

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 128,167 With 125 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

According to Some reports, the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu Will Meet With His Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, on Monday (Today) in Tehran

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2

DOMESTIC

Tehran Entering Vienna Talks in Good Faith



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

Pilgrims and Neighbors Are Judges of Art Works at Mashhad Int'l Festival of Urban Arts



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Has Nothing to Do With Belarus-Poland Border Crisis



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Curry Nets 40 as Warriors Win 7th Straight



> SEE PAGE 8

Majlis Opposes Urgent Review of Securing Essential Goods

TEHRAN (IP) - Iranian lawmakers opposed a double-urgency and single-urgency bill review to "secure provision of basic goods, medicine and livestock."

In Iran's Parliament open session on Sunday, MPs opposed double-urgency and single-urgency consideration of the "secure provision of basic goods, medicine and livestock" and compensatory policies for the livelihood of the vulnerable groups.

According to Article 1 of the bill, to compensate for the effects of rising global prices of imported livestock's, agricultural products, and medicine, also taking into consideration of drought effects across the country, the credit ceiling will increase to twelve billion and 600 million dollars to ensure adequate supply of essential goods, livestock, medicine.

Massoud Mirkazemi, head of Iran's Program and Budget Organization, has attended the Parliament to defend the bill.

In a November 26 meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, the State Planning and Budget Organization approved the two urgently approved conditions for legal formalities.

"Bill secure provision of basic goods, permanent inputs, medicine and medical equipment and compensatory policies to support the livelihoods of vulnerable groups" was approved by the cabinet after legal formalities are provided.

Iran, Tajikistan Trade Volume Exchange Could hit 500m Euros

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance (MEAF) in his meeting with Tajik ambassador to Iran Nizamuddin Zahedi emphasized that preliminary ground must be provided for enhancing bilateral economic trade level to €500 million.

During the meeting, the two sides explored avenues for enhancing bilateral relations especially after the historic visit of Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi to Tajikistan as his first foreign tour.

Seyyed Ehsan Khandouzi, Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Nizamuddin Zahedi said that preliminary grounds should be provided in line with promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries to the level of €500 million.

Turning to the effort of the Islamic Republic of Iran for developing and enhancing relations with neighboring states, the Iranian minister placed special emphasis on the need for planning long-term cooperation in Iran's technical and economic fields.

See Page 7

Russia to Continue Military Cooperation With Iran



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Russia will proceed military-technical cooperation with Tehran, strictly abiding by international law and the legislation of both nations, the director general of a Russian state arms exporter has announced.

"Regarding the prospects of military-technical cooperation with Iran, it is vital to answer that under any circumstances, cooperation will be maintained given strict abidance by active legal norms of both countries, international commitments of the parties, and norms of international law," the director general of Russian state arms exporter Rosoboronexport, Alexander Mikheev, told reporters at the Dubai Airshow 2021 exhibition in the United Arab Emirates on Sunday.

A UN arms embargo on Iran was lifted on 18 October 2020, as set out in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Before that, arms supplies could be allowed only by the UN Security Council.

In November 2015, Russia prolonged the contract with Iran for sales of four units of S-300 air defense systems, and in 2016, the equipment was shipped. A similar contract was signed in 2007, but was frozen in 2010, when the United Nation Security Council adopted Resolution 1929, prohibiting transfer of armament to Iran. However, Moscow and Tehran also signed some other agreements, which did not contradict the UN sanctions, such as Iran's purchasing of Russian radio-monitoring and radio-technical intelligence equipment, according to the director of the Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, Dmitry Shugayev.

In late August, Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzagharyan told RIA Novosti that the countries are in talks on a range of military products, in light of the lifting of the UN arms embargo.

Meanwhile on Saturday a senior Russian diplomat said his country shares stance with Iran on the possibility of reaching a good agreement in a short time during the upcoming talks between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries, which are scheduled to start in the Austrian capital of Vienna later this month.

Russia's lead negotiator at the Vienna talks, Mikhail Ulyanov, made the remarks in a post on his Twitter account on Saturday after Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Tehran and the remaining parties to the landmark nuclear deal of 2015 -- officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- can reach a "good agreement in a short time" only in case of a "serious and positive" approach to the upcoming Vienna talks.

The Iranian foreign minister says Tehran and the P4+1 group of countries can reach a good agreement in a short time only in case of a serious and positive approach to the Vienna talks.

In response to the Iranian foreign minister's post, Ulyanov said via Twitter that "Russia proceeds from the same understanding."

In another tweet, the Russian diplomat reacted to earlier remarks made by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and chief negotiator Ali Baqeri-Kani on the significance of the removal of all sanctions against Tehran.

Pakistan Gov't Urged to Facilitate Rice Export to Iran

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Rice Research and Development Board Punjab has recommended the government to devise some strong banking system to facilitate Pak-Iran rice export as being proposed by the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP).

The recommendation was given at the 20th meeting of the Board held recently at the Rice Research Institute, Kala Shah Kaku with Board's Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik in the chair.

It may be mentioned here that REAP in a recent meeting with the PM Advisor on Commerce had requested to form a working group on issue of export to Iran as trade between two countries can give a quantum jump to rice exports.

The meeting discussed rice crop situation in the province and it was told that area under cultivation for 2021-22 is 6.7 percent higher than previous year while production is also being tipped as higher as overall health of crop is satisfactory.

According to the minutes of the meeting, Chief Scientists (Rice) Muhammad Rafiq also said that pest and disease attack remained under control during the current season. Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) Chairman Ali Hussam Asghar while addressing the meeting announced attractive incentives for rice breeders for the development of new rice variety acceptable to rice stakeholders.

However, Ali Hussam and Kissan Board Pakistan (KBP) Chairman Shoukat Ali Chaddhar showed concern regarding establishment of the centre of excellence of rice without farmers/exporters consent under government's agri-transformation plan, the minutes added.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Two-Faced Biden And the JCPOA

For years the U.S. and administrations and presidents in this country have been trying to show the world that they are well-wishers and supportive of human rights and nations against despotic governments and regimes but they use this issue as a pretext to rule the governments, and their words and actions have been in contradiction.

In recent years and regarding Iran's nuclear program, the U.S. administrations have claimed and promised something but they acted otherwise. Let's forget Barack Obama and Donald Trump's words and acts in the past. Let's check the current U.S. President Joe Biden's claims that the world is still remembering them.

Biden in his presidential election campaign regarding the return of the U.S. to the JCPOA has said something and now has been acting differently. The current president had vowed some other things and so far has revealed the true nature of the U.S. administrations which have been two-faced in the history especially when it comes to other countries.

While in recent months the U.S. and its allies have increased pressure on Iran to started nuclear talks, they have forgotten that Iran has not left the deal and this was the U.S. which has left it and now in an excessive demand move tries to blame Iran.

Americans want Iran to give concessions but they are not ready to observe their own commitments to the JCPOA. Although some officials in Washington have claimed the Biden Administration will remove major parts of sanctions, the president himself happily supports oil sanctions on Tehran.

On Friday, Biden said there are sufficient supplies of petroleum worldwide so other countries can reduce what they buy from Iran.

Biden's remarks are potentially construed as an impediment to the progress of the forthcoming round of negotiations on the removal of anti-Tehran sanctions at the Austrian capital of Vienna.

Biden made the comments in a memo to the State Department on Friday as the U.S. government needs to give assurance every six month that there is enough oil supply globally to maintain sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

See Page 7

Taliban Plans to Buy Electricity From Iran

KABUL (Dispatches) - Afghanistan's national power company plans to import electricity from Iran in the hope of heading off a looming electricity crisis.

Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) announced a deal this week to purchase a 100-megawatt supply, according to the Afghan network TOLO News.

The country's power network is in a precarious state since the Taliban ousted the US-backed government in August. Afghanistan imports the majority of its power, and had mounting debts to neighboring countries.

In October, The Wall Street Journal reported that Kabul was facing blackouts in the winter. The former CEO of DABS, who left in the Taliban takeover, said it owed some \$90 million to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Those nations, he said, would be justified in stopping the supply of power to Afghanistan on grounds of non-payment.

The deal with Iran offers another avenue for the Taliban to secure reliable electricity.

A DABS spokesman told TOLO News that the imports were focused on western Afghanistan. Kabul, where the blackout threat was said to be most acute, is in the east.

Afghanistan's economy has been in crisis since the Taliban came to power. Earlier this month, the group banned the use of foreign currencies in Afghanistan, citing the dire economic situation.

The Taliban has been prevented from accessing overseas reserves accumulated by the previous government, including almost \$10 billion held in the US by Afghanistan's central bank.



