

Director-General of the
International Atomic Energy
Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi Will
Visit Tehran on Tuesday to
Discuss Iran's Nuclear Program,
The Body Has Confirmed

IRAN NEWS

Reacting to Remarks of French FM
Spokesman, Iran's Foreign Ministry
Spokesman Said that Any Stance of
Political Officials of Different States
Aimed at Influencing IAEA Will
Tarnish IAEA Technical Prestige

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Removal of All Illegal Sanctions, Main Goal In Vienna Talks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says the main goal pursued by Iran during the forthcoming talks with the remaining parties to the landmark nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers is to secure removal of all illegal sanctions imposed on the country.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Thursday phone call with his Polish counterpart, Zbigniew Rau, during which the two sides discussed bilateral relations as well as regional and international developments.

During the phone call, Iran's top diplomat stressed that the main goal pursued by Tehran through participation of the forthcoming talks in the Austrian capital, Vienna, is removal of all illegal sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States after the latter withdrew from the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2018.

"All participants [in Vienna talks] have reached the common understanding that the United States is the main party to blame and is responsible for the current state [of negotiations]," Amir-Abdollahian added.

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Iran, IAEA Continue Interaction Despite Differences

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Iran's representative to the international organizations in Vienna says the country's interaction with the UN nuclear watchdog will continue despite differences on technical issues.

"Despite our [standing] technical differences with the [International Atomic Energy] Agency (IAEA), interaction between the two sides continue in this area with the aim of final resolution of the issues," Mohammad Reza Ghaebi said.

He, therefore, urged IAEA member states against issuing "hasty or politically-motivated" remarks concerning the status of cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the nuclear agency.

The official was apparently referring to the United States and its Western allies' habit of coming up with unfounded accusations concerning the quality of the bilateral cooperation. Tehran routinely refutes the allegations, citing technical facts to the contrary and reasserting its constant intention of working transparently with the international body.

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Canada-Drafted UN Rights Resolution Lacks Legal Credibility



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned a United Nations resolution on the human rights situation in the country, urging Canada, which is among the co-sponsors of the motion, to end its genocide of indigenous people and complicity in the Israeli regime's crimes against the Palestinians instead of focusing on human rights in other countries.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh made the remarks on Thursday, one day after the UN General Assembly Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) approved the anti-Iran draft resolution by a vote of 79 in favor to 30 against, with 71 abstentions.

He said the document repeated "baseless allegations" against the Islamic Republic and was founded on "false information and dishonest generalizations."

The resolution, he added, is based on weak and scattered votes, most of them garnered under political pressure and various threats.

Canada and other main supporters of the motion are addicted to the failed defamation project against Iran, Khatibzadeh said. "Unfortunately, some actors, who have a long history of gross human rights violations, including by selling weapons to authoritarian, occupying and aggressor regimes, are using human rights as a tool to advance their own political ambitions and intentions."

He said Iran condemned the move by the Canadian government and the other co-sponsors of the resolution as "a clear example of the abuse of transcendent human rights concepts and values to advance short-sighted political motives," adding that the measure lacks "legal credibility and effect."

The spokesman also said such "immoral and unjustified activities" do not help promote respect for human rights on the world stage and "merely fuel negative stereotypes and political labeling against nations."

He further advised the Canadian authorities to stop supporting the US government's economic terrorism against the Iranian nation and hosting the corrupt and the thieves, who have looted the Iranian people's wealth, instead of showing hypocritical compassion for human rights in the Islamic Republic.

The Canadian authorities should try to reform their inhumane practices inside their own country and abroad, stop the systematic policy of genocide against their indigenous people, and stand accountable for their complicity in the Zionist regime's crimes against the Palestinians, Khatibzadeh said.

He also emphasized that strong religious faith, strong cultural infrastructure, sound legal frameworks, and deep-rooted social practices, as well as protection of human rights are among the main pillars of the Islamic Republic.

The official further drew attention to a number of steps that Iran had taken to promote human rights both at home and at an international level, including fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and racial discrimination in the international arena, hosting a large number of immigrants from violence-stricken countries, making judicial reforms and increasing the participation of women in senior management positions.

Tehran Urges UN to Deal With Israel in Unbiased Manner

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations critiques the world body for refusal to deal with the Israeli regime in a "professional and unbiased" manner.

Majid Takht Ravanchi made the remarks after enumerating the long list of the Israeli regime's violations of international nuclear regulations and its terrorist activities targeting the Islamic Republic's nuclear work and professionals.

"The Israeli regime continues to be a non-signatory to the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty)," he told a UN General Assembly session.

"It (the regime) has consistently and vehemently refused to join the NPT and adhere to the IAEA (the International Atomic Energy Agency)'s comprehensive safeguards," he added.

The Israeli regime has, thanks to steadfast support on the part of its biggest ally the United States, consistently avoided all sorts of accountability to the world body. This comes despite the regime's being the Middle East's sole possessor of nuclear weapons, including hundreds of atomic warheads.

Tel Aviv has also assassinated as many as seven Iranian nuclear scientists, including Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, whom the regime subjected to targeted killing in 2020, and targeted Iran's nuclear installations on several occasions with terrorist crimes.

"The assassination of Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh on November 27, 2020, is following the pattern of terrorist acts that began over a decade ago with the assassinations of several Iranian nuclear scientists in 2010, 2011, and 2012," Takht Ravanchi said.

"Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities have been under sabotage attacks and our nuclear scientists have been the target of assassination by the Zionist regime," noted the envoy.

The international community and relevant international organizations, and in particular the United Nations, must unequivocally condemn these heinous acts of terrorism, the official concluded.

ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Old Habits Die Hard

There is a proverb which is very common in the Persian language and especially among Iranians which says "Old Habits Die Hard" and this proverb can easily be applied to the countries like the U.S. and UK which never stop quitting their habits of sanctions, arrogance and colonialism.

On Thursday, the U.S. Treasury Department placed six Iranian persons and one institution on Washington's sanctions list under the pretext of their trying to impact on the 2020 U.S. presidential elections and a couple days ago some Iranian nationals and entities were hit with the U.S. sanctions.

This kind of hostile reactions against Iran and Iranians is nothing new and Americans under any of their administrations have taken such hostile actions against Iranians since 1979 when the Islamic Revolution conquered Iran and its impact is currently conquering the world. Since then, the U.S. hostility against Iran has been ignited and sanctions one after the other has been imposed on the Iranians. Under different pretexts.

Reacting to the U.S.'s Thursday decision for slapping Iranians with sanctions, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman called the new U.S. sanctions against Iran the continuation of Washington's abortive policies concerning the Islamic Republic.

"The Islamic Republic considers the U.S.'s new sanctioning efforts to be the continuation of [former US president Donald] Trump's defeated maximum pressure policy," Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Thursday.

The Iranian official also commented on an anti-Iran statement issued on Thursday following a meeting in the Saudi capital Riyadh between the U.S.'s point man on Iran, Robert Malley, European envoys, and officials from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

The statement repeated the collective countries' Iranophobic remarks concerning the Islamic Republic's nuclear work and its regional influence.

Khatibzadeh highlighted the countries' own history of regional trouble-making and interference, saying the meeting and its concluding statement was "so factitious and lacking in legitimacy that does not warrant a reaction."

The spokesman said that a recent anti-Iran statement by the United States, the E3 - Britain, France and Germany - as well as the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council is not worth answering.

The Iranian spokesman further condemned the U.S.'s new sanctions on six Iranian individuals and one Iranian entity, underlining that such a failed policy to put more pressure on Iran shows the Americans' dismay.

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Russia Applauds Arab States for Revising Stance on Iran Deal

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A senior Russian diplomat has applauded a change for the better in the hostile approach of certain Persian Gulf Arab states toward the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, saying they seem to have backtracked on their endorsement of the US withdrawal from the accord and are instead calling for its revival.

In a tweet, Mikhail Ulyanov reacted to the outcome of a recent round of talks between the United States and members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, which focused on Iran.

Following the Riyadh talks, Washington and its GCC allies - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates - issued a joint statement revolving around a number of Iran-related topics, including the nuclear deal and the upcoming negotiations in Vienna, Austria.

The statement said the U.S. and GCC member states "welcomed" the upcoming seventh round of negotiations in Vienna on the fate of the deal, officially named the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which will center around the removal of the American sanctions and the deal's revitalization.

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President Congratulates Oman on National Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi extended a message to Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday to congratulate him on National Day in that country coinciding with November 18.

In his message, President Raisi hoped that the two would grow the current cordial ties and strengthen cooperation more than before.

Iran and Oman enjoy brotherly and intimate ties which can support friendship between the two nations, the president added.

At the end of his message, the Iranian president wished prosperity and success for the Omani people.

Regional Nations' Enemies Don't Brook Iraq's Stability

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi tells the Iraqi prime minister that the enemies of regional nations do not brook Arab country's stability and advancement.

"They (the adversarial forces) are after [advancing] their own sinister goals through sedition," Raisi told Mustafa al-Kadhimi in a phone call on Wednesday, adding, "All should therefore stay alert in the face of such plots."

The chief executive made the remarks amid ongoing sporadic attempts at sowing instability across the country, the last major one among which featured a drone attack against al-Kadhimi's residence in Baghdad's Green Zone area.

