

**Ayatollah Seyed Ahmad Khatami,
The Member of Iran's Assembly of
Experts Said That Provoking
Neighbors Against Iran Is a Plot by
The Enemies, and Called for Vigilance
Of Iranian Officials and People**

IRAN NEWS

**The IAEA Chief, Rafael Grossi,
Said He Hasn't Yet Met With
Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi
But Hopes to Do So Soon to Build
A Relationship Based on
"Mutual Trust and Confidence"**

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Iran Warns of Psywar Behind IAEA's Exposing Details of Its Nuclear Work

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's nuclear agency says the UN nuclear watchdog's repeated exposition of details of the country's nuclear work is partly driven by psychological warfare intentions.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI)'s spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi made the remarks in an exclusive interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) News agency.

Kamalvandi said, going against its own Statute and jurisdiction as well as the concerned country, in this case Iran's approbation, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been exposing details of Iran's nuclear activities in its periodic reports that it publishes on the agency's website, to which the member states have access.

This is while the agency should publish such reports, when "a major development or diversion" has taken place, the spokesman cautioned.

"Given the repeated incidence of publication of Iran's documents, it looks like this is a trend that is underway under the influence of certain countries with certain goals, part of which is waging psychological war," the official said. **See Page 7**

U.S. Has No Room to Operate in West Asia

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the United States is fleeing from the region due to resistance of regional nations and has no more room to operate in West Asia.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks while addressing a ceremony on Thursday, saying, "In the political battle [with the West], Islam and Muslims have emerged victorious and this is a reality... A proof [to this reality] is the humiliating escape of the [American] enemy from Afghanistan."

The IRGC chief commander added, "The [global] arrogance is fleeing the region as it has no more room to operate in the [West Asia] region, and the US has been marginalized more than ever before."

Drawing attention to the formation of resistance movements in all parts of the Muslim world, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan, Salami argued that as a result of that, the enemy forces' morale has plummeted and they have become frustrated. **See Page 7**

JCPOA Violators Far From Meaningful Negotiating Table



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's top negotiator says the parties that have failed to honor their commitments under the 2015 Iran nuclear accord are the ones being far from a meaningful negotiating table, not the Islamic Republic, which has fully complied with its contractual undertakings and never left the table in the first place.

Ali Baqeri-Kani, the Iranian deputy foreign minister for political affairs, made the remarks during an interview with Press TV and before departing for Moscow, reacting to mounting pressure on Tehran to return to talks in Austria's capital, Vienna, aimed at reviving the nuclear deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The talks, which were paused in June after Iran's presidential election, are expected to resume before the end of November, Baqeri-Kani announced via a tweet on Wednesday, following talks with Enrique Mora, the European Union's deputy foreign policy chief, in Brussels.

"During today's meeting, I stressed that we, who fully honored the [nuclear] agreement and we still do, are in fact near the negotiating table," he told Press TV after the Wednesday meeting.

"Those who are far from the negotiating table are the ones that have either failed to uphold their commitments or indeed violated the previous commitments," he said. "They are very far from the negotiating table."

The senior Iranian diplomat explained that his meeting with Mora lasted several hours, during which they discussed the backgrounds, requirements, and conditions that are needed for result-oriented negotiations to be established between Iran and P4+1.

He said it was decided during the meeting that Iran and P4+1 will resume negotiations "within the next month" based on those frameworks.

Iran's envoy to talks aimed at potential removal of U.S. sanctions says the Islamic Republic is to rejoin the negotiations before November's end.

He also repeatedly underlined Iran's firm stance on the primacy of establishing "result-oriented" negotiations via the Vienna format.

"Result-oriented talks are acceptable for us; talks that will have practical outcomes; talks that will lead to the removal of cruel and illegal sanctions. But we do not accept talks for the sake of talks and reject them," he said.

"A very important point that was underscored during today's meeting and also during the meeting in Tehran is that the Islamic Republic of Iran only pursues talks that require practical achievements and outcomes, and that the Islamic Republic of Iran does not pursue talks for reaching a mere agreement written on a piece of paper," Baqeri-Kani, who replaced Abbas Araghchi as Iran's lead negotiator, stated.

"The main subject in these talks is the removal of cruel and illegal sanctions that were imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran in the course of the last few years, especially the sanctions that were imposed by [former U.S. President Donald] Trump under the so-called maximum pressure policy against our people as a result of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA," he added, using the official acronym of the landmark agreement.

He arrived in Moscow Thursday night to hold talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Ryabkov, on new round of talks in Vienna, Austria, to pave the way for lifting cruel sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran.

Upon his arrival, the Iranian diplomat said that in accordance with a recent agreement between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries (Britain, France, Russia, China plus Germany), Iranian representatives are scheduled to hold joint meetings with each of the four states; so, the first joint session will be held between Russia and Iran.

He stipulated that the new round of talks will be held merely with the aim of lifting illegal and cruel U.S. sanctions. The Iranian official in his first trip as deputy FM to Moscow said that he would discuss other issues of mutual interests.

UNSC Urged to Compel Israel to End Golan's Occupation

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations (UN) says the Security Council must fulfill its responsibility and compel the Israeli regime to put an immediate end to its occupation of Syria's Golan Heights and its acts of aggression against the country.

"Aggressions and destabilizing measures of the Israeli regime constitute flagrant violations of international law and continue to threaten regional and international peace and security," Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in an address to a UNSC session on Syria on Wednesday. Israel frequently launches missile attacks and targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists.

Israel has been a key supporter of terrorist groups that have been fighting the government of President Bashar al-Assad since the foreign-backed militancy erupted in Syria over 10 years ago.

The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country. **See Page 7**

ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian UN and Law Of the Jungle

When in 1945 the United Nations (UN) was founded aiming to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations, most countries expected this international body to spread justice by taking action against offenders but it seems it and its arms are losing their effectiveness at least in dealing with the big powers.

In recent years people in the world have witnessed and believed that the UN is losing its effectiveness when it comes to react to the world powers' offences and in support of the weaker parties. There are several cases wherein the UN has shown the world that it is unable to take a fair action.

The International Court of Justice is one of the crucial arms of the UN for spreading justice in the world but its verdicts are ignored by the offenders and it has turned into a toothless tool. The best example regarding to the toothless of the ICJ is its verdicts against the U.S. in a case lodged by the Islamic Republic of Iran. On Thursday, Iran criticized the UN and the ICJ for its passiveness regarding its verdict against the U.S.

Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations said that the U.S. administration continues to disregard orders issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which have been handed down in cases filed by Iran against US and vice versa.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks in an address to the UN General Assembly on Thursday, emphasizing that Iran acknowledges "the vital role of the ICJ in the prevention of hostilities and mitigation of crises through peaceful settlement of disputes as well as in strengthening the rule of law, preserving international order and tackling unilateral measures."

"Due to adoption of a number of legislative and executive acts in the United States in flagrant violation of international law, the immunity of states and their properties from suit before U.S. courts as well as immunity from jurisdiction and enforcement have been removed against Iran," he added.

Takht-Ravanchi noted that as a result of the filing of cases in the U.S. courts against Iran as well as its officials and the Central Bank (CBI), "the assets of the CBI have been subjected to execution in order to satisfy a default judgment."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that such asset blocking and enforcement proceedings against the CBI and certain Iranian companies and banks in the U.S. is in violation of provisions of 'Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights of 1955' between the two countries," Iran's UN envoy said. **See Page 7**

Outer Space, Common Heritage for All Mankind

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations called outer space a common heritage and province for all mankind that must be explored and utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Speaking at the UN Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL/C4) on Wednesday Majid Takht-Ravanchi said: "The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the founding members of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space since its inception in 1958, continues to reaffirm the universally agreed principle that outer space is a common heritage and province for all mankind."

It must be explored and utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes as well as for the benefit of present and future generations of all peoples."

Elsewhere he underlined: "The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR). We believe that all member states of the UN should commit themselves to cooperate with the UNSCEAR in the fulfillment of its responsibilities. **See Page 7**

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Iran Attends UN Charity Market in Geneva

GENEVA (IP) - The Islamic Republic of Iran took part in the annual United Nations Charity Market held in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Iranian handicraft stand was one of the most visited places at the annual UN Charity Market in Geneva, also visited by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva Tatiana Valovaya.

Organized annually by the Association of Wives of Ambassadors and Diplomats in Geneva to encourage countries to participate in UN charity programs, diplomatic missions offer and sell their local-traditional products and handicrafts and culture in the event.

Gov't Determined to Fulfill Its Responsibilities To Develop the Country

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - During the meeting of the Assembly of Representatives of Tehran Province in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi instructed his chief of staff and executive deputy to make arrangements for holding meetings and provide solutions to solve Tehran's problems.

During the meeting, which was also attended by the Governor-General of Tehran, 24 representatives of the province expressed their views on the issues and problems of the province and urged the government to try to solve these problems.

Raisi described the holding of this meeting as the beginning of a joint effort to solve the problems of Tehran province and said, "Today, there is a serious hope and expectation in the people to solve problems and a feeling of despair and hopelessness in the enemy".

The President also said, "Although Tehran is not the whole country, but due to its centrality and high population, Tehran's problems are national, and solving social problems and harms in this province can be effective in solving similar problems in all countries".

