

**Health Ministry Announced on Wednesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 128,531 With 125 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Director-General of the Int'l Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi Is Scheduled to Meet Tehran on Monday, according To Iran's Caretaker Envoy to Vienna-Based Int'l Organizations**

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**2 DOMESTIC**

**Gov't Not to Borrow From CBI**



> SEE PAGE 2

**3 DOMESTIC**

**Portuguese Companies Waiting For Removal of Sanctions to Cooperate With Iran**



> SEE PAGE 3

**4 INTERNATIONAL**


**Poland Turns Water Cannon, Tear Gas On Migrants**



> SEE PAGE 4

**8 SPORTS**

**DeRozan Remains Hot, Sparks Bulls' Win**



> SEE PAGE 8

## Iran Slams Use of Sanctions As Blind Instruments To Pressure Nations

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat has slammed the use of sanctions as "blunt and blind instruments" to exert pressure on world states, saying reforms are needed to prevent the United Nations' Security Council (UNSC) from resorting to embargos that merely punish an entire nation but fail to contribute to international peace.

"The use of sanctions as blunt and blind instruments has raised fundamental ethical questions about whether sufferings inflicted on vulnerable groups is a legitimate means of exerting pressure on the targeted country," Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said in an address to the UN General Assembly.

He said certain Security Council sanctions had been used in the past only to collectively punish an entire nation, without any actual positive impact on the maintenance of international peace and security, emphasizing that enforcement measures must be applied only as a last resort.

**See Page 7**

## Tehran Calls COP26 a Failure

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iranian authorities say the United Nations' recent climate conference in the Scottish city of Glasgow (COP26) failed to reach its objectives because of the colonialist approaches of rich countries toward developing nations.

Head of the Iranian government's Department of Environment Ali Salajegheh said on Tuesday that the Glasgow summit turned out to be a failure because developed nations continued to dictate their wishes on countries that still rely on fossil fuels for a bulk of their energy needs.

Salajegheh made the remarks after returning from COP26, an occasion he used to highlight the impacts of US sanctions on Iran's ability to meet climate goals set under a 2015 global agreement. In his Tuesday briefing with reporters in Tehran, the Iranian climate chief accused the developed nations of trying to force others into accepting the huge costs of the global transition to the renewables.

"The question is who created problems for the ozone layer and the greenhouse gases? They (who created them) have now come to the conclusion that the countries with energy resources should pay for improving the climate, this is a colonialist policy," he said.

**See Page 7**

## Encouraging Youth to Leave Country Amounts to Treason



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei warned Iran's scientifically-elite community of the soft wars being waged by the world's colonial powers with the aim of rendering nations indifferent or ignorant towards their genius and setting the stage for the pillaging of those nations.

Ayatollah Khamenei issued the warning at a meeting on Wednesday with a group of young scientifically elite in Tehran. "A significant part of the soft war, which is being and has always been waged by colonialists...is to render a nation — either our nation or any other talented nation — ignorant and indifferent toward its talents or make it (the nation) face a situation in which it denies those talents itself," the Leader said.

"When a nation is dominated by ignorance of its own capabilities, it becomes easy [for the colonialists] to pillage that nation. Ignorance is a prelude to plunder...Ignorance and plunder go hand in hand," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

Referring to the Holy Qur'an, the Leader said, "God warns in the heavenly book that the enemy wants to render you ignorant of your weapons and possessions in order to attack you easily. This is significant today given the pressure and the hype [against Iran] in the world over the issue of drones and missiles."

Ayatollah Khamenei further hailed the high levels of intelligence and genius in Iran and said, "When it comes to mental talents, our country stands above average in the world. It is not a mere claim. It has been proven and is certain, which means our country — or our nation — is potentially a genius."

"Genius is a divine blessing, a blessing from God that should be thanked. The first thing that comes to your mind should be for you to express gratitude," the Leader told the participants.

"What makes a genius, besides mental talents and mental capacities, is being grateful for this reality and blessing," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He said while authorities are required to fulfill their duties vis-à-vis the country's scientific community, the young elite should likewise feel responsible toward the homeland's affairs, accept certain "inevitable hardships" while fighting to overcome the obstacles, and not allow instances of unkindness in some institutions to prevent them from making efforts and moving forward.

The Leader further praised the progress being made in different scientific sectors and said, "Today, important scientific projects are being implemented in the country, which are mainly part of the scientific branches created by others, but in addition to all this, unknown rules of the nature should be discovered on the back of creativity and innovations should be made in generating science."

Ayatollah Khamenei enumerated a number of the issues facing the country, including the problems facing water resources, environment, rural life, the banking or financial system, and production, as well as social deficiencies. He said, however, that "scientific solutions could be found for all the country's problems."

The Leader further urged the elite to pay attention to the planned future for Iran, reminding them of his remarks a few years ago about the need for the country to turn into a frontrunner in the field of science on the global stage. "We must move in such a way that at a reasonable time in future, Iran will become a source of science in the world and everyone will have to learn Persian to have access to the latest scientific findings," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei called artificial intelligence an important and "future-making" matter and emphasized, "This issue has a role in managing the future of the world and we must act in such a way that Iran will be among the world's top 10 leading countries in [the area of] artificial intelligence."

The Leader also raised the alarm at certain attempts at dismaying the scientific elite of the country's future and provoking them to leave their homeland.

Promoting the immigration-first policy and encouraging young elite at universities to leave their homeland "is explicitly a betrayal of the country and enmity with it," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

## Iran to Build 5,000 MW of Coal-Fired Power Capacity

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has to build 5,000 megawatts of coal-fired power capacity in the coming years due to limitations of gas supplies to power plants in cold seasons and the need to diversify the fuel basket of thermal power generation units, a senior energy official says.

Mohsen Tarzatab, the head of the Thermal Power Plants Holding Company, made the announcement on Wednesday during a visit to Tabas in central Iran, where the country builds its first coal-fired thermal power plant.

"In order to diversify the primary sources of electricity production and due to rich thermal coal reserves in the country, especially in the Tabas region, the construction of this power plant with two units of 325 MW is on the agenda," he said.

The units will join the national grid in the Persian year of 1403 which begins in March 2024, he added.

**See Page 7**

## Lukoil Interested In Returning to Iran, Watching Talks

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's second-largest crude oil producer Lukoil says it is closely monitoring progress made with Vienna talks to remove sanctions on Iran.

Lukoil CEO Vagit Alekperov reiterated that his company would be happy to return to talks on its Iranian oil projects, which were at an advanced stage, once US sanctions on the Middle Eastern country are removed.

Lukoil was in talks with Iran to develop the Ab Teymour and Mansouri oil fields, but had to put such plans on hold in late 2018 after the U.S. pulled out of the Iranian nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on the country's oil industry. "We are interested in coming back to these fields. A lot of work has been done some time ago, we know these fields and their geology," Alekperov said.

Lukoil announced putting its plans to develop projects in Iran on hold in May 2018.

At the time, Russian companies had signed a record number of oil and gas contracts with Iran since the lifting of sanctions on the Islamic Republic in early 2016.

In 2011 when the U.S. and the Europeans intensified sanctions on Iran, Lukoil pulled out of a joint project with Norway's Statoil which included their discovery of oil in Iran's Azar and Changuleh fields.

**See Page 7**

## Tehran Insists Global Energy Decisions Must Be Depoliticized

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji has called for depoliticizing of energy decisions around the world as he insists that U.S. sanctions on Iran continue to affect the global supply of energy.

Owji said at the 23rd Gas Exporting Countries Forum in Cape Town, South Africa, that in addition to breaching the international laws and norms and threatening international peace and stability, the unilateral sanctions can affect investments, and transfer of technology, especially in energy, and particularly in gas industries.

He said that the world economy suffered greatly during the Corona pandemic, and the world gas market, too, respectively suffered noticeably, whose aftermaths will be seen in production and consumption patterns in the world in the mid-time by the emergence of major developments.

Despite the entire difficulties during the past two years, the GECF countries have managed to remain committed to the reiterated objectives and fundamentals in the GECF Letter of Association and manage the irregularities in the world gas market.

**See Page 7**

## Pakistan Committed To Maintain Excellent Ties With Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Foreign Minister of Pakistan says our ties with Iran are rooted in history, religion, culture and we are committed to maintaining excellent relations with Tehran.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi made the remarks while delivering a lecture at National Defence University titled "Contours of Pakistan's Foreign Policy and Challenges" on Tuesday in Islamabad.

"We have maintained consistently excellent relations with Iran despite different pressures," he said.

He said our bilateral relations with Iran are rooted in history, religion, culture, and a deep spiritual affiliation.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister, who met with the President and Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tehran on October 27, while attending the second meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan's neighboring countries, hosted by Iran, said "we have broadened and deepened the scope of our traditional partnerships with Iran".

Regarding the unity of the Islamic Ummah, he added Pakistan has always strived to build bridges and promote dialogue even when the clouds of war were hovering over the Middle East.

**See Page 7**

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## Emirati National Security Advisor Set to Visit Tehran

TEHRAN (MNA) – The national security advisor of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is reportedly scheduled to visit Tehran next week.

The national security advisor of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is set to travel to Iran on a rare visit, Amwaj media reported.

