

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 129,053 With 97 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Majlis Speaker Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf Urged for Transparency in All Administration Parts, Saying That Those Matters That Affect People's Lives and Are Directly Related to Society Should Be Transparent

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President Calls for Using Public Funds to Boost Production



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Kremlin Accuses West of Artificially Whipping Up Ukraine Tensions



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Hamilton Cruises In Qatar to Maintain Title Momentum



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Official Calls for Developing Trade Ties With China

TEHRAN (IRNA)- The managing director of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare Ministry for international affairs called for taking advantage of the capacities of the Chinese Embassy in Tehran to develop trade ties with Iran.

Referring to the capacities of the Social Security Investment Company (SHASTA), Hamed Foroozan said that it is the biggest economic body in Iran and the country tends to materialize cooperation and investment between SHASTA and holdings in oil, gas, joint investment, petrochemical, infrastructure, cement, mine, tourism, transportation and financial fields.

He pointed to SHASTA's tendency to use Chinese active economic companies to implement its projects worth about €10b.

He also expressed interest in using capacity created by the 25-year comprehensive cooperation agreement between China and Iran, adding that talks should be held with Beijing on investment in petrochemical sector which is of interest to China and among its imports.

Meanwhile, the head of China commercial office referred to the serious determination of the Iranian and Chinese companies with regard to developing cooperation. The Chinese official termed SHASTA as one of the most important economic bodies in Iran and welcomed its tendency to cooperate with Chinese companies. He noted that the both sides can cooperate in investment and financing fields.

Azerbaijan-Iran Trade Up by 22%

BAKU (Dispatches) - Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev has said that the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Iran has increased by 22 percent in the first nine months of 2021.

He made the remarks at a meeting with the Iranian roads and urban development minister in Tehran on November 21.

Noting that the trade turnover has increased despite the fact that the coronavirus pandemic has had a negative impact on the global economy, the minister stated that the transportation between the two countries did not stop.

"We need to build new transport infrastructure, including bridges, to further develop economic relations between the two countries," he said. Mustafayev noted that working groups of Azerbaijan and Iran are currently working on a document on preferential trade between the two countries.

He stated that the development of trade relations between Azerbaijan and Iran is being discussed, adding that there are joint projects in the energy, electricity fields, which are already being completed.

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U.S. Must Accept Reality And Lift Sanctions



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The United States must "accept reality" and agree to lift its sanctions on Iran during next week's nuclear talks in Vienna, according to Tehran's top negotiator.

Representatives of Iran and the other signatories of its 2015 nuclear deal will be in Austria starting November 29 to try to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which the U.S. abandoned in 2018.

Iran, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany will resume six rounds of talks that stopped in June to allow Iran's new president Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, to form his administration.

As before, the U.S. will participate indirectly in negotiations that if successful will see harsh US sanctions on Iran lifted, and bring Iran back to full compliance with the terms of the accord.

Iran has previously said it is ready for a "good agreement" in Vienna, but the U.S. must accept responsibility for reneging on the JCPOA, lift all sanctions imposed since 2018 at once, and guarantee it will not leave the deal again.

But the U.S. has said it is prepared to lift sanctions "inconsistent" with the accord, signaling it wishes to keep some of the human rights and "terrorism" sanctions imposed over the past three years. It has also said time to reach an agreement is running out as Iran's nuclear program continues to advance.

What follows is a Q&A of Aljazeera TV with Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's deputy foreign minister, who will lead the Iranian negotiating team in the Austrian capital. In written replies to Al Jazeera, he discusses Iran's position in the talks on sanctions and nuclear advances, the region, and what it expects of European signatories.

Aljazeera: It appears Iran and the US have adopted conflicting positions prior to the Vienna talks, especially in terms of scope and ways of lifting sanctions. Considering the current situation, what is your assessment of the possibility of achieving a good agreement?

Ali Bagheri Kani: It is widely believed that the United States, by withdrawing from the JCPOA, breached the deal blatantly and violated UNSC Resolution 2231 flagrantly.

However, Iran, having overcome the so-called maximum pressure campaign, is sitting at the negotiating table with full preparedness, capacity and total commitment to the 2015 deal. That's why the Americans, while resorting to deception, try to exploit the political and media environment in their own favor. But it is not to their advantage. They should accept reality and abide by all their commitments.

Q: You recently said "we don't have nuclear negotiations" in Vienna since the terms of the JCPOA have been previously agreed upon. Does this mean that Iran can reverse its steps to advance its nuclear programme and limit IAEA inspections without needing talks? What will happen to a workgroup that was formed during the previous rounds of talks in Vienna to discuss nuclear issues?

A:Iran continues its nuclear activities legitimately within the framework stipulated in paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, the reason behind which has been fully explained in the text of the nuclear deal. Until the violating and non-compliant party to the deal does not demonstrate, in practice, its commitment to the JCPOA, there is no reason for Iran to abandon its rights and entitlements guaranteed by the deal. Everything is clear and there is nothing ambiguous about the nuclear deal to negotiate.

The U.S. and the EU must show that they have the political will to implement what they agreed to do in 2015. They must overcome domestic considerations to resolve this.

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U.S. Warns Israel Against Launching Attacks on Iran Nuclear Sites

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A new report says U.S. officials have warned the Israeli regime against carrying out attacks against Iranian nuclear sites, stating that such an act of aggression would be counterproductive and would prompt the Islamic Republic to rebuild an even more sophisticated and efficient uranium enrichment system.

According to the report published by the American daily newspaper New York Times on Sunday, Americans have praised the Tel Aviv regime for the attack against Iran's nuclear facilities in the central city of Natanz and the assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh last year and described the criminal acts as "tactically satisfying," but said they are "ultimately counterproductive."

However, officials familiar with the behind-the-scenes discussion between Washington and Tel Aviv said that Israeli officials have dismissed the warnings in return.

The report went on to say that the matter was among many disagreements between the United States and Israel on how to stop Tehran's civilian nuclear program.

Further complicating the issues was the fact that Iran has apparently managed to improve its defenses, particularly in the cyberspace, the New York Times report said, meaning that launching cyber attacks like the one by the malicious Stuxnet computer virus that was created jointly by the United States and Israel to damage Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities, was no longer as effective.

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Iran, UAE Ties On Good Track

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Stating that some countries are making miscalculations on the eve of the Vienna talks beginning, the Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson said that the focus of Iran in the Vienna talks will be on lifting sanctions.

Speaking in his weekly press conference, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh answered questions on a wide range of topics.

Answering a question about the meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its impact on the Vienna talks, Khatibzadeh said, "Tonight, IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi will travel to Tehran. Iran-Agency relations have always tried to be technical and within the framework of safeguards and procedures of the Agency. We hope this trip will be as constructive as before."

Iran has always urged the Agency not to avoid political behaviour in technical issues, he said. "The Agency is well aware that all the acts of sabotage committed by the Zionist regime in Iran, which have been accompanied by the silence of some countries, have had a significant impact on some technical aspects."

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Iran, Iraq to Expand Trade Relations In Agro Field

TEHRAN (MNA) - Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq will expand their bilateral trade ties in the field of agriculture.

Speaking in a meeting with Iraqi Ambassador to Iran Naseer Abdul Mohsen Abdullah in Tehran on Sunday, Alimorad Sarafrazi the Director-General of Ministry of Agriculture for Specialized Organizations and International Affairs emphasized the need for the expansion of scientific, technical and trade relations between Iran and Iraq.

Turning to the very close and vast relations between the two countries of Iran and Iraq especially in the agricultural field, he stressed the need to set up various specialized working groups in the field of agriculture.

He then referred to some challenges and obstacles in the field of trade relations between the two countries and stated that improving and establishing mechanisms for plant quarantine, monitoring animal health at common borders of the two countries, creating unity of procedure at different border crossings between the two countries and also promoting infrastructures for transporting goods between the two countries seem essential in that respect.

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Pakistan to Exchange Rice for LPG With Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Adviser to Pakistani Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood says that Pakistan would exchange rice for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Iran under a barter arrangement, local media reported.

Daily Pakistan Today reported that the adviser while talking to media said that "when we went to Iran what we talked about was the barter trade, almost all pieces of the jigsaw had been put in place". "We will export rice to Iran and import LPG from there it is purely a barter deal. They have agreed in principle and we have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU)," he said, adding that the barter would begin within a month or two.

The 9th meeting of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee was held in Tehran on November 6-7 during which both sides had agreed to increase the bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion. Adviser to Pakistani Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood led the Pakistani delegation in the JTC meeting.

Meanwhile, a Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Zahedan Chamber of Commerce to strengthen cooperation. Earlier Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood talking to IRNA said soon a barter trade mechanism will be established with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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President Felicitates Lebanon on National Day

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a message to the Lebanese President Michel Aoun, the Iranian President congratulated the country's national day.