Raisi referred to the issue of environmental problems in Tehran province and said, "According to the law, the governor-general of Tehran should be responsible for managing air pollution, traffic, sewage and other environmental issues in the province, and if necessary, amendments should be made to these laws or more authority should be given to him".

Regarding the government's task in developing the public transport fleet, especially in Tehran province, the President said, "Certainly, we should not expect the problems accumulated from previous years to be solved overnight, but the 13th government will certainly fulfill its duties in this regard".



In another part of his speech, Raisi stated that the reform of the budget structure is being seriously pursued, adding, "The government is extremely sensitive to the increase in expenditures; In the first days of office, when we wanted to pay the salary, no credit was available, and now we pay an average of 10 trillion tomans in monthly expenses for the previous government".

Emphasizing that the direction of the 13th government is the administration of justice, the President said, "The budget structure is being reformed with the justice administration approach, and for example, the salary increase will be implemented in a gradual manner and the government will not make any promises that will not be realized".

Raisi said, "In the new budget structure, a share in national development and production has been determined for each province, and the provinces must play their share and role in the prosperity of production and development of the country".

The President said, "If rescuing the country's economy from the current situation requires some major surgeries, I and the 13th government will not hesitate to spend our power and reputation in this direction".

The President then emphasized, "We have big problems ahead of us, but we also have great capacities to solve problems, and realizing these capacities requires close and sincere cooperation between the government and the parliament".

UN Approves Iran's Proposal for World's Nuclear Disarmament

TEHRAN (IP) - The biennial resolution proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the world's nuclear disarmament was adopted with the support of a majority of UN member states.

The Iranian proposal adopted by the UN as a resolution is supposed to pursue the implementation of the agreements reached the Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conferences in 1995, 2000, and 2010.

Part of the resolution stresses the implementation of the decision of the NPT Review Conference in 1995 to establish a nuclear-weapon-free West Asia region.

The decision calls for the Israeli regime to join the NPT and accept the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) oversight of its nuclear facilities.

The resolution calls on the member states of the Treaty on the NPT to speed up the implementation of their commitments to completely destroy their nuclear arsenal in accordance with the principles of transparency, irreversibility, and international oversight.

Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, nuclear states are committed to destroying all of their nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the nuclear states are legally obliged not only to refrain from any action to build nuclear weapons, but also to refrain from transferring such weapons to other countries, deploying them outside their territory, and cooperating with other governments to build nuclear weapons.

In the resolution in question, Iran asks for security assurances so that the owners of the nuclear weapons do not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear countries.

The U.S., the Israeli regime, the European Union, and several of the predominantly Western allies of the U.S. voted against the resolution. By its 'Little boy' and 'Fat man', the US killed about 220,000 Japanese people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Iran Ready to Expand All-Out Ties With Algeria

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Qasemi has emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to develop cooperation with Algeria in all economic, political and cultural fields.

According to news.mrud.ir, the Iranian minister received different ambassadors of other countries on Thursday, including Algerian Ambassador to Iran Abdel Moneim Ahriz.

Qassemi expressed pleasure at long-term historical relations between Algeria and Iran, underlining that expansion of cooperation with the African country in all economic, political and cultural arenas is in line with the Islamic Republic's policy.

Referring to President Ebrahim Raisi's emphasis on

expansion of ties with Algeria, the minister expressed hope that the level of interactions will increase in the future, noting that despite the bilateral political understanding, the current exchanges and collaborations are not sufficient.

The Iranian cabinet member further thanked the Algerian envoy for his effort to hold commissions and boost political, economic and cultural cooperation, expressing hope that the precious experiences would help upgrade mutual interactions in all fields.

Expressing readiness to hold the fourth meeting of joint economic commission, Qassemi said that development of trade ties between the two countries will be beneficial for both sides, adding that the two countries can take common stance on different regional developments.

Plot to Run Gas Riot in Iran Failed

TEHRAN (IP) - Intelligent management of Iran thwarted the enemies' plot to bring the country to their intended gas riot, said the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

Following a cyber attack to the gas stations in Iran on Tuesday, a governmental system managing fuel subsidies was shut down throughout the country.

Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani wrote in a Wednesday tweet: "Although, front line of passive defense was inactivated by a cyber attack, the back line thwarted enemy's goal of rioting in #Iran through coordinated & timely action of the executive, security & media agencies."

Shamkhani then made the enemies beware of the fact that: "Intelligent management in October 2021 revealed recklessness of October 2019."

The problem caused difficulties for gas stations, and their activities were temporarily suspended but soon the process of refueling at gas stations returned to normal.

No further information has been released from which country and how the attack was carried out.

IRGC Disbands Terrorist Outfit

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says its forces have wiped out a terrorist outfit in the country's northwestern city of Sardasht, which is close to the Iran-Iraq border.

In a statement on Thursday, the IRGC Ground Force's Hamzeh Seyed al-Shohada Base explained that following reconnaissance and intelligence operations in Sardasht, an armed terrorist outfit that intended to infiltrate and carry out sabotage operations in Iran's northwestern area was disbanded upon entering the country.

Sardasht is the main city of Sardasht County in Iran's West Azarbaijan Province. The city was attacked with chemical weapons by Iraq under former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during his imposed war against Iran in the 1980s.

The IRGC statement added that during the timely operation, some weapons and ammunition were confiscated, but it did not clarify whether there were any casualties.

Iranian forces frequently engage in clashes with terrorist outfits or carry out operations against them near the country's western and eastern borders.

Last month, two terrorist outfits were disbanded in separate operations conducted by the Intelligence Ministry and police forces in Iran's northwestern areas, during which two terrorists were killed, two others injured, and dozens arrested by the Iranian forces.

Iranian Army Unveils Friendship 5-3031 Aircraft

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian Army has unveiled the Friendship 5-3031 aircraft in a ceremony attended by Commander of the Army's Aviation Division Brigadier General Yousef Qorbani.

"They worked on this plane for 30 thousand hours," said the top general. "Unfortunately, the aircraft was not in a good condition at the beginning, but through efforts and work, its condition improved and reached a good point," he added.

General Qorbani then touched upon the capabilities of the Iranian military. "Our Armed Forces are strong and the unrivalled power in the region," he said.

The top commander underlined that Iran's Armed Forces are standing on their own feet today.

"Our army is a revolutionary one and always stands by the people," he said.

"We, the Armed Forces, become united against the enemy and at the same time stand by our dear people," said the commander.

Syrian, Iranian Officials Confer on Enhancing Strategic Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP) - Head of the Joint Ministerial Committee, Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development discussed with Syria's Ambassador to Iran the means of boosting strategic cooperation between the two countries.

Economy, commerce, investment, agriculture, roads, transportation, and power were among the topics Rostam Ghasemi sides Shafiq Dayoub discussed.

Ghasemi stressed that the new Iranian government is keen to enhance the cooperation with Syria in all domains in a way that fulfills the aspirations and interests of the two friendly peoples.

Tehran Terms UN Special Rapporteur's Report as Unfair, Political

TEHRAN (IRNA) - High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran has rejected the recent report delivered by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran Javard Rehman and called it political.

Through a statement on Wednesday evening, the Council described Rehman's report on Iran as unprofessional, unfair and political. In his report, the Special Rapporteur has not paid attention to realities.

Today, all world people know that certain Western states and the United States use the issue of human rights as a tool [for achieving their goals], according to the statement.

Islamic Republic of Iran sees the fight against terrorism as a duty to defend the nation's rights.

The statement further expressed deep regret over the UN report which has not taken into consideration the U.S. illegal, inhuman and unilateral measures which have endangered the health of children, women and men who need medicine and medical care.

High Council for Human Rights also condemned Rehman's report which has deliberately ignored to refer to unjust and inhuman sanctions against Iran; the sanctions as the statement stressed have directly and indirectly violated basic human rights in Iran.

And the issue has challenged impartiality of the report.

As the statement stressed, Iran continues its constructive cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and the country believes that cooperation based on mutual respect guarantees support for the human rights in the international arena.

The statement also criticized the Rapporteur's report for relying on the baseless claims, which have already made by sources affiliated to terrorist and anti-Revolution groups and been responded reasonably by Iran.

Justice necessitates that Islamic Republic of Iran gives its responses completely, and the truth will be revealed in this way.

High-Ranking Belarus MP to Help Iranians Caught at Border

TEHRAN (MNA) - Deputy Iranian foreign minister has held a meeting with chairman of the International Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus at the Iranian embassy in Minsk.

Seyed Kazem Sajjadi, the deputy Iranian foreign minister for consular, parliamentary and Iranians' affairs, has sat down with Andrei Savinykh, the chairman of the International Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus at the Iranian embassy in Minsk, the Iranian Foreign Ministry reported on its official website.

Seyed Kazem Sajjadi, the deputy Iranian foreign minister for consular, parliamentary and Iranians' affairs, has sat down with Andrei Savinykh, the chairman of the International Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus at the Iranian embassy in Minsk. In the meeting, the Iranian official underlined cordial relations between the two countries as well as both sides' willingness to enhance bilateral ties on different political, economic and parliamentary diplomacy fronts.