An informed source in Abu Dhabi has stated that Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan (TbZ) will travel to the Iranian capital for talks next week. This comes as former Emirati minister of state for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash has stated that the UAE “has taken steps to de-escalate tensions [with Iran] as we have no interest in a confrontation.”

## Gov't Not to Borrow From CBI

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN - Referring to the report of the Plan and Budget Organization for financing without borrowing from the Central Bank during the term of the 13th government, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said that Efforts should be made to continue the process of financing by not borrowing from the Central Bank until the end of the year.**

A meeting of the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Board was held on Tuesday night, chaired by President Raisi wherein the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance presented a report on its plan for “economic growth without inflation.”

In this program, the policies of monetary, financial, liquidity control, budget, encouragement of production, implementation and completion of infrastructure projects have been considered.

Based on the decision of the members of the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Board, it was decided that the proposed program of the Ministry of Economy be integrated with the programs of other parts of the government's economic team, including the Plan and Budget Organization.

In this meeting, the Plan and Budget Organization also presented a report on the



current year's budget situation, which was based on the implementation of measures, including the provision of non-borrowed funds from the Central Bank during the term of office of the 13th government.

In this regard, the President emphasized, “Try to continue the process of financing without borrowing from the Central Bank until the end of the year”.

In this meeting, the issue of interaction and expansion of economic and trade cooperation with major and friendly countries, including Russia, was discussed.

Referring to his telephone conversation with the Russian President, Raisi described the prospects of cooperation between the two countries as clear and constructive and stressed the need for a meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Cooperation Commission chaired by the First Vice President and follow up on agreements.

## Russian Embassy Refutes Reports Aimed At Hurting Iran-Russia Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Russian Embassy in Tehran in a statement rejected Western media reports which were aimed at tarnishing Iran-Russia relations.

“Once again drew attention to the false reports that Russia allegedly gained access to the gas field in Caspian Sea,” the Russian diplomatic mission in Tehran wrote in its official Twitter account on Wednesday.

“Russian Amb. Dzhagaryan: such fake-news are formed by the USA special services in order to harm friendly Russian-Iranian relations,” it added.

“These attempts will not be successful,” the embassy reiterated.

## President Names New Pick For Education Minister

TEHRAN (IFP) – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has introduced Yousef Nouri as his new pick for Minister of Education to the Iranian Parliament. Nouri will be put to vote on Sunday at the legislature.

The new proposed Minister of Education was born in 1961. He holds a PhD in Management from Tehran-based Allameh Tabatabaie University.

Nouri has had a strong executive background. He has held the following posts in his resumé: director general of Planning and Budget Department and head of the IT and Communications Headquarters of the Education Ministry; member of the Teachers Fund's Board of Trustees; and teaching at the Teacher's Training College of Ilam and Iranian schools in Qatar and Bahrain.

Raisi's previous pick for Minister of Education lost the vote of confidence at Parliament on Tuesday.

The president had three months to propose a nominee for the post and only six days are left from the deadline for him to introduce a candidate and get Parliament's approval for his pick.

## Indonesian Ambassador In Mashhad



TEHRAN (IP) - Indonesian Ambassador to Iran arrived in Mashhad on Tuesday to discuss economic cooperation development.

Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro is heading 20 businessmen and Indonesian diplomats on the 2-day visit.

Visiting the International Exhibition of Food Industries, participating in the meetings of Mashhad Chamber of Commerce and meeting with the chairman and members of the Chamber of Commerce of Khorasan Razavi Province, participating in the meetings with economic activists of the province, and visiting economic activities in Mashhad are on the agenda.

The ambassador is also scheduled to meet with provincial's officials.

## Tehran Ready to Pioneer Implementation of ECO Decisions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari has said that the country is ready to pioneer the implementation of important decisions to be taken at the upcoming Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit in the Turkmen capital.

Safari made the remarks in a meeting with Secretary General of ECO Khusrav Noziri, according to Foreign Ministry's information center on Wednesday.

Safari, in the meeting, said the Islamic Republic of Iran prioritizes expansion of trade and economic cooperation with neighbors.



He also highlighted the role of the ECO in pursuing the goals of the member countries.

As he noted, Iran attaches importance to the position of the ECO and attends the forthcoming summit at the high level.

For his part, the ECO secretary general presented a report on the process of

preparation of the Organization's future summit in Ashgabat and thanked Iran's help in this regard.

The ECO has currently ten members including Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

## Iran, Taliban Delegations Hold Meeting in Kabul

KABUL (IP) - A meeting of the working group committees between the Iranian and Taliban delegations was held in Kabul.

Seven committees have been formed in the working group meeting between the Iranian and Taliban delegations, including cultural, economic, immigrants, political, security, borders, and utilities (water and electricity) committees.

The special representative of Iran to Afghanistan Hassan Kazemi-Qomi and the Iranian ambassador to Kabul, along with Iranian economic officials, attended the meeting on Wednesday, which was attended by Taliban officials, including the ministers of agriculture, refugees, economy, and trade and industry. Kazemi-Qomi had arrived at Kabul airport on Monday morning with a political and economic delegation and was welcomed by Taliban officials in Afghanistan.

The special representative of Iran to Afghanistan stressed that Tehran seeks the presence of services, and engineering in Afghanistan to build and activate factories and industry in this country. Hassan Kazemi-Qomi said that Afghanistan is a rich country with rich natural resources.

He told a joint meeting of Iranian and Taliban delegations in Kabul on Wednesday that others did not allow Afghanistan to develop its capabilities.

He expressed hope that in the new situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran would do its best to help Afghanistan in developing its capacities.

Kazemi-Qomi said that the presence of the Iranian delegation in Kabul was due to cooperation with the Taliban to solve part of Afghanistan's problems.

He also called on the cooperation committees to agree on operational ways of joint cooperation in order to make the best use of the opportunity.

The special representative of Iran to Afghanistan stresses that Tehran seeks the presence of services, technical and engineering in Afghanistan to build and activate factories and industry in this country.

## AEOI's Main Priority Development of Accelerators

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Vice president and head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said here that the development of accelerators is among AEOI's main priorities and hardworking technicians in nuclear industry must manufacture those precious facilities.

Mohammad Eslami who heading a delegation of high-ranking AEOI officials travelled to Qazvin visited the Parto Rarayand Novin Center, the Cheshme Noor Iran Plan, the Atomic Energy High School, Dr. Salehi Museum and Salehiyeh Mosque and was informed about the completing process of the project and the ongoing activities.

The AEOI chief during his visit to the Parto Rarayand Novin Center talked with the managers of that complex and was familiarized with the difficulties an issues related to the facilities and the systems that are being put to use, a part of whose facilities are made in Iran.

“The deficiencies must be identified and the AEOI will support this project wherever it is needed. So the managers and technicians of the complex must wholeheartedly stick to their jobs. This project is in need of a time schedule so that the affiliated companies and those whose work is related to this project will offer the technical support, parts manufacturing, executive affairs, and the required commercial and financial activities,” he emphasized.

The AEOI chief appreciated the efforts done and emphasized that the expertise of the personnel need to be increased and updated.

“It is necessary to study the marketing and keeping in mind that this complex will at the beginning of its activities radiate the agricultural products related to industrial townships, it also needs to acquire international popularity so that its products' quality will be high, keeping in mind that Qazvin province is an international export center,” he said.

Eslami said that one reason why Iranian pistachios and saffron are not exported today is that the required radiation machines do not exist, and those machines are one of the country's major needs.

He said if the AEOI will expand its radiation centers it will be a great contribution to Iran's exports.

## Baku, Yerevan Urged to Exercise Restraint

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has voiced concern over the latest border clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia, urging the two neighbors to exercise restraint and resort to dialogue to resolve differences.

“As in the past, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to help the two sides settle differences and establish stability and peace in the region,” Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Tuesday.

He added that all countries should respect internationally recognized borders and called on Baku and Yerevan to patch up differences through dialogue and peaceful channels.

The Iranian spokesperson warned that the ongoing challenges would pose a danger to the gradual process to the promotion of regional peace and progress.

Armenia and Azerbaijan on Tuesday accused each other of initiating fighting along their shared border amid renewed border clashes between the arch foes a year after their war over contested territory.

Russia's Interfax news agency cited Armenia's parliament as saying that 15 Armenian soldiers had died in clashes on the country's border with Azerbaijan. The parliament added that 12 of their soldiers had been captured by Azerbaijan.

On the other side, the Azeri Defense Ministry also spoke of a tense situation on the border with Armenia and said a military operation was underway to repel large-scale “provocations.”

Russian media reported on Tuesday that Armenia had asked Moscow to help defend its territorial sovereignty against attacks by Azerbaijani forces.

Tensions between Yerevan and Baku remain high a year after the arch-foes fought a war over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. The six-week conflict, which claimed more than 6,500 lives on both sides, ended last November with a Russian-brokered deal that left Azerbaijan largely in control of the territory.

## Iran, Romania to Cooperate in Animal Health, Veterinary Medicine

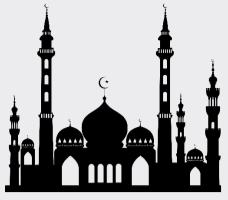
IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - In a meeting held on Wednesday morning, chaired by President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, the cabinet appointed Mr Esmail Zarei Koosha as the Governor-General of Kurdistan after reviewing his plans and records.

