

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 130,722 With 61 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

On the Final day of 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships, Iran's Mehdi Pourrahnama Defeated A Rival From Mexico 3-1 in the Final of -70 Weight Category to Win The Gold Medal of the Tournament

VOL. XXVII, No. 7385 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

MONDAY DECEMBER 13, 2021 - AZAR 22, 1400

2 DOMESTIC

Iran-Russia Agreement, Roadmap for Broadening of Bilateral Ties



> SEE PAGE 2

3 DOMESTIC

Next Year Budget Bill Seeks Economic Stability



> SEE PAGE 3

4 INTERNATIONAL

UK Calls for Western Unity Against Russia, China Threats



> SEE PAGE 4

8 SPORTS

Premier League Top Guns Need Penalties To Scrape Wins



> SEE PAGE 8

Iran Is Optimistic But Not Naïve

VIENNA (IP) - Deputy Foreign Minister and top negotiator in Vienna, pointed to the serious atmosphere inside the talks in Vienna and said that he's optimistic about reaching an agreement, but given the unpleasant record that the Iranian nation has on the other side, the Iranian negotiators will certainly not be naïve.

Explaining the atmosphere inside the talks in Vienna, Ali Bagheri Kani told IRIB: "The atmosphere inside the talks is very serious, but while respecting each other and with the view that the parties want to reach an agreement, from the day we arrived on November 29th, this atmosphere has been dominating the dialogue room."

He went on to say that each side defends its own positions and brings its own arguments and pursues the interests of its own side and continued: "The talks have been formed in several areas in the six rounds that were before and this round that we are continuing now. In some of these issues, agreements have been reached in part, but in many, there has been no complete and comprehensive agreement yet."

See Page 7

Arrogant Powers Delighted By Suffering of Iranians



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has hailed Iranian nurses for their sacrifices in the country's fight against the coronavirus pandemic amid the most draconian sanctions.

U.S. sanctions have prevented Iran from getting necessary medicine and equipment to fight against the virus, forcing the country to resort to its own means to tackle the problem.

Ayatollah Khamenei said on Sunday the arrogant powers' joy at the suffering of the Iranian people has been manifested in events such as helping former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein gas Iranian troops and border towns and imposing a "medical embargo on the Iranian nation".

"Given these facts, when nurses, with effort and self-sacrifice, put a smile on the lips of patients and their loved ones, they are in fact struggling against the malicious world of arrogance. This is the double value of the nursing community in the Islamic Iran," the Leader said.

The coronavirus pandemic, however, "showed that if the nursing community is not strengthened, we will be hit hard", Ayatollah Khamenei added.

Food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies are exempt from US sanctions imposed on Tehran in 2018 after President Donald Trump walked away from a 2015 international deal over Iran's nuclear program.

But the U.S. measures, which target all sectors including oil and financial activities, have deterred foreign banks from processing financial transactions with Iran. Tehran says this has frequently disrupted efforts to import essential medicines and other humanitarian items.

The Leader made the remarks in a meeting with a group of Iranian nurses and families of health workers fallen in the line of duty in the fight against COVID-19 on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Sayyida Zainab (SA), the granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad (Peace upon Him), and National Nurses Day.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the nature of nursing - that is observing the suffering of patients and caring for them around the clock - is bitter and harsh.

"In some junctures, such as the period of the Sacred Defense or the coronavirus, these difficulties have multiplied," he said, referring to Saddam's 1980-1988 war on Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the sacrifices of the Iranian nurses merit to be recorded through art.

"With regard to narrating the difficulties of the work of nurses, we have a dearth of artistic production. These have artistic themes or in the language of art, they have dramatic themes. They can be used to make attractive art programs. Artists should come to the arena," he said.

"You should recount the truths of your society, your country and your revolution. If you do not recount them, the enemy will do that. If you do not chronicle the revolution, the enemy will do it. If you do not narrate the incident of the Sacred Defense, the enemy will do it in whatever way it likes, making its own justification to tell lies and change the place of the oppressor and the oppressed."

The Leader also paid tribute to women, saying they can be "a huge ocean of patience" and the "pinnacle of wisdom and prudence" at the same time.

Sayyida Zainab, he said, was able to show the great spiritual and intellectual capacity of women to the world.

"Sayyida Zainab, peace be upon her, showed two points: First, a woman can be a huge ocean of patience and second, a woman can be the pinnacle of wisdom and prudence."

Iraq Has Paid Part of Its Debt to Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iraq has paid part of its \$ 7 billion debt to Iran, the head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al Eshagh said.

Yahya Al-Eshagh said receiving the debts continues based on an agreement between the central banks of the two countries.

According to Al-Eshagh, most of Iraq's debt to Iran is related to selling and exporting gas and electricity to that country.

He added that the Central Banks of Iran and Iraq have an agreement under which the Iranian Central Bank will spend part of the receivables to purchase the required items through Iraq, and the other part will be paid to Iran in banknotes.

Al Eshagh said since the exports to Iraq continue with partial payment, Iraq's debts to Iran remain in the range of 5 to 7 billion dollars, and consultations are underway to reduce this total amount and collect the total claims.

He added since the flow of exports to Iraq continues with the partial payment, Iraq's debts to Iran remain in the range of 5 to 7 billion dollars, and consultations are underway to reduce this total amount and collect the total claims.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Don't Mess Up With the Asian Cheetahs

It seems the U.S. and Israel have not learned from the past and they want once again to test the Islamic Republic of Iran and its devastating military power by resorting to bully and threat and even launching attacks on this country but they should know that this time they will get due punishment and there will be no mercy.

While Iranian negotiating team is in Vienna and is busy with talks with P4+1 for revival of the JCPOA or probable return of the U.S. to the JCPOA, Israelis have started their nonsense of threatening Iran with attacks and they are seeking the Americans' support.

According to reports, the top U.S. and Israeli officials have recently met to discuss options in the event that ongoing talks with Iran to revive the 2015 nuclear deal do not produce a lasting agreement.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz met with his U.S. counterpart Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday in Washington. Reuters cited U.S. officials as saying that potential military scenarios against Iran's nuclear program were to be discussed in the meeting.

During a press conference that same day, State Department spokesperson Ned Price did not confirm the agenda of the meeting, but said that U.S. officials were "discussing those alternatives" in the event that "the path to diplomacy towards a mutual return to compliance isn't viable in the near term," as the U.S. and Iran talk indirectly via other parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that was abandoned by the U.S. in 2018.

"We are discussing those options with our close partners, with our close allies, and that includes with the Israelis," Price said. "We have already had good discussions with the Israelis about the path forward and how we can work together to ensure that Iran is never able to acquire a nuclear weapon."

While Americans have violated the JCPOA commitments, they are now trying to put pressure on Tehran for getting concessions for the offence that they have committed and their Zionist allies have been tasked to bark and threat Iran with attacks.

The Americans and Zionists are better to have a glance back at the history in at least recent two decades and the number of crushing responses from Iran and the Resistance Front, and if they do so, they will prefer not to mess with the Asian Cheetahs to avoid being mauled by the brave Iranian forces.

See Page 7

Iran Among World Top 4 Missile Systems Manufacturers

TEHRAN (MNA) - Stating that Iran is one of the four top manufacturers of missile systems in the world, the deputy chief of the Russian Academy of Rocket and Artillery Sciences said that Iran is able to make Israel an uninhabitable place.

Constantine Siokov made the remarks in an interview with Russia Today.

Tel Aviv is unlikely to start a war against Iran, and Israel is estimated to have between 200 and 400 nuclear warheads, said the Russian official when asked about the possibility of a war between Iran and the Zionist regime.

Iran has short-range missiles and conventional weapons that have high accuracy, he added, saying that Israel is not capable of countering these missiles. Israel today does not have air defense systems or missile defense systems that can counter these missiles.

Accordingly, Iran's missile attack on the Israeli nuclear systems and reactors will make the small territory of Israel uninhabitable, he noted.

The Russian official went on to say that he does not think that Israel will use nuclear weapons against Iran, because if it does, it will provoke a reaction from Russia and China, so this step is unacceptable to both countries.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he noted that in the military field, Iran is one of the most advanced, leading powers and one of the four top countries producing missile systems alongside Russia, the United States, and China.

Europeans Reportedly Accepted Iran's Presented Draft Texts in Vienna

TEHRAN (MNA) - A Saudi media reported the acceptance of Iran's presented draft texts in Vienna by European parties.

According to a Saudi media, there was an increase in meetings between European and Iranian delegations in Vienna over the past two days and Europeans accepted the draft texts presented by Iran.

Earlier, the Russian diplomat at Vienna talks Mikhail Ulyanov in a tweet wrote, "The #ViennaTalks are underway. A number of meetings in various formats are planned for today. Numerous outstanding issues still remain on the agenda but now, after the break last week, they are raddressed properly in accordance with norms and rules of multilateral diplomacy."

Russia's Permanent Representative to the Vienna-based international organizations had previously criticized the comments of some analysts and journalists about the talks underway in the Austrian capital, saying that the atmosphere in the talks in Vienna is "positive."

"To my surprise, some analysts and journalists describe the situation at the #ViennaTalks as dramatic, "almost deadlock". This is not the case in point," wrote Ulyanov in a tweet on late Saturday.

"After the break, the negotiators returned to normal diplomatic business and maintain intensive dialogue. Atmosphere is positive," he added.