Sajjadi also called on the Belarusian parliamentarian to help save the lives of Iranian nationals stranded along Belarus' borders with Lithuania and Poland.

Sajjadi said Iran's policy is to offer all-out support to its nationals.

"The Belarusian government and authorities are expected to act responsibly and care about the lives of Iranians caught in bitter cold along that country's border with Lithuania and Poland, and help the embassy offer humanitarian services such as providing them with blankets and warm food and help those who would like to return to their homeland," the Iranian official noted.

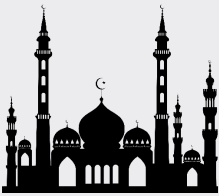
Sajjadi said he, his accompanying delegation and Iran's ambassador to Belarus are all ready to inspect Belarus's borders with Lithuania and Poland in order to help Iranians stranded in cold.

He asked the Belarusian official to tap into all his potential and resources to ward off a humanitarian catastrophe. Savinykh, in turn, touched upon the close ties between the two countries and added his government attaches great importance to maintaining and expanding those relations.

He also expressed regret over the current situation.

He said some groups tempt individuals and drag them into a complex and difficult situation. He stressed that all countries and governments should abide by international laws and regulations.

Savinykh said he will use all his power and potential to solve the current problem.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)

■ Evening (Maghreb)

■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

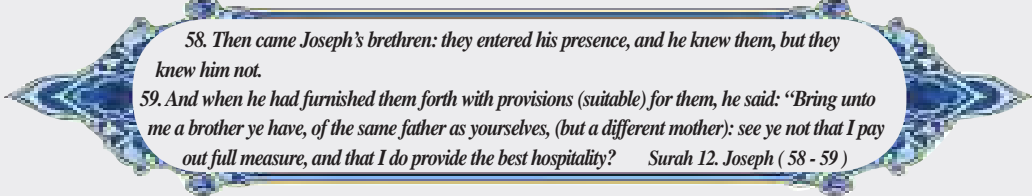
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise

11:48

17:29

05:01

06:25



58. Then came Joseph's brethren: they entered his presence, and he knew them, but they knew him not.
59. And when he had furnished them forth with provisions (suitable) for them, he said: "Bring unto me a brother ye have, of the same father as yourselves, (but a different mother): see ye not that I pay out full measure, and that I do provide the best hospitality? Surah 12. Joseph (58 - 59)

Iran, Turkmenistan Sign 236 Cooperation Documents

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister stated: 236 cooperation documents were signed between Iran and Turkmenistan and according to the agreements, a protocol has been prepared, according to which the two governments are determined to expand their ties.


In the closing ceremony of the 16th meeting of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Commission on Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation, Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister said: "In the transportation sector between Iran and Turkmenistan, the countries agreed to increase the speed of transportation of goods between the two countries."

Rasit Meredow added: "We also reached agreements in rail transport. To develop cooperation between the two countries, it was decided to allocate a zone in Iran's Shahid Rajaei port to Turkmenistan to increase transit between the two countries."

The Turkmen Foreign Minister continued: "In the health sector, it was also agreed to set up a working group to implement the provisions of the MoU signed between the parties in 2015, and to form a group to organize exchanges and scientific and health experiences."

Also, Rasit Meredow announced joint activities between the two countries in education and tourism soon.

"A working group was set up to monitor the implementation of the protocol, which will create a new phase in relations between the two countries," he said.



The Turkmen Foreign Minister stressed: "In order to implement the agreements reached, we invited the Minister of Roads and Urban Development to continue these meetings in Turkmenistan and to have an overview of this cooperation."

On Thursday, a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Iran and Turkmenistan to develop rail cooperation in Tehran on Thu.

Accordingly, a joint MoU for developing railway cooperation was inked in presence of Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Ghasemi and Azad Atamardovs the Director General of Railways Agency of Turkmenistan.


Following the intensive talks held between heads of Iran and Turkmenistan railway companies on Nov. 26-27, Deputy Roads Minister and CEO of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Seyyed Mi'ad Salehi signed and sealed a MoU with Azad Atamardovs Head of Railways Agency of Turkmenistan in order to enhance and develop rail cooperation.

Promoting export and transit, doubling exchange and acceptance of wagons from Sarakhs railway border, resuming trade activity between Artiq-Lotfabad border and holding joint meetings between representatives of the two countries' railways were among the issues mentioned in the cooperation document inked between the two countries.

Implementation of this document will lead to the development of bilateral cooperation on relevant issues, increase in the volume of exchange of goods, development of rail transportation and economic prosperity of the two countries.

Uzbekistan Calls for Use of Chabahar Port Transit Capacities

TEHRAN - Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov called for taking an advantage of transit capacities of Iran's Chabahar port.



He made the remarks in a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Tehran and said that Uzbekistan wants to use transit capacities of Iran's Chabahar Port.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed latest developments in Afghanistan, bilateral economic cooperation in the fields of transit and energy as well as interactions of Iran with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Turning to the importance of restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan, Uzbek foreign minister emphasized the need for exchanging views between Tashkent and Tehran on issues of mutual interests.

He expressed readiness of his country for developing and broadening bilateral cooperation in various fields including energy and called for acceleration of holding Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Economic Commission.

Strengthening cooperation of Islamic Republic of Iran with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and holding Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization next year in Uzbekistan as current periodical chairman of the Organization were among other topics discussed by the two sides.

Early Production At Khesht Oilfield To Start Soon

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran is to bring on line an oilfield developed by local companies in the very near future, a sign that development work in the country's petroleum sector has continued in recent years despite US sanctions targeting its crude sales.

Local news agencies said in reports published on Wednesday that the Khesht Oilfield, located in westernmost part of Iran's southern province of Fars, will start early production of 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) within the next few months.

A contractor assigned by the Oil Ministry for development works at the field said that the project was 99% complete and early production would start if the government provides the cash needed to finish the works.

Ehsan Taheri said works remaining to be completed in the field include finishing installation of wellhead equipment at a third and final oil well.

Khesht Oilfield contains over one billion barrels of oil, according to estimates provided by the Iranian Oil Ministry. Exploration work in the field started in 1992 but development stalled for years due to financial and technological issues.

Iran has tapped local companies in recent years to build out oil and gas fields where international companies had abandoned work under American pressure.

Early production from Khesht Oilfield comes as Iran has seen its exports of crude lowered to below 1 million bpd as a result of American sanctions enacted since mid-2018.

International estimates suggest that Iran's crude output has continued to grow in recent months to above 2.6 million bpd as the country finds ways to get round the US sanctions and supply oil to Asian customers.

Experts believe the country will significantly increase its output and exports of crude if it can reach an agreement with world powers to revive a 2015 international deal on its nuclear program.

Gov't Commits to Creating Nearly 2m New Jobs Until March 2023

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's labor minister Hojatollah Abdolmaleki has announced plans showing that the government has committed to creating nearly two million new jobs in the country until March 2023.

Abdolmaleki said on Thursday that a target had been set for Iran's public and private sectors to create some 1.85 million new jobs until the end of the next calendar year.

The minister said the Iranian administration is to implement a new employment charter which could increase the level of coordination between various government departments as they seek to create new jobs in the country.

The announcement came after Abdolmaleki and other senior government officials attended a high-profile meeting of the Iranian government's Supreme Council of Employment (SCE) led by President Ebrahim Raisi.

Raisi said in the SCE meeting that there was a need for an overhaul in the Iranian government's labor policies.

The Iranian president said that his administration would launch a major job creation campaign that would rely on precise information about unemployed people and their education and job training records.

He said that the government's policy would be to provide more support for Iran's private sectors and for the entrepreneurs to help expand the job market in Iran.

"A necessity in the field of job creation is that the private sector should lead the campaign and the government should play its supportive and regulatory role in a proper manner," said the Iranian president.

The official IRNA news agency said in a report that the SCE had adopted 20 pieces of legislation in its Thursday meeting to facilitate job creation in Iran.

Homemade Drug for Treating Rheumatoid Arthritis in Children Unveiled

TEHRAN (PressTV) – The government authorities have unveiled a major homegrown medication that can be used for treating rheumatoid arthritis in children.

In a ceremony held on Thursday, Iranian deputy president for science and technology Serena Sattari unveiled the drug that will be marketed under the commercial name of PerkinRA.

The drug has been developed by Iranian startup accelerator PesisGen. It is a new formulation of Anakinra, or what is internationally known as Kineret which is a product of Swedish pharmaceutical company Sobi.

A report by the official IRNA news agency said that PerkinRA had proved effective in managing symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis especially in patients who had not responded well to single treatments like methotrexate.

PesisGen's CEO Amir Hossein Karagah said after the unveiling ceremony that PerkinRA is the first Iranian biopharmaceutical medication whose entire research,

development and manufacturing process has been carried out inside Iran.

Karagah said that the drug had been tested on patients under 16 who needed intensive care in Tehran's Imam Hossein Hospital where hospitalization rates had reduced by 65% after the clinical trial.

He said half of the patients who avoided the drug during the trial had died while those taking the medication had seen their oxygen levels improve after 48 hours.

Reports said PesisGen had already manufactured 60,000 syringes of PerkinRA for distribution in the Iranian market.