In addition, the cabinet approved the amendment to the expenditure of credits related to the “Law on Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Interests of the Iranian Nation”.

Given the special role of Romania as one of the most important producers and exporters of livestock products in the European Union and its good trade relations with the Middle East, the Council of Ministers issued a permit to the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad to negotiate, initial and sign a cooperation agreement in the field of animal health and veterinary medicine between the governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Romania.

The Council of Ministers further authorized the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance to coordinate with the Vice President for Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate, initial and sign an interim agreement to encourage and support mutual investment between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Sultanate of Oman.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:15
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:17
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:44

78. They said: "O exalted one! Behold! he has a father, aged and venerable, (who will grieve for him); so take one of us in his place; for we see that thou art (gracious) in doing good."  
 79. He said: "(Allah) forbid that we take other than him with whom we found our property: indeed (if we did so), we should be acting wrongfully. Surah 12. Joseph (78)

## Portuguese Companies Waiting For Removal of Sanctions to Cooperate With Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – Ambassador of Portugal to Tehran Carlos Costa Neves in meeting with Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafei said Portuguese companies are waiting for removal of sanctions against Iran to resume their economic activities with Tehran.**

In the meeting, Costa Neves pointed to almost five centuries of historic relation between Iran and Portugal and said fortunately the two countries have good relations especially political one but at the same time they have not ignored significance of economic, cultural and sport cooperation.

He noted especially in the field of sport, some of good Iranian football players are now in the Portuguese League, adding that he knows well that there are projects for cooperation in football and officials of football federations of the two countries have met and there are broad fields for cooperation in this field.

He reiterated that Portugal is waiting for the positive developments in the Vienna talks which is to be held soon and expressed hope the sanctions would be lifted, adding that this is a serious concern for big companies.

Costa Neves went on to say that fortunately he has heard positive news as Iran has accepted to return to the negotiation table and this has created a positive economic prospect, and companies hope to return to Iran and resume their investment after the sanctions removal.

He said the Embassy of Portugal follows all news related to the JCPOA and it has kept its economic advisors in Tehran despite the U.S. pullout of the JCPOA.

He also announced readiness of his country for broadening economic cooperation with Tehran, adding that Portugal is ready to take steps for bilateral cooperation which both countries benefit it. He reiterated that Portuguese companies constantly inquire the embassy for the condition in Iran for cooperation and therefore, if the sanctions are removed, cooperation will resume immediately.

Costa Neves said that Iran is an opportunity and after the pandemic some companies lost some part of their market and sanction-less Iran can be a good attractive economic opportunities for Portuguese companies.



He said the two countries should first identify the fields for the joint economic cooperation but Portugal is good in the field of industrial equipment and it can provide Iran with high quality products with the cheaper price. He then pointed to water management, new energies and medical equipment as the other fields that both countries can have joint cooperation and they can resume immediately after sanctions are lifted.

Then Shafei, for his part, pointed to the historic relation of Tehran and Lisbon and hailed Portugal's achievements in the economy and especially the country's new approach towards the Middle East and the Persian Gulf states and it has boosted the level of relations with the countries in the region.

He then pointed to the considerable capacities of Portugal for meeting the needs of Iran's market, adding that Portugal stands in a high level in the fields of textile, fishery and cork and the country ranks first in the world in terms of cork production. He added that Iran is an importer of olive oil while Portugal is the fourth olive oil producing country in the world and this is a good capacity for boosting bilateral economic relations.

Shafei went on to say that Iran and Portugal can cooperate in other fields like auto making, glass, ship-building, plastic, ceramic, textile, petrochemical, food industries and tourism as well as agriculture.

He admitted that sanctions have led to the decline in the economic cooperation between Tehran and Lisbon but in the future and by taking proper measures, they can compensate and take action for increasing the trade level.

He then pointed to the significance of Portugal for the ICCIMA and said the chamber launched Iran-Portugal Joint Commercial Council years ago and this council should become more active. He said in 2020 the ICCIMA tried to send a trade delegation to Lisbon but Portugal's chamber of commerce did not welcome it, expressing hope the chamber would dispatch a trade delegation to Lisbon.

Shafei assured Costa Neves that Iranian products are as good as its football players and expressed hope the trade relation between Tehran and Lisbon would grow favorably in the future.

## Yazdizadeh Named Man of The Year in Steel Industry



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN- The CEO of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) Mansour Yazdizadeh was named the Man of the Year in steel industry for the second consecutive year.

According to reports, the Institute of Planner for the second consecutive year named Yazdizadeh as the man of the year in the steel industry.

The institute conducted a poll with participation among the activists in the steel industries as Yazdizadeh by winning 3800 direct votes could win the title of the man of the year.

Yazdizadeh received his award during the PLANEX 2021 international conference in presence of activists and managers in the iron ore and steel industry.

The CEO of ESCO had been named man of the year of Iran steel two years ago in the poll conducted by the officials of the Steel Price Conference.

Before joining the ESCO, Yazdizadeh was in charge of National Steel Company.

## Iran Ready to Modernize, Develop Afghanistan's Electricity Industry

KABUL (IP) - Head of the Centre for International Affairs and Coordination of Water and Electricity Diplomacy of Iran's Energy Ministry said that Tehran is ready to cooperate with Afghanistan in empowering the country's electricity industry.

Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting of Iranian and Taliban delegations in Kabul, Mohammad-Ali Farahnakian stated: "Iran has been in talks with Afghanistan to develop electronic communications, and these talks are still ongoing."

He noted that about two weeks ago, a delegation of high-ranking officials of the new Afghan government traveled to Tehran, and good talks were held on electricity cooperation, and now these talks are being pursued in Kabul.

He announced Iran's readiness to provide its technical and engineering capabilities in the electricity industry to Afghanistan and help the country in training electricity experts.

## Iran Calls for Acceleration of Trade With Russia



TEHRAN (IRNA)- Iran's Deputy Industry, Mines and Trade Minister, in a meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Tehran, urged acceleration of trade between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, especially within the framework of Eurasia. Alireza Peyman Pak had a meeting with Russian Ambassador in Tehran Levan Dzhagaryan on Wednesday, where he highlighted the expansion of business transactions between Iran and Russia.

During the meeting, the Russian diplomat introduced big viable companies from Russia to have cooperation with Iranian businesses in third countries in production, trade, exports, and food sectors.

The two sides emphasized the necessity of cooperation to facilitate goods transit, remove customs-related obstacles by Russia and ease visa granting for business people and drivers.

Iran's trade with Russia has reached 1.168 billion dollars in the last seven months, from which 317 million dollars is Iran's export to Russia and 851 million dollars is its imports.

## Iran, Uzbekistan Keen to Expand Agro Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Director General of the Office of Europe and America of Iran Trade Promotion Organization Mohammad Reza Karimzadeh in meeting with visiting First Deputy Chief Uzbekistan Plants Quarantine Service Mr. Nadir Kasimov called for broadening economic relations between Iran and Uzbekistan especially in the agriculture.

In the meeting both sides explored trade capacities of the two countries and emphasized broadening trade ties especially in the field of agriculture.

Karimzadeh said that Iranian companies can cooperate with Uzbekistan in the field of extraterrestrial cultivation and called for taking advantage of preferential trade agreement for expansion of trade exchanges.

Kasimov, for his part, announced readiness of his organization for registering the name of Iranian exporters in the portal of the organization to ease the process of exporting agro products from Iran to Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile in the meeting, Ambassador of Uzbekistan Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, for his part, said that Uzbekistan welcomes the presence of Iranian companies in the field of cultivating cotton, extraterrestrial cultivation and processing industries and urged Uzbek companies to plan for the presence of Iranian companies and taking advantage of their capacities.

Iran's exports to Uzbekistan have been around \$244m in seven months of this year which shows the growth over 250 percent comparing to the same period last year.

Uzbekistan is the second major exporting destination of Iran in the CIS states.

## Iran, Algeria to Keep on Close Collaboration in OPEC and GECF

TEHRAN (SHANA) – Oil Minister Javad Owji said on Tuesday that Iran and Algeria will continue their close collaboration in OPEC and GECF, congratulating its nominee on his appointment as GECF's secretary general.

Iran made a lot of diplomatic efforts to be the secretary general but we had tougher conditions in comparison to others as Iran held the post of secretary general for two terms (four years), Owji said after the 23rd Ministerial Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum held via video conference.

Let us not forget that the Gas Exporting Countries Forum has 11 members, only two of which have been able to serve as the secretary general, he added.

Algeria's nominee was selected as the Forum's secretary general for two years after several negotiations, he stated, I am pleased that our friend, Algeria, which accompanied



us in international organizations such as OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and GECF, could hold the post. I would like to extend my sincere congratulation and wish him continued success.

Owji stressed that Iran and Algeria will continue their close collaboration in GECF and OPEC, adding I had constructive negotiations with my Algerian counterpart and expect this cooperation will lead to good results.