Raisi said Iran's "unwavering and principled position" concerning Iraq is one of support for the country's independence, security, and sovereignty.

The Islamic Republic always stands by the Iraqi people and government, he said, adding, "Iraq's unity and integrity are strategic issues that should not be compromised."



The Islamic Republic, he said, backs whatever mechanism that could seek to resolve the country's standing problems and disputes through legal and transparent means.

Iraq held general elections on October 10, which was followed by allegations of fraud and widespread protests in the capital and elsewhere.

Al-Kadhimi, for his part, expressed gratitude towards Tehran over its "unstinting" assistance of his country and support for its stability and security.

President Urges Media to Pursue Results of Provincial Trips

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - At the end of his visit to Zanjan province on Thursday evening, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi explained the results and achievements of his one-day visit to the province in a press conference.

Pointing out that he has followed some of the problems of the province during his visit as the head of the Judiciary, Raisi said, "The issue of zinc cake and wastes is people's concerns, which during my trip in 2019, I checked, and it was decided to take three measures: controlling the waste, locating and determining the ownership of this waste".

Raisi thanked the measures taken to determine the ownership of this waste and said, "These three measures were implemented, but the necessary measures must be taken as soon as possible to turn this waste into wealth for the people".

Emphasizing that any development is a subset of preserving the environment and preserving the lives of the people, the President stated, "Protecting the lives of the people is very important. Some reports indicate that this issue has been neglected. We want development and the necessary industries must be active, but our first task is to protect the environment and save human lives".

Referring to his explanations at the meeting of the Administrative Council about the change in the form of the meetings of this council, the President noted, "The points that you mentioned were among the things that the people conveyed to me".

Raisi added, "Dear journalists, be sure to record the reports that the ministers gave in the meeting and follow up on them. One of the sections that should follow the travel resolutions and the statements of the ministers are the media themselves. For example, today it was mentioned that the national housing construction movement started in this trip and you should follow the results".

The President stated that if the semi-finished projects are not completed, there will be a lot of damage, saying, "Basically, one of the main issues of the 13th government is the issue of semi-finished projects. Of course, not all projects are semi-finished, but those that have priority are on the agenda".

Removal of Sanctions to Bring About Stronger Iranian Presence in Regional Arrangements

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister has expressed hope that the removal of Washington's "illegitimate" and "cruel" sanctions will lead to closer interactions between the Islamic Republic and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) member states.

"More than two decades of active work and cooperation within the framework of IORA have increasingly revealed its huge capacities for economic cooperation among member states," Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said in a statement at the 22nd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of IORA on Wednesday.

Amir-Abdollahian drew a parallel between the bright prospects for cooperation in IORA and the Indian Ocean's "huge blessings" for the coastal states, saying Iran is well aware of such enormous potential and is determined to expand and deepen its relations with the Association.

Hinting at the devastating consequences of the coronavirus pandemic for the entire world and the IORA members, he said, "The noble nation of Iran has been struggling with the coronavirus at a time when the country's economic and financial capability has been severely affected by the restrictions caused by illegitimate and cruel U.S. sanctions."

"The lifting of sanctions and restoration of Iran's rights will not only render positive economic and humanitarian impacts, but will undoubtedly lead to a stronger and more effective presence of the Islamic

Republic of Iran in regional arrangements, including IORA," the chief Iranian diplomat said.

Iran's top negotiator says the talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna will succeed if the P4+1 group of countries have a "firm determination" and stand "practically" ready to bring about a removal of the United States' sanctions against Iran.

Iran has been engaged in high-profile negotiations in the Austrian capital, Vienna, since earlier this year with the aim of removing the United States' unlawful sanctions, slapped on Tehran under the Trump administration after the US unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear pact.

In his statement, Amir-Abdollahian also explained that Tehran had recently reinforced the "national coordination mechanism for IORA through which various Iranian line ministries and bodies have reinvigorated their effective participation in eight IORA priorities and clusters for cooperation."

"At the latest development, Iran's vice-president for women and family affairs has volunteered to assume the role as the coordinator of the IORA cross-cutting area of 'Women's Economic Empowerment.'"

"Moreover, the Tehran-based IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (IORA-RCSTT) continues to enjoy the strong support of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

Iran Hopes to Expand Ties With NAM Countries

ISFAHAN (IRNA) - Isfahan governor referring to President Ebrahim Raisi government's foreign policy, said on Tuesday that Iran hopes to sign more memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries and establish broader ties with them, the Latin American countries.

Governor Reza Mortazavi made the comment in a meeting with Bolivian Ambassador to Iran, Ms. Romina Ramos after congratulating the national day of her country, adding that keeping in mind the broad relations between the diplomatic delegations of Iran and Bolivia, beyond doubt in near future "we will be witnesses to important and good events for the two nations".

"In Iran, and especially in its cultural capital, Isfahan, the name of Bolivia is associated with the name of the internationally renowned leader Simon Bolivar," added Mortazavi.

On the sidelines of his talks with the Bolivian ambassador, Isfahan governor told the IRNA reporter that Ms. Romina Ramos was appointed as her country's ambassador to Iran for a second time last January.

He said that the Bolivian ambassador has come to Isfahan to support the expansion of the two countries' comprehensive interactions.



Indonesian Envoy Stresses Expansion of Relations With Iran



MASHHAD (IP) - Indonesian Ambassador to Iran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro said on Thursday that the ground is prepared to enhance relations between Tehran and Jakarta further.

He made the remarks speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an exhibition of food industries in Mashhad, the capital city of the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan Razavi.

The ambassador said that in his first visit to Mashhad, he aims to boost economic and tourism relations with Iran, in the Halal industry in particular.

As a major Muslim country, he said that Indonesia has a significant capacity in the tourism industry and production of Halal products.

Yuliantoro expressed hope that the Indonesian and Iranian traders would build close connections in this event to pave the way for further enhancement of trade relations between the two countries.

The 21st International Exhibition of Food and Food Processing (iFood Mashhad 2021) opened on November 17 and will run until November 20.

Some 120 domestic and foreign companies are present at the event.

Iran Ready to Have All-Out Cooperation With Afghanistan

KABUL (IRNA) - Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan voiced Tehran's readiness for having all-out cooperation in various areas with Kabul.

Cooperation could be in health, educational, humanitarian, investment, and economic fields, Hassan Kazemi-Qomi said.

Kazemi-Qomi at the head of an Iranian delegation arrived in the Afghan capital on November 15 to hold talks with officials of the interim government of the Taliban, members of the Shia council, caretaker of the Afghan Foreign Ministry, and other officials in the country.

Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021.

In a related development, Afghanistan's Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah wrote on his Facebook page on Thursday that his country calls for the continuation of help and cooperation from Iran.

Abdullah wrote while referring to his meeting with Kazemi-Qomi.

During the meeting with Iran's special envoy, the two have exchanged views about the situation of Afghanistan and the region.

Iran to Powerfully Respond To Any Act of Aggression

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) for Coordination Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi highlighted Iran's victories in the face of enemy plots over the past four decades and said the country would respond intensely to any act of aggression.

Despite the enemies' advantages in economic, scientific and military fields, the Islamic Revolution front has always been victorious over the past decades, Rear Admiral Fadavi said in a speech on Wednesday in the northern province of Golestan.

The adversaries thought they could undermine the foundation of the Islamic Revolution via hard war but they have realized that the revolution's power and capability is beyond what they could imagine, the senior commander said.

He also said that the enemy cannot even imagine the scope of the Islamic Republic's deterrent power, warning that the country would respond powerfully to even the slightest act of aggression.

In comments in April, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said all Iranian military forces are ready to give a decisive and crushing response to any threat at any level in such a way that the enemies of Iran would regret taking a hostile action against the Islamic establishment.

Iran, Denmark to Boost Academic Ties



TEHRAN (IP) - Deputy Foreign Minister and President of the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) held a meeting with Denmark's ambassador to Tehran and discussed the issues of mutual interest.

Hassan Sheikholslami and Jesper Vahr on Thursday discussed the opportunities of cooperation between the centers for political and international studies in the two countries.

The two sides also talked about important regional and international issues.

Denmark is the official name of the Kingdom of Denmark in Northern Europe and its capital is Copenhagen.

American Singer Demolished Human Dignity in Concert

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Secretary of Iran's Human Rights Headquarters Kazem Gharibabadi reacted to the indecent act of an American singer in a concert, and said that what happened was ruining the human dignity in a country that claims to defend the human rights in other countries.

The Deputy Judiciary Chief for International Affairs and Secretary of the Human Rights Headquarters Gharibabadi said that "we have heard a lot about the US claims on human rights. But now the American singer, Sophia Urista's issue should not be viewed as personal liberties".

"What happened there was demolishing the human dignity in a country that claims to be the standard bearer of the human rights for the other countries," he added.

American singer Sophia Urista in an indecent in one of her concerts urinated on the head of one of her fans and was criticized by many media correspondents in the U.S. and the world.

The unethical move, meanwhile, enraged the users of different social networks and urged the New York based music band in which she sings to apologize from the public.