"I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to Your Excellency and the people of your country on the anniversary of independence of the Republic of Lebanon", said Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. "I hope that with His Excellency's measures, the efforts of the Lebanese officials, and people, we will see a stable, secure and growing country and that the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to make bilateral efforts to expand bilateral relations in the mutual interest", he added.

President Calls for Using Public Funds to Boost Production

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - At the meeting of the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Board, the Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade reported on the actions of the Market Regulation Headquarters in controlling prices, especially food items.

In the Sunday night meeting of the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Board, chaired by President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, a report was presented on the situation of the country's macroeconomic indicators and the process of regulating various markets.

In this report, the Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade, while explaining the actions of the Market Regulation Headquarters in the field of price control, especially food items, considered the decisions of this headquarters to be effective in stabilizing the market.

Emphasizing the importance of market stability and rationalization of commodity prices, the President called for the continuation of the implementation of the decisions of the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Board and the Market Regulation Headquarters.

In this meeting, a report on the trend of increasing car production in the country was presented and ways to strengthen domestic production using public funds were examined.

Meanwhile Emphasizing the need for close and mutual relations between the government and scientific communities, research centers and universities, the President said, "Elites and scientific communities should propose a scientific and executive solution to the various issues and problems of the country in this two-way relationship."

Referring to the problem of water shortage and drought, Raisi stated in the cabinet meeting, "Addressing the problem of water shortage is not limited to the



Ministry of Energy and all relevant agencies have a duty to consult with the academic community for a national solution to the drought".

The President stated that if the people are complaining about an issue, we have a duty to explain to the people the different dimensions of the existing problems and solutions.

Raisi described changing the cultivation pattern as one of the ways to deal with water shortage and said, "It is necessary to cultivate crops in accordance with the climate and water resources, and the necessary training should be provided to farmers".

He further described it necessary to pay attention to the educational and professional future of students and elites and said, "The Ministries of "Science", "Health and Medical Education" and the Vice President for Science should use the capacity of graduates and give students hope for their future careers".

In another part of his speech, the President referred to the need for organs to be prepared to deal with cyberattacks and stressed, "Services provided to the public in the context of cyberspace must be completely secure and services and data must be protected against cyberattacks".

He continued referring to false claims against the government and spread of rumors in the country's media and emphasized, "Some people want to damage the

Dual Nationals Will Not Face Detention During Stays

TEHRAN (PresSTV) - Foreign Ministry is to launch a program under which it can give guarantees that dual nationals traveling to the country will not face detention or any other legal problem.

Amir-Abdollahian said on Sunday that the Ministry will soon launch an online service to enable dual nationals to check their legal records before they travel to Iran.

"A new service will come on line within nearly a week which helps these individuals and says that you have no problem for entry and return," Amir Abdollahian was quoted as saying by the semi-official ISNA news agency.

"... and if a problem occurs the Foreign Ministry will be responsible and we will guarantee this issue," he said.

The comments come more than a month after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said Iranians living abroad who want to engage in business and investment activities in Iran should not have any concern about their travel to the country.

Raisi said that his government would seek to facilitate the flow of investment into the country from Iranians living in other parts of the world, including in Western countries.

Current Iranian laws do not recognize dual nationality. However, the government and the parliament in the country seem to be willing to legislate on the issue to ease legal restrictions facing dual nationals when traveling to Iran.

Speaking to members of High Council of Iranian Affairs Abroad, Amir-Abdollahian called for a final settlement of the issue, saying the parliament will need to introduce new laws on how dual nationals should be treated.

He said the issue had caused unwanted consequences for Iran, including what he described as Iranophobia campaigns affecting Iranian nationals living abroad.

Intra-Syrian Talks Only Solution to Syria's Crisis

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says promotion of negotiations among all Syrian groups is the only way to find a political solution to Syria's crisis.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Sunday meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy for Syria, Alexander Lavrentiev, who is in Iran heading a delegation.

During the talks, Iran's top diplomat emphasized the need for the continuation of cooperation between Iran and Russia within the framework of talks held in the Kazakh capital, Astana, to resolve the crisis in Syria.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amir-Abdollahian pointed out that promotion of intra-Syrian talks is the only path to find a political solution to the country's crisis. He added that Iran and Russia have had a "quite successful" experience of cooperation in Syria upon the demand and will of the Arab country's government.

The Iranian foreign minister also stressed the need to use the successful experience of joint cooperation between Tehran and Moscow in the fight against terrorism in Syria in other areas. He noted that the same model of cooperation should be used to help both countries play an effective role in economic fields, such as reconstruction of Syria, and to help restore stability to the war-ravaged country.

Iran Backs Territorial Integrity of Regional States

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the country supports the territorial integrity of regional states, adding that international borders in the region cannot be changed.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Sunday meeting with the First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev, who was in Tehran for a one-day visit.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the latest developments in the Caucasus region as well as cooperation between Tehran and Baku in various fields of mutual interest.

Stressing Iran's unwavering position on supporting the territorial integrity of all regional countries, Iran's foreign minister emphasized that international borders in the region are unchangeable.

He also hailed the growing trend of mutual trade ties and profound bonds between the two nations, saying that last year's liberation of Azerbaijan's territories in a war with the neighboring Armenia opened a new chapter in the two countries' economic relations. The two neighboring countries fought a six-week war last year in which Azeri troops drove Armenian forces out of swathes of territory they had long controlled in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave.

Although the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, ended in a Russian-brokered ceasefire, clashes on the border have persisted at irregular intervals this year, occasionally causing fatalities.

Iran's top diplomat noted that the two countries must take advantage of their mutual potentialities in various fields of trade, transportation, energy and tourism.

Highlighting economic capabilities of Iran, Amir-Abdollahian declared readiness of Iranian firms to participate in the reconstruction projects in the liberated Azerbaijani territories.

He added that in view of successful COVID-19 vaccination programs carried out by the two countries, they should consider facilitation of exchanges between their nationals and reestablish mutual flights.

The visiting Azerbaijani official, for his part, said he had already held constructive meetings with Iranian ministers of petroleum as well as roads and urban development, adding that the two countries are close to signing important agreements in oil, gas and transportation sectors.

Mustafayev also commended the constructive role played by the Iranian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in settling the recent tensions in the Caucasus region, saying that the two countries' joint economic cooperation commission will hold a session in early 2022. Amir-Abdollahian also called for more positive steps toward settlement of possible issues between the two countries and the facilitation of the Iranian trucks traveling in the border areas with Azerbaijan.

Interim Agreement Could Be Trap or Opportunity

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A former Iranian diplomat said that the interim agreement idea floated by the U.S. couldn't be judged until its details are clarified, so it could be an opportunity or a trap.

Hamidreza Asefi said on Monday that the current administration in Iran has a proper approach to neutralize US sanctions via domestic mechanisms, but this is a lengthy process that should be done through increasing production power and boosting relations with neighbors.

He said that President Ebrahim Raisi's administration announced that it honored all the commitments of the previous administration and that was in contrast with the US administration conduct in getting out of the previous administration's obligations.

The U.S. paradoxically slaps new sanctions against Iran while stipulating that it is willing to rejoin the JCPOA and the European participants to the deal have refused to abide by their commitments while staying in the deal, Asefi said, adding that this leads the Iranian negotiating team to take a more precautionary approach in the talks to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran Exchanges With Afghanistan, Pakistan to Increase to \$5b

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - Iran's trade exchanges with Afghanistan and Pakistan at eastern border crossings stand at around 1.5 billion dollars per annum, which are planned to increase to 5 billion dollars, an Iranian official predicts.

Saeed Mohammad, the advisor to president and the secretary of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones, said on Monday in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, that one of main priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to expand border trade with eastern neighbors such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Rimdan Border Crossing, Chabahar Free Trade Zone, and Ramshar Special Economic Zone have been appointed as border point to enhance trade ties with the eastern neighboring countries, Mohammad said.

There are some infrastructure plans such as an airport and a railway between two cities of Chabahar and Zabol which can pave the way for developing border trade, he mentioned.

The Iranian authorities are outlining a comprehensive plan to turn Sistan and Baluchestan Province into a free trade zone, he said, adding that following compilation of the document, they will kick-start development of required infrastructure.

Pointing to the proper location of the newly-established city of Ramshar, the advisor argued that the free economic zone can play a key role in expanding Iranian export to Afghanistan.

The advisor to Iran's president visits Sistan and Baluchestan Province to inspect establishment of infrastructures in Ramshar Special Economic Zone.

Iran's Expediency Discernment Council ratified creation of seven FTZs in different Ilam, Sistan and Baluchestan, Kurdistan, Bushehr, Kermanshah, Ardebil, and Golestan provinces.