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Iran's Policy Is Consistent

TEHRAN (IP) - Member of the national security and foreign policy commission of Iran's parliament emphasized Iran's consistent policy that lifted all sanctions and verification.

Abolfazl Amouei referred to Iran's Ali Bagheri Kani's trip to four European countries and called them a means of bilateral exchange of views.

Iran's parliament's National Security and foreign policy added that Iran would follow its previous request, lifting all imposed sanctions.

Tehran Entering Vienna Talks in Good Faith

TEHRAN (IFP)- Iran's foreign minister says Tehran is entering the Vienna talks in good faith and despite the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Hossein Amir Abdollahian made the remarks on Saturday night while receiving members of the Advisory Commission of the Public Diplomacy Center of the foreign ministry as well as a host of Iranian analysts, university professors, journalists and ambassadors.

In the meeting, Amir Abdollahian expounded on the foreign policy of the 13th administration, of President Ebrahim Raeisi.

He said Tehran is entering into talks in Vienna in good faith despite the United States' breach of its commitments under the JCPOA and withdrawing from the deal as well as Washington's violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 not to mention failure by the European parties to the JCPOA to make good on their obligations.



The top Iranian diplomat elaborated on Iran's policy on the resumption of negotiations aimed at lifting the United States' cruel, illegal and unilateral sanctions. The Vienna talks are scheduled to be held in November's end.

Amir Abdollahian had earlier said Iran is ready to reach a good deal.

The Islamic Republic has time and again called for the return of all JCPOA parties to their full commitments under the deal and the lifting of all anti-Tehran sanctions.

German Embassy in Tehran Not to Accept Asylum Applications by Afghans

TEHRAN (IFP) - The German embassy in Tehran has hung a large banner outside the building bearing bizarre statements.

"Have you fled Afghanistan recently? The German embassy has no special plan for the admission of Afghan nationals in Iran," reads part of the banner.

"Asylum-seekers must be present inside Germany in order to be able to submit their applications for asylum," reads the banner.

"The German embassy in Tehran can neither accept nor examine asylum applications," according to the banner.

"If you have worked as a local employee for a German or international organization or institution in Afghanistan, or if you have worked as a civil activist, journalist or representative of the government and have been linked to Germany, too, you may contact the relevant individual or institution in Germany and inform them that you are in Iran," explains the banner.

"If you meet the requirements for admission, Germany will contact you," it reads.

"If you have recently fled from Afghanistan to Iran, you may visit the following website link for further information" <https://help.unhcr.org/iran/en/arrival/>, reads the banner.

This comes as Iran has in the four decades hosted around four million Afghan refugees. Following the Taliban takeover of Kabul last August, thousands of Afghans have been flocking to Iran. Tehran, under US sanctions, is inoculating Afghan refugees against Coronavirus.

Iran Role Model of Resistance

TEHRAN - Interior Minister Vahid Amiri says today the Islamic Republic is a beacon of hope, a role model of resistance and perseverance for the oppressed nations in the face of arrogant powers.

Vahidi said, "Just imagine a world without the Islamic Republic; then what would happen to the world and on whom would the Palestinian people pin their hope as they fought for their rights?"

The Iranian interior minister said the Islamic Republic of Iran is today a glimmer of hope for human beings and makes them hopeful for a great future.

Vahidi said the global arrogance has waged a propaganda campaign and economic war against Iran because of its support for the oppressed of the world.

He added that the U.S. accuses Iran of human rights violations while it killed several people inside its legislature because they were protesting at the result of the presidential election.

He also said Canada has been violating the rights of its indigenous people, dismissing Ottawa's allegations against Iran.

Vahidi also praised the achievements of the 13th government in Iran. He said the administration of President Raisi is the symbol of relentless fight against oppression and symbol of reliance on domestic capacities.

He added that momentum is on Iran's side in terms of using domestic possibilities and that Iran will prevail in this way.

Tehran, Bishkek Determined to Expand Trade Relations

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran and Kyrgyzstan economy ministers have underscored their common will to expand bilateral trade relations and strengthen the North-South corridor.

During a meeting with his Kyrgyz counterpart Daniyar Amangeldiyev, Iran's Finance Minister Ehsan Khandozi noted that Iran's principle foreign policy was to develop relations with neighboring, regional and neighboring countries.

He further stressed the need to create the necessary facilities to promote and improve the activities of businessmen and economic activists of the two countries.

The Kyrgyz Minister too referred to the need to develop economic and trade relations between the two countries based on the unique capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of freight transport, especially from Bandar Abbas to the Caspian Sea.

He also highlighted the desire of Central Asian countries to strengthen the North-South Corridor.

Amangeldiyev also pointed to Kyrgyzstan's membership and Iran's observer membership in the Eurasian Economic



Union, noting the organization's capacity to develop trade relations between the two countries.

In a separate meeting with the Tajik ambassador, Khandozi also stressed the need for planning to develop long-term cooperation in the economic and technical fields of Iran, referring to Iran's efforts to develop

relations with neighboring countries and the civilization of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Emphasizing on the promotion of bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Iran, he said that preparations and prerequisites for raising the level of economic relations between the two countries to the level of 500 million euros should be provided.

The two officials also decided that in the next meetings of the high officials of the two countries, issues such as the signing of a memorandum of understanding on technical and economic cooperation, which was presented during the recent visit of our President to Tajikistan, will be on the agenda.

Science Ministry Says Prioritizes Increasing Foreign Student Admission

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A Senior official in Iran's Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology said that increasing admission of foreign students in Iranian university was the Ministry's priority.

President of Science Ministry's Organization for Student Affairs Hashem Dadashpour and Romanian Ambassador to Iran Mirela-Carmen Grecu met on Sunday in Tehran to explore expansion of scientific and technical ties between the two countries.

Dadashpour said in the meeting that Iran's Science Ministry was serious about interactions between the two countries and called for exchanging students and lecturers.

He also said that the Science Ministry welcomed a platform to introduce Iranian and Romanian universities to the students of both countries, attract Romanian students to Iranian universities, and vice versa.

The Romanian ambassador welcomed the proposal and invited Dadashpour to pay a visit to Romanian university and high education centers.

She also urged Iran's Science Ministry to increase of Romanian universities share in its yearly ranking of academic institutes.

The two agreed to do preparations to sign an MoU in this regard.



Iran Endorses India's Position at UN Climate Summit

TEHRAN (IP) - The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced its support for India's position on fossil fuel subsidies at the UN Climate Summit in Glasgow, UK.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the UN Climate Summit in Glasgow on Saturday expressed dissatisfaction with the draft COP26 agreement on phasing out fossil fuel subsidies noting that Iran endorses India's position on subsidies for fossil fuels.

India's Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav recently stated that he did not agree with the tone used in the draft of the final agreement at the Glasgow summit on fossil fuel subsidies, saying that the draft was unbalanced.

Sources close to the talks also said on Friday that China and Saudi Arabia were among the countries seeking to block the passage of an agreement draft in the UN Climate Summit.

Despite the end of the announced time of the 26th UN Climate Change Summit in Glasgow, the disagreements among the participants prevented the issuance of a final statement.

The Glasgow Climate Change Summit was scheduled to end on Friday, November 12, but no consensus was reached, and there are still many differences, including financial assistance to vulnerable countries affected by the climate crisis.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۲۱۲۱۶

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9646004



National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
12	P/F" COOPER-BESSEMER" CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR	NO:115

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their " [Intention To Participate](#)" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,572 EURO or 425,500,250 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN

PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:16
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:14
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:41

75. They said: "The penalty should be that he in whose saddle-bag it is found, should be held (as bondman) to atone for the (crime). Thus it is we punish the wrong-doers!"

Surah 12. Joseph (75)

Tehran, Tashkent Call for Boosting Trade Volume to \$2b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran and Uzbekistan expressed satisfaction over the growth of their bilateral trade and called for boosting the trade volume to \$2b by the end of 2022.

A trade delegation from Uzbekistan, led by First Deputy Chief of Uzbekistan's Plants Quarantine Service Mr. Nadir Kasimov, met officials of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and during the meeting both sides deplored ways for enhancing bilateral trade.

In the meeting, head of international affairs of ICCIMA Mr. Mohammad Reza Karbasi expressed his satisfaction over the growing trend of trade between Tehran and Tashkent and emphasized materializing the \$2b bilateral trade volume. Karbasi pointed to the growing trend of trade relation between Iran and Uzbekistan in the first five months of 2021 which shows 39 percent growth comparing to the same period in 2020, adding that it is expected the cooperation to continue the growing trend and it passes \$500m mark.