The Algeria's Mohamed Hamel is 64 years old and has 39 years of experience in various energy sectors. Holding degrees in mining engineering and economics, he is currently the senior advisor to Algerian Minister of Energy, Mohamed Arkab. He also served as the senior advisor to the secretary general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for five years and as the head of Energy Studies Department at the OPEC Secretariat for seven years.

## Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran Holds A Mushaira on Iqbal Day Celebrations

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - To Commemorate 144th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a mushaira was organized at the Embassy of Pakistan, Tehran. Senator Walid Iqbal, the grandson of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Pakistani and Iranian Poets presented Allama Iqbal's and their own poetry to pay tribute to Allama Iqbal.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Walid Iqbal elaborated the role of Iqbal's poetry in awakening the spirit of freedom and unity among Muslim of then Indian Sub-continent. The concept of Ishq as envisioned by Allama Muhammad Iqbal was also emphasized.

H.E Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi in his concluding remarks highlighted the important role that the Persian poetry of Iqbal-e-Lahori (as known affectionately by people in Iran) played in motivating Iranian people during the Islamic revolution. H.E Ambassador thanked all the participants for gracing the occasion.



A Mushaira was organized on 16.11.2021 by Pakistan Embassy in Tehran to commemorate 144th Birth anniversary of Allama Iqbal, Senator Waleed Iqbal was the Chief Guest on the Occasion

## Italy, France to Sign Rome Treaty

ROME (Dispatches) - Italian and French leaders Mario Draghi and Emmanuel Macron will sign a deal next week to try to tilt the balance of power in Europe after the departure of German Chancellor Angela Merkel a government source said.

The details of the accord remain undisclosed, but another Italian official said it will boost cooperation between the countries in areas spanning the economy, trade, tourism and culture.

The project was first mooted in 2018 under Italy's then premier Paolo Gentiloni but relations between Rome and Paris deteriorated after Gentiloni was succeeded that year by the populist government of the League and the 5-Star Movement.



## Norway Urges Support for U.N. Fund to Aid Afghans

OSLO (Dispatches) - Norway urged other countries to contribute to a United Nations fund by providing cash directly to Afghans so they can survive the winter, its foreign minister told Reuters.

With the Afghan economy "imploding", the United Nations set up the fund last month to provide direct help for local households, bypassing the Taliban and drawing on donor funds frozen since it took power in August.

Norway has pledged 200 million Norwegian crowns (\$23 million) to the fund, which is managed by the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP). "We encourage other countries to do the same, to pitch in to avoid a pressing humanitarian crisis and a potential famine," Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt said in an interview ahead of a U.N. Security Council meeting.



## Poland Turns Water Cannon, Tear Gas on Migrants



WARSAW (Dispatches) - Polish forces fired tear gas and deployed water cannons against stone-throwing migrants trying to cross the Belarusian border on Tuesday, sparking accusations from Belarus that Poland was trying to escalate the crisis.

Polish border guards estimate up to 4,000 migrants are currently camped out along the border between Poland and Belarus in increasingly dire conditions and freezing temperatures.

Western powers accuse Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko of orchestrating the crisis, possibly with the backing of Russia, by luring migrants to the border to sow division in the EU - claims denied by Minsk and Moscow.

A standoff near the Bruzgi-Kuznica border crossing on the EU's eastern frontier began last week when hundreds of migrants gathered there.

"Migrants attacked our soldiers and officers with rocks and are trying to destroy the fence and cross into Poland," Poland's defence ministry said on Tuesday, tweeting a video showing apparent clashes at the border.

"Our forces used tear gas to quell the migrants' aggression."

A police officer, a border guard and a soldier were injured in the clashes, Polish officials said, with police saying stun grenades and tear gas canisters had also been thrown at officers.

Belarusian foreign ministry spokesman Anatoly Glaz accused Poland of exacerbating the problem.

"The goal of the Polish side is completely understandable - it needs to escalate the situation even more, to stifle any progress in resolving the situation," he said.

"We see today from the Polish side direct provocations and inhumane treatment of the disadvantaged," he said.

Russia also condemned Poland's use of tear gas and water cannons against the migrants, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calling it "absolutely unacceptable".

Lukashenko, who has crushed opposition to his rule over nearly three decades in power, said on Tuesday that he wanted to avoid a "heated confrontation" at the border.

"The main thing now is to protect our country and our people, and not to allow clashes," he told a government meeting, according to state news agency Belta.

The Belarusian leader discussed the crisis with Germany's Angela Merkel on Monday, his first phone call with a Western leader since he suppressed mass protests against his rule last year.

Merkel's office said the pair discussed bringing humanitarian aid to the migrants, whose number includes many young children.

Lukashenko said he and Merkel agreed the standoff should be defused.

"We were of the united opinion that nobody needs escalation - not the EU, or Belarus," he said.

## EU to Aim for Rapid Deployment Force Without U.S. Help by 2025

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union is considering a joint military force of up to 5,000 troops by 2025 to intervene in a range of crises and without relying on the United States, according to a draft plan.

The "EU Rapid Deployment Capacity" should be made up of land, sea and air components that could be swapped in and out of any standing force, depending on the crisis, according to the confidential 28-page document dated Nov. 9 and seen by Reuters.

EU foreign and defence ministers began debating the plan on Monday evening in Brussels and continued on Tuesday, aiming to settle on a final document by March next year.

Italy and France, two of the EU's military powers, welcomed the draft. The view of Germany's incoming federal coalition government, expected soon, will prove critical.

"The document combines a high level of ambition but also makes concrete and operational proposals. It's a good balance," French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly told reporters. Her Italian counterpart, Lorenzo Guerini, said it would also be complementary to NATO and strengthen transatlantic ties.

## Biden, Xi Agree to Plan Arms Control Talks

WASHINGTON (AFP) - U.S. President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping agreed during their virtual summit to work on organizing talks between the nuclear-armed nations on arms control, a senior White House official said.

Biden and Xi met via teleconference for more than three hours late Monday (early Tuesday in Beijing) in a bid to ease tensions between the world's top two economies and major geopolitical rivals.

"President Biden did raise with President Xi the need for a strategic stability set of conversations," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told a conference, using an expression employed in diplomatic circles to indicate arms control.

"The two leaders agreed that we would look to begin to carry forward discussions," he added, in comments made at the Brookings Institution think tank in Washington.

Sullivan, a top aide to Biden, had been asked about Beijing's increasing military might.

The Pentagon recently confirmed that China in August carried out a test of a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile that would be difficult to defend against, and has said that Beijing is expanding its nuclear arsenal more quickly than anticipated.

While the United States and Russia have had a formal strategic stability dialogue since the days of the Cold War, producing several disarmament agreements, that is not the case between Washington and Beijing.

Biden's predecessor Donald Trump repeatedly asked in vain that China be included in the U.S.-Russian talks.

Biden, who took office in January, appears to be more interested in bilateral talks.

"That is not the same as what we have in the Russian context with the formal strategic stability dialogue that is far more mature, has a much deeper history to it," Sullivan said.

"There's less maturity to that in the U.S.-China relationship, but the two leaders did discuss these issues and it is now incumbent on us to think about the most productive way to carry it forward from here."

## Several Dead in Suicide Bombing in Kampala

KAMPALA (Dispatches) - Three suicide bombers in the heart of Uganda's capital killed at least three civilians and sent parliamentarians rushing for cover as nearby cars burst into flames, witnesses and police said, the latest in a string of bombings over the past month.

At least 33 people were being treated at Mulago Hospital, including five people in critical condition, police spokesperson Fred Enanga said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. The al Qaeda-linked Somali insurgent group al Shabaab has carried out deadly attacks in Uganda. Last month another group, the Islamic State-aligned Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), claimed its first attack in Uganda.

"Our intelligence also indicates that these are domestic terror groups that are linked to ADF," said Enanga.

The explosions - the first near the central police station and the second very close to parliament - sent bloodied office workers scrambling for cover over shards of broken glass as a plume of white smoke rose above the downtown area.

A single suicide bomber carried out the first blast near the checkpoint at the police station, which killed two people, Enanga said. Then two suicide bombers on motorbikes detonated, killing one other person.

"A booming sound like that from a big gun went off. The ground shook, my ears nearly went deaf," Peter

Olupot, a 28-year-old bank guard who was near the attack near parliament, told Reuters.

"I saw a vehicle on fire and everyone was running and panicking. I saw a boda boda (motorcycle) man - his head was smashed and covered in blood."

A Reuters journalist saw burned cars behind a police cordon at the scene and a reporter with local television station NTV Uganda said he saw two bodies in the street.

Irene Nakasiita, spokesperson at the Uganda Red Cross, said they would release information about the blasts later.

Ugandan soldiers are fighting al Shabaab in Somalia as part of an UN-backed African Union peacekeeping force. Al Shabaab's bombings in Uganda include a 2010 attack that killed 70 people watching the World Cup.

Last month, the ADF made its first claim of responsibility for a blast in Uganda with a bomb - packed with shrapnel - that killed a waitress at a restaurant.

Also last month, Ugandan police said a suicide bomber had blown up a bus, killing himself and injuring others. His affiliation was unclear. The ADF was originally established by Ugandan Muslims but now have their main bases in the forested mountains of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which borders Uganda.