Sistan and Baluchestan free trade zone encompasses northern parts of this province, including Zabol, Hamoun, Zahak, Hirmand, and Nimrooz.



شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۳۴۵۶۸

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9150035

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
19	PARTS FOR" AIR PACK " AIR COMPRESSOR TYPE HA-550-LT SERIAL NO. T-995-00449-1 TO 00449/3	210 NO

N.I.S.O.C.
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of **2,555 EURO** or 685,450,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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

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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:12
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:21
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:49

85. They said: "By Allah, (never) wilt thou cease to remember Joseph until thou reach the last extremity of illness, or until thou die!"

86. He said: "I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah, and I know from Allah that which ye know not..."

Surah 12. Joseph (85 - 86)

Iran Losing Syrian Market to Turkey

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's share of the Syrian economy is only three percent, but Turkey has taken 30 percent of its trade, says the Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

Mohammad Amirzadeh said that weakness in economic diplomacy has caused Iran to be unable to function defensibly even in areas where it has had a strong presence.

Unfortunately, we have chosen challenges and tensions in many historical places instead of choosing engagement, and the results of this choice have repeatedly shown themselves in different indicators, he added.

Turkey's latest statistics center report shows that the country exported more than \$1.5b to Syria in the nine months of 2021, up 31 percent from the same period last year.

Statistics from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran also show that in the seven months of 1400, Iran's total exports to Syria did not reach even \$104 million.

On the other hand, Turkey's total imports from Syria in the 9 months of 2021 were



about \$134m while Iran's imports from the country in the seven months of 1400 were only \$17m.

According to reports, Iran's Minister of Industry is to travel to Syria to solve the problem of banning "imports of parts" of Iranian cars

The significant trade dispute between Turkey and Iran and Syria comes as the Turkish government is a staunch opponent of the government of President Bashar al-Assad and a supporter of the militias of the country's opposition and Iran, along with Russia, are the most important defenders of the government of Al-Assad.

Meanwhile, the Tehran Chamber of Commerce announced that the government had "revoked the permit to import cars from Iran to Syria."

KSC Sets New Record for Monthly Steel Ingot Production

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – After three years since its foundation, Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) sets a new record for monthly steel ingot production.

The CEO of the company Mr. Amin Ebrahimi announced this achievement and said after three years since its foundation and due to tireless efforts of staff, Khuzestan Steel Company set a new record for monthly production of steel ingots with producing 342,824 tons.

Ebrahimi went on to say that in the condition that the country is under heavy sanctions and facing electricity restrictions, the condition for production has become difficult but none of them could have stopped the strong determination of steel men in the company and they produced the most amount of steel ingots in the month of Aban (October 23-November 21).

He added that this year's autumn has been the most fruitful season of all times for the company because the company first set a new record in the month of Mehr in the monthly production of slab ingot and then in the month of Aban, the company improved its production by setting a new record for monthly production of steel ingot with producing 342,824 tons. The previous record was 338,704 tons which had been set three years ago (February 2018).

Ebrahimi termed development as the secret of sustainable production and said high quality production, presence in the international markets beside developmental approach form the strategic pillars in Khuzestan Steel Company. He went on to say that the policy of the company in the scene of production is to have constant and effective presence in the international markets and providing the domestic rolling-makers as well as earning forex.

He added that in the development sector and with a look at producing 55m tons of steel in the 2025 Outlook, the company in two sections of downstream and upstream steel chain has both defined developmental projects and taken action in direct investment in the mineral exploration.



NIOC Seeking Win-Win Opportunities in Investment Sector

TEHRAN (Shana) – The CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) emphasized the need to facilitate investment in the oil industry, saying: "When we say we should improve contracts and increase bargaining power and attractiveness of projects, it does not necessarily mean changing the nature of past methods, but seeking to improve and create winning opportunities in the investment sector."

According to the National Iranian Oil Company, Mohsen Khojastehmehr said at the meeting honoring Tallin Mansoorian, former director of investment and business of NIORC and introducing Fereydoun Kordzanganeh, "I appreciate Ms. Mansoorian's efforts during her tenure and ...I ask Mr. Kordzanganeh to strengthen the expert body and the investment department in that division."

The CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company stated: "Creating an investment and business management structure in the National Oil Company was a good step that was done in the past and as a necessity it should reach maximum effectiveness."

Khojastehmehr stated that oil activities are both capitalist and income-generating, and that the profitability of activities is highly dependent on investment.



Compassion of the International Foundation's Deprivation Camp

The Charity of Emotions Waterfall Charity has Been Hit by an Earthquake This Time Alongside Good Compatriots

Step by Step
City to city
hand to hand
step by step
It went on ... with the right breath from the east of Iran

It is decorated with the name of light and joy ... the eighth Imam ... is Imam Reza (AS)
And this time with the song of love
Went to Hormozgan
Hearts tied to each other and hand in hand
You have made an effort
And in this crisis, he has made his lips full of smiles
And it has relieved the heart of pain

The director of the deprivation camp of the International Charity Foundation of Abshar Atefeh, Ms. Fatemeh Choupani, said in an interview: Was donated and once again the deprivation camp of this foundation has taken a great step and is still the helmsman of the benevolent charity all over the country.

Divide the sun into particles like the sun
If your fortune is all bread
Let us be God's helping hands on earth
International Waterfall Foundation Charity Waterfall Emotions
Deprivation camp

Bank information to help donors is as follows:

Account number: 1-7720500-759-1878
Card number: 6273811043191250
Bank Name: Sepah Bank (formerly Ansar)
National Bank Number:
IR770630187875907720500001
Website: www.absharatefehah.org
Instagram : abshaar_atefehah
Telegram : t.me/bitolreza
Telecommunication network code
*741*3*800#



Tehran to Hold 15th Iran Plast Int'l Exhibition



TEHRAN (Shana) – The 15th Iran Plast International Exhibition will be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on February 7-9, 2022.

According to the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Iran Plast International Exhibition seeks to provide a basis for the prosperity of the domestic plastics industry market and facilitate the global marketing process and presence of this part of the country's industry in the global markets.

This exhibition is one of the largest plastic industry events in the Middle East and is classified among the most prestigious plastic industry exhibitions in the world.

A statistical look at the last 14 editions of the Iran Plast International Exhibition shows that the event has been able to go through a growing trend with all the problems and issues ahead such as sanctions and especially the global coronavirus pandemic.

Automobile, Auto Part Exports Exceed \$58m in 7 Months

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's exports of automobiles and auto parts have reached \$58.407 million during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that of the mentioned figure \$7.217 million was the value of automobile export.

According to the official, the destinations for the mentioned products were 12 countries on top of which stood Azerbaijan, followed by China, Spain, Russia, Senegal, Ukraine, Iraq and Turkey.

As previously reported, three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 501,635 vehicles during the first seven months of the current year.

The production by the mentioned companies has risen 1.1 percent compared to the previous year's same seven months in which the output stood at 496,095.

During the said seven months, IKCO manufactured 242,276 vehicles, which was 2.8 percent less than the output in the same time span of the previous year.

SAIPA manufactured 192,628 vehicles in the mentioned period. Production by this automaker rose 2.2 percent in comparison to the previous year's same time span in which the output stood at 188,490.

Pars Khodro also manufactured 66,731 vehicles in the period under review, 14.5 percent more than the output in the first seven months of the past year.

Infrastructure Facilities of Persian Gulf Fresh Water Transfer Line "Expandable"



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company and one of the founders of the national mega project of fresh water and transfer of water to Iranian Plateau (Iran Central Desert) says the infrastructure facilities of the fresh water of the Persian Gulf and its transfer line can be expanded.

Eng. Naser Taghizadeh told reporters that fortunately in implementing the national project of transfer line of the Persian Gulf fresh water to the central areas of Iran which is underway with investment and cooperation of three big mineral companies of Chadormalu, Gol Gohar and Mes, and its expansion has been predicted and three water supply lines have been designed and currently one of those lines is exploited.

Taghizadeh who was attending the meeting of Tajali Mines and Metals Development Company added that unfortunately the country is facing with drought and today water is the main concern of the senior officials of the country, adding that this super project of water transfer from the Persian Gulf can at least transfer 600,000 cubic meters of water per day to the central regions of the country.

He noted that currently in its industries, Chadormalu Company only uses water being transferred from the Persian Gulf and it is ready to participate in completing the water supply to other regions in the country with economic considerations.

Meanwhile touching upon Tajali Company whose shares are to be listed in the Far Bourse, Taghizadeh said that this project-center company has been launched for the first time in the country and Chadormalu Company wholeheartedly supports programs and industrial projects of this company.

