

**Health Ministry Announced on Wednesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 129,912 With 82 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Deputy for Foreign Minister for Consular, Parliamentary and Expatriates' Affairs Kazem Sajjadi Stressed That Those Iranians Living Abroad Are Welcomed to Enter the Country With No Worries**

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## National Rights Not to Be Sacrificed for Fake Deadlines

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has entered the 7th round of talks in Vienna with clear demands and proposals and is ready to engage as long as needed, but will not sacrifice the nation's rights for the sake of deadlines, senior Iranian diplomat said.

"The Islamic Republic has come to Vienna with full seriousness and is negotiating with transparent demands and proposals," the source told Press TV on the condition of anonymity on Wednesday.

The country, the source added, "stands prepared to continue intensive talks as long as needed, [but] it will not be ready to sacrifice its principled demands and the Iranian nation's rights for mere artificial deadlines or time tables."

Meanwhile the European parties engaged in the Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal have called for an immediate end to the current round of negotiations, a source said.

The informed source told Tasnim on Wednesday that the European representatives in Vienna have urged an immediate conclusion of this round of negotiations. **See Page 7**

## Tehran Ready to Host 10th Global Summit on Urban Tourism

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani has written to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), voicing the Iranian capital's readiness to host the United Nations specialized agency's 10th Global Summit on Urban Tourism.

Iranian officials held a meeting on Tuesday with UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili in Spain's capital of Madrid, which is hosting the 24th session of the agency's General Assembly.

During the meeting, Iranian Ambassador to Madrid Hassan Qashqavi submitted Zakani's letter to the UNWTO chief, the IRIB news agency reported.

Meanwhile, Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali Asghar Shalbafian, who was also present in the meeting, outlined Tehran's latest plans to develop its tourism industry, saying the country's new administration attaches special significance to this sector. **See Page 7**

## Gov't Seeks Next Year Budget Without Deficit, Inflation



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi says, "The next year budget is the first important financial document to be submitted to Majlis in this government, adding that the government wants this budget to have no deficit and inflation and to include economic growth".

Speaking in the meeting of the government and the Majlis on Wednesday, Raisi said, "We consider consulting with our friends in the Majlis and experts as an asset for us."

Referring to the priority of a bill over a plan in the statements of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution in a meeting with the members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the President emphasized, "Sometimes the concerns of the parliament members are presented in the form of a plan; this is the right of the representatives, but if the plans are drafted using the opinion of experts and government officials, they will become law with more richness".

While emphasizing the clarification of the provisions of the Sixth Development Plan, Ayatollah Raisi said, "The next year budget is the first document that is to be submitted to the parliament. The head of the Plan and Budget Organization will take advantage of the opinions of MPs to draft a budget bill. The government wants the 1401 budget not to have deficits and inflation and to have economic growth." **See Page 7**

## Washington Impeding Global Development Goals

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) has blasted the US for the imposition of unilateral sanctions against various countries, saying the coercive measures have undermined global development goals at a time that the world is struggling to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Majid Takht Ravanchi made the remarks in a statement at the 45th Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China in New York on Tuesday, a group which is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the world body.

Takht Ravanchi said the U.S.-imposed economic sanctions are in defiance of multilateralism that is needed to fight the coronavirus, and the lack of decisive international action to counter those illegal measures has rendered the issue of sustainable development "meaningless." **See Page 7**

## 21 States Among Iran Target Markets for Export

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Some 21 countries, including members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), neighboring states, African nations, and Far East countries, are among export destinations and priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an official says.

Deputy Chairman of Iran's Trade Development Organization for export development Farhad Nouri made the remarks in the national seminar of "Eurasia: a bridge to global trade," noting that the organization has prepared 10 plans for expansion of trade ties with 21 prioritized countries, and that the program will go into effect one year from now.

Referring to the share of government in economy in terms of setting laws, he argued that governments are not good traders; so, they should stop competing with private sector and play the role of a facilitator to invest in infrastructure.

Export and trade enterprises, businesses and overseas problems are three main areas of the 10 plans scheduled for four years later to double Iran's trade indices, the official added. **See Page 7**

## Iran Delivers 2m Barrels of Condensate To Venezuela

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Venezuela swaps its heavy oil for Iranian condensate to improve the quality of its tar-like crude.

Venezuela's state-run firm Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) has received 2 million barrels of condensate from Iran, S&P Global Platts reports.

The cargo was expected at the Jose terminal in northeastern Venezuela between Nov. 27-29, the financial news provider said, citing PDVSA's internal production reports.

PDVSA had received 2 million barrels of condensate from Iran at end-September and another 2.1 million barrels on Oct. 25, it added.

Venezuela swaps its heavy oil for Iranian condensate to improve the quality of its tar-like crude. This allows PDVSA to minimize cash payments since the U.S. has blocked the company from using US dollars.

Like Iran, which is also subject to illegal U.S. sanctions, the South American country is using innovative methods to boost its oil exports.

The sanctions on both nations have crimped their oil sales in recent years, spurring Iran to support Venezuela, including through shipping services and fuel swaps. **See Page 7**

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Dear Mr. Bahrampour  
Honorable Chairman of the Board and Managing Director of Rafsanjan Industrial Complex

On the passing of our dear Abu, your Excellency, who has spent his life in the service of the people, development and prosperity of Rafsanjan city, we sincerely offer our condolences and condolences to His Majesty and ask God Almighty to make the soul of that noble father happy and his position in Let the holy neighbor rise to his door.

Board of Directors and staff of Rafsanjan Industrial Complex



# UAE to Send a Delegation to Iran Soon

TEHRAN (MNA) – Diplomatic Advisor to UAE President Anwar Gargash has said his country would soon send a delegation to Iran in a bid to improve relations between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

Diplomatic Advisor to UAE President Anwar Gargash said on Tuesday afternoon that his country will send a delegation to Iran soon, adding that “The sooner, the better.”

The high-ranking Emirati official also said that Iranians seek to rebuild relations with the Persian Gulf states, which is welcomed by the UAE.

## Gov't to Remove Sanctions Through Dignified Negotiations

**TEHRAN (IRNA) - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Wednesday expressed hope that President Ebrahim Raisi and his cabinet members will do their best to remove the oppressive sanctions through dignified negotiations.**

Qalibaf made the remarks speaking during the joint meeting of Iran's legislative and executive branches of the Islamic System.

This joint meeting was held on the occasion of Azar 10th (December 1), which marks the National Parliament Day in Iran.

Addressing President Raisi, Qalibaf expressed certainty that Raisi's government will with effort be able to restore Iranian's rights and remove the oppressive sanctions.

The Speaker also said that the rights of the nation will be restored with a good and fair agreement, so that oppressive sanctions will be lifted.

He added, “I am sure that with the efforts made in the field of foreign policy, the rights of the nation will be restored with a good and fair agreement and the oppressive sanctions will be lifted from the shoulders of the people.”

Qalibaf said in the joint meeting of the legislative and executive branches of government: “More than one hundred days have passed since the beginning of the thirteenth administration, and I testify that the President has made a militant effort.”

Referring to the measures taken by the government to control the outbreak of COVID-19, Qalibaf said: “The government reduced the casualties from 700 to 70 in less than 70 days, and this was not possible except by virtue of efforts of the



government and the support of the parliament in providing funds.”

He added: “The relationship between the 13th administration and the 11th parliament should be exemplary for the future and our cooperation is undoubtedly responsible. The parliament considers itself as source of help for all members of the cabinet and at the head of it, the president to solve the people's problems.”

Qalibaf continued: “We must trust the expert opinions of the lawmakers and consider them as our companions, because they are the representatives of the people and among the people.” In this regard, we have expectations from the administration. Law enforcement, implementation of budget and program provisions, addressing the issue of stock exchange, livelihood, employment, housing, youth and raising the purchasing power of the people are the expectations of the parliament from the government.”

The joint meeting of Iran's Legislative and Executive branches of Islamic System was held in Tehran with participation of the heads of the two branches, as well as Iranian parliamentarians, ministers, and vice presidents.

## Bagheri Kani Consults With Mora in Vienna

TEHRAN (MNA) – Top Iranian negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani consulted with Enrique Mora, EU representative at the Vienna talks two days after the Monday meeting between Iran and P4+1 in Coburg hotel in Vienna.

In continuation of intensive diplomatic consultations by the Iranian negotiating team in the Austrian capital, the top Iranian negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani held a meeting with Enrique Mora, the EU representative at the Vienna talks.

Apart from that meeting, Bagheri Kani also held a meeting with the Austrian Foreign Minister Michaela Mayr on issues of mutual interest on Wednesday.

Bagheri Kani is also scheduled to meet the representatives of the three European countries that are parties to the JCPOA.

## Raisi Meets Ralliers Outside Majlis

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Ebrahim Raisi has made an unannounced visit to the families of SMA patients who have rallied outside Parliament since Sunday.

After leaving Parliament at the end of a joint meeting between government officials and lawmakers on Wednesday, the president got off his car and talked to the ralliers who were there along with their ill children.