See Page 7

Sokhan Gostar Institute

IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

President Appoints Representatives To Supervisory Council of IRIB

TEHRAN (IP) – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi appointed Mr Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili and Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi to represent the President in the Supervisory Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

In implementing Paragraph (1) of Article (1) and Article (2) of the Law on the Implementation of Article (175) of the Constitution, Ayatollah Raisi appointed Mr Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili and Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi to represent the President in the Supervisory Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

Iran-Russia Agreement, Roadmap for Broadening of Bilateral Ties

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Director of the Russian Institute of Political Studies Sergey Markov said on Sunday that Iran-Russia long-term cooperation agreement is a roadmap for the two countries and effectively helps the development of bilateral ties.

Markov said that Iran-Russia Agreement is in fact a roadmap for the broadening of bilateral relations between the two countries.

This Russian expert in his interview added that the long-term strategic agreement between Iran and Russia, which was recently extended for another five years, was signed in completely different circumstances from the current global and international, and regional situation.

Markov said that the current agreement between Iran and Russia will not meet the two sides' ties and cannot be used to develop mutual cooperation, therefore a new strategic agreement was needed to develop relations between the two countries.

According to the Russian expert, when the Iran-Russia agreement was signed in 2001, there was a different field of cooperation between Iran and Russia, and now the two countries have come to the conclusion that their interests are in more cooperation and coordination of positions on various issues.

Iran said on Saturday a long-term cooperation roadmap with Russia is at its final stage of development.

"We have launched a new initiative at the Foreign Ministry, namely 20-year



cooperation roadmap documents with neighboring countries, including one with Russia, which is almost finalized," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

"We will obtain permission from the cabinet to conduct negotiations and, like the 25-year cooperation roadmap, we developed with China, we can do the same with major neighboring countries," Khatibzadeh added.

He also said President Ebrahim Raisi is slated to visit a number of neighboring countries soon.

He added that the heads of some of those countries, including Turkey, are also going to visit Tehran.

Iranian Professor Named as Top Researcher in Renewable Energy

TEHRAN (IP) - "ScienceDirect" website named professor Ali Mostafaie-Pour, an associate professor at Yazd University, as the top researcher in renewable energy research.

Professor Mostafaie-Pour, one of the most well-known and prominent experts in renewable energy in the world, has conducted extensive research on carbon dioxide reduction, electricity generation from clean resources, and also hydrogen production from renewable energy.

He was also introduced as one of the world's top scientists in two periods and currently has 166 scientific articles in ISI journals.

Participation in 105 international conferences, membership in the scientific committee of 249 international conferences, membership in the editorial board and editors of 16 English journals, publication of 5 books, and registration of 3 inventions are other honors of Dr. Mostafaie-Pour.

Output of Aghajari Units up 20,000 b/d

TEHRAN (Shana) – There is an uptick of 20,000 barrels per day of crude oil from Aghajari production facilities with the repair of the salt oil pipeline of Aghajari units to Paznan.

According to Aghajari Oil and Gas Production Company, Manouchehr Qanavati, Head of Operations, said: "By repairing critical points and securing the 10-inch salt oil pipeline of Aghajari units to desalination units of Paznan 1, it is possible to produce more than 20,000 per day from Aghajari and Pazannan oil fields."

He added: "The 28-kilometer pipeline will be used to transfer part of the oil from Aghajari Oil Field through production units No. 1 and 2 of Aghajari and part of the wells of Paznan Oil Field to Paznan 1 Desalination Unit for salt oil processing in accordance with the standards accepted by the National Iranian Oil Company."

Canada's Human Rights Shows Do Not Work



TEHRAN (IRNA) – The Government Spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi said that Canada's actions on Human Rights Day Anniversary do not work.

The Canadian Government's actions on Human Rights Day Anniversary do not work, Bahadori Jahromi wrote in his Twitter account on Sunday adding that the Iranians are waiting for the extradition of Iranian financial criminals living in Canada and returning looted public properties.

However, the end of the embezzlers' paradise will not be anything else, he noted.

The Canadian media reported on Saturday that, the Canadian immigration office has deported a SAVAK staff who had been living illegally in Canada.

This is while some of the economic criminals are still living in Canada.

Pakistani Commander to Discuss Anti-Narcotic Cooperation in Tehran

TEHRAN (MNA) – The commander of the Pakistan Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has departed for Tehran on Sunday to discuss with Iranian officials strengthening cooperation in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

The visit of the commander of the Pakistan Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) to Tehran came at the invitation of Brigadier-General Majid Karimi, Head of Iran's Anti-Narcotics Police.

During his visit to Iran, the Pakistani official is scheduled to meet with his Iranian counterpart and other officials.

The two sides will discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation between Iran and Pakistan to effectively combat drug trafficking, as well as border cooperation.

Head of Iran's Anti-Narcotics Police paid a 4-day visit to Pakistan's Islamabad on January 2021 at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart to strengthen cooperation in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

Gas Oil Consumption Falls 10% Following NIOPDC Fuel Allocation Plan

TEHRAN (MNA) - Deputy head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) has announced a 10-percent decline in the country's gas oil consumption following the implementation of a program for monitoring the allocation of fuel to various transportation fields.

"Implementation of the fuel allocation survey which was conducted over a smart fuel supply system has led to a reduction of about 10 percent in gas oil consumption in the country's transportation sector," Ali-Akbar Nejad-Ali said.

Emphasizing the reduction of seven to 10 million liters of the country's daily gas oil consumption following the implementation of the mentioned plan, Nejad-Ali said: "The fuel allocation survey plan for the transportation fleet is performance-based, that means, a general gas oil quota and a performance quota are separately allocated to vehicles."

According to the official, the second quota is allocated based on the vehicles' performance (the distance they travel) which is assessed by the NIOPDC based on the information received from the Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization as well as the municipalities across the country.

In this regard, the cars that work more and travel longer distances receive more fuel and vice-versa.

He noted that based on the latest statistics on the daily gas oil supply to the transport fleet including trucks and passenger buses, in the seventh month of the current Iranian calendar year (September 23-October 22) on average about 59 million liters per day of gas oil was distributed across the country.

"The actual amount of daily consumption by these vehicles is about 52 million liters per day on average, which indicates a nine percent increase compared to the last year," Nejad-Ali said.

Bell Pepper Exports to Russia to Resume Soon

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian agrifood authorities have announced that they are working with Russian counterparts to lift a controversial ban imposed in the country on imports of bell pepper from Iran.

Head of Iran Plant Protection Organization (PPO) Kaykhosrow Chengelvaie said on Saturday that a sudden and uncoordinated change in the way Russia enforces its food safety standards on imported crops had caused the country to ban bell pepper imports from Iran in late November.

Chengelvaie said the four types of pesticides for which Russia has banned Iranian bell pepper shipments are legal types of pesticides that are commonly used in 120 countries around the world.

He said, however, that Russian authorities had suddenly banned crops containing the four pesticides without giving a prior notice to the Iranian authorities.

"These pesticides have been used in crops exported to Russia for the past several

years. If there was to be a ban or restriction, it should have been announced in advance," said the official.

Russia's decision to return bell pepper shipments to Iran caused uproar in the Iranian media as agriculture authorities have been accused of failing to enforce proper safety standards on crops cultivated in the country. However, Chengelvaie said Russia's ban on bell pepper imports from Iran was an isolated case, adding that the country imports over 0.7 million tons of agriculture products from Iran each year.

The official said that authorities in the two countries would soon reach an agreement to coordinate the safety standards used for screening food and agriculture products.

Chengelvaie said the PPO had also updated a list of pesticides allowed for cultivation of crops in Iran that are meant for export markets.

Time Comes to Lift Sanctions From Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Former Pakistani ambassador to Iran says demand of the Islamic Republic of Iran for lifting of sanctions in Vienna talks is quite genuine and logical, adding the U.S. must change its approach towards Tehran to make talks successful.

Asif Durrani said the former U.S. President unilaterally withdrew from Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, so they are responsible for sabotaging the nuclear deal.

Former Ambassador went on to say Pakistan has always urged all members of the JCPOA to fulfill their obligations within the ambit of the deal. Durrani noted that the US has adopted a false pretext for quitting the nuclear deal.

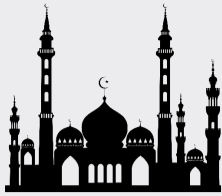
"Iran is a member of the NPT thus has every right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," he said. The expert on the international affairs said that JCPOA is a complete framework and if any party of the treaty has any issue it can raise it within the agreement.

Asif Durrani expressing his views said that the sanctions have created lot of problems for the people of Iran and their banking system and it is high time that they were lifted immediately.

He said that Russia and China are with Iran while other members of the JCPOA are aligned with the U.S. The diplomat said Iran is not responsible for delay in the implementation of the JCPOA. He noted that pace of Vienna talks is quite slow and needs to speed up while the US has to change its negative approach.

He added all members of the JCPOA, including Iran, must fulfill their commitments under the agreement. Former Pakistani ambassador to Iran said Iran's demand for lifting of sanctions in Vienna talks is quite genuine and logical.

"U.S. must stop pursuing harsh stance towards Iran," he said.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:58
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:11
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:36
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	07:06

5. "Nay," they say, "(these are) medleys of dream! - Nay, He forged it! - Nay, He is (but) a poet! Let him then bring us a Sign like the ones that were sent to (Prophets) of old!"

6. (As to those) before them, not one of the populations which We destroyed believed: will these believe?

