

Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 128,852 With 118 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

The U.S. Department of Commerce on Friday Extended The Sanctions of Iran's "Mahan Air" And 12 International Companies That Cooperated With The Company for Six Months

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Iran-China Trade at Over \$10b in First 9 Months of 2021

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The volume of trade between Iran and China reached 10,425,000,000 dollars in the first nine months of 2021.

According to figures released by China's customs administration, bilateral trade decreased 7% compared to the same period in 2020. China's imports from Iran in the January to September period grew 5 percent year on year to reach 4.818 billion dollars.

But China's exports to Iran fell by 15% to 5.607 billion dollars. China is Iran's biggest trade partner and remains an important customer of its crude oil even as many other countries avoid buying Iranian oil out of fear of unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States. The two sides signed a 25-year cooperation agreement this year to strengthen their long-standing economic and political ties.

Meanwhile on Friday China reiterated its support for the implementation of the JCPOA, saying "diplomatic efforts" and "concrete actions" are key to a smooth restart of talks between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries slated to be held in the Austrian capital of Vienna later this month.

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Tehran Urges Clarification Of True, False Narratives On Israeli Crimes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the UN office in Geneva has called for clarification of true and false narratives, referring to the stories that equate victims of Israeli crimes with the perpetrators of the heinous acts.

Ismail Baqaei Hamaneh made the remarks in a meeting between ambassadors of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) residing in Geneva and members of the Commission of Inquiry of the United Nations Council on Human Rights, during which the sides discussed the Israeli crimes against the Palestinians.

"It is the duty of all of us to clarify the true and false narratives, the narrative that equates the victims of Israeli crimes with their killers, which is humanly shocking, legally unfounded and morally shameful."

He added that the inquiry commission has a historic responsibility to prevent the normalization of systematic human rights violations by the Israeli regime. The Iranian diplomat invited all the participants in the meeting to call for justice and do not allow war crimes, crimes against humanity and blatant violations of human rights to become normal.

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Iran Trade Balance Improves by \$2b in H1



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The statistics released by the Iran Custom Administration shows Iran's trade balance which was negative in first half of last year has improved in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year.

According to reports, Iran's trade balance last year was minus \$1.3b in the first half of the past year but it has improved by \$2b in the same period this year. As per report, the foreign trade of the country in the first half of the year has been \$44.9b as the country has exported \$21.8b and in return it has imported around \$23b.

The report shows that the country's goods trade has increased 47.7% and 25.7% respectively.

Meanwhile on Saturday the spokesman for Iran's Customs has said that neighboring states had a 52-percent share in Iran's foreign trade in the last seven months.

Iran's non-oil exports in the first half of the year has been valued at around \$16b (almost 73% of the total exports excluding crude oil) which shows 63% growth comparing to the same period last year.

The report shows some European countries like UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland have been the major exporters to Iran in the first half as their trade with Iran has been around \$3b.

Meanwhile yesterday the Tehran Chamber of Commerce announced that the value of trade between Iran and the EU in the nine months of 2021 has reached about 3.4 billion euros, which is 19% of Iran's total trade.

China, Iraq and Turkey have been the major destinations for export of Iranian goods in the first half of the year. Rouhollah Latifi said that Iran's foreign trade in the last seven months totaled 54.8 billion dollars with over 98.68 million tons of goods traded.

From the amount, he added, over 61.46 million tons worth of about 28.32 billion dollars accounted for business transactions with 15 countries neighboring Iran.

This shows that the share of neighbors in Iran's foreign trade accounted for 62 percent in terms of weight and 52 percent in terms of value, according to Latifi.

The official also said that Iraq topped the list of Iran's export destinations in this period, with 19.74 million dollars of imports from Iran.

On the other hand, the United Arab Emirate has the biggest share of Iran's imports, with about 8.6 billion dollars of exports to Iran, as said by the official.

The spokesman added that balance of trade in Iran was +1.246 billion dollars in the last seven months.

Iran Press/ Iran news: The Tehran Chamber of Commerce reported that the value of European countries' exports to Iran was 2 billion and 720 million euros.

IRGC Seizes Foreign Ship Smuggling Diesel In Persian Gulf

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has seized a foreign ship in Persian Gulf waters for smuggling diesel, according to a Navy Guards commander.

A foreign ship carrying smuggled diesel was seized by the Iranian flotilla off the coast of the southern Parsian, Hormozgan Province, on Saturday.

"Through intelligence monitoring and in a well-coordinated operation, the Marines of this navy managed to seize a foreign ship with 11 crew members in our country's waters," said Colonel Ahmad Hajian, the commander of the Naval Type 412 Zulfaqr in Parsian.

"After the inspection, more than 150 thousand liters of smuggled diesel was seized and the 11 foreign crew members were handed over to judicial offices of Parsian," he added.

Hajian underscored that his unit will "decisively encounter" any fuel smuggling in the sea for the support of Iran's economy.

The IRGC's Navy has also foiled several attacks on both Iranian and foreign tankers.

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Monthly Loading, Unloading of Goods Rise 12.5% in Iranian Ports

TEHRAN (MNA) - Loading and unloading of goods increased 12.5 percent in the ports of Iran during the seventh Iranian calendar month Mehr (September 23-October 22), as compared to the same month in the past year, according to the data released by Iran's Port and Maritime Organization (PMO).

The PMO's data indicate that 11.968 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded in the ports during the seventh month, while the figure was 10.642 million tons in the same month of the previous year.

Loading and unloading of basic goods also rose 29.5 percent to 2.621 million tons in Mehr of this year from 2.024 million tons in Mehr of past year.

Meanwhile, as previously reported, loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 10.7 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), as compared to the same period in the previous year.

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Tehran, Islamabad Reach Barter Trade Agreement

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran and Pakistan have reached an agreement to use barter trade in order to boost bilateral trade in the face of U.S. sanctions, Pakistani news outlets reported on Friday.

As reported by DAWN newspaper, the decision was announced by Pakistani Commerce Secretary Suleh Faruqi in a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce.

According to Suleh, due to the lack of banking channels with Iran, some issues existed in trading with Tehran and the barter trade agreement is expected to resolve such issues. He further said that barter trade with Iran would start in a month.

Earlier this month, Iran and Pakistan had also announced that a free trade agreement between the two sides was going to be implemented within the next three months as the two sides looking to expand the annual trade exchanges to \$5 billion by 2023.

The MOU for the new trade target was reached during the ninth meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee which was held on November 6 in Tehran.

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UK's Blacklisting of Hamas Draws Condemnation, Concern

LONDON (Dispatches) - Resistance groups have strongly condemned Britain's decision to ban Hamas, which could see supporters of the Palestinian resistance movement punished with 14 years in prison.

"The decision is not surprising at all as Britain is the founder of the (Israeli) occupation," Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, said Saturday. "The move coincides with the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, and underscores Britain's continued support for the criminal regime," Houthi added.

The Balfour Declaration was a public statement issued by the British government in 1917 during the First World War, which laid the foundations for the entity of Israel. The declaration is seen as a catalyst for the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe) where more than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes.

"We had hoped that Britain would not commit a new crime against the Palestinian nation following the Balfour Declaration," said Khalil al-Hayya, deputy head of the Hamas political bureau.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel on Friday announced the move to bring Britain into line with the European Union and the United States, which designated Hamas a terror group in 1995. The British parliament will vote on the proposals next week and if successful, could become effective from next Friday.

The al-Qassam Brigades military wing of Hamas has been banned in Britain since March 2001. Patel argued an outright ban was necessary because it was not possible to distinguish between Hamas' political and military wing.

Israel applauded the news, with its foreign minister Yair Lapid saying the move was a result of "joint efforts" between the British and Israeli regimes.

The proposals would see the outlawing of flying Hamas' flag, arranging to meet its members or wearing clothing supporting the group.

Politically, it could force Britain's Labour party to take a position on Hamas, given the strong pro-Palestinian support of the main opposition party. Showing support for Hamas in Britain could be punished with 14 years in prison if the government succeeds in banning the group.

Tehran, Baku Review Political, Economic Developments

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan met and held talks with First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan for examining the recent political and economic developments in the relation of the two countries.

Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyed Abbas Mousavi wrote in his tweeter account that in a meeting with First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev, the latest developments in bilateral political and economic relations specifically joint projects were examined.

Mousavi further stated that holding joint economic commissions, removing obstacles, enhancing trade ties as well as expanding regional cooperation were the pivotal subjects of this meeting.

President Calls for Lifting COVID-Related Night Curfews

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday ordered the termination of night-time curfews on motorists in large cities, which have been in effect for months with the purpose of slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

In comments at a Saturday meeting of the Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters, Raisi ordered that the night-time curfew imposed on the movement of vehicles in big cities be lifted considering the growing rate of public vaccination.

Urging the ministries of interior and health to keep the border travels under strict control to avert a new wave of pandemic, the president said the smart controls would contain the infectious disease.