He said with a glance at the existing capacities both countries can materialize \$2b trade volume by the end of 2022, reiterating that economic activists of the two states should take serious steps.

Karbasi added that fortunately there are no restrictions for expansion of trade relations between Iran and Uzbekistan and co-operations are underway for easing the trade. He said that ICCIMA launched Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce for this reason to be an effective executive arm for facilitating the trade.

He said in order to enhance the number of trade delegation exchanges between the two countries, it needs to ease traveling and increasing the number of direct flights between Iran and Uzbekistan. He also reiterated that signing the preferential trade agreement between the two countries is necessary and called for the launch of a trade arbitration committee in case of dispute between traders.

He then called for signing an agreement between quarantine organizations of the two countries which will help their trade of food, livestock and agro products. Then Kasimov, for his part, announced the agreements between Uzbekistan and Iran's quarantine organizations and then elaborated the condition of exports in Uzbekistan and reforms in this field.

He said despite the pandemic, the reforms continue and concentration is on the infrastructures of the country.



Kasimov called Iran as one of Uzbekistan's main trade partners and said holding \$2b meetings between economic activists in different fields are of the effective actions in line with enhancing the bilateral trade volume.

On the direct flight between Tehran and Tashkent, he said that on November 12, the first direct flight between the two countries was carried out after months of halt due to the pandemic, noting that reinforcing this route and flight will definitely help to improve the current condition of cooperation between the two states.

Kasimov then pointed to goals of his visit to Tehran and said imports of Iranian products to Uzbekistan are not his only goal, reiterating that Uzbekistan seeks shaping a joint relation and broad activities between the two countries.

Then Uzbekistan's Commercial Attache Mr. Umid Babaev, for his part, expressed his views on ways of developing the trade ties between the two countries and urged ICCIMA to send a list of Iranian traders and fields of their activities to the Embassy of Uzbekistan for the planning for the future cooperation.

Then deputy head of Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce expressed his satisfaction over the growing trend of trade between the two countries and invited Uzbekistan's agro products exporters to Iran for getting familiar with Iran's market.

Some traders in the fields of fruit, dried fruits and potato had accompanied the Uzbek delegation to Tehran.

Currency Flow Into Iran Rising

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The process of repatriation of foreign currency earned from the export of Iranian commodities has improved, resulting in relative stability in the currency market, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran said.

In an interview with ICANA on Sunday, Ali Salehabadi said Iran's currency incomes and the flow of currency earned from the exports into the domestic trade chain have improved compared to the past.

"The inflow of currency into the country is a positive point, and we will definitely proceed with such a policy," he noted,

Hailing the "relative stability" of the currency market in Iran, Salehabadi said the Central Bank of Iran seriously pursues plans to repatriate currency from the non-oil exports.

The top banker said the currency generated from the exports of oil, natural gas and gas condensates is also being supplied to the domestic market.

Days after taking office in August, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi emphasized the necessity for the removal of obstacles to the activities of Iranian exporters, saying plans must be formulated to eliminate the barriers and provide motivation for the enhancement of exports.

Iran, Kyrgyzstan Transport Goods Via Bandar Abbas

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Roads and Urban Development Minister highlighted the possibility of goods transit directly from Bandar Abbas to Kyrgyzstan.

The bilateral meeting of Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Ghasemi and Daniyar Amangeldiev, the Minister of Economy and Commerce of Kyrgyzstan, as chairmen of the Joint Commissions for Economic Cooperation between the two countries, was held on Saturday evening.

In an interview with Iran Press on the sidelines of the Joint Commissions for Economic Cooperation, Ghasemi mentioned: "This route also provides the import of Iranian goods to China."

Issues such as trade, Iran-Kyrgyzstan joint venture, and the creation of a two-nation private investment fund were discussed and agreed upon, said the Iranian minister.

He emphasized the willingness of the two countries' officials to expand bilateral relations and Iran and Kyrgyzstan's readiness to cooperate in the agricultural sectors.

Confirming the growth in trade exchanges between the two sides, especially in agriculture, Rostam Ghasemi expressed Iran's readiness to invest in Kirgizstan.

The two sides also explored the two countries' trade capacities while discussing road, aviation, and railroad transportation expansion.

Meanwhile Minister of Economy and Commerce said that via Kyrgyzstan, Iran's entrance to international markets would be feasible through extending road and maritime transits.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Joint Commissions for Economic Cooperation meeting of Iran and Kyrgyzstan, Amangeldiev noted that the grounds are prepared for the business activities of both countries' investors.

"Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to economic cooperation with Iran in various fields, especially in joint ventures," said Amangeldiev.

Stressing the historical political, trade, and cultural ties between Iran and Kyrgyzstan, Amangeldiev also said that Iran was one of the first countries to recognize Kyrgyzstan's independence.

Kyrgyzstan is rich in natural resources and highly attractive in agriculture and tourism, so efforts are being made for a significant boom between the two countries, the Kyrgyz minister said.

At the meeting meat export to Iran and the establishment of dairy factories due to Iran's high potential in the field of dairy production, were also discussed.

Mayor of Mashhad Says:

Pilgrims and Neighbors Are Judges of Art Works at Mashhad Int'l Festival of Urban Arts

The mayor of Mashhad Syed Abdullah Erjaee Shirzai said, "The share of pilgrims and neighbors of Hazrat Reza (AS) in judging the works of the International Festival of Mashhad Urban Arts is noticeable." Speaking on the sidelines of the "Mashhad International Festival of Urban Arts", which was held to welcome the spring of 1401 with the presence of city managers, artists and foreign guests in the main hall of the city theater, Mr. Erjaee Shirazi said, "At the same time, as we clean the houses of our hearts from dust and rust and recite 'Yam Qalub al-Qulub wa al-Absar' on the seventh table, we also clean our houses." He noted, "About 13 years ago, with the initiative of Engineer Pejman, the then mayor of Mashhad, the design of a beautiful urban space began in Mashhad." Arjaei Shirazi emphasized: "This year, in consultation with our colleagues, we will implement a new plan that has the strength of the previous years and if it has weaknesses, we will compensate them. Therefore, we invite all artists, who are interested in beautifying the streets of Mashhad with their art on upcoming New Year (Nowruz 1401), to participate in the 14th festival, which is the first international festival of urban arts in Mashhad." He went on to say that the share of pilgrims and neighbors of Hazrat Reza (AS) in judging the works is tangible, adding, "In this festival, a special prize has been provided for the selected work of the people." The mayor of Mashhad pointed out, "To become a city world is not in words but this slogan should be observed in act. Therefore, we are launching the international section of the Mashhad Urban Arts Festival and we are waiting for the works of artists for the biggest urban arts festival in Iran. I invite all international artists who are committed to the Imams of Infallibility and Purity, especially the Eighth Imam (AS), to help us hold this glorious event." The head of the Cultural, Social, Pilgrimage, Tourism and Media Commission of the Islamic Council of Mashhad Hojjatoleslam Hassan Mansoorian also said: "The main policy about art in the sixth term of the city administration is progressive and artistic art that promotes and shows the spirituality and ethics of the society; Art that promotes knowledge and social ethics, kindness, friendship, peaceful coexistence and responsibility." He



continued: "These propositions should be injected into the society and the city and its citizens should benefit from it. As the custodian of this festival, we hope to see applied art to promote the cultural and social level." He noted, "Art is one of the names of God and the artist is the manifestation of divine names. God is beautiful and the artist of the manifestation of God, and whatever comes from the creation to the stage of beauty, that stage of the creation is an art. Art is the manifestation of the glory of God, means of the transcendence of human morality and the spirituality of human beings. Thus, the work of the artist is a manifestation of the beauty of the universe and monotheism. The artist has a high position in the school of monotheism. Art is the means by which we bring the city to spirituality. The best way to solve social problems is to use artwork to make people feel good." Deputy Mayor and Head of Cultural and Social Organization of Mashhad Municipality, stating that the festival is held internationally and the municipality seeks to cooperate with artists of the Islamic world, said: "Our vision is to make the call being unveiled by the municipality an international call for all artists of the Islamic world. We invite all Iranian and international artists to present their works of art at this festival." Seyyed Mojtaba Montazeri also announced: "The elements that will be unveiled in the spring will be exhibited in a garden with the theme of pilgrimage after the spring season." It is worth mentioning that those interested in the details of this festival can refer to the House of Artists of Mashhad Municipality and the website: www.artmashhadevent.ir

Iran, Armenia Build Industrial City

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade reported the co-establishment of an industrial city by Iran and Armenia.

Hervik Yarianian announced a joint venture between economic activists, businessmen, and craftsmen of Iran and Armenia and the construction of a joint industrial city.

