish, adding: "Dependence of people's livelihood on the Caspian Sea indicates the need to sign this protocol."

Mohammad Taghi Naqdali, while opposing the bill, said: "According to Article 1, 2 and 4 of the Constitution, international treaties and agreements must be ratified in the parliament."

Khomeini Shahr's representative added: "Throughout history, we have had many treaties, such as Treaty of Turkmenchay, which have plundered the interests of the nation, and for this reason, the MPs must be careful about all the provisions of the agreements."

Iran Navy Fends Off Pirate Attack On Iranian Oil Tanker

TEHRAN (PressTV) - An Iranian warship has successfully thwarted a pirate attack on an Iranian oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden following a heavy exchange of fire.

The pirates, in five speedboats, attacked the Iranian oil vessel early Saturday to hijack it but they were forced to escape following a heavy exchange of fire with the Iranian Navy's 78th flotilla of warships.

"The 78th naval fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran, consisting of the Alborz destroyer, was attacked by five pirate boats this morning while escorting two Iranian tankers," Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said in an interview, describing the incident as "maritime terrorism."

The commander said the pirates were forced to flee as the Iranian Navy's 78th flotilla intervened.

Tehran Backing Regional Peace, Security



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Condemning any actions that violate security throughout the region, Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that Iran backs peace and security in the region.

"The West Asian region is in a very sensitive situation today. Some complicated plans are underway to involve the countries of the region in civil wars," said the Majlis Speaker on Sunday session of the Parliament.

"Creating dispute between the countries of the region is on the agenda of the United States and its allies to prevent economic cooperation and the establishment of lasting peace throughout the region," he added.

He went on to say, "Occurrence of tragic events such as the killing of innocent people at the Bibi Fatima Mosque in Kandahar, the armed and illegal riots in Lebanon, the divisiveness in Iraq and the false and divisive statements made by some regional leaders in the past week have revealed these conspiracies more than before."

Stating that the Islamic Republic of Iran wants to maintain stability and security throughout the region, he said that Iran considers the will of the people in every country as the determining factor to settle disputes, as well as thwart conspiracies.

Any actions that violate security throughout the region are condemned, he said, adding that all countries must work to establish lasting peace and stability and increase economic relations in the region.

Italy's Donated COVID Vaccines to Arrive Today

TEHRAN - Ambassador of Italy to Tehran yesterday said that major part of 1.6m doses of the Covid-19 AstraZeneca vaccines which have been donated by Italy will arrive in Tehran tomorrow (on Monday) and remaining part will arrive in the coming weeks.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the meeting of representatives of COVID-19 vaccine donating countries with Iran's health minister, Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone said that today was a good opportunity for international cooperation between Iran and other countries in the field of health cooperation while Italy has some joint projects with Iran in the medical and health fields, and expressed hope the co-operations would broaden more every day.

He added that during the meeting the participants talked about COVID vaccines and he is happy that Iran has progressed considerably in this field and expressed hope the donated COVID vaccines by Italy to Iran could help Tehran in its fight with Coronavirus and

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



acceleration in vaccination in the country.

Perrone went on to say that as well as health, Italy has cooperation with Iran in the economic and trade fields and the country enjoys having an old and deep-rooted relation with Tehran. The diplomat added that Italy was the first country which has been on the list of trade and economic cooperation with Iran. He stated that although the trade volume has been declined due to the sanctions, he hopes these relations would be bolstered.

He noted that Italy has good relations with Iran in the field of education and they have had good interactions and exchanges in the field of art and culture though the exchange of students and experts and it will broaden in the future.

Perrone added that today it is a very crucial time that Iranian people like the Italians have suffered from the COVID-19 and expressed hope this cooperation can have its positive impact on the lives of the people.

Majlis Playing Role to Secure People's Interests

TEHRAN (IP) - The spokesman of the Presiding Board of the Iranian Parliament has said that the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission has been tasked to closely monitor developments.

Nezamuddin Mousavi told reporters: "If necessary, the Iranian Parliament would play its role to secure the country's interests with the help of other branches of government."

Explaining the content of Sunday's closed-door meeting between the parliamentarians and the foreign minister, Mousavi stated that in recent weeks the West Asian region and the neighbors of the Islamic Republic of Iran had witnessed many developments and events that have been important from the perspective of foreign policy and people of Iran.

He noted that the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian explained the views and analysis of the Foreign Ministry on the recent developments and the actions of the diplomatic apparatus in response to these developments.

The speaker of the Presiding Board of the Parliament stated elsewhere that parliamentary elections were held in Iraq and that the new Iraqi government would be elected. Issue of Afghanistan and the developments in this country with the change of government were also examined, and the Taliban group took control of this country.

Referring to the developments in Lebanon and Syria, Mousavi said that large-scale movements are being pursued by the United States and the Zionist regime based on their strategic plans for the region and our neighbors, noting that also, a series of developments were taking place in the northwestern region of the country, which was sometimes considered a threat to Iran's borders.

He emphasized that Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian provided detailed explanations on the mentioned issues; in particular, in the case of Afghanistan, regarding the developments in the northwest of the country and the events between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, issues were raised that Iranian border's issues in the northwest could lead to possible threats. The MP stated that the foreign minister provided a comprehensive analysis of the strategy of the United States and the Zionist regime to influence the developments and the sequence of events.

Mousavi emphasized that Amir-Abdollahian explained the positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the developments in the northwest of the country.

"According to Amir-Abdollahian, the diplomatic apparatus closely monitors the affairs of the region, and the movements of the enemy and the Zionist regime are under the supervision and pursuit of our country," he added.

The speaker of the Presiding Board of Iran Parliament added that Amir-Abdollahian noted that the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the face of these developments was clear and Iran would not allow the enemy to harm the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its people. The philosophy and manner of Iran's entry into these developments were based on maintaining stability in the region.

Stating that the Islamic Republic of Iran is actively pursuing its diplomacy, the speaker of the Presiding Board of the Iranian Parliament said: "Soon, 35 business advisers will be selected by the Foreign Minister and efforts will be made to form active diplomacy based on economics."

Mousavi elsewhere referred to the Foreign Minister's explanations about the measures taken to strengthen economic diplomacy and said: "Since the MP's vote of confidence in the ministers, using the capacity of diplomacy to pursue economic issues has been one of our most important demands, the Foreign Ministry also followed up on the issue, and today the FM explained the steps taken to activate economic diplomacy with neighboring countries, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Soon 35 trade attaches shall be appointed by Amir-Abdollahian and the Foreign Ministry will make every effort to form active diplomacy based on economic priorities."

Tehran, Vienna Consult on Boosting Bilateral Relations

TEHRAN (IP) - The Secretary-General at the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, visiting Iran to hold the fifth round of political talks between the two countries met with Iran's Foreign Minister

During the meeting, the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said: "Iran attaches great importance to the relations with Austria."

Expressing hope for increased economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, Amir-Abdollahian appreciated Austria for donating the Covid-19 vaccine to Iran, calling for more cooperation between the two countries in corona vaccines.

The Iranian minister stressed the European Union to take more responsibility for the rights of displaced Afghans, condemning the rise of ISIS and terrorist groups in Afghanistan, along with the terrorist acts in recent weeks in the country.

Peter Launsky-Tieffentha praised the friendly relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Austria, expressing hope that the Joint Comprehensive Plan Action (JCPOA) would be revived with the participation of all parties.

He also condemned the recent terrorist acts in Afghanistan, noting: "The Islamic Republic of Iran and Austria have common concerns regarding ISIS."





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:43
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:51
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:14

45. But the man who had been released, one of the two (who had been in prison) and who now bethought him after (so long) a space of time, said:
"I will tell you the truth of its interpretation: send ye me (therefore)."