“The more the dimension and extent of smart controls increase, the less the non-smart restrictions could become,” he noted.

Raisi said, “Coronavirus is a matter of self-sacrifice, and problems can be overcome by maintaining and strengthening this spirit”.

The President added, “The main concern and priority of the government is to protect



the lives of the people, and we will continue this path powerfully until the desired conditions are achieved”.

Raisi described the importance of controlling traffic through the country’s borders important and said, “The Interior Ministry and the Health Ministry have a duty to control the movement of people across the borders with sensitivity and seriousness”.

“As the dimensions and volume of smart controls increase, non-smart restrictions can be reduced,” the President said, emphasizing the continued use of smart controls and their impact on controlling COVID-19.

He emphasized, “Due to the general vaccination, the ban on night traffic in cities should be lifted”.

FM Condemns UK’s Decision to Designate Hamas as “Terrorist” Organization

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian foreign minister has condemned the United Kingdom’s decision to designate Palestine’s resistance movement Hamas as a “terrorist organization”, stressing that the rights of the Palestinian nation cannot be trampled upon through distorting facts.

“We condemn the UK’s decision to declare the popular resistance movement of HAMAS a terrorist organization. Rights of Palestinians cannot be trampled on by distorting facts. The only political solution for Palestine lies in holding a referendum among all indigenous residents,” Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said in a post on his official Twitter account on Friday night.

We condemn the UK’s decision to declare the popular resistance movement of HAMAS a terrorist organization. His comments came hours after the British government announced that it intended to label Hamas “a terrorist organization”, joining the United States, Canada and the European Union in fully banning the Gaza-based Palestinian resistance group, which plays a significant role in defending Palestinian rights against frequent Israel aggression.

Environmental Protection, Long-Term Investment

TEHRAN (IP) – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi described environmental protection as a cause of power, security and a kind of long-term investment and growth of the country’s products.

“In order to protect the environment, the university should be strengthened as a think tank with the executive apparatus,” Raisi said on Friday at a meeting with elites and environmental activists, which was held on the occasion of the anniversary of the announcement of general environmental policies by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Referring to the necessity and importance of paying attention to the environment, the President said: “Human society should be sensitive to aggression against the environment. Unfortunately, major world powers make the worst use of the environment and

then, through a mechanism, use the environment as a weapon against developing countries, such as the issue of human rights.”

Raisi added: “Preservation of the environment should be considered as a divine gift for human life and all living beings, and in this regard, it is necessary to create structures appropriate to this great mission and correct some incorrect behaviors.”

Emphasizing the priority of paying attention to the environment over development and economic activity, and that development is a subset of the environment, the President said: “Although development and economic activities are a necessary issue, they must have an environmental attachment and pay attention to the environment.”

Defense Ministry Ready to Assist With House Construction

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Defense Ministry of Iran expressed readiness to help the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development in the house construction sector by sharing its technical know-how to build houses at an industrial scale. Iranian Minister of Road Rostam Qassemi on Saturday paid a visit to the “industrial building factory”, belonging to the Ministry of Defense.

During the visit, Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said the factory manufactures prefabricated steel buildings with modern technologies at an industrial scale.

Voicing the Defense Ministry’s readiness to assist the Road Ministry with the housing projects, the general said the average age of the new buildings has been increased from 30 to 100 years.

The buildings constructed with the new method are resistant to strong earthquakes and can be finished in only six months, six times sooner than the ordinary methods, he added.

“The Defense Ministry is prepared to provide the other institutions and organizations in charge with the technology of industrial construction of buildings. We have the capability to establish such factories wherever and with whatever capacity needed,” the defense minister noted.

In September 2016, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei outlined general policies on family, known as the cornerstone of the Islamic society.

GC Approves Bill on Supporting Family, Young Generation



TEHRAN (IP) – The Guardian Council Spokesman said the body approved the bill to support the families and young generation.

Hadi Tahan-Nazif said on Saturday that the bill was discussed several times between the parliament and the Guardian Council, and finally, in recent weeks, this bill was approved by the Guardian Council.

Speaking to the reporters in his weekly presser, Tahan-Nazif stated, “The Constitution has special attention to the family. Article 10 of the Constitution has stipulated safeguarding the family, so we hope to make a family-oriented society.”

Approving the amendments to the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification, and Protecting Seafarers, he said that the bill was not contrary to Islamic law and the Constitution.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the spokesman referred to the car imports bill and has said no permission has yet been received on regulating the car industry, stressing that the car industry should be regulated and the cars should be sold at a reasonable price and quality.

Tahan-Nazif stated: “We are not familiar with car import. Of course, the opponents and the proponents discussed in the parliament and in cyberspace. Our mission in the GC is merely to examine the car import regulations being compatible with the law.”

“Of course, we are not seeking to make obstacles for the import of cars, but looking for a solution,” said the spokesman and noted, “The ratifications of the parliament should not be against the constitution.”

Iran, Russia Confer on Int’l and Regional Issues

TEHRAN (IP) - At a meeting, the Iranian Ambassador to Russia and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister discussed important regional and international issues.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry in a statement on Friday said that Iran’s ambassador Kazem Jalali had met with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin in Moscow and that the two sides discussed key aspects of Moscow-Tehran cooperation at the United Nations and on global and regional issues.

The Iranian ambassador to Moscow and the Russian deputy foreign minister discussed the settlement of disputes in the West Asian region with a focus on

humanitarian and security issues.

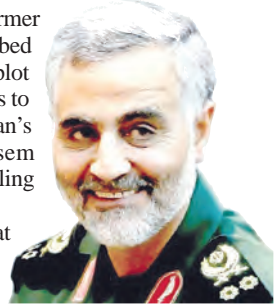
The two sides agreed to increase their cooperation in the international community. Iran and Russia are actively involved in the issues of the West Asian region, and the interaction between the two countries has yielded good results so far.

Cooperation between Tehran and Moscow, as well as Ankara in the framework of the Astana talks, has led to the political settlement of many Syrian issues and has brought peace and security to this country.

Iran and Russia have also been cooperating with Iraq and Syria in the framework of the Regional Counterterrorism Center in Baghdad.

Martyr Soleimani Foiled U.S. Plots in West Asia

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A former Iranian diplomat has described Daesh terrorist group as a plot hatched by the United States to destroy West Asia, but Iran’s Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani succeeded in foiling the conspiracy.



Mohsen Pakaein said that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force commander organized resistance in the region to foil American plot, so the current decline and withdrawal of the US from the region come from Martyr General Soleimani’s efforts.

The United States created terrorist groups, Daesh in particular, in West Asia to destabilize Muslim countries in a bid to provide the Zionist regime with security, the diplomat argued.

As a result of financial issues and pressures on American soldiers, the United States decided to pull out its military forces from West Asia, but they started forming terrorist groups in order to wreak havoc in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria on behalf of the U.S., Pakaein warned.

Iran’s former ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan went on to say that the U.S., Europe, and certain regional states seek to overthrow the legitimate government of Syria and some other Islamic countries in order to disintegrate the Muslim nations with the aim of weakening them in the face of the Zionist regime.

But Martyr Soleimani identified their plots for the region and stood against the Daesh terrorism until they were uprooted, the former diplomat added.

Today, the resistance movement is the most organized entity that played a key role in containing and destroying Daesh’s menace in the region, Pakaein said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he expressed hope that ruling groups in Afghanistan can stand against Daesh in the war-torn country in order to foil the United States’ plot to turn Afghanistan into another Syria.

He further urged Russia, China, and Iran to be vigilant when it comes to fight terrorism in the region.

Refugees in Iran To Be Vaccinated

TEHRAN (IRNA) -The director general of Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of Iranian Ministry of Interior has announced that refugees will be vaccinated in Iran with cooperation of international organizations.

Mehdi Mahmoudi said that 1.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered to Iran under the Humanitarian Buffer within the COVAX Facility, according to a Saturday report from the information center of Ministry of Interior.

Due to importance of inoculation of refugees and foreign nationals against coronavirus, the Islamic Republic of Iran has held various meetings with international bodies, Mahmoudi added.

Humanitarian Buffer within the COVAX Facility is under the support of the United Nations.

To fight the pandemic, Iran has been implementing a broad project on vaccination in recent months.

Coronavirus has killed over 5,150,000 worldwide since its outbreak in December 2019.

Int’l Flights Passing Iranian Airspace Rise by 36%

TEHRAN (MNA) – Managing Director of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company said that international flights crossing airspace of the country in Iranian month of Mehr (Sep. 23-Oct. 22) showed 36 percent growth.