Chadormalu Company owns 14 percent of stakes of Tajali Mines and Metals Development Company.

600 Migrants Traveling in Two Trailers Rescued in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Some 600 migrants from 12 countries were rescued in Mexico as they traveled crammed into two tractor-trailers, the country's National Migration Institute said.

The 145 women and 455 men, who hailed from not only Central America but also Africa and the Indian subcontinent, were found in the southeastern state of Veracruz, the institute said in a statement.

The vast majority were from Central America with 401 from Guatemala alone. Dozens were from Honduras and Nicaragua while a total of 37 were from Bangladesh, six were from Ghana, and one person was from India and Cameroon, the institute added.



Japan's FM Invited To Visit China

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said he has been invited to visit China.

Hayashi said in an interview on Fuji TV that his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi invited him during a phone call on Thursday. He said he was considering his response and nothing had been decided yet, the network said.

Asked about U.S. President Joe Biden's proposed "diplomatic boycott" of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, Hayashi said Japan will proceed based on its own situation and point of view.



Kremlin Accuses West of Artificially Whipping Up Ukraine Tensions



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Kremlin accused the West of artificially whipping up tensions around Ukraine with repeated statements suggesting Russia was poised to launch an attack on its neighbor and told Washington and its allies to stop a military build-up nearby.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Saturday his country has real concerns, widely shared with partners in Europe, over Russian activities at the Ukrainian border, after Ukraine said it feared Russia might be preparing an attack.

U.S., NATO and Ukrainian officials have been making similar statements for nearly two weeks, referring to what they say are unusual Russian troop movements in the proximity of Ukraine.

Moscow has dismissed such suggestions as inflammatory and complained about what it says is increasing activity in the region by the NATO alliance.

In comments due to be broadcast later on Sunday on state TV, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "a provocation" in the area could not be ruled out given all the U.S. rhetoric. "This hysteria is being artificially whipped up. We are being accused of some kind of unusual military activity on our territory by those who have brought in their armed forces from across the ocean. That is, the United States of America," Peskov said.

"It's not really logical or polite."

Peskov suggested Ukraine was probably looking for a way to solve its own problems by force.

Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula in 2014 and Russian-backed separatists seized a swath of eastern Ukraine that same year.

Peskov said Russia wanted NATO to stop "concentrating a military fist" near Russia's own borders and to stop arming Ukraine with modern weapons.

The Kremlin said in September that NATO would cross a Russian red line if it expanded its military infrastructure in Ukraine.

Ukraine, which strives to become a NATO member, received a large consignment of U.S. ammunition earlier this year and Javelin anti-tank missiles, prompting criticism from Moscow.

Over 250,000 Lebanon Expts Register to Vote in Polls

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Nearly 245,000 Lebanese living abroad have signed up to vote in next year's parliamentary polls, Lebanon's foreign ministry said Sunday, after it closed the window for registration.

The vote scheduled for March 2020 is seen by many as a chance to challenge the ruling elite's stranglehold on a country mired in its worse-ever financial crisis.

Lebanon's diaspora -- estimated to number at least three times the country's 6-million population -- will take part in the vote for the 128-seat parliament, making them a powerful electoral force.

Sudan PM Hamdok to Return To Lead Gov't After Deal

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Sudan's General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok have reached a deal for his return and the release of civilian leaders detained since a military coup, mediators said.

Burhan on October 25 declared a state of emergency and ousted the government in a move that upended a two-year transition to civilian rule, drew international condemnation and punitive measures, and provoked large protests.

"A political agreement has been reached between General Burhan, Abdalla Hamdok, political forces and civil society organizations for Hamdok's return to his position, and the release of political detainees," senior Sudanese mediator Fadlallah Burma, acting head of the Umma party, told AFP.

A group Sudanese mediators -- including academics, journalists and politicians -- who have been locked in talks to mediate a deal since the outbreak of the crisis, released a statement outlining the main points of the deal.

It includes the restoration of Hamdok as prime minister, the release of all detainees, and what it said was the resumption of the constitutional, legal and political consensus governing the transitional period.

The return of Hamdok, a British-educated economist who has worked for the United Nations and African organizations, has been a key demand of international community.

"The agreement will be officially announced later today (Sunday), after the signing of its terms and the accompanying political declaration," the statement said.

Mediators said the deal was reached following an agreement among political factions, ex-rebel groups, and military figures.

Sunday's deal announcement came as pro-democracy activists geared up for mass protests to denounce the coup and the ensuing deadly crackdown that have left at least 40 people killed, according to medics. Wednesday was the deadliest day with 16 people killed.

The protest calls were also led by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella of unions that were instrumental to the mass protests that led to the ousting of autocratic president Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.



Venezuelans Head to Polls in Regional, Local Elections

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelans headed to the polls in local and regional elections which represent a major challenge for electoral authorities and opposition politicians alike, as the latter return to compete for votes against the government of President Nicolas Maduro for the first time in four years.

During the elections, over 3,000 state governors, mayors and city councils will be chosen across the South American country, which is beset by a long-running recession and hyperinflation.

The vote will test the impartiality of Venezuela's electoral commission, which in May included two opponents among its top five directors, making it the most balanced board in 17 years, its members have said.

Other centers saw delays due to voting officials arriving late, while some voters complained their center had been changed without their knowledge.

European Union election observers will be present at around 1,000 of the 14,400 voting centers, the first such European mission since 2006.

Opposition politicians had boycotted presidential elections and parliamentary elections in 2018 and 2020 respectively accusing Maduro's government of fraud. If they lose the 4 state governorships they won in 2017, they will lack a powerbase for campaigning in 2024's for presidential elections.

Maduro and opposition leader Juan Guaido, who is backed by the United States, among other countries, both urged supporters to vote on Friday night, though Guaido decried voting conditions.

In Maracaibo, capital of Zulia state, which is one of the regions most affected by electricity, water and fuel shortages, small groups of voters walked or cycled to polling stations due to lack of public transportation and gasoline.

Some 5 million Venezuelans have left the country due to its long-running economic crisis and hundreds continue to join caravans passing through Central America and Mexico headed for the United States.

"We don't have electricity or water, nor transportation, but we're going to vote, even on foot, because we're fed up," said 68-year-old pensioner Ernesto Urdaneta.

Bulgarian President Seen Winning Second Term

SOFIA (Dispatches) - Bulgaria's incumbent President Rumen Radev is seen winning the decisive round of Sunday's presidential election by a large margin after voters backed his strong anti-corruption message, exit polls by Alpha Research and Gallup International showed.

Radev, supported by several anti-graft parties and the Socialists, won 64-66% of the vote, compared with 32-33% for Anastas Gerdzhikov, backed by the centre-right GERB party of former premier Boyko Borissov, according to the exit polls.

Bulgarians voted on Sunday to elect their president, a largely ceremonial role that the current incumbent has transformed and put at the heart of the struggle against corruption in the EU's poorest country.

Radev, the frontrunner with 49 percent in the first round of voting last weekend, faces off against

academic Gerdjikov after neither could secure an outright majority.

While Radev, a former fighter jet pilot, is the country's most popular politician, Bulgaria itself is riven by fractious political parties that have failed to deliver a stable government needed to tackle deep-seated graft and the worsening coronavirus pandemic.

"This vote is a clash between two visions: the soft tolerance of endemic corruption and the firm opposition to a model of governance that uses public power for private purposes," New Bulgarian University political science professor Antony Todorov wrote in a blog post this week.

A clear win for Radev, 58, may usher in a period of political stability after last weekend's surprise victory in the third general election this year of a new anti-graft party.



China Downgrades Diplomatic Ties With Lithuania



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China has officially downgraded diplomatic ties with Lithuania in protest, the foreign ministry in Beijing said, after Taiwan established a de facto embassy in Vilnius.

Lithuania allowing Taipei to open an office using the name Taiwan was a significant diplomatic departure that defied a pressure campaign by Beijing.

China balks at any official use of the word "Taiwan", lest it lend a sense of international legitimacy to the island -- which it considers a part of its territory to be taken one day.

"The Chinese government had to lower diplomatic relations between the two countries... to safeguard its sovereignty and the basic norms of international relations," the ministry said in a statement announcing the downgrade to the charge d'affaires level.

"The Lithuanian government must bear all consequences that arise from this." It added that Lithuania had "abandoned the political commitment made upon the establishment of diplomatic relations" with China.

It was a reference to the "One China" policy, under which countries officially recognize Beijing over Taipei.

Taiwan announced that it would open the office in July, its first new diplomatic outpost in Europe in 18 years.

That prompted a fierce rebuke from China. It withdrew its ambassador from Lithuania and demanded Vilnius do the same, which it eventually did.