They rushed to Raisi upon seeing him and put forward their demands about medicines and treatment challenges of their loved ones.

Raisi expressed sympathy with them and promised that his administration will do its best to resolve problems of people suffering from specific diseases including SMA patients.

Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a rare neuromuscular disorder that results in the loss of neurons and progressive muscle wasting. The US sanctions have hampered Iran's efforts to import highly-needed medical supplies.

## Tehran Sympathizes With Azerbaijan Over Copter Crash

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman sympathized with the Republic of Azerbaijan over the fatal crash of a military helicopter.

In a statement, Saeed Khatibzadeh offered his condolences to the government and people of Azerbaijan over the crash and expressed sympathy with the families of the victims. Fourteen people have been killed after a military helicopter crashed during a training flight in Azerbaijan on Tuesday.

Earlier Tuesday, the country's border service and prosecutor general said in a joint statement that “a military helicopter belonging to Azerbaijan's state border service crashed today at Garakheybat airfield in the Khyzy region at approximately 10:40 am (GMT 0640) while conducting a training flight.”

## Investment for Iranians Abroad to Be Facilitated

TEHRAN (IP) - The Deputy for International Affairs of Iran's Judiciary says Iranians abroad who seek investments in the country should be facilitated.

The Iranians abroad who have innovation plans must be provided with the necessary space, based on their talents as a precious asset, Kazem Gharibabadi told reporters following a Joint meeting held to discuss the issue of Iranians abroad. The joint meeting was held in the presence of the Judiciary's Deputy Minister for International Affairs, the Secretary of the Human Rights Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran and some other related organizations, including Iran's Parliament.

Gharibabadi said: “By the sublime order of Iran's Judiciary Chief, Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, consular services are provided to Iranians abroad, and the judicial authorities should not issue any ruling in this regard.”

Elsewhere in his speech, he recalled the issue of Iranians imprisoned abroad, he said constant negotiations were being held with the relevant authorities in the target countries to solve the problems of Iranians imprisoned abroad.

“Iran offers services to the families of some of the prisoners, who are inside the country to meet their livelihoods.”

The Joint meeting to discuss Iranian issues living abroad was held on Tuesday in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Kazem Sajjadi, the Deputy for Foreign Affairs with the Deputy for International Affairs of Iran's Judiciary Kazem Gharibabadi.

## Commander Warns Enemies Against Smallest Act of Aggression

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian commander says that the Islamic Republic is prepared to deliver a “harsh response” to even the slightest aggression by the country's enemies.

“We will deliver a harsh response to the enemies' smallest [aggressive] move,” Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Aerospace Division of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said on Tuesday.

“Today, Iran's security and [its] missile and defensive power are stable and exemplary,” he added. He asserted that the country's defensive prowess, including its missile and drone capabilities, had turned into “a thorn in the side” of the adversaries.

Hajizadeh noted how the country's adversaries, themselves, acknowledge the premium status of Iran's defensive power.

The commander cited the country's successful 1980-88 confrontation against the Western-backed invading military of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein as a case in point for the Islamic Republic's decisiveness and devotion to preserving its sovereignty and security.

“Today too, we can triumph against the enemy's economic and media war through steadfastness and determined struggle,” he noted.

The remarks came as the Israeli regime keeps beating the drums of war with Iran.

Tel Aviv also tries to discourage ongoing negotiations that could revive a 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world countries by harping on about recourse rather to “military option” against the country.

## Talks Between AEOI Head, IAEA Chief “Constructive”

TEHRAN (MNA) – A member of Iran Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission said that the recent talks between head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and International Atomic Energy Agency Chief were “constructive”.

Speaking about the meeting of Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission with the head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami, member of Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Ebrahim Azizi stated that AEOI head attended the session of the Commission on Tuesday and submitted a comprehensive report on the recent visit of IAEA Chief Rafael Grossi to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran in a meeting with the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stressed that the Agency must refrain from politically-motivated approaches, he emphasized.

Iran expects the IAEA to carry out its technical and professional supervisions properly and must refrain from making politically-motivated comments, he said, adding that this issue has been one of the important issues brought up by Iranian officials and they deemed it as necessary to remind the issue to the IAEA Director-General.

Also, Iranian officials stressed in their recent meeting with IAEA Chief Grossi that the IAEA should not be under the control of oppressive and bullying powers and should perform its expert-level duties within the framework of law, Azizi added.

The Islamic Republic of Iran stressed in the meeting between AEOI and the IAEA chiefs that “Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions and Protecting Rights of Iranian People” piece of legislation as approved by the Iranian lawmakers last December must be strictly implemented, the lawmaker quoted AEOI head Mohammad Eslami as saying.

## Retaining Elites on Parliament's Agenda

TEHRAN (IP) - The member of Iran's Parliament Presiding Board and head of the Fraction on Expatriates says the Parliament is seriously pursuing the return of the elites to the country.

Speaking on the occasion of the national day of the parliament in Iran on Monday, Alireza Salimi stated that the Parliament has passed laws to provide the elites with facilities so that they are encouraged to stay in the country.

Regarding the measures taken for the return of Iranians living abroad, the head of Parliament's Fraction on Expatriates explained that the Iranian fraction abroad has pursued as seriously as possible to return the Iranians living abroad to their country:

“To this aim, various meetings have been held with the relevant officials, and it is on the agenda as a serious issue of the country, and the President, the Judiciary Chief and the Parliament Speaker are all trying to settle this issue.”

The fraction had also meetings with Iranian nationals in some countries, despite restrictions, he added and

stressed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should find a better approach to let them return to Iran.

“There are obstacles in the way returning Iran, which we are trying to resolve them through consultations with the Vice President for Science and Technology, the First Vice President, the Minister of Science, the Speaker of the Parliament and the Foreign Minister.”

Regarding the recruitment of elites and encouraging them to stay and work in the country, Salimi said that laws were passed to allocate facilities to the elites in order not to let brain drain happen.

The elites' employment also, he said, was being followed up through the relevant offices.

The MP reported that more than 200 prominent people and world-class elites were returned to the country through the Parliament's efforts, and facilities were provided to them. He said that it was possible to attract elites as faculty members in universities.

## Thousands of Iranians Travel to Turkey During Black Friday Sales

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Thousands of Iranians travelled to Turkey recently for shopping during Black Friday sales, as the American commercial tradition has spread throughout the world.

The spokesman of Iran's customs, Rouhollah Latifi told local media that 16,759 crossed land borders to Turkey in what he said was an unprecedented rush to take advantage of sales as quality consumer goods in Iran are more expensive.

Latifi said that almost all travelers to Turkey in a two-week period returned to Iran from November 27-29, which proves they crossed the border for shopping purposes.

Tourists traveling to Turkey's Mediterranean coast mostly use charter flights.

Although international clothing brands are sold in luxury malls in Iran, prices are much higher than in open economies like Turkey where every brand has its own retail outlets and large department stores have sales.

## Starting Capital Requirements for Offshore Banks to \$5m Lowered

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian government has persuaded the country's central bank to significantly lower the starting capital requirements needed to set up an offshore bank in free trade zones amid efforts to boost foreign investment in those regions.

Government's top man on free trade zones Saeed Mohammad said on Tuesday that investors and lenders will be able to establish an offshore bank in the Iranian FTZs with a starting capital of \$5 million.

The figure is 30 times lower than a previous minimum set in the law governing offshore banks in Iran, said Mohammad.

He criticized those laws and said they had deterred investment from the FTZs.

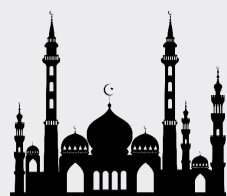
“When some people in Iran declared the starting capital at \$150 million, it basically meant that setting up offshore banks in the country would be impossible,” Mohammad was quoted as saying by ILNA news agency.

The change in law comes amid Iran's efforts to boost investment and manufacturing activity in free trade zones where laws and regulations are less stringent compared to the mainland.

Iran hopes higher trade and manufacturing activity in its FTZs can help the economy recover from the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and the sanctions imposed by the United States.

Mohammad, a former commander of Iran's elite IRGC military force, said that offshore banks in the Iranian FTZs will be able to process funds belonging to Iranian nationals living abroad.

He added that the government had received numerous requests for setting up offshore banks in recent months, adding that Iran's central bank will soon issue guidance on how the process can be regulated.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:53
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:10
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:28
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:57

100. And he raised his parents high on the throne (of dignity), and they fell down in prostration, (all) before him. He said: "O my father! this is the fulfilment of my vision of old! Allah hath made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord understandeth best the mysteries of all that He planneth to do, for verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom. Surah 12. Joseph (100)

## Iran Opens Trade Center in Damascus

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Iran has opened its first trade center in Syria amid efforts to boost economic exchanges between the two allied countries.**

The center was opened in the Free Zone of the capital Damascus on Tuesday in a ceremony attended by visiting Iranian trade minister Seyed Reza Fatemi Amin, according to a report by Syria's official SANA agency.