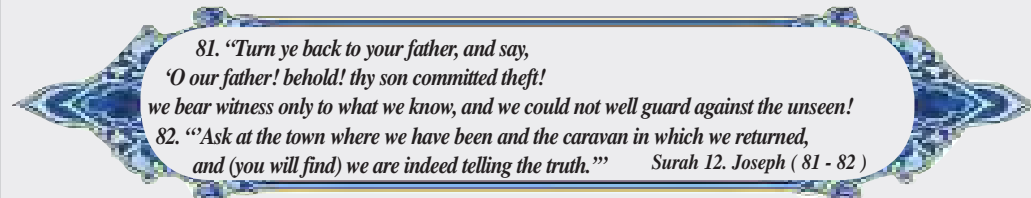
Siavash Amir Makri Chief Executive of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company broke the news and reiterated that international flights passing from Iranian airspace in the last Iranian month of Mehr (From Sep. 23 to Oct. 22) registered a 36 percent growth as compared to the same period of last year.

He went on to say that 80 percent of flights have been conducted through 10 airports of the country, adding that Mehrabad, Kish and Mashhad account for the most traffic airports in the country in this period.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:13
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:19
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:47



Tehran, Jakarta Economies Complementary

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Mr. Gholam-Hossein Shafei in meeting with Ambassador of Indonesia to Tehran Mr. Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro said economies of Iran and Indonesia are complementary and called for broadening bilateral cooperation.

In the meeting which was arranged at Mashhad Chamber of Commerce where some economic activists of Indonesia and Iran were present, Shafei said Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world and it has a stable and developed economy and it enjoys an important place in the world economic and political relations, adding that Iran considers Indonesia as a good opportunity for entering the ASEAN market.

He noted that both countries fortunately enjoy having valuable political relations but he believes both countries have not taken advantage of their economic capacities. He called the economic potentials of the country complementary and called the mentioned capacity a good opportunity for defining joint co-operations and noted some of the goods being produced in Indonesia are needed in Iran and in return some of Iranian products have good markets in Indonesia.

Shafei added that for example two products of saffron and precious stones from Khorasan Razavi can be welcomed by the Indonesians and currently Iran and Khorasan's turquoise has customers in Indonesia.

He then pointed to the economic potentials of Khorasan Razavi Province and stipulated that the strategic location of this region has caused that major parts of east-bound exports or transit of goods of Iran are done via Khorasan Razavi Province.



Shafei noted that Mashhad itself for the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS) hosts 30m tourists mainly religious tourists annually and the tourism potentials of this city have valuable potentials for attracting international tourists from Muslim states in the East Asia.

He expressed hope this visit of ambassador to Mashhad to be an opening for cooperation between Iran and Indonesia and invited the members of Indonesia's Chamber of Commerce to visit Iran.

Shafei then pointed to the role of ambassadors in strengthening the economic relations and said despite good economic relations between the two states, the economic activists of the two countries are unaware of the potentials and capacities for cooperation, and exchange of trade delegations and holding joint economic events can boost information and acquaintance of the economic activists with economic capacities of the two states.

Then Indonesian Ambassador Yuliantoro, for his part, said that Indonesia is also keen to develop economic relations with Iran because there are huge potentials in the economic sector of the two countries and all should work to improve it.

He also called for holding a joint webinar between the chambers of commerce of Iran and Indonesia and said Indonesia is keen to study fields for the joint investments and to prepare the ground for the cooperation of the private sectors of the two countries in those fields.

He also said that tourism and halal products that Indonesia is one of the biggest producers and exporters are of good examples for these good potentials.

Iran, Brazil Launch Chamber of Commerce in Sao Paulo



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian and Brazilian private sectors have launched a chamber of commerce in São Paulo, the largest and most important city in South America.

The event which was jointly formed by the two sides' private sectors was the first one ever in two countries' bilateral trade exchange. Iran's Ambassador to Brasília Hossein Qaribi, who attended the opening ceremony of the chamber of commerce, called for expansion of bilateral relations. The ambassador referred to removal of financial exchange problems, establishment of direct shipping line, and airlines as facilitators of trade cooperation.

Referring to the role and position of Iran and Brazil in their regions, as well as the potentials of the two economies, Qaribi said: "The trading capacity between the two countries is much higher than the selling some essential agricultural items, and in addition to maintaining and developing the current situation, it can expand to various trade interactions with the presence of small and medium companies on both sides."

He added that removing banking barriers, creating a direct shipping line, and the airline would facilitate these goals.

The Iranian ambassador also said: "Brazil is an important member of Mercosur and Iran has a huge market in a region adjacent to Asia, Eurasia and West Asia and can facilitate activities between Mercosur and Eurasia."

For the first time, Iranian and Brazilian private sectors have launched a chamber of commerce in São Paulo, the largest and most important city in South America. Brazil is the eighth largest economy globally and Iran's most important trading partner in the Americas.

The first joint virtual meeting of the parliamentary friendship groups of Iran and Brazil was held with the participation of MPs member to the friendship groups and ambassadors of the two countries in Oct.

Mercosur, officially Southern Common Market, is a South American trade bloc established by the Treaty of Asunción in 1991 and the Protocol of Ouro Preto in 1994. Its full members are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Tehran Gallery Exhibits 35 Paintings of Italian Painter



TEHRAN (IRNA) - An exhibition of artworks of a renowned Italian painter opened in Tehran on Friday, showcasing 35 paintings at Vista Art Gallery.

The gallery has invited Gianni Fornaresio to show his paintings as part of its program to expand cultural and artistic cooperation with international artists. The 10-day Goconde Exhibition will showcase Fornaresio's artworks November 19-29.

This event is being held in cooperation with the Middle East & Europe Specialized Institute of Contemporary Arts (SPFPEM).

Parisa Pahlevan, the manager of the Vista Art Gallery, said that the first phase of the exhibition was held in Turin in Italy on October 26 to November 7, showcasing artworks of 70 Iranian artists.

Behnam Kamrani, an Iranian artist and university professor, said that the exhibition in Tehran is displaying a set of artworks created by Fornaresio, whose works have been viewed throughout the world.

Enthusiasts are provided with the opportunity to visit the Vista Art Gallery from 4 pm to 7 pm local time every day except Saturdays.

Armenian, Iranian Officials Discuss Ways to Expand Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's envoy to Yerevan Abbas Badakhshan Zohuri has met with Acting Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council of Armenia Gagik Jahangirian.

In the meeting the two sides reviewed ways to boost judicial collaboration between Armenia and Iran. Badakhshan Zohuri and Jahangirian held talks on expansion of bilateral cooperation regarding judicial affairs. The acting head of the Supreme Judicial Council of Armenia invited representatives of the judiciary branch of the Islamic Republic of Iran to visit his country and sign a memorandum of understanding to mutual assistance. Iran's ambassador expressed gratitude for paving the ground for holding the Thursday meeting, noting that signing the proposed memorandum of understanding will play a key role in bolstering mutual ties in judicial field.

The diplomat went on to say that he will make stride to pave the way for expediting meetings between delegations of both sides, expressing hope that bilateral cooperation will expand in the future.

Finland Serious in Observing Sanctions Against Iran



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TERAN - Chairman of Iran-Finland Joint Chamber of Commerce Gholam-Hossein Jamili says Finland is fully committed to abide by international laws and the country is more serious in observing sanctions against Iran than even the U.S. which has imposed them.

Speaking to ILNA, Jamili said that the launch of the Iran-Finland corridor can help countries like India, Iran's neighbors and Arab states to reduce costs of their trade and if Iran has lost part of the main competitions due to different reasons, the corridor can be important for it to take advantage of its ties with those countries.

On the latest condition of trade between Tehran and Helsinki, he said the Scandinavian countries are different from other countries in terms of population, consumption pattern and other public behaviors, adding that considering this point that for years Iran have been away from the first level markets of the world due to different reasons and so far it has not had cheap transportation, the country has faced restrictions with Finland and the trade volume with Helsinki is not considerable.

He added that Finland strongly abides by international laws and regulations and it also pursues sanctions more serious than those who have imposed. Therefore restrictions are created for trade between Iran and Finland which do not let relations between the two countries develop, he noted.

Touching on the launch of Iran-Finland corridor, he said that the corridor can compensate the past restrictions and weaknesses, adding that although Iran does not have the trade of goods with Finland, being in this corridor can pave the ground for the next years for a probable new opening in the trade between Tehran and Helsinki.

Jamili reiterated that Iran's approach for trade with Finland should be focused on technology, and in its relation with Finland, Iran's priority should be to obtain technology, presence in new businesses and taking advantage of Finland's studies in different fields like agriculture.

He said when it is talked about trade, everybody thinks of exchange of physical goods but in the today's world different issues like transfer of technology can be a trade and the Finns can help Iran in this regard as Iran has strong human resources which can be combined with the capabilities of Finland.

UAE Exports to Iran Grow by 82%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Chairman of Iran-UAE Joint Chamber of Commerce Mr. Erfan Shakeri says according to the official statistics, Iran's imports from the UAE have been 6.87m tons worth of \$8.596b in the first seven months of the current year which shows 169% growth in terms of weight and 82% in terms of value comparing to the same period last year.