The company said that exports of the drug had already been launched to three countries of Ukraine, Turkey and the Philippines.

Iran is the number one producer of biopharmaceutical medications in the Middle East and West Asia region. Iranian deputy president Sattari said on Thursday that PerkinRA's had become the 27th such medication developed in Iran.

Iranian Ship Docks in Saudi Arabia Port

TEHRAN (IP) – Head of Iran Export Confederation said that Iran's economic relations with Saudi Arabia have begun, and the first ship carrying Iranian goods has docked in a Saudi port."

Mohammad Lahouti said: "Political interactions also affect economic cooperation, and reducing tensions will lead to more activities in neighboring markets."

The head of the Export Confederation of Iran said: "Of course, regarding trade relations with neighboring countries, banking and trade relations have faced problems that will be resolved."

Lahouti added: "In the export market, we need to recognize the needs of neighboring countries. For example, agricultural goods, processing industries, and consumer goods are exported to Iraq and Afghanistan, but for export to a country like Pakistan, in addition to the mentioned goods, petrochemical products must be concluded."

He predicted that in the next six months, trade with ECO countries would be expanded.

The head of the Export Confederation of Iran said: "Iran's membership in the Eurasian treaty also causes the supply of raw materials with lower tariffs for Iranian industries, which will have positive effects on the Iran economy."

Lahouti added: " With the improvement in the border markets, by creating jobs, it is possible to prevent the phenomenon of smuggling goods."

Iran Facing Difficulty in Receiving Money From S. Korea, China and Iraq

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of parliament's planning and budget commission says Iran is having trouble receiving its oil money from South Korea, China and Iraq.

Ehsan Arkani, a representative of Neyshabur, said on Thursday that the problem stemmed from U.S. sanctions against Iran.

The member of the planning and budget commission on Iraq's debt to Iran and its repayment time said: "The exact time is contingent on negotiations between the foreign ministry and the central bank and its results, so the exact time cannot be mentioned."

The comments come as senior officials, including President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, have consistently insisted that economic problems should not be linked to nuclear negotiations and its outcomes.

Iran Eyes 1,100 Ton/Year Odorant Output by 2023

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Deputy Minister of Petroleum for Gas announced that the country's production capacity of odorant would reach 1,100 tons per year by 2023.

According to the National Iranian Gas Company, Majid Chegeni said Iran is the third producer of gas odorant in the first South Pars refinery.

"Using the power of specialists, researchers and domestic companies through Iran Gas Engineering and Development Company, the company designed, supplied equipment and constructed a natural gas odorant production unit with a capacity of 800 tons per year, which due to restrictions, production capacity in the first step was 200 tons," Chegeni added.

"But with the efforts of experts and with the changes made in one year in the refinery feedstock, the production capacity has now reached 550 tons per year," he said.

The Deputy Minister of Petroleum stated that the long-term design of this project, which is still with the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) will lead to a higher production of this strategic item, and said, "Based on this design model and using feed concentration, the production capacity of the item will reach 1,100 tons per year in the next two years."

U.S. Sanctions Lebanese MP

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The U.S. Treasury slapped sanctions on prominent Lebanese tycoons Jihad al-Arab and Dany Khoury and lawmaker Jamil Sayed for allegedly benefitting from corruption and adding to the breakdown of the rule of law in the country.

The three "have each personally profited from the pervasive corruption and cronyism in Lebanon, enriching themselves at the expense of the Lebanese people and state institutions," the US Treasury said. "While the Lebanese people face daily struggles to access basic public goods, including medicine, electricity, and food, during a historic and devastating economic crisis, members of the Lebanese political class and their cronies operate with impunity to enrich themselves and hide their wealth," the Treasury said in a statement.



Ethiopia Air Raid On Tigray Kills 10

ADDIS ABABA (Dispatches) - Ethiopia's military has carried out an air raid on the capital of the war-torn Tigray region that a hospital official said killed ten people and wounded more than 20.

The air force "destroyed the second part of Mesfin Industrial Engineering. The facility was used by TPLF terrorist group for maintaining its military equipment," government spokeswoman Selamawit Kassa said.

Dr Hayelom Kebede, research director at Mekele's Ayder Referral Hospital, said a residential area was hit and casualties were inflicted.



Sudan's Capital Rocked By Fresh Street Clashes



KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Security forces clashed with protesters Thursday furious over a military coup that derailed a fragile transition to democracy and sparked an international outcry.

At least one protester was killed, according to medics, on the fourth day of street violence in Khartoum, as the UN Security Council called on the military to restore the civilian-led government they toppled on Monday.

The council in a unanimously passed statement expressed "serious concern" about the army power grab in the poverty-stricken Northeast African nation and urged all sides "to engage in dialogue without pre-conditions".

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan -- Sudan's de facto leader since the 2019 ouster of veteran autocrat Omar al-Bashir after huge youth-led protests -- on Monday dissolved the country's fragile government.

While the civilian leader, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, has been under effective house arrest, the capital has been rocked by days of unrest and is bracing for major demonstrations on Saturday.

Roads have been blocked by barricades of rocks, debris and burning car tyres that have sent black smoke billowing into the sky, while most shops have been shuttered in a campaign of civil disobedience. "We do not want military power, we want a free democratic life in this country," said one protester, who asked not to be named.

The latest street clashes on Thursday rocked the restive eastern Khartoum district of Burri and the Khartoum-North suburb, AFP reporters said.

At least one protester was killed in the clashes in Khartoum-north, a doctor's committee linked to the protest movement said. That takes to eight the number of protesters killed since Monday's coup, up from a toll of seven given by health officials earlier in the day. Some 170 have been wounded.

Tear gas and rubber-coated bullets were fired at the demonstrators Thursday and witnesses reported several injuries.

The coup was the latest to have hit the country which has experienced only rare democratic interludes since independence in 1956.

The World Bank and the United States have frozen aid and denounced the army's power grab, while the African Union has suspended Sudan's membership over what it termed the "unconstitutional" takeover.

The U.S., EU, Britain, Norway and other nations in a joint statement stressed their continued recognition of the "prime minister and his cabinet as the constitutional leaders of the transitional government".

Sudan had been ruled since August 2019 by a joint civilian-military council, alongside Hamdok's administration, as part of a transition to full civilian rule.

Recent years saw the country -- formerly blacklisted by the US as a "state sponsor of terrorism" -- make strides toward rejoining the international community, with hopes of boosting aid and investment.

Critics Walk out as Lebanon Parliament Reaffirms March 2022 Poll

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The Lebanese parliament has again backed holding a parliamentary election in March next year, despite President Michel Aoun's objections.

The vote on Thursday came some 10 days after MPs had voted in favour of amending the country's 2017 electoral law to hold elections as early as March 27, rather than on May 8, and also decided against adding six additional seats to represent the large Lebanese diaspora.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati had supported holding the polls earlier than originally scheduled to avoid campaigning during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. But the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), the largest Christian bloc headed by Aoun's son-in-law Gebran Bassil, had opposed the move, citing stormy weather and the date coinciding with Lent, during which Christians fast. Aoun also opposed the amendment and sent it back to parliament for reconsideration. In addition to reiterating the FPM's comments, the president's office said holding elections almost two months before schedule would pose logistical issues, shorten the timeframe for expats to register, and prevent young people who would reach the voting age of 21 by May 8 from taking part.

Macron Says Up to Australia to Repair Broken Relations

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron told Australia's prime minister that he had broken the trust between their two countries and that it was up to Canberra to repair relations with "tangible actions," the Elysee said on Thursday.

France has accused its allies of stabbing it in the back when Australia opted for nuclear-powered submarines to be built with U.S. and British technology instead of a multi-billion-dollar French submarine program.

While France has sought to mend fences with Washington, with Macron meeting U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday in Rome, it had frozen its contacts with Australia. "Australia's unilateral decision to scale back the French-Australian strategic partnership by putting an end to the ocean-class submarine program in favor of another as-yet unspecified project broke the relationship of trust between our two countries," Macron told Prime Minister Scott Morrison, according to the Elysee.

The call between Macron and Morrison, who will both attend a G-20 summit in Rome later this week, is the first time the two leaders have spoken since France was informed by letter that Canberra was scrapping the 2016 submarine deal.

"It is now up to the Australian Government to propose tangible actions that embody the political will of Australia's highest authorities to redefine the basis of our bilateral relationship and continue joint action in the Indo-Pacific," the Elysee said.

In the call on Thursday, which came ahead of a U.N. climate change summit next week, Macron also urged Morrison to commit to halting coal mining and the use of coal for power production.

Australia, long under fire as one of world's top producers of coal and gas, has pledged to target net zero carbon emissions by 2050 but will not legislate the goal, and instead, relies on consumers and companies to drive emission reductions.



U.S. Expected to Wage More Wars Across World

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad says the United States is expected to wage more wars in different parts of the world and sustain further losses despite its record of failures and defeats in the past.

"The U.S. has supposedly spent one trillion dollars on military operations in Iraq, and a few trillion dollars more in Afghanistan. Who did Americans give all this money to? Did they give it to the Iraqi nation? Was the money given to the people of Afghanistan then? The United States spent the dollars on American companies to supply weapons and various kinds of military equipment," Assad said as he addressed a ceremony at the Higher Military Academy in Damascus on Wednesday, Syria's official news agency (SANA) reported.