Surah 12. Joseph (45)

Iranian Company Constructing Yerevan-Tbilisi Transit Bridge

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry Hervik Yarianian says an Iranian company is constructing the Yerevan-Tbilisi transit bridge, reiterating that it can improve the pace of transit of goods from Armenia to other countries.

Speaking to ILNA, Yarianian said that in the past the consignment took between 8 to 9 hours to be shipped to Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia, from the border but through opening new routes and roads, those transited consignments which are shipped from Tehran towards Yerevan can reach in shorter time. He added that there are some roads under construction in Armenia which link the country to Georgia and a bridge between Armenia and Georgia is under construction as the project is carried out by an Iranian company which will boost the pace of transit of goods.

He then reacted to reopening of roads between Armenia and Azerbaijan and also this claim that Nakhchivan will be connected to Azerbaijan, and said all those efforts and remarks are the long term ideas and it cannot happen overnight because it needs some pre-conditions for reopening of the roads.

He said since Iran and Armenia are strategic partners of each other and they are also neighbors, these factors cannot affect their trade. He added that despite sanctions against Iran, Armenian Government continues cooperating with Iran and they have very close relations in terms of trade, tourism, politics and economy.



Yarianian stated that inauguration and reopening of the roads can accelerate the trade between Tehran and Yerevan and they can continue their trade faster and more agile. He said that several joint investments from Iran and Armenia are underway and it is unlikely such simple incidents to overshadow their bilateral trade.

He reiterated that the more access to the international markets and uses safer roads, the more Iran's trade will be agile. He said today Iran's roads to reach Russian market are limited but due to the strong determination of Iran and Armenia, increasing the roads and making them safer will definitely provide Iran with better routes.

Yarianian emphasized that according to the international pacts, Azerbaijan cannot change its borders with Armenia, and Baku will not be able to use other country as its own corridor.

On vaccinating Iranians with COVID-19 vaccines, he said that according to the regulations of the health ministry, those who have had their first jabs of COVID-19 vaccines abroad have to take the second doses abroad, too. He added that therefore those Iranians who had first doses of COVID-19 vaccines in Armenia have to take the second doses in that country but Armenia has its own regulations. Therefore, according to the Armenian rules, Iranians have to stay at least five days in Armenia in order to take their second doses of vaccines. He said so far the exact details on the number of vaccinated Iranians in Armenia have not been published because Armenia publishes the details after the second jabs.

Iran Mulls Selling Crude to Domestic Private Buyers



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is considering plans to sell crude oil for a first time to private buyers inside the country as the company seeks to maximize output and sales to meet revenue targets set by the government.

NIOC's newly-appointed chief Mohsen Khojasteh Mehr said that the company would seek to diversify its sales option mainly by relying on capacities of Iran's private sector.

"We will use all legal capacities for crude sales including foreign buyers or qualified domestic buyers," said Khojasteh Mehr in remarks covered by the Iranian parliament's news service ICANA.

He said that other options for maximizing crude oil sales would be to barter crude for goods or for investment brought to the Iranian construction or energy projects. The official said the Iranian Oil Ministry's policy of diversifying crude sales options is meant to serve the Iranian government's budget needs.

"The sales of crude should not be limited to the traditional form but it should be carried out in a professional and legal manner through using all capacities of the private sector," said the NIOC chief.

The remarks come nearly a week after Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji said that the government had plans to pay energy projects investors in crude oil.

Owji said that the plans are part of a larger barter system involving crude which seeks to minimize the impacts of U.S. sanctions on Iran's crude exports.

Saudi Arabia Rejoins Iran Exports Market

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran Customs Administration's spokesman Roohollah Latifi said that Saudi Arabia has rejoined Iran exports market, adding that over 47 million tons of goods worth \$22.588 billion has been traded with 15 neighbors during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21).

Latifi said that the figure experienced a 52-percent growth in value and a 37-percent rise in weight, compared with the same period last year.

He added that some 59,996,000 tons of products worth \$21,805,611,569 were exported to the world, 36,087,373 tons of which worth \$11,218,138,119 belonged to those which have common borders with Iran.

He went on to say that Iran exports to neighboring states grew 33% in weight and 41% in value.

Iraq with \$3.840 billion, Turkey with \$2.308 billion, the UAE with \$2.243 billion, Afghanistan with \$999 million, and Pakistan with \$544 million are Iran's exports destinations.

Tehran Int'l Short Film Festival Approved by Oscar

IRAN NEWS ART DESK

TEHRAN - The Director of the 38th Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) said this edition of the event was approved by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Academy Awards), popularly known as the Oscars, and became the only Oscar-qualifying festival in Iran.

Speaking in a press conference, Sadegh Mousavi said: "I have been in charge of this cinematic event for five years and during these years we have witnessed an improvement in the quality of the festival in all aspects."

"Of course, we are still far from the ideal point, but for various reasons, this festival can be one of the best and most prestigious short film festivals."

"We managed to become the only Oscar-qualifying festival in Iran in the fields of the international section," he added.

He said that, among Muslim countries, only Iran, Egypt and Turkey have been approved by the Academy Awards.

"Last year, 4,500 works were registered in the international section, and this year, over 2,000 works were added," said the festival's director.

He added that the festival has considered a grand prize of 5,000 Euros for the top winner of this



international cinematic event.

Mousavi noted that thanks to the position of Iran's cinema industry in the region, Tehran International Short Film Festival enjoys very high credibility.

He added: "This year, for the first time, we received emails from foreign filmmakers asking

why our film is not at the festival. Mousavi noted that there are 127 Oscar-qualifying festivals worldwide, and 67 of them are held in the U.S.

Mousavi said: "This year, the judges of the festival enjoy a higher level due to the fact that this event has become an Oscar-qualifying festival."

"About 10% of the works in the international section are Iranian. Most of the films were sent from India, France, Spain, Brazil, Italy, Russia, followed by China, Turkey, etc.," he added.

He said a total of 128 foreign countries have submitted works to the 38th edition of the festival, including: India 621, France 590, Spain 396, USA 339, Italy 294, Brazil 272, Russia 216, Germany 212, Turkey 198, China 197, UK 182, Taiwan 137, Canada 133, Mexico 132, South Korea 116, Poland 109, Argentina 104, Indonesia 102, Egypt 70 and Portugal 62.

Mousavi said: "Due to being Oscar-qualifying festival, we are going to hold an opening ceremony in this edition of the event and there we will unveil the festival teaser and 11 books that we have published so far."

"In this year's festival, we have 20 specialized sessions entitled Virtual sessions of 20-38 with the presence of 12 international and 8 Iranian lecturers on current topics and debates which have focused on the subject of experimental cinema," Mousavi said, adding: "With the publication of 11 books, our approach is based on fostering knowledge."

Tehran International Short Film Festival is one of the oldest short film festivals not only in Iran but also in the region. The festival has been the host of international well-known festival directors and cineastes from around the world.

The 38th edition of TISFF will be held on 19-24 October 2021, in Tehran.

Iran Joined 8 WIPO Treaties

TEHRAN (IP) - The Head of the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, said: "Iran has so far joined eight of the 17 effective agreements under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in industrial property and will soon agree to the Vienna and Strasbourg agreements and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement."

Mohammad Ali Mirtaheri, referring to the situation of Iran in the latest ranking of the Global Innovation Index (GII) said: "Iran is currently the second most innovative industry in the region, with a growth of 7 steps compared to last year. It also is one of the middle-income countries that have the highest branches of science and technology."

He added: "The most innovative industries in Iran are chemistry, medicine, and mechanics, which have the most national and international patent applications in Iran. Iran has also made significant progress in nanotechnology, robotics, and stem cells."

27th Shipment of COVID-19 Vaccines Arrives in Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - The 27th consignment of coronavirus vaccines containing some 6 million doses has arrived in Iran and handed over to the health ministry.

The shipment has been provided through the good offices of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

"The order now in place with regards to the continuation of vaccine imports is the result of cooperation among relevant institutions together with effective monitoring and prudence by the first vice president, which saw the IRCS import 4 cargos containing a total of 24 million doses of vaccines over the past week," said IRCS President Karim Hemmati.