China also halted freight trains to Lithuania and stopped issuing food export permits.

The opening of the Vilnius office is the latest sign that some Baltic and central European countries are seeking closer relations with Taiwan, even if that angers China.

In May, Lithuania announced it was quitting China's 17+1 cooperation forum with central and eastern European states, calling it "divisive".

Politicians in the Czech Republic have also pushed for closer ties with Taiwan. Only 15 countries officially recognize Taipei over Beijing.



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Oman Says Fuel Prices to Remain Unchanged

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq of Oman has ordered a cap on motor fuel prices at October rates until the end of 2022, state media reported.

The government would bear the cost difference that may result from any potential increase in oil prices, state TV said.

The ruler of the Persian Gulf oil producer also ordered the cancellation of fees related to doing business in some sectors and the reduction of others.



Optimism Abounds as India's Economic Recovery Gathers Pace

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's economy is turning a corner and looks set for a strong rebound this year, helped by a pick-up in the pace of Covid-19 vaccinations and a progressive drop in new infections.

However, Asia's third-largest economy is not yet on the home straight and risks including inflation can hamper the recovery, analysts say. "Given a faster ramp-up in vaccinations and opening of the economy, a rebound in economic momentum is quite visible," Binod Modi, head of strategy at Mumbai-based Reliance Securities, says.

"In our view, India is set to witness healthy economic growth [this year]."

The economy took a massive battering last year as the country of 1.3 billion people imposed one of the strictest Covid-19 lockdowns in the world.

Many restrictions were reimposed this year, as India went through a deadly second wave of the pandemic. At its peak in May, the country recorded more than 400,000 cases a day, health ministry figures show.

The country's gross domestic product shrank 7.3 per cent in the financial year to the end of March, a major setback for the developing economy. India needs to achieve annual GDP growth of 8 per cent or more to lift people out of poverty and create enough jobs for its large, young population.

In recent months, the government has removed most Covid-related restrictions. New coronavirus cases have been averaging about 10,000 a day in the past week.

The majority of the eligible population has received at least a first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, which is driving optimism for a steep economic rebound. "There is light at the end of the tunnel," Luis Breuer, the International Monetary Fund's senior resident representative to India, said in a podcast earlier in November.

The IMF forecasts that India's GDP will grow 9.5 per cent in the current financial year and 8.5 per cent the following year. "Granted it is from a low base, but the economy is recovering," Mr Breuer says.

In its November 15 report, the Reserve Bank of India said that the country's job market is rebounding and "overall economic activity is on the cusp of a strengthening revival". However, "the global economic outlook remains shrouded in uncertainty with headwinds from multiple fronts", it warned.

"In India, the recovery gained strength though the speed and pace of improvement remains uneven across different sectors of the economy," the RBI said. "Indicators of aggregate demand posit a brighter near-term outlook than before". Business owners are optimistic about the economic rebound and expect the momentum to continue as spending improves.

"The economy is getting back to normal quite fast, primarily because of consumer spending," says Rohit Gawli, chief executive and co-founder of The Lokal Kitchen, a Mumbai-based food technology company.

Global IPOs in 2021 Blow Past \$817b Mark in Best Year on Record

LONDON (BLOOMBERG) - Global initial public offerings (IPOs) have smashed their previous record this year, propelled by a blank-cheque boom and companies cashing in on high valuations.

With six weeks to go, about 2,850 businesses and special purpose acquisition companies (Spacs) have raised more than \$600 billion (\$817 billion) in IPOs, leaving the records for both deal count and proceeds reached in 2007 in the dust, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Leading the pack is electric-truck start-up Rivian, which raised nearly US\$12 billion in New York this month.

Asia's biggest was China Telecom's 54 billion yuan (\$81.5 billion) IPO in August, while Polish parcel-locker provider InPost seized the top spot in Europe with its 2.8 billion euro (\$4.3 billion) Amsterdam listing in January.

These companies took advantage of record-high stock prices, as central bank support kept investors flush with cash. And the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic along with stimulus measures helped boost corporate earnings.

Still, it has not all been smooth sailing. Regulatory scrutiny has cooled the Spac craze, which reached a fever pitch early this year. China's crackdown on technology companies over the summer sent shockwaves through global markets, halting the record rush of Chinese listings in the United States and casting a shadow over Hong Kong's IPO market.

"We are moving from a perfect market for IPOs with plenty of liquidity and well to a more normal environment" where investors are more selective, said Mr Gareth McCartney, global co-head of equity capital markets at UBS Group.

A retail-buying frenzy that sent stock markets on a rollercoaster ride this year, along with investor appetite for hot sectors has fuelled some dizzying post-listing pops.

Rivian, which has yet to generate revenue, more than doubled in its first few sessions, briefly surpassing Volkswagen in market value, while South Korea's SK Bioscience surged 160 per cent in its debut.

These outsized gains have fanned worries of a bubble. The S&P 500 Index is trading at more than 21 times projected earnings in the next year, well above its 10-year average. Stocks are near their most expensive level since the dot-com bubble of 2000.

"As monetary stimulus programmes are scaled back, and if global growth slows sharply, markets could be heading for a correction," said Ms Susannah Streeter, senior analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown. "Overvalued companies will feel the pain much faster than others."



Turkish Firms Eager To Receive More Share In Iraq's Rebuilding

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish contractors and consultancy firms can be a part of projects involving infrastructure, hospitals, schools and public buildings in Iraq. This cooperation can be further facilitated

by a reversal in discrimination regarding the conditions of fair competition as well as the easing of processes required to do business, a Turkish trade official said.

Nail Olpak, head of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) was at the Turkey-Iraq Business, Investment and Contracting Forum, hosted by Turkey's Ministry of Commerce and organized by DEIK, in cooperation with the Turkish Contractors Association (TMB) and the Iraqi Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICC).

Speaking at the opening of the forum that saw the participation of Turkey's Trade Minister Mehmet Muş, Olpak said that the main purpose of the organization is to "add a new angle to investment and commercial cooperation" between the countries.

The two countries' trade volume is currently around \$17 billion, Olpak stated and said that Turkey's share in Iraq's imports increased from 20% to 27%.

Noting that the gold jewelry, plastic and furniture sectors have come to the fore in exports to Iraq recently, Olpak said, "We need to focus on other sectors, especially the manufacturing industry."

Olpak, who commented on the areas he views will pave the way for the development of existing economic cooperation and is necessary to increase mutual investment and trade, said, "shortening and facilitating visa processes as well as facilitating the work visa processes of the employees of our companies doing business in our countries would be an important step."

The extension of the railway connection between Turkey and Iraq to the south is another important factor, he said.

Suggesting that Turkish companies can share their know-how in practice in Iraq, which has large-scale goals of establishing factories and facilities within domestic Iraqi industry, Olpak said that Turkey is aware of how important information and networks are, especially in today's world and that DEIK is ready "to use our entire network together with our colleagues."

Abdulrezaq al-Zuhari, head of FICC stated that Turkey and Iraq should cooperate and focus on issues such as production and export.

"We call for cooperation to gain and benefit mutually," he said, particularly in the oil, mining and agricultural sectors.

Al-Zuhari also noted that thanks to the cooperation to be realized between Turkey and Iraq, it is possible to export very quickly to Gulf countries by land and rail.

TMB Chairperson Erdal Eren, also speaking at the event, said that Turkish contractors have undertaken 1,034 projects in Iraq, with which they have been cooperating since 1975.



China Central Bank Adviser Warns About "Quasi-Stagflation" Risk



BEIJING (BLOOMBERG) - China's economy could enter a period of "quasi-stagflation" with relatively slow growth and excessively high producer-price inflation, said Liu Shijin, an adviser to the nation's central bank.

Such a scenario is "very likely" if demand remains weak, producer prices stay high, corporate profits are squeezed, and existing risks in the economy are "released too quickly," he told an online forum, the China Macroeconomy Forum, on Sunday (Nov 21). Such a possibility needs close attention as once it happens, it will last into next year, he said.

China's economic growth has slowed noticeably after September, and judging from the current situation, especially the two-year average growth rate, economic growth "is very likely to come in below 4 per cent in the fourth quarter," he said.

Mr Liu, a member of the monetary policy committee at the People's Bank of China, proposed an "appropriately long" timeframe to address structural problems such as local government debt and the rapid expansion of certain property developers, and recommended targeting a "soft-landing" to minimize negative consequences.

While the busting of "some bubbles" appears to be "hard to avoid," it won't change the whole situation, he said without being specific.

He also called for more attention to the economy's "structural potential," such as city clusters, the digital economy and green development, which he said can be more important than macroeconomic policy in driving growth.