Surah 21. The Prophets (5 - 6)

Next Year Budget Bill Seeks Economic Stability

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi said on Sunday that the budget bill presented to Majlis (Iranian Parliament) for the next Iranian year (starting on March 21, 2022) is aimed at ensuring economic stability.

Raisi attended Majlis open session this morning to present the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year which will start on March 21, 2022.

Elaborating on some parts of the bill, the President said the budget should enjoy stability and guarantee interests of producers and customers and the market.

Raisi said that the budget bill presented to the Parliament for the next Iranian year of 1401 (starting on March 21, 2022) is aimed at ensuring economic stability.

Speaking on Sunday at the Iranian Parliament while presenting the 1401 budget bill, he said, "I hope that the richness of the 1401 budget bill will be increased with the help of the representatives, and God willing, the bill will be presented to them and solve the country's problems."

"In the years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, thanks to the efforts of this land's men and women, a lot of work has been done for development in water, electricity, higher education, agriculture, industry and mining, but with all these measures, serious problems in economic, social and cultural fields still exist," the President added.

The President said, "The serious problem that everyone used to suffer from was that the economy was tied to the will of outsiders, and therefore, despite the many capacities that exist in the country, especially the human resources and valuable reserves, we had serious economic problems."

Raisi pointed out that inequality in investment attraction relative to depreciation, economic growth of 4 tenths of a percent, and a 10-fold increase in costs, makes the people and representatives concerned about the problems, stating, "The first goal in the 1401 budget is economic stability. The economy must benefit from stability so



that it can be reassuring for producers, consumers and the market."

"The requirement for economic stability is to provide a budget that has no deficit. If there is a budget deficit, it will be the root of many problems in the country," Raisi added.

"In the 1401 budget, borrowing from the Central Bank and increasing the monetary base is a red line. The plan is to prevent this from happening because it will create serious problems for the country's economy," he said.

Emphasizing that this process will continue until inflation reaches single digits, the President stated, "We hope that inflation, which is now in double digits and has worried the people and economic activists and everyone, will become a minimal and declining inflation."

Raisi also said that the second goal of the 1401 budget is to guarantee economic growth and to reach the goal of 8% growth, adding, "The third point as the goal of the 1401 budget is justice in the distribution of capacities and facilities in the country. Distribution is currently unfair and must be balanced."

According to law, each member of Parliament is provided with a copy of the budget bill after its presentation to the Parliament. The lawmakers have 10 days to offer their suggestions about the bill to the specialized commissions in Parliament.

The specialized commissions are tasked with giving due reports to Parliament within 15 days. Parliament will finally approve outlines of the budget.

According to law, each member of Parliament is provided with a copy of budget bill after its presentation to Majlis.

The lawmakers have 10 days to offer their suggestions about the bill to the specialized commissions in Majlis.

The specialized commissions are tasked with giving due reports to Parliament within 15 days.

Majlis will finally approve outlines of the budget.

Medical Services Almost Unrivaled in Region

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said on Sunday that Iran renders almost unrivaled medical services in the region.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of a medical center, Einollahi said that the most advanced treatment services are performed in the country today and this quality has to be maintained.

The health minister said that Iran has provided 174 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine so far and 86 percent of the population has received the first shot.

74 percent of Iran's population has also taken the second jab of the coronavirus vaccine, according to Einollahi.

From among the total supply of vaccine, 150 million doses have been purchased from foreign sources and 24 million doses have been provided through domestic vaccine developers, as said by the minister.

Majlis to Discuss Iran-Afghanistan International Railway

TEHRAN (IP) - Majlis will address the report of the Construction Commission about the bill of the agreement between the Islamic Republics of Iran and Afghanistan on the international railway projects.

The Iran government must submit its first budget proposal to the parliament.

A railway construction project between Iran and Afghanistan is already underway.

The construction of the first phase of the fourth section of the Khaf-Herat railway on Afghan soil began in early 2021.

The Khaf-Herat railway line connects Iran and Afghanistan and is an essential step in reviving and boosting joint economic cooperation between the two countries.

The big railway project of Khaf-Herat is being officially put into operation in the presence of the former Iranian Presidents and Afghanistan via videoconferencing on Thursday, 10 December 2020.

Country Eyes Self-Sufficiency in Main Petrochem Catalysts by 2023

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The CEO of the Petrochemical Research and Technology Company announced breaking of the monopoly of foreign companies in supplying the catalysts needed by the petrochemical industry, and said: "Iran will not need to import the main catalysts of the petrochemical industry by 2023."

According to the National Petrochemical Company, Majid Daftari, commemorating the research week and congratulating the petrochemical industry researchers, said: "Petrochemical Research and Technology Company, with the support of the petrochemical industry and using the world's latest technical savvy, is always in the process of developing the industry."

He added: "Based on its strategic plans, the company is taking steps to formulate and develop technical knowledge for production of catalysts and chemicals required by the petrochemical industry, secondary industries, optimization of production units and existing knowledge, and commercialization of technical knowhow."

The CEO of Petrochemical Research and Technology Company stated that out of 40 types of catalyst groups in the petrochemical industry, 20 have been localized and industrialized in the country for far, adding by the end of the current calendar year, which began on March 21, 8 more groups of catalysts will be localized and the remaining 12 groups are under study."

Tehran to Hold 5th Int'l Expo of Transportation, Logistics and Related Industries



TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's 5th international exhibition of transportation, logistics, and related industries will be held from 19 to December 21, 2021, in Tehran.

Coincided with the National Transport Day in Iran on December 17, the 5th exhibition of transportation, logistics, and related industries will be held from 19 to December 21 in Tehran.

The 2021 theme for Iran Transportation Exhibition is "development of infrastructure, renovation of fleet, and efficient transport."

Each day of the exhibition from December 17 to 22 is dedicated to a specific mode of transport, respectively to the road, rail, air, maritime, transport infrastructures, and support and quality control of projects.

In this exhibition, including the affiliated companies and organizations to Iran Ministry of Transport, private sector, start-ups in transport industries, and knowledge-based companies will be present in the exhibition.

Moreover, Islamic Azad University, the Association for Road Construction Companies, the Iranian Society of Consulting Engineers, the Iran Institute of Industrial Engineering, and other associations in the transport sector are among other sponsors and participants in this exhibition.

During this event, the Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development, Rostam Ghasemi, will visit the actors of the transport sector and transport associations.

Power Exchange With Neighboring States Possible

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of energy has emphasized that Iran has the potentials to exchange power with Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan Republic, Armenia, Turkey, and Iraq through synchronizing electricity network connections.

Ali Akbar Mehrabian said that the connecting electricity networks with neighboring states in accordance with international standards to expand power export is one of his ministry's agenda during his tenure.

As part of the ministry's electricity diplomacy, Iran is going to synchronize its power network in order to pave the way for linking the Iranian network to Russian and the Persian Gulf littoral states' power networks, he said.

According to the ministry's official website, Mehrabian made the remarks in a gathering at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noting that the issue of exporting electricity and electrical equipment is one of capabilities of the Islamic Republic and that Iran has had good progress in this respect.

He argued that the electricity export and exchange can bring about remarkable economic wealth for Iran, help manage power usage peaks through exchanges, and make countries permanently dependent on power supply.

According to the energy minister, Iran is one of the few countries in the world that produces high-technological electrical equipment, turbines, and generators.

Iran enjoys many potentials to export electricity and its equipment to the countries of the region, the Iranian Minister of Energy said, speaking in the meeting of the Ambassador of the Republic of Iran to neighboring countries.

The country is capable of exchanging electricity with Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, and so on, Mehrabian said.

The Islamic Republic is among a few states in the world manufacturing F-class turbines, the minister said, adding that Iran is capable of producing different types of turbines, generators, and other electricity equipment.

Iranians have got valuable experiences in conducting power generation projects such as dam-building and hydro-power plants, he noted.

Almost 100 percent of Iranian residents in urban areas enjoy electricity and water networks, he said, adding that 99.5 percent of Iranians living in rural areas have access to electricity, which is a high rate of power access throughout the world.

The Ministry of Energy has planned for adding 6,000 megawatts to the power generation network of the country slated for next summer, Mehrabian said, noting that the project will be completed by the end of spring.

Iran Boosting Gas Transit Capacity by 110 mcm/day

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Gas Transmission Company (NIGTC) says its nationwide pipeline network will be able to process an extra 110 million cubic meters per day of natural gas very soon.

NIGTC's CEO Mehdi Jamshidi Dana said on Saturday that the company will be able to pump the extra amount of gas through launching four new turbo-compressor units near Arsanjan in the southwestern province of Fars.

Jamshidi Dana said that lengthy and successful safety tests had been carried out on three of the turbo-compressor units, adding that one more compressor is being launched to further boost the gas transit capacity in the region.

"The full launch of these facilities boosts the stability of gas transit and as a result increases the supply of gas by 110 mcm (per day)," he said.

The announcement comes as Iran struggles to prevent a shortage in natural gas supplies to power plants and to the households in the upcoming winter a year after record consumption caused brief but recurrent power cuts in large cities across the country.

Figures by the Iranian Oil Ministry suggest that Iran's actual capacity for production of natural gas has exceeded 1 billion cubic meters per day thanks to continued development works at South Pars, the world's largest gas reserve which is shared between Iran and Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

However, latest data by NIGTC's dispatching subsidiary shows that gas supplies delivered to the pipelines across Iran can peak at just above 800 mcm per day.

Arsanjan facilities are part of Iran's fifth gas transit zone from which around 70% of the country's natural gas output is transmitted.