Speaking to ILNA, Shakeri talked about the latest condition of trade between Iran and the UAE and said considering developments and longtime relation between Iran and the UAE, regardless of political disputes in recent years, the relation has been deep and therefore the outlook of trade development between the two states is predictable.

He added that according to the official statistics, the trade volume of Iran and the UAE in the first seven months has been \$11.186b that some \$8.569b of the figure accounts for Iran's imports and the remaining \$2.59b is the UAE's share of imports from Iran.

Shakeri noted that Iran imported 6.87m tons of goods from the UAE worth of \$8.596b which shows 169% growth in terms of weight and 82% in value. He said while Iran's imports from the UAE have grown by 82% its exports have declined to 22% in weight but 12% growth in value.

He reiterated that since most of the imported goods are used in production, the statistics show the rise of the role of the UAE in Iran's domestic production and at the same time Iran's exports to other countries which are carried via the UAE have declined.

Shakeri admitted that the UAE has slumped in the ranking of export destinations of Iran and according to the statistics in the first seven months of the current year, the UAE has been the top trade partner of Iran in terms of imports but it slumped from the third to the fourth place in the top export destinations in terms of exports.

On how the country can increase its exports, he said that investment packages should be carried out in form of operational and they should display their capabilities. He also reiterated that the country should take advantage of opportunities for investment in other countries for increasing its exports.

Shakeri reiterated that exporters should seek exporting high quality products in the international scene and exporters and producers should be encouraged through incentives. He said unfortunately producers are focused on the domestic market and 80 percent of the products are for the domestic consumption and the policy-makers and planners have been less focused on the production capacity for exports.

He also criticized current forex policy in the country and said that the difference between the government rate of dollar (42,000 rials) with the free market rate (280,000 rials) is very high and it will affect the production and exports and said in the world such a big gap between official and free rate is unjustifiable and it will have considerable impact on the inflation rate and health system.

He reiterated that management and control of earmarking the subsidized forex is in hands of the state bodies and they should act wisely.

IME Weekly Trade Hits Record High

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 1,953,000 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$608m, posting growths of 4% in volume and 28% in value of trades comparing to the figures in the preceding week.

According to a report by the IME's international affairs and PR, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1,566,000 tons of commodities valued at more than \$380m.

Commodities sold on this floor included 1,000,035 tons of cement, 269,829 tons of steel, 110,000 tons of iron ore, 11,550 tons of copper, 9,375 tons of aluminum, 7,300 tons of sponge iron, 640 tons of zinc, 280 tons of molybdenum sulfur, 15 tons of precious metals concentrate and 20 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor trade of 882,000 tons of commodities worth almost \$220m.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 160,229 tons of bitumen, 78,686 tons of polymeric products, 61,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 42,000 tons of lube cut, 26,565 tons of chemicals, 8,200 tons of sulfur, 4,406 tons of base oil and 68 tons of insulation. It's worth noting that the IME's agricultural trading floor played host to trading 1 ton of saffron.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 14,889 tons of commodities traded on it.



Biden to Hold Africa Summit to Boost U.S. Ties

ABUJA (Dispatches) – U.S. President Joe Biden plans to hold a summit with African leaders to show US commitment to the continent, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced.

“President Biden intends to host the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit to drive the kind of high-level diplomacy and engagement that can transform relationships and make effective cooperation possible,” Blinken said in the Nigerian capital Abuja.

Blinken, who is on his first visit to sub-Saharan Africa as secretary of state, did not give a date for the summit.



Nicaragua Starts Post-Election Exit From Regional Bloc

MANAGUA (Dispatches) - Nicaragua began the process of leaving a Washington-based regional cooperation body that rejected President Daniel Ortega's reelection two weeks ago.

Exiting the Organization of American States (OAS) will take about two years as Nicaragua fulfils its obligations.

The Central American country's congress on Tuesday asked former Marxist guerrilla Ortega to withdraw from the OAS, which had stated the November 7 election “was not free, just or transparent and had no democratic legitimacy.”



Modi U-Turns on Indian Farm Laws After Mass Protests



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India will scrap agricultural reform laws that sparked a year of huge protests by farmers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a stunning U-turn that sparked celebrations but also criticism from economists.

Thousands of farmers have been camped out on the borders of the capital New Delhi since November last year, handing Modi one of the biggest challenges since his Hindu nationalist government came to power in 2014.

The rallies became a lightning rod for opposition to Modi's administration in a country where two-thirds of the 1.3 billion population rely on agriculture for their livelihood.

In a contrite address to the nation coinciding with a major Sikh festival — the religion of many farmers — Modi said the laws would be repealed in parliament's winter session, which begins later this month.

“I appeal to all the farmers who are part of the protest... to now return to your home, to your loved ones, to your farms, and family. Let's make a fresh start and move forward,” the 71-year-old said.

The surprise announcement sparked muted celebrations today with farmers chanting, waving flags and beeping tractor horns at two protest sites outside Delhi.

“Until they give it to us in writing, we won't leave from here. We don't trust the government,” farmer Gurmeet Singh, 50, told AFP. “Our farmers have died fighting for this. Until it's passed in the parliament, we won't leave.”

The reforms passed in September 2020 aimed to deregulate farm produce markets where state bodies have for decades set guaranteed minimum prices for crops.

Modi reiterated today that the changes would have boosted rural incomes and reformed a hugely inefficient agricultural sector where a vast amount of produce rots before it can be sold.

Thousands of Indian farmers commit suicide every year because of poverty, debt and ever more erratic weather patterns caused by climate change.

“This is a black day in the history of India's economic reforms. This is Modi's worst decision ever,” economist Gautam Chikermane from the Observer Research Foundation think tank told AFP.

“Now there will be no agriculture sector reforms for the next 25 years... These three farm sector reforms would have done to India's agriculture what the 1991 reforms did to manufacturing and services.”

But protesters said the changes — which were suspended pending negotiations with the farmers — would have left farmers at the mercy of big business.

The farmers first tried to march on New Delhi last November, but violent clashes police prevented them from entering the capital.

They camped out at two sites outside the city, blocking major highways. In the subsequent months they dug in as their numbers swelled to tens of thousands.

U.S. Warns China After South China Sea Standoff With Philippines

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States called Chinese actions in using water cannon against Philippine resupply boats in the South China Sea “dangerous, provocative, and unjustified,” and warned that an armed attack on Philippine vessels would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said Washington stood by its treaty ally the Philippines amid an “escalation that directly threatens regional peace and stability.”

Beijing “should not interfere with lawful Philippine activities in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone,” he said in a statement.

“The United States stands with our Philippine allies in upholding the rules-based international maritime order and reaffirms that an armed attack on Philippine public vessels in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments,” Price said.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin reaffirmed American defense commitments to Manila and pledged to “stand with



Lebanese President Baulks at March Polls

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanese President Michel Aoun said he would not sign any authorisation for legislative elections to take place in March, adding to doubts about when the vote can be held amid economic and political meltdown.

Aoun told the Al Akhbar newspaper the early date for elections, approved by parliament in October, would deprive thousands of voters from reaching the voting age of 21.

Snowy weather in March would also mean voters could face difficulties reaching polling stations through blocked mountain roads, he said.

The planned March 27 election date would give Prime Minister Najib Mikati's government even less time to try to secure an IMF recovery plan.

“I will not agree to legislative elections except on one of two dates, May 8 or May 15,” Aoun was quoted as saying by the paper.

Aoun had previously refused to sign a law passed by parliament bringing forward the election to March and sent it back to the legislature, which once again adopted it.

Gebran Bassil, the leader of Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and his son-in-law, withdrew with his parliamentary bloc from that parliamentary session in October when the date was approved again.

The FPM this week presented a legal complaint to the constitutional council disputing the date of the election and the proposed election law.

Lebanon's financial crisis, which the World Bank labelled one of the deepest depressions of modern history, has been compounded by political deadlock and a row over the probe into last year's Beirut port blast that killed more than 200 people.

The currency has lost 90% of its value and three-quarters of the population have been propelled into poverty. Shortages of basic goods such as fuel and medicines have made daily life a struggle.

Turkish Opposition Calls for Early Election Amid Lira Meltdown

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish opposition leaders called for immediate early elections on Thursday after the lira plunged 6% to new lows following the central bank's decision to cut interest rates amid pressure from President Tayyip Erdogan.

The lira saw its worst day since a 2018 currency crisis, tumbling to 11.3 versus the dollar and a low against the euro after the central bank decided on a rate cut seen as dangerous for the emerging market economy. It stood at 11.06 to the dollar at 1636 GMT.

“Stop Already, Erdogan! Election Immediately,” tweeted Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the main opposition CHP.

Iyi Party Chairwoman Meral Aksener said Erdogan had “ruined our money and our reputation.”

“If this is on purpose, it's outright treason. However, if it is a result of incompetence, it is obvious what needs to be done: This disgrace must be stopped by taking the country to elections as soon as possible,” she said.

“Dollar 11 Lira” and “Election Immediately” were the top two trending topics on Twitter, as criticism against Erdogan mounted on social media.