Yarianian expressed hope that with the continuation of economic and industrial cooperation as well as the facilitation of the two sides' private sectors' cooperation, the establishment of small industries and joint industrial cities between Iran and Armenia would be operational.

Reminding his meeting with the Armenian Minister of Economy a few weeks ago in Yerevan, the Iranian official said: "Armenia's Minister of Economy welcomed the economic development of the two countries; about 50 hectares of land is supposed to be allocated for the construction of a joint industrial city between Iran and Armenia."

Gasoline Responsible for 27% of Iran's Refinery Output

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran has managed to increase the share of gasoline from its refinery output capacity to more than 27% despite U.S. sanctions that hamper its energy sector's access to technology and equipment, says a report.

The report by the official IRNA news agency said that the share of gasoline from total refining output in Iran was well above a global level of 24%.

That comes just less than a decade after Iran decided to ramp up gasoline production to prevent shortages that could be caused by foreign sanctions on the country.

Under the plan, Iran modernized a series of old refineries while launching a sprawling facility for production of gasoline on its southern coast to feed on massive natural gas resources in the Persian Gulf.

That enabled the country to become a net exporter of gasoline and gave the government a new source of



earning hard currency at a time of increased financial pressure because of US sanctions.

The report by IRNA said, however, that Iran needs to do more to improve the upgrading capability in its refining sector. It said that the country scores 5 on the Nelson Complexity Index, which measures the quality of refinery operations in a country, well below a score of 9 recorded for developed countries.

The report said heavy oil still accounts for a bulk of output in the Iranian refineries, adding that the country is responsible for five percent

of the global production of mazut.

Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji said recently that Iran plans to implement extensive expansion programs in its refineries to increase output of the sector to 3.5 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2025, up from a current production of 2.2 million bpd.

New Delhi to Shut Schools, Construction Sites

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Schools in New Delhi will be closed for a week and construction sites for four days, the Indian capital's chief minister said on Saturday, as the city tries to protect people in a worsening air pollution crisis.

Arvind Kejriwal said talks on a potential complete lockdown in the capital were also underway, but any decision would only be taken after consultation with the central government.

Earlier in the day, the chief justice of India asked the central government to come up with an emergency plan to tackle the dangerous smog, calling the situation "very serious".



Ecuadorian Court Freezes Ex-President's Bank Account

QUITO (Dispatches) - Ecuador's Attorney General's Office has said that through a local court it had frozen the bank accounts of many business leaders and former government officials, including former President Rafael Correa and members of his administration, who were sentenced last year for breaking campaign finance laws.

Correa and 19 others, including his former vice president who is in prison for another corruption case, were accused of accepting \$7.5m in bribes in exchange for public contracts to finance his party's electoral campaigns between 2012 and 2016.



Russia Has Nothing to Do With Belarus-Poland Border Crisis



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday denied claims Moscow is helping to orchestrate a crisis that has left hundreds of migrants from the Middle East trapped on the Belarus-Poland border. Blaming Western policies in the Middle East for the crisis, Putin hit back at claims from Poland and others that Russia is working with Belarus to send migrants to the border of the European Union.

"I want everyone to know. We have nothing to do with it," he said in an interview with state television broadcast Saturday. Putin said European leaders needed to talk to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to resolve the crisis and that "as I understand it" German Chancellor Angela Merkel was ready to do so.

"We should not forget where these crises associated with migrants came from... Western countries themselves, including European countries," he said.

The migrants, mainly Kurds, have been stuck for days in a no-man's land on the border in near-freezing temperatures, setting up a tent camp and burning wood to keep warm.

Belarus says there are about 2,000 people in the camp, including pregnant women and children. Poland says there are between 3,000 to 4,000 migrants on the border, with more arriving every day.

There is growing concern for their plight as temperatures continue to fall, with Poland refusing to allow them to cross and accusing Belarus of preventing them from leaving the area.

Belarusian authorities said Saturday they were delivering aid including tents and heaters to the migrant camp -- a move that could make it a semi-permanent presence on the borders of the EU.

State news agency Belta reported that government bodies were erecting tents at the camp and that a generator had been delivered.

"The Belarusian side is doing everything to provide them with what they need. Water, firewood and humanitarian aid have been delivered," Igor Butkevich, the deputy head of the state border committee, told Belta.

Migrants have been trying to cross the border for months, but the crisis came to a head when hundreds made a concerted effort on Monday and were pushed back by Polish border guards.

Sporadic attempts to cross have continued, and Polish police said Saturday that the body of a young Syrian man had been found in a forest close to the border.

Police said the cause of death could not be immediately determined and that a group of around 100 migrants had attempted to cross the border during the night in the area.

The death brings to 11 the number of migrants found dead on both sides since the crisis began in the summer, according to aid groups.

Anti-Coup Rallies In Sudan Turn Deadly

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Sudanese security forces shot dead at least one protester Saturday in a crackdown on anti-coup demonstrations, medics said, after the military tightened its grip by forming a new ruling council.

The pro-democracy protests come nearly three weeks after top General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan ousted the government, detained the civilian leadership and declared a state of emergency.

"One protester was killed in Omdurman by the bullets of the putschist military council," the Central Committee for Sudanese Doctors said in a statement referring to security forces.

Other demonstrators in Khartoum's twin city were wounded by "live rounds", it added.

An AFP correspondent reported hearing the sound of gunfire as well at a protest in east Khartoum.

Tear gas was also fired at many protests in Khartoum and neighboring cities as security forces sought to disperse the demonstrations, witnesses and an AFP correspondent there said.



Tunisian Town Revolts Over Trash Crisis

TUNIS (Dispatches) - As tear gas and protest cries filled the air in the Tunisian town of Agareb, Mabrouka Ben Ibrahim vowed to demonstrate for her daughter, whose death she blames on a nearby rubbish dump.

Yousra, 21, died in 2019 after being bitten by a mosquito that came from the toxic trash site, Ben Ibrahim said.

"I lost my daughter and I don't want other families to lose their children because of the filth in this landfill," the 59-year-old said.

Residents say rubbish dumped at the site, including dangerous industrial and medical refuse, has caused a string of diseases from cancer to vision problems and infertility.

Authorities decided to close the site in September after declaring it full but reversed course on Monday, prompting angry street demonstrations that degenerated into clashes with security forces.

In the early hours of Tuesday, a protester died of what relatives said was tear gas inhalation, although authorities have blamed his death on an unrelated health condition.

The protests come amid a garbage crisis across Sfax province that has seen refuse piling up on pavements after the closure of the Agareb site, the province's main dump.

Residents say the site, around three kilometres (two miles) from the town centre and stretching over 35 hectares (85 acres), has become a public health disaster since it opened in 2008.

"Two years after it was opened, we started seeing an increase in allergies, respiratory diseases and miscarriages as a direct result of burning of trash and the release of toxic gases" from the site, said Bassem Ben Ammar, a doctor who has worked in the town for two decades.

"The number of cancer cases has shot up."

Even as the smell of tear gas dissipates, the stench of refuse still hangs over the town of 40,000.

West at Risk of Conflict With Russia

LONDON (Dispatches) - There is a greater risk of an accidental war breaking out between the West and Russia than at any time since the Cold War, with many of the traditional diplomatic tools no longer available, Britain's most senior military officer said.

General Nick Carter, chief of the defense staff, told Times Radio there was a greater risk of tensions in the new era of a "multipolar world", where governments compete for different objectives and different agendas.

"I think we have to be careful that people don't end up allowing the bellicose nature of some of our politics to end up in a position where escalation leads to miscalculation," he said in an interview to be broadcast on Sunday.

Tensions have been mounting in Eastern Europe in recent weeks after the European Union accused Belarus of flying in thousands of migrants to engineer a humanitarian crisis on its border with EU-member state Poland, a dispute that threatens to draw in Russia and NATO.

President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that unscheduled NATO drills in the Black Sea posed a serious challenge for Moscow and that Russia had

nothing to do with the crisis on close ally Belarus's border with the bloc.

Carter said authoritarian rivals were willing to use any tool at their disposal, such as migrants, surging gas prices, proxy forces or cyber-attacks. "The character of warfare has changed," he said.

Following the bi-polar world of the Cold War, and the unipolar world of U.S. dominance, diplomats now face a more complex multi-polar world, he said, adding that "traditional diplomatic tools and mechanisms" of the Cold War were no longer available.

"Without those tools and mechanisms there is a greater risk that these escalations or this escalation could lead to miscalculation," he said. "So I think that's the real challenge we have to be confronted with."

Britain said on Friday that a small team of UK military personnel had been deployed to explore "engineering support" for Poland on its border with Belarus.