Benin Opposition Leader Sentenced to 20 Years in Jail

PORTO-NOVO (Dispatches) - Benin opposition leader Reckya Madougou was sentenced on Saturday to 20 years in prison for terrorism by a special court in the capital Porto-Novo after a brief trial that her lawyers condemned as a "political attack".

After more than 20 hours of hearings, Madougou was found guilty of "complicity in terrorist acts" by the Economic Crime and Terrorism Court, or Criet, which on Tuesday sentenced another key opposition figure to 10 years.

Critics say the court, set up in 2016, has been used by President Patrice Talon's regime to crack down on the opposition and pushed Benin into authoritarianism.



Scholz Calls on Party To Back Ruling Coalition

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday called on members of his Social Democratic party (SPD) to back the country's new ruling coalition, adding promises made during the election campaign now had to translate into concrete action.

Speaking at a virtual convention of the SPD at which the party's new leadership was elected, Scholz said the new government needed to allay Germans' fears over globalisation, climate change and digitalisation.

"I am counting on you to support this work," said Scholz, who succeeded Angela Merkel as chancellor on Wednesday.



UK Calls for Western Unity Against Russia, China Threats



LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - The West and its allies need to be united against authoritarianism, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said on Saturday, as she hosted G7 counterparts with concern about threats from Russia and China.

The two-day gathering of foreign ministers from the world's richest nations in Liverpool, northwest England, is the last in-person gathering of Britain's year-long G7 presidency, before it hands over the baton to Germany.

Russia's build-up of troops on Ukraine's border is top of the agenda, alongside discussions on confronting China, limiting Iran's nuclear ambitions and addressing the crisis in military-ruled Myanmar.

"We need to come together strongly to stand up to aggressors who are seeking to limit the bounds of freedom and democracy," Truss said as she formally opened the talks, without mentioning specific countries.

"To do this, we need to have a fully united voice. We need to expand our economic and security posture around the world."

Truss held talks on the sidelines of the summit on Friday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as well as Germany's new Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. Blinken flies on to Southeast Asia next week on a visit designed to highlight the region's importance in Washington's strategy of standing up to an increasingly assertive China in the region.

Ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will join the G7 summit for the first time ever on Sunday, in a session earmarked for wide-ranging talks on issues including Covid-19 vaccines, finance and gender equality.

South Korea, Australia, South Africa and India will also participate as Britain's chosen G7 "guests", with many attendees taking part virtually due to the pandemic and emergence of the Omicron variant.

Truss said before the meeting that she wanted deeper ties between G7 nations in trade, investment, technology and security "so we can defend and advance freedom and democracy across the world".

"I will be pushing that point over the next few days," she added.

Truss, who replaced Dominic Raab as Britain's top diplomat in September, delivered her first major foreign policy address Wednesday as crises loom around the world.

She warned Moscow it would be "a strategic mistake" to invade Ukraine, following growing concerns over a big Russian troop build-up on the border.

That echoed comments delivered by U.S. President Joe Biden to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in a virtual summit the previous day.

Britain's G7 presidency has been dominated by responding to Beijing's increasing international assertiveness and alleged widespread domestic rights abuses, including of its Muslim minority Uyghur population.

Truss has said the West needs to work towards ending the "strategic dependence" of a growing number of low- and middle-income countries on its adversaries, in various areas from energy to technology.

China Brands U.S. Democracy Weapon of Mass Destruction

BEIJING (AFP) - China branded U.S. democracy a "weapon of mass destruction" on Saturday, following the U.S.-organized Summit for Democracy which aimed to shore up like-minded allies in the face of autocratic regimes.

China was left out of the two-day virtual summit -- along with countries including Russia and Hungary -- and responded by angrily accusing U.S. President Joe Biden of stoking Cold War-era ideological divides.

"Democracy" has long become a "weapon of mass destruction" used by the US to interfere in other countries," a foreign ministry spokesperson said in an online statement, which also accused the US of having "instigated 'color revolutions'" overseas. The ministry also claimed the summit was organized by the U.S. to "draw lines of ideological prejudice, instrumentalize and weaponize democracy... (and) incite division and confrontation."

Instead, Beijing vowed to "resolutely resist and oppose all kinds of pseudo-democracies".

Ahead of the summit, China ramped up a propaganda blitz criticizing U.S. democracy as corrupt and a failure. Instead, it touted its own version of "whole-process people's democracy" in a white paper released



last week that aimed to shore up legitimacy for the ruling Communist Party, which has become increasingly authoritarian under President Xi Jinping.

While the U.S. has repeatedly denied there will be another Cold War with China, tensions between the world's two largest economies have spiraled in recent years over issues including trade and technological competition, human rights, Xinjiang and Taiwan.

The U.S. Treasury on Friday sanctioned two high-level Chinese officials for human rights abuses in the Xinjiang region and placed Chinese AI surveillance firm SenseTime on a blacklist for its facial recognition technology targeting the Uyghur minority.

Taiwan, a democratic self-ruling island that is claimed by China, was invited to the US summit in a clear snub to its larger neighbor.

But Beijing got a boost in the middle of Biden's summit when Nicaragua dropped its previous diplomatic alliance with Taiwan, saying it only recognized China.

France-Greece Frigate Deal Signed

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. State Department announced the approval of the potential sale of naval frigates to Athens to challenge a deal announced between France and Greece in September. France responded on Saturday to say the deal had already been done.

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency said it had approved the sale for \$6.9 billion of four Lockheed Martin combat frigates, known as multi-mission surface combatant ships, just 10 weeks after Athens signed a memorandum of understanding with Paris on a similar deal for French-built ships.

The agency also approved a \$2.5 billion Lockheed program to upgrade Greece's MEKO class frigate, including adding and upgrading weapons systems and electronics.

France's armed forces announced on Saturday that a contract for Greece to buy three French frigates had just been signed, saying it scuppered a competing offer from the United States the day before.

"Since we have been in discussion with the Greeks, the American offer is no longer on the table ... We also signed the contract with the Greeks. It was initiated a few days ago," the armed forces ministry told AFP.

The U.S. announcement suggested that France faces a fresh commercial arms deal threat after the United States wrested away a massive submarine contract for Australia in a shock announcement on September 15 that ruptured relations between Washington and Paris.

France recalled its ambassadors to the United States and Australia and labelled it a "stab in the back" by an ally when Canberra ditched a longstanding deal worth billions of euros to buy conventional French submarines for U.S. nuclear-powered vessels.

Two weeks after that, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis set a memorandum of understanding with President Emmanuel Macron for France to buy three and possibly four French Belharra frigates for three billion euros (\$3.5 billion).

More Than 70 Killed as Tornadoes Rip U.S. States

BENTON (Dispatches) - A devastating swarm of tornadoes ripped through six U.S. states, killing more than 70 people in Kentucky and leaving a trail of destroyed homes and businesses along a path that stretched more than 200 miles, officials said on Saturday.

Dozens were feared dead at a candle factory in western Kentucky where about 110 people were working when a powerful tornado ripped through the facility late on Friday, causing the roof to cave in.

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear said 40 of the 110 workers had been rescued from the factory so far.

"The level of devastation is unlike anything that I have ever seen," Beshear said of the damage caused by the collection of twisters, with the primary tornado travelling more than 227 miles (365 km) across his state.

"Earlier this morning at about 5 a.m., we were pretty sure that we would lose over 50 Kentuckians. I'm now certain that number is north of 70. It may, in fact, end up exceeding 100 before the day is done."

Beshear said 189 National Guard personnel have been deployed to assist with the recovery, with a focus on Mayfield, a small city of about 10,000 people in the southwestern corner of the state where it converges with Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas.

Fire and police stations in Mayfield were destroyed, hindering the emergency response. Mayfield is also home to the candle factory, which collapsed soon

after employees heard howling winds and the lights began flickering, according to Kyanna Parsons-Perez, a worker at the plant.

"We could feel the wind ... then we did a little rock," she told NBC. "And then boom everything came down on us."

Video and photos posted on social media showed brick buildings in downtown Mayfield reduced to rubble, with parked cars nearly buried under bricks and debris. The steeple on the Graves County courthouse in Mayfield appeared to have been toppled, photos on Twitter showed.

The genesis of the tornado outbreak was a series of overnight thunderstorms, including a super cell storm that formed in northeast Arkansas. That storm moved from Arkansas and Missouri and into Tennessee and Kentucky.

"Unfortunately it produced a couple of deadly tornadoes along the way. One of them may have been a long-track tornado," Storm Prediction Center meteorologist Roger Edward said. "The killer tornado was part of that."

The scene of a train derailment is pictured after a devastating outbreak of tornadoes ripped through several U.S. states in Earlington, Kentucky, U.S. December 11, 2021. REUTERS/Cheney Orr

A derailed train is seen amid damage and debris after a devastating outbreak of tornadoes ripped through several U.S. states in Earlington, Kentucky, U.S. December 11, 2021. REUTERS/Cheney Orr



Bulgaria's PM-Designate Announces Graft-Fighting Gov't

SOFIA (AFP) - Bulgaria's PM-designate Kiril Petkov, whose new anti-graft party won general elections last month, said on Saturday he hoped to take office on Monday as the head of a four-party coalition, ending months of political deadlock in the poorest EU country.

