

Iranian State Agency the Government Trading Corporation (GTC) Has Issued an International Tender to Purchase About 180,000 Tons of Milling Wheat, European Traders Said on Tuesday

IRAN NEWS

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 130,831 With 67 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

VOL. XXVII, No. 7387 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2021 - AZAR 24, 1400

2 DOMESTIC

Tehran, Moscow Reaffirm Determination To Restore Nuclear Deal



> SEE PAGE 2

3 DOMESTIC

Iran Exports to Surpass \$40b This Year



> SEE PAGE 3

4 INTERNATIONAL

EU Stands United On Russia Sanctions



> SEE PAGE 4

8 SPORTS

Durant Delivers Monster Night Against Pistons



> SEE PAGE 8

Western Parties In Vienna Urged To Stop Blame Game

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's chief negotiator to the Vienna talks has criticized certain parties involved in the negotiations of failing to engage in real diplomacy. "Some actors persist in their habit of blame game instead of real diplomacy," Ali Bagheri Kani said in a tweet on Tuesday. He noted that during the latest round of talks in the Austrian capital, Iran was quick to offer its suggestions and worked constructively and flexibly to narrow the differences. "Diplomacy is a two-way street. If there is a will to make up for the culprit's wrongdoing, the way to a good and quick agreement will be paved," the Iranian chief negotiator added. Bagheri's tweet came soon after British, French and German diplomats said Iran had yet to get down to business at the Vienna negotiations, warning that the unraveling Iran nuclear deal will very soon become "an empty shell". "As of this moment, we still have not been able to get down to real negotiations," the European diplomats said in their statement.

See Page 7

Tehran Not to Accept IAEA Demands Beyond Safeguards Agreement, NPT

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran has rejected the media hype about Iran's nuclear activities, saying Tehran will accept nothing beyond the agency's Safeguards Agreement and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. "What is being published in media, in the news and elsewhere, is part of the psychological warfare against Iran and has to do with politics. We are encountered by people, who by no means tolerate technological and scientific development of the Islamic Republic of Iran and use the accusations, propaganda and psychological warfare to pretend that Iran has illegitimate objectives and is not committed to nuclear non-proliferation," Mohammad Eslami said. Eslami added that Israel is fueling the accusations, which have never been proven. He stressed that this "commotion" will not affect how Iran moves forward with its nuclear program. "The issue of the Karaj [nuclear] site and other issues, which were mentioned in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [nuclear deal], are beyond the Safeguards Agreement," he said.

See Page 7

Gov't Signs 175 Foreign Investment Projects



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Government spokesman says that the President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi administration has signed 175 foreign investment projects with 21 countries worth 3.3 billion dollars. Speaking in his presser and in response to a question on the new administration's plan to develop economic ties with other countries within its first 100 days, Ali Bahadori Jahromi said Iran had attracted investment worth 280 million dollars during nearly four months. Bahadori Jahromi added: "Despite sanctions, Iran, with its active diplomacy, succeeded at releasing its blocked foreign assets." He further highlighted Iran's active foreign diplomacy, saying that the Raisi administration has gained promising results, including full membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), attending the 15th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and reaching an agreement signed on the gas swap. He said that interacting with all countries, particularly the neighbors, is Iran's priority. The 2022 budget aims at controlling inflation, he said. Also, he noted that the submitted budget plan intends to activate most of the private sectors. The administration will complete all projects left undone and pursue eradicating poverty, the spokesman added. Referring to Iran's refineries, he said the budget plan intends to launch a refinery with 300,000 barrels of output per day, allocating 300 million dollars to develop the Abadan refinery to provide gas and increase export. Highlighting the coronavirus mutations, he urged all people to observe the hygienic protocols still, though Iran has been successful in the nationwide vaccination. On Vienna talks, he said Iran has a correct narration of the Vienna Talks, adding that all suggestions have been made in the framework of previous negotiations, adding that government is serious for removing illegal and cruel sanctions. He referred to West as imposer of sanctions, saying those who leave the negotiating table will not be interested in presenting a correct narration of the negotiations and will use any tool to present false narrations. If the West is after lifting sanctions, negotiations will be successful, he noted. All suggestions made by the negotiating team are in the framework of the previous negotiations, Bahadori Jahromi said. He said that in line with good interaction with neighbors, \$268m worth of Iran assets were unfrozen. Referring to positive messages from the Persian Gulf states, he lauded the Iranian government's success with regard to foreign diplomacy.