Both the ADF and al Shabaab frequently use explosive devices and have been accused of killing thousands of civilians.



## Armenia Reports Deaths in Azerbaijan Border Clashes

YEREVAN (AFP) - Armenia on Tuesday reported deaths and the loss of military positions in border clashes with Azerbaijani troops, a year after the arch-foes fought a war over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The six-week conflict, which left more than 6,500 dead, ended last November in a Russian-brokered deal that saw Armenia cede swathes of territory it had controlled for decades.

Armenia's defense ministry said on Tuesday that "there are fatalities and wounded among Armenian troops as a result of fighting that erupted following an attack by Azerbaijani forces."

It said the number of casualties was being verified and that Armenia had "lost control of two military positions."

The ministry reported later in the evening that 12 Armenian servicemen were captured by the Azerbaijani military.

Earlier on Tuesday, the two sides accused each other of initiating fighting along their shared border.

"Armenian troops attacked Azerbaijani positions in the districts of Kelbajar and Lachin," Azerbaijan's defense ministry said in a statement, adding that two Azerbaijani troops were wounded.

The ministry said Azerbaijani troops "stopped the enemy's advance, surrounded and detained Armenian servicemen."

The country's foreign ministry said Armenia "is deliberately mounting tensions and is not interested in ensuring peace and security in the region".

Armenia's defense ministry said Azerbaijani forces tried to "break through" the border before being repelled.

The European Union called on both sides to cease hostilities.

"Call for urgent de-escalation and full ceasefire," European Council President Charles Michel said on Twitter.

"Challenging situation in region -- EU is committed to work with partners to overcome tensions for a prosperous and stable South Caucasus," he added.



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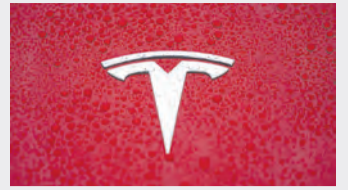
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## JPMorgan Sues Tesla for \$162m

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - JPMorgan Chase & Co has sued Tesla Inc for \$162.2 million, accusing Elon Musk's electric car company of "flagrantly" breaching a contract the two corporate giants agreed in 2014 relating to warrants Tesla sold to the bank.

Warrants give the holder the right to buy a company's stock at a set "strike" price and date. The suit, filed in a Manhattan federal court, centers on a dispute over how JPMorgan re-priced its Tesla warrants as a result of Musk's notorious 2018 tweet that he was considering taking the carmaker private. It is unusual for a major Wall Street bank to sue such a high-profile client.



## IEA Lifts 2022 Average Crude Oil Price Assumption to \$79.40/bbl

LONDON (Dispatches) - The International Energy Agency (IEA) on Tuesday upped its average Brent crude oil price assumption for 2022 to \$79.40 a barrel, but predicted a rally may ease off as prices that hit a three-year high last month push up global production.

Brent is expected to average \$71.50 a barrel this year, it added, in a rarely published take on oil prices. The average annual oil price last broke above \$80 in 2014.

The Paris-based IEA said on Tuesday that much of the uptick in supply is due to come from the United States.

A hurricane battered the main U.S. production and export hub in the Gulf coast in late August, but U.S. output made up for half the increase in global oil production last month.

But the IEA said in its monthly report that U.S. production, despite climbing, would not return to pre-pandemic levels until the end of next year. It is due to account for 60% of non-OPEC+ supply gains in 2022.

"The world oil market remains tight by all measures, but a reprieve from the price rally could be on the horizon ... due to rising oil supplies," the IEA said.

"Current prices provide a strong incentive to boost (U.S.) activity even as operators stick to capital discipline pledges."

Including price assumptions in monthly reports is rare, but not unprecedented, the IEA told Reuters. In its report last month, the IEA's assumption for the average 2022 Brent price was \$76.80, while for 2021 it was \$70.40.

"We publish our price assumptions when we think that this can be useful for the understanding of our forecast," the IEA said in a statement. "As current prices are getting more elevated, they start to have a significant effect on demand."

Oil stored in industry stocks for OECD countries dropped by 51 million barrels in September, and were 250 million barrels below the five-year average and at their lowest since the start of 2015. Preliminary October data pointed to a slight increase.

"Global oil demand is strengthening due to robust gasoline consumption and increasing international travel as more countries re-open their borders," the IEA said.

But it said an uptick in coronavirus cases in Europe, weaker industrial activity and higher oil prices could dent demand.

The IEA kept its outlook for oil demand growth largely steady at 5.5 million barrels per day (bpd) for 2021 and 3.4 million bpd next year.

## Dutch Economy Grows 1.9% in Q3

AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - The Dutch economy grew 1.9 per cent in July-September compared with the previous quarter, as the lifting of coronavirus restrictions continued to fuel a boom in consumer spending, official data released today showed.

Growth of the euro zone's fifth largest economy followed a 3.8 per cent expansion in the second quarter, and was stronger than the 1.7 per cent predicted on average by economists.



The boom of the past six months has compensated for the deep slump caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and the size of the Dutch economy now exceeds the levels seen before the crisis hit.

The strong recovery is also visible in the labor market, where there are now 126 open vacancies for every 100 persons without a job.

Bars, restaurants and stores were allowed to reopen over the summer and all social distancing measures in the Netherlands were dropped in late September.

Since then, however, coronavirus infections have jumped, reaching record levels in the past week.

To contain the outbreak, the country returned to a partial lockdown last Saturday, as cafes, restaurants and stores were ordered to close early for at least three weeks.

## Goods Trade Slowing Due to Supply Issues, Cooler Demand

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Global goods trade is slowing after a sharp rebound following the initial shock of the Covid-19 pandemic as production and supply disruptions and cooling demand for imports dampen growth, the World Trade Organization said on Monday.

The WTO said its goods trade barometer dropped to 99.5 points, close to the baseline of 100, in November following a record reading of 110.4 in August.

The Geneva-based trade body said supply shocks, including port gridlock arising from surging import demand in the first half of the year and disrupted production of goods such as automobiles and semiconductors, had contributed to the decline.

Demand for traded goods was also easing, indicated by falling export orders.

"Cooling import demand could help ease port congestion, but backlogs and delays are unlikely to be eliminated as long as container throughput remains at or near record levels," the WTO said.

The WTO said the reading was broadly in line with its forecast of a 10.8 per cent pick-up of merchandise trade volume this year, slowing to a 4.7 per cent rise in 2022. The WTO said the outlook for world trade continued to be overshadowed by downside risks, regional disparities and continued weakness of services trade.

The Geneva-based trade body said all its barometer's component indices had declined, with the steepest decline for its automotive products index and only the air freight index firmly above trend.

Electronic components, container shipping and raw materials were at or close to the 100 mark indicating growth in line with medium-term trends. The WTO goods trade barometer is a composite of data and is designed to anticipate turning points and gauge momentum in global trade growth rather than to provide a specific short-term forecast.

## UK Earnings Growth Expected to Hit Highest in Two Decades in 2021

LONDON (Dispatches) - New research has shown that average weekly earnings (AWE) in the UK are expected to grow 5.7% in 2021, the highest level in more than two decades.

According to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) wage tracker this will mean 3.6% growth in real terms, after 1.8% (nominal) and 0.8% (real) growth in 2020.

NIESR said that the strength of AWE is explained by high bonuses, robust public sector pay growth and a cyclical recovery exaggerated by compositional effects and increased weekly average hours due to the end of furlough.

While there is currently no generalised acceleration in settlement pay, there is evidence of higher starting salaries for new recruits, particularly in sectors experiencing labour shortages, such as hospitality.

The record level of vacancies of 1.2 million reported earlier on Tuesday by the ONS suggests a persistent mismatch between labor force skills and the post-pandemic pattern of labour demand. The labour market recovery is U-shaped, with the number of payrolled employees in September reaching a record 29.3 million.

The growth rate in average weekly earnings including bonuses in Britain decreased in the three months to September to 5.8% compared to a year ago, down from 8.8% in the three months to June. This is in line with what was forecast last month and reflects a smaller impact of base effects.

"We forecast average weekly earnings to decelerate further to 4.1% in the fourth quarter as the base effect fully dissipates," NIESR said in its release, citing inflation as a reason for close to no earnings growth next year if there are no significant increases in underlying wage growth.

"Unless there is an acceleration in underlying wage growth, rising inflation will reduce any real wage gains next year, and households' income will be further squeezed by the rise in national insurance contributions," said Cyrille Lenoël, principal economist at NIESR.

Data on Tuesday showed eight out of 10 people who became unemployed during the pandemic have returned to employment, but some of them in temporary or zero-hours contracts.

A more worrying side of the labour market recovery is that participation is staying at lower levels compared to pre-pandemic, NIESR said. While the number of unemployed has decreased, the number of active people has continued to decrease since December 2020.

## U.S. Retail Sales Accelerate In Strong Boost to Economy

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. retail sales surged in October, likely as Americans started their holiday shopping early to avoid empty shelves amid shortages of some goods because of the ongoing pandemic, giving the economy a lift at the start of the fourth quarter.