Announcing his cabinet, Harvard graduate and former entrepreneur Petkov, 41, said he would "not lose a minute" in getting his cabinet approved by parliament. "I hope that as soon as Monday, this government will become a reality and will remain so over the next four years," Petkov said as he unveiled ministerial picks that included many younger professionals with overseas experience or from business circles.

Two elections in April and July returned fractured parliaments that failed to form a cabinet.

Disillusioned voters backed Petkov's newly founded anti-graft party We Continue the Change (PP) on a third vote on November 14, lured by its platform for "zero tolerance for corruption".

The new government will end ten years of dominance by the centre-right GERB party of "tough guy" ex-Prime Minister Boyko Borisov.

A burly former fireman and bodyguard with a karate black belt, he had faced massive anti-corruption protests in 2020.

Petkov and another Harvard graduate and former entrepreneur, 44-year-old Assen Vassilev, have won praise for their decisive actions as interim ministers of economy and finance to restore transparency in spending taxpayers' money and eradicate corruption.

And voters rewarded their decision to co-found the PP in September as analysts welcomed what they called a new more transparent and consensus-based political style.

The two managed to strike late on Friday a difficult 140-page coalition deal with four diametrically opposed partners -- the Socialist BSP party, the anti-establishment ITN formation of showman Slavi Trifonov, and the right-wing DB coalition, ensuring a majority of 134 lawmakers in the 240-seat parliament.

Observers welcomed the deal, which will see ministers from all four political formations, with many clashing views.



Shanon
(adviser)

Fereshteh Apt
(\$2600)

240sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, S, J
L.balcony
marble fl
FullyFurn

Darrou Villa
(\$3000)

1000sq.m
6bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Mahmoodieh (\$2200) 180sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, pkg, F.F
 Kamranieh (\$3000) 250sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, pkg, F.F
 Zaferanieh (\$1400) 120sq.m, 2bdrs, S/p, pkg, F.F
 Gheitarieh (\$2300) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, pkg, F.F

Pasdaran (\$1000)
2bdrs, pkg, & F.F

Cell: +989121907875
 Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
 Tel : 88510081
 Fax : 88506474

Vanak Office (\$20 per sq.m)
300sq.m, 4bdrs, & pkgs



Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865



U.S. to Sell 18m bbls of Oil From Reserve

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The U.S. Department of Energy said it will sell 18 million barrels of crude oil from its strategic petroleum reserve on Dec. 17, as part of a previous plan to try to reduce gasoline prices. The Biden administration announced last month it would release about 50 million barrels from its reserves in conjunction with other consumer countries including China, India and South Korea to combat the rising cost of fuel. The White House has been trying to deal with Americans' worries about high fuel costs and inflation as drivers emerge from the pandemic, even though the president has few tools to deal with the price of crude, a global market influenced by numerous factors.



UK Economy Almost Flat-Lined in October

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's economy barely grew in October, before the emergence of the new Omicron variant of the coronavirus, further denting expectations that the Bank of England will raise interest rates next week for the first time since the pandemic struck.

Gross domestic product edged up by a weaker-than-expected 0.1 per cent in October.

That meant the economy remained 0.5 per cent smaller than it was in February 2020, just before the country went into its first Covid-19 lockdown, the Office for National Statistics said today.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast monthly gross domestic product growth of 0.4 per cent from September.

"Growth disappointed in October, reinforcing concerns about the resilience of the UK's economic recovery to the Omicron variant and the impact of further restrictions," Alpesh Paleja, lead economist at the Confederation of British Industry, said.

"We need to create consistency in our approach and build confidence by reducing the oscillation between normal life and restrictions as we learn to live with the virus and its variants."

Sterling dipped after the ONS figures were published as investors took them as another sign that a BoE rate hike on December 16, after its December meeting, was unlikely.

Britain's economy bounced back strongly earlier this year from its nearly 10 per cent slump in 2020 when the pandemic hit.

But the rebound slowed in recent months as supply chain problems hit manufacturers and it is expected to lose more momentum due to new Covid-19 rules to slow the spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

October's growth was helped by a continued rise in face-to-face appointments at doctors' surgeries in England which had fallen sharply during the coronavirus pandemic, contributing to a 0.4 per cent rise in output in Britain's dominant services sector.

By contrast, industrial output fell 0.6 per cent, hit by big falls in electricity and gas and in mining and quarrying.

The manufacturing sector flat-lined as the sector struggled with supply chain problems and staff shortages.

Construction fell by the most since April 2020, down by 1.8 per cent from September, also hit by a shortage of supplies. Separately, the ONS released trade data which showed Britain's goods trade deficit narrowed to £13.9 billion (RM77.5 billion) in October from £14.7 billion in September.

India Working on Urgent Economic Package to Help Sri Lanka

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India is expected to extend a food & health security package to Sri Lanka on an urgent basis, along with an energy security package and currency swap, and also push Indian investments, officials told ET. It was agreed during Rajapaksa's visit that the procedures to realize these objectives would be finalised early, within a mutually agreed time.

India recently bailed out Lanka with fertilisers for the island's farmers after China-made fertilisers had to be rejected on grounds of quality.

India is working out a package on an urgent basis to assist Sri Lanka, following finance minister Basil Rajapaksa's New Delhi visit that focussed on measures to tide over an economic crisis that the island nation is facing.

India is expected to extend a food & health security package to Sri Lanka on an urgent basis, along with an energy security package and currency swap, and also push Indian investments, officials told ET. It was agreed during Rajapaksa's visit that the procedures to realise these objectives would be finalised early, within a mutually agreed time. The food and health security package would envisage the extension of a line of credit to cover the import of food, medicines and other essential items from India. The energy package would also comprise a line of credit to cover import of fuel from India, and an early modernisation of Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm. There is also an offer of a currency swap to help Sri Lanka address its current balance of payment issues, the officials said.

It was also decided to facilitate Indian investments in different sectors in Sri Lanka that would contribute to growth and expand employment. Rajapaksa and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and foreign minister S Jaishankar agreed to open direct lines of communication and to be in direct and regular contact with each other in order to coordinate delivery of the package.

"The Sri Lankan finance minister's discussions with his Indian counterpart and the external affairs minister focused on a whole gamut of issues of mutual importance pertaining to the bilateral relationship with particular attention on the economic cooperation aspect. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the evolving trajectory of the bilateral relationship. During the discussions, they identified ways and means through which the existing bilateral economic relationship between the two countries could be further broadened and deepened," according to a Lankan government statement.



Turkish Firms Eye Boon in Deepening Bilateral Ties With Qatar

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar is already the second-largest foreign investor in Turkey, with major stakes in banking, shipping, retail, and the financial sector.

As Turkish businesses grapple with high inflation and a sharply devalued currency, a recent visit to Qatar by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is kindling hopes that deepening economic ties between the two countries will open up new avenues of trade and investment with other Persian Gulf states.

Qatar is already the second-largest foreign investor in Turkey, with major stakes in banking, shipping, retail, and the financial sector. While bilateral trade between the two countries is modest, Turkish traders say it has dramatically gone up in recent years, when Qatar endured a three-and-a-half-year blockade by four Arab states that finally eased early this year.

Turkish construction firms, meanwhile, say Qatar has provided them with a unique opportunity to showcase work on a global scale - an opening they hope will continue to be available as the Gulf region continues to emerge from diplomatic tensions that halted trade.

While many details are still unclear, Turkey and Qatar signed more than a dozen agreements during a December 6-7 visit by Erdogan to Doha. The Turkish president and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani oversaw the seventh major summit to coordinate strategy between the two close allies.

Many of the announced areas of cooperation deal with sharing know-how between government departments dealing with emergency and disaster management, diplomatic training, culture and tourism promotion, health and medical sciences, religious affairs, and media training.

"Previously they were statements of intention, and now on this trip some of those general agreements have been more defined, put into place, and given more detail," Basar Arioglu, chairman of the Qatar Business Council under Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board, told Al Jazeera.

The council has more than 70 members, Arioglu said - companies that include construction contractors, architectural firms, real estate dealers, and groups dealing with exporting everything from furniture to medical products and health services. There's even a Turkish company that provides meals for the Qatari army, Arioglu said.

While Turkey and Qatar have been close on the political front for decades, the alliance took center stage in 2017, after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a blockade on

Unemployment Rate Falls Slightly in OECD Area



PARIS (Dispatches) - The unemployment rate in the OECD area fell for the sixth consecutive month in October 2021, to 5.7% (from 5.8% in September), but at a slower pace than in previous months. It remained 0.5 percentage point above the pre-pandemic rate recorded in February 2020. The number of unemployed workers across the OECD area also continued to fall (by 0.2 million), reaching 38.3 million, still 2.8 million above the pre-pandemic level. The unemployment rate in the OECD area was stable among women (at 6.0%) and declined slightly among men (to 5.5%, from 5.6% in September). Unemployment also declined slightly among prime age and older workers aged 25 and above (down to 4.9%, from 5.0% in September), but edged up among younger people aged 15 to 24 (up to 12.1%, from 12.0%).

The fall in the OECD area unemployment rate when compared with the April 2020 peak should be interpreted with caution, as it largely reflects the return of temporary laid-off workers in the United States and Canada, where they are recorded as unemployed, unlike in most other countries, including European member states, where they are recorded as employed. In addition, methodological changes to the EU Labor Force Survey blur the comparison for several European Union countries between December 2020 and subsequent months. Furthermore, the unemployment rate may conceal additional slack in the labor market as some non-employed people may be "out of the labor force", either because they are not able to actively look for work or are not available to work.