The announced that their singer had got dizzy and that deed will never be repeated in their future performances.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:14
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:18
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:45

80. Now when they saw no hope of his (yielding), they held a conference in private. The leader among them said: "Know ye not that your father did take an oath from you in Allah's name, and how, before this, ye did fail in your duty with Joseph? Therefore will I not leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah commands me; and He is the best to command."

Tehran-Baku Trade Overshadowed By Political Issues

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran- Azerbaijan Joint Chamber of Commerce Hossein Pirmoazen says the economic relations between Tehran and Baku has recently been affected by the political issues as Baku has stopped issuing visas for Iranian traders.

Speaking to ILNA on Wednesday, Pirmoazen said that during the joint economic commission of Iran and Azerbaijan four years ago, both countries signed a MoU on cooperation in auto making and one branch was inaugurated in Baku and the joint cooperation between the two states in this sector began but due to the political issues, Iran has had no exports of vehicles to Azerbaijan and the joint project has also been halted.

Talking on the latest development on Iran-Azerbaijan trade activities and the report on establishing a new custom office between the two countries, Pirmoazen said according to reports from Baku, this custom office has not been set up yet and it is just a decision for the future but on the whole custom is not the most important issue in the ties of Iran and Azerbaijan and the main and essential issue is the commitment of Baku to the signed MoU and approvals of the joint economic commission of the two countries. He stated both countries have MoUs but political issues have overshadowed those MoUs.

He said Iran and Azerbaijan have 720 kilometers of joint border and their trade relations are underway, and the volume of their non-oil trade and their trade balance is in good condition but lack of commitment of Azeris towards the MoUs is troublemaker.

Pirmoazen said last year in the last joint economic commission of the two countries it was decided Iran to give list of its reputed companies to Azerbaijan for reconstruction of Karabakh but despite delivering the list, Iran has been unable to enter Azerbaijan market for reconstruction of Karabakh due to the political issues.

He reiterated that economically there is no problem with Azerbaijan and the joint Iran-Azerbaijan chamber of commerce and the center for the entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan are doing their jobs well but they have problems in getting visas and holding meetings or participation in the exhibitions. He admitted that unfortunately in the past two years, physical presence or activities have faced problems.



Pirmoazen noted that Iran's exports to Azerbaijan this year have increased by 65 percent comparing to the same period in the preceding year and have surpassed \$80m, adding that every day 120 to 150 containers from Astara Custom Office enter Azerbaijan to be transited to Russia.

On the banking problem, he said no Iranian bank is active in Baku, adding that of course Bank Melli Iran is present in Baku but due to the U.S. sanctions its activities have been restricted and unfortunately Iranian traders face problems for opening banking accounts in Azerbaijan and they suffer much due to the banking problems.

Pirmoazen went on to say that traders are facing problem for transfer of forex and it is conducted through forex shops which cost dear and since the forex shops cannot provide the traders with forex, they provide traders with Iran's national currency rial.

On the cooperation in the field of auto making and exports of cars to Baku, he said there has been no car exports to Baku due to political issues and the two countries have stopped their joint cooperation in the auto making sector.

Pirmoazen admitted that the chamber applied for visas for dispatch of a trade delegation to Baku but it was denied and it was the second time that Azerbaijan denied issuing visa.

Meanwhile according to reports, after a two-day meeting of the joint commission in Baku, Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, signed a memorandum of Understanding on road and transit communications development.

Increasing the number of traffic licenses for vehicles through 4 lanes, reducing some of the problems in this sector and the need for electronic communications are among the most important issues of this agreement.

Javad Hedayati, Director General of the Transit Office of the Roads and Transportation Organization of Iran said at the meeting: "Sustainable economic benefits are not in increasing customs duties, and the development of trade between the two countries can be fruitful for the economies of countries in the long run."

Anar Rezaev, head of the National Transport Service Center of the Republic of Azerbaijan, said at the meeting, referring to the will of the two countries in developing cooperation: Our effort is to increase the level of bilateral transport cooperation and international transit, and the traffic statistics of the last 10 months of the year show that we have almost doubled compared to the same period last year.

Chabahar to Enjoy Convenient Development

TEHRAN (MNA) – Saeed Mohammad, the Advisor to President and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones expects convenient development for Chabahar free trade zone.

According to Saeed Mohammad, Chabahar enjoys high capacities in terms of land and sea border relations.

Referring to the significant role of the free zone in the development of the region, he added that the Makran is also considered one of the most important capacities of Makran.

He also said, "I expect convenient development for the free zone of Chabahar due to planned programs."

Necessity for Maximum Utilization of Existing Capacities, Boosting Productivity



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) Mohammad Yaser Tayebnia in meeting with the chairman and board of directors of Iranian Steel producers Association (ISPA) called for maximum utilization of existing capacities, increasing productivities and removal of hurdles in way of production

Tayebnia pointed to the reform of mindset of quantitative development to qualitative development and launch of the movement for maximum utilization of the existing capacities, increasing the productivity and removal of obstacles are of the issues which should be put on the agenda of the vocational guilds and bodies more than ever. He added that the society as the body which steel companies and upstream and downstream industries are its members can play well the role of the representative and making discourse in line for restoring balance in the steel chain. Therefore, steel companies and sets which are the member of the society expect it to implement discourse-making well with observing all threats and opportunities in the chain despite lacking a government authority because lack of balance in the steel chain is seen, he added.

Pointing to good investments carried out in the steel chain and different industries, Tayebnia stipulated that currently he can say that the created capacities in most of the fields are more than the domestic demands. He noted although shortages in the qualitative products still remain, in the field of commercial, energy, food stuff and other chains the country has created good capacities but they are not used well due to the existing.

He said therefore they need the movement of maximum utilization from the existing capacities and increasing productivity along with removal of obstacles in way of production.

He said if identification of capacities and potentials is put on the agenda, bodies like the society can easily determine in the steel chain the capacities and vacuums and with how much investment and with what approach they can have maximum utilization of capacities, and this approach indicates the irreplaceable role of this guild.

PGSOC Shining In the Int'l Markets

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Manager of marketing and sales department of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company (PGSOC) announces successful offering and competition with two products of the world super gas condensates refineries in the international ring of Iran Energy Bourse.

Reza Karamad in an interview explained the successful offering of the two special products of the company in the international ring of Iran Energy Exchange (IRANEX) and said the company offered 90,000 metric tons of light naphtha and 70,000 metric tons of medium naphtha which were welcomed by the activists in the international market.

He reiterated that the price of naphtha of Persian Gulf Star refinery is the highest exporting price of naphtha in Iran and this sale indicates the stability of the market for the naphtha products of the company in the international market.

Karamad went on to say that due to the volume of production, good pricing of the products based on the new international algorithm for predicating the prices, analysis and plan and monitoring the target market are considered as the main determining factors in pricing the products especially naphtha in IRANEX. He went on to say that the current success is because of the efforts of his colleagues in the gas condensates refinery of PGSOC in line with strengthening entry into the big international market and boosting the sale margin of Iranian products during the cruel sanctions era by using all export capacities of the country.



Aluminum Output Rises 23% in March-October

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's aluminum production rose by 23% in the seven months to October 22, shows a report, as the country continues to expand its production capacity for precious metals.

Data published on Wednesday by Iran's metals and mining conglomerate IMIDRO showed that four major Iranian smelters had churned out over 0.305 million tons of aluminum in March-October, up from over 0.247 million tons recorded over the same period last year.

The Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) was responsible for more than a third of the total output at 0.105 million tons while collective output at second and third largest smelters SALCO and Al Mahdi had amounted to over 0.177 million tons, showed the figures.

Output at Iran Alumina Company, the sole producer of alumina powder and bauxite ore in the country, reached nearly 22,000 tons.

However, Iran Alumina's powder production had decreased by 2% to nearly 0.137 million tons in March-October while its bauxite ore output rose by 19% to nearly 0.555 million tons, according to IMIDRO figures.

Iran has launched massive projects to expand its capacity for production of precious metals since the United States imposed sanctions on the country's crude oil sales in 2018.

Washington has introduced similar bans on Iran's trade of metals but many of them have failed in the face of growing demand for Iranian shipments in Asia and elsewhere.

Iran's aluminum output in the seven months to late October was 10% higher than the total production recorded in the calendar year to March 2020.

That comes as annual output reached nearly 0.45 million tons in the year to March 2021.

Uzbek Official Calls for Cooperation With Iran in Agriculture

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC NEWS

TEHRAN – First Deputy Chief of Uzbekistan Plants

Quarantine Service Mr. Nadir Kasimov during meeting with business activists of Hamedan Province last week called for expansion of cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture.

Kasimov and his delegation visited Hamedan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and during his visit he exchanged views with officials of the chamber and business activists of the province.

Addressing the participants, Kasimov said that the potential for cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan in the agro sector is very high, adding that both countries should take advantages of the existing opportunities for expansion of trade ties.

He then pointed to the historic relation between the two countries and commonalities and noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the biggest trade partners of his country.

Kasimov went on to say that the trade exchange between the two countries in the past two years has increased considerably, noting that there were good and useful meetings in Tehran and Hamedan between the traders of the two countries.