The report said that the Iranian trade center will host offices of major Iranian trade and manufacturing companies, including those active in agriculture and construction activities.

Keyvan Kashfi, a businessman watching over private sector trade between Iran and Syria, told Iran's IRNA agency that the center will help boost the presence of Iranian companies in Syria at a time the Arab country is seeking increased foreign investment to emerge from nearly a decade of terrorism and war.

Iran has declared its full support for Syria's reconstruction efforts. Fatemi Amin, who also heads Iranian government's departments on mines and industries, reiterated the pledge on Tuesday as he visited a number of factories closed by the war in the Adra region on the outskirts of Damascus.

The minister said Iran will be ready to help Syria rebuild its manufacturing sector, especially the once-booming textile industry in the Arab country.

On the third and final day of his trip to Syria, Fatemi Amin also held a key meeting with Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous on Tuesday while he also opened a second trade fair dedicated to the Iranian companies in Syria.

Meanwhile Fatemi-Amin said that Iranian companies are ready for reopening the halted industries in Syria and also putting up joint industries.

Fatemi-Amin said that the objective of his visit of Syria was surveying the



supportive capacities for restarting the Syrian industries, especially the textile industries, and helping them regain their economic status that was lost in Syria's war against terrorist.

In order to increase the joint investments and exchange experience, there have been consultations between the two countries' officials, so that after supporting Syria in the post-crisis era, the two countries' trade volume will increase to a more logical level, he added.

During this visit, four cooperation documents were signed between the two countries, said an official at the ministry.

The Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Fatemi Amin in his visit to Syria met and held talks on the industrial cooperations between the two countries with the Syrian minister of economy and foreign trades, said the Deputy of the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Peyman-Pak on Wednesday.

He added that four cooperation documents were signed during the trade committee and industrial committee sessions between the two countries.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official pointed out that the Iranian minister on his visit to Syria visited several places including Iran House of Innovation and Technology and Iran's trade center in Damascus, as well as the Syrian-Iranian Automobile Manufacturing Company (SIAMCO) and Kaveh Glass manufactory in Adra Industrial City.

## Chadormalu Co. Invited To Invest in Free Zones



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Vice President and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones Mr. Saeed Mohammad has called on Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company to invest in the free zones and special economic areas.**

On the sideline of the opening of the 3th Exhibition of Investment Opportunities and the 8th International Exhibition of the Stock Exchange, Banking, Insurance, and Privatization "KishINVEX 2021" held on Kish Island, Mohammad visited the pavilion of Chadormalu Company and during his visit he was informed about the developmental projects of the company.

Then Mohammad called on Chadormalu Company to invest in the free industrial and trade zones especially in the special economic zones. He emphasized that the council is ready to cooperate with the company and support its developmental projects in the free zones especially in Sistan and Baluchestan Province and Chabahar.

Chadormalu Company along with its 6 investing subsidiary companies (Arfa Iron and Steel Company, Iranian Ghadir Iron and Steel Company, Shahrood Steel Company, Sarmad Iron and Steel Complex, Parsland Mines and Industries Development Company (PAMIDCO), and CPG Pars Company) has an active presence in the KishUNVEX 2021.

## Majlis Trying to Alleviate Economic Problems

TEHRAN (IP) - Head of the Iranian Parliament's Economic Commission says the 11th Parliament has put on the agenda plans that can alleviate part of Iran's economic atmosphere in the short term.



Mohammad-Reza Pour-Ebrahimi stated that one of the plans of the 11th administration was the plan for the justice shares, which was put on the agenda of the Economic Commission.

"In the field of macroeconomic issues, tax system reorganization and the bill on empty houses' tax was approved to reduce the rental price in the country," he noted.

"Completion of the VAT law was another measure that was finalized after four years and its implementation is on the agenda. Amendments to the anti-trafficking law are also in the final stages," he added.

"The stock market is a highly diverse market in which people participate with short-term and risk-taking investments and undergo these fluctuations; in Iran, due to the lack of proper infrastructure and accurate information, new events are taking place in the capital market, and people think that they will make huge profits in a very short period of time while this market is directly related to the general economic conditions," he said.

The anniversary of the martyrdom of Martyr Modarres is named national day of the parliament in Iran. Seyed Hassan Modarres (c. 1870 - December 1, 1937), confronted conspiracies and plots which were being hatched by the colonial powers to gain dominance in the strategic important region. He also became staunch supporter of the constitutional movement which was being led by several prominent religious and intellectuals at the time.

"One of the programs requested from the 13th administration is a revision in market monitoring, which is attended by about fifty million people, and the next issue is the administration's actions in the macroeconomic field, which affects the capital market directly and indirectly," the official pointed.

The MP noted that the lack of mandatory pricing is another issue that is being pursued in Parliament. The administration must reduce its presence in the economy so that the capital market can return to better conditions.

Referring to the budget bill that the administration will present to the Parliament in the near future, he said: "Its components will be reviewed after the presentation, but what is important for us is a change in the form and content of next year's budget, which will continue to double the economic problems of previous years."

"The news coming from the Program and Budget Organization indicates that the organization has made changes, and we hope to see a budget plan with a minimized balance deficit," Pour-Ebrahimi concluded.

## Energy Ministry Only Wants Cash Not Goods From Iraq

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-e Eshaq says Iran's energy ministry does not accept goods instead of cash for the sale of electricity to Iraq and it insists on getting money from Iraq.



Speaking to ILNA, Al-e Eshaq said energy ministry should talk with Iraqi officials for return of its money for the sales of electricity to get favorable result, adding that the ministry does not accept goods instead of money and it insists on getting its money in cash. He noted that Iran's frozen money in Iraq is estimated at between 5 to 7 billion dollars and the total amount of sold gas to Iraq by the energy ministry has been on the basis of dollar.

On the release of the frozen money from Iraq, he said Iraq owes Iran some certain amount of money which it has delayed in repaying because of some conditions and it seems this country is currently less under pressure for repaying Iran's debts and the talks between the two countries are bearing fruits. Therefore Iraq will pay major part of Iran's money, he noted.

He noted that Iraqis had financial problem and been under the U.S. pressures which hindered paying their debts and currently the political pressures have reduced, and on the whole the country is now in a condition that

it can pay major part of Iran's debts.

Al-e Eshaq added that on how the money is being paid, the energy ministry should talk with Iraqi officials to get results. He reiterated that energy ministry does not accept goods in exchange for its money and it insists on getting cash.

He noted currently no deadline has been set for the return of money and Iran does not want to put Baghdad under pressure for repaying its money and by the way Iraq is not the country dodging from repaying its debts to Iraq.

He also refuted reports on Iran's cutting electricity supply to Iraq, adding that Iraq is in dire need of Iran's electricity and Iran has no reason to cut the power supply.

Al-e Eshaq also reacted to the proposal for the launch of economic union between Iran, Turkey and Iraq and said if it happens, it will have great positive impacts but this needs a strong determination by all parties.

On Monday it was reported a spokesman for the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity has said his country is ready to pay back its debt for imports of gas and electricity to Iran.

"The Ministry of Electricity is ready to pay back its debts to Iran based on the agreement of the delegations that previously visited Tehran. They money is a weight on our shoulders that we have to pay to Iran," Ahmed Musa told Baghdad al-Yawm news agency.

## Hormozgan Province to Expand Trade Ties With Russia, Belarus, Ukraine

BANDAR ABBAS (IRNA) - The governor general of Hormozgan Province, southern Iran, said in a joint meeting with the ambassadors of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine at governor general's office that economic and trade ties between the province and the three countries would expand.

Governor Mahdi Dousti made the remarks on Tuesday, while discussing Hormozgan Province's exports and imports of petroleum and agricultural products to and from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine with the three ambassadors.

"Facilitating export of the Hormozgan Province's agricultural products and oil to Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine was one of the important topics of discussions in my meeting with the ambassadors of those three countries and it was agreed that the issue would also be pursued by the Russian officials aimed at finding solutions, added Governor General Dousti.

Referring to the Russian side's request for signing contracts for doing farming in Iran, he said that in this meeting the preliminary talks were made and the Russian ambassador was ensured that the government sector would offer the required guarantees so that the Russian investors would at greater ease of mind be able to get engaged in this field and their products would match the real demands in Russian markets.

Focusing on his talks with the Ukrainian ambassador, too, Dousti said that Ukraine is one of the countries that has access to the Black Sea, adding that the Ukrainian ambassador announced his country's readiness to serve as an economic hub for distribution of the Iranian export goods.

He said that the Ukrainians demand of some oil products, such as tar and various grades of petrochemical products. The governor general said that there were also proposals on economizing water usage by resorting to technological methods, especially in the current water shortage conditions of the country, as well as using the hydroponic and aeroponic technologies.

He said that the three ambassadors also announced readiness for travelling to various parts of Hormozgan to get acquainted with the capacities and demands of the province.