"The IRCS has imported some 76 million 390 thousand doses of the Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine since May," he said.

He noted 75% of the country's population have been vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus so far. "According to the health minister, the country's senior officials have fortunately reached a consensus on the provision of vaccines and expansion of the inoculation drive," he said.

"By continuing this trend, we can soon vaccinate the whole population," Hemmati said.

He urged people to get vaccinated as soon as possible as, according to the National Coronavirus Task Force, the sixth peak of the disease looms large.

Now that mobile vaccination teams are operating across the nation 24/7, he said, all citizens across the country have the chance to get vaccinated and weather the sixth coronavirus surge.

Majlis Car Import Permission Bill Ambiguous

TEHRAN (IP) - The Spokesman of Iran's Guardian Council said the council and the Parliament reviewed the ambiguities of the car import permission bill, and in case the ambiguities of the bill were removed, the council would confirm it.

Hadi Tahan Nazif said that the Parliament's decision on lifting restrictions on car imports had several ambiguities, including the currency transfer mechanism and Guardian Council asked Parliament to explain ambiguities.

Tahan Nazif noted: "The bill to permit car imports is to be sent back to the Parliament and its ambiguities are to be examined and resolved. After that, the ratification, it must be returned to the Guardian Council for review, and if approved by this council, it will be adopted as a law."

The next ambiguous point was the regulations that the Ministry of Mine, Trade, and Industry were responsible, allowed for in the bill.

The Expediency Council also considered the system of car imports permission to be inconsistent with policies of boosting Iranian production, labor, and capital, he added.

Steel Ingot Production Volume Exceeds 9.9m Tons in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's major companies in the mining and mineral sector produced 9,901,221 tons of steel ingots during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar (from March 21 to Sept. 21).

The country's large companies in the mining and mineral sector produced a total amount of 1,622,802 tons of steel ingot in the Iranian month of Shahrivar (Sept. 21), registering a 19 percent decline as compared to the last year's corresponding period. Accordingly, Esfahan Mobarakeh Steel Company (EMSCO) produced 4,406,805 tons of steel ingot in the first six months of the current year (from March 21 to Sept. 21), showing a considerable hike as compared with other domestic steel production units.

According to statistics, large firms in the mining and industrial sector managed to produce 6,768,642 tons of various types of steel products in the first half of the current year (from March 21 to Sept. 21), showing a nine percent decline as compared to the same period of last year. Regarding the export of steel products, major steel production companies managed to export 3,811,617 tons of steel in the first six months of the current year, showing a 48 percent growth as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Russia Tops 1,000 Daily Virus Deaths for First Time

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia on Saturday recorded 1,000 deaths over 24 hours for the first time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, with the country's jab drive at a standstill and few restrictions in place.

An official government tally showed 1,002 deaths and 33,208 new infections, setting a high for both fatalities and cases for the third day in a row.

The surge comes with just 32 percent of Russians fully inoculated, according to official statistics published for the first time Saturday.



Earthquake Kills 3 in Bali

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - An earthquake of magnitude 4.8 struck Indonesia's Bali island on Saturday morning, killing at least three people, Indonesia's search and rescue agency said.

The quake affected the Karangasem and Bangli districts on the eastern side of the tourist island and a search has been concluded, the agency said in a statement, but authorities were continuing to monitor situation.

A landslide triggered by the quake killed two of the victims, the agency said. A third, a three-year old girl, was killed by falling debris.



ASEAN Excludes Myanmar Junta Leader From Summit



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (Dispatches) - Southeast Asian countries will invite a non-political representative from Myanmar to a regional summit this month, delivering an unprecedented snub to the military leader who led a coup against an elected civilian government in February.

The decision taken by foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at an emergency meeting on Friday night, marks a rare bold step for the consensus-driven bloc, which has traditionally favored a policy of engagement and non-interference.

Singapore's foreign ministry said on Saturday the move to exclude junta chief Min Aung Hlaing was a "difficult, but necessary, decision to uphold ASEAN's credibility".

The statement cited a lack of progress made on a roadmap to restore peace in Myanmar that the junta had agreed to with ASEAN in April.

A spokesman for Myanmar's military government blamed "foreign intervention" for the decision.

Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun told the BBC Burmese news service that the United States and representatives of the European Union had pressured other ASEAN member states.

"The foreign interventions can also be seen here," he said. "We learned that some envoys from some countries met with U.S. foreign affairs and received pressure from EU."

More than 1,000 civilians have been killed by Myanmar security forces with thousands of others arrested, according to the United Nations, amid a crackdown on strikes and protests which has derailed the country's tentative democracy and prompted international condemnation.

The junta says those estimates of the death toll are exaggerated.

ASEAN's current chair Brunei said a non-political figure from Myanmar would be invited to the Oct. 26-28 summit, after no consensus was reached for a political representative to attend.

"As there had been insufficient progress... as well as concerns over Myanmar's commitment, in particular on establishing constructive dialogue among all concerned parties, some ASEAN Member States recommended that ASEAN give space to Myanmar to restore its internal affairs and return to normalcy," Brunei said in a statement.

It did not mention Min Aung Hlaing or name who would be invited in his stead.

Brunei said some member states had received requests from Myanmar's National Unity Government, formed by opponents of the junta, to attend the summit.

ASEAN has faced increasing international pressure to take a tougher stand against Myanmar, having been criticized in the past for its ineffectiveness in dealing with leaders accused of rights abuses, subverting democracy and intimidating political opponents.

Taliban Pledge to Step Up Security

KABUL (Dispatches) - Taliban authorities pledged to step up security at Shi'ite mosques after the second Islamic State attack in a week on worshippers killed more than 40 people in the Afghan city of Kandahar yesterday.

The hardline Sunni group Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack on the Fatima mosque in Kandahar which saw a group of suicide bombers shoot their way into the mosque before blowing themselves up among the worshippers.

A health official said the casualty toll from the attack stood at 41 dead and 70 wounded but the toll could still rise further. "Some of the wounded are in a critical condition and we are trying to transfer them to Kabul," he said.

The head of Kandahar police said units would be assigned to protect the Shi'ite mosques which have so far been guarded by local volunteer forces with special permission to carry weapons.

"Unfortunately they could not protect this area and in future we will assign special security guards for the protection of mosques and Madrasas," he said in a statement posted on Twitter by a Taliban spokesman.

The attack on the Fatima mosque, the largest Shi'ite mosque in Kandahar, also known as the Imam Bargah mosque, came a week after a similar attack on a mosque in the northern city of Kunduz, which killed as many as 80 people.

Attacks on Shi'ite mosques and targets associated with the Hazara ethnic minority, who make up the biggest Shi'ite group in Afghanistan, were regular occurrences under the former Western-backed government.

There has been deep shock as the attacks have continued since the Taliban seized power in August, tarnishing the movement's claim to have brought peace to Afghanistan after decades of war.

Since the takeover, Islamic State has conducted dozens of operations, from small scale attacks on Taliban targets to large-scale operations such as Friday's suicide bombing, killing scores of civilians.



Giant Rome Rally Urges Ban on Extreme Right

ROME (AFP) - Tens of thousands of Italians called for a ban on the extreme right as they rallied in Rome Saturday after protests over a tough coronavirus pass regime last weekend degenerated into riots blamed on neo-fascists.

Carrying placards reading "Fascism: Never Again", the protesters in Piazza San Giovanni -- a square historically associated with the left -- called for a ban on openly neo-fascist group Forza Nuova (FN).

FN leaders were among those arrested after the Rome headquarters of the CGIL trade union -- Italy's oldest -- was stormed on October 9 during clashes outside parliament and in the historic center.

"This is not just a retort to fascist 'squadismo'," CGIL secretary general Maurizio Landini said, using a word used to refer to the fascist militias that began operating after World War I.