British Typhoon fighters also escorted two Russian military aircraft out of its area of interest on Friday, working with NATO partners to monitor the jets as they passed through international airspace.



Qatar Has No Plan to Normalize Ties With Syria

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar is not considering normalising ties with Syria and hopes other countries will be discouraged from taking further steps with President Bashar al-Assad's government, foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has said.

His comments at a joint news conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington were in response to a question on a visit this week by the foreign minister of fellow Gulf state the United Arab Emirates to Damascus.

"It will be wishful thinking to have all the countries in the region united when it comes to the issue of Syria, and we hope that countries will be discouraged from taking further steps with the Syrian regime in order not to (worsen) the misery of the Syrian people," Al Thani said.

"We don't see any serious steps by the Assad regime showing his commitment to repair the damage that he made for his own country and people," he added.

Qatar was among several regional states including Saudi Arabia that backed rebels in Syria's decades-old civil war. Some like the UAE have sought to normalize ties after Assad regained control of most of the country.

The UAE earlier this year called for Syria to be readmitted to the Arab League. On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed met with Assad in Damascus in the first such visit by a senior Emirati dignitary since the civil war erupted.

Washington, which opposes efforts to normalize ties with Assad until progress is made towards a political solution to the conflict, said it was concerned about the move by the UAE, one of its allies.

At Friday's press conference, Blinken said the U.S. is concerned about "the signals that some of these visits and engagements are sending".

"I would simply urge all of our partners to remember the crimes that the Assad regime has committed and indeed continues to commit. We don't support normalization," he added.

Last month, the Emirati economy ministry said it had agreed with its Syrian counterpart to enhance trade and economic cooperation.

Ties between the two countries have slowly rekindled since the UAE reopened its embassy in Damascus in late 2018. In March 2019, bin Zayed said the UAE intended "to ensure that Syria returns to the Arab region".





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Iraq's External Public Debt Drops to \$20b

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Iraq's external public debt has fallen to \$20 billion, the state news agency (INA) reported on Saturday, citing the prime minister's adviser for financial affairs.

Iraq's foreign debt was \$133 billion in September 2020.

Iraq, which relies on oil to fund 95% of its 2021 national budget, plans to increase oil exports to 3.4 million barrels per day in the first quarter of 2022.



Turkey Sees Tourism Rebound, Expects Better in 2022

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey experienced a fairly good tourism season this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2022 is expected to be better, said tourism professionals.

"I believe that we have given a good image of tourism with the safe program that we are promoting, and thus the occupancy rate is satisfactory despite the end of the tourism season," Volkan Yorulmaz, a board member of the Professional Hotel Managers Association of Turkey, told Xinhua.

Tourism season in Turkey usually starts from May and ends after the summer months.

"The weather is still good on the Mediterranean coast in November, and foreign guests are vacationing," Yorulmaz noted.

In Turkey's capital Ankara, tour operator Esra Kilic told Xinhua that some hotels are working longer due to the high demand.

Russian tourists began arriving this year in the southern Antalya province, their favorite destination, from the end of June after a two-month flight suspension imposed by Moscow over concerns about a surge in COVID-19 cases in April.

Kilic explained that the industry had higher expectations for 2022 with an increase in vaccination around the world.

Tourism in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and a cultural hub, is also gaining momentum with an upper segment of visitors, she said.

Kilic added that the clients are inquiring about prices and locations for the next year. Apart from the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, there is also an interest in Cappadocia in central Anatolia, famous for its unique volcanic cones and hot-air balloon trips.

Cappadocia used to be a hotspot for Chinese tourists before the coronavirus outbreak. Local sector representatives are hoping for their return in 2022.

The number of foreign visitors from January to September this year is up to 86 percent from the same period last year and hit 17.6 million in the country, according to Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry.

In 2019, Turkey's tourist revenue hit a record 34.5 billion U.S. dollars with more than 45 million foreign visitors. However, tourism plummeted by more than 65 percent in 2020 due to travel restrictions, but rebounded in 2021.

Having been experiencing economic difficulties, Turkey sees tourism as a very important source of income. The weakening of the Turkish currency has made the country more attractive to foreign visitors.

The contribution of the tourism sector to the national economy is 12 percent, constituting the main source of foreign income. Turkey aims to lure 50 million tourists and expand the sector's revenues to 50 billion dollars by 2023, said Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy recently.

Erkan Yagci, the chairperson of the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers Association, told state-run Anadolu Agency that the region had a much better season than last year and hoped 2022 would surpass 2021. "There is a significant effort by both the public and the private sector. It was an important success to initiate the tourism move during the pandemic and to make it sustainable. I think we have achieved this," he said.

India's Industrial Growth at 7-Month Low

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Industrial growth moderated sharply to a seven-month low of 3.1% in September from over 12% in August, hit by the strong monsoon in the month that dented economic activity, component shortages that hit the automobile sector, and the waning base effect that had boosted growth in recent months.

The separately released consumer price index (CPI) showed retail inflation ticked up to 4.48% in October from 4.35% in September but remained within the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) target range of 2-6%, which will allow it to maintain the growth-supporting monetary policy.

Industrial production grew 23.5% in first half of FY22, helped by the strong base effect of 20.8% contraction in the year-ago period. The waning base effect has exposed the weakness in the industrial recovery. Mining output rose 8.6% in September while manufacturing rose 2.7%. Electricity generation was up 0.9%. On a month-on-month basis, industrial growth dropped 2.6%, mining output fell 8.4%, and electricity generation was lower by 11%. "The major setbacks were in the area of automobiles and electronics, where growth was negative," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at CARE Ratings.

Revival of industrial output will remain a challenge in the near term, India Ratings said in a report. The moderate industrial growth numbers are in sharp contrast to strong retail demand in the festive season. "While high-frequency indicators such as record high GST e-way bill generation are encouraging, festive season trends were somewhat divergent across price points, and supply side issues afflicting the auto sector continued to act as a dampener," said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar.

"On balance, we expect the high base to keep the IIP growth lacklustre at under 2.5% in the just-concluded month,"



Nayar said.

Production of capital goods grew 1.3% in September while that of consumer durables contracted 2%, reflecting the impact of the chip shortage. Consumer non-durables output fell 0.5% in September from a year ago.

"The seasonal setbacks observed so far are expected to subside in coming months leading to a better industrial performance in the second half," said Sabnavis of CARE Ratings, but added that growth may remain subdued due to the normalization of the base.

Higher fuel and food prices caused inflation to rise marginally in October. Food inflation accelerated 0.85% in October versus 0.68% in September while fuel inflation accelerated 14.35% from 13.6% in the month before.

Spanish Inflation at 29 Year High

MADRID (Dispatches) - Bottlenecks in global production caused by the pandemic and rising energy costs are continuing to increase prices for consumers all over the country. There is a large worry that many households will end up under severe pressure to make ends meet this Christmas season due to this Spanish inflation.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) had a huge increase in October, reaching a high of 5.4%, the highest price increase recorded in 29 years.

The massive rise in energy costs is the main contributing factor to this Spanish inflation, with some household electricity bills costing 62.8% more last month than during the same period in the previous year. Fuel is now 28.6% more expensive in 2021, this is the highest price in four years.

Food is not immune from these increases either, with staples of the Spanish diet such as olive oil turning up a 26% price rise. Fresh fruit also rose by 11.3%.

Natural gas has received a knock-on effect from the soaring price of electricity as more and more people are turning to this method to heat their homes as the winter nights draw in. This has caused an 11.3% increase. The same has happened with bicycles due to the huge cost of petrol and diesel, with push bikes registering a 7.6% price jump.

Analysts from the Bank of Spain have warned that inflation will continue to increase well into next year. This could cause consumers to lose purchasing power in the home economy. A loss of purchasing power for Spain's residents could result in a slow-down in Spain's economic recovery as 90% of the growth needed depends on domestic demand.

Sri Lanka Looking to Lower Fiscal Deficit From 2022

COLOMBO (Reuters) - Sri Lanka is confident of not defaulting on its debts and will work on gradually improving the quality of its foreign exchange reserves, finance minister Basil Rajapaksa said on Saturday.

Rajapaksa said when presenting Sri Lanka's 2022 budget on Friday that the government will cut its budget deficit to around 8.8% of gross domestic product in 2022. The deficit target for 2021 was revised to 11.1%.

"Sri Lanka has never defaulted in its history and that record will be maintained," Rajapaksa told a

briefing, a day after presenting the annual budget.

"Even part of our reserves are borrowed but we will improve the quality of reserves gradually from next year till 2024. By 2024, we are confident we will be able increase reserves and put debt on a sustainable footing," he added.