It was also agreed that joint offices would be established in Bandar Abbas and Odesa, Ukraine, and webinar meeting among the merchants of the two countries would be arranged within the next couple of week," concluded the governor.



## Pakistan Takes Date Market From Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian date exporters report that Pakistani traders are exporting these products to the global market by attending Iran and buying domestic dates and exporting in new packages.

The claim came during a meeting of the agricultural commission of Tehran Chamber and members of the Iran Dried Fruits Exporters Association.

According to the report, Iranian date exporters say Pakistan is currently taking over more than 30-year-old Iranian dates markets around the world, and as seen among Pakistani officials, they are seeking to trade dates with Iran.

Tejarat News has also reported that Poland, as one of the buyer countries of Iranian dates, has announced that it will no longer buy dates from Iran because it is more economical for them to buy dates from Poland and Pakistan by establishing a zero percent tariff.

Meanwhile Hassan Rashid Farokhi, Head of National Association of Iranian Dates told ILNA on Monday that the reason for the return of these palm trees to Iran was the failure to certify their health certificates.

## Serbian Artist Hails Works of Iranians

BELGRADE (IRNA) - Head of board of juries of the 51st Golden Pen of Belgrade and the 16th International Biennial of Illustration 2021 has appreciated Iranian artists for the works they put on display in the Serbian exhibition.

David Vartabedian made the appreciation in a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Belgrade Rashid Hassanpour on Tuesday evening.

Serbia and Iran have great capacities for expanding cooperation in the areas of culture and art, Vartabedian said. The Iranian ambassador, in the meeting, referred to his visit to an exhibition of works of Iranian artist Noushin Sadeghian in Belgrade and expressed satisfaction over close cooperation from the European festival.

Hassanpour hoped that such cooperation would continue. He went on to say that the Islamic Republic of Iran is after fostering all-out relations with Serbia.

This year, Belgrade hosted an exclusive exhibition displaying works of Sadeghian who had won a prize at in the 2019 biennial event in the Serbian capital.

## Barcelona Fire Kills Four

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - A fire ripped through an abandoned bank occupied by squatters in central Barcelona on Tuesday, killing four people, including a baby and a three-year-old boy, Spanish firefighters said.

"While we were battling the fire, we found four people. Emergency services tried to revive them, but unfortunately they failed, they could not do anything to save them," the head of the firefighting operation, Angel Lopez, told reporters. A neighbor who lives in a flat above the bank said people trapped on the premises had been screaming, pleading for help after the blaze broke out.



## Germany Jails Iraqi Jihadist for Life

FRANKFURT (AFP) - A Frankfurt court on Tuesday handed a life sentence to an Iraqi man who joined the Islamic State group for genocide against the Yazidi minority, in the first verdict worldwide to use the label.

Taha Al-Jumailly, 29, was found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity resulting in death, war crimes, aiding and abetting war crimes and bodily harm resulting in death after joining IS in 2013.

Proceedings were suspended as the defendant passed out in court when the verdict was read out.

The Yazidis, a Kurdish-speaking group hailing from northern Iraq, have for years been persecuted by IS militants who have killed hundreds of men, raped women and forcibly recruited children as fighters.



## Putin Hits Back as NATO Warns Moscow Against Attacking Ukraine



RIGA (Dispatches) - Russia would pay a high price for any new military aggression against Ukraine, NATO and the United States warned on Tuesday as the Western military alliance met to discuss Moscow's possible motives for massing troops near the Ukrainian border.

President Vladimir Putin countered that Russia would be forced to act if U.S.-led NATO placed missiles in Ukraine that could strike Moscow within minutes.

Ukraine, a former Soviet republic that now aspires to join the European Union and NATO, has become the main flashpoint between Russia and the West as relations have soured to their worst level in the three decades since the Cold War ended.

"There will be a high price to pay for Russia if they once again use force against the independence of the nation Ukraine," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken echoed Stoltenberg, saying: "Any escalatory actions by Russia would be a great concern to the United States..., and any renewed aggression would trigger serious consequences."

Tensions have been rising for weeks, with Russia, Ukraine and NATO all staging military exercises amid mutual recriminations over which side is the aggressor.

Putin went further than previously in spelling out Russia's "red lines" on Ukraine, saying it would have to respond if NATO deployed advanced missile systems on its neighbor's soil.

"If some kind of strike systems appear on the territory of Ukraine, the flight time to Moscow will be 7-10 minutes, and five minutes in the case of a hypersonic weapon being deployed. Just imagine," the Kremlin leader said.

"What are we to do in such a scenario? We will have to then create something similar in relation to those who threaten us in that way. And we can do that now," he said, pointing to Russia's recent testing of a hypersonic weapon he said could fly at nine times the speed of sound.

EU and other Western leaders are involved in a geopolitical tug-of-war with Russia for influence in Ukraine and two other ex-Soviet republics, Moldova and Georgia, through trade, cooperation and protection arrangements.

NATO foreign ministers began two days of talks in the Latvian capital Riga to debate what they say is the growing Russian threat, with Blinken due to brief his 29 alliance counterparts on Washington's intelligence assessment.

Blinken, speaking at a news conference with his Latvian counterpart, said he will have more to say on Wednesday on how to respond to Russia after holding talks with NATO allies.

## Moqtada Sadr's Bloc Declared Biggest Election Winner

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq's Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr was Tuesday confirmed the biggest winner of last month's parliamentary election that had sparked charges of voter fraud from pro-Iranian factions.

Sadr's movement won 73 out of the assembly's 329 seats, the election commission said, after a lengthy manual recount of hundreds of ballot boxes.

A distant second with 17 seats was the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance, the political arm of the pro-Iran Hashed Al-Shaabi former paramilitary force, which is now integrated into Iraq's state security apparatus.

Hashed leaders had rejected the preliminary result, which was sharply down from their 48 seats in the outgoing assembly, as a "scam," and their supporters have held street protests chanting "No to fraud."

Their activists have staged sit-in protests outside Baghdad's ultra-secure Green Zone district, where the government, the assembly and many foreign embassies are located.



## Sudan Security Forces Fire Tear Gas at Demonstrators

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Sudanese security forces fired tear gas at protesters rallying against last month's military takeover and a deal that saw the prime minister reinstated after his ouster in the coup, witnesses said.

Thousands of demonstrators gathered in central Khartoum and marched on the presidential palace when security forces fired tear gas to disperse them, they said.

Security forces were stationed around the palace to prevent demonstrators from approaching.

"No partnership, no negotiation, no legitimacy," protesters chanted, urging the military "to go back to their barracks".

"I'm here to demand the fall of military rule," demonstrator Mohamed Alaaldin told AFP.

Sudan's top general, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, seized power and detained Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on October 25, but after international condemnation and mass protests he reinstated the premier in a deal they signed last week.

Critics lambasted the agreement as "whitewashing" and accused Hamdok of "betrayal" as pro-democracy activists vowed to maintain pressure on the military-civilian authority.

The Sudanese Professionals Association, an umbrella of unions which called for Tuesday's protests, accused Hamdok and Burhan of seeking to "reproduce the former regime" of president Omar al-Bashir who was ousted in April 2019 following mass protests.

"Taking to the streets is a clear and decisive response to the putschists' nonsense," said the SPA, which was also instrumental in the anti-Bashir protests.

Hamdok, who has been prime minister in the transitional government since the ouster of long-time autocratic ruler Bashir, has defended the deal which was signed on November 21.

He has told local media he had partnered with the military to "stop the bloodshed" and to "not squander the gains of the last two years".

## UK Spy Chief Warns China, Russia Racing to Master AI

LONDON (Dispatches) - The chief of the United Kingdom's foreign spy service is to warn that China and Russia are racing to master artificial intelligence in a way that could revolutionize geopolitics over the next 10 years.

Richard Moore, who heads the Secret Intelligence Service, known as MI6, is due to make his first public speech since becoming chief of the organization on Tuesday.

In extracts of the speech released in advance by the British government he will say quantum engineering, engineered biology, vast troves of data and advances in computer power pose a threat that needs to be addressed by democratic powers.

"Our adversaries are pouring money and ambition into mastering artificial intelligence, quantum computing and synthetic biology, because they know that mastering these technologies will give them leverage," Moore, who rarely makes public speeches, will say when he sets out his view of current threats.

The world's spies are trying to grapple with seismic advances in technology that are challenging traditional human-led spying operations, which have dominated espionage for thousands of years.

Moore, a former diplomat, became MI6 chief in October 2020.

Speaking at the Institute for International and Strategic Studies think tank, he will stress that technological

progress over the next decade could outstrip all the tech advances made over the past century.

"As a society, we have yet to internalize this stark fact and its potential impact on global geopolitics. But it is a white-hot focus for MI6," he will say.

Of particular concern to the spies in the world's liberal democracies are Russian and Chinese intelligence agencies, which have rushed to harness the power of a range of sophisticated technologies, sometimes at a faster pace than in the West.

Western intelligence agencies fear Beijing could dominate all key emerging technologies within decades, particularly artificial intelligence, synthetic biology and genetics.