He reiterated that his country is well aware that there are good potentials for cooperation with Iran in agro sector and invited an Iranian trade delegation to Uzbekistan for talks and exchange of views and to get acquainted with Uzbekistan agriculture and agro products.

He stated that the meeting in Hamedan was a great opportunity for expansion of bilateral cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan, adding that 15 entrepreneurs and active traders



were accompanying him in his visit to Iran that they can provide the ground for expansion of co-operations.

Kasimov said that such meetings can improve the trade of Iran and Uzbekistan, noting that he hopes the meeting between entrepreneurs of the two countries bears fruits.

Then Head of Hamedan Chamber of Commerce Ali Asghar Zebardast, for

his part, welcomed the arrival of Uzbek delegation, stating that Hamedan is one of the oldest provinces of Iran and historically is similar to Uzbekistan and they have many commonalities. He went on to say that Hamedan and Uzbekistan in terms of culture have many similarities.

He went on to say that since the independence of Uzbekistan from the former Soviet Union, 54 documents for cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan have been signed. He added that in the field of transit and transportation, a four-way MoU has been signed by Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan in order that those countries can transport their goods by rail from Chabahar Port of Iran.

Zebardast went on to say that Uzbekistan is a country rich in agro capacities and it has good products and this country's vegetables and fruits are exported to 21 countries. He expressed hope during this meeting, exporters and producers of Hamedan Province in the field of potato and citrus would reach agreements with the Uzbek traders, reiterating that Hamedan Province ranks first in Iran in terms of producing potato and three other agro products. He said Hamedan is also good in terms of producing grapes and raisins and the city of Tuyserkan in the province is one of the biggest producers of the walnut and producers of walnut in the province can reach an agreement with Uzbek traders.

Iran to Launch First Thermal Solar Power Plant by 2023

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran is expected to launch its first thermal solar power plant in 2023, says a senior Energy Ministry official, amid pledges to increase the share of renewables in the country's electricity generation mix.

CEO of Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) Mohsen Tarzatab said on Thursday that the new power plant will produce 17 megawatts of clean energy, enough to supply more than 30,000 homes in areas near the central city of Yazd, where it is located.

Tarzatab said that construction of the power plant will start next week as he added that a consortium of Iranian companies will build the facility using finances provided by the TPPH.

Iran has nearly 500 MW of capacity for traditional photovoltaic solar power. The thermal solar, however, uses a new technology that allows storage of the sun's heat to generate electricity for hours, including at night.

The Iranian Energy Ministry has announced plans to roll out around 10,000 MW of new renewables capacity within the next four years on top of nearly 1,000 MW it is operating currently.

The TPPH is responsible for Iran's massive thermal power sector which accounts for a bulk of electricity generation in the country at a capacity of over 68,000 MW.

Pakistan Frees Leader of Radical Party

LAHORE (AFP) - Pakistan freed the leader of a radical religious party that staged massive anti-France protests, after lifting a ban on the group earlier this month to end the latest round of deadly unrest.

Hundreds of supporters could be seen cheering and throwing flower petals as Saad Rizvi, head of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), was taken to the party's headquarters in Lahore.

His release was confirmed to AFP by his party's spokesman and the Lahore police. The TLP livestreamed the celebrations outside its headquarters on YouTube. Over the past several years, the TLP has staged a series of disruptive protests, mainly linked to the flashpoint issue of blasphemy in Muslim-majority Pakistan.



Czech Republic and Slovakia Tighten COVID-19 Curbs

PRAGUE (Dispatches) - The Czech Republic and Slovakia tightened restrictions on people who have not had COVID-19 shots to try to encourage more to get vaccinated and ease the burden on hospitals.

The Czech government approved plans to allow only those who are vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 in the past six months to enter restaurants, attend certain events and use various other services from Monday.

Slovakia took a similar step, in what Prime Minister Eduard Heger called a "lockdown for the unvaccinated".



Putin Accuses West of Escalating Situation in Ukraine



MOSCOW (AFP) - Russian President Vladimir Putin said the West is "escalating" the Ukraine conflict by holding drills in the Black Sea and flying bombers near its borders.

His comments come as the U.S. accuses Moscow of a troop build-up near Ukraine.

Western countries have for days raised alarm over Russian military activity near Ukraine, with Washington warning Moscow against making another "serious mistake" in the ex-Soviet country.

"(Our) Western partners are escalating the situation by supplying Kiev with lethal modern weapons and conducting provocative maneuvers in the Black Sea," Putin said in a speech to the foreign ministry.

He claimed that Western bombers are flying "20 km from our border."

The longtime Russian leader said Moscow has been "constantly raising concerns about this" but "all our warnings and talk about red lines are treated superficially". Putin has been voicing concern about US naval exercises in the Black Sea for days, telling his French counterpart this week that they were "provocative" and leading to "increasing tensions" between Moscow and NATO.

He has also slammed Ukraine for using a Turkish-made drone against pro-Moscow rebels.

The Black Sea is a sensitive region for Russia, which controls the Crimea peninsula after annexing it from Ukraine in 2014. Since then, Kiev has fought a conflict with pro-Russia rebels in the east of the country which has claimed more than 13,000 lives.

Renewed Western speculation about Russia's plans in eastern Ukraine have come amid a clash over an unexpected migrant crisis on the border with Kremlin-aligned Belarus and EU member Poland.

The EU has accused the Kremlin-backed regime of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus of purposefully luring thousands of migrants -- mostly from the Middle-East -- to its doorstep as revenge for sanctions.

Some in the EU, including Poland, have said that Moscow is also behind the crisis.

"Brussels needs to understand that the decreasing of military-political tensions is not only in Russian interests, but in those of the whole of Europe, and even the world," Putin said.

Earlier on Thursday, the Kremlin said Europe should not blame Russia for "all problems".

"Russia has an interest in everybody in Europe finally coming to their senses and stopping considering Russia the culprit of all problems," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

He added that Europe should instead "address the primary sources of the problems that are currently suffocating Europe".

Peskov's remarks come after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday warned Russia against any "military adventurism" on the borders of Ukraine and EU member Poland.

Sudan Protests Continue After Deadliest Day Since Military Coup

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Street clashes again shook Sudan's capital on Thursday, a day after security forces shot dead 15 protesters in the bloodiest day since the military's October 25 takeover.

Wednesday's killings were condemned by UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet who said statement that "it is utterly shameful that live ammunition was again used yesterday against protesters."

Since Thursday morning, police fired tear gas to disperse dozens of anti-coup protesters who had stayed on the streets of north Khartoum overnight, witnesses said, braving an intensifying crackdown that has drawn international condemnation.

Police tore down makeshift barricades the demonstrators had erected the previous day.

Later in the day, dozens of protesters returned to rebuild them and police again fired tear gas in a bid to clear the streets, witnesses said.

"Protesters responded by hurling stones at the police," said one of them.



Poland Detains 100 Migrants at Border

SOKOLKA (Dispatches) - The Polish army detained dozens of migrants who crossed the Belarus border and accused Belarusian special forces of masterminding the operation, as G7 foreign ministers on Thursday urged Minsk to end the migrant crisis.

Thousands of people, mainly from the Middle East, are camped out or staying close to the Poland-Belarus border in dire conditions and desperate to cross into the European Union, in a crisis that began over the summer.

The EU says Belarus engineered the crisis in retaliation for sanctions on the ex-Soviet country. Minsk and its main ally Russia have rejected the charges and criticized the EU for not taking in the migrants seeking to cross over.

"We call on the regime to cease immediately its aggressive and exploitative campaign," the EU and foreign ministers of the G7 global powers said.

"We are united in our solidarity with Poland, as well as Lithuania and Latvia, who have been targeted by this provocative use of irregular migration as a hybrid tactic."

Belarus has said it wants to de-escalate the crisis and is facilitating a voluntary repatriation flight to Iraq that is due to take off later on Thursday with up to 300 people on board.

In the latest border incident, the Polish defense ministry said that Belarusian forces had first carried out reconnaissance and "most likely" damaged the barbed wire fence along the border.

"Then the Belarusians forced the migrants to throw stones at Polish soldiers to distract them. The attempt to cross the border took place several hundred meters away," it said.

"A group of about 100 migrants was detained," it said, charging that "Belarusian special forces led yesterday's attack".

Video footage released by the defense ministry appeared to show Polish soldiers surrounding a large group of migrants crouched down in a wooded area at night next to some barbed wire.

Philippines Tells China to Back Off After South China Sea Standoff

MANILA (Dispatches) - The Philippines on Thursday condemned "in strongest terms" the actions of three Chinese coast guard vessels that it said blocked and used water cannon on resupply boats headed towards a Philippine-occupied atoll in the South China Sea.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin said no one was hurt during Tuesday's incident at the Second Thomas Shoal but the Philippines boats, which were transporting food to military personnel based there, had to abort their mission.

"China has no law enforcement rights in and around these areas. They must take heed and back off," Locsin said in a statement, reminding China that a public vessel is covered by a Philippines-United States Mutual Defense Treaty.

Locsin said he had conveyed "in the strongest terms" to China's ambassador in Manila "our outrage, condemnation and protest of the incident."

China's embassy did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment.