The government did not provide an estimate for 2022 growth in its budget but at a forum on Saturday central bank governor Nivard Cabraal said growth is likely to improve in 2022.

"This year we are looking at 5% growth and if we have a good year in 2022 with tourism reaching a quarter of pre-2019 levels then we are well on course for 6% growth," Cabraal said.

"But we will mean our macroeconomic fundamentals will be in much better shape than now".

Debt repayment is one of the key challenges facing Sri Lanka with foreign exchange reserves having dropped to \$2.27 billion as of end October.

Rajapaksa said remittances and tourism, which are the top two sources of dollar inflows, have both been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and it has been tougher to attract investors.

"But we want to reduce borrowings. I guarantee that the \$1.54 billion up to July 2022 will be repaid," he added.

Treasury Secretary S. R. Attygalle said the budget is likely to bring in structural reforms to support and strengthen growth and improve Sri Lanka's fiscal position.

He said the government has a revenue target of 15% of GDP by 2025 and that expenditure will be strictly managed.

"The revenue side is a challenge but with tourism bouncing back Sri Lanka will become comfortable in the next 12 to 18 months," he added.

Analysts, however, are unsure if the announcements in the budget are enough to instill confidence in investors, ratings agencies and market participants.

Airbus Shaves 20-Year Emand Forecast, Sees Faster Replacements

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Airbus shaved its forecast for airplane demand by 0.5% compared with pre-pandemic projections on Saturday, offset by a brighter outlook for freighters as the world's largest jetmakers fight for inaugural sales of large new cargo planes.

Airbus issued new long-term demand forecasts on the eve of the Dubai Airshow, where a battered aviation industry is reeling from the loss of two years' growth to COVID-19, while striving to defend its environmental plans amid growing climate pressure.

Airbus said it expected a market total of 39,020 jetliner deliveries in the next 20 years, fractionally lower than the 39,213 it predicted two years ago in its last rolling forecast.

The estimate for small planes like the best-selling A320 was essentially flat at 29,690 units, but the outlook for big jets that traditionally dominate the region fell 3.1%, reflecting a drop in long-haul travel on top of a glut of such aircraft.

The view echoes that of Boeing which in September cut its 20-year delivery forecast by 1% compared to 2019. That tempered greater pessimism seen from Boeing as the crisis peaked in 2020.

Airbus issued slightly weaker forecasts for medium jets - a key battleground that includes its longest-range narrow-body jet, the A321XLR. Its sales have been causing a headache for Boeing at the top end of its recently troubled 737 MAX range.

Airbus slashed its forecast for average annual growth in passenger traffic to 3.9% from 4.3% in pre-pandemic 2019. "The fastest traffic growth will be in Asia with domestic China becoming the largest market," Airbus said, indicating a permanent shift after China briefly grabbed the top spot in domestic air traffic from the United States during COVID.

Airbus raised its 20-year delivery forecast for new freighters by 2.9% to 880 units. It is in talks to find a first buyer for a proposed A350 freighter with airlines including Singapore Airlines, industry sources said.

Boeing said earlier it is in advanced discussions with potential buyers for a new 777X freighter. Market sources have said main contenders include Qatar Airways and FedEx.

Airbus said a rising share of total airplane deliveries would be to replace jets already in the market rather than to facilitate the recently curbed growth plans of many airlines.

That emphasis reflects expectations that airlines will retire less efficient jets earlier following COVID-19, but also// aims to tackle a sensitive point for the industry as some environmental groups target what they see as over-expansion.

Faster retirements also worry suppliers and lessors who fear the average economic life of jets will fall, forcing them to miss out on service revenues or push up depreciation costs.

Japan's New Economic Stimulus Package Expected to Exceed 40 Trillion Yens



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Spending by the central government on a set of economic stimulus measures to be finalized next week will exceed 40 trillion yens (\$350 billion), expanding from its initial plan of around some ¥30 trillion due to cash handouts, sources close to the matter have said.

Under the COVID-19 relief measures, there will be ¥100,000 handouts in cash and vouchers for children aged 18 or younger as well as aid for students facing financial difficulties, the sources said.

The package, which Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's Cabinet is expected to approve on Nov. 19, will also include financial aid of up to 2.5 million yens each for businesses suffering from plunging revenues due to the virus spread, and wage hikes of about 3% for child care and nursery school workers as well as nurses, the sources said.

Along with funds left over from the fiscal 2020 budget and the issuance of new bonds, the stimulus is planned to be financed by a supplementary budget, which Kishida's administration aims to enact following its passage during an extraordinary parliamentary session to be convened by the year-end.

Some policy measures will be funded by a budget for the next fiscal year starting in April. Additional fiscal spending could further dent the government's fiscal soundness, which is already the worst among major developed countries with over ¥1.2 quadrillion worth of public debt as of March.

Restarting the government's Go To Travel program, intended to subsidize travel spending to help the coronavirus-hit domestic tourism industry, will also be among the stimulus measures, the sources said. The program was suspended amid the rapid spread of infections.

Kishida has said the size of the package will be "several tens of trillions of yen."

Iranian “Dusty Dream” Awarded In German Film Festival

MAHABAD (IRNA) - Iranian director Soleiman Rahimi’s “Dusty Dream” (Rouyayeh Khaak Aaloud) won the Best Script Award in German Film Festival known as “Golden Tree International Documentary Film Festival 2021”. “The documentary Dusty Dream directed by Soleiman Rahimi and produced by Elnaz Jalehchin won the awarded for best short documentary in this international festival. Dusty Dream uses great techniques in filming, and depicts the hard and exhausting work and life of the workers of brick producing factories in Bukan as the capital city of Bukan County, West Azarbaijan Province.



Shipping Companies Feel the Heat as Investors Shun Coal



LONDON (Dispatches) - Shipping companies that transport the world’s coal are in the crosshairs of some financial backers who are cleaning up their businesses in the absence of a truly global drive by nations to renounce the dirtiest fossil fuel.

In a sign of investors taking the initiative, six European firms collectively representing over 5% of the estimated annual \$16 billion capital financing requirements of the dry bulk industry told Reuters they were either reducing their exposure to vessels that transport coal or were considering doing so.

Such carriers - titanic vessels stretching up to 270 meters (885 ft) long and able to carry hundreds of thousands of tons of cargo - are the cheapest way to transport coal and other commodities like iron ore and grain in large quantities.

Swiss Re told Reuters that from 2023 it would no longer cover the transport of thermal coal via reinsurance treaties, where it covers a portfolio of insurers’ policies. It exited the direct insurance of coal cargoes in 2018.

“There is much more pressure on the insurance companies in terms of ESG,” said Patrizia Kern-Ferretti, head of marine at Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, referring to the sustainable investment sphere. “I hear from brokers they are having difficulty placing coal policies in the insurance market,” she added. “More and more companies are applying direct guidelines.”

Esben Saxbeck Larsen, senior portfolio manager at Denmark’s Danica Pension, said it favored greener shipping firms as they provided the best risk/return characteristics. The fund has “close dialogue” with firms about their ESG strategies.

“If we are uncomfortable with such answers, we will not invest in the company,” he added, without elaborating on the specifics of the methodology.

Such pressures pose new challenges for the shipping industry, which hitherto largely hasn’t been drawn into the center of the coal debate by policymakers and investors focused on production and consumption rather than transport of the fuel.

Andreas Sohmen-Pao, chairman of BW Group, which operates a diverse fleet including oil and gas tankers, offshore vessels and dry bulk carriers, said ESG pressures on investors and banks – capital providers to the industry – were growing.

“How that plays out in terms of outcome is a different question. Sometimes, people shun a sector and the returns only get better as supply moderates,” he added.

“Everyone has to do what they think is right. Sometimes, you can have counter-intuitive effects.”

There’s good money be made from delivering coal, which broadly accounts for about 30% of cargo volumes and has hit record prices amid a shortage of fuel including natural gas to provide the power needed by a global economy recovering from a pandemic.

And demand beckons for decades to come after major consumers including China and India failed to join a pact to phase out coal power at U.N. climate talks being held in Glasgow this week; while Europe and the United States are retiring coal-fired plants, Asian nations are building almost 200 more.

Khalid Hashim, managing director of Precious Shipping (PSL.BK), one of Thailand’s largest dry cargo ship owners, said investors should target the consumers and producers of coal.

“All we do is deliver it from the point of origin to the point of consumption, like a messenger delivering his message,” he added. “Coming after ship owners seems the easy cop-out route as we have no voice.”

The six firms that spoke to Reuters about their coal concerns collectively own, finance, insure or reinsure more than \$1 billion of capital in the dry bulk industry, based on the estimated value of shipping assets.