"This piazza also represents all those in Italy who want to change the country, who want to close the door on political violence," he told the gathered crowds.

Last weekend's riots followed a peaceful protest against the extension to all workplaces of Italy's "Green Pass", which shows proof of vaccination, a negative Covid-19 test or recent recovery from the virus.

The violence has focused attention on the country's fascist legacy.

Saturday's demonstration was attended by some 200,000 people, said organizers, with 800 coaches and 10 trains laid on to bring people to the capital for the event.

It coincided with the 78th anniversary of the Nazi raid on the Jewish Ghetto in Rome.

Over 1,000 Jews, including 200 children, were rounded up at dawn on October 16, 1943, and deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

The center-left Democratic Party, which has led the calls to for FN to be banned, said its petition calling on parliament to do so had gathered 100,000 signatures.

Macron Calls 1961 Massacre of Algerians an Unforgivable Crime

PARIS (Dispatches) - Emmanuel Macron on Saturday denounced as an "unforgivable crime" a bloody crackdown on Algerian protesters by police in Paris 60 years ago, the strongest recognition by a French president of a massacre in which many bodies were thrown into the River Seine.

On Oct. 17, 1961, under the orders of then Paris police chief Maurice Papon, police attacked a demonstration by 25,000 pro-National Liberation Front (FLN) Algerians protesting against a curfew imposed on Algerians.

The march was repressed "brutally, violently and in blood", Macron's office said in a statement, adding that some 12,000 Algerians were arrested, many were wounded and dozens killed.

Macron attended a ceremony commemorating the anniversary at the bridge at Bezons, west of Paris, from where some Algerians had started their march and where many bodies were recovered from the Seine.

"He admitted the facts: the crimes committed that night under the authority of Maurice Papon are inexcusable for the Republic," the Elysee Palace statement said.

The massacre, which took place during the war against French rule in Algeria, was long denied or concealed by French authorities. The first commemorations of the event were organized in 2001 by the mayor of Paris.

The precise number of victims was never established, with some historians putting it at over 200 dead.

This year's commemoration takes place amid diplomatic tensions between Paris and Algiers.

Early this month Algeria recalled its ambassador to Paris, citing comments attributed to Macron, who was quoted in the Le Monde newspaper as saying Algeria's rulers had rewritten the history of its colonisation based on "a hatred of France".



Merkel Vows Continuity On Last Visit to Erdogan

ISTANBUL (AFP) - Chancellor Angela Merkel vowed continuity in Germany's relations with Turkey that included both cooperation and criticism of Ankara as she paid her final visit to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Merkel and Erdogan developed complex but close relations over the German chancellor's 16-year term that navigated the perils of Turkey's tumultuous ties with the West. Their personal bond was instrumental in helping Europe manage a refugee crisis in 2016 and calm simmering tensions in the east Mediterranean last year.

Merkel also helped iron out some of the difficulties that have crept into Erdogan's relations with Washington and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The two leaders had lunch and private talks in a presidential villa overlooking the Bosphorus on the latest leg of Merkel's parting foreign tour.

"I have always said that our collaboration was very good in the years that I worked with Mr Erdogan," Merkel told reporters after the talks.

"I criticized Turkey on the issue of human rights and individual freedoms. We looked for solutions. We could have differences, but we depended on each other," she said.

The 67-year-old German leader said her "advice" to Turkey today was to expect "the same thing for the coming government in Germany."

"The relationship between Turkey and Germany, with its negative and positive sides, will go on. It will be recognized by the next government," she said.

Erdogan referred to Merkel as his "dear friend" twice during the closing media event.

But he also hinted at the difficulties Turkey might have in promoting its interests after Merkel formally gives way to a new coalition government taking shape in Berlin following elections last month.

"If there had been no coalition government, (Germany's) relations with Turkey might have been easier. Of course, it is not easy to work with a coalition government," Erdogan said.





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J, blcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Tajrish Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
green garden
Fully Furn

Parsian

(\$2400)
Fereshteh Apt
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
Jacuzzi, gym
pkg, Fully Furn

Niavaran Apt (\$1600)
3bdrs, balcony, & F.F

Dibaji Apt (\$1800)
150sq.m, 2bdrs, S/p, gym, F.F

(\$15000)
Andarzgoo bldg
7storey, 30bdrs
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Emirates Airline to Return to Profitability in 2022-23

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Emirates, the world's biggest long-haul airline, expects to return to profitability in the 2022-2023 fiscal year as travel restrictions ease and passenger demand recovers, the carrier's president Tim Clark said.

The airline will turn a moderate profit in the "back end" of the next financial year, barring any new developments, Mr Clark said at the International Air Transport Association's annual general meeting in Boston.

"I'm sure the business will really start to generate the cash that it needs and go profitable during the course of 22-23, moderately so," Mr Clark said.



Moody's Cuts Tunisia's Ratings

TUNIS (Dispatches) - Moody's Investors Service downgraded Tunisia's long-term foreign currency and local currency issuer ratings to Caa1 from B3.

The downgrade takes the North African country to seven levels below investment grade and is based on weakening governance and heightened uncertainty regarding the government's capacity to implement measures that ensure renewed access to funding to meet its high financing requirements over the next few years, the ratings agency said. The country's negative outlook was maintained.

The New York-based ratings agency says that the North African country is at risk of a default stemming from high liquidity pressure if significant funding is not secured, with the country's large external imbalances and reliance on continued inflows limiting the degree to which reserves can be drawn down further without jeopardizing its currency and price stability.

"The negative outlook captures downside risks related to possible protracted delays in reforms and reform-dependent funding which would erode FX reserves through drawdowns for debt service payments, thereby exacerbating balance of payment risks. In this scenario, the probability of a public sector debt restructuring that would entail losses for private sector creditors would rise," Moody's said.

The downgrade reflects the economic challenges facing Tunisia, which is battling a bloated public wage bill, high unemployment and loans coming due from foreign lenders, exacerbated by the central bank's worries about an acute shortage of external financial resources and foreign currency.

The country needs to raise at least \$3.5 billion in 2021 to roll over foreign debts and pay the wages of hundreds of thousands of public-sector employees.

This week, a new government was sworn in, with President Kais Saied on Wednesday appointing Najla Bouden Romdhane as the new prime minister in an effort to steer the country out of economic and political crises. Ms Bouden – the first woman to hold the position in Tunisia and the Arab World's first female prime minister – has made fixing public finances and implementing economic reforms as her priorities.

Moody's said Tunisia's external and domestic liquidity conditions have tightened significantly in the wake of the constitutional crisis, which erupted on July 25 after Mr Saied's suspension of the former government and parliament, leading to uncertainty regarding the government's capacity to meet its upcoming funding needs.

The agency's fiscal deficit estimate of 7.7 per cent of GDP in 2021 and 5.9 per cent in 2022 implies gross borrowing requirements of about 18 per cent of GDP this year and 16 per cent in 2022.

Moody's says that the government may seek alternative sources of funding, such as bilateral loans and a drawdown of the International Monetary Fund's recently allocated Special Drawing Rights amounting to \$740 million. On the domestic side, a renewed increase in commercial banks' refinancing needs at the central bank indicates increasing absorption constraints.

Italy's Business Lobby Sees Stronger Economic Growth

ROME (Reuters) - Italy's business lobby Confindustria said on Saturday the country's growth this year would be more robust than expected, mainly due to a more contained impact of the COVID-19 Delta variant and stronger-than-expected economic indicators.

In a report, the association's research unit CSC forecast gross domestic product (GDP) would rise 6.1% this year and 4.1% next year, going above pre-pandemic levels in the first half of 2022.

In April the research unit had said Italy's GDP would be up 4.1% in 2021.

Its forecasts for this year are now just above the 6% expected by the national unity government lead by Mario Draghi.