ViewPoint Zionists, Source of Tension And Insecurity in Region

For year the Zionist regime and its forces has tried to paint an innocent picture of themselves in dealing with the Palestinians and Muslim countries especially in the Middle East and they have tried to interpret their crimes against the Palestinians as self-defense and recently they have tried to normalize their ties with the Muslim states and especially with the Persian Gulf states. They have always tried to shed crocodile tears and accusing Iranians or Palestinians as terrorists while they are the very terrorist themselves and following state terrorism. On Monday Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett, as the first Zionist prime minister, paid an official visit to the UAE and met with senior Emirati officials amid protests with Muslims in the world. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement strongly condemned the United Arab Emirates (UAE) officials over receiving Israeli prime minister, stressing that any normalization and alliance with the Tel Aviv regime amounts to "betrayal to Palestine." "Bennett's reception would help the criminal [Israeli] regime beef up its security and would be an attempt to legitimize the regime's false existence, wash the hands stained with the blood of Palestinian children and innocent people, and exonerate Israeli murderers and terrorists from their crimes against the entire Palestinian nation," the movement said in a statement released on Monday. Bennett had a meeting with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ) at his private palace, Israeli officials said, following the premier's arrival in the Emirati capital late on Sunday. The UAE officially inaugurated its embassy in Israel on July 14. The inauguration ceremony was hosted by UAE's Ambassador to Israel Mohammad al-Khaja, with the regime's president Isaac Herzog in attendance. The embassy is situated in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange building, also known as the Bursa. Although Emiratis are well aware of the inhuman nature of Israeli officials, they have normalized ties with the Zionist regime regardless of this regimes crimes against the Palestinians and occupying their lands. Reacting to this meeting, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said the presence of Israel in the Persian Gulf region will only lead to increased tensions in the region as a result of the Zionist regime's Iranophobic policies. Ali Shamkhani made the remarks while addressing a gathering of Iran's diplomatic missions in the neighboring countries, in which he emphasized the need for adoption of strategies, which would lead to more synergism and convergence among regional countries, especially between Iran and its neighbors.

See Page 7

Iran Victim of U.S. and Israel Cyber-Attacks

TEHRAN (IFP) - Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations has rejected using force in cyberspace. Majid Takht Ravanchi said Iran has been a victim of cyber-attacks by the United States and Israel. Takht Ravanchi made the remarks addressing the First Substantive Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of information and telecommunications technologies. The full text of the Iranian envoy's statement is as follows: I congratulate you on your assumption of leadership of our Group and extend my gratitude to the Secretariat for its support in organizing this meeting. I avail myself with the NAM statement made by Indonesia. We are happy to witness the realization of a request to end parallelism and to lead the ICT process through the OEWG, the UN's first-ever inclusive, transparent and multilateral intergovernmental process. Iran has been the victim of a number of cyber-attacks, including the 2010 Stuxnet malware attacks against its critical infrastructure by the US and Israel. Since 2010, these illegal acts have intensified and still continue. We believe that this Group is in the best position to address this irresponsible behavior and build upon the desire to end such reckless activities. Among other factors, the Group's success is contingent on consistently adhering to its mandate. We remain committed to our stances on major concerns, which have been articulated repeatedly during the previous OEWG. Given the ongoing discussions and developments, Iran underlines the following essential points: respecting the sovereignty of states; non-interference in the internal affairs of the states using ICTs; accountability of platforms and transnational corporations; avoiding action-oriented recommendations without due attention to the said principles; the need for codifying and implementing a legally binding instrument and developing the current international law as well as further norms of responsible state behavior; the non-compulsory designation of repositories; applying ethics and justice to the ICTs; responsible behavior of non-state actors, including digital platforms; ensuring and facilitating the cooperation of the relevant digital platforms and transnational corporations with the states; application of ICTs exclusively for peaceful purposes and rejecting justification of threat or use of force using ICTs; and last but not least, equal status of all national initiatives within the OEWG.

See Page 7

Iran Changes Oil Pricing Formula in Sign It Prepares For Oil Export Return

LONDON (OilPrice) - The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will change from January 1 the benchmark against which it prices its crude for Europe and the Mediterranean—a move which traders tell Argus could signal Iran's intention to return to exporting its oil to Europe. As of January 1, 2022, the state-controlled oil firm of the Islamic Republic will use the ICE Brent settlement for pricing the crude it would sell to the European and Mediterranean markets instead of the ICE Bwawe benchmark, Argus reported on Monday, quoting NIOC's January pricing formulas. Currently, no refiner in Europe buys Iranian crude oil, as no one risks incurring secondary sanctions from the United States for dealing with Iran's oil. The U.S. re-imposed sanctions on Iran's oil, shipping, and banking industries in 2018, when former President Donald Trump withdrew from the so-called nuclear deal.