Leading shipping financiers more broadly currently provide close to \$290 billion of lending to the industry annually, with capital requirements for the dry bulk segment accounting for about \$16 billion, according to analyst and Reuters estimates.

The investor pullback, part of a wider shift in the financial industry away from fossil fuels, threatens to drive up the cost of finance and insurance for some shipping firms in the dry bulk sector, which carries close to half of global seaborne cargo volumes.

London-based specialist asset manager Marine Capital, which owns and operates shipping assets on behalf of institutional investors, said it anticipated that funders would not support investments in the largest bulk carriers that typically carry coal, known as capesize vessels.

A Million Afghan Children at Risk of Dying Amid Acute Malnutrition

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Around 3.2 million children are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in Afghanistan by the end of this year, with 1 million of them at risk of dying as temperatures drop, a World Health Organization spokesperson said.

Aid agencies have warned of famine as a drought coincides with a failing economy following the withdrawal of Western financial support in the aftermath of a Taliban takeover in August. The health sector has been hit especially hard, with many healthcare workers fleeing due to unpaid salaries. read more

“It’s an uphill battle as starvation grips the country,” Margaret Harris told Geneva-based journalists by telephone from the capital Kabul. “The world must not and cannot afford to turn its back on Afghanistan.”

Nighttime temperatures are falling below zero degrees Celsius and colder temperatures are expected to make the old and the young more susceptible to other diseases, Harris said. In some places, people are chopping down trees to provide fuel for the hospitals amid widespread shortages, she added.

Harris did not have numbers for the number of children who had already died from malnutrition but described “wards filled with tiny little children”, including with a seven-month old baby whom she described as “smaller than a newborn”.

Measles cases are rising in the country and WHO data shows 24,000 clinical cases had so far been reported.

“For malnourished children, measles is a death sentence. We will see so many more deaths if we don’t move on this quickly,” Harris said.

Indonesian Economy on the Rebound

KARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia’s stock benchmark closed at a fresh record high this week amid signs of an economic recovery.

The Jakarta Composite Index of shares rose 0.1% to 6,691.34, a new all-time high close on Thursday.

Bank and consumer stocks were the biggest gainers, with PT Unilever Indonesia surging 6.6% and PT Bank Mandiri climbing 1.1%.

“Indonesia’s index has slightly trailed other countries, we’re playing catch up,” said Ferry Wong, head of ASEAN and Indonesia research at Citigroup Inc.

“And Indonesia’s position now is relatively far better. We’re being helped by gains in the commodity market.”

South-East Asia’s largest economy is set for a quicker growth rebound as it eases movement restrictions and reopens borders after reining in Covid-19 cases and deaths to the lowest levels since the middle of 2020.

Household spending is showing signs of a pick-up, while the commodities boom is bolstering the economy, which remains a major exporter of coal and palm oil.

Foreign investors have bought US\$2.9 billion more Indonesian shares than they’ve sold so far this year, while neighboring countries including Philippines and Thailand recorded outflows.

Local bonds have also outperformed emerging-market peers despite year-to-date outflows amounting to US\$2.4 billion. The central bank has pledged to continue its debt purchases through next year to help the government fund measures to address the pandemic’s impact.

Morgan Stanley upgraded Indonesia to overweight in late October, citing further reopening of ASEAN economies and supportive trends in its rates markets.

Steady reform progress including the passage of an omnibus law on job creation, continued investment into tech platforms and commodities and an improving macro outlook should all support equity prices, analysts including Daniel Blake wrote in a note.



Two-Faced Biden...

FROM PAGE 1

“Consistent with prior determinations, there is a sufficient supply of petroleum and petroleum products from countries other than Iran to permit a significant reduction in the volume of petroleum and petroleum products purchased from Iran by or through foreign financial institutions,” the U.S. president said in the memo.

The sanctions were put in place during the former U.S. President Barack Obama’s administration in 2012.

Obama’s successor, Donald Trump, later reimposed other sanctions on Iran’s oil and petrochemical products, which were aimed at cutting off its oil supply to other countries. The Trump administration also urged other oil-producing countries to raise their oil output to compensate for drop in Iran’s oil supply.

Biden’s statement comes ahead of a virtual meeting with China’s President Xi Jinping on Monday, in what is expected to be the two presidents’ most extensive meeting since Biden took office.

The United States has recently resorted to pirating Iranian oil cargoes as it has failed in its various attempts to cut the country’s oil exports to zero through its regime of sanctions.

Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday that it had prevented a piracy attempt on an Iranian oil cargo traveling in the sea of Oman last month.

The new oil-related sanctions by Biden would complicate the upcoming negotiations with Iran over the removal of U.S. sanctions as part of obligations to the 2015 nuclear deal that would allow Tehran to sell its oil openly again.

So it seems Iran is right to cast doubt on the U.S. words and sincerity and to continue its own way and puts aside its voluntary nuclear activities.

Iranian officials as have mentioned in recent months are not against the idea of talks but at the same time they will not tie the activities of the country to the talks because the U.S. cannot be trusted and this country can cheat and retreat any moment it wishes.

Iran has fully honored its nuclear obligations since signing the JCPOA deal but after the U.S. withdrew, the Iranians decided to only observe the commitments and not the voluntary commitments and this has enraged the West which has ignored all of their JCPOA commitments.

Now with recent Biden’s remarks, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and his negotiating team should be careful and not to be fooled by the carrot of the West because the U.S. is happy with its cruel and unilateral sanctions against Iran and it seems even after its return to the deal the sanctions would continue under other pretexts by the two-faced U.S. Administration which is under influence of the Zionists’ lobbying.

Iran, Tajikistan...

FROM PAGE 1

In the subsequent meetings, it was envisioned that senior officials of the two countries of Iran and Tajikistan would follow up the issues such as signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in bilateral technical and economic cooperation as presented in the recent visit of the Iranian president to Tajikistan.

Khandouzi also stressed the need for the promotion of trade and economic relations between the two countries to the level of €500 million.

Bangladesh on Track to Gain Full Socio-Economic Transformation by 2041

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Bangladesh is on the right track for achieving complete socio-economic transformation by 2041, said Planning Minister MA Mannan.

“The year 2041 will be the year when we will have our strengths recognised and utilised in furthering development,” the minister added.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a day-long conference titled “Bangladesh in 2041: Notions and Narratives of Diversification and Transformation” organised by the Department of Social Science and Humanities of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) in Dhaka on Saturday, read a press release.

Renowned Economist and Policy Expert Dr Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), delivered the keynote speech during the conference. He highlighted the remarkable liberation of entrepreneurial talents in the country, which he said was unleashed five decades ago by the liberation of Bangladesh.

The Vice-Chancellor of IUB Dr Tanweer Hasan said, “Bangladesh is a nation built on the resilience and tenacity of its people. It is no stranger to challenges. As we strive to develop our country, urgent action is required to invest in developing human resources.” Dr Hasan urged all educational institutions in the country to revamp their curriculum so that the graduates can become tech-savvy to keep up with the ever-changing global market.

Japan's Uno Back on Top

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's Shoma Uno said he was "back fighting at the top" of figure skating after winning the NHK Trophy on Saturday -- his first major title in almost three years. Uno, the silver medallist at the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics, claimed a personal-best score of 290.15 in Tokyo, beating American Vincent Zhou into a distant second. Uno's last major win came at the Four Continents in February 2019, and he thought of quitting skating during the barren spell that followed.

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Paul Reaches First ATP Final

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Tommy Paul of the United States reached his first career ATP Tour final with a tough three-set victory over compatriot Frances Tiafoe at the Stockholm Open.

Paul, ranked 52 in the world, had knocked out three-time major winner Andy Murray on Thursday.

He took that form into his semi-final against eighth-seeded Tiafoe to win 5-7, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

Curry Nets 40 as Warriors Win 7th Straight

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry connected on nine 3-pointers and scored 40 points as the Golden State Warriors completed a franchise-record-tying, eight-game homestand with a 119-93 blowout win over the Chicago Bulls in San Francisco.

Andrew Wiggins had 15 points, Kevon Looney grabbed a game-high 10 rebounds and Draymond Green turned in another strong all-around game for the Warriors, who opened their 16-day homestand with a loss to the Memphis Grizzlies before rattling off seven straight wins.

Zach LaVine had 23 points and DeMar DeRozan 18 for the Bulls, who began a five-game trip without Nikola Vucevic after the big man tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the week.

The 40-point game was the 52nd of his career. Curry has made nine or more 3-pointers 36 times, an NBA record. James Harden and Damian Lillard are tied for the second-most such games in NBA history with nine.