Last year the COVID-hit economy contracted by 8.9%, the steepest recession in Italy's post-war history. The firm pick-up now in place is seen resulting in lower-than-expected public deficit and debt ratios this year.



The CSC report cautioned that, starting from the last quarter of this year, GDP growth would have a more "moderate profile".

It said that its estimates took into account Italy's multi-billion euro recovery plan, partly funded by the European Union.

It added that, despite the "positive perspectives", the forecasts had downside risks that were linked to the possibility of new COVID-19 restrictions, the lack of raw materials that could bog down production and more structural inflation.

Confindustria President Carlo Bonomi said that recovery was well underway but that it was important to "keep the guard up".

"Italy must go back to growing at a yearly pace of at least 1.5-2%, an achievable goal, equal to the annual growth registered between 1997 and 2007," he said.

Global Steel Demand to Return To Pre-Pandemic Levels in 2021

LONDON (Dispatches) - Global demand for steel is expected to return to pre-Covid-19 levels in 2021 with the exception of China, as resurgent demand continues to fuel strong manufacturing activity, according to a new report from the World Steel Association (worldsteel).

The Brussels-based industry group's economic committee, chaired by Saeed Al Remeithi, chief executive of the UAE's Emirates Steel, projects demand to grow 4.5 per cent in 2021 to reach 1,855.4 metric tons after a tepid 0.1 per cent growth in 2020, with growth further rising by 2.2 per cent to 1,896.4 metric tons in 2022. The forecast takes into account the vaccination programs around the world, and less-disruptive nature of coronavirus variants compared with previous waves.

"Strong manufacturing activity bolstered by pent-up demand is the main contributor. Developed economies have outperformed our earlier expectations by a larger margin than the developing economies, reflecting the positive benefit of higher vaccination rates and government support measures. In the emerging economies, especially in Asia, the recovery momentum was interrupted by the resurgence of infections," Mr Al Remeithi said.

The pandemic upended the global economy, forcing industries engaged in steel, including construction, autos and durable goods, to halt projects or scale down manufacturing as demand dried up. But with restrictions largely lifted and economies reopening, industry stakeholders are making up for lost time and keeping up with rejuvenated demand.

Steel demand recovery in the GCC fell short of expectations on the back of reduced construction activity owing to fiscal consolidation efforts. But with rising oil prices and the pandemic under control, steel demand is expected to rebound more strongly in 2022.

Demand in China dropped 13.3 per cent in July and 18.3 per cent in August because of the slowing momentum in the real estate sector and the government cap on steel production. Activity also weakened owing to tough government measures on developers' financing that were introduced in 2020. Chinese steel demand will have negative growth for the rest of 2021.

In the U.S., demand was aided by the strong performance of the automotive and durable goods sectors, but shortage of some components is undermining this recovery.

The momentum in the construction sector is weakening with the end of a residential construction boom and sluggish non-residential sector activities. Recovery in the European Union is gathering pace, with all steel-using sectors exhibiting a positive recovery despite continuing waves of infection.

Japan's rising exports, investment and consumption have aided steel's recovery, with the manufacturing, automotive and machinery sectors leading the way. South Korea's steel demand is expected to recover to 2019 levels this year, supported by improving exports and investment in manufacturing facilities.

India's Economy Gradually Recovering



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said India's economy is gradually recovering after it was hit by two Covid waves, but it cautioned the authorities against inflationary pressures. The agency recommended slow reduction in monetary policy support as recovery gains ground.

The IMF said while the impact of Covid-19 on investment and human capital could prolong the recovery and affect medium-term growth, the recovery could also be faster than expected because of the pace of vaccination and economic reforms.

In its annual report on India under Article IV, the IMF's executive board said the economic outlook remains clouded because of pandemic-related uncertainties contributing to both downside and upside risks.

"The second wave resulted in another sharp fall in activity, albeit smaller and shorter and recently high frequency indicators suggest an ongoing recovery," it said.

It warned that a persistent negative impact of Covid-19 on investment, human capital, and other growth drivers could prolong the recovery and impact medium-term growth. While India benefits from favorable demographics, disruption to access to education and training due to the pandemic could weigh on improvements in human capital.

However, it said, "faster vaccination and better therapeutics could help contain the spread and limit the impact of the pandemic".

Global Energy Crisis Prompts Asia to Turn to U.S. for Oil

LONDON (Dispatches) - Asian demand for U.S. oil is rising as the energy crisis boosts prices for other crudes that are priced against the global Brent futures contract.

China and other Asian buyers have been snapping up supertankers of American sour crudes for delivery in November and seeking more for December, according to traders. Most buyers are seeking US grades that had recently slumped to the lowest levels in over a year, with an added incentive after China's government awarded millions of tons of crude oil import quotas.

A wide spread between Brent and West Texas Intermediate oil futures would accommodate higher U.S. crude exports, said Elisabeth Murphy, ESAI Energy LLC upstream analyst for North America. WTI has been trading at least \$3 a barrel under Brent since August, a discount that generally favors U.S. crude exports.

Asia's increased appetite for U.S. crude comes after a widespread recovery in road-fuel and freight activity and ahead of a winter that will likely see more oil demand from the power sector. This is also happening against a global supply deficit in fossil fuels that is driving higher prices. Earlier Brent crude surpassed \$85 a barrel Friday following months of production curtailments by OPEC and its allies in response to the pandemic. Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman reiterated this week the need for OPEC and its allies to take a gradual, phased approach to restoring output.

ESAI's Murphy expects around 700,000 barrels a day in additional crude oil demand from Europe and Asia combined this winter due to the switch from natural gas to oil. With the help of a wide WTI discount to Brent, U.S. crude exports this month should reached 3.1 million to 3.2 million barrels a day, up from about 2.6 million last month, she said.

Romania to Recruit 40,000 Foreign Workers

BUCHAREST (Dispatches) - Romania, a country in southeastern Europe, has decided to recruit around 40,000 workers from abroad, paving the way for Bangladesh to send more workers to that country.

"This is a new area. We've already sent around 1,000 workers. We can send more. They've (Romania) decided to recruit around 40,000 workers from abroad," said Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen while talking about his recent visit to Romania. He said the Romanian government prefers government-to-government recruitment as they feel more comfortable to recruit people in a better regulated way.

"There's no space for illegal entry there," said the Foreign Minister, adding that some 860 Bangladeshis entered Germany from Romania illegally.

These 860 people will be sent back to Bangladesh from Germany through International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The Foreign Minister said Romania needs construction workers, electricians, household helpers, workers in manufacturing units apart from doctors and nurses.

"They'll (Romania) identify in which areas they need workers from Bangladesh and in which area we can provide," Dr Momen said, adding that they will have to follow it up to reach an understanding.

The Foreign Minister said around 300 Bangladeshi workers are waiting for the Romanian visas and it was raised with his Romanian counterpart.

Dr Momen said his Romanian counterpart assured him of sending a team from the New Delhi mission to provide emergency services and issue visa quickly.

The Foreign Minister said Bangladesh first opened its Mission in Romania in 1975 but it was shut in 1995 while Romania closed its Mission in 2000.

"We've reopened the Mission recently," he said, adding that Romania will also consider reopening its Mission in Dhaka once the trade and investment ties expand further between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Momen invited his counterpart to visit Bangladesh along with a business delegation. The Romanian Foreign Minister happily accepted the invitation.

"It's a very successful trip. I'm very pleased and in many ways it was a historic visit, too," said the Foreign Minister. This was his first official visit to Bucharest at the invitation of the Romanian Foreign Minister. This was also the first-ever visit at the level of Foreign Minister since Bangladesh's independence.

During his meeting with the Romanian Foreign Minister, Dr Momen urged the Romanian investors and companies to enter into joint ventures or 100 percent owned business ones in the 100 special economic zones, which are currently being set up in Bangladesh as well as in High-Tech Parks.