He added, "Wars would, therefore, inject huge sums of dollars into American firms and serve their interests. Even though the U.S. military suffered defeats in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Vietnam, Washington is still expected to wage more war and record more losses."

The Syrian president then urged resilience and steadfastness in the face of the ongoing Syria conflict, calling on the entire Syrian nation to strive for the Arab country's progress in military, economic, administrative and social spheres.

Assad also lauded the expertise, perseverance, willpower and steadfastness of the Syrian army, stating that government forces will work to restore Syrians' unalienable rights.

"The nation has placed its trust in the Syrian army. Syrian troops will remain guarantors of the homeland and its independence," he pointed out.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mikdad said earlier this month that major gains made by government forces in battles against foreign-sponsored Takfiri terrorist groups have resulted in positive international Since 2011, Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy, leading to the emergence of Daesh and other terrorist groups in the Arab country.

The Syrian government has also repeatedly condemned the US and the EU for waging economic terrorism on the country through their unilateral sanctions, holding them responsible for the suffering of the Syrian people, especially now that the country is grappling with a deadly coronavirus outbreak.

Damascus has also been critical of the United Nations for remaining silent on the destructive role of the U.S. and EU, among other parties supporting terrorism in Syria.



India Tests Nuclear-Capable Missile

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -

India has test-fired a nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of 5,000km (3,125 miles) from an island off its east coast amid rising border tensions with China.



The successful launch on Wednesday was in line with "India's policy to have credible minimum deterrence that underpins the commitment to no first use", said a government statement.

The Agni-5 missile splashed down in the Bay of Bengal with "a very high degree of accuracy", said the statement issued on Wednesday night.

Beijing's powerful missile arsenal has driven New Delhi to improve its weapons systems in recent years, with the Agni-5 believed to be able to strike nearly all of China.

India is already able to strike anywhere inside neighbouring Pakistan, its archrival against whom it has fought three wars since gaining independence from British colonialists in 1947.

India has been developing its medium- and long-range missile systems with and without nuclear warheads since the 1990s amid increasing strategic competition with China in a major boost to the country's defence capabilities.

Tension between them flared last year over a long-disputed section of their border in the mountainous Ladakh area.

India is also increasingly suspicious of Beijing's efforts to heighten its influence in the Indian Ocean.

Talks between Indian and Chinese army commanders to disengage troops from key areas along their border ended in a deadlock earlier this month, failing to ease a 17-month standoff that has sometimes led to deadly clashes.

India and China fought a bloody war in 1962.



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Deutsche Bank Extends Profit Run

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - Deutsche Bank's profits rose a stronger than expected 7% in the third quarter, the bank's fifth straight quarter in the black as fees for advising on deals partly made up for a drop in trading revenue. The profit, while a fraction of that of major U.S. competitors, is a victory for Chief Executive Officer Christian Sewing, who in 2019 embarked on a 9 billion euro (\$10 billion) overhaul of the German bank after a series of regulatory failings and billions in losses logged over the previous decade. Investors, however, balked at the bank's reliance on volatile money spinners. Its shares were down 6% by early afternoon having hit a four-month high the previous session.



IMF Sees Strong Foundations for Global Recovery, Big Downside Risks

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Extraordinary policy measures led by Group of 20 economies and COVID-19 vaccines are underpinning a global economic recovery, but new virus variants, inflation and supply-chain disruptions pose downside risks, the International Monetary Fund said.

In a blog published Wednesday, ahead of Friday's meeting of G20 finance and health ministers, Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva urged bold action now to end the pandemic and create space for a more sustainable economy.

This month, the IMF trimmed its 2021 global growth forecast to 5.9% from its 6.0% forecast in July, citing nagging supply chain disruptions and inflation pressures. It said the modest revision masked large downgrades for some countries.

Georgieva said G20 countries could boost their prospects through 2022 by carefully calibrating their own monetary and fiscal policies.

Enacting growth-enhancing reforms, such as programs to support job search and retraining, and reducing regulatory barriers to entry for new firms, could boost aggregate real gross domestic product in the G20 countries by about \$4.9 trillion through 2026, Georgieva said.

She said joint action was needed to provide some \$20 billion in additional grant funding for testing, treatment, medical supplies and vaccines to end the pandemic, and deliver vaccine doses already pledged.

To help developing countries cope financially, G20 nations should also speed up implementation of the Common Framework for Debt Treatments so that vulnerable countries were not forced to choose between paying creditors and providing healthcare.

Incentives to debtors, early engagement with all creditors, including the private sector, and faster timelines for debt resolution would also make the Common Framework more effective and attractive, she said.

G20 countries should also act soon to channel part of their newly allocated Special Drawing Rights, or emergency reserves, to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, she said.

She also called on G20 leaders to commit to a comprehensive package to reach net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century.

Georgieva cited a new IMF analysis which found that increasing energy efficiency and transitioning to renewables could result in net creation of new jobs because renewable technologies are more labor-intensive than fossil fuels.

The research showed that a comprehensive investment plan focused on "green supply policies" could lift global GDP by about 2% this decade and create 30 million new jobs.

Georgieva repeated her call for an international carbon price floor, and said richer countries should deliver on their longstanding promise to provide \$100 billion per year for green investment in developing economies,

German Economy Minister Slashes 2021 Growth Forecast

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Economy Minister Peter Altmaier presented the new forecast for economic growth in Germany. He said the government predicts lower-than-expected growth this year but a boom the following year.

German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier comments a graph during a press conference to present the German government's economic spring projection.

The German economy is projected to expand by 2.6% this year, slower growth than what had been expected, Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said Wednesday.

The announcement comes as the current government of Europe's largest economy prepares to hand over the reins to a new coalition.

The German government originally forecast a gross domestic product growth of 3.5% for 2021, but that figure was downgraded due to supply chain disruptions and shortages of raw materials, the minister said.

"Growth this year will be year will be lower than we had all imagined," Altmaier told public broadcaster ARD.

"It will still be one of the strongest growth rates in Europe," he later told ZDF public television. "But many goods are not being delivered because there is a shortage of raw materials in many areas and that is simply having an effect."

"Higher energy prices are also a factor," the minister said. "At 2.6%, the economy will still expand strongly this year."

Altmaier said the country's long-term prospects are good, but the economy "will only really begin to boom next year with growth of over 4%."

S Korea Economic Growth Rate in Q3 Is 0.3%

SEOUL (Dispatches) - With increased exports, Korea's economy grew 0.3 per cent in the third quarter of this year. As the growth rate slowed down in the third quarter, it is expected to be difficult to achieve a four per cent growth rate, which was predicted by the Bank of Korea (BOK), this year.

According to the 2021 Third Quarter Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) report released by the Bank of Korea on the 26th, real GDP in the third quarter increased 0.3 per cent from

the previous quarter. Compared to the third quarter of last year, when the economy had slowed down due to COVID-19, it increased four per cent.

Although it has been on the rise for five consecutive quarters since negative growth in the first quarter of last year (-1.3 per cent) and the second quarter (-3.2 per cent), the growth rate slowed significantly considering that it grew 1.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent in the first and second quarters of this year, respectively. It is also lower than the market forecast of 0.4 to 0.6 per cent.

Hwang Sang-pil, director of the statistics department at the BOK, said, "The 0.3 per cent growth in the third quarter is due to global supply-chain bottlenecks such as decreased personal consumption, automobile semiconductor supply-chain disruptions, and imbalance in supply and demand of construction materials. But this is not something to worry about much."

However, it is expected that it will be difficult to achieve four per cent annual growth this year. The BOK previously predicted that if GDP growth in the third and fourth quarters reaches more than 0.6 per cent, respectively, it will achieve an annual growth rate of four per cent.

The BOK, however, predicted that it is still possible to achieve annual growth of four per cent. "The third-quarter economic growth rate is not much different from last August's forecast," director Hwang said. "If the growth rate in the fourth quarter exceeds 1.04 per cent, it is possible to achieve an annual growth rate of four per cent."

Director Hwang said, "There are still risk factors such as global supply-chain disruptions, increased economic uncertainty in China, and rising energy prices, but Korea's economy is expected to continue to recover due to positive factors such as expanding vaccination rates, easing quarantine regulations, and a second supplementary budget."

Global Labor Market Hamstrung By Unequal Vaccine Distribution

BERLIN (Reuters) - The pandemic-induced loss in working hours in 2021 will be equivalent to 125 million full-time jobs, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said, in a sign that the global labor market is not recovering as expected this year.

That number is 25 million higher than what the ILO predicted in its last report in June, affected primarily by the disparities in vaccine rollouts in poorer and richer countries.

Globally, the number of hours worked is set to be 4.3% less than the pre-pandemic level, the ILO said.

However, when that figure is calculated based on countries' income level, there is a 2.1 percentage points difference: Rich countries saw only a 3.6% loss, versus a 5.7% for poorer nations.

The ILO said economic stimulus packages were also responsible for the disparities between countries.

Low-income countries could make up that gap in just over a quarter if they were given more equitable access to vaccines, the ILO said.