The Second Thomas Shoal, 105 nautical miles (195 km) off Palawan, is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and a small contingent of military

have occupied it since 1999 having intentionally grounded a navy ship on the reef.

China regards the shoal as its territory as it falls within the "nine-dash line" that it uses on maps denoting its claim to almost the entire South China Sea. A 2016 international arbitration ruling, however, said the Chinese line had no legal basis.

Locsin said China's failure to exercise self-restraint "threatens the special relationship" between the two countries.

The office of President Rodrigo Duterte, who has been a staunch supporter of China, said it was aware of the incident at the shoal.

"We will continue to assert our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction," acting spokesperson Karlo Nograles said.

Before the incident, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon said authorities had noticed an unusual presence of Chinese maritime militia near the atoll and Philippine-occupied Thitu island. China has denied operating a militia.

There were 19 vessels near Second Thomas Shoal last week, and 45 near Thitu Island, Esperon told reporters, describing those as "very aggressive".



Afghanistan on the Brink of Catastrophe

NEW YORK (Dispatches) -

The UN envoy for Afghanistan says the country is "on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe", urging the international community to find ways to provide financial support to the Afghan people, who "feel abandoned".

Deborah Lyons said an estimated 60 percent of Afghanistan's 38 million people are facing crisis levels of hunger in a food emergency that will likely worsen over the winter.

"Now is not the time to turn away from the Afghan people," Lyons said at a press conference at the UN.

"To abandon the Afghan people now would be a historic mistake -- a mistake that has been made before with tragic consequences," she had told the UN Security Council earlier in the day.

Lyons added that the humanitarian catastrophe "is preventable" as its main cause is financial sanctions on the Taliban, who took over the country in August, and she assured the international community the UN would make every effort to avoid the diversion of funds to the Taliban.

Sanctions "have paralyzed the banking system, affecting every aspect of the economy", according to the UN envoy. The country's GDP is estimated to have contracted by 40 percent since the Taliban takeover.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) blocked the release of about \$450m to Afghanistan more than a week after the West-backed government collapsed and the Taliban took over. The Afghan central bank's \$9bn in reserves, most of which are held in the US, were also frozen.

Asked by Al Jazeera's James Bays if releasing the frozen funds would alleviate the current humanitarian crisis, Lyons said: "We're looking at the money that has already been committed by the donors for the humanitarian work and making sure we have mechanisms in place to have that flowing."

"Unfreezing assets is something that is a decision by key countries." Lyons said a new mechanism to pay health workers' salaries has been set up. The Taliban has struggled to pay workers in key sectors such as health and education.





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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
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Parsian

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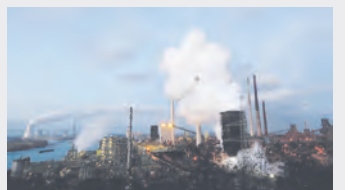
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Thyssenkrupp to Seek Steel Spin-Off in 2023

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Thyssenkrupp Chief Executive Martina Merz wants to get the group's shareholders to vote on a spin-off of the steel division at its annual general meeting in February 2023, Manager Magazine reported.

Thyssenkrupp declined to comment. The magazine said Merz's plan is to give away all the shares except for a minimum shareholding to existing shareholders, with the conglomerate giving the division financing that is below its estimated pension burden of 3.5 billion euros (\$3.95 billion).

That could fuel a conflict with the IG Metall trade union and the works council, the magazine said.



Total Global Debt Dips, But Emerging Market Debt Hits Record High

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Global debt dipped in the third quarter though it remained near the record high set in June, while debt in emerging markets hit a fresh record high of \$92.5 trillion, a report showed on Wednesday.

Total debt, including that owed by governments, households and companies, dipped to \$296 trillion at the end of September, after an increase to record highs in the second quarter. It stands about \$36 trillion above pre-pandemic levels.

The ratio of debt to annual global economic output fell more than 10 percentage points from July through September, hitting 350% at the end of the third quarter, as economies across the globe recover from the pandemic-induced slow-downs, data from the Institute of International Finance showed.

Total emerging market debt edged up to \$92.6 trillion, with China taking the dragon's share.

Debt to GDP in China has risen 25 percentage points since the end of 2019 to 330%, accounting for more than 80% of emerging market debt buildup over the period. Emerging market government debt remained at about 63% of GDP, a record level.

In emerging markets excluding China, total debt hit a record high of \$36.4 trillion, largely driven by increasing government debt, but external debt is on track to drop below 43% of GDP in 2021 from an all-time high of near 46% in 2020.

"With political and social pressure limiting governments' efforts to reduce deficits, high government financing needs represent a source of vulnerability in many countries in the face of broader revenue weakness," the IIF report said.

More than 95% of the increase in emerging market debt since the end of 2019 has been in local currency bonds, according to the data, though the appeal of that debt has fallen among foreign investors, who now hold around 19% of local currency debt compared to 23% at the end of 2019.

Indonesia and Russia saw the sharpest drop in foreign ownership, while demand increased in China, Peru and Korea. In foreign exchange debt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Colombia have seen the sharpest increases in relation to GDP since the start of the pandemic.

In developed markets, debt declined by \$1.4 trillion last quarter, the IIF said, with the sharpest declines in Japan and the euro area. A large part of spending in developed markets went to social net and health, while still only a very small part is destined to environmental protection and climate change.

"With decarbonization efforts on the rise, many governments are expected to channel significantly more resources towards climate priorities, with major implications for government debt (and) interest rates," said the IIF.

ECB Sees Slowing Vaccine Tempo as Risk to Financial Stability

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - Low vaccination rates in some parts of the world are a future risk to financial stability, the European Central Bank said in a report today, while the recovery from the pandemic has eased pressure on the economy.

The economic rebound from the coronavirus in the eurozone had "reduced many of our worst fears about economic scarring," ECB vice-president Luis de Guindos said in a statement.

But the "risks stemming from the pandemic have not disappeared entirely, not least because vaccination progress has remained slow in many areas of the world," de Guindos said in the foreword to the ECB's Financial Stability Review.

Widespread vaccination in Europe, where 64.9 per cent of the population has received two doses of the vaccine, had also reduced the continent's exposure to more shocks from the virus into 2022.

Yet uncertainty about the future course of the pandemic and the limits it might place on economic activity meant it remained "one of the main risks to economic growth", the report said.

At the same time, global supply bottlenecks and a sharp rise in energy prices on the continent had created new stresses for firms, producing a more sustained rise in prices that could "weigh on the economic recovery", according to the report.

The ECB also noted the risk of "pockets of exuberance" in credit, asset and housing, making the markets vulnerable to a correction, and the "high debt levels in the corporate and public sectors as a legacy of the pandemic".

After the conclusion of the COP climate conference last week, where countries agreed to a watered-down promise to "phasedown" the use of coal, the ECB report said "timely, concerted action" on climate change would limit risks for the financial system.



Global Islamic Finance Assets Expected to Hit \$4.94t in 2025

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Global Islamic finance assets are projected to reach US\$4.94 trillion (US\$1=RM4.17) in 2025, according to financial markets

data provider Refinitiv.

Citing its Islamic Finance Development Indicator (IFDI) 2021 report released today said, it said global assets for the industry maintained double-digit growth by rising 14 per cent to US\$3.374 trillion in 2020.

"Sukuks, the second-biggest sector in Islamic finance, grew 16 per cent in 2020, driven by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Southeast Asia," it said in a statement.

Refinitiv said the report also highlighted new trends for this year, including the expansion of the financial technology (fintech) industry and digital banks led by Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In terms of the IFDI 2021 indicator score which measures knowledge, governance, corporate social responsibility, and awareness among 135 countries, Refinitiv said Malaysia and Indonesia retained their top rankings for the second year in a row.

Looking back at 2020, Refinitiv head of Islamic finance Mustafa Adil said Malaysia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia were notable actors in the industry as they leveraged sukuks to finance social and green projects.

Moving forward, he said the group expected to see more developments in the industry after the central banks of Malaysia and Saudi Arabia awarded their first digital banking licences in their countries.

"Islamic fintechs coming out of the United Kingdom and the United States also continue to attract attention, and we expect to see newer entrants from Pakistan and Central Asia," he said.

UAE Seeks to Bolster Arms Industry to Reduce Imports

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Drones, guided missiles, simulators: the United Arab Emirates is on the offensive to develop its defense industry in a bid to wean itself off dependence on imports.

Khalid Al-Breiki heads one of five clusters of the Emirati defense consortium EDGE, formed two years ago and bringing together 25 Emirati arms firms in a bid to develop "national capacities".

According to him, the Abu Dhabi-based defence consortium is an indicator of the "maturity of our industry in the UAE". EDGE became the first Middle Eastern company to rank among the top 25 military firms in the world last year, with gross sales of over \$5 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

"We realized that we needed to bring our capabilities under one roof to focus on what we want to manufacture and service in the country, and now we can go global with that," Breiki told AFP.

"We have a start-up mentality, but with an economy of scale."

The group has 13,000 employees "from all over the world", but it wants to hire more UAE citizens, with a focus on striking agreements with universities in the country or abroad.