China's economic and military rise over the past 40 years is considered one of the most significant geopolitical events of recent times, alongside the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, which ended the Cold War.

MI6, depicted by novelists as the employer of some of the most memorable fictional spies from John le Carré's George Smiley to Ian Fleming's James Bond, operates overseas and is tasked with defending the UK and its interests.

Moore says the service will have to give up some of its deep-rooted secrecy and work with technology firms to combat the rapidly developing threats.



## Ethiopia PM Claims War Gains, Urges Rebels to Surrender

ADDIS ABABA (Dispatches) - Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Tuesday

urged Tigrayan rebels to surrender, claiming government forces were nearing victory just one week after he vowed to lead military operations at the front.

His upbeat portrayal of the military's fortunes came as fighting reportedly raged on at least three fronts, one of which -- the town of Debre Sina -- is located less than 200 kilometres (120 miles) by road from the capital Addis Ababa.

"The youth of Tigray is perishing like leaves. Knowing it is defeated, it is being led by one who does not have a clear vision or plan," Abiy, winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, said in comments aired on state media.

"It should surrender today to the Ethiopian National Defence Force, to the special forces, to the militias and to the people."

Tuesday's footage was the latest in a series of clips showing Abiy, in uniform with soldiers, in what appeared to be the northeastern region of Afar.

The area has been the site of fierce fighting in recent weeks as the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rebel group has tried to seize control of a critical highway that supplies the capital.

On Sunday, state media claimed the army controlled the lowland Afar town of Chifra, and Abiy said Tuesday such gains would be replicated to the west, in Amhara region.

"The enemy has been defeated. We scored an unthinkable victory with the eastern command in one day... Now in the west we will repeat this victory," he said.

The announcement last week that Abiy, a former lieutenant-colonel in the military, would head to the battlefield came after the TPLF claimed to control Shewa Robit, a town 220 km northeast of Addis Ababa by road.

The move "has inevitably boosted troop morale and emboldened the people of Ethiopia to unite, and to resist and to push back the threat of the terrorist organization," Abiy's spokeswoman Billene Seyoum told a press conference Tuesday, referring to the TPLF.

"In the past few days alone, great strides have been made in forcing the TPLF to relinquish their occupation of key areas." But a TPLF spokesman on Monday dismissed Abiy's deployment as a "circus" involving "farical war games."



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## Petronas Posts Q3 Profit, Sees Modest Demand Growth

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) - Malaysia's state energy firm Petrolia Nasional Berhad, or Petronas, swung to a third-quarter profit on higher prices and demand, and forecast a modest recovery in demand. The company reported third-quarter profit of 16.3 billion ringgit, compared with a loss of 3.4 billion ringgit in the year-ago quarter.

Revenue rose 50% to 61.8 billion ringgit, mainly due to higher average realized prices, the company said.

"The current trajectory of the oil and gas industry is expected to continue, given modest recovery in demand underpinned by improvements of economic activities globally," the company said in a statement.



## India's Economic Recovery Gathers Pace

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India is expected to remain on track to post the fastest economic growth among major economies even as the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant has raised fears for the future.

The country's economic recovery is expected to strengthen in the July-September quarter, helped by an uptick in consumer spending, data due later is expected to show.

Asia's third-largest economy has been seeing a rebound from last year's deep slump, boosted by rising vaccination rates and increased government spending.

A Reuters survey of 44 economists projected GDP data will show 8.4 percent year-on-year growth in the September quarter, the fastest pace among major economies, vs a 7.5 percent contraction in the same quarter last year.

The projected growth is slower than 20.1 percent growth in the previous quarter - which largely reflected a bounce back from last year's crash - but marks a fourth straight quarter of expansion.

The recovery is "led by the services sector, with individual mobility back to pre-COVID levels, and ultra-accommodative financial conditions," as well as higher government expenditures, said Gaura Sen Gupta, an economist with IDFC First Bank in Mumbai.

While she said it was too early to predict the impact of the omicron strain, the cost of lockdowns has been falling as they become more targeted and shorter.

The improvement in workplace mobility became possible due to the government's extensive vaccination program, Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings and Research, said in a statement emailed to Al Jazeera. Cumulative vaccinations in India leapfrogged to 890.21 million at the end of the September quarter, up from 335.72 million at the end of the previous quarter, the ratings agency said.

Sinha, however, warned that growth numbers should be "interpreted with caution" as growth in the first six months of the current financial year was "mainly due to the lower base" of the same period last year.

Fast-moving indicators including exports, electricity generation, rail freight and bank deposits showed improving signs of growth momentum in October while vehicle sales, fuel sales and tax collection showed slower growth.

Private economists have said the economy is on the cusp of recovery helped by a resilient farm sector growth, but risks included slowing global growth, rising manufacturing prices as well as new variants of COVID-19.

As the market awaited the figures, health authorities warned they were tightening testing at airports in the wake of the spread of the Omicron variant. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday ordered a review of plans to ease travel curbs.

"COVID risks have resurfaced globally and (these need to be watched) for implications for the timing of monetary policy normalization," Shubhada Rao, economist at Mumbai-based QuantEco Research, said.

## Global Jet Fuel Demand Under Pressure From Omicron

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Global jet fuel markets stayed under pressure on Tuesday as more countries expanded border restrictions to keep the new Omicron coronavirus variant at bay, prompting travelers to reconsider their plans.

Jet fuel demand - the biggest laggard in the oil complex - had been forecast to post the strongest growth of 550,000 barrels per day to 5.9 million bpd in fourth quarter, according to the International Energy Agency in its Nov. 16 report.

But now Omicron pose the greatest risk to jet fuel consumption. Hong Kong expanded a ban on entry for non-residents from several countries, the latest to expand travel curbs after Israel and Japan have already announced border closures to all foreign travelers.

Britain and Australia have tightened rules for all arrivals in response to the new variant while hundreds and thousands of would-be travelers are now considering to cancel or delay their trips in response to renewed restrictions.

"The real risk from the new variant is ... the reimposition of more widespread flight restrictions during the winter and again reducing current global jet fuel demand of some 6 million barrels per day significantly," energy consultancy FGE said in a note.

Asian refining margins for jet fuel slumped to their lowest in more than two months on Monday at \$6.92 a barrel, while the front-month time spread for the aviation fuel in Singapore flipped to a contango for the first time since end-September.

"Current jet demand levels are just 1 mb/d above last winter, when cases and hospitalizations were far higher and before any widespread vaccinations," Goldman Sachs analysts said in a Nov. 26 note.

"While a worst case outcome could be a return to last winter's levels, 0.5 mb/d downside to our current base-case until 2Q22 would be a conservative assumption given what we know at present."

Global airlines, most of which have been struggling since last year's plunge in air travel as a majority of long-haul international flights remained grounded, are now scrambling to limit the impact of the latest variant on their networks. "In total, 2.4% of scheduled (global airline) capacity has been removed for the next four months," aviation data firm OAG said.

"But it is too soon to say whether this is due to slightly weaker demand than expected, or an early response by some airlines to the prospect of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus causing a return to border restrictions for international air travel."



## Turkey's Economy Grows 7.4% in Q3

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's economy zoomed ahead of most peers to expand 7.4% in the third quarter, but soaring inflation and a slump in the lira mean the surge could be short-lived.

Growth during the three months through September matched the median forecast among nine economists surveyed by Bloomberg. The seasonally and working day-adjusted figures showed an expansion of 2.7% in the last quarter from the previous three months, when gross domestic product surged 22% as the economy bounced back from the worst phase of the pandemic.

The lira weakened after the data release, trading 0.5% lower at 12.8884 against the dollar at 11:47 a.m. in Istanbul. The currency has hit a series of record lows in recent weeks as the central bank has embarked on a cycle of interest-rate cuts that have turbo-boosted growth but hit incomes and shaken confidence. Investors have warned against further easing, arguing that uncontrolled inflation would ultimately act as a brake on growth, and even drag the economy into recession.

"With the current acute lira selloff akin to the 2018 episode which triggered a recession, our expectation is for the growth momentum to markedly weaken in the quarters ahead owing to higher FX volatility and a decline in purchasing power," Ehsan Khoman, head of emerging market research for Europe, Middle East and Africa at MUFG Bank in Dubai, said after the data.

Khoman said growth would slow from a projected 8.8% for this year to 3.4% in 2022, with the risk firmly on the downside. He predicted that the central bank would push ahead with cuts for now but be forced to increase borrowing costs to 20% next year to stabilize the economy.

Inanc Sozer, an economist at Istanbul-based Virtus Glocal Consulting said the economy could even contract next year if the central bank continues on its current path.

Turkey's central bank has slashed 4 percentage points off borrowing rates since September, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pushes to revive his flagging popularity ahead of 2023 elections by delivering robust growth and more jobs.

Soaring inflation has hit purchasing power, however, which means some of the strongest real GDP growth among Group of 20 nations isn't translating into better living standards for many households. While exporters benefit from the weaker lira and property-owners cash in on rising rents and house prices, among the worst hit are working class Turks — Erdogan's traditional base.