El Salvador Plans "Bitcoin City" Financed by Crypto Bonds

MIZATA (Dispatches) - President Nayib Bukele said El Salvador plans to build the world's first "Bitcoin City", powered by a volcano and financed by cryptocurrency bonds.

Bitcoin City "is gonna include everything: residential areas, commercial areas, services, museums, entertainment... airport, port, rail," Bukele said at the Latin American Bitcoin and Blockchain Conference on Saturday.

El Salvador, which has used the US dollar for two decades, was the first country in the world to legalize bitcoin as legal tender.

Bukele said the Conchagua volcano "will power the whole city and will also power the mining."

Bitcoin mining is the process by which new bitcoin is created using computers that solve complex mathematical problems -- a process which demands huge amounts of energy.

In El Salvador, some of that energy comes from a geothermal plant fed by the Tecapa volcano.

Bukele said the city would initially be powered by the Tecapa plant before his government builds a new geothermal plant powered by Conchagua.

"Zero Co2 emissions. This is a fully ecological city," Bukele told the crowd.

To fund the project, El Salvador will issue \$1 billion "bitcoin bonds" in 2022, according to Samson Mow, chief strategy officer of Blockstream, a blockchain tech provider. On stage with Bukele, Mow said half of "volcano bonds" would be invested in bitcoin, and the other half in infrastructure.

"El Salvador will be the financial center of the world," Mow said.

Singaporeans Putting More Money Into Investments

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - More Singaporeans are looking for ways to grow their wealth, a study by UOB has found.

The results of the UOB ASEAN Consumer Sentiment Study, released on Friday (Nov 19), found that close to two in five respondents, or 38 per cent, put more money into investments in the past six months.

This is an increase of 8 per cent from last year.

The study aims to provide a better understanding of ASEAN consumers, including

those from Singapore, while the region undergoes social and economic transformation.

Nearly half, or 46 per cent, of the Singaporean millennial respondents indicated that they allocated more money to investments in the past six months, and plan to invest more. Millennials are people aged 24 to 39, according to the study.

This compares with 11 per cent for those older than 55; 35 per cent for those aged 40 to 55; and 29 per cent for those aged 18 to 23.

Among the Singaporean respondents, 51 per cent said they are choosing to buy more stocks and bonds.

At the regional level, the study found that consumers across ASEAN are keeping to the financial habits they had adopted a year ago amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

More than half, or 53 per cent, of the respondents in the region said they have not changed their budgeting in the last six months, compared with the 60 per cent in the previous edition of the study who said they adjusted their budget at the start of the pandemic.

In the area of personal finance, more than six in 10 respondents indicated uneasiness around increased household expenses (64 per cent), meeting long-term financial commitments (63 per cent) and a decline in their savings and wealth (65 per cent).

One in three respondents (33 per cent) expects that it will take two years or more for Covid-19 to be contained in his country, an increase of 18 per cent from the previous year.

Two out of five respondents (40 per cent) believe it will take two years or more for life to go back to the way it was before Covid-19, a rise of 15 per cent from the previous year.

Ms Jacquelyn Tan, UOB head of group personal financial services, noted that financial well-being plays an important role in people's mental health as it "minimizes the stress and anxiety that they experience, especially in these uncertain times".

Iran Wins 2021 UNIATF Award

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Health Ministry was chosen to receive the 2021 United Nations Inter-Agency Taskforce (UNIATF) Award for its excellent mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UNIATF Award for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) was awarded to the

Islamic Republic of Iran for the exemplary leadership and the determination for its excellent delivery of mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNIATF announced.

The taskforce said that the Government of Iran demonstrated its commitment to population health with these efforts to alleviate mental health suffering during the pandemic.



OPEC+ Plan to Raise Output Not Sufficient to Bring Down Oil Prices

DUBAI (Dispatches) – The current OPEC+ plan to increase oil production by 400,000 barrels per day each month will not be enough to bring down oil prices in the short term, said Tarun Kapoor, India's Petroleum Secretary.

"Even if we go by their plan, the gap between demand and supply is going to remain for at least till the end of this year or maybe even early next year," said Kapoor, during a visit to Dubai's Expo 2020 event.

Kapoor noted that even with the existing agreement, several member nations were not able to meet their production quotas. "Some countries are not able to ramp up according to the quotas allocated to them, so the total increase is less than what OPEC declared."

The world's third largest crude oil importer was hit particularly hard by the second wave of the COVID-19 virus earlier this year and rising fossil fuel prices has threatened to upend India's economic recovery.

"We are not saying that they should produce more than the demand, all we are saying is at least match up with the demand," said Kapoor.

Rising prices of fuel coupled with a coal shortage has sparked concerns about inflation – an economic phenomenon where prices of basic consumer products shoot up.

"If there's a short supply of coal or natural, then it has impact across the board," said Kapoor. "We must ensure adequate supplies and we must try to keep the price level which is not only affordable, but understandable."

Kapoor said that when Brent crude – the international benchmark for oil prices – dropped to \$19-\$20 a barrel last year, economists were predicting it to recover to \$50-\$55.

"No one said it would go up to \$84 - as economies come back, and energy supplies are needed, we have to ensure that all the basic ingredients, which will ramp up economic activity, must be available at a reasonable price," said Kapoor.

India, which ships in more than 80 per cent of its oil requirements from overseas, has been looking for partnerships with global oil majors to monetize its reserves,



located in offshore and deep sea areas. "Onshore, we are looking at some areas in Rajasthan and the southern part of India," said Kapoor.

"We have good interest from some international companies - we had meetings with Schlumberger and Halliburton and some of the smaller companies too," he added.

French Ski Resorts Reopen After 2020 Covid Write-Off



VAL THORENS (Dispatches) - French mountain resorts are starting to open for the first time since Covid made last season a write-off, with winter sport enthusiasts and sector professionals hoping that no fresh virus wave will spoil the fun.

Val Thorens, Europe's highest winter sport resort at 2,300 metres (7,500 feet) and hugely popular with Britons, was the first of France's Alpine resorts allowing skiers back on the lifts and slopes on Saturday.

Others will follow over the coming weeks.

"Amazing, we're the first," said one skier testing the slopes with a group of friends. "It's a bit cold, but we'll be fine," the skier added.

Some 10,000 people descended on the station on Saturday, local media reported, with the snow in good shape and favourable weather.

France's resorts are the world's third-most popular skiing spots in the world, after those in the United States and in Austria, and an economic lifeline for many regions.

"This year will be important for us, crucial even," said Olivier Simonin, in charge of ski lifts in Val d'Isere which is to open next Saturday.

"Our future is at stake and we can't imagine not having a winter season, so we did everything possible to make sure we'd have one," he told AFP.

Last winter, Alpine skiing was almost impossible in France as ski lifts were shut to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Hotels were allowed to open and other winter activities such as snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing were authorized, but the lack of downhill skiing caused a collapse in income.

"We're so happy to be able to restart the ski lifts and get back to doing our jobs at 100 percent," Val Thorens ski patrol member Emmanuel Laissus told AFP.

Franck Feyeux, a cabin lift driver, added: "We've been impatient for customers to return, a lot of people's livelihoods are at stake."

The tiny station of Porte-Puymorens meanwhile was the first resort in the southwestern Pyrenees to reopen, with others in the region to follow suit by early December.

"Demand is incredible," Porte-Puymorens resort director Eric Charre told AFP. "The economic engine is restarting."

Demands on skiers linked to Covid are relatively light at the resorts, with mask wearing required in queues and onboard ski gondolas.

But the government has already warned that it could tighten the rules, notably by introducing a health pass obligation, if Covid cases rise strongly.

The health pass, required in French restaurants, cafes and many cultural venues, certifies that a person is fully vaccinated, has recently recovered from Covid, or has tested negative for the virus.

Thailand's Economic Recovery Forecast Beats Estimates

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - The Thai economy is set to expand as much as 1.2 per cent this year with the reopening of its key tourism sector, exceeding the Finance Ministry's earlier forecast of 1 per cent.

The country's nationwide reopening to vaccinated visitors that started this month boosted economic activities in the fourth quarter, said Finance Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, adding that next year's growth could reach as much as 4.5 per cent, exceeding the ministry's earlier forecast of 4 per cent.

Arkhom's new growth estimates for 2021 and 2022 are in line with the latest forecasts from the National Economic and Social Development Council. However, they far exceed the central bank's prediction for growth of 0.7 per cent this year, and 3.9 per cent in the subsequent 12 months.

The Southeast Asian nation, popular among tourists for its Bangkok nightlife and beach resorts along the coast of Andaman Sea, has seen a decline in COVID-19 infections and hospitalisations as vaccination rates rise.

The central bank is also resisting pressure to raise interest rates from increased government spending, fuel prices and inflation, the minister said, with the Bank of Thailand still keeping an accommodative monetary policy. Fiscal and monetary policies will continue to be synchronised to support economic recovery, he added.