“The Recess” Wins Fundación Charlot Award

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Iranian short film ‘The Recess’ directed by Navid Nikkhah Azad won Best Short Film Award of Fundación Charlot in the Festival International De Cine De DosQuebradas (FICDOS). The short film represented Iranian cinema in the festival with the Spanish title ‘El Recreo’ and won Best Short Film Award. A sum of 250 short films competed in this category to win the best

short film award, according to the festival. ‘The Recess’ tells the story of 17-year-old Sahar, who is determined to watch her favorite soccer team play for the league championship. Barred from attending sports events as a woman, Sahar disguises herself as a boy with the help of her friends and things take a tragic turn as it is uncovered.



China Looks to Lock in U.S. LNG



SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Major Chinese energy companies are in advanced talks with U.S. exporters to secure long-term liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies, as soaring gas prices and domestic power shortages heighten concerns about the country’s fuel security, several sources said.

At least five Chinese firms, including state major Sinopec Corp and China National Offshore Oil Company and local government-backed energy distributors like Zhejiang Energy, are in discussions with U.S. exporters, mainly Cheniere Energy and Venture Global, the sources told Reuters.

The discussions could lead to deals worth tens of billions of dollars that would mark a surge in China’s LNG imports from the United States in coming years. At the height of a Sino-U.S. trade war in 2019, gas trade briefly came to a standstill. LNG export facilities can take years to build, and there are several projects in North America in the works that are not expected to start exporting until the middle of the decade.

Talks with U.S. suppliers began early this year but speeded up in recent months amid one of the biggest power-generating, heating fuel crunch in decades. Natural gas prices in Asia have jumped more than fivefold this year, sparking fears of power shortages in the winter. “Companies faced a supply gap (for winter) and surging prices. Talks really picked up since August when spot prices touched \$15/mmbtu”, said a Beijing-based senior industry source briefed on the talks.

Another Beijing-based source said: “After experiencing the recent massive market volatility, some buyers were regretting that they didn’t sign enough long-term supplies.”

Sources expected fresh deals to be announced over the coming few months, after privately controlled ENN Natural Gas Co. (600803.SS), headed by the ex-LNG chief of China’s largest buyer, CNOOC, announced a 13-year deal with Cheniere on Monday. It was the first major U.S.-China LNG deal since 2018.

The new purchases will also cement China’s position as the world’s top LNG buyer, taking over from Japan this year.

“As state-owned enterprises, companies are all under pressure to keep security of supply and the recent price trend has deeply changed the image of long-term supplies in the mind of leadership,” said the first Beijing-based trader.

“People may have taken the spot (market) as the key in the past, but are now realizing that long-term cargoes are the backbone.”

The sources declined to be identified as the negotiations are private.

Sinopec declined comment. CNOOC and Zhejiang Energy did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Venture Global and Cheniere both declined comment.

“We expect more deals to be signed before year-end. It’s primarily driven by the global energy crunch and prices we’re seeing now... U.S. supplies now stand out as attractive,” said a third Beijing source briefed on the talks.

U.S. cargoes used to be expensive versus oil-linked supplies from Qatar and Australia for example, but are cheaper now.

A deal at \$2.50 + 115% of Henry Hub futures , similar to ENN’s deal according to traders, would be roughly about \$9-\$10 per million British thermal units (mmbtu) on a delivered basis into Northeast Asia. This includes an average shipping cost of \$2 per mmbtu for the U.S.-China route.

Jason Feer, global head of business intelligence with consultancy Poten & Partners said Chinese companies are heavily exposed to Brent-related pricing for LNG and the U.S. purchases give some diversity to the pricing.

Asian spot gas prices are currently trading at above \$37 per mmbtu after reaching a record high of over \$56 earlier this month.

Traders expect prices to go higher in winter when demand typically surges.

Chinese buyers are scouting for both near-term shipments to cover demand this winter and long-term imports as demand for gas, seen by Beijing as a key bridge fuel before reaching its 2060 carbon-neutral goal, is set for steady growth through 2035.

It’s hard to estimate a total volume of the deals being discussed, sources said, but Sinopec alone could be eyeing 4 million tons annually as the company is most exposed to the spot market versus domestic rivals PetroChina and CNOOC, said a third source.

Traders said Sinopec is in final talks with 3 to 4 companies to buy 1 million tons a year for 10 years, starting from 2023, and is looking for U.S. volumes as part of the requirement.

Delays in LNG export projects in Canada, in which PetroChina owns a stake, and Mozambique, where both PetroChina and CNOOC have invested, also made U.S. supplies attractive, sources added.

North American LNG exporters have been adding to capacity because of demand in major Asian economies.

Cheniere, the largest exporter out of the United States, said in late September it expects to announce “a number of other transactions” that will support their going forward with the Corpus Stage 3 expansion next year.

Venture Global is building or developing over 50 million tons per annum (MTPA) of LNG production capacity in Louisiana, including the 10-MTPA Calcasieu, which is expected to cost around \$4.5 billion and start producing LNG in test mode in late 2021.

However, some buyers remained cautious.

“There is a lot of hype in the market and nobody knows for sure how long this supply crunch would last. For companies that do not have fresh demand in the next year or two, it’s better to wait,” said a separate Chinese importer.

UAE Steps Up Investment in Central Asia’s Wealthiest Economy



DUBAI (Dispatches) - The document aimed to establish a long-term strategic partnership between the countries was signed as part of Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin’s visit to Abu Dhabi last week.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kazakhstan have signed an intergovernmental agreement, under which the two countries will implement \$6 billion worth of investment projects in priority sectors of the economy.

The document aimed to establish a long-term strategic partnership between the countries was signed as part of Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin’s visit to Abu Dhabi last week.

While in Abu Dhabi, Mamin met with Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Minister for Presidential Affairs, as well as heads of the region’s largest holding companies.

After the talks, the sides agreed that the Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company (ADQ) would become Kazakhstan’s primary partner in implementing the agreement, covering energy, agribusiness, transportation, logistics, pharmaceuticals, and finances.

ADQ, whose assets are estimated at \$110 billion, is considered the UAE’s third-biggest sovereign wealth fund with investments in more than 90 local and international companies. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan’s Samruk-Kazyna National Wealth Fund and ADQ will establish a joint energy holding for renewable and conventional energy development under the intergovernmental agreement. The sides intend to implement joint projects for building solar, wind, and hydropower stations with a total power generation capacity of five gigawatts (GW).

Iran Reportedly...

FROM PAGE 1

According to the Iranian lawmaker, the foreign minister said that Iran’s development and people’s welfare will be on the agenda of Iran’s negotiation team in the talks aimed at restoring Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal known as JCPOA and if the negotiations reach a positive result, it will lead to further development of the country.

Meanwhile The EU foreign policy chief says the bloc has currently no decision to go for what some media reports are calling a “Plan B” on Iran. “It’s time to go back to the negotiating table. And I don’t want to think about Plan Bs because no... Plan B that I could imagine would be a good one,” Josep Borrell said. He added that he is open to discussions with Iranian officials in Brussels as part of efforts to revive the talks with Iran on the 2015 nuclear deal, but warned that ‘time is running out’. His comments come after a recent meeting between the EU’s Coordinator for the nuclear talks Enrique Mora and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Baqeri in Tehran.

Iran, Venezuela...

FROM PAGE 1

Dino I, a very large crude carrier (VLCC) owned and operated by NIOC’s National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), finished loading the Venezuelan oil at PDVSA’s Jose port late Friday, according to the documents, a source and monitoring service TankerTrackers.com.

The bilateral oil trade could be a breach of U.S. sanctions on both countries, the US Treasury Department told Reuters last month, citing government orders that establish the punitive measures.

Reuters said a Treasury spokesperson on Saturday declined to comment further on the latest development. If the U.S. allows the shipment to proceed, it would be a change from the Trump era policy of vigorously enforcing US sanctions against Iran.