Nuggets 105, Hawks 96

Nikola Jokic had 22 points, 19 rebounds and 10 assists in his return from a one-game suspension, and host Denver beat Atlanta.

Jokic was suspended for Wednesday's win over Indiana after his actions against Miami on Monday night. He notched his 59th career triple-double in this one, tying Larry Bird for eighth all-time. Aaron Gordon had a season-high 23 points, Jeff Green added 16, Bones Hyland scored a career-high 15 points and P.J. Dozier had 12 for Denver, which has won four straight.

Timberwolves 107, Lakers 83

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 18 of his 29 points in the third quarter and visiting Minnesota ended a six-game losing streak by cruising to a victory over Los Angeles.

D'Angelo Russell scored 22 points for the Timberwolves, who opened the second half on a 29-4 run and held the Lakers without a field goal for a 7:33 stretch of the third quarter. Naz Reid scored 12 points for Minnesota, while Patrick Beverley had 11.

Hornets 104, Knicks 96

Miles Bridges scored 24 points and



Gordon Hayward added 22 points for host Charlotte, who stormed back from a 16-point, first-half deficit to beat New York.

LaMelo Ball produced 12 points, 17 rebounds and nine assists while Terry Rozier contributed 18 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 12 points for the Hornets, who have won two straight. Oubre's 3-pointer with 3:36 left gave Charlotte the lead for good at 96-93.

Celtics 122, Bucks 113 (OT)

Dennis Schroder scored a season-high 38 points, Jayson Tatum added 27 points and 11 rebounds and host Boston held off short-handed Milwaukee in overtime.

Schroder, who also grabbed eight rebounds, scored eight of the Celtics' 14 points in overtime as Boston outscored Milwaukee by nine in the extra period. Marcus Smart added 19 points and Robert Williams III had 12 and 10 boards for the Celtics, who have won back-to-back games and four of their last five.

Bobby Portis had 22 points and was one of six double-digit scorers for Milwaukee, which played without both of its All-Stars against Boston as Giannis Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton sat out.

Cavaliers 98, Pistons 78

Darius Garland matched his season high with 21 points and Cedi Osman added 17 as Cleveland cruised to a victory over visiting Detroit.

Evan Mobley had 16 points and seven rebounds for Cleveland, which shot 47.6 percent from the field and led by as many as 27 in the fourth quarter. Jarrett Allen added 11 points and seven rebounds.

Aguero Denies Rumors He Will Never Play Again



MADRID (Dispatches) - Barcelona forward Sergio Aguero has dismissed as rumours reports a heart condition had ended his playing career, insisting he hoped to be back in action within three months.

The 33-year-old Argentine was rushed to hospital on October 30 after suffering breathing problems while playing in the Liga draw against Alaves.

The club said after he underwent heart tests that Aguero would be "unavailable for selection and during the next three months the effectiveness of treatment will be evaluated to determine his recovery process."

Catalunya Radio however reported on Friday that Aguero would never play again "due to a serious heart problem."

The former Manchester City star took to Twitter to deny the reports.

"Always positive," said Aguero. "There are rumours going around but I'm following the club doctor's opinion and we'll see how I am in 90 days."

After helping Argentina to the Copa America title in July, Aguero left Manchester City and moved to Spain.

He left City as their all-time record goalscorer with 260 goals, and with the most goals scored for a single club in Premier League history -- 184 goals in 275 appearances.

Before his switch to Barca he suffered a bout of Covid.

Hamilton

Under Investigation

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - World Champion Lewis Hamilton yesterday dominated qualifying at the Brazil Grand Prix but then found himself facing demotion to the back of the grid for the sprint race after Mercedes were placed under investigation for a potential breach of technical rules.

Hamilton edged out title rival Max Verstappen for first place on the grid for the 24-lap sprint which in turn decides the starting order for tomorrow's race at Interlagos.

However, race stewards were investigating whether or not the DRS system (the flap mounted on the rear wing of the car which opens to gain top speed) had exceeded allowed limits.

Seven-time world champion Hamilton, who trails Verstappen by 19 points in the title race, had already been hit with a five-place grid penalty for tomorrow's main event after the engine was changed on his Mercedes.

"I'm so happy to be back in Brazil. Just a big thank you to all the team, they've been working flat-out. Today was a really good qualifying," said Hamilton before the investigation was launched.

"It's been so long — it's like the first time," added the 36-year-old who had not set the fastest time in qualifying since Hungary in August.

Kontaveit Crushes

Pliskova to Reach Semis

GUADALAJARA (Dispatches) - Anett Kontaveit powered past third-seeded Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 6-0 to lead the way into the semi-finals of the season-ending WTA Finals.

The eighth-seeded Estonian notched her 12th straight WTA match win as she assured herself of finishing in the top two of her group in the round-robin phase.

Kontaveit, whose win streak included titles at Moscow and Cluj-Napoca, had beaten French Open champion Barbora Krejickova in her tournament opener. She needed just 57 minutes to roar past Pliskova, winning 24 of her 29 first-service points and claiming the last eight games for her first career victory over the Czech in four meetings.



Alves played for Barca between 2008-16 in a trophy-laden spell during which he won

Barca Agree Deal to Re-Sign Alves

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona have reached an agreement in principle to sign free agent Dani Alves, with the Brazilian right back set to rejoin the team for the rest of the season, the Spanish LaLiga club said.

Barca said in a statement the 38-year-old would be reunited with former team mate and newly appointed manager Xavi Hernandez when he joins the squad next week, but will not be able to play until January.

Alves played for Barca between 2008-16 in a trophy-laden spell during which he won six LaLiga titles, three Champions League crowns and three Club World Cup trophies among other major honours.

He recently helped Brazil win the Olympic title at the Tokyo Games, adding to two Copa America titles and two Confederations Cup trophies with the national team.

Alves had joined Brazilian side Sao Paulo in 2019 after a glittering 17 years in Europe with Sevilla, Barcelona, Juventus and Paris St Germain but terminated his contract in September following a dispute over unpaid salaries.

Alves joined Barcelona from Sevilla in 2008 and made 391 appearances, becoming a regular under ex-managers Pep Guardiola, Tito Vilanova, Tata Martino and Luis Enrique before leaving for Juventus in 2016. Barca are ninth in the league with 17 points from 12 games after a difficult start to the campaign in which Ronald Koeman was sacked as manager.

Younger Players Had Breakthrough Season in 2021

LONDON (Dispatches) - German world number three Alexander Zverev believes 2021 has been a breakthrough season for the younger generation despite world number one Novak Djokovic winning three out of the four Grand Slam titles during the year.

The so-called "Big Three" of Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal have dominated men's tennis for more than a decade but in 2021 the younger players have enjoyed more success.

Though Federer and Nadal missed the chunk of the year due to injuries and world number one Djokovic skipped a number of tournaments to concentrate on winning more major titles, Zverev feels the younger players now have more momentum.

World number two Daniil Medvedev beat Djokovic to win the US Open final and deny the Serbian a calendar Grand Slam in September.

"First of all, we're not young anymore," the 24-year-old Zverev told reporters today ahead of the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin, Italy.

"We did make a big step forward this year. The young guys have won all the Masters (1000 titles) apart from Rome and Paris. My winning the Olympics was a big statement. Daniil winning the US Open was a big statement."

Nadal, ranked sixth, is a year older than the 34-year-old Djokovic and the next oldest players in the current men's top 10 are 25-year-olds Medvedev and Italian Matteo Berrettini.

"I think the young guys are coming through and it's a natural curve," Zverev said, adding that Djokovic is "deservedly" the number one for winning three majors in 2021.



World Cup Every Two Years "Not a Bad Idea"

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City attacker Kevin De Bruyne said a proposal to hold the World Cup every two years was "not a bad idea."

FIFA's biennial World Cup scheme was mooted earlier this year by former Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger, who now works as chief of global football development for the governing body.

The proposition has been widely criticised by the likes of UEFA and the Premier League. FIFA plans to publish a report in November, before a "global summit" by the end of the year.

"At the start of the season, I had a meeting with FIFA and Arsene Wenger to explain to us what they wanted to do," De Bruyne told news agency Belga.

"To do something like that, federations of all countries, UEFA and FIFA have to coordinate. Everyone has to work together."

"I insisted on a second point: I told them that they had to keep a real period of rest for us, the players, at the end of the season."

"The idea isn't bad in itself, as long as everyone works together," he added.

De Bruyne, 30, is set to feature as Belgium host Estonia on Saturday and then travel to Wales on Monday in qualifiers for next year's World Cup.

Two points from the final pair of games in the campaign will claim a place at the finals in Qatar for the Red Devils.