The uptake in vaccine rollouts at the start of 2021 had slightly softened the blow of lost working hours in the second quarter, the ILO said, when it had predicted a loss of 6%, 1.2 percentage points more than the 4.8% actually recorded.

The ILO uses hours worked, instead of the unemployment rate, for example, in an attempt to compare how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the labor market globally in light of differing definitions of employment within each country.

Turkey Slashes Foreign Trade Deficit by Almost Half



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's foreign trade deficit fell 47.5% on an annual basis to \$2.5 billion in September, according to official figures released on Wednesday.

The country's exports and imports saw an annual rise of 30% and 11.9% to reach \$20.78 billion and \$23.3 billion, respectively, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) reported.

Excluding the energy and gold trade, Turkey's exports and imports were \$19.96 billion and \$19.6 billion, respectively.

"Foreign trade surplus, excluding energy products and non-monetary gold, was \$1.38 billion in September 2021," TurkStat said.

In September, the ratio of manufacturing industry products in overall exports was 94.6%, followed by agriculture-forestry-fishing with 2.9% and mining-quarrying with 1.9%.

The share of high-tech products in the manufacturing industry products was 2.8% in September.

"The ratios of intermediate goods, capital goods, and consumer goods in total imports were 78%, 12.9%, 9%, respectively," the institute noted.

In September, Germany was the main export destination for Turkey with \$1.7 billion and China was the main import partner with \$2.9 billion.

In the first nine months of 2021, Turkey's exports grew 35.9% on a yearly basis to hit \$160.95 billion, while imports were up 23.7% to \$193.3 billion.

The trade balance during the January-September period saw a deficit of \$32.3 billion, a 14.6% decrease from the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile after posting record highs in previous months, Turkey's economic confidence index fell on a monthly basis in October, the country's statistical authority said.

Despite a 1% drop from September, the index was still above the threshold level as it stood at 101.4 in October, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) reported.

A value above 100 indicates an optimistic outlook for the general economic situation, while a value below 100 points to a pessimistic view.

The fall in September "stemmed from the decreases in consumer and real sector (manufacturing industry) confidence indices," according to TurkStat.

The sub-index for retail trade posted the largest monthly rise of 4.8% as it reached 121.1 in October.

It was followed by the services confidence index, which increased 2.1% to 120.3, while the confidence index for the construction sector was up 1% to 92.7, the data showed.

The consumer confidence index dropped 3.6% from September to 76.8 in October, while the sub-index for the real sector was down 1.8% to 111.3.

U.S. Companies to Keep Prices High

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The largest U.S. manufacturers including General Motors, General Electric, 3M and Boeing face logistics headaches and higher costs due to global supply bottlenecks that are likely to persist into next year but agreed the hit to profits can be mitigated by charging higher prices for their goods.

Companies across the globe sounded the alarm on supply issues months ago that have pushed prices higher on raw materials from chemicals to steel.

In earnings reports this week investors got a closer look at how companies are managing.

"It starts with really strong price," said GM Chief Executive Officer Mary Barra in a call with reporters. "We were able to do very well (with) full-size trucks and full-size SUVs. We just can't build enough of those vehicles."

GM is also looking to wring efficiencies from its supply chain and she said the chip shortage is likely to improve in the second half of 2022.

Larry Culp, the chief executive of General Electric Co, a maker of jet engines and wind turbines, told investors keeping up with fits and starts in the global supply chain was akin to playing a carnival game that aims to keep players on their toes.

"I'm not sure we're yet at a place where we would say that things are stable," Culp told investors on an earnings call on Tuesday. "It really is akin to playing a whack-a-mole."

General Electric also expects supply constraints to persist through the rest of the year and in 2022, hurting profit in its healthcare business. Boeing Co also complained of a "severely weakened supply chain."



The pandemic has crippled many companies' ability to send and receive the parts and supplies needed to make a wide range of products, creating shortages, reducing inventories and hammering profits.

On Wednesday, Harley-Davidson said it increased surcharge pricing in the United States to offset higher raw material costs. The motorcycle maker expects these costs to remain high and is exploring higher surcharge costs globally.

Harley-Davidson said the inventory shortage is also squeezing its international market share. McDonald's Corp also said it had to raise prices in the United States.

Industrial giant 3M Co cut its full-year earnings outlook on Tuesday and said it would increase product prices to combat inflationary and supply chain pressures.

Iran Ranks First in Biotechnology Products in West Asia

TEHRAN (IP) - The Secretary of Biotechnology Development Headquarters of Iran's Vice Presidency for Science and Technology said that Iran is in the first place of biotechnology products in West Asia.

Mostafa Ghanei said on Thursday: "The achievement of the first place in the production of biotechnology items and vaccines in West Asia, being placed among the 5 countries producing biotechnology products in Asia, the establishment of innovation centers, the accomplishment of the twelfth scientific rank in the world and first in the region are the achievements of the Iranian researchers in the field of biology."

"358 products worth \$ 894 million are also supported by the biotechnology development headquarters in the field of medicine, raw materials, and pharmaceutical supplies," he added.



Fighting Climate Change is a \$150 Trillion Battle

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A recent Bank of America (BAC) Global Research Report found that, within a 30-year period, global carbon emissions could reach zero at a cost of \$5 trillion per year.

The study explores the extent to which climate change can be battled and what the costs of such efforts would look like.

The consequences of climate change, the report said, will be dire and extreme. "This is the last decade to act," the authors wrote. "Absolute water scarcity is likely for 1.8 billion people, 100 million face poverty, and 800 million are at risk from rising sea levels by 2025. Climate migration could reach 143 million from emerging markets, driven by extreme weather."

Climate change mitigation measures, which have already been implemented in some parts of the world, will need to be drastically increased, the researchers found. In order to make significant changes, they contend, a complete global decarbonization must begin to take place within the next few decades.

"\$5 trillion is [the amount of investment required to] fully decarbonize the world," Global Strategist and Managing Director of Research at Bank of America Merrill Lynch Haim Israel said in an interview with Yahoo Finance. "It's the annual number that will have to be the average for the next 30 years. Total investment is \$150 trillion over the next 30 years, a massive number."

Even in global terms and over a 30-year span, \$150 trillion is a gargantuan amount. The latter number is almost twice the total global GDP in 2019, whereas the \$5 trillion yearly figure would be equivalent to the entire U.S. tax base.

Israel, who was a co-author of the report, noted that while the \$150 trillion cost is daunting, it's necessary to reduce carbon emissions to zero and mitigate damage related to climate change.

"It's the transition from emitting industries into cleaner industries [which creates this cost]," Israel said. "I think one of the lessons that we're learning today during this whole crisis that we're seeing with oil and gas prices is that the renewable energy capacity that was rolled out was not going hand in hand with storage."

Producers which have been able to create enough wind or solar energy have encountered difficulties storing it, which has led to a more costly production process.

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP26, is set to begin on October 31 and last until November 12.

"We are expecting to see a global decarbonization plan [at COP26]," Israel said. "The last accord that was put in motion was, of course, the Paris Agreement, but it has to be updated."

One of the specific proposals garnering interest is the unified carbon price. A carbon price is essentially a number which identifies the cost of greenhouse gas emissions to the public. Such a figure could prove useful in providing the foundations for calculations of climate change costs to use in policy measures. Israel noted that he would be watching carefully to see if world leaders could agree on a carbon price, and if so, what that price would be.

A power-generating windmill turbine is seen in front of the Arc de Triomphe on the Champs Elysees avenue in Paris ahead of the COP21 World Climate Summit, France, November 25, 2015. The upcoming conference of the 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) will start on November 30, 2015 at Le Bourget near the French capital. REUTERS/Christian Hartmann TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY

A power-generating windmill turbine is seen in front of the Arc de Triomphe on the Champs Elysees avenue in Paris ahead of the COP21 World Climate Summit, France, November 25, 2015. The upcoming conference of the 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) will start on November 30, 2015 at Le Bourget near the French capital. REUTERS/Christian Hartmann TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



What would \$5 trillion a year be spent on?

The \$5 trillion yearly figure accounts for the replacement of carbon-emitting technologies and industries with more environmentally-friendly substitutes over time.

Green energy has gotten significantly cheaper over the past decades, the authors noted. "Exponential cost reductions in wind, solar and batteries technologies have made renewables the cheapest form of energy in areas producing >90% of global electricity," they said. "Market appetite is chipping in too. Labelled bonds and loans jumped to > \$3 trillion this year, with \$3 in every \$10 of flows into global equities going into ESG, which will support climate-friendly investments, as well as funding new ones needed to further decarbonize our planet like green mining, green hydrogen or carbon capture. Finally, we see central and commercial bank balance sheets funding rising by c. \$500 billion."

Converting to green technology, while costly, would be cheaper than continuing to rely on fossil fuels in the long run, Israel said.

"It's also that today renewable energy is cheaper, which we spoke about, there's an economic incentive to renewable energy, we believe that the green economy will create 42 million jobs. That's huge. And I don't think it's going to come at the expense of oil and gas all together; we are still gonna be with fossil fuel industry for a very long time. It's just going to be to diversify our energy sources."