Its targets align with a country-wide "Emiratization" strategy that has seen the authorities push for more local hires in an oil-rich Persian Gulf country, where the foreign population outnumbers citizens at almost nine to one. At the Dubai Airshow, the huge display erected by EDGE boasts several homemade products, from guided missiles to cybersecurity systems.

The group's contracts have multiplied recently, nearly all of them with the UAE government.



Particularly lucrative deals have included maintenance of military jets, worth almost \$4 billion, as well as providing guided munitions at \$880 million.

Like neighboring Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the UAE is among the world's top arms importers and is seeking to diversify its economy.

In the defense industry, this occurs through "offsets", which require defense manufacturers to invest in countries that import equipment from them.

"We have 20 products done under the 'Made in the UAE' initiative and 13 new products announced this year," Breiki said.

"There is an inspiration to have an indigenous capability, however we haven't matured enough that we can do it without partners."

UK Inflation Highest In Nearly a Decade

LONDON (AP) - Consumer prices in the United Kingdom surged at the fastest rate in nearly a decade in October amid soaring energy costs, official figures showed Wednesday, a development that has cemented market expectations that the Bank of England will raise interest rates next month.

The Office for National Statistics said inflation accelerated to 4.2% in the 12 months through October, from 3.1% the previous month. The bigger-than-expected increase pushed inflation to its highest level since November 2011 and means most people will be enduring a drop in living standards in the run-up to Christmas as household incomes get stretched.

Because inflation is running at more than double the Bank of England's target rate of 2%, the central bank is under pressure to raise interest rates to try to curb the price surges by cooling the economy. It had been widely expected to become the first central bank among the leading industrial nations to raise interest rates earlier this month but held off because of some unease about the outlook for unemployment.

With figures on Tuesday showing the U.K.'s labor market remaining resilient, many analysts said the latest inflation numbers gives the rate-setters on the bank's Monetary Policy Committee, or MPC, further ammunition to modestly lift the benchmark rate from the record low of 0.1% to 0.2%.

"With CPI inflation moving further away from the Bank of England's 2% target, there is now even more pressure on the MPC to act to rein in price growth at its upcoming December meeting," said economist Ellie Henderson at Investec.

Not everyone thinks a rate hike is a good idea, especially at a time when the British economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic appears to be losing some steam. Skeptics think a rate hike won't do much because a large chunk of the increase in inflation is a result of temporary factors related to the shock of the pandemic, such as supply shortages, and as a result, inflation will drift lower toward the bank's target next year.

In its release Wednesday, the statistics agency noted that the inflation data was influenced by the effects of the coronavirus-related lockdowns that triggered "dramatic declines" in some prices last year. These unusually low prices are now the starting point for calculating 12-month price increases, causing short-term "distortions" in the figures.

These are factors that are affecting inflation levels around the world. Last week, the U.S. recorded an annual inflation rate of 6.2%, its highest level in nearly 31 years. European countries are recording similar spikes, too, but so far neither the U.S. Federal Reserve nor the European Central Bank appear to be as close as the Bank of England in considering a rise in borrowing costs.

India's GDP Likely to Grow at 10% in FY22

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's economy is moving towards a higher growth trajectory and is likely to grow at around 10 per cent in 2021-22, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) Chairman Bibek Debroy said.



I am confident that we are on a path towards a higher growth trajectory, higher poverty reduction, higher employment, and a prosperous, more developed and better governed India.

I think it is, more or less, agreed that the real rate of growth this year (FY2022) is going to be around 10 per cent, Debroy said at an SBI event.

At the beginning of FY2021-22, the forecasts for real growth were in the 8.5-12.5 per cent range, he noted.

However, all kinds of high-frequency indicators, including GST revenue, e-way bill, power consumption, vehicle registrations, railway freight, corporate profitability, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and steel consumption now instil confidence about the fact that the real rate of growth will be at around 10 per cent this financial year, Debroy said.

For the 2022-23 fiscal, he expects growth likely to be in the 6-7.5 per cent range.

According to him, growth and income growth has four drivers - consumption, investment, government expenditure and exports. Of those, three and a little bit of investment are showing fairly robust and broad-based growth.

He said the export story in the country looks good at present. Also, government expenditure has been quite stepped-up.

Debroy said with improvement in capacity utilization, investments are also going to pick up in another six months.

He also said that there is a lot of uncertainty around the third wave of COVID-19. However, even if it comes, the impact on economic growth is not going to be very serious due to higher vaccination numbers and a better-equipped medical system.

Armenia Building New Route For Iranian Vehicles

TEHRAN (IFP) - Armenia is building a new transit route for Iranian cargo and passenger vehicles after the Azerbaijan Republic imposed restrictions on the previous road. After its completion, Iranian vehicles can use the Kapan-Datev road which is being reconstructed by Armenia. The road replaces the previous one, Kapan-Goris. Azerbaijan controls approximately 20 km out of a 400 km route from Norduz to Yerevan. It captured the area during last year’s war with Armenia and claims sovereignty over the section.



China’s Key Industries Could Hit Peak Coal Use by 2024

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China’s major coal consuming industries, including power, steel, cement and coal chemical production, could hit peak use of the dirty fossil fuel around 2024, a government researcher said. Beijing has pledged to bring its carbon emissions to a peak by 2030 and to start phasing down coal use after 2026. The four industrial sectors made up more than 86 per cent of total coal consumption and more than 70 per cent of total carbon emissions in China, the world’s biggest coal user and greenhouse gas emitter. Coal use in those four sectors could peak at 2.48 billion tons of standard coal equivalent, said Cao Dong, principal expert from Chinese Academy of Environment Planning, a research institute affiliated to China’s environment ministry, at a seminar. “Coal use at steel and cement sectors should have reached a peak (in 2020 and 2021), followed by coal chemicals by around 2024,” Cao said. The power sector, however, would only hit peak coal consumption by around 2028 due to growing electricity demand and concerns over energy safety, Cao said, adding that carbon emissions would hit a high one year after coal use peaks. More than 60 per cent of China’s electricity comes from coal-fired power plants, and a shortage of coal this year has caused widespread power outages. Cao also estimated a total of 24.1 trillion yuan (RM15.8 trillion) of investment would be needed to control coal consumption at the four industries by 2035. However, the transition could generate annual gross domestic product of 159.5 billion yuan from sectors such as renewables and equipment manufacturing . Declining use of coal at key industries would reduce exports by an average of around 1.03 trillion yuan per annum by 2035 and further limit demand for raw materials



such as iron ore and limestone. Iron ore imports already dropped 4 per cent in the first 10 months of 2021 as Beijing limited steel output amid pressure to reduce emissions.

EU Plans to Ban Food Imports From Deforested Areas

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The EU plans to bar food and wood imports from deforested areas, according to a proposal unveiled aimed at using its trade power to drive sustainability. The draft law, which Brussels wants to turn into binding rules for all 27 European Union nations, would require companies show their soy, beef, palm oil, cocoa, coffee and wood products are certified “deforestation-free”. It follows an international pledge made at the COP26 summit last week to end deforestation by 2030. “This proposal is a truly ground-breaking one,” the EU commissioner for climate action policy, Virginijus Sinkevicius, told a media conference. “It targets not just illegal deforestation but also deforestation driven by agricultural expansion,” he said. Under the EU plan, two criteria would have to be met: that the commodities are produced in accordance with the origin country’s laws; and that they were not produced on land deforested or degraded since the beginning of 2021. Imports from higher-risk countries would be subject to tighter checks. The European Commission did not say when it hoped to have the new legislation adopted. The rules could impact countries such as Brazil, where European disquiet at razing of the Amazon rainforest by cattle farmers is holding up implementation of an EU-Mercosur trade deal. Clearing of the Amazon hit a new record last month, according to Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research. The environmental protection group WWF says the huge EU market is responsible for 16 percent of global deforestation linked to international trade. It and other NGOs welcome the EU plan as a first step, but say it does not go far enough. Greenpeace says it does not address deforestation from other commodities such as rubber and maize, or from pig and poultry farming. Other sustainability proposals presented alongside the anti-deforestation rules were on waste management and improving the health of soils. “These initiatives show that the European Union is serious about the green transition and just keeps moving forward with it,” said the Commission vice president in charge of overseeing the EU’s Green Deal, Frans Timmermans. On waste, the Commission wants to see “circular economy” principles attached to the way it sends abroad its millions of tons of discarded metals, cardboard, plastic, textiles and other detritus.

LNG Markets Eye Record Prices in Race to Replenish Stocks

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices face a quick return to recent record highs as cold weather approaches the Northern Hemisphere and surging power demand and depleted gas storage heightens the global energy crunch, particularly in Europe. This year’s power price shock has seen several domestic energy suppliers go out of business, while heavy industry curtailed output in energy-intensive sectors. Consumers are paying significantly more for home heating, adding to wider inflationary pressures, with no let-up in sight for countries dependent on LNG imports such as Spain. LNG prices lurched from record lows under \$2 per mmBtu to all-time highs of \$56 in the last 18 months, as markets struggle to keep pace with global economies recovering from COVID-19. Benchmark prices are around \$31 currently. When coronavirus containment measures snuffed out power demand, LNG producers slashed production, reducing shipments through the 2020 summer which have had a lasting impact on global gas inventories. The 2020/21 winter freeze then caught many power providers short, sparking a surge in spot demand and tightening gas stockpiles further just as logistics constraints slowed delivery times. Supply-sensitive European gas prices have similarly sky-rocketed, with the benchmark Dutch front-month contract hitting a record high of 150 euros per megawatt hour in October and currently trading around 90 euros. Europe and Asia account for some 94% of global LNG imports and over a third of global gas consumption. Asia looks better prepared for winter than Europe, so far, in terms of inventories; however a repeated cold snap could lead to a buying spree similar to that seen in January which served as the catalyst to fire up prices. Learning a hard lesson from last winter, when freezing conditions across Asia and widespread LNG plant outages fuelled competition for cargoes in a tight spot market, Asian buyers have been busy restocking LNG inventories to comfortable levels. East Asia inventory days cover stand at or above the 5-year average levels for China, Japan and South Korea.