Already the vessel was allowed to reach Venezuela in September with its transponder turned off while carrying 2.1 million barrels of Iranian condensate. A second condensate cargo of similar size is expected to be delivered to Venezuela in the coming weeks as part of the swap routine, which will be in effect for six months in its first phase. PDVSA first launched the exchange last month by sending 1.9 million barrels of Merey heavy crude on the Iran-flagged supertanker Felicity.

The exchange provides the OPEC nation with a stable supply of blending material needed to convert its extra heavy oil into exportable grades. The pact also delivers heavy oil to Iran for blending, refining or marketing to Asian customers.

Iran and Venezuela have strengthened their cooperation in the last year even under the watchful gaze of the United States, which has in recent years reimposed sanctions on Iranian state entities, including NIOC, and in 2019 blacklisted PDVSA.

India Has...

FROM PAGE 1

The Indian consortium submitted a Master Development Plan (MDP) of Farzad-B gas field in April 2011 to Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), the then designated authority by NIOC for the development of Farzad-B gas field.

A Development Service Contract (DSC) of the Farzad-B gas field was negotiated till November 2012, but could not be finalized due to difficult terms and international sanctions on Iran. In April 2015, negotiations restarted with Iranian authorities to develop the Farzad-B gas field under a new Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC). This time, NIOC introduced Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) as its representative for negotiations.

From April 2016, both sides negotiated to develop the Farzad-B gas field under an integrated contract covering upstream and downstream, including monetization/marketing of the processed gas. However, negotiations remained inconclusive.

In 2016, Iran said it was examining the Indian proposal but that an agreement was unlikely because of the difference between Iran’s demanded gas price and India’s offer. India offered a USD 6.2 billion development plan and a gas price of around USD 4 per million British thermal unit for Farzad-B in 2018. Meanwhile, on the basis of new studies, a revised Provisional Master Development Plan (PMDP) was submitted to POGC in March 2017, sources said, adding that in April 2019, NIOC proposed development of the gas field under the DSC and offtake of raw gas by NIOC at landfall point.

However, due to the imposition of US sanctions on Iran in November 2018, technical studies could not be concluded which is a precursor for commercial negotiations. The Indian consortium has so far invested around \$85 million in the block. The contract provides for the Indian consortium being paid back the expense together with a fixed rate of return.

Zionists and...

FROM PAGE 1

The Biden administration has criticized Israel’s illegal settlement construction activities as an obstacle to reviving the so-called peace process, but it has not demanded a freeze, the Associated Press reported.

Most of the international community considers Israeli settlement construction illegal under international law and an obstacle to the so-called two-state solution to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

The UN Security Council has in several resolutions condemned the Tel Aviv regime’s settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian lands but it has not stopped the Zionists continuing their illegal activities.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been the only country which has always stood against this criminal and occupier regime and fortunately the number of the countries which oppose the Zionist regime is on the rise but it is not enough. As long as the international bodies are sleeping and keeping silence on Israeli regime’s crimes, this ’s regime will continue its different types of crimes like state terrorism, assassination, bombing and occupation.

In recent days Israeli forces have attacked under pretention of attacking at Iranian forces in Syria while the truth differs and the Zionists do not like an anti-Israel regime in Syria and attacks are aimed at weakening and toppling the Bashar Assad government.

Iran’s representatives and envoys in the international bodies have repeatedly called for serious reaction against this illegal criminal regime but they have remained silent because of the West’s support.

On Friday, at least 44 Palestinians were injured south of Nablus in the occupied West Bank after Israeli troops attacked protest rallies to condemn the regime’s settlement activities, which are illegal under international law. The clashes occurred when Israeli soldiers attacked anti-settlement rallies, mainly by young Palestinians, in Beita town and the village of Beit Dajan, Palestine’s official Wafa news agency reported.

The Zionists’ atrocities continued on Saturday when the Israeli regime reportedly assassinated Midhat Saleh al-Saleh, a former Syrian lawmaker who was imprisoned in Israel for 12 years, by gunfire in a Syrian town in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

According to Syria’s official news agency SANA, Saleh was killed on Saturday while returning home in the Syrian village of Ain al-Tinah.

While in recent days Iran has written to the United Nations Security Council over a sharp increase in Israeli threats against the country, warning against any “miscalculation” or “military adventurism” on the part of the regime against the Islamic Republic, including its nuclear program, the U.S. Administration has claimed it will oppose what it calls “disproportionate” attention by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on Israel.

So the world should awake and take a serious action against these Zionist crimes otherwise the criminal regime will continue the atrocities bolder than ever. Although resistant front has stood against the Zionists and has given a proper response to Israel but to tame this regime, a united voice and response is needed by the UN or other international bodies.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always voiced its support for Palestinians both practically and verbally and it is time for the world community to take a united action to save humanity by stopping the Zionists from continuing its crimes.

Pakistan, Iran...

FROM PAGE 1

(i) The two countries should start barter trade on a mass-scale; incorporating as many sectors as possible.

(ii) Iran and Pakistan should collectively set up multiple large marketplaces in their respective border areas.

They also suggested that FPCCI should prepare a list of Pakistani products that have huge duties and tariffs imposed by Iran on Pakistani exporters; so that, they can take up the matter with the relevant authorities in Iran.

Najam Ul Hassan Jawa, Chairman FPCCI’s Pak-Iran Business Council, said that Pakistan and Iran can contribute towards their economic growth through benefitting from enormous regional and border trade potential.

Maggo urged Abdul Razzak Dawood, Advisor to PM on Commerce & Investment, to take FPCCI recommendations into account before commencing his upcoming official visit to Iran.

De Grasse Ready To Dominate Sprints

LONDON (Dispatches) - Lamont Marcell Jacobs may be the 100 meters Olympic champion but Andre De Grasse is the man to watch and runner most likely to put his stamp on the men's sprints, says the world's fastest man Usain Bolt. De Grasse took silver behind the Italian in Tokyo but the Canadian's consistency makes him the frontrunner to dominate the sprint scene, including next year's world championships which will be staged in the United States for the first time.

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Canter Closing In on Maiden Win

MADRID (Dispatches) - Laurie Canter is in sight of his first professional tournament victory after the Englishman finished three shots clear at the Andalucia Masters on Saturday. Canter's compatriot Matthew Fitzpatrick is his closest challenger on four under par at Valderrama, one shot ahead of American David Lipsky, who equalled the lowest ever round at the event with a 64.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

MONDAY OCTOBER 18, 2021

Man Utd Lose at Leicester, Five-Star Liverpool Win at Watford

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United succumbed to a first away league defeat for 30 games by losing 4-2 at Leicester as Liverpool stormed to the top of the Premier League with a 5-0 demolition of Watford on Saturday.

Manchester City moved into second with a 2-0 win over Burnley, while Chelsea can move back to the top of the table when they travel to Brentford later in the day.

But the focus will fall on United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after his side failed to win for the third consecutive Premier League game.

United led at the King Power thanks to Mason Greenwood's spectacular strike, but were quickly pegged back by Yuri Tielemans' dinked finish beyond David de Gea.

A flurry of four goals in the final 12 minutes then condemned Solskjaer's men to a first defeat on the road since January 2020.

Caglar Soyuncu put Leicester in front before Marcus Rashford equalised on his first appearance of the season after shoulder surgery.

Straight from kick-off, United's leaky defence was breached once more as Jamie Vardy smashed home and Patson Daka's first Leicester goal in stoppage time sealed a much-needed win for Brendan Rodgers' men.

Roberto Firmino scored his first hat-trick since 2018 as Liverpool ran riot at Vicarage Road in Claudio Ranieri's first match as Watford boss.

But it was Mohamed Salah who again took most of the plaudits for another stunning solo goal to take his tally for the season to 10 in as many games.

"In this moment it is clear that there is no one better than him," said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp of the Egyptian.

Salah helped open the floodgates with a defence-splitting pass that teed up Sadio Mane to score his 100th Premier League goal.