One of the more interesting tidbits in the report, especially for crypto enthusiasts, was that a single bitcoin has a carbon footprint of 270 tons, the equivalent of 60 internal combustion engine cars. "Bitcoin today is consuming more and more electricity because bitcoin right now is so widely used and mined, it's just generating and consuming more and more electricity," Israel said.

The mining process for bitcoin has been a source of controversy in the past, due to the intense computing power it requires. After China banned bitcoin mining back in May, much of the activity moved to the United States. Some 17% of mining now occurs in the US. Some of the geographical features of Bitcoin mining which have changed as a result of China's ban may reduce its carbon footprint, a 2021 Cambridge University study found.

In recent years, Israel said, the discussion surrounding decarbonization has moved from debating "if" we need to decarbonize the planet to debating "how" the process should occur, what exactly the needs are, and how much money ought to be allocated. "We are hoping to get one unified global plan, eventually," Israel said.

UN and Law of...

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Takht-Ravanchi said following the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and the unlawful re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran, Iran filed an application instituting proceedings against the U.S. with regard to violations of multiple provisions of the Treaty of Amity.



He said on October 3, 2018, the ICJ issued an order unanimously requiring the U.S. to remove any impediments on the importation of foodstuffs as well as medicines and medical devices to Iran and also ordered Washington to ensure that the licenses and necessary authorizations are granted and that payments and other transfers of funds are not subject to any restriction in so far as they relate to the aforementioned goods and services.

"Regrettably, the United States has not only failed to comply with the Court's Order but, by imposing new sanctions, especially during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, has also deliberately defied that Order," Takht-Ravanchi said.

Iran, he noted, has on several occasions brought the U.S. non-compliance with the Order to the Court's attention and the answer provided by the U.S. in this regard has always been a repetition of its previous contentions; that humanitarian transactions are exempt from its sanctions.

However, Takht-Ravanchi added, "through tightening the grip of sanctions after the Court's Order, the U.S. ... violated this Order which requires that 'Both parties shall refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve'."

Tehran has on multiple occasions called on the United Nations court to order the immediate lifting of the sanctions, and demanded compensation for damages incurred in their wake.

In fact Takht-Ravanchi's remarks show that the U.S. only follows the law of the jungle and the thesis of the might is right and the UN's order is something which is easily ignored by the U.S. or is vetoed by this arrogant country.

If the UN and its arms are to be trusted by the world, it should be powerful enough to bring any offender to the court and punish it, and it should not let big powers dodge punishment because of their power and veto powers.

If this international body functions ineffectively and passively, it will have the same fate that its predecessor, the League of Nations, faced in 1946 when it stopped operations and the UN replaced it.

So cases like the U.S. and Israel's offences are the best chances for the UN to show it is an international body that everyone can trust it or else, it should not expect nations to respect and carry out its decisions because this approach promotes the law of the jungle in the world and unfortunately it is a truth that law of the jungle is gradually dominating the world unless the UN shows its real nature of backing justice and peace in the world.

Outer Space...

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Likewise, the UNSCEAR should be able to benefit from the contributions and knowledge of all countries in all possible ways, including through participation in the work of the Committee."

Referring to the fact that the Palestinian question has been the most challenging international concern for nearly seven decades, Takht-Ravanchi further stated: "In addition to the deprivation of their most inalienable rights, the unlawful, inhumane and expansionist Israeli policies and measures -pursued in violation of international law- have also led to the deterioration of living conditions for the Palestinian people."

Iran's top diplomat stressed: "I would like to reiterate my government's unwavering and full support for the Palestinian people in their legitimate resistance against the occupation and for their just quest in exercising their inalienable rights to self-determination as well as the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital."

Referring to the fact that Iran considers the Golan as an integral part of Syria, he highlighted: "Iran reaffirms that all discriminatory and illegal policies towards the Syrian population, the presence of Israel's army bases in and around Syrian civilian areas as well as the construction and expansion of settlements there constitute a flagrant violation of international law, the UN Charter, relevant UN resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention."

"I would like to, once again, reiterate our strong commitment and support to the UN peacekeeping operations as the flagship activity of the United Nations. In this regard, my government stands ready to increase its contribution to the peacekeeping operations logistically and militarily by deploying troops, military observers, police and civilians," he concluded.

U.S. Has...

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The IRGC's top commander noted that in today's world, realities cannot be hidden anymore and every development is being reported to the entire globe in real time.

"The fact of the matter is that Islamic territories are not a safe place for the enemies and Islam does not allow Muslims" to let the region be a safe place for the enemies, General Salami said.

The IRGC chief further stated that "we are in the final stages of the resistance and this juncture has always been difficult, but the Iranian nation is certainly about to score a great triumph."

In similar remarks a day earlier, a former chief of the IRGC said the Americans "left Afghanistan in disgrace" twenty years after their invasion of the country, expressing hope that they will be soon expelled from Iraq and Syria as well.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, who served as the IRGC chief commander from 1997 to 2007, lauded Iran's military power, saying three major wars broke out near the country's territory but it remained unaltered.

Also, "the Daesh project was defeated and the Islamic resistance front, led by [late founder of the Islamic Republic] Imam Khamenei emerged victorious," said Rahim Safavi, who currently serves as a top military adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

He also mentioned the US assassination of Iran's top anti-terror General Qassem Soleimani in Iraq in early 2020, saying Iran became the only country to dare target a major American base since the Second World War.

The general was making a reference to the IRGC's targeting of Ain al-Asad in al Anbar Governorate, western Iraq, in an operation to avenge the assassination of General Soleimani.

"No one had dared do so since the Second World War," he asserted, adding, "But our dear and powerful Leader has stood up to the United States and the Zionists."

Iran warns of...

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"Because there is no [other actual] reason for publication of this information," he added.

He, therefore, called it an "unpropitious" trend for the world body to simply release technical details of a given country's activities in the absence of justifying reasons.

Kamalvandi expressed regret that the agency has been doing this concerning Iran "from a long time ago."

The IAEA does not behave in such a way when it comes to other countries, he said. A comparison between the way the agency reports on other countries' activities and the country reports it publishes about Iran's nuclear energy program clearly reflects this, Kamalvandi noted.

Since Iran's enrichment activities were completely transparent and avoided all sorts of diversion, "it looks like they are publishing such reports to tarnish it," the official observed.

He warned that the Islamic Republic might be forced to "take [some] actions to stop this situation" such as rethinking the way it interacts with the agency if the situation was to continue.

UNSC Urged to...

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Israel has also occupied large swathes of land known as the Golan Heights in southwestern Syria since 1967, maintaining a significant military presence in the Arab country's territory. Syria has repeatedly reaffirmed its sovereignty over Golan, saying the territory must be completely restored to its control.

Takht-Ravanchi hailed efforts by the UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen to hold a sixth meeting of the country's Constitutional Committee, saying its work must be complemented by other efforts, including by putting an end to the foreign occupation of Syria without any precondition or further delay.

"We emphasize again that the Committee must continue its work without any external interference or pressure. Setting any artificial deadline for its conclusion or any other conditions of such nature will negatively impact the Committee's work and must therefore be avoided," the top Iranian diplomat added.

It must be ensured that this will be a truly Syrian-led political process that belongs to Syria and is being facilitated by the United Nations, he noted.

Takht-Ravanchi slammed the assassination of former Syrian lawmaker Midhat Saleh al-Saleh by Israeli snipers in the occupied Golan Heights earlier this month as one of the regime's latest "adventuristic practices."

"We condemn, in the strongest terms, this criminal act as well as all violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria by the Israeli regime, and reaffirm Syria's inherent right to self-defense and to respond at a time and place of its choosing," the senior Iranian diplomat added.

Takht-Ravanchi also condemned the terrorist attack in the Syrian capital of Damascus on October 20, saying such acts underscore the need to continue the fight against all terrorist groups unabated.

Takht-Ravanchi warned that sanctions would not only increase the suffering of the Syrian people, but would adversely affect the activities of the UN and international and national humanitarian organizations in the Arab country.

He called for the allocation of more aid to Syria and for steps to be taken to ensure that the aid does not fall into the hands of terrorist groups.

Takht-Ravanchi once again reiterated Iran's principled stance that the Syrian crisis should be solved through peaceful channels and in accordance with international law, particularly respect for the countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal and external affairs.

Kjaer Extends Milan Deal Until 2024

MILAN (Dispatches) - Simon Kjaer has agreed to extend his AC Milan contract until 2024, the Serie A leaders said on Wednesday.

Denmark captain Kjaer has been at the seven-time European champions since January last year and has become a firm fan favourite in the red and black half of Milan.

"AC Milan are delighted to announce that Simon Thorup Kjaer has extended his contract with the Club until 30 June 2024," Milan wrote in a statement.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

Public Relations Tel:

(+98)(21) 44253450

Editorial Board: 44253449

Public Relations Fax:

(+98)(21) 44253395

Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234

Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

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Xavi Leads Candidates To Replace Koeman

MADRID (Dispatches) - Barcelona are looking for a new coach after they sacked Ronald Koeman with the Spanish giants ninth in La Liga and third in their Champions League group.

A dire financial situation has hung over the club in recent months, causing Lionel Messi to join Paris Saint-Germain in August. Barcelona are 1.35 billion euros in debt.

Any successor would have to work within those economic constraints, bring back a more attractive style of football and significantly improve results.