Below are some more highlights from the GDP report released by the state statistics institute in Ankara on Tuesday:

\*Household consumption - estimated to account for about two-thirds of the economy - continues to be one of the main drivers of growth. It jumped 9.1% from a year earlier.

\*Annual GDP grew to \$795.2 billion in the third quarter from \$765 billion through the previous three-month period.

\*Exports jumped 25.6% on an annual basis. Imports dropped 8.3%.

\*Gross fixed capital formation, a measure of investment by businesses, shrank an annual 2.4%.

\*Government spending rose 9.6% after a revised 3.4% increase in the previous quarter.

Leading indicators show activity remains strong in the fourth quarter even as the official economic confidence index dropped to 99.3 in November, compared to 101.4 in the previous month.

## Shell Eyes Return to Libya With Oil, Gas, Solar Investments

LONDON (Dispatches)

Royal Dutch Shell is considering a return to Libya with a plan to develop new oil and gas fields and infrastructure, as well as a solar project, two sources said, a decade after exiting the North African country because of unrest.

The plan, details of which were seen by Reuters, marks a rare new oil and gas foray by the energy major as it seeks to cut fossil fuel investment and slash greenhouse gas emissions. In that strategy, Shell still needs some new projects to maintain output as reserves in existing oil and gas fields have rapidly fallen after years of slowing drilling activity.

Under the Libya plan, discussed with state-run National Oil Corporation (NOC), Shell would explore for new oil and gas fields in several blocks in the onshore Sirte and Ghadames basins, as well as the offshore Cyrenaica basin.

Shell also proposed re-developing ageing fields such as block NC-174 in the Murzuq basin and developing new fields including in the Ain Jarbi block.

The plan includes developing a solar energy project south of the Sirte Basin, part of Shell's strategy to cut oil output by up to 2% a year by 2030 and hike investment in renewables and low carbon technologies to make up 25% of its budget by 2025.

"Shell is preparing to return as a major player," Shell's proposal said, according to the sources and details seen by Reuters. The proposal did not give details about the value of any investment or scale of the oil, gas and solar projects.

A Shell spokesperson declined to comment. NOC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Other firms now working in Libya, include TotalEnergies, Italy's Eni and ConocoPhillips.

Shell's \$9.5 billion sale of its U.S. onshore Permian basin operations in September freed up about \$1 billion for other upstream activities, a senior company source told Reuters.

## U.S., Allies Biggest Beneficiaries of Australia's \$17b China Trade Row

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Australia's closest security allies, led by the United States, have been the biggest beneficiaries of Beijing's campaign of economic coercion against Canberra, a report has found.

More than 18 months after China kicked off the trade war against Australia amid a series of spats between the two countries, the University of Technology Sydney found it was Canberra's partners who were picking up much of the slack. UTS's Australia-China Relations Institute has released figures that show the value of 12 Australian exports to China affected by sanctions fell by \$U.S.12.6 billion (\$17.3b) in the first nine months of this year compared with 2019.

During the same period, the value of U.S. exports of the same commodities increased by \$U.S.4.6 billion (\$6.3 billion), while those of Canada and New Zealand jumped by \$U.S.1.1b and \$U.S.786 million, respectively.

Institute director James Laurenceson said the data showed Australia's pursuit of closer security ties with the US and other western democracies was not stopping its allies from capitalizing on its trade predicament.

"Of course, the U.S. is our great security ally and strategic mate," Dr Laurenceson said. "Sometimes we get very excited by U.S.-based commentators, and indeed senior Biden officials, saying, 'We will stand shoulder to shoulder with Australia.'"

"So strategic friends can be fierce commercial rivals and that's exactly what we're seeing."

Over several months from May 2020, Australian exporters were hit with a series of crippling trade strikes by Beijing over grievances that included "siding with the U.S.' anti-China campaign".

## South Korea Industrial Output Falls by Most in 18 Months in October

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's industrial output fell by the most in 18 months in October as production in the manufacturing sector lost steam amid global supply chain bottlenecks, data showed Tuesday.

Industrial output declined 1.9 percent in October from the previous month, a turnaround from a 1.1 percent on-month gain in September, according to the data compiled by Statistics Korea.

It marked the largest on-month fall since April 2020, when industrial output fell 2 percent.

From a year earlier, industrial output rose 4.8 percent.

Output in the manufacturing sector declined for the fourth consecutive month in October, affected by a global supply chain squeeze.

Manufacturing output declined 3.1 percent on-month mainly because a global shortage of auto chips dented vehicle production.

Auto production fell 5.1 percent last month.

Retail sales, a gauge of private spending, rose for the second straight month in October as economic activity increased amid the vaccine rollout.

Retail sales gained 0.2 percent on-month in October, compared with a 2.4 percent on-month increase in September.

Facility investment fell 5.4 percent on-month last month, following a 1.8 percent on-month decline in September.

The statistics agency said economic recovery momentum has slowed down, coupled with fewer working days and September's high base effect.

South Korea used alternative holidays to create two back-to-back extended weekends in October in an effort to help prop up domestic demand.

"Economic uncertainty remains high, given the virus situation, global supply chain disruptions and rising commodity prices," Eo Woon-sun, a senior Statistics Korea official, told reporters.

But he said it is too early to say that economic recovery momentum has been sapped solely with the October data.

Asia's fourth-largest economy is on a recovery track on the back of robust exports of chips and petroleum products.

The country implemented the "living with COVID-19" scheme on Nov. 1 with eased virus restrictions in a bid to gradually return to normal life.

Economic policymakers expect the relaxed virus curbs to boost private spending.

But spikes in COVID-19 cases and the emergence of the omicron variant are raising concerns that economic uncertainty could heighten.

# “Drowning in Holy Water” Shines at Stockholm Festival

TEHRAN (IRNA) - “Drowning in Holy Water” by Iranian director Navid Mahmoudi was awarded as the best feature film at the SAMA International Film Festival in Stockholm, Sweden, on November 26-28.

The Iranian movie is produced by Jamshid Mahmoudi. India, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan had also attended the event.

“Drowning in Holy Water” narrates the story of some young Afghan immigrants who want to move to Europe.



## Moderna Boss Warns Against Omicron Vaccine Struggle

LONDON (AFP) - Existing Covid-19 inoculations will struggle against the fast-spreading Omicron variant, the head of vaccine manufacturer Moderna warned Tuesday, as countries ramp up vaccination programs and impose further restrictions in an effort to curb growing concern.

First reported to the World Health Organization in South Africa less than a week ago, the new strain has rapidly spread from Africa to the Pacific, and from Europe to North America as dozens of countries have announced travel restrictions.

While no deaths have yet been reported from Omicron, and it could take weeks to know how infectious and how resistant the strain may prove to vaccines, its emergence underscores how besieged the world remains by Covid-19, nearly two years after the first cases were recorded.

Stephane Bancel, the head of U.S. vaccine manufacturer Moderna, told the Financial Times in an interview published Tuesday that data would be available on the effectiveness of vaccines in the two weeks' time, but that scientists were pessimistic.

“All the scientists I’ve talked to ... are like ‘this is not going to be good,’” Bancel said, warning against a “material drop” in the effectiveness of current jabs against Omicron.

Moderna, U.S. drugmaker Pfizer and the backers of Russian vaccine Sputnik V have all announced that they are already working on an Omicron-specific vaccine.

Scientists in South Africa said they had detected the new variant with at least 10 mutations, compared with three for Beta or two for Delta -- the strain that hit the global recovery and sent millions worldwide back into lockdown.

China warned that the fast-spreading Omicron variant would cause challenges in hosting next February’s Winter Olympics in Beijing, with thousands of athletes, media and participants arriving from overseas required to enter a strict “closed-loop” bubble.

“I think it will definitely lead to challenges linked to prevention and control,” foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

“But China has a lot of experience in responding to Covid-19,” Zhao added. “I firmly believe the Winter Olympics will be conducted smoothly.”

On Monday, U.S. President Joe Biden said the strain was “a cause for concern, not a cause for panic,” stressing that he does not foresee new lockdowns or extending travel restrictions for now.

G7 health ministers called for “urgent action” to combat the Omicron variant.

The WHO said the overall risk from Omicron was “very high” and warned that any major surge would put pressure on health systems and cause more deaths.

Omicron could slow the recovery of the U.S. economy and labour market and heighten uncertainty over inflation, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is to tell the Senate Banking Committee.

Governments, particularly in western Europe, had already struggled with rapid rises in case numbers and have reintroduced mandatory mask-wearing, social-distancing measures, curfews or lockdowns -- leaving businesses fearing another grim Christmas.

Germany’s outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel was to meet remotely with



her successor, Olaf Scholz, and regional leaders Tuesday on whether to toughen up restrictions to tame raging infections in the European Union’s largest economy.

Germany’s constitutional court has ruled that sweeping restrictions such as curfews, school closures and contact restrictions were lawful, likely to pave the way for further curbs with hospitals, already over capacity, long sounding the alarm.