By contrast, European gas storage stocks, which include natural gas and LNG, entered the winter trailing their five-year average, highlighting the need for a strong pick-up in supplies via LNG imports and also placing a strong spotlight on Russia. On Tuesday, Germany’s energy regulator suspended the approval process for a

major new pipeline bringing Russian gas into Europe, throwing up a new roadblock to the contentious project and driving up regional prices. “At this point, we see Europe barely scraping through and finishing the winter at just about the 5-year minimum level, which is about 20% full,” said Tamir Druz, managing director at Capra Energy Group, adding that this will require both LNG and European gas prices to remain very high. The European withdrawal season has started with storage stocks still 15% below their 5-year averages and storage levels not expected to normalise before October 2022, leaving little buffer for below normal temperatures or supply outages, said James Huckstepp, manager of gas analytics at S&P Global Platts. He added that while November LNG supply should grow by 10% relative to October levels, mostly from the United States, rising Asian seasonal demand means spare LNG capacity available to Europe will be limited. Trading firm, Vitol, expects a tight winter with disruptions on LNG supplies and lower than expected pipeline flows. “There is a chance of short-term spikes in pricing of European Gas and LNG, in addition to the physical balances, the market has a risk premium from geopolitical issues that could escalate as well as the potential impact of gas and power retailers going out of business,” said Pablo Galante Escobar – Vitol’s Global Head of LNG and European Gas & Power. Northwest Europe is forecast to be colder than previously expected, while in Asia, Beijing and Seoul are set to experience colder weather than the seasonal norm in coming weeks, Refinitiv data show. “Despite the comfortable inventories, all it takes is a cold winter and they will need to buy cargoes again,” a Singapore-based trader said.

Old Habits...

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Of course Iranians know the U.S. administrations very well and they know that the U.S. officials follow blindly the Zionist regime’s demands and milk the Arab states by creating Iranophobia.



Everybody expected Democrat U.S. President to stop the policy of sanctions or minimize it during his presidential election because during the presidential election campaign in 2020 he had promised to remove sanctions or at least major part of it but practically he has done nothing yet and on the contrary he has continued President Donald Trump’s path of imposing sanctions either on Iran or any other contrary like Nicaragua and Yemen which does not follow the West. The BidenAdministrationlike the previous administrations in the U.S. is suffering from the sanction disease and they try to bring to their knees resisting countries by imposing sanctions while they have forgotten this point that the era of winning through sanction has ended and nations are ready to tolerate sanctions but they are not ready to bow to the pressures of aliens like the Western states.

So it is better for the Americans and its allies to quit this dirty habit of sanctioning against countries because this will not work any longer. The U.S. is also better to stop spreading Iranophobia in order to milk Arab states through issuing such worthless statements because the Islamic Republic of Iran is now so strong that it does not need any help of foreign forces and it can have proper response to any bullying and it can expel any invasion on its soil. And Arab states especially in the West Asia are better to realize that the U.S. has never helped its Arab allies in the hard times because it is some part of the nature and habit of this arrogant country and it cannot quit because as the proverb says, “Old Habits Die Hard” and a united Muslim world can shatter the dream of the world arrogance over dominance on the wealth of Muslim states and looting their wealth and the Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported unity among the Muslim and regional countries and it advises the countries in the region not to be fooled with the West’s luring vows because their chief Biden has even so far failed to fulfill the promises that he has given to his own nation.

Removal of...

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During the Thursday phone call, Amir-Abdollahian also thanked Poland for donating one million doses of coronavirus vaccine to Iran, saying the move was an example of humanitarian relations between the two countries. Iran’s top negotiator also says the talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna will succeed if the P4+1 group of countries have a “firm determination” and stand “practically” ready to bring about a removal of the United States’ sanctions against Iran. He said despite the United States’ inhumane sanctions, Iran has covered more than four million Afghan refugees in its vaccination drive, stressing that his country welcomes any initiative by other countries, especially Poland, to help the Afghan people, including the refugees who are not in good conditions these days. Pointing to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, Amir-Abdollahian underlined that Iran supports the establishment of peace in the Arab country, saying the Yemeni crisis has no military solution. The siege of Yemen must be lifted and the war must be ended, he stressed, making a reference to the Saudi-led military campaign and blockade of Yemen, which has been underway since 2015. The Polish foreign minister, for his part, voiced his country’s determination to further enhance the Tehran-Warsaw relations.

Russia...

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The two sides called for “an urgent mutual return to full compliance with the JCPOA, that would help pave the way for inclusive diplomatic efforts to address all issues that are necessary to ensure sustainable safety, security, and prosperity in the region.” The call was suggestive of a shift in the policy of Saudi Arabia, which was once one of the very few proponents — along with Israel and its vassal Persian Gulf states — of the decision by then-US President Donald Trump to pull Washington out of the JCPOA in 2018. In his tweet, Ulyanov welcomed the apparent U-turn in the GCC’s highly-belligerent Iran policy and said, “We observe very positive progress. Not long ago some of these states were against #JCPOA and welcomed the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal.” “Now they demonstrate the ability to draw lessons and revise their position in the light of experience gained. Deserves respect,” the senior Russian diplomat added. The Saudi kingdom severed ties with Iran in January 2016 after angry protests and violence targeted its diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad in the aftermath of Riyadh’s execution of a senior Shia Muslim figure. With the election of Trump in 2016 and the ensuing rise of ardent Iran hawks to power in Washington, Riyadh under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler, who had Trump’s firm support, further intensified its hostile rhetoric against the Islamic Republic.

Iran, IAEA...

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Ghaebi cited the agency’s recent quarterly report, in which it has affirmed conducting its routine regulatory checks of Iran’s nuclear energy program. The report cites only one instance of difference arising from Iran’s inability to allow the agency access to one location owing to underway legal and security investigation into a “terrorist action” targeting the facility, he said. The Islamic Republic’s nuclear facilities and scientists have come under repeated, and often deadly, terrorist attacks. The Israeli regime has either admitted to conducting the incidents or is the prime suspect in all of them. Iran has asked the agency to help it complete the investigations, the official reminded. He also noted that the IAEA report has verified Iran’s enrichment of uranium up to 60 percent in purity, beyond the level enshrined in the country’s 2015 nuclear deal with world countries, noting that Tehran has already notified the agency of the move. Iran’s decision to go beyond the specified level fits well within the agreement, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The deal entitles member states to take remedial steps in case of other parties’ non-compliance. The Islamic Republic initiated its countermeasures in 2019, a year after the US left the deal and returned its illegal sanctions against the country. Based on the IAEA report, the volume of Iran’s enriched uranium up to various levels were estimated at 2,489.7 kilograms as of November 6. According to Ghaebi, IAEA’s Director General Rafael Grossi has accepted an invite by the Islamic Republic to visit the country for high-level meetings, including with Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, next week.

Kimmich Doubtful for Augsburg Clash Over Covid Concerns

MUNICH (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich's Joshua Kimmich is doubtful for their Bundesliga game against Augsburg today after coming into contact with a person suspected of having Covid-19, coach Julian Nagelsmann said. Nagelsmann added a decision on whether Kimmich will be at the team's disposal tomorrow would be taken later. "With Joshua it's a precautionary measure at the moment," Nagelsmann told reporters. "There's the suspicion that he came into contact with an infected person."

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McIlroy Takes Two-Shot Lead in Dubai

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Rory McIlroy shot a seven-under-par 65 for a two-shot first round lead in the European Tour's season-ending World Tour Championship in Dubai. Race to Dubai leader Collin Morikawa did his chances of becoming the first American ever to become the European Tour No.1 no harm when he began his campaign with a solid four-under-par 68. McIlroy, who did not have the best of seasons even though he won twice on the PGA Tour, is too far behind in the Race to Dubai to secure the European No.1 crown.

Antetokounmpo's 47 Points Fuel Bucks in NBA Win Over Lakers

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 47 points and Khris Middleton grabbed a slice of Milwaukee franchise history as the NBA champion Bucks beat the Los Angeles Lakers 109-102.

Antetokounmpo out-muscled a Lakers lineup still missing injured superstar LeBron James, along with Trevor Ariza and Kendrick Nunn.

He set a tone with 17 points in the first quarter and combined with Middleton late to thwart a Lakers rally bid.

"I wanted to be the aggressor out there," said Antetokounmpo, whose points total was his highest since he posted 50 in the Bucks' championship-clinching victory over the Phoenix Suns in game six of last season's NBA Finals.