West Ham Knock Man City Out of League Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - West Ham ended Manchester City's four-year hold on the League Cup as Liverpool and Tottenham booked their places in the quarter-finals.

City's record run in the competition came to an end at the London Stadium as the Hammers emerged 5-3 winners from a penalty shootout after both sides were guilty of missing plenty of chances in a 0-0 draw.

Phil Foden was the only man to miss from the spot as Mark Noble, Jarrod Bowen, Craig Dawson, Aaron Cresswell and Said Benrahma all found the net for David Moyes' men.

Pep Guardiola characteristically named a strong side and will feel City should have continued their run of 21 League Cup games without defeat.

Nathan Ake, John Stones, Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling all wasted big opportunities as the scoreline belied a contest which raged from one end to the other.

Tomas Soucek also side-footed wide two big chances to win the game for the hosts.

Foden was thrown on along with Jack Grealish in an attempt to win the game from Guardiola.

But the England international pulled City's first penalty wide and stand-in goalkeeper Zack Steffen could not bail his teammate out despite getting a hand to Bowen and Benrahma's strikes.

Liverpool will now fancy their chances of winning the League Cup for the first time in nine years, but had to overcome a poor start to win 2-0 at Preston.

The Reds had scored 30 goals in eight previous away games this season, but a much-changed side

from Jurgen Klopp failed to hit the heights of Sunday's famous 5-0 win at Manchester United.

Preston had by far the better of the first-half as Adrian made a point-blank save from Sean Maguire, Neco Williams cleared off the line and Brad Potts fired over within a matter of seconds.



Liverpool were clinical as they went in front with their first shot on target just after the hour mark as Williams' cross was acrobatically flicked home by Takumi Minamino.

Klopp's men then controlled the final half hour and doubled their lead in spectacular fashion when Divock Origi's backheel dinked the ball over Delcan Rudd.

Tottenham's bid for a first trophy since they last won the League Cup in 2008 remains on course as Nuno Espirito Santo was rewarded for naming a strong side with a 1-0 win at Burnley.

Lucas Moura scored the only goal 22 minutes from time with a powerful downward header from Emerson Royale's cross.

Leicester also needed penalties to see off Brighton after an entertaining game ended 2-2.

The Foxes twice pounced on Brighton gifting possession away in dangerous areas to take the lead through Harvey Barnes and Ademola Lookman in the first-half.

Adam Webster and Enoch Mwepu levelled for the Seagulls, but Mwepu and Neal Maupay failed to beat Danny Ward from the spot.

Brentford reached the last eight for the second consecutive season with a 2-1 win at Stoke thanks to first-half goals from Sergi Canos and Ivan Toney.

Students, Teacher Arrested In India for Celebrating Pakistan Cricket Win

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Indian police have arrested three Muslim students and a teacher for celebrating the Pakistan cricket team's crushing victory over arch-rivals India at the Twenty20 World Cup, officials said Thursday.

The students, originally from Indian-administered Kashmir, were taken into custody on Wednesday in the northern city of Agra for "promoting enmity" and disrupting religious harmony, police inspector Pavindra Kumar Singh told AFP.

The case was lodged after right-wing Hindu nationalist groups barged into the Raja Balwant Singh Engineering Technical College demanding the arrest of the three students, according to press reports.

Also on Wednesday, teacher Nafeesa Attari was arrested in Udaipur in western India for posting "we won" on her WhatsApp status after Pakistan routed India on Sunday in Dubai. She was later released on bail.

Attari, who was also dismissed from her job, apologized for her conduct in a video message seen by AFP, saying she never intended to hurt anyone's sentiments.

"I am an Indian and I love my country. I love India as much as anyone else does. As soon as I realized I have made a mistake I deleted my post," she said.

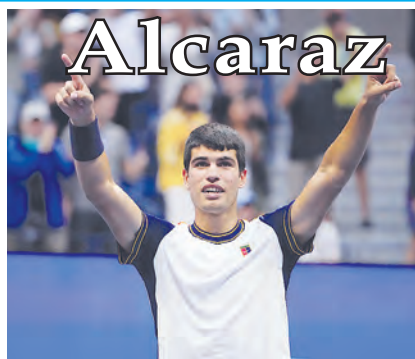
The Times of India said two more people were arrested for displaying pro-Pakistan slogans in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

The arrests came after police launched an investigation into several hundred students who burst into celebrations in Kashmir following the T20 clash watched by millions across South Asia.

Kimmich Urged To Get Vaccinated

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich star Joshua Kimmich has been told to get vaccinated against Covid-19 by Germany's acting interior minister after the footballer sparked a lively debate by revealing he had opted out of receiving jabs against the coronavirus.

"Think again and get vaccinated," Horst Seehofer, a senior figure in Angela Merkel's outgoing government, told Bild in a message aimed directly at Kimmich.



25 break points and seven breaks of serve.

"I played really, really well and I'm just really happy for the performance today."

Last month, Murray, now ranked 156 in the world, had stunned his 42nd-ranked

Alcaraz Gains Murray Revenge in Vienna

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz avenged his Indian Wells defeat to Andy Murray to reach the quarter-finals of the ATP event in Vienna.

Alcaraz, 16 years younger than former world number one and three-time major winner Murray, clinched a 6-3, 6-4 win.

"For me it's a great feeling to play against Andy Murray and to be able to beat him," said Alcaraz after a match which featured

opponent in three sets in the second round of the prestigious Masters tournament in the Californian desert.

"Indian Wells was the first time that I met Andy on court and now I knew a little bit more, I just knew his game, how to play," added Alcaraz.

The young Spaniard will face either third-seeded Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini or Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia for a place in the semi-finals.

Meanwhile, Italian seventh seed Jannik Sinner, the champion in Antwerp last weekend, kept up his late push for a place in the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin by making the second round.

Sinner defeated big-serving American Reilly Opelka 6-4, 6-2 and will next play Austria's Dennis Novak.

The 20-year-old Sinner started the week in 10th place in the race for Turin just behind Hubert Hurkacz for the final qualifying spot in the eight-man field for the Turin showpiece.

FIFPro Chief Convinced Biennial World Cup Won't Happen

B RUSSELS (Dispatches) - The head of global footballers' union FIFPro is confident a plan to hold the men's World Cup every two years is "dead in its tracks" and insists FIFA should do more to promote the women's version instead.

FIFA will hold a summit in December with President Gianni Infantino still hoping to find consensus on plans to stage the men's tournament more often than the current four-year cycle.

However, opposition has been so widespread from leagues, players and supporters groups that the chances of a biennial World Cup actually happening appear remote.

"There has been a lot of pushback. They have realized that," FIFPro's general secretary Jonas Baer-Hoffmann told AFP about FIFA's proposals.

"It is quite clear that if you try to push this through against the interests of all these other stakeholders, and without their agreement, it is probably dead in its tracks."

FIFPro, comprised of national member associations from 64 countries, is one of several organisations within football that has expressed unhappiness at a lack of consultation on the issue.

The proposals were put forward by Arsene Wenger, FIFA's head of global development. Baer-Hoffmann questioned whether holding more frequent World Cups would be sustainable economically, but said there is already a solution in place.

"When we met with FIFA for the first time, we asked them for the economic analysis, we haven't seen that yet. I don't think a second World Cup would just mean the current revenue times two. It's not like you just double the value in sponsorship etcetera."

"The truth is also that there are two World Cups in every four-year cycle already. We should make the women's one more of a priority. That is your second World Cup."

The World Cup is expanding regardless in another way -- the men's version to 48 teams from 2026 and the women's to 32 teams from 2023.



Mueller Apologizes To Bayern Fans for 5-0 Cup Thrashing

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich veteran Thomas Mueller has apologized to their fans and admitted the 5-0 thrashing at Moenchengladbach in the German Cup was the worst defeat he has experienced during 13 years playing in the famous red shirt.

"We were picked apart from A to Z in the first half," the 32-year-old Mueller, who made his Bayern debut in 2008 and is approaching 600 appearances for the Bavarian giants, told ARD.

"I don't know if I've ever experienced anything like that before in an FC Bayern shirt. We have to apologize to our fans."

A full-strength Bayern team was pole-axed Wednesday when Gladbach took the lead at Borussia Park with barely a minute gone.

After Kouadio Kone's early goal, Algerian defender Ramy Bensebaini netted twice to make it 3-0 at half-time. Bayern's bright start to the second-half was obliterated when Swiss striker Breel Embolo scored two rapid-fire goals.

Furious Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic described the visitors' performance as "a collective blackout -- we simply didn't turn up".

Gladbach fans started celebrating long before the final whistle as the song 'Oh, wie ist das schoen' (Oh, how beautiful this is) echoed around the stands.

"Of course, this was a disgrace for us," added Mueller who said the Bayern team sat stunned in the dressing room afterwards.

"We had a lot planned. We tried to somehow pick ourselves up, but I don't think you saw that on TV."

Bayern had plenty of off-field distractions in the build-up. Head coach Julian Nagelsmann was sidelined at home, isolating after testing positive for Covid-19.

Defender Lucas Hernandez discovered the morning of the second-round cup tie that he will escape jail in Spain despite violating a restraining order in 2017.