In the euro area, there was another slight decrease in the unemployment rate in October (to 7.3%, from 7.4% in September), with the largest declines in Greece (to 12.9%, from 13.1%), Lithuania (to 6.5%, from 6.7%), Luxembourg (to 5.1%, from 5.3%) and the Netherlands (to 2.9%, from 3.1%). In contrast, the largest increases were observed in Austria (to 5.8%, from 5.2%) and Italy (to 9.4%, from 9.2%).

Malaysia's Industrial Production Index Increases 5.5% in October

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) rose to 5.5 per cent in October 2021, driven by the manufacturing index, which saw an increase of 8.0 per cent in the month under review, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) said.

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the growth was supported by the electricity index, which climbed 4.1 per cent.

"Meanwhile, the mining index recorded a downturn of 3.5 per cent, and on month-on-month basis, the IPI increased by 4.8 per cent, driven by the manufacturing and electricity sectors," he said in a statement.

The manufacturing sector output based on year-on-year comparison increased 8.0 per cent in October 2021 after recording a positive growth of 4.0 per cent in September 2021.

Mohd Uzir said the main subsectors contributed to the growth in the manufacturing sector in October 2021 were electrical and electronics products (13.6 per cent), food, beverages and tobacco (9.3 per cent), and petroleum, chemical, rubber and plastic products (6.3 per cent).

Simultaneously, export-oriented and domestic-oriented industries recorded a growth of 8.6 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively.

The increase in export-oriented industries was mainly supported by the manufacture of computer, electronics and optical products, and the manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products.

Pakistan Values Relations With U.S., Wants Enhanced Economic Ties

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan underlined on Saturday that Pakistan values its long-standing relationship with the United States and was committed to expanding it in all spheres, particularly in the economic dimension.

The premier reiterated that a deeper and stronger partnership between the two countries was mutually beneficial and critical for the region's peace, security and prosperity, said a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

PM Imran shared these views after a four-member delegation of the U.S. Senate, comprising Senators Angus King, Richard Burr, John Cornyn and Benjamin Sasse, called on him in Islamabad. Senator King is also a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee of the U.S.

The premier's statement has come on the heels of Pakistan's decision to skip the summit on democracy convened by U.S. President Joe Biden on December 9 and 10, which experts believe could entail serious implications for the already strained relations between the two countries.

Offering rare praise, the opposition parties have welcomed the PTI government's decision to decline the U.S.' invitation to its summit, underscoring that Pakistan's friendship with China cemented unity among the political parties of the country.

Warmly welcoming the senators, PM Imran hoped that the visits of Congressional delegations will help strengthen mutual understanding and forge closer people-to-people contacts.

"A deeper and stronger partnership between the two countries was mutually beneficial and critical for the region's peace, security and prosperity," he said.

With regard to the evolving situation in Afghanistan, the premier emphasized that Pakistan and the US must have a deeper engagement to promote the shared objectives of peace, stability and economic development.

Imran particularly underscored the urgent need to support the Afghan people by taking all possible measures to prevent a humanitarian crisis and economic collapse in the country.

He also highlighted the importance of closer cooperation to address the security threats in the region, including terrorism.

Apprising the delegation about the continuation of human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), PM Imran underscored that the extremist and exclusionist policies of the RSS-inspired BJP were posing a threat to regional peace and security.

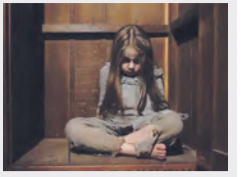
Iranian Short Film Finds Way To Cineaste Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian short film 'Breach' has been accepted into the Cineaste International Film Festival of India.

Written by Masoud Hasheminejad and directed by Shahab Hosseinpour, the 19-minute fiction tells the story of a young couple who move to a sinister house and experience strange, supernatural events.

The film casts Sara Tavakoli, Mohammad Ali Mohammadi, Farshid Naseri, Parasto Ghaed Rahmat, Niloufar Rad, Amir Hossein Blouri, Hassan Babaei, Sobhan Sohrab and Roza Danazadeh.

The film was previously accepted into the 2021 edition of Around the World in 20 Shorts in Spain, Portland Horror Film Festival, and Onkyo Film Awards in Estonia.



U.N., World Bank Under Pressure to Offer Afghanistan Aid

LONDON (Dispatches) - The World Bank and many Western nations are under pressure to release funds that could avert famine in Afghanistan as a Himalayan winter closes in and the country's former allies grapple with how to keep the population alive without enabling more Taliban atrocities.

Afghanistan's descent into destitution since the Taliban's victory in August is fueling concerns of an armed uprising or even civil war, amid accusations that U.S. President Joe Biden's administration is withholding food and money as punishment for the Western alliance's humiliating defeat.

Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy—international donors previously accounted for 43 percent of its GDP and 75 percent of its public expenditures—has imploded in the four months since the Taliban took control. Now, the Afghanistan Analysts Network estimates around half of Afghanistan's 40.2 million people are at "crisis or emergency levels of food security," and more than half of the population will be in peril as winter progresses. The Taliban's interim prime minister, Mohammad Hasan Akhund, recently called the looming famine a "test from God."

The World Bank and many Western nations are under pressure to release funds that could avert famine in Afghanistan as a Himalayan winter closes in and the country's former allies grapple with how to keep the population alive without enabling more Taliban atrocities.

Afghanistan's descent into destitution since the Taliban's victory in August is fueling concerns of an armed uprising or even civil war, amid accusations that U.S. President Joe Biden's administration is withholding food and money as punishment for the Western alliance's humiliating defeat.

Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy—international donors previously accounted for 43 percent of its GDP and 75 percent of its public expenditures—has imploded in the four months since the Taliban took control. Now, the Afghanistan Analysts Network estimates around half of Afghanistan's 40.2 million people are at "crisis or emergency levels of food security," and more than half of the population will be in peril as winter progresses. The Taliban's interim prime minister, Mohammad Hasan Akhund, recently called the looming famine a "test from God."

The World Bank holds \$1.5 billion in trust for Afghanistan, with \$1.2 billion earmarked for projects agreed to by the previous government. It will be months before complicated legal requirements needed to unlock the money are completed. The money is not likely to be released until the first fiscal quarter of 2022—and then only incrementally.

There are some minor cash injections. The World Bank has \$280 million in its Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), which had not been committed before the Taliban victory in August. The World Bank is expected to transfer that fund on Friday to the World Food Program and UNICEF, which can use the money as they see fit.

One immediate use will be to pay the salaries of Afghans working in the health



sector for the next six months through a project called Sehatmandi, which was set up by donors that supported the former government to provide basic health care across the country. Other sectors, such as education, will be harder to tackle: Most teachers were government employees paid by the Ministry of Education, so the money has to pass through Taliban hands first. ARTF donors want to hear from the Taliban that girls will have equal access to schooling before they agree that funds can be released for education.

The problem is it's hard, both morally and legally, for international agencies and banks to release any money for Afghanistan now that a bunch of blacklisted terrorists run the government. U.S. and United Nations Security Council sanctions make it illegal for the United States, U.N. members, or businesses in those countries to deal directly with the Taliban. Few commercial banks will risk doing business with Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, so it is virtually impossible to send money into the country. The United Nations has flown in cash, but that's expensive and unsustainable.

Afghanistan's central bank reserves, close to \$10 billion—much of it held in the United States—have also been frozen since Aug. 15. The Taliban regard that money as a national asset and demand it be made available, but that is also illegal under the sanctions regime. Meanwhile, Afghans at home and abroad cannot access their personal bank accounts, leading to a severe cash crisis. As the Taliban have taken control of the country's banking sector, private banks have collapsed and owners have left the country, fearing kidnappings or worse. The Afghan currency has lost about half its value since the Taliban takeover.

Canada Threatens Trade Action Over Biden Electric Car Plan



OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Canada yesterday threatened to impose sweeping tariffs on American goods and suspend parts of a landmark North American trade deal if Washington rewards electric cars made in US union shops, to the detriment of Canada's auto sector.

In a letter to U.S. senators, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said Ottawa is "deeply concerned" by an electric vehicle tax credit proposed in the Build Back Better Act that it says violates the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

The proposed tax credit is equivalent to a 34 per cent tariff on Canadian assembled electric vehicles, Freeland said, adding that this poses "a significant threat to the Canadian automotive industry and is a de facto abrogation of the USMCA." The proposal, included in US President Joe Biden's US\$1.75 trillion (RM7.37 trillion) spending package pending in Congress, encourages US production of electric vehicles by offering a bigger tax credit for local union-built electric vehicles (EV) and phases out for imported EVs after five years.

Mexico and Canada have argued that it threatens the integrated North American auto supply chain enabled by the USMCA signed in 2020 following tortuous negotiations.

Non-union automakers led by Toyota and Tesla have also balked at the Biden proposal, calling it a sop for the United Auto Workers labor union that could hinder the transition to EV autos. If the measure is passed, Freeland said Canada could impose retaliatory tariffs on the US auto industry and several other sectors, suspend US access to the Canadian dairy market and hold up implementation of new copyright rules in the USMCA.

Europeans Reportedly...

FROM PAGE 1

At the talks, the Iranian delegation presented two detailed draft texts; One on the removal of U.S. sanctions and the other on Iran's return to its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA.

Iran has repeatedly asserted that the Iranian delegation is very serious in the negotiations, and the submission of documents shows the country's seriousness to reach an agreement, and now other parties must show their determination.