The solid report from the Commerce Department on Tuesday suggested high inflation was not yet dampening spending, and added to strong employment growth in October and an acceleration in services sector activity in painting an upbeat picture of the economy after it grew at its slowest pace in more than a year in the third quarter.

"Strong gains in employment, wages and wealth, as well as elevated savings for many households, have more than compensated for inflation's hit to spending power," said Sal Guatieri, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto. "For now, both consumers and the economy, in aggregate, look to cap the year on a high note."

Retail sales jumped 1.7% last month after increasing 0.8% in September. Sales have now risen for three straight months. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast retail sales advancing 1.4%. Sales soared 16.3% year-on-year in October.

The broad increase in sales was led by motor vehicles, with receipts at auto dealerships advancing 1.8% after gaining 1.2% in September. The rise reflects an increase in unit sales as well as higher prices. Unit motor vehicle sales rose in October for the first time in six months.

The tight supply of automobiles because of a global semiconductor shortage has driven up motor vehicle prices. Retail sales also received a boost from higher gasoline prices, with receipts at service stations increasing 3.9%. Consumer prices soared 0.9% in October. Shortages probably led consumers to anticipate even higher prices and encouraged them to shop early. Online retail sales rebounded 4.0%.

Receipts at building material stores advanced 2.8% and furniture outlets sales rose 0.4%. There was also an increase in receipts at sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book stores. Sales at electronics and appliance stores rebounded 3.8%. But sales at clothing stores fell 0.7%.

Sales at restaurants and bars were unchanged despite an ebb in COVID-19 infections, driven by the Delta variant. Restaurants and bars are the only services category in the retail sales report. The nearly

two-year long coronavirus pandemic has caused an acute shortage of labor, delaying deliveries of raw materials to factories as well as shipments of finished goods to markets.

Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, retail sales shot up 1.6% last month after increasing 0.5% in September. These so-called core retail sales correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product.

Retail sales are mostly made up of goods, with services, including healthcare, education and hotel accommodation, making up the remaining portion of consumer spending.

## OPEC Chief Urges Output Caution As Signs of Oil Surplus Grow



ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - OPEC is seeing signs of an oil supply surplus building from next month so its members and allies will have to be "very, very cautious" when they review output policy at regular monthly meetings, the group's secretary general said on Tuesday.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, known as OPEC+, is gradually unwinding record production cuts made in 2020 by raising output 400,000 barrels per day per month. OPEC+ holds its next policy meeting on Dec. 2.

"The surplus is already beginning in December," OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo said on the sidelines of an energy conference, when asked if he was sure there would be an excess in oil supply next year.

"These are signals that we have to be very, very careful," he told reporters.

Barkindo declined to say if he thought OPEC+ would stick to existing policy when it meets on Dec. 2.

On Monday, the energy minister for OPEC's United Arab Emirates indicated that OPEC+ would probably stay the course, despite an expected first-quarter surplus.

While world oil demand is recovering from the pandemic-induced collapse in 2020, OPEC forecasts that demand growth next year is expected to slow and supply from rival producers such as U.S. shale companies is expected to rise.

OPEC follows the level of oil inventories in members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) closely as an indicator of oil market health and is wary of any renewed build up that might depress prices.

As of September, oil stocks in OECD member states stood at 2.8 billion barrels, 374 million barrels lower than the same time a year ago, according to OPEC data, reflecting the impact of the OPEC+ supply cuts.

## Official Sees Potential for Doubling Iran-Iraq Trade

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari said that Iran-Iraq trade has the potential to double provided that the existing border crossings issues are solved.

Chairing the seventh Foreign Economic Ties Coordination Headquarters meeting on Wednesday, Safari briefed the

audience on his recent trip to Baghdad and Kurdistan Region of Iraq to identify and remove obstacles against expansion of economic ties with Iraq.

He said that the two countries have the potential to double their business transactions if they remove issues experienced in border crossings.



## Air Pollution in Europe Still Killing 300,000 a Year

PARIS (Dispatches) - Premature deaths caused by fine particle air pollution have fallen 10 per cent annually across Europe, but the invisible killer still accounts for 307,000 premature deaths a year, the European Environment Agency said.

If the latest air quality guidelines from the World Health Organization were followed by EU members, the latest number of fatalities recorded in 2019 could be cut in half, according to an EEA report.

Deaths linked to fine particular matter — with a diameter below 2.5 micrometers or PM2.5 — were estimated at 346,000 for 2018.

The clear reduction in deaths for the following year were put down partly to favorable weather but above all to a progressive improvement in air quality across the continent, the European Union's air pollution data center said.

In the early 1990s, fine particles, which penetrate deeply into the lungs, led to nearly a million premature deaths in the 27 EU member nations, according to the report.

That figure had been more than halved to 450,000 by 2005.

In 2019, fine particulate matter caused 53,800 premature deaths in Germany, 49,900 in Italy, 29,800 in France and 23,300 in Spain.

Poland saw 39,300 deaths, the highest figure per head of population.

The EEA also registers premature deaths linked to two other leading pollutants, but says it does not count them in its overall toll to avoid doubling up.

Deaths caused by nitrogen dioxide — mainly from car, trucks and thermal power stations — fell by a quarter to 40,000 between 2018 and 2019.

Fatalities linked to ground-level ozone in 2019 also dropped 13 per cent to 16,800 dead.

Air pollution remains the biggest environmental threat to human health in Europe, the agency said.

Heart disease and strokes cause most premature deaths blamed on air pollution, followed by lung ailments including cancer.

In children, atmospheric pollution can harm lung development, cause respiratory infections and aggravate asthma.

Even if the situation is improving, the EEA warned in September that most EU countries were still above the recommended pollution limits, be they European guidelines or more ambitious WHO targets.

According to the UN health body, air pollution causes seven million premature deaths annually across the globe — on the same levels as smoking and poor diet.



In September, the alarming statistics led the WHO to tighten its recommended limits on major air pollutants for the first time since 2005.

"Investing in cleaner heating, mobility, agriculture and industry improves health, productivity and quality of life for all Europeans, and particularly the most vulnerable," said EEA director Hans Bruyninck.

The EU wants to slash premature deaths due to fine air pollution by at least 55 per cent in 2030 compared to 2005.

If air pollution continues to fall at the current rate, the agency estimates the target will be reached by 2032.

However, an ageing and increasingly urbanized population could make that more difficult.

"An older population is more sensitive to air pollution and a higher rate of urbanization typically means that more people are exposed to PM 2.5 concentrations, which tend to be higher in cities," said the report.

### Iran Slams...

FROM PAGE 1

Sanctions, Takht-Ravanchi added, "must be applied very rarely, in an actually smart and targeted manner, with limited scope and duration, and only when all 'measures not involving the use of armed force' are exhausted and have truly 'proven to be inadequate' to 'maintain or restore international peace and security'."

The Iranian official said the Security Council's increasing deficiencies had "resulted in its legitimacy and credibility crisis as well as its serious trust and confidence deficit, making its reform inevitable."

"The ultimate goal of the Security Council's reform must be to address all its current challenges and deficiencies and to evolve the Council into a truly representative, effective, transparent, accountable and above all, rules-based body," the Iranian diplomat said.

He said the ongoing attempts focused on the Council's enlargement, equating it with its reform and efficiency, but this cannot continue at the expense of neglecting or underestimating other issues.

Takht-Ravanchi stressed the importance of considering the Council's enlargement as only one out of many objectives in reforming the body, saying, "Improving the Council's working methods and accountability and ensuring that all its decisions are taken in full accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and international law are in no way less important than the Council's enlargement."

"The Council's reform must be considered as a comprehensive process, in which all five core issues under consideration must be treated equally, discussed thoroughly, and addressed in a package as they are interlinked and, as a whole, are greater than the sum of their parts. Therefore, any selective approach must be avoided," the official added. He said Iran attached great importance to ensuring "equitable representation" in an expanded council and strongly believed this could not be realized only through safeguarding "geographical representation."

The Iranian ambassador criticized the West's strong presence and influence in the Council, saying three members of the body have veto power, "while the main regions are poorly represented in terms of both the number as well as privileges, including veto power."

"This means inequality 'among the regions'... The existing inequalities must therefore be addressed both 'among' and 'within' the regions as they are both necessary and complementary," he said.

The Iranian diplomat voiced Iran's support for addressing historical injustice towards the developing world, particularly Africa, in ensuring equitable regional representation. "We also fully support ensuring equal opportunities for each State within a given region, which, inter alia, can be done through limiting chances for those who have served more in the Council and, instead, provide more advantages to those who have never served in the Council or served lesser," he said.

He said a combination of factors like population, economic power and regional position could play a role in achieving such a goal.

Takht-Ravanchi rejected as unacceptable any reform that serves the interests of only certain regions or a few states, stressing the need to seriously avoid any proposal that would "literally deepen the current imbalances or reduce the equal chance for states to become a Council member or contradict such intrinsic principles as sovereign equality and equal rights of states, transparency and accountability."

Iran backs reforms to the Council's working methods that would ensure that it acts "in full compliance with international law, particularly the UN Charter," he said.

Takht-Ravanchi further pointed to the Council's political and moral responsibility to act properly and responsibly and said its members must avoid taking decisions based on their own national interests or that of the geopolitical or geographical groups they belong to "but based on the common interests of the entire membership of the Organization."