“Contacts must be reduced,” said Germany’s vice-chancellor-in-waiting Robert Habeck, calling for tougher restrictions such as banning unvaccinated people from “all public facilities” apart from essential shops.

On Tuesday, Greece said coronavirus vaccines would be compulsory for over 60s, a day after Britain said all adults would be now eligible for a third Covid jab. On Tuesday, Norway also said it would offer a booster shot to all adults before Easter, as preferable to lockdown.

And in Switzerland, ahead of what some had hoped would be a prosperous ski season, hoteliers said they were facing a wave of winter cancellations following quarantine restrictions being imposed on travellers from certain countries, including Britain.

Hotels had seen “massive cancellations of corporate events and Christmas parties,” said industry group HotellerieSuisse, calling on political leaders to take steps to avoid a lockdown and to maintain financial assistance to the sector already hard hit by the pandemic.

A ministerial meeting on the World Trade Organization, which had been due to take place this week in Geneva but which was postponed due to Omicron, could now take place in early March 2022, the body said.

The first confirmed case of the Omicron variant was in South Africa on November 9, with infections spreading rapidly in the country.

Kazakhstan has banned flights from December 3 to Egypt, a popular tourist destination, over Omicron.

### Gov’t Seeks...

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The President described legislation and laying the rails for the movement of society as the great duty and responsibility of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and said, “The parliament is a manifestation of the will, vote and discernment of the people and today in our country this laying of the society is manifested in the form of legislation”.

Emphasizing the need to pay attention to the implementation of the law, Raisi said, “All individuals and officials, without exception, should define themselves with the law and be obliged to implement the law, because the law is the center of society”.

Ayatollah Raisi stated that the best and most important criterion for the administration of justice is the implementation of the law, adding, “The criterion for measuring justice in society is agreement on the implementation of the law, and if the law is enforced, justice is enforced and if the law is violated, justice is violated”.

The President considered it important to keep the laws up-to-date and efficient, and said, “But more important is the effort to revise the laws, which the Supreme Leader of the Revolution has repeatedly emphasized, and the parliament is central to this issue.”

Raisi described the convergence, empathy and cohesion of all parts of the country necessary for the correct implementation of laws and emphasized, “The coordination and integration of the three branches in all systems and institutions are not a tactic but a strategy that should not be compromised in any way.”

Ayatollah Raisi said, “The result of ignoring spirituality and politics in today’s world is the increase of nuclear warheads, 70 years of oppression on the Palestinian people and many oppressions that occur in different parts of the world.”

He also underlined the need to politics go hand in hand with spirituality, saying today’s problems in the world stem from the separation of the two from each other.

He said the divorce of politics from spirituality led to the production of nuclear warheads.

The president said Iran’s Parliament today is the manifestation of people’s will, and that a country where elections are held must ensure the prevalence of law. Raisi also said just laws, just enforcement of laws and just judgments are main pivots of administering justice.

### National Rights...

FROM PAGE 1

Another source close to the team of Iranian negotiators has informed Tasnim that the Iranian delegation prefers to proceed with the negotiations as long as necessary.

The meeting of a task force on the removal of sanctions was held in Vienna on Tuesday at the level of experts, attended by diplomats from Iran, the P4+1 and the European Union.

Envoys from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries — Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany — began on Monday the seventh round of the talks in the Austrian capital.

The following day, they participated in expert-level meetings of the working group formed to separately deal with the removal of U.S. sanctions against Iran.

On Wednesday, they also attended the meetings of another working group on nuclear issues.

The negotiations resumed after a five-month pause over Iran’s presidential election and the formation of a new administration in the country.

Meanwhile on Tuesday a group of U.S. lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives prepared an anti-Iran bill, calling for preventing the country from advancing its defense activities in the field of drone power.

A group of Republican and Democratic representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives presented a bill to stop the activities of Iranian drones.

The Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Gregory Meeks, claimed that US sanctions on Iran’s arms program under CAATSA also include the supply, sale, or transfer of combat drones to or from Iran.

### Iran Delivers...

FROM PAGE 1

PDVSA’s swap contract with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) provides it with a steady supply of condensate, a high-value light crude, as a diluent.

The bituminous crude from the Orinoco Belt, Venezuela’s largest producing region, requires mixing before it can be transported and exported.

Iran’s supply of condensate helps Venezuela stabilize exports of the Orinoco’s crude blends and allows its own lighter oil to be refined in the country to produce badly needed motor fuel.

Overall, it helps Venezuela increase its crude exports as the country needs the revenues to improve an economy that has suffered because of U.S. sanctions.

## Spain’s GDP to Be Hit by Inflation



MADRID (Dispatches) - The Spanish economy could be hit by supply bottlenecks, rising inflation and a surge of COVID-19 in Europe, prompting a slight downward revision of growth forecasts in the fourth quarter and early 2022, Bank of Spain Governor Pablo Hernandez De Cos said on Tuesday.

He said these recent developments were likely to prompt a “significant downward” revision of the bank’s estimates for Spain’s economic growth in 2021, due to be updated in December, and also affect the 2022 forecast.

Taking into account these projections, pre-pandemic levels of economic activity would not be reached until around early 2023.

Tourism, which used to account for more than 12% of Spain’s GDP before the coronavirus outbreak, would not fully reach pre-pandemic levels until the summer of 2023, De Cos said.

Spain’s central bank chief also said the economic outlook for the coming months would depend on the strength of household consumption and the implementation of European Recovery funds.

“Although the expectation of recovery is real, its speed and depth are subject to a high degree of uncertainty,” he told members of the upper house of parliament during a budget commission hearing.

The Spanish economy is bouncing back after a record plunge of 10.8% last year, although at a slower pace than expected.

The European Commission expects Spain to grow 5.5% in 2022, versus 6.3% previously, but the government has so far stuck to its upbeat forecast of 7% growth next year.

Spanish inflation hit its highest in nearly three decades in November as a jump in food and fuel costs pushed consumer prices up to 5.6% year-on-year.

The rate accelerated from October’s 5.4% to reach its highest level since September 1992’s 5.8%. Inflation has been rising across the euro zone in recent months, with Spain particularly hard hit.

## AIDS: Years of Research But Still No Vaccine

PARIS (AFP) - Covid vaccines began to show promise just months after the novel coronavirus started spreading across the globe. One answer is that the political will and colossal investment that have spurred on Covid vaccine development have largely been missing from AIDS vaccine research since HIV was discovered in 1983.

But another lies in the complexity of the science behind HIV.

“With COVID vaccines, researchers worry about the vaccine being able to fend off a handful of variants that have become particularly worrisome,” reads a June report by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI). “But for HIV, there are millions and millions of different viruses that have resulted from the virus’s stealth ability to rapidly mutate... It is this astonishing level of diversity that any HIV vaccine must contend with.”

Olivier Schwartz, head of the viruses and immunity unit at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, says that while most people can recover naturally from an initial coronavirus infection and thus acquire immunity, this is not the case for HIV.

“HIV mutates much more easily than Covid and so it is more difficult to generate so-called broadly neutralizing antibodies that could prevent infection,” he said.

Only a handful of people naturally produce these antibodies when exposed to HIV.

Research into a vaccine has meant studying those rare responses, understanding how they work, and trying to replicate them in healthy people’s immune systems.

Several dozen vaccines are being studied, with one by U.S. firm Moderna seeking to use the same mRNA delivery method as its popular Covid vaccine. The June report describing the research explains how the mRNA jab is meant to deliver instructions for a process called “germline targeting”. This means “guiding the immune system, step by step, to induce antibodies that can counteract HIV”, the report explains.

So far, the technique is complex, involving an initial shot to activate important B-cells before several jabs attempt to spur the body into producing a range of antibodies.

Being able to visualize a way forward has given researchers hope, and some say it’s thanks in no small part to the pandemic.

### Washington Impeding...

FROM PAGE 1

“COVID-19 — as a wake-up call for the whole world — reminds us once again that the development, welfare and prosperity of all human beings are interconnected and interdependent. However, as the entire world continues to work together to contain the Covid-19, we witness that the US continues to impose unilateral coercive measures, including illegal economic sanctions, on a number of countries including those that are greatly suffering from the grave consequences of the pandemic,” Iran’s UN envoy said.

“These illegal acts, on the one hand, and the lack of decisive action on the part of the international community to counter them, on the other, have turned the pivotal ideal of sustainable development, namely ‘no one should be left behind’,

into a purely decorative and meaningless claim,” he added.

Takht Ravanchi underlined that the world needs to work together to contain the coronavirus, saying, “International crises and challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and unilateralism, cannot be defeated without a genuine collective response and joint efforts of all countries under the auspices of multilateralism, cooperation and solidarity and in conformity with the spirit of international collective coordination.”