“The depreciation of the lira means the government, which has not changed for 20 years and was elected by a

majority of votes, has collapsed the economy,” said Mehmet Hasim Acanal, a 36-year-old farmer in Sanliurfa.

“The situation will deteriorate unless there is any positive government change. The probability of a positive change seems to be quite low.”

Elections are due no later than mid-2023. Opposition leaders have ramped up calls for early elections amid the economic woes, while Turks have cited economic mismanagement in opinion polls that show support for Erdogan, who has been in power for nearly 20 years, at multiyear lows.

Erdogan on Wednesday told lawmakers from his AK Party that he cannot walk alongside those defending interest rates and repeated his unorthodox view that high rates cause inflation.

Kilicdaroglu later told broadcaster Haberturk that Erdogan's call for lower rates to boost exports and investments showed he was “completely detached from reality,” adding the public wanted early elections.

“Others make plans for 50-100 years and we cannot even tell what will happen tomorrow,” he said. “The government wants to go into elections after fixing the economy. That is a total figment of their imagination.”



EU Takes Step Towards Punishing Poland and Hungary



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Commission wrote to Poland and Hungary on Friday to launch a process that could lead to them being deprived of funds over threats to the EU legal order.

The move came as the European justice commissioner visited Warsaw, expressing concern about the independence of the judiciary and urging the government to respect EU court rulings.

“The Commission services sent administrative letters to Hungary and Poland,” a Commission spokesperson said, adding that they “have now two months to send the requested information”.

A European source told AFP that Brussels demanded Warsaw explain measures it has taken to limit the independence of its judiciary and to challenge the supremacy of EU law.

In Hungary's case, the commission will raise concerns over public contracts, conflicts of interest and corruption in the spending of EU funds, the source said.

Poland and Hungary are the first states to be targeted under the EU's new “conditionality mechanism”.

The new process entered into force in January and is separate from the bloc's infringement procedures for members deemed in breach of EU rules.

Under it, national governments can eventually find themselves cut off from EU funding if they fail to bring their practices in line with EU law.

Both Warsaw and Budapest have contested the legality of the mechanism and appealed to the European Court of Justice, which could rule within months.

The European Commission, which oversees the use of the mechanism, has said it will not take formal action until the court has ruled whether it is in bounds.

But officials have begun assembling the evidence necessary to proceed -- hence Friday's requests for information.

“We don't start concretely the formal procedure today,” Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders said in Warsaw, calling the letters “a mechanism of clarification”.

Reynders urged Poland to abolish a “disciplinary chamber” for judges -- a central part of judicial reforms pushed through by the populist Law and Justice (PiS) party despite EU objections.



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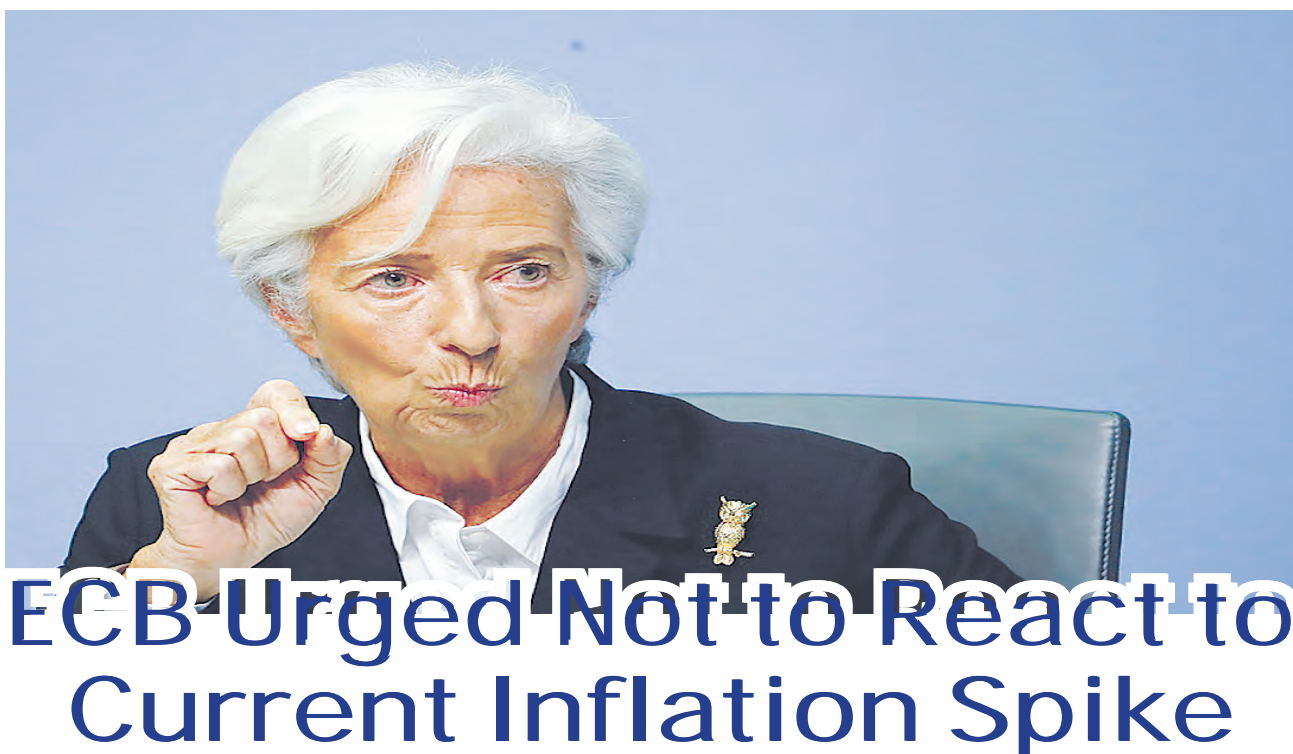


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Egypt's Remittances From Workers Abroad Rises to \$2.7b

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Remittances from Egyptians working abroad rose to \$2.7 billion in August, compared to \$2.4 billion in the same month last year, the central bank said on Thursday. Remittances in January-August amounted to \$21.4 billion, up by a total of \$2 billion from the same period a year prior, the bank added.



ECB Urged Not to React to Current Inflation Spike

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde said that inflation in the euro zone will fade so the ECB should not tighten policy as it could choke off the recovery, and hinted at continued bond purchases next year.

Inflation in the euro zone hit 4.1 per cent in October, pushed up by higher energy costs, and is expected to stay above the ECB's 2 per cent target next year as suppliers strained by the pandemic cannot keep up with the reopening of the economy.

But Lagarde insisted the ECB should not hit the brake now but rather keep adding fuel the recovery of the economy.

"When inflation pressure is expected to fade — as is the case today — it does not make sense to react by tightening policy," she said. "The tightening would not affect the economy until after the shock has already passed."

The ECB is due to decide on the future of its bond-purchase programs at its December 16 policy meeting.

While the central bank has already signalled its 1.85 trillion euros Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program would end in March, Lagarde said asset purchases would still be "important" after that date.

"Even after the expected end of the pandemic emergency, it will still be important for monetary policy — including the appropriate calibration of asset purchases — to support the recovery and the sustainable return of inflation to our target of 2 per cent," she said.

The Bank of England is widely expected to raise rates later this year and the Federal Reserve is winding down its bond-buying program.

But Lagarde argued that tightening policy now would squeeze household incomes, which are already facing a shock from soaring energy costs that will likely dampen growth.

"In this situation, tighter monetary policy would only exacerbate the contractionary effect on the economy," she said.

While Lagarde acknowledged that the outlook for inflation had improved after a decade of sluggish price growth, she said the ECB should "nurture" demand.

"As positive demand forces in the economy gain strength, the inflation outlook over the medium term is looking better than it did before the pandemic," Lagarde said. "So, we should continue nurturing these forces by not withdrawing policy support prematurely."

Yemen Moves to Tackle Foreign Currency Woes

DUBAI (Dispatches)- Yemen's central bank has begun weekly auctions of dwindling foreign exchange reserves to banks in a bid to bolster the currency and temper inflation, and is also seeking to tap IMF reserves offered in August, the bank and an IMF source said.

The International Monetary Fund has allocated \$655 million worth of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to Yemen, which would boost foreign exchange reserves by 70%, to help ease an acute economic and humanitarian crisis in the war-torn nation.

But to spend SDRs, countries must first exchange them for hard currencies, requiring them to find a country willing to be an exchange partner.

The war split Yemen's central bank into rival branches, one run by the Houthis in the north, the other answering to the internationally-recognized government in Aden, which is backed by Saudi Arabia.

An official at Yemen's internationally-recognised central bank, who declined to be named, told Reuters the government was still looking for a partner and that Britain was a candidate for that. The UK Treasury and Bank of England declined to comment.

Britain is among Western nations that have provided support to the Saudi-backed coalition.