Belarus Oil Firm Cancels 2022 Exports to Germany

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Belarusian oil company Belorusneft has cancelled its 2022 export plans to Germany via the Druzhba pipeline following new European Union sanctions on the company, three traders familiar with the matter said.

On Dec. 2, the EU imposed sanctions on several Belarusian individuals and entities, including Belorusneft. The new sanctions are aimed at increasing the pressure on President Alexander Lukashenko, accused by Western governments of rigging his election, ordering a massive crackdown on the opposition and pushing Middle Eastern migrants towards the border with Poland. Lukashenko denies the allegations.

Belorusneft exports most of its relatively modest oil production to Germany on a regular basis using Russia's Druzhba pipeline. In October-December, Belarus could supply about 450,000 tonnes of oil to Germany, according to the quarterly schedule. Trading firms supply the oil to the PCK Schewdt refinery in Germany, owned by Russia's Rosneft (ROSN.MM) and Italy's Eni (ENI.MI).

In November, Belorusneft issued a sales tender for 2022 supplies to Germany. But it only sold a part of the planned export volume, some 40,000 tonnes per month, to Shell (RDSA.L), traders said. After the sanctions were announced, the companies cancelled the supply plans for 2022, two of the traders said.

Belorusneft did not respond to requests for comment. A Shell spokesperson said the company "complies with all relevant sanctions and all applicable laws" and declined further comment.

Belorusneft may divert oil eyed for export to its domestic refineries, traders said, which would result in lower Russian oil supplies to the country.

Shell could offset oil volumes expected from Belorusneft with its own production in Russia, traders said. Shell is a shareholder in Russian oil company Salym Petroleum Development.

EAEU Leaders Discuss Union Development Strategy

MINSK (Dispatches) - The most pressing issues of Eurasian integration were discussed today by the leaders of the EAEU countries. The meeting of the Eurasian Economic Council was held online. The main message is solidarity on many political points. The President of Belarus pointed out that the pressure from the U.S. and the EU won't be limited to our country. There are already alarming signals from other members of the EAEU.

According to Kassym Zhomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan, we are witnessing demand for digital products for the third year with a struggle for digital consumables. The failures of microchips and computer elements are observed. Therefore, their production will meet both demand and export.

Kazakhstan's proposal is more than relevant. The market for microchips and semiconductors amounted to \$150 billion in the third quarter of 2021. In short, there

are places to make money together.

The program until 2025 is clear: common energy markets and open logistics; the freights within the EAEU will be equipped with navigation seals. This will prevent smuggling and guarantee cargo security. During the active work of the Eurasian Economic Union, 80 percent of barriers and restrictions were removed. The leaders have agreed to develop the green economy and to resolve the climate problem.

The meeting was attended by Cuba and Uzbekistan, which have ad observer status. Azerbaijan may soon receive observer status, the negotiations are already underway. The main plan for 2022 is to protect the EAEU economy and involve China in an active dialogue.

The leaders have agreed and signed a whole range of documents including the EAEU budget for 2022 and a dozen more agreements. All of them are important pillars of the joint economic development.

Norway, Sweden Ease Recent Power Flow Cuts

OSLO (Dispatches) - Norway and Sweden are set to ease recent cuts to their respective cross-border power flows, power grid operators Statnett and Svenska Kraftnaet said on Friday, after changes in its generation mix forced Sweden to curb energy exports.

Statnett will offer an additional 250 megawatts of capacity at its border with southern Sweden from Sunday, it said, citing closer cooperation with Swedish counterpart Svenska Kraftnaet.

Capacity will rise to 1,450 MW out of capacity of 2,200 MW, Statnett said in a market message. Statnett cut available capacity between the Norwegian bidding zone NO1 and Swedish price zone SE3 to 1,100-1,200 megawatt (MW) in late November. It did so after Svenska Kraftnaet curbed capacity to neighbors including Norway as it grappled with power flow changes due to nuclear plant closures, new power connections between the Nordics and continental Europe and rapid wind power expansion.

Don't Mess Up...

FROM PAGE 1

Israelis have bitter experiences in war with Hizbullah forces and suffering humiliating defeats and Americans are still remembering rains of Iranian missile attacks on their airbase in Iraq.

On Saturday, an Iranian website quoted a top Iranian military official as threatening retaliation with missiles if the United States and Israel attack Iran's nuclear sites.

U.S. and Israel said they are considering joint military drills to prepare for action against Iran if current nuclear negotiations fail and political leaders decide to act to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Nour News close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council Saturday in a brief report quoted a military official as saying that Iranian commanders would take an attack as an opportunity to test their missiles "on real targets, to extract a heavy price from aggressors who would violate the territory of the Islamic Republic."

The military official also mentioned the January 8, 2020 ballistic missile attack on the Ain al Asad base in Iran hosting U.S. troops and the concussion more than one hundred US troops received. He said he does not believe these soldiers would be willing to attack Iran.

Now if the U.S. and Israel are keen to choose military option against Iran, they should wait and get a humiliating response from Iranian forces and their missile power. If they like to taste the power of new Iranian missiles, it is enough for them to commit their stupid mistake and launch an attack on Iran.

Iranians through the history have shown the world that they do not like war and they have not been starter of any war but when a war has been imposed on them, they have fought tooth and nail and they have sacrificed their lives for their territory.

Now it is up to the U.S. and its ally to choose the option of peace and talks or the other option which is war, then they have to see the consequences of their mistake.

Like in the past, it seems threat and bully for attack is just a trick in order to frighten Iran and Iranians in order that they give in during the Vienna talks by giving concessions to the enemies but it is a dream for the enemies that will never come true.

Iran Is Optimistic...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran's chief negotiator cited an example: "For example, an agreement has been reached between the two sides on nuclear measures, but in this regard, there are still issues from the 6th round of talks that have not been agreed upon yet, and negotiations will continue."

Bagheri Kani further referred to the talks of this round, saying: "We are the inheritors of a series of efforts that were made in the first half of this year. When the new government was formed, it was natural for it to have different focuses, priorities and agendas on various issues, including foreign policy."

Iran's chief negotiator continued: "In the field of negotiations, we tried from the very beginning to be able to find all the capacities that can directly or indirectly affect the dialogue process, both in terms of content, such as relevant bodies, including economic bodies and other related areas."

Bagheri Kani said: "In interaction with the relevant bodies related to economic discussions, the main priority of this round of talks was the lifting of illegal and oppressive sanctions, we had a continuous relationship with the representatives of these bodies for several months and their opinions, views, priorities and sensitivities. We inquired about the lifting of sanctions and drafted them in the form of documents that can be presented to the other side to reach a lasting agreement desired by our people."

He added: "At the end of 6th round of talks, we had several unresolved issues, both in terms of lifting sanctions and nuclear measures, which in this round, if issues are not resolved, will be added to the previous issues and those issues will become the focus of our talks with the other side. It will shape the negotiations that we will enter at this stage in the upcoming days."

Bagheri Kani also answered the question of whether it is possible to reach an agreement: "The Iranian negotiating team first came to Vienna having the upper hand and categorized, summarized and prioritized their views on the various issues that are being discussed and will present some of them and some in the coming days as required by the dialogue process."

The senior negotiator of Iran continued: "The second point is that we have observed frameworks in the negotiations that are the basis for reaching an agreement, especially to build our positions and views based on the agreement that both parties want, the agreement of 2015."

He added: "This agreement and negotiation also has another side, their view, priority and approach and their seriousness and readiness would determine whether the negotiations succeed and whether we reach an agreement more quickly. As far as the Iranian side is concerned, I am optimistic about reaching an agreement, but given the unpleasant record that our people have on the other side, we will certainly not be naive."

Senior Japanese Officials To Skip Beijing Olympics

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Senior Japanese government officials will likely skip the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February, joining the United States in a diplomatic boycott, the Yomiuri newspaper reported on Saturday, citing multiple sources with knowledge of the matter.

Earlier this week, Canada joined Australia, Britain and the U.S. in saying they would not send top officials to the Games, citing longstanding concerns over China's human rights record.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard:
(+98) (21) 44253448
Public Relations Tel:
(+98)(21) 44253450
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
ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by:Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Kuzma Fined \$15K For Obscene Gesture

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The NBA fined Washington Wizards forward Kyle Kuzma \$15,000 for directing an obscene gesture toward a fan in Detroit.

Kuzma turned and flashed his middle finger at a fan after sinking a corner 3-pointer with 9:34 remaining in the fourth quarter of Washington's 119-116 overtime win against the Pistons.

He later waved goodbye (with all five fingers) to the crowd at Little Caesars Arena after making the game-winning 3-pointer with 0.6 seconds remaining. He finished with 26 points, seven rebounds and four assists.

Premier League Top Guns Need Penalties to Scrape Wins

LONDON (Dispatches) - Premier League leaders Manchester City and title challengers Liverpool and Chelsea as well as Manchester United all needed penalties to secure victories on Saturday, leaving the top of the table unchanged.

Manchester City beat Wolverhampton Wanderers at the Etihad thanks to a Raheem Sterling spot kick after a controversial penalty award.

Liverpool also won by a single goal against Aston Villa, managed by former Anfield favorite Steven Gerrard, with the visitors upset at the decision to award a penalty when Mohamed Salah went down in the box before converting the 67th minute winner.

Chelsea midfielder Jorginho scored twice from the spot, including a stoppage time winner, as Thomas Tuchel's side beat Leeds United 3-2 at Stamford Bridge.