"The Council must never be used as a tool to pursue national political interests and agendas. The Council is responsible before the Member States on behalf of whom it acts and must therefore remain accountable to them," the Iranian diplomat stated. "The Council shall also not consider issues which do not fall within its purview or are conferred by the Charter to other UN organs, and in particular it must stop encroaching upon the functions and powers of the General Assembly."

He warned that making hasty decisions or setting artificial deadlines for its work will be counter-productive, saying any possible decision, procedural or substantive, at any stage must be adopted only by consensus.

"We also do not support text-based negotiations at this stage. Moreover, changing the rules or format of the process or its informal nature seems to be unconstructive and must therefore be avoided," Takht-Ravanchi said.

## Over 1.6m Donated COVID-19 Vaccines Land in Tehran for Afghan Refugees



TEHRAN (UNIC) - This evening, a first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines landed at Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, donated as part of the Humanitarian Buffer mechanism of the COVAX Facility to help the government vaccinate more refugees. A second shipment of the vaccine will land in the country on the 16, bringing the total number of vaccines donated through the international mechanism - all Sinopharm - to 1,611,600 doses. Safety boxes and syringes for these vaccines will be shipped to the country separately.

Iran has already been vaccinating refugees against the coronavirus, at the same time as its citizens and as part of the national vaccination plan. This new shipment will ensure that more refugees will be protected under Iran's inclusive health policies.

Iran was one of the first countries affected by the pandemic and, in the last months, has managed to step up its vaccination campaign. So far, around 50% per cent of the eligible population have been fully vaccinated. According to government figures, to date over 500,000 refugees and other persons of concern have received two vaccine doses.

While the Humanitarian Buffer within the COVAX Facility ensures that countries have enough vaccines to immunize high-risk and vulnerable populations in humanitarian settings, given the high number of Afghans already living in Iran, and the recent arrivals of Afghans fleeing renewed violence and insecurities, more vaccines will likely be needed to protect this community against COVID-19.

Iran's application for the Humanitarian Buffer was supported by the UN in Iran, which extends its appreciation to the COVAX Facility and the international community for donating vaccines to countries in need. The UN calls for more such donations, as a symbol of international responsibility sharing, to help countries hosting large numbers of refugees to overcome the pandemic.

Iran, as one of the self-financing participant countries of the COVAX Facility, has since April 2021 received 6.7million COVID-19 vaccine doses from its paid allocation, with new consignments to be delivered soon. Through COVAX, UN Iran has also facilitated the delivery and shipment of donated COVID-19 vaccines to Iran, including 2.9 million doses donated by Japan, 1,139,600 doses donated by Italy and 302,400 doses donated by Germany.

The COVAX Facility is a partnership co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi-The Vaccine Alliance and the World Health Organization (WHO), alongside key delivery partner United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

### Tehran Calls...

FROM PAGE 1

Salajegheh said Iran will seek to expand its cooperation with countries that have opposed the unilateral approaches adopted in the West on the issue of environment.

He hailed positions adopted by Qatar and Saudi Arabia in COP26, saying Iran should seek to boost its regional diplomacy on environment. The Iranian delegation to the Glasgow summit announced on Saturday that it was not satisfied with the language used in the meeting's draft agreement on phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and instead declared its support for India's position on the issue.

### Lukoil Interested...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran and Russia signed a dozen cooperation agreements covering energy, railway, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and tourism in June 2019, giving rise to hopes that Moscow had opted to ignore the US sanctions.

Iran and Russia have signed a dozen cooperation agreements covering energy, railway, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and tourism, reinforcing ties in the face of U.S. sanctions. The agreements included cooperation on exploration, recovery

and production of oil, and investment in oil, gas and petrochemical industries. Iranian officials said then as many as 12 projects in the petroleum sector had been presented to Russia's Gazprom, Rosneft, Gazprom Neft, Zarubezhneft, Taftneft and Lukoil for development. President Vladimir Putin also said Russia was prepared to continue its oil investment in Iran to the tune of \$50 billion despite the U.S. sanctions, but the country apparently backed down on those plans as the sanctions set in.

### Tehran Insists...

FROM PAGE 1

The minister referred to the key role played by gas in energy's purgatory period, arguing: "Natural gas played an important and key role during the purgatory period of energy into a sustainable energy system with less carbon, due to its environmental and economic privileges, even though the renewable energies, too, existed, since in order to make certain about the provision of sustainable energy resources and achieving the green energies' objectives, gas can be a part of that major objective."

Owji said that soaring gas prices in Europe and elsewhere in the world are partly a result of politicized way of dealing with major energy suppliers, including Iran, in recent years.

He made the comments while addressing a ministerial meeting of Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Bolivia.

"In order to overcome challenges of the world energy security; rather than adopting political approaches and imposing unilateral sanctions, a substantial strategy is required to restore economic logic and multilateralism," read part of Owji speech published by the Oil Ministry's news service Shana. Iran produced 267 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2019, making the country the world's third-largest dry natural gas producer after the US and Russia despite the most draconian sanctions imposed on the country.

The minister said that U.S. sanctions on Iran, as one of the world's largest holders and producers of natural gas, was against the international law. He argued that the policy had led to reduced global cooperation on critical issues related to energy, including efforts meant to tackle climate change. Owji, who took office as Iran's oil minister only in August, vowed in his first address to the GECF that he would do his best in the upcoming years to secure the interests of the bloc's members in the global gas markets. He said Iran's new administration will be committed to goals and standards set by the Forum, including the need for cooperation on price and production issues.

### Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 1

Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Afghanistan is part of shared responsibility. Pakistan has played its role in promoting dialogue and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan had maintained all along that there was no military solution to the war in Afghanistan and that a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan was in Pakistan's own interest,"

said the Pakistani FM.

It is worth mentioning that the Pakistani Foreign Minister has paid an official visit to Tehran on August 25 and met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Amirabdollahian to discuss regional developments in Afghanistan and strengthen bilateral relations.

### Iran to Build...

FROM PAGE 1

The project, Tarzatab said, adds thermal coal as a new carrier into the country's energy basket and another 650 MW to the country's electricity generation capacity, besides creating jobs for about 6,000 people and leading to economic and industrial development in the region.

"The limitation of gas supply required by thermal power plants in the cold seasons in recent years has exposed the need to use other available energy sources to generate electricity. Hence, we are tapping our rich natural resources for energy production and trying to build the first coal-fired power plant in the country by local experts in the Tabas region."

The operation of the power plant will free up 1.2 billion cubic meters of natural gas for export, Tarzatab said.

## Raducanu to Face Ruse in Exhibition Match in London

LONDON (Dispatches) – U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu will round out her stellar year by taking on Romanian Elena-Gabriela Ruse in an exhibition match later this month in London, organizers announced today. The 19-year-old Briton became the first qualifier to win a major when she triumphed at Flushing Meadows in September and will take on Ruse having played practice matches with her at last month's Transylvania Open.

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## Derby Face Relegation After Points Deduction

LONDON (AFP) - Wayne Rooney's Derby are facing relegation from the second-tier Championship after being deducted a further nine points for breaches of English Football League accounting rules. It takes the total points docked this season to 21, after the club were previously deducted 12 points for entering administration. A further three-point deduction, which is suspended, will take effect if the club does not comply with the terms of a budget agreement for the rest of the 2021/22 season.

## DeRozan Remains Sparks Bulls' Win

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - DeMar DeRozan scored a season-best 38 points on 15-of-23 shooting and Lonzo Ball also established a season high with 27 points as the visiting Chicago Bulls halted an eight-game losing streak against the Los Angeles Lakers with an easy 121-103 triumph on Monday night.

It was the second huge outing in two nights for DeRozan, who poured in 35 points on 12-of-16 shooting in Sunday's 100-90 win over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Ball matched his season high of seven 3-pointers and was 10 of 13 from the field while also contributing eight assists and seven rebounds for the Bulls. Zach LaVine knocked down six 3-pointers while scoring 26 points and Derrick Jones Jr. scored 13 points on 6-of-7 shooting for Chicago, which beat the Lakers for the first time since registering a 118-110 road win on Nov. 20, 2016.

Talen Horton-Tucker scored a career-high 28 points and Russell Westbrook recorded 25 points, eight assists and six rebounds for the Lakers, who are just 8-7 despite opening the season with 12 of 15 at home. LeBron James (abdominal strain) sat out for the seventh consecutive game.

### Celtics 98, Cavaliers 92

Jayson Tatum scored 23 points to fuel visiting Boston to a victory over Cleveland. Al Horford collected 17 points and nine rebounds for the Celtics, who bounced back after squandering a 19-point lead in a 91-89 setback to Cleveland on Saturday. Marcus Smart and Dennis Schroder each scored 14 points and Grant Williams added 11 off the bench to send Boston to its fifth win in seven outings.

Ricky Rubio scored 26 of his 28 points in the second half for the Cavaliers. Rubio was inserted into the starting lineup and rookie Evan Mobley shifted to center in place of Jarrett Allen, who sat out due to a non-COVID illness.