The number of active cases has fallen to 87,271 on Sunday, the lowest since July 11, while the average daily infection rate has dropped to 6,600 cases this week from a peak of more than 20,000, Health Ministry data showed. About 54 per cent of the population has received two vaccine doses.

With an expected global economic recovery in 2022 and a stronger grip on the outbreak, Arkhom said that the government's steps to support growth include measures to boost consumption, exports, private investment, public spending and the recovery of businesses. The government's spending to support the economy so far amounts to the equivalent of 14.6 per cent of GDP. The government aims to manage economic shocks by driving growth in every sector, he said. It's also trying to avoid twin deficits in its budget and current accounts, and encouraging Thais to travel abroad to keep the exchange rate at an appropriate level, the minister said.

IAEA Chief's Forthcoming Iran Visit Good Opportunity for Cooperation

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has welcomed an upcoming visit by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to Tehran as a good opportunity for the new Iranian administration and the UN nuclear watchdog to establish closer cooperation.

"On November 22-23 the #IAEA Director General will pay a visit to Tehran," Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, wrote in a tweet on Sunday.

The visit "will be a good opportunity for the Agency and the new authorities in Iran to establish closer contacts and cooperation on issues of common interest," he said, adding,

"We wish the two sides to have productive discussions!"

During his visit to Tehran, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi is scheduled to hold talks with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and the head of the country's atomic energy organization, Mohammad Eslami.

Grossi's trip comes ahead of the meeting of the 35-nation Board of Governors as well as the much-anticipated talks in the Austrian capital, Vienna, on the removal of US sanctions on Iran.

Earlier this month, the IAEA chief complained that he had "no contact" with the new Iranian administration of Ebrahim Raisi.

Iran, Iraq...

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Elsewhere in his remarks, Sarafrazi called for the timely announcement of bans and restrictions on the export of Iran's agricultural products to this country in order to prevent damage to Iranian exporters and producers as well as exchange of technical knowhow and knowledge in various sectors of the agricultural sector between the two countries.

Iraqi envoy to Tehran, for his part, pointed to the age-old and longstanding relations between the two countries of Iran and Iraq in political, economic, social and cultural fields especially in agricultural field and welcomed the proposal of Iranian side for setting up specialized working groups in the relevant field.

U.S. Warns Israel...

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As a consequence, cyber-attacks against Iran's nuclear program have become "much harder now to pull off," the report pointed out.

With the "fading chance of Washington's return to the 2015 nuclear deal" – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the United States was examining the possibility of hammering out an interim deal with Iran, the New York Times report said.

"Inside the White House, there has been a scramble in recent days to explore whether some kind of interim deal might be possible to freeze Iran's production of more enriched uranium and its conversion of that fuel to metallic form," the Times said.

It added, "In return, the United States might ease a limited number of sanctions. That would not solve the

problem. But it might buy time for negotiations, while holding off Israeli threats to bomb Iranian facilities."

Iran has on occasions warned the Tel Aviv regime against any adventurism toward the Islamic Republic amid renewed Israeli threats of "nuclear terrorism."

Back on October 24, Iran's security chief brushed aside reports about Israel's budget for a potential attack on Iranian nuclear facilities, saying the regime must consider the colossal cost of repair after Tehran's "shocking" response.

The Times of Israel, citing a report published by Channel 12, reported earlier that Israeli officials had approved a budget of five billion shekels (\$1.5 billion) to purchase high-powered weapons and equipment in preparation for a possible attack against Iranian nuclear facilities.

U.S. Must...

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Q: Iran has repeatedly stressed it won't discuss its missile program or regional influence during the Vienna talks. If an agreement is reached in Vienna, will Iran be willing to discuss these issues after?

A: Countries of the region are the ones that must make decisions about the issues of the region. Any interference from outside the region will bring no benefit for any party. The experience of foreign intervention from outside the region in Iraq and Afghanistan indicates that murder, genocide, the destruction of infrastructure, the spread of terrorism as well as narcotics cultivation and trafficking have been the main outcome of intervention and manipulation by foreign powers during the past two decades. It's their presence and interference that impedes constructive dialogue.

Q: If the talks in Vienna don't yield results, what are Iran's alternative plans to counter the sanctions and in dealing with Western powers? How do you think this will affect the future of the region?

A: Reliance on domestic capabilities and capacity has been a key to success for Iran over the past four decades. Experience has shown that self-reliance would prove more productive and fruitful than anything else in the sophisticated process of political, economic and even security and military developments. We have gone a long way and we are a patient people.

Q: What will Iran expect of European powers in the Vienna talks? Are they also expected to make any guarantees concerning their full future commitment?

A: Europeans should demonstrate their abidance by the JCPOA in action and not words, and put an end to non-compliance and the bankrupt policy of maximum pressure. Many Iranians wonder why the Europeans are at the negotiating table if they cannot make decisions independent of Washington.

Azerbaijan-Iran...

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"There is possible cooperation with Iran in the production of auto parts. We can also cooperate with Iran in the agricultural machinery field," he said.

The deputy prime minister added that 2,000 Iranian companies are registered in Azerbaijan and that they have implemented successful projects.

Mustafayev emphasized that the North-South corridor from Iran to Azerbaijan and Russia is one of the projects that both countries are working on. He added that the oil and gas sphere was also discussed.

"The joint working group continues discussions. Azerbaijan and Iran cooperate in the electricity field. We are working on the synchronization of the power grids of Iran and Russia," he said.

The deputy prime minister said that the next meeting of the joint commission of the two countries will be held in Baku.

The parties also stressed the importance of strengthening efforts for the sustainable development of relations between the two countries. They discussed the opportunities and prospects for cooperation in oil and gas, transport, energy, transit, joint industrial and investment projects, information and communication technologies, agriculture, humanitarian and other spheres.

It should be noted that the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Iran amounted to \$339.1 million in 2020. This figure was \$293.2 million in the first nine months of 2021.

Iran, UAE...

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Stating that some countries are making miscalculations on the eve of the Vienna talks beginning, Khatibzadeh said that the focus of Iran in the Vienna talks will be on lifting sanctions.

"Iranian negotiation team will leave for Vienna with a serious will to lift the sanctions imposed on the Iranian people. We hope that the other sides will also come to Vienna with serious will and good intentions in order to reach a practical and comprehensive agreement," he added.

The foreign ministry spokesman also spoke about the visit of an Emirati delegation to Tehran, saying, "Relations between Iran and the UAE are on a good track with a common understanding of good neighbor policy, despite some differences at the political and regional levels. Trade and economic relations have reached a remarkable level in recent months."

Naturally, it is necessary for both countries' officials to have some diplomatic trips in order to have good economic, trade, political and diplomatic relations, he added.

Khatibzadeh also pointed to the visit of the Azeri Deputy Prime Minister to the country and the possible meeting between the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan on the sidelines of the ECO Summit in Ashgabat, calling the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev to Iran 'remarkable and constructive'.

Korda, Ko Enter Final Round of LPGA Tour Championship

MIAMI (AFP) - LPGA Player of the Year contenders Nelly Korda and Ko Jin-young set the stage for a dramatic final-round duel as they joined a four-way tie for the lead alongside Nasa Hataoka and Celine Boutier at the LPGA Tour Championship. South Korea's Ko surged up the leaderboard at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida, with a six-under par 66 that included seven birdies in a row on the front nine. World number one American Korda had a more up-and-down day, but grabbed a share of the third-round lead with an eagle at the 17th in a five-under par 67.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

Public Relations Tel:

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Editorial Board: 44253449

Public Relations Fax:

(+98)(21) 44253395

Advertising Department:

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

Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

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Morikawa Becomes First American Winner of Race to Dubai

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Collin Morikawa fired a final-round 66 to win the DP World Tour Championship in brilliant fashion on Sunday and create history by becoming the first American to win the season-long Race to Dubai. World number two Morikawa made five birdies in his last seven holes at Jumeirah Golf Estates' Earth course to close with a six-under-par fourth round and a winning total of 17-under-par 271. Rory McIlroy, who led the tournament heading into the last few holes, fell back with consecutive bogeys on the 15th and 16th holes.

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SPORTS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2021

Hamilton Cruises In Qatar to Maintain Title Momentum

DOHA (AFP) - Lewis Hamilton won Sunday's inaugural Qatar Grand Prix with a commanding performance from pole to cut Max Verstappen's world championship lead to eight points.

The Mercedes seven-time champion held off his arch Dutch rival's Red Bull by a country mile under the Losail circuit's lights to leave the battle for the F1 drivers' crown delicately poised with only two races remaining.