"I wanted to initiate the contact, get in the paint, make the right play and just play with an edge out there," added the two-time league MVP, who added nine rebounds and three assists with one steal and one blocked shot.

With 29 seconds remaining, he sealed the game with two free throws.

The Lakers had rallied from an 11-point first-half deficit and led 87-86 with 9:29 left to play.

Middleton, playing in his first game since October 30 after completing Covid-19 protocols, combined with Antetokounmpo on nine straight Bucks points that put Milwaukee up 95-91.

Middleton's 16 points included a brace of three-pointers in the fourth quarter that gave Milwaukee the lead for good and tied him with Ray Allen for most in Bucks history with 1,051.

"That's a very, very special place to be," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

Talen-Horton Tucker led the Lakers with 25 points and 12 rebounds. Anthony Davis, nursing a sore hip in the final period, scored 18 points and Russell Westbrook added 19 points and 15 assists for Los Angeles.

The Brooklyn Nets bounced back from a lopsided 117-99 loss to the Golden State Warriors with a 109-99 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers at the Barclays Center.

One night after coach Steve Nash admitted his team weren't in the same "category" as the Warriors, James Harden scored 27 points with 10 rebounds and seven assists and Kevin Durant added 23 points for Brooklyn.



The Nets' 21-point halftime lead was their largest of the season, but the Cavaliers kept the pressure on with a 32-19 third quarter.

The Cavs, led by 25 points from Ricky Rubio, trimmed the deficit to seven points with less than five minutes remaining, but couldn't get any closer.

Over at Madison Square Garden, the New York Knicks were booed by their home fans during a 104-98 loss to the lowly Orlando Magic, who improved to 4-11.

"Disappointed," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said after his team surrendered the lead in the final minutes of a game in which they coughed up 18 turnovers. "We have to learn from it and get ready for the next one. But we're capable of doing a lot better."

Miami's Jimmy Butler returned from a three-game absence with a sprained right ankle to lead the short-handed Heat to a 113-98 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Butler delivered a triple-double of 31 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists with one blocked shot to help the Heat — who were without Bam Adebayo and Kyle Lowry — notch a third straight win. The Phoenix Suns surged late, finishing on a 9-2 scoring run to clinch a 105-98 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

In Charlotte, Miles Bridges, Terry Rozier and Kelly Oubre led a second-half offensive charge as the Hornets beat the Eastern Conference-leading Washington Wizards 97-87.

Rozier led the Hornets with 19 points. Bridges added 17 points with 10 rebounds and five assists.

Oubre contributed 14 off the bench for Charlotte, who were coming off a 106-102 victory over the league-leading Golden State Warriors on Sunday — halting the Warriors' winning streak at seven games.

Federer Hopes to Return One Last Time From mid-2022

LAUSANNE (Dispatches) - Roger Federer is targeting a return to the circuit in mid-2022, the Swiss star said Wednesday, hoping to play some big matches once again before bowing out in style.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion, who turned 40 in August, is working his way back from a persistent right knee injury that restricted him to just five tournaments this year.

Federer said the Australian Open in January was out of the question, while participation in the French Open in May and June and his favorite major, Wimbledon in June and July, was highly unlikely.

"The truth is I would be incredibly surprised to play Wimbledon, which is to say that Australia does not even come into play," he said in an interview published in the Swiss newspapers 24 Heures and Tribune de Geneve.

Federer had been out for more than a year with two surgeries on his right knee before getting back onto the tour in 2021.

But he played only 13 matches, and underwent a third operation on the knee following his quarter-final defeat at Wimbledon in July.

He said he was targeting a "return to competition in summer 2022", but warned that "the next four or five months are going to be decisive" for his comeback.

After this year's Wimbledon, Federer missed the Tokyo Olympics to undergo more surgery on his right meniscus, followed by a cartilage operation.

"This operation, I was going to have to do it anyway for my long-term well-being... to be able to ski with my children, to play football or tennis with my friends in the decades to come. My first motivation was to get back in shape for my life as a man," he said.

Federer said he will start light running again in January and then only take up "training that looks like tennis" in March-April.

"I want to go and see one last time what I am capable of as a professional tennis player," he said.

"We would all like that I could say goodbye in my own way and on a tennis court.

"And if we push the reasoning, playing again in 2022 or 2023 no longer makes a big difference: 40 or 41 years old, it's the same thing."



Liverpool, which Atleti lost 2-0, a fortnight ago.

But the Frenchman will also now miss the upcoming fixture against Milan on November

Griezmann Given Two-Match Champions League Ban

MADRID (Dispatches) - Antoine Griezmann will miss Atletico Madrid's Champions League group game against AC Milan next week as part of a two-match suspension from UEFA, a source close to the club has told AFP.

Griezmann was sent off in Atletico's 3-2 defeat at home to Liverpool last month and has been handed a two-game ban, the first of which was served in the return match against

24, after Uefa confirmed the suspension to the club on Wednesday.

Atletico are scrapping to edge out Porto in what appears to be a two-horse race for second in Group B.

Liverpool are already through as group winners, with Porto one point ahead of Atletico and Milan a further three points behind.

Porto travel to Anfield next week before hosting Atletico in Portugal in the final game. Griezmann will be available again for the final fixture but his absence against Milan is a blow.

The forward, who rejoined Atletico on loan from Barcelona in the summer, has scored five goals in his last six appearances.

He scored twice in the defeat by Liverpool at the Wanda Metropolitano before being shown a red card by referee Daniel Siebert in the 52nd minute for lifting his foot high and catching the head of Roberto Firmino.

Man Utd Wage Bill Soars After Ronaldo Return

LONDON (AFP) - Manchester United's wage bill rocketed by 23 percent during the period in which they re-signed Cristiano Ronaldo, the club's latest set of financial results showed.

Figures for the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year show a rise of £16.6 million (\$22 million) in "employee benefit expenses" compared with the corresponding period of the previous year.

The total amount spent on salaries during the quarter ended September 30, when the club re-signed Ronaldo and also brought in Raphael Varane and Jadon Sancho, was £88.5 million.

This rise was offset by £17.4 million brought in through player sales, principally Dan James' move to Leeds, although the club did also earn a sell-on fee from Romelu Lukaku's transfer from Inter Milan to Chelsea.

Total revenue increased by 16.1 percent to £126.5 million, explained largely by the increase in matchday income after fans returned following the lifting of coronavirus restrictions.

Commercial revenues rose by 7.9 percent to £64.4 million. This will partially have been driven by the arrival of Ronaldo, although the Portuguese star was only back at the club for the final month of the quarter.

The club, without silverware since 2017, slipped to sixth in the Premier League after recent losses to rivals Liverpool and Manchester City.

Manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is under increasing pressure, with the club currently nine points behind leaders Chelsea despite their high-profile signings.

United's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward said: "While these financial results today demonstrate our resilience through the pandemic, our top priority is success on the pitch.

"The manager, players and everyone at the club are determined to achieve that objective."



Zverev Sets Up Semifinal Clash With Djokovic

TURIN (Dispatches) - Alexander Zverev booked his place in the last four of the ATP Finals where he will face world number one Novak Djokovic after a 6-2 6-4 win over Hubert Hurkacz in Turin on Thursday.

The German fired 22 winners and closed out the match in one hour and two minutes, the fastest of the tournament so far, and joins defending champion Daniil Medvedev in the semi-finals from the Red Group.

The 24-year-old will face Green Group winner Djokovic on Saturday for the fifth time this year, having lost on three occasions including in the last four of the U.S. Open, but having beaten the Serb in the semi-finals of the Tokyo Olympics.

"I have played Novak in every single big hard-court tournament this year," the world number three said. "We are making a habit of playing in the later rounds at big tournaments. It is going to be an entertaining one, I think."

Zverev was looking to make a statement in Turin, having won via a retirement in his first match against injured Matteo Berrettini before losing in three sets to Medvedev on Tuesday.

The 2018 champion certainly made his intentions clear in the first set against Hurkacz, breaking the Pole in the first game and racing to a 4-0 lead. It took Zverev only 27 minutes to seal the set 6-2.

However, Hurkacz was not in the mood to leave his first Finals so quickly and recovered his service game to keep the score level in the second.



GUADALAJARA (Dispatches) - Spain's Garbine Muguruza claimed her first WTA Finals title, defeating Estonian Anett Kontaveit 6-3 7-5 in Guadalajara, Mexico.

After trading breaks early in the match, the sixth seed chipped away at Kontaveit's defences to convert on break point in the seventh game, as the Estonian put up four double faults throughout the first set, got roughly half of her first serves in and struggled with errors.

Kontaveit regained her composure in the second set, converting on break point in the seventh game, but could not retain the momentum as the two-time Grand Slam winner refused to give in, firing off a mighty forehand winner in the 10th game to level the score and keep the set going.

Muguruza again broke Kontaveit's serve to clinch the affair, crumpling to the court with her hands over her face before greeting her opponent for a hug at the net.

It was Muguruza's fourth appearance at the season-ending finals and her first in the championship match. Her win gave Spain its first-ever WTA Finals title.