## Alfa Romeo Sign China's First F1 Driver

PARIS (AFP) - Guanyu Zhou will become China's first ever Formula One driver after Alfa Romeo announced on Tuesday the 22-year-old would drive for the team next season.

Zhou has been making waves in Formula Two and replaces Antonio Giovinazzi alongside Valtteri Bottas, who is moving from Mercedes to replace the retiring Kimi Raikkonen.

"To be the first ever Chinese driver in Formula 1 is a breakthrough for Chinese motorsport history," said Zhou.

"I know a lot of hopes will be resting on me and, as ever, I will take this as motivation to become better and achieve more."

Alfa Romeo described their new signing as "a trailblazer who will write a pivotal page of his country's motorsport history".

F1 chief executive Stefano Domenicali said the arrival of the first driver from China was "fantastic".

"The news Guanyu Zhou will be in F1 next season is fantastic for the sport and the millions of passionate Chinese fans that now have a home hero to cheer all year long," he tweeted.

The country of 1.4 billion which hosted its first grand prix in Zhou's home city of Shanghai in 2004 represents a huge market for F1 and constructors like Alfa Romeo.

The Covid-19 pandemic put paid to the Chinese Grand Prix in 2020 and this year with the race returning to the calendar in 2022 when there is no doubt who the locals will be rooting for.

## Sabalenka Crashes out as Sakkari Advances

GUADALAJARA (Dispatches) - Top seed Aryna Sabalenka crashed out of the WTA Finals in Guadalajara, losing a grueling three-setter against Greek fourth seed Maria Sakkari.

Sakkari set up a semi-final showdown with Estonia's Anett Kontaveit after outlasting Sabalenka 7-6 (7/1), 6-7 (6/8), 6-3 in 2hr 47min.

Sabalenka was left ruing a failure to capitalise on key moments and an eye-watering 19 double faults that undermined her service game.



Tyrese Haliburton supplied a double-double with 17 points and 10 assists, as did Chimezie Metu with 16 points and 10 rebounds. Saddiq Bey's 28 points led Detroit in the opener of a five-game homestand. Cade Cunningham, the top pick in the draft, had a career-high 25 points along with eight rebounds and eight assists.

### Grizzlies 136, Rockets 102

Ja Morant scored 22 points while Jaren Jackson Jr. and Dillon Brooks combined for 34 as Memphis snapped a three-game skid while handing visiting Houston its 12th consecutive defeat.

Morant added six rebounds and six assists to his ledger while making 4 of 6 3-point attempts to pace an unselfish offensive attack. Six Grizzlies scored in double figures.

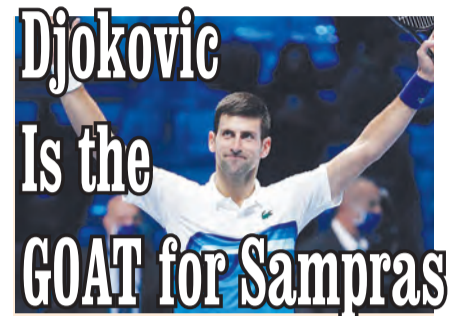
Jalen Green led the Rockets with 15 points while Jae'Sean Tate added 14 points and nine boards.

### Knicks 92, Pacers 84

Immanuel Quickley scored 16 points off the bench and hit all four of his 3-point attempts -- including the go-ahead 3-pointer with 5:03 left -- for host New York, who struggled again in the third quarter before overcoming a 12-point deficit to beat Indiana.

Julius Randle (11 points, 11 rebounds) had a double-double for the Knicks while Kemba Walker had 16 points. Derrick Rose scored 14 points and RJ Barrett added 12 points.

Malcolm Brogdon scored 22 points and Domantas Sabonis had 21 points for the Pacers, who went ice cold in the fourth quarter as their two-game winning streak was snapped.



LONDON (Dispatches) - The debate over the Greatest of All Time (GOAT) in men's tennis has divided opinions for years but American Pete Sampras has no doubt that Serbian Novak Djokovic is the one.

Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal are currently tied at 20 major singles titles each and fans and pundits have continued to argue over who should be considered the 'GOAT'.

Djokovic, at 34, the youngest of the triumvirate, has been unmatched in consistency and success in recent years and has already claimed Federer's long-standing record for holding the men's world number one ranking for most weeks.

This month the Serbian broke a tie with his childhood idol Sampras by clinching the year-end world number one ranking for a record seven times.

"Seven years, for him, I'm sure he sees it as a bonus to all the majors that he's won," Sampras, who won 14 major singles titles before retiring after the 2002 U.S. Open, was quoted as saying by the ATP Tour website.

"But I think he'll appreciate it more as he gets older. He did it at a time where he dominated two of the greats, in Roger and Rafa, and he handled the next generation of players very well -- all at the same time.

### Kings 129, Pistons 107

Buddy Hield had 22 points off the bench and Sacramento snapped a four-game losing streak with an emphatic win over Detroit.

De'Aaron Fox contributed 19 points, nine assists, six rebounds and three steals for the Kings, while Richaun Holmes also scored 19 points while grabbing nine rebounds.



the struggles Melbourne, which hosts the tournament, has endured during the pandemic. The city has spent more than 260 days under lockdown since coronavirus emerged, and Kyrgios suggested it was not worth risking another setback.

"I don't think the Aus Open should go ahead, just for the people in Melbourne -- you've got to send a message," he said today on his "No Boundaries" podcast.

## Medvedev Edges Closer to Last Four At ATP Finals

TURIN (Dispatches) - Defending ATP Finals champion Daniil Medvedev maintained his perfect start to this year's tournament but found it hard going against Alexander Zverev, eventually winning 6-3 6-7(3) 7-6(6) in their Red Group clash.

Medvedev had won his opening match against Hubert Hurkacz while Zverev was given a walkover in his opener on Sunday against Italian Matteo Berrettini, who retired injured and then withdrew from the tournament.

The Russian world number two, who won his first Grand Slam this year at the U.S. Open, raced into a 3-0 lead in the first set by frequently coming to the net and looked like he would take a comfortable fifth straight victory over Zverev.

However, the German found some confidence in Turin to bring himself back into the contest, firing down 13 aces and taking the second set on a tiebreak.

The pair could not be separated in the decider with neither able to break serve and both soaking up some heavy hitting.

In the decisive tiebreak, Zverev saved two match points but could only hit a backhand into the net on a third to give Medvedev his seventh straight win at the ATP Finals after two hours and 35 minutes. Zverev, 24, faces Poland's Hurkacz in his final round-robin match looking to clinch a place in the last four.

The Green Group resumes on Wednesday with Novak Djokovic facing Andrey Rublev and Stefanos Tsitsipas taking on Casper Ruud. Berrettini announced that he was withdrawing from the event in a post on Instagram after suffering an abdominal injury.



## Kyrgios Backtracks on Call for Australian Open to Be Cancelled

SYDNEY (Dispatches) -Nick Kyrgios today attempted to play down comments that he wanted the Australian Open to be cancelled, after a backlash with government officials stressing the country was "gagging for major events".

The mercurial Australian created waves by saying he believed January's opening Grand Slam of the year should not go ahead out of respect for the struggles Melbourne, which hosts the tournament, has endured during the pandemic. Victoria state Sports Minister Martin Pakula disagreed, saying he "couldn't follow the logic".

"We've had a long lockdown so the Australian Open shouldn't proceed? I'm not sure I follow that. I think the opposite applies," he said.

"Melburnians, Victorians and, frankly all Australians, are absolutely gagging for major events." Within hours Kyrgios took to social media, claiming he was taken out of context.

"To say that I would want the Aus Open cancelled, that was the sentence that got taken out of context. It's more for the people of Melbourne who have been to hell and back," he said.

"I think it's been 275 days, nearly 300 days of lockdown, your freedom has been taken away from you."

The tournament went ahead this year, but players were forced to spend two weeks in hotel quarantine, crowds were restricted and a five-day snap lockdown was called mid-event.

Organizers are adamant it will run as scheduled in 2022, with fully vaccinated players expected to be able to enter Australia without being quarantined or confined to bio-secure bubbles.

England captain Kane scored four times in the first half after Harry Maguire's opener and a Filippo Fabbri own goal.

Emile Smith Rowe, Tyrone Mings, Tammy Abraham and Bukayo Saka completed the rout after the interval as England finished top of Group I to ensure their place at the tournament in Qatar in 12 months' time.

It was England's record win in a competitive international and Kane was delighted with the stylish way Gareth Southgate's unbeaten side achieved their qualification target.

"We were fantastic. It came to the last game and we were expected to win but we've done a good job. Fantastic to go through," Kane told ITV.

"We still need to keep working. I feel like we have been improving year on year. We have to make the most of the time, every training session to fine-tune the little pieces."

Kane, who scored a hat-trick in Friday's 5-0 win against Albania, moved alongside Gary Lineker on 48 England goals.

The Tottenham striker is behind only Bobby Charlton (49) and Wayne Rooney (53) in England's all-time list.

His 16 goals in 2021 is a calendar year record for England and he is the first Three Lions player to score three or more in successive games since Tommy Taylor in 1957.

"Fantastic again. Every time I wear an England shirt I am proud and when I score goals it is one of the nicest feelings I can have in my career. Nice to be among those names," Kane said.