Fernando Alonso took third for Alpine, the former two-time world champion's first podium since 2014, the grizzled 40-year-old getting a huge cheer from the crowd. One week on from arguably his toughest and greatest win in Brazil, Hamilton enjoyed one of his easiest.

And after an unprecedented eighth world title appeared to be slipping from his grasp after Verstappen's wins in the USA and Mexico, it is the 36-year-old Briton rather than the 12-year-younger pretender who has the momentum.

"We needed those points today. I can't wait to watch the race replay to find out what happened behind me," he said after his 102nd career win.

"I'm really grateful for these points, it's been a hell of a year. Back-to-back wins here, feel good, I feel fit, fitter than I've ever felt. Bring on the next two!"

Verstappen, who was demoted from second to seventh on the grid for a yellow flag infringement in qualifying on Saturday, took second, and picked up a point for the fastest lap.

"Our starting position was compromised, but luckily we had a really good start," he said.

"Of course, I know it's going to be difficult to the end but it keeps it nice, keeps it exciting. This track was fun to drive as well. I feel good, but it's going to be a tight battle to the end."

Hamilton's faster engine, fitted last weekend in Sao Paulo, will likely give Red Bull a tough time again at the ultra quick



new circuit in Saudi Arabia in a fortnight's time ahead of the season-closing race in Abu Dhabi in mid-December.

The 20th race of the season was being held one year to the day to the World Cup and the trophy was on display, as were some of football's finest -- David Beckham, Andrea Pirlo and John Terry getting a touchline view of how fast Hamilton takes corners.

Sporting the rainbow helmet he has worn in practice and qualifying to raise awareness for human rights and equality, Hamilton got off to a dream start, quickly drawing away from the pack as Verstappen jumped up from seventh to fourth.

The charging Verstappen knocked off Pierre Gasly's Alpha Tauri to move into third by lap four, with Alonso falling shortly after to leave only Hamilton in his cross hairs.

With the new engine fitted before Brazil firing on all cylinders, Hamilton was leaving his Red Bull pursuer for desert dust.

Verstappen, trailing by nine seconds, was the first to pit on lap 18, resuming in second. Mercedes covered that move, boxing Hamilton on the very next lap with the Briton resuming with a lead of around eight seconds.

Like a game of shadow boxing, Mercedes carried out the same tactics the next time Verstappen pitted, leaving Hamilton to coast to victory and Red Bull puzzling over what they can do to keep their championship hopes alive.

Tatum, Celtics Attempt To Silence Thunder

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - An emotional victory over their rivals has the Boston Celtics riding high into a home matchup with the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Jayson Tatum's 37 points and 11 rebounds carried the Celtics in a 130-108 rout of the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday. Tatum's big game spoiled the return of Lakers star LeBron James after he missed eight games with an abdominal injury.

"Whether anybody else believed it (or not), I always tell myself when I get on the floor I'm the best player," Tatum said.

The Celtics trailed by 14 points late in the first quarter before coming to life and outscoring the Lakers 112-76 the rest of the way. Boston won for the sixth time in nine games after opening its season with five losses in seven games.

"I'd say (it was) composure, resilience, and just never hung our head. It never felt like we were out of the game," Celtics first-year coach Ime Udoka said after making his sideline debut in one of the NBA's biggest rivalries.

The Celtics benefited from a complete effort as Marcus Smart totaled 22 points, eight rebounds and six assists, Dennis Schroder scored 21 against his former team, Al Horford added 18 points and Josh Richardson chipped in 15.

Boston's win was all the more impressive considering it came without injured All-Star forward Jaylen Brown, who missed his seventh straight game with a Grade 1 right hamstring strain. Center Robert Williams III was also sidelined due to an ailing left knee.

Oklahoma City is coming off a hard-fought effort in a 96-89 loss against the defending champion Milwaukee Bucks on Friday.

Jeremiah Robinson-Earl's 3-pointer with 2:36 left pulled the Thunder within 91-89. Neither team scored again until Giannis Antetokounmpo's 2-footer with 28.7 seconds remaining, and the Bucks closed out the win at the free throw line.

"We gave it everything we had out there," Oklahoma City assistant coach Dave Bliss said. "Just really proud of these guys."

Man Utd Finally Sack Solskjaer



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United ended Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's three-year reign as manager at Old Trafford on Sunday, but plan to wait until the end of the season to name the Norwegian's permanent successor.

Saturday's 4-1 embarrassment at the hands of struggling Watford was the final straw for the United board, who had stuck by Solskjaer in recent weeks despite humiliating home defeats to Liverpool and Manchester City.

Former midfielder Michael Carrick, who was part of Solskjaer's coaching team, will

take charge of the forthcoming games while the club look to appoint an interim manager till the end of the season.

"Manchester United announces that Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has left his role as Manager," the club said in a statement.

"Ole will always be a legend at Manchester United and it is with regret that we have reached this difficult decision. While the past few weeks have been disappointing, they should not obscure all the work he has done over the past three years to rebuild the foundations for long-term success."

Solskjaer leaves with United already realistically out of the Premier League title race, 12 points behind leaders Chelsea down in seventh in the table, and having exited the League Cup.

Carrick's first game in charge will be a crucial Champions League trip to Villarreal on Tuesday.

Zverev Reigns Supreme In Turin

TURIN (Dispatches) - Alexander Zverev captured his second Nitto ATP Finals title Sunday, overcoming World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev 6-4, 6-4 to end his standout 2021 season in style in Turin.

The German defeated World No. 1 Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals and backed that up against Medvedev in an impressive performance. Zverev imposed his powerful game on the Russian as he stepped inside the court to outmanoeuvre the 25-year-old, who sat deep behind the baseline, to secure victory after 75 minutes.

With his victory, Zverev has become just the fourth player in the tournament's history to earn semi-final and final wins over the Top 2 players in the FedEx ATP Rankings. The World No. 3 fired seven aces, hit 22 winners and did not face a break point in his statement win over the Russian.

"It was great," Zverev said in his on-court interview. "I won the [Nitto ATP] Finals, in the final against someone I had lost five times in a row, so I had to play one of my best matches. I am happy about that and happy to go on holiday with this win."

The 24-year-old, who fell to Medvedev in the round-robin stage, has repeated what he achieved in London in 2018 when he won the title by reversing a round-robin loss to the player he faced in the championship match. The third seed beat Djokovic to clinch his first season finale trophy three years ago.



Djokovic Remains Non-Committal About Australian Open Participation

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic said he has not yet decided whether he would compete at January's Australian Open after organizers confirmed that all players must be vaccinated against COVID-19 if they want to compete at the season's opening Grand Slam event.

"We'll see. We'll have to wait and see," world number one Djokovic told reporter after his semi-final defeat by Alexander Zverev at the ATP Finals on Saturday.

Djokovic, who has declined to say publicly if he has been vaccinated, is currently tied with Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal with 20 Grand Slam titles. The Australian Open, which he has won nine times, is seen as a golden opportunity for him to take the lead over his rivals. Nadal confirmed he would play at Melbourne Park in January but Federer, who like the Spaniard is also fully vaccinated, will miss the tournament as he recovers from another knee surgery.

Australia Open chief Craig Tiley's announcement brought to a conclusion months of negotiations between Tennis Australia and the Victoria state government, which had insisted throughout that everybody at Melbourne Park would need to be vaccinated.

Zverev said players need to respect that decision.

"We are visiting another country. This is not about tennis," he said after defeating Djokovic to advance to Sunday's ATP Finals championship match.



Vlhova Beats Shiffrin Again



LONDON (Dispatches) - Slovakia's Petra Vlhova beat U.S. rival Mikaela Shiffrin into second place in a World Cup women's slalom for the second time in two days in Finland on Sunday.

The reigning overall World Cup champion won the opening slalom of the season with the fastest time in both runs in Levi on Saturday and doubled up with a repeat performance a day later.

She beat Shiffrin, who made a costly mistake on the upper part of the slope, by 0.47 seconds for her 22nd career World Cup win and 14th in slalom. Germany's Lena Duerr was third, the same as on Saturday.

Shiffrin is one win short of Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark's 32-year-old record for most World Cup wins in a single discipline but will now have to wait until she is back on home snow in Killington, Vermont next weekend.

Stenmark won 46 giant slaloms in the 1970s and 1980s, while Shiffrin is on 45 slalom victories and 70 in total.

Shiffrin, winner of the season-opening giant slalom in Soelden, Austria, now has 109 career podiums and shares the overall World Cup lead with Vlhova -- the pair tied on 260 points after three races but the Slovak ahead on wins.

"It's a nearly perfect start, and especially after the last couple of weeks," Shiffrin, recovered from a nagging back injury, said on Saturday of a season that has the 2022 Beijing Olympics as her main focus.