Firmino would have been unavailable due to a late return from international duty but for an injury that forced him to withdraw from the Brazil squad.

He tapped home his first goal from James Milner's cross before half-time and took



advantage of another open goal after Ben Foster parried Craig Cathcart's attempted clearance. Salah left four Manchester City defenders trailing to score in a thrilling 2-2 draw before the international break and pulled off a similar feat before curling into the far corner.

Firmino then completed the rout in stoppage time.

City did not need to hit top gear to see off Burnley at the Etihad and remain one point behind Liverpool at the top of the table.

Bernardo Silva and Kevin De Bruyne were on target either side of half-time for Pep Guardiola's men. Wolves produced a miraculous comeback from 2-0 down with 10 minutes remaining to win 3-2 at Aston Villa.

Danny Ings and John McGinn had put the hosts in a commanding position at Villa Park. But Romain Saiss, Conor Coady and Ruben Neves handed Bruno Lage's men a dramatic three points.

Southampton got their first league win of the season thanks to Armando Broja's goal to beat Leeds 1-0.

Norwich remain winless and bottom of the table after a 0-0 draw with Brighton.

Azarenka Books Spot in Final Against Badosa



INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - Victoria Azarenka, who is hoping to become the first three-time WTA winner in Indian Wells, punched her ticket to the final by rallying to beat former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Two-time Australian Open winner Azarenka continued her solid play in the California desert as she goes for her first title of 2021 and 22nd of her career.

The 32-year-old arrived in the semi-finals without dropping a set and after losing the first one to Ostapenko on Friday night she settled in and found her form.

Azarenka will face Spaniard Paula Badosa, who defeated Ons Jabeur in straight sets 6-3, 6-3.

Azarenka is seeking to win the tournament for the third time after victories in 2012 and 2016.

She is the only former champion left in either the women's or men's field, and with another victory can separate herself from the list of women who have won the trophy twice -- which includes Martina Navratilova, Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova.

Azarenka clinched victory on her first match point when Ostapenko slammed a forehand into the net.

Chinese GP Off F1 Calendar for Third Year in a Row

LONDON (Dispatches) - Formula One will have a record 23 races next season but the Chinese Grand Prix has been dropped for the third year in a row due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Races in Australia, Singapore, Canada and Japan -- all cancelled for the past two seasons -- were included on a calendar published.

"Due to ongoing pandemic conditions, China will not be included on the 2022 calendar. China will be restored to the calendar as soon as conditions allow," Formula One said.

The 2022 season marks the start of a new era, with major rule changes, and opens at Bahrain's Sakher circuit on March 20.

It ends some 35 weeks later at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina on Nov. 20, the championship's earliest finish since 2010.

Formula One is keen to avoid any regional clash with the soccer World Cup which kicks off in Qatar in late November.

Australia's race in Melbourne, the season-opener in recent years, has been scheduled for April 10 as the third round to allow more time for an easing of the country's travel restrictions. "Now more than ever we need major international events, like the Australian Grand Prix, to not only help our economy recover but to put a spring back in our step," said Australian Grand Prix Corporation CEO Andrew Westacott.

The Miami Grand Prix on May 8 is new for 2022, providing a second round in the United States. It remains subject to approval of the circuit, which runs around the city's Hard Rock Stadium -- the home of the Dolphins NFL team.

Inter Lose Cool In First Defeat

ROME (Dispatches) - Reigning champions Inter Milan suffered their first Serie A defeat of the season and caused a long delay after being angered by a Felipe Anderson goal as they lost 3-1 to Lazio on Saturday.

Anderson tapped home a rebound in the 81st minute to put the hosts 2-1 ahead at the Stadio Olimpico, with the Inter players furious that Lazio had not stopped play due to Federico Dimarco being down injured.



Dhoni, who on Friday led Chennai Super Kings to their fourth IPL crown, captained India to the T20 world title in 2007.

But a World Cup win still awaits Kohli who will step down as the national T20 skipper after the 2021 tournament which gets underway today.

The star batsman, who took over the leadership role across all formats from Dhoni in 2017, said the former captain's presence in the dressing room as team mentor will inspire an already confident unit.

Kohli Hails Impact of Dhoni

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Virat Kohli on Saturday hailed M.S. Dhoni as an "inspiration" who had a "huge impact" on his cricketing journey as the India captain goes in search of the Twenty20 World Cup title.

Dhoni, who on Friday led Chennai Super Kings to their fourth IPL crown, captained

"He has always been a mentor for all of us when we were starting our careers through till the time we played with the team and now has an opportunity to continue to do that same work again," Kohli told reporters.

"Younger guys who are playing their first major tournaments at early stages of their careers will benefit from his practical inputs, the intricate details of where the game is going and how we can improve.

"So we are delighted to have him back in this environment and his presence will certainly boost the morale of the team further and give us a lot more confidence than we already have as a team."

The 32-year-old Kohli, who recently stepped down as captain of Royal Challengers Bangalore without an IPL title, said Dhoni lifting the T20 trophy in Johannesburg at the inaugural event in 2007 had a "huge impact" on his cricketing journey.

Haaland Scores Twice On Comeback

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Erling Haaland marked his return from injury with two goals on Saturday as Borussia Dortmund beat Mainz 3-1 to go top of the Bundesliga overnight.

Norwegian prodigy Haaland missed Dortmund's last four games in all competitions with a thigh complaint, but returned against Mainz to score his third brace in as many appearances and take his season tally to nine league goals.

Marco Reus smashed a brilliant half-volley into the top corner to give Dortmund the lead on three minutes, before Haaland coolly converted a penalty to double the lead after the break.

Jonathan Burkardt struck late on to give Mainz hope, but Haaland swept in a second in injury time to seal the win and continue Dortmund's perfect home record this season.

Fellow top-four hopefuls RB Leipzig lost further ground on the leaders as they were held to a 1-1 draw away to unbeaten Freiburg.

Emil Forsberg converted a penalty just after the half-hour mark to give Leipzig the lead and become the first Bundesliga goalscorer in Freiburg's new stadium.

Korean forward Jeong Woo-yeong levelled the scores with a header in the second half, however, as Leipzig dropped points for the fifth time this season to slip seven points behind Dortmund.

Leipzig also remain behind Freiburg and Union Berlin, who moved up to fifth with a 2-0 win over Wolfsburg.



Zverev, Tsitsipas Crash out of ATP Indian Wells Masters

INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - Olympic gold medallist Alexander Zverev and French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas slumped to shock quarter-final exits in the ATP Indian Wells Masters, losing in three sets at the main stadium.

American Taylor Fritz survived two match points to come from behind and eliminate third seeded Zverev 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) while second seeded Tsitsipas was shown the door 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 shortly after by world number 36 Nikoloz Basilashvili.

The exits of Zverev and Tsitsipas means Great Britain's Cameron Norrie, who is seeded 21st, is the top seed left in the final four. The semi-finals are now set with 31st seeded Fritz facing Basilashvili and Norrie going up against 23rd seeded Grigor Dimitrov for a spot in Sunday's championship match at the Tennis Garden in the California desert.

Germany's Zverev jumped out to a big lead in the final set and appeared to be heading to victory before he started to struggle mightily on his second serve.

"This one hurts because I knew that after Stefanos lost this morning, I was kind of the favourite to win this tournament," said Zverev. "But my tennis wasn't there."

He blasted a 135 mph ace to get to match point but then immediately double faulted and Fritz won the next point to take the game and cut the lead to 5-4. Crowd favourite Fritz dominated the third-set tiebreaker clinching the match with a cross court forehand winner.

"I put myself in a situation to get back into it and I did," said Fritz, of San Diego. "I just kept fighting and went after my shots and kept playing my game."

This was just the second loss for Zverev since losing in the fourth round at Wimbledon. Zverev is 20-2 over that stretch.