The Aden-based central bank has run through most of \$2 billion deposited by Saudi Arabia in 2018 after a previous foreign exchange crisis to help finance imports of basic goods. "What is left from the Saudi grant is only \$100 million dollars, but we need prior permission from Saudi Arabia to spend it," the central bank official said.

Saudi Arabia's embassy to Yemen did not respond to a request for comment on its current support for the central bank in Aden.

Riyadh leads a military coalition that intervened in Yemen in March 2015 against the Houthis after they ousted the Saudi-backed government from the capital, Sanaa.

The war has caused the world's largest humanitarian crisis. Inflation, foreign currency shortages and coalition restrictions on imports to Houthi-held areas have made food, water and fuel unaffordable for many in Yemen, which imports most of its needs.

The IMF official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Yemen's foreign currency reserves were now extremely low, at less than one month of import cover, and that the market needed greater access to foreign exchange to stabilize the economy.



Turkey's Central Bank Cuts Rates Again, Lira Sinks To Record Low

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The Turkish lira fell to a record low after the central bank cut borrowing costs for a third straight month, a move that risks further undermining price and currency stability.

The lira fell as much as 4.1% to 11.0877 against the dollar, extending the biggest depreciation in emerging markets this year. Policy makers cut the one-week repo rate by 100 basis points to 15%, in line with the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey, and said they would consider ending the easing cycle next month.

It comes as consumer inflation accelerated to almost 20% in October, a level last seen in the wake of a currency crisis three years ago. Yet under pressure from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the central bank has lowered interest rates by 400 basis points since September, driving the currency's real yield well below zero.

The central bank has "narrowly avoided fueling a full blown currency crisis today by including a reference to potentially halting the cutting cycle in December," said Simon Harvey, senior FX market analyst at Monex Europe. "However, terminology around such a decision remains loose. Therefore, pressure on the lira remains."

Easier policy in Turkey also leaves the lira vulnerable to further gains in the U.S. dollar and higher Treasury yields as speculation grows the Federal Reserve may tighten policy sooner than anticipated. The greenback rose to the strongest level in more than a year against a basket of peers this week, piling pressure on riskier emerging-market currencies that have benefited from exceptionally loose policy in the developed world.

The lira has lost around a third of its value against the dollar since December and is poised for a ninth straight yearly loss. It has weakened more than 20% since the central bank started cutting rates in September.

Before the decision, the chairman of Turkey's biggest business group Tusiad said the central bank shouldn't forget its main target of controlling inflation. It reflects mounting concerns that extended currency weakness risk destabilizing the economy which sits on \$446 billion of gross external debt, according to central bank data.

Turkish companies and the government have to repay \$13 billion in foreign-currency debt in the final two months of the year. More than half — \$8 billion — is set to mature in November, the biggest amount due over the next 10 months, according to the latest available data.

Turkey's benchmark BIST 100 Index erased earlier gains to trade 2.4% higher after the decision. The yield on 10-year government bonds jumped as much as 57 basis points, the biggest increase since September.



Qatar Not Reporting All Work-Linked Deaths

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar is not adequately investigating and reporting worker deaths including unexplained fatalities among seemingly healthy laborers, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said.

The small but wealthy Persian Gulf state, where foreigners make up the majority of the population, has faced scrutiny over worker conditions in the run up to its hosting the football 2022 World Cup next November.

Data collected at government-run trauma centers and ambulances in 2020 showed 50 workers died and more than 500 were severely injured, the ILO said. "Most were suffered by migrant workers from Bangladesh, India and Nepal, mainly in the construction industry. Falls from height and road traffic accidents were the top causes of severe injuries, followed by falling objects on worksites," the report said.

The ILO said numbers could be higher as authorities don't classify all work-related deaths as such, including unexplained deaths among healthy workers and heat-related fatalities.

That data gap should be addressed, with better injury investigations, Max Tuñón, head of the ILO's Qatar office, told Reuters. In August, Amnesty International criticized Qatar for failing to investigate thousands of unexplained deaths.

A widely-reported Guardian newspaper analysis in February concluded 6,500 South Asian migrants had died in Qatar since 2010. However, Tuñón cautioned that Qatar worker death data is frequently reported without necessary nuance.

"The [Guardian's] number includes all deaths in the migrant population ... without differentiation between migrant workers and the general migrant population, let alone fatalities that resulted from occupational injuries," the ILO said.

Yemen Moves to Tackle Foreign Currency Woes

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India May Create Obstacles To Crypto Trading and Holding



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India plans to tighten regulation of cryptocurrencies to deter investors from holding them though the government is unlikely to follow through with an earlier plan to ban private digital coins, according to two sources familiar with the discussions.

Instead, it could allow only those that have been pre-approved by the government to be listed and traded on exchanges -- an intentionally cumbersome process, said the sources, who asked not to be named as the discussions are private.

"Only when a coin has been approved by the government can it be traded, else holding or trading it in may attract a penalty," said the first source.

The government aims to introduce and pass a cryptocurrency law in the parliamentary session that begins this month.

Such a pre-verification approach would create obstacles for thousands of peer-to-peer currencies that thrive on being outside the ambit of regulatory scrutiny.

On Thursday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said all democratic nations must work together to ensure cryptocurrency "does not end up in wrong hands, which can spoil our youth" -- his first public comments on the subject.

Earlier this year, the government considered criminalizing the possession, issuance, mining, trading and transference of crypto-assets.

Its stance has changed since then -- but only slightly, according to the two sources, who said hefty capital gains and other taxes may be levied to discourage cryptocurrency trading.

A senior government source said investors "will have to pay over 40% on any crypto gains so far", adding that additional goods and services sales taxes, and securities transaction taxes, could be levied on top of any capital gains taxes.

Iranian Actress Wins American Film Festival Award

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian actress Nassim Afsharpour won the best acting award of the American short film festival Route 66, for acting in the short film “House of Fortune”.

Directed by Adel Mashoori, the short film experienced its 12th international presence in the festival. It has previously received best acting and best and best cinematography in Symorna film festival in Turkey and also nominated for the best international short film in Dreams Fantastic film festival in the U.S.



Asia Looks to Release Oil Reserves After U.S. Request

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The world’s biggest economies said today they were looking into releasing oil from their strategic reserves, following a rare request from the United States for a coordinated move to cool global energy prices.

The U.S. move reflects frustration with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies such as Russia who have rebuffed Washington’s requests to speed up oil production as the world economy rebounds from the pandemic.

It also comes as U.S. President Joe Biden fends off political pressure ahead of midterm elections next year over rising gasoline prices and other costs driven by the recovery.

The Biden administration has asked big oil buyers such as India and Japan — as well as China for the first time — to consider releasing stocks of crude, several people familiar with the requests told Reuters.

Oil prices sank about 4 per cent to a six-week low after Reuters reports about the U.S. request and China’s decision to release some crude, before recovering some ground later on Thursday.

“Brent is now under 80 bucks,” said John Driscoll, managing director at consultancy JTD Energy in Singapore. “It’s having a short-term effect on oil markets. It’s probably good for at least a 5 per cent correction.”

China’s state reserve bureau told Reuters it was working on a release of its crude oil reserves, although it declined to comment on the U.S. request.

A Japanese industry ministry official said Washington had requested Tokyo’s cooperation in dealing with higher oil prices but he could not confirm whether the request included a coordinated releases of reserves. By law, Japan cannot release reserves to lower prices, the official said.

A South Korean official confirmed the United States had asked Seoul to release some oil reserves.

“We are thoroughly reviewing the U.S. request, however, we do not release oil reserve because of rising oil prices. We could release oil reserve in case of supply imbalance, but not to respond to rising oil prices,” the official said.

The United States and its allies have coordinated strategic petroleum reserve releases before, such as in 2011 when supplies were hit by a war in OPEC member Libya.

But because the current proposal involves China for the first time, it represents an unprecedented challenge to Opec, the cartel that has influenced oil prices for over five decades. There was no immediate official reaction from OPEC+ members.

One source in the group, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said it would be surprising to see stocks released for the purpose of lowering prices, rather than meeting a supply shortage.

Opec sees signs of an oil supply surplus building from next month, Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo said earlier this week.

Another OPEC+ source said A release of strategic reserves was, “not necessary, as Covid cases are increasing and surely new containment measures will be imposed that will reduce the demand for oil and affect prices”. A third source said a release would have a “limited impact”.



The U.S. SPR was set up in the 1970s after the Arab Oil Embargo to ensure the United States has adequate supply to weather an emergency.

If China is doing its release in coordination with other nations, it would be the first such time, said Sengyick Tee, analyst at Beijing-based consultancy SIA Energy.

China rolled out its first public auction of state crude oil reserves to a select group of domestic refiners in September, aiming to stabilize energy prices.

Biden and top aides have discussed the possibility of a coordinated release of stockpiled oil with close allies including Japan, South Korea and India, as well as with China, over the past several weeks, sources told Reuters earlier.