Since the start of the viral outbreak in early 2020, calls have been growing inside the US and abroad for Washington to lift its unilateral sanctions against other countries, which are throwing a wrench into global efforts to rein in the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

### 21 States...

FROM PAGE 1

As to small enterprises’ dire need for expertise in order to be able to keep export development, Nouri noted that the TPO has signed a memorandum of understanding to provide small businesses with proper education with the help of international academics.

The seminar of “Eurasia: a bridge to global trade” was held by the TOP in association with Anzali Free Zone Organization as well as chambers of commerce of Russia and Iran to pave the ground for exchange of views on facilitating and expanding trade of agricultural and food products between Iran and member states of the EAEU especially Russia.

## Pakistan Win 1st Bangladesh Test

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Abid Ali fell just shy of back-to-back centuries as Pakistan cruised to an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh in the first Test in Chittagong on Tuesday.

Ali's 151-run stand with fellow opener Abdullah Shafique helped bring play to an end before lunch on the final day, beating their first-innings partnership by five.

The duo had already made 109 overnight, chasing 202.

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## Carrick to Lead Man Utd Against Arsenal

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United interim coach Ralf Rangnick will be unable to take charge of the team for Thursday's Premier League clash with Arsenal as his work visa is yet to be finalised, the club said today, adding Michael Carrick will remain caretaker.

United named German Rangnick as interim boss until the end of the season following the sacking of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. Rangnick, 63, will then continue in a consultancy role for a further two years.

# Jokic's Return Helps Nuggets End Skid

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Reigning league MVP Nikola Jokic returned from a four-game injury absence to account for 24 points, a game-high 15 rebounds and a team-high seven assists as the Denver Nuggets defeated the host Miami Heat 120-111.

Denver shot 58.1 percent from the floor, including 18-for-35 on 3-pointers (51.4 percent). Jokic, who had been out with a sprained right wrist, made 9 of 14 shots from the floor and 5 of 6 on free throws as Denver snapped a season-worst six-game losing streak.

Aaron Gordon added 20 points for the Nuggets (10-10), who improved to 3-6 on the road. Bones Hyland came in off the bench and scored 19 points on 5-for-8 3-point shooting.

This was the first game played between these teams since the host Nuggets beat Miami on Nov. 8. Jokic and Miami's Markieff Morris were involved in a skirmish in that game. Morris (neck injury) has yet to play as a result of that altercation, and Jokic was booed throughout Monday's game.

**Pelicans 123, Clippers 104**

Jonas Valanciunas scored a career-high 39 points and grabbed 15 rebounds to lead visiting New Orleans to a win over Los Angeles.

Valanciunas made all seven of his 3-point attempts in the first half before finishing 7-for-8 from long distance. Brandon Ingram added 27 points and Herbert Jones scored 16 for the Pelicans, who have won three of four for the first time this season.

**Bulls 133, Hornets 119**

Nikola Vucevic notched a double-double of 30 points and 14 rebounds and DeMar DeRozan had 28 points to lift host Chicago to a victory over Charlotte.

Shooting 59.6 percent for the night -- including a 46.2 percent effort from long range -- the Bulls led by as many as 23 points while sending the Hornets to their second straight defeat to open a four-game road trip.

Zach LaVine (25 points), Lonzo Ball (16 points, eight assists) and Alex Caruso (14 points) also helped the Bulls register a season high in points. Terry Rozier scored 31 points and LaMelo Ball had 18 points and 13 assists for the Hornets.

## UEFA's New Charter Urges Clubs to Teach Players, Staff About Concussion

LONDON (Dispatches) - UEFA has launched a concussion charter in a further measure to safeguard players sustaining blows to the head, European football's governing body said.

The charter, drawn up by the UEFA Medical Committee, is aimed at educating players, coaches, referees, doctors and the public about the dangers of concussion in football.

As part of the charter, clubs and national teams are being urged to provide education sessions to brief players, coaches and staff about concussion procedures.

"Concussion is undoubtedly a serious injury which needs to be managed and treated properly," Tim Meyer, UEFA Medical Committee chairman, said in a statement.

"Although research studies report a low incidence in football, everyone should know how to react and what to do in the event of a concussion on the pitch.

"By signing this charter, clubs and national teams will demonstrate their support for UEFA's concussion awareness activities — and take a considerable step forward in helping to protect their players."

UEFA launched a concussion awareness campaign in October 2019 and, following that, lawmakers the International Football Association Board (IFAB) approved trials for concussion substitutes until the end of July 2022.

## Bayern Matches to Be Played Without Fans

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Markus Soeder, the premier of the German region of Bavaria, home to Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich, called for football matches to be played without fans again due to the fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Soeder said he hoped that in a meeting he is attending today, German federal and regional officials would agree to stop fans from attending matches nationwide, but if that was not the consensus, Bavaria would go it alone and implement the step.



**Jazz 129, Trail Blazers 107**

Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and Rudy Gobert amassed 21 points and 16 rebounds to lead Utah to a victory over Portland in Salt Lake City.

Year Jordan Clarkson added 22 points, six rebounds and three assists off the bench as the Jazz won for the sixth time in eight outings.

**Timberwolves 100, Pacers 98**

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 32 points as Minnesota notched its seventh win in the past eight games, beating Indiana in Minneapolis.

Minnesota's D'Angelo Russell made clutch plays while racking up 21 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds. Anthony Edwards added 21 points, nine rebounds and five assists.

The Pacers fell short despite getting 16 points, a career-high 25 rebounds and 10 assists from Domantas Sabonis.

**Rockets 102, Thunder 89**

Christian Wood scored 24 points and collected a career-high 21 rebounds to lead Houston past visiting Oklahoma City.

Garrison Mathews made five 3-pointers while scoring 19 points for the Rockets, who have won three straight contests following a 15-game losing streak. Kevin Porter Jr. recorded his first career triple-double with 11 points, 11 assists, 10 rebounds and three steals.

# Ronaldo Hits Back at Ballon d'Or Rivalry With Messi



Argentine Messi, who joined Paris St Germain on a free transfer from Barcelona during the close season, beat Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski and Chelsea midfielder

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo has hit back at comments made by Ballon d'Or organiser Pascal Ferre, saying the editor-in-chief of France Football "lied" about his rivalry with Lionel Messi.

Ferre told the New York Times that Manchester United forward Ronaldo's sole ambition was to retire with more of the awards for the world's best player than Messi.

Jorginho to claim a record-extending seventh Ballon d'Or award.

"Pascal Ferre lied, he used my name to promote himself and to promote the publication he works for," Ronaldo, who has won the award five times, said in an Instagram post yesterday.

"It is unacceptable that the person responsible for awarding such a prestigious prize could lie in this way, in absolute disrespect for someone who has always respected France Football and the Ballon d'Or."

France Football did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment on Ronaldo's post.

"I always win for myself and for the clubs I represent, I win for myself and for those who love me. I don't win against someone," added the Portugal forward.

"The biggest ambition of my career is to leave my name written in golden letters in the history of world football."

## FIFA Goal of the Year Nominees Announced

ZURICH (Dispatches) - FIFA have announced an 11-player shortlist for this year's Puskas Award, with Patrik Schick's goal against Scotland at Euro 2020 among the nominees.

Czech forward Schick beat goalkeeper David Marshall with one of the most remarkable goals in European Championship history, a stunning 45-metre strike from just inside the halfway line as his team beat Scotland 2-0.

Schick's effort was subsequently voted goal of the tournament.

Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min won the award in 2020 for his solo effort against Burnley in the Premier League in which he ran nearly the length of the pitch, dribbling past several Burnley defenders before scoring.

Manchester City's Caroline Weir makes a second consecutive appearance in the shortlist, courtesy of a deft chip from the edge of the box in an FA Women's Super League derby match against Manchester United.

Premier League players Erik Lamela and Riyad Mahrez are also on the list.

Lamela scored with a rabona against Arsenal in a North London derby and Mahrez was recognised for his solo effort against Zimbabwe while on international duty with Algeria.

The winner of the award will be selected by an international jury comprised of former footballers and select fans from across the globe. The winner will be announced on January 17.



## Woods Rules Out Full-Time Return to Golf

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Tiger Woods has ruled out making a full-time return to professional golf as he works his way back from career-threatening leg injuries.

The 15-time major winner told Golf Digest in an interview published that although he is confident of eventually making a return to the sport, he expected he would only play select tournaments from now on.

The 45-year-old former world number one suffered compound fractures in his right leg after a car he was driving in a Los Angeles suburb in February veered off the road and flipped several times.

Before the accident, Woods was already playing a reduced schedule following multiple surgeries on his back and knee over the years.

He told Golf Digest yesterday that his days as a full-time member of the PGA Tour were now effectively over, saying he now expected to "pick and choose" events in future.

"I think something that is realistic is playing the Tour one day — never full time, ever again — but pick and choose," Woods said.

"Pick and choose a few events a year and you play around that. "I think that's how I'm going to have to play it from now on. It's an unfortunate reality, but it's my reality. And I understand it, and I accept it." Woods generated buzz earlier this month after posting video on Twitter of himself hitting balls, with the caption "Making progress."