Cristiano Ronaldo extended Ralf Rangnick's unbeaten start as Manchester United interim manager as the Portugal striker's penalty clinched a 1-0 victory at struggling Norwich.

England forward Sterling's 100th Premier League goal was just enough to earn leaders City victory over 10-man Wolves.

Wolves had limited City in the opening period before their striker Raul Jimenez's dismissal for two yellow cards in quick succession in first-half stoppage time shifted the odds against them.

City dominated from then on, edging in front through Sterling's penalty - a decision that required a lengthy VAR check - in the 66th minute with the ball striking Joao Moutinho.

Referee Jon Moss ruled the ball had hit the Portuguese midfielder's arm and although the television images suggested it had struck him in the upper ribs, VAR backed the on-field decision.



Down the East Lincs Road at Anfield was a surprisingly low-key reception for Gerrard, the Liverpool-born former captain and Champions League winner, before a game where his Villa team set about frustrating the home side.

Liverpool dominated the first half with Villa keeper Emiliano Martinez doing well to save efforts from Andy Robertson and Salah.

After the break, Martinez produced a brilliant reflex stop to keep out a powerful header from Virgil van Dijk but Liverpool's pressure finally paid off when Salah went down in the box under challenge from Tyrone Mings.

The Egyptian fired home an unstoppable spot-kick to secure the win for Jurgen Klopp's side.

Chelsea could ill-afford another slip-up, after last week's loss at West Ham United but they were pushed all the way by Leeds, before ending up with a 3-2 home win.

Leeds went ahead against the run of play in the 28th minute when Daniel James went down under a challenge by Marcos Alonso to win a penalty that Brazilian playmaker Raphinha stroked home.

But the Blues clawed their way back into the game when Alonso, trying to atone for his earlier error, stole the ball from Stuart Dallas, exchanged passes with Timo Werner and crossed for Mason Mount to score with a first-time angled shot.

Tuchel's men turned the game around when referee Chris Kavanagh, after a VAR check, awarded them a penalty after a Raphinha challenge on Antonio Rudiger and Jorginho fired high into the net.

Chelsea were then caught out in the 83rd minute when 19-year-old Joe Gelhardt, barely on the field as a substitute, connected with a Tyler Roberts cross to score his first league goal.

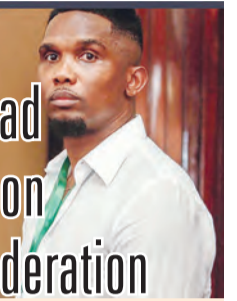
But just when the Blues looked like they had slipped further behind in the title race, Rudiger went down under a challenge by Mateusz Klich and Jorginho slotted home.

Ronaldo won and converted the second half spot-kick that gave Rangnick a second successive Premier League victory since he replaced the sacked Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

United found it difficult to impose themselves for long periods and it took several fine saves from David de Gea to keep them on level terms before Ronaldo's 13th goal since rejoining the club from Juventus in August.

Arsenal weathered storms on and off the pitch before coasting to a 3-0 Premier League win over Southampton on Saturday as boss Mikel Arteta dropped captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang from the match-day squad for disciplinary reasons.

Eto'o Elected Head Of Cameroon Football Federation



YAOUNDE (Dispatches) - Samuel Eto'o said on Saturday his election as president of the Cameroon Football Federation, announced earlier in the day, was "one of the proudest moments" of his life.

The four-time African player of the year gained 43 votes to beat acting president Seidou Mbombo Njoya, who collected 31.

"I'm deeply grateful to be elected as the new president," the former star striker said on Twitter.

"Every vote represents the energy and ambition of our football family to take our beloved sport to a level we've never seen before," Eto'o added.

After the result was announced at Hotel Mont Febe in Yaounde, Eto'o's supporters exulted.

The vote was held because the Court of Arbitration for Sport in January annulled Njoya's victory in a 2018 election.

When filing his candidacy on November 17, Eto'o, a four-time African footballer of the year, said: "I will be the next president of the federation despite all the cheating."

Eto'o had said Njoya, who he supported in 2018, had "failed miserably".

Eto'o received the support of three other candidates who withdrew in the days before the vote, as well as another Indomitable Lions legend Roger Milla and former Barcelona team-mate Lionel Messi.

British Gov't to Develop New Concussion Protocols

LONDON (Dispatches) - The British government published a 10-point action plan to tackle concussion in sport by developing new protocols alongside sporting bodies and introducing new technology by autumn next year to mitigate head injuries.

The plans also include asking sports governing bodies to discuss training protocols with player associations, commissioning new research into concussion and working with the Premier League on a pilot scheme to improve player welfare.

The recommendations are a response to the Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee's (DCMS) inquiry earlier this year, which urged the government to adopt a "coherent approach" to look into head injuries in sport.

"Player safety must be absolutely paramount. Working with the sports industry, it is right that we do all we can to ensure that people are as protected as possible and the risk of head injuries are minimized," sports minister Nigel Huddleston said.

"That's why we're taking steps to reduce this risk and developing new, gold-standard industry protocols and focusing on emerging tech that can help build a fuller picture of the risks involved."

In July, the Premier League and other governing bodies said English football would limit the number of high-force headers in training to 10 per week from the 2021-22 season to protect players as part of new guidelines.

The league introduced permanent concussion substitutions trials in February after the game's rule-making body IFAB gave the go-ahead for trials of additional "concussion subs".

Murray Splits With Coach Delgado

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's Andy Murray has split with coach Jamie Delgado after working with his compatriot for over five years, British media reported.

Delgado joined Murray's team in 2016 as an assistant coach, when the Scot won a second Wimbledon title and finished the year as world number one, and took over from Ivan Lendl as the main coach in November 2017.

Gut-Behrami Denies Goggia in Saint-Moritz Super-G



ST. MORITZ (Dispatches) - Switzerland's Lara Gut-Behrami edged Italian rival Sofia Goggia to win the World Cup super-G at Saint-Moritz.

Gut-Behrami's 33rd World Cup success brought her level on points at the top of the discipline standings with Goggia, who turned up after annexing all three races at Lake Louise.

In the first of a pair of super-Gs this weekend, the reigning world champion, returned to her best after being slowed by a virus last week in Canada.

Despite reduced visibility under a cloudy sky, she gave a demonstration of anticipation

and technical fluidity as she swept down the course in 1min 19.82 seconds.

Goggia, who won the super-G as well as both downhill last week, was 0.18sec slower as the top two in the standings outpaced the competition.

Mikaela Shiffrin was third, exactly a second behind than Goggia.

The American, who has been a specialist in the shorter technical disciplines, won the bronze in the super-G in the World Championships in February and has said she wants to try to win speed events this season.

The decision is paying off as Shiffrin has built a substantial lead in the overall standings. She has 465 points, Goggia climbed to second on 395 while Slovakian defending champion Petra Vlhova, a slalom specialist who is skipping this weekend's faster races, dropped to third on 340.

Antetokounmpo Dominates as Bucks Halt Rockets Win Streak



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Giannis Antetokounmpo put on a one-man show, scoring 41 points and grabbing 17 rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks cooled off the red-hot Houston Rockets 123-114.

Antetokounmpo also had five assists, three steals and two blocked shots as the Bucks snapped the Rockets' winning streak at seven games.

"I was just looking to be aggressive," Antetokounmpo said. "Last game I wasn't as aggressive as I wanted."

He got plenty of support from his teammates, especially Khris Middleton and Bobby Portis, who each scored 21 points and added eight rebounds.

The Bucks extended their lead to seven points, 119-112, with 47 seconds left in the fourth when Antetokounmpo slammed a dunk home.

Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer said they know they can count on Antetokounmpo and Middleton down the stretch.

"When you have a good team and have players like that, you're fortunate to put the ball in their hands and let them make plays," he said.

Houston hadn't lost since ending a 15-game losing streak by beating the Chicago Bulls on November 24. The Rockets led by 10 at one stage Friday and hung around until the Bucks were able to pull away in the fourth.

Garrison Mathews finished with a team-high 23 points, including a half dozen threes, as the Rockets made Milwaukee work for the victory.

Christian Wood and Armoni Brooks chipped in 21 points apiece, with Wood also grabbing 13 rebounds. Rookie Alperen Sengun scored a career-high 15 points.

Arsenal Selling Aubameyang Not Being Considered



LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal have never discussed selling under-performing striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, manager Mikel Arteta said yesterday as he backed the Gabon player to hit a goalscoring streak soon.

Aubameyang signed a new three-year contract with the north London side last year but has struggled this season, scoring only four Premier League goals - the last of which was in October against Aston Villa.

Arsenal, who host Southampton in the league today, may have been tempted to cash in on the 32-year-old striker in next month's transfer window but Arteta said that was not being considered.

"We have never discussed something like this (selling Aubameyang) and when players are under difficulty what we have to do is give them support," the Spaniard told a news conference.

"It's all about patches. Every player has patches and moments. It's about trying to maintain it as long as possible and try to reduce it when they don't."

Arsenal have slipped to seventh in the league standings after back-to-back defeats to sit four points off fourth place. However, Arteta was convinced his side would eventually reap the rewards for their performances.

"It's painful and even more painful for me because of the way we lost those games. Across the two matches I think we deserved much more than two defeats. It happened, so we have to manage that reality," he said.

Arteta will be boosted by the return of young winger Emile Smith Rowe, who has recovered from an injury. The 21-year-old has been one of Arsenal's standout players this season with five goals and two assists in the league.