OPEC and other major producers including Russia, known collectively as OPEC+, have been gradually unwinding record production cuts made in 2020 by raising output by 400,000 barrels per day per month.

But they have resisted Biden’s calls for more rapid increases, arguing that the rebound in crude demand could be fragile and there were already signs of a surplus building in 2022.

The Biden administration had not addressed the “root cause” of high prices, which was limited domestic U.S. supply, said Tilak Doshi, managing director at Doshi Consulting in Singapore.

He cited the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline to bring oil from Canada’s Western tar sands to U.S. refiners, and bans on drilling on Federal lands.

The Biden administration had been “doing everything to stymie domestic oil and gas producers,” Doshi said, adding that he believed Washington’s call for a coordinated response from allies plus China was a first.

Iraq Ready to Pay Back Debts to Iran for Imported Gas

TEHRAN (MNA) - Spokesman for Iraqi Ministry of Electricity said that his country is ready to pay debts to Iran for the imported gas.

Speaking in an interview with Iranian news outlet on Friday, Ahmed Musa Spokesman for Iraqi Ministry of Electricity said that the ministry is ready to pay the total amount owed to Iran for ongoing gas imports for its power plants.

He stressed that the previous debts belong to Iraqi Ministry of Finance and there is no problem for the current invoices to be paid by Iraqi Ministry of Electricity to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iraq’s previous debts to Iran relate to the Ministry of Finance and Iraqi Ministry of Electricity has told all parties, including former government and parliament and also Iraqi Ministry of Finance that Iran’s debts must be paid fully, Musa stressed.

The spokesman for the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity had been previously quoted as saying that Iraqi government has agreed with Iran on its obligations to pay all debts related to gas and electricity imports from Iran and was ready to pay its debts.

Azerbaijan’s Transit Opportunities Can Be Alternative to Suez Canal

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Azerbaijan’s transit opportunities can make its roads an alternative to the Suez Canal, Director General of the Transit and International Affairs Department of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) Javad Hedayati told Trend.

According to the official, Azerbaijan’s roads and road infrastructure are at an advanced level. Azerbaijan has invested in this direction and done great work. The Azerbaijani state has taken steps in this direction with a very clear and transparent strategy.

“The incident involving a ship in the Suez Canal last year and the long-term closure of the canal was a threat to international trade. After this incident, many

countries began to think about finding a solution to this restriction,” he added.

Hedayati noted that Azerbaijan can connect Iran to Russia, the Caucasus and the Black Sea in the west of the Caspian Sea.

“In addition, this route, where Iran and Azerbaijan are located, can connect East Asia, China, South Korea and India, which have several trillion dollars in trade with European countries,” he said.

The director-general emphasized that Iran and Azerbaijan should make the most of this golden opportunity. Because if transit roads are not used in the next 2-3 years, this opportunity may not be easily obtained again. In this regard, it is important to activate the route between the two countries. So that, this route can always maintain its activity.

Monthly Loading...

FROM PAGE 1

According to PMO’s Ports Affairs Director Ravanbakhsh Behzadian, loading and unloading of goods at the country’s commercial ports reached 82.24 million tons in the mentioned period, while the figure stood at 74.31 million tons in the past year’s same time span.

During the said seven months, unloading and loading operations in the container sector reached 11.09 million tons, for dry bulk the figure stood at 26.56 million tons, in liquid bulk the figure was 2.56 million tons, while for general cargo (general and miscellaneous goods) it was 11.46 million tons and for the petroleum products loading and unloading volume amounted to 30.57 million tons, Behzadian said.

He noted that the loading and unloading operations in the dry bulk sector grew by 14.5 percent in the mentioned period compared to the last year’s same time span, while in the liquid bulk sector the figure increased by 27.5 percent, in the general cargo sector the growth was 8.8 Percent and the petroleum sector also experienced a growth of 17.1 percent compared to the same period last year.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country’s

ports as the major gates of exports and imports play some significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition, to facilitate loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that PMO has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country’s ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in a course of five years.

According to the Ports and Maritime Organization, the capacity of the country’s ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in the previous calendar year.

The total capacity of the country’s ports is expected to reach 280 million tons by the end of the current fiscal year (late March 2022).

North American Leaders to Curb Methane, Boost Vaccines

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Canada, Mexico and the U.S. are set to agree to curbs on methane and a boost to COVID-19 vaccine donations during the first leaders’ meeting in five years, senior officials in the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden told reporters.

The U.S. officials, who spoke on background, said the three countries are expected to agree to cut methane emissions in their oil-and-gas sectors by 60 to 75 percent by 2030 during their meeting in Washington, DC, on Thursday.

Canada and Mexico are also set to announce plans to donate millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines — initially loaned to them by the U.S. — to other countries, one of the officials said. The deals are part of a larger effort by Biden to revive the so-called Three Amigos, a North American working group abandoned by his predecessor, former President Donald Trump.

Washington wants to shore up alliances with the neighboring countries to help reorient the economy to a lighter carbon footprint, fight the pandemic, ease immigration pressures and compete with China, the officials said.

With an eye towards the Asian superpower, the leaders

Iran to Produce 20m Doses of Domestic Covid Vaccine

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran will have produced some 20 million doses of the Razi Cov Pars coronavirus vaccine by March 2022.

“So far, we have produced as many as 5 million doses of the Razi Cov Pars vaccine, and with a permit for emergency use being issued, we are seeking to produce 20 million doses by the end of the [Persian] year (ending March 21, 2022) and hand them over to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education,” said Mohammad Fallah, the deputy head of the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, which has developed the vaccine. “It is up to the health ministry to decide on the timing of the public distribution of the Razi Cov Pars vaccine across the country, and whenever an agreement is concluded and the vaccine is pre-purchased, the vaccine can be supplied to different centers through the health ministry’s distribution networks and made available to the public in different parts of the country,” he added.

He said a protocol is being drawn up to use this vaccine as a booster dose for all other COVID-19 vaccines.

Razi Cov Pars is the second Iranian coronavirus vaccine the clinical trial of which has already begun. The recombinant protein method has been used in developing Razi Cov Pars, making it one of the safest vaccines.

Razi Cov Pars can both be inhaled or injected.

Iran-China...

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Speaking at a regular press conference on Friday, China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Beijing always believes that upholding and implementing the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is the “only effective way” to resolve the outstanding issues pertaining to Iran’s nuclear program.

“All parties should step up diplomatic efforts and take concrete actions to push for a smooth restart of negotiations on resuming compliance with the JCPOA and achieve positive results.” He expressed hope that all relevant parties would pay heed to the “overall interest, be rational and exercise restraint, and avoid disrupting diplomatic efforts to advance the negotiations.”

Tehran Urges Clarification Of...

FROM PAGE 1

In May, the UN Human Rights Council agreed to initiate an international probe into “systematic” human rights abuses committed during the asymmetrical war between Israel and Palestinian resistance groups in the besieged Gaza Strip. The 47-member forum adopted a resolution presented by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC and the Palestinian delegation to the UN, by a vote of 24 states in favor, 9 against, and 14 abstentions.

The UN rights body agreed to establish “an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry” into the war to probe “underlying root causes of recurrent tensions and instability, including systematic discrimination and repression based on group identity.”

Israeli troops have on numerous occasions been caught on camera brutally killing Palestinians, with the videos going viral online and sparking international condemnation. The Tel Aviv regime has been criticized for its extensive use of lethal force against and extrajudicial killing of Palestinians who do not pose an immediate threat to the occupation forces or to the Israeli settlers.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to launch an immediate investigation into the Tel Aviv regime’s crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories after Israeli forces shot dead a young man in the northern part of the West Bank.

IRGC...

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier this month, it released detailed footage of its confrontation on October 25 against an American act of piracy targeting an Iranian fuel shipment.

During the episode, American forces confiscated the tanker that was carrying a cargo of Iranian oil in the strategic Sea of Oman, transferring its consignment of crude to another vessel.

The IRGC then staged a maritime operation against the second vessel, landing its helicopters on its deck and navigating the ship towards Iranian waters.

Tehran, Islamabad...

FROM PAGE 1

Co-chaired by Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin and Pakistan’s Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood, the meeting was attended by high-ranking Iranian and Pakistani officials as well as traders and businessmen from the two countries.

Banking relations, customs cooperation, border markets, barter trade, and coronavirus pandemic issues were among the subjects discussed at the meeting, after which the businessmen from the two sides held B2B meetings to explore avenues of mutual cooperation.

Mbappe Becomes Godfather to Panda Cub

PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris St-Germain football star Kylian Mbappe and Chinese Olympic diving champion Zhang Jiaqi became godparents on Thursday to two baby pandas born at a French zoo earlier this year.

In a ceremony at Beauval Zoo, the three month-old twin cubs Yuandudu and Huanlili nuzzled each other in a specially made mobile pen, at times trying to lift themselves onto their still weak limbs

Mbappe described it as a “big moment” for him.

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De Bruyne Tests Positive for Covid

LONDON (Dispatches) - Kevin De Bruyne has been ruled out of Manchester City's clash with Everton and next week's Champions League showdown against Paris Saint-Germain after testing positive for coronavirus, manager Pep Guardiola said.

The City boss said De Bruyne was isolating for 10 days after receiving the positive test during the recent international break.

After facing Everton in domestic action, City, who are three points behind Premier League leaders Chelsea, host PSG in a crucial fixture on Wednesday.

Curry Scores 40 as Warriors Top Cavs

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry saved 20 of his game-high 40 points for the final 12 minutes as the Golden State Warriors rallied from a 13-point deficit to defeat the host Cleveland Cavaliers 104-89.

Curry's 40 points featured 9-for-16 shooting on 3-pointers. The Warriors made 15 threes in the game, six in the fourth period. Draymond Green contributed a game-high 14 assists as Golden State won for the ninth time in 10 games.

Darius Garland paced Cleveland with 25 points. Dean Wade and Kevin Love chipped in with 17 points each for the Cavaliers, who lost their third in a row as they continued to play without Evan Mobley and Collin Sexton.



76ers 103, Nuggets 89

Tyrese Maxey scored 22 points, Seth Curry had 20 and visiting Philadelphia beat Denver to snap a five-game losing streak.

Tobias Harris scored 17, Shake Milton and Charles Bassey had 12 apiece and Georges Niang scored 11 for the short-handed 76ers. Joel Embiid and Matisse Thybulle remain sidelined after testing positive for COVID-19. Nikola Jokic had 30 points and 10 rebounds, Will Barton scored 19 points and Monte Morris finished with 11 points for the Nuggets.

Grizzlies 120, Clippers 108

Ja Morant compiled 28 points, five rebounds and five assists and Brandon Clarke keyed a fourth-quarter run that powered Memphis past visiting Los Angeles.

Clarke scored 10 of his 14 points off the bench in the fourth quarter. Dillon Brooks and Jaren Jackson Jr. both finished with 18 points, and Desmond Bane added 16.

Paul George led all Los Angeles players with 23 points, Reggie Jackson added 18 points with five assists, and Ivica Zubac had 13 points and seven rebounds.

Heat 112, Wizards 97

Jimmy Butler scored 32 points and Bam Adebayo added 20 points and nine rebounds as Miami extended its winning streak to four games, beating visiting Washington.

Butler added five assists and four steals, and Gabe Vincent chipped in a season-high 18 points in 25 minutes off the Miami bench. P.J. Tucker scored 15 points.

Bradley Beal scored 30 points to lead Washington, which has lost two straight following a five-game winning streak. Kyle Kuzma recorded 19 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists.

Berrettini to Miss Davis Cup Due to Injury



ROME (Dispatches) - Italian Matteo Berrettini said that he will not compete at the Davis Cup Finals starting this month due to injury and described his withdrawal as “painful and disappointing.”

The 25-year-old was forced to pull out of the ATP Finals with an abdominal injury on Tuesday and he was replaced in the season-ending tournament by compatriot Jannik Sinner.

Berrettini, Italy's top-ranked player, will also miss the Davis Cup finals, which take place from November 25-December 5. Italy will face the United States and Colombia in Group E of the 18-team tournament.

“This is the last thing I wanted to announce to end the best season of my career. It was a fantastic year, full of emotions, victories, painful defeats and unfortunately injuries,” Berrettini wrote on Instagram.

“This last one is the reason why I cannot participate at the Davis Cup this year. It is pointless to tell you how painful and disappointing these last few days have been; of all the possible scenarios this is definitely the hardest to stomach.”

Berrettini reached his first Grand Slam final at Wimbledon this year, where he lost to Novak Djokovic, and rose to number seven in the world rankings.

Mercedes' Brazil Grand Prix Appeal Rejected

DOHA (Dispatches) Formula One Officials have rejected the request by Mercedes for a review of Max Verstappen's driving during the Sao Paulo Grand Prix, motorsport's governing body said.

Verstappen appeared to force Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes wide but the FIA said the team's appeal failed to raise significant new evidence in the case. After the incident, Hamilton passed Verstappen 11 laps later and went to win the race last Sunday, cutting the gap on the Dutchman to 14 points.

Mercedes had based its review on the argument that footage from the on-board camera from both cars had not been available when stewards decided not to investigate during the race at Interlagos.

Hamilton tried to overtake Verstappen around the outside on a turn but the Red Bull driver ran wide and both ended up off the track in the run-off area.

The Mercedes driver, who had started 10th on the grid, went on to win and described it as “the best weekend I have experienced in probably my whole career”.

Both drivers will lock horns again at the first ever Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday.

Van Bronckhorst Named Rangers Manager

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Former Netherlands midfielder Giovanni van Bronckhorst has been named head coach of Rangers following the departure of Steven Gerrard to Aston Villa, the Scottish champions said.

Gerrard, who ended Celtic's nine-year domination by guiding Rangers to the league title in an unbeaten season, left the club last week.

“I feel so lucky to be going to work with a squad which is in a great position on all fronts and largely has that experience of being winners,” Van Bronckhorst told the club website.

“I look forward to carrying on and enhancing the work that has been done already alongside (sporting director) Ross Wilson and the board of the club, and I'm grateful for the chance to work again at this huge football club.”



Rodgers Quashes “Not Real” Man Utd Talk

LONDON (AFP) - Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers has dismissed speculation linking him with Manchester United as pressure mounts on Old Trafford boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

Rodgers is believed to be one of the leading contenders to replace Solskjaer if the under-fire Norwegian gets the sack.

United travel to Watford on Saturday with Solskjaer desperate for a victory after his side's lacklustre defeat against Manchester City before the international break.

That loss came hot on the heels of a humiliating 5-0 home thrashing at the hands of bitter rivals Liverpool, leaving Solskjaer fighting to save his job.

Rodgers, who led Leicester to FA Cup glory last season, was asked whether he would be interested in taking over at United during his press conference on Thursday ahead of Leicester's clash with Chelsea this weekend.

“There's two things. Firstly it is really disrespectful to ask the question when you have a manager in place, a good manager and a good man, who is working hard at the club,” Rodgers said.

“Secondly I can't really comment on it, because it is not something that is real.

“I am here as the Leicester City manager, proud to be here, privileged to be here and fully committed to the players, the club, the ownership.

“That's about it, all the other noise around that is something we can't control.”

It is not the first time Rodgers has been the subject of speculation over other jobs during his spell at the King Power Stadium, having been linked to Arsenal, Tottenham and Newcastle in recent years.

Federer Is Very Important For Our Sport

TURIN (Dispatches) - World number one Novak Djokovic said on Wednesday he hopes rival Roger Federer will return to competitive action soon and be able to compete with the best again after the Swiss great said he would miss the Australian Open in January.

Federer, 40, told Swiss media he is unlikely to return to competition until mid-2022 as he recovers from multiple knee surgeries and would be “extremely surprised” if he was able to play at Wimbledon, a Grand Slam he has won a record eight times.

The 20-times major champion said he would be able to resume running in January and return to training on the court in March or April.

“Roger is an icon of our sport and people around the world love him. They love watching him play, love seeing him around,” Djokovic said after securing a semi-final spot at the ATP Finals with a 6-3 6-2 victory over Russian Andrey Rublev.

“He's very important for our sport on and off the court. For the sake of our sport, I sincerely hope that we can see him play at least another time. I'm sure he doesn't want to end his career this way.

“I think he's going to definitely give it a last push, a last try. For everything he has achieved and created for this sport, he deserves to play and deserves to have a proper farewell.”

Djokovic is looking to match Federer's record of six titles at the season-ending ATP Finals.



Ruud Books ATP Finals Last Four Spot

TURIN (Dispatches) - Casper Ruud will face Daniil Medvedev in the last four of the ATP Finals after coming from behind to beat Andrey Rublev 2-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/5).

Both players knew a win at the Pala Alpitour in Turin would take them into the Saturday's semi-finals and Ruud impressed in coming from behind to make sure he will be taking on the world number two at the season-ending event.

Fifth seed Rublev came into the match unbeaten in his four previous meetings with Ruud but after a strong start fell to a deserved defeat, failing to qualify for the knockout rounds from the Green Group.

The way Rublev strolled through the first set suggested a quick victory but Ruud fought back gamely in the second set, forcing his higher-ranked opponent into unforced errors and hitting 13 winners as he broke Rublev twice to take the set.

Rublev was visibly angry with the way his performance levels dropped, taking his frustration out on his racket after allowing Ruud to immediately break back in game four to level the set at 2-2 when he had the match by the scruff of the neck.

From there Ruud gained further confidence and wasn't even fazed when his serve was broken in game five of the third set, hitting straight back to level the scores.

He eventually came through the tie-break after a tense round of games held to serve, in which both players pulled out some beautiful shots, to set up a huge clash with U.S. Open champion Medvedev.