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

Iran to Use PastoCovac As Booster Dose

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The CEO of the third phase of clinical trial of Iranian COVID-19 vaccine PastoCovac said that the third dose of the vaccine, named PastoCovac Plus, was authorized to be used as the booster dose for any other coronavirus vaccine.

Epidemiologist Dr. Ehsan Mostafavi said that all the people who have received two shots of any type of COVID-19 vaccine, whether Sinopharm, AstraZeneca or Sputnik, can take a PastoCovac

Plus jab as the booster dose.

Dr. Mostafavi said that PastoCovac Plus has been authorized to be administered to people over 12.

The vaccine has passed clinical test for children from 2 to 18 in Cuba and it is administered to children aged 12 to 18 in Iran, according to the doctor who added that younger children would be authorized to receive PastoCovac in the future.

Tehran, Moscow Reaffirm Determination to Restore Nuclear Deal

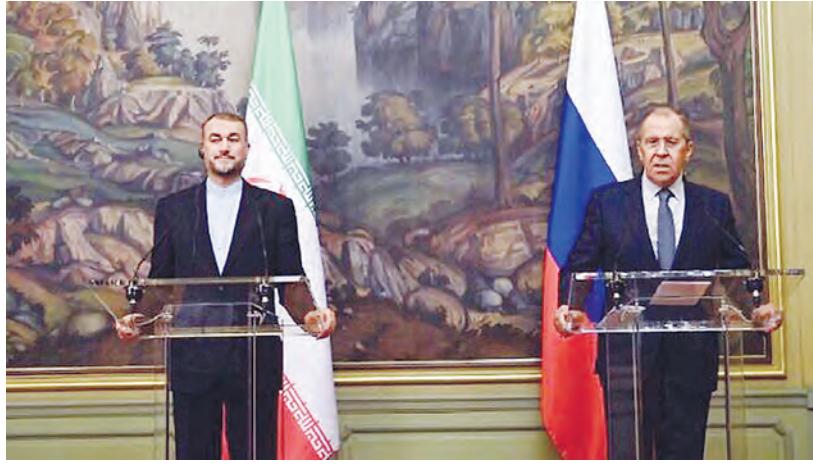
TEHRAN (PressTV) - The foreign ministers of Iran and Russia have reaffirmed their respective countries' commitment to the restoration of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in its original version.

The remarks by Iran's Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, were made in a phone call on Monday, during which the two ministers exchanged views on the current situation surrounding the landmark nuclear accord being discussed in the Austrian capital of Vienna.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the two diplomats focused in their conversation on "vital issues related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Iran's nuclear program in the context of the resumption of the negotiating process in Vienna" on November 29.

"Both parties affirmed the common determination to revive the nuclear deal in its original, balanced form, which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council," the statement said.

Lavrov and Amir-Abdollahian, as the statement said, underlined that "this is the only correct way to ensure that the rights and interests of all parties participating in



the comprehensive agreements are taken care of."

According to Iran's Foreign Ministry, during the telephone conversation, the Iranian foreign minister outlined Tehran's position on the JCPOA, calling on the West parties to appear more serious in the Vienna talks and demanding the negotiating parties to come up with initiatives in the sanctions removal talks.

Noting that repeated emphasis has been put on the need to remove all illegal sanctions imposed on Iran, including those contrary to the 2015 nuclear deal and UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorses it, Lavrov said Russia has spared no effort to get Americans attune all their laws with the JCPOA regulations and those stipulated by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Lavrov added that diplomatic creativity of all negotiating parties in addition to showing patience for achieving necessary coordination were keys to the success of the ongoing round of talks in the Austrian capital.

Amir-Abdollahian Congratulates German New FM

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian felicitated appointment of Ms. Annalena Baerbock as new foreign minister of Federal Republic of Germany.

In his congratulatory message on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian stated that historical relations between Islamic Republic of Iran and Federal Republic of Germany, which dates back to more than one hundred and fifty years ago, have led to the formation of deep ties between the two countries.

This friendly and amicable relations between the two countries based on mutual respect and interests could put the two countries on the path of sound interaction and understanding in spite of all challenges facing ahead, he added.

Islamic Republic of Iran and Federal Republic of Germany also have high capacities to jointly and constructively meet the challenges of today's world at international and regional arenas, Amir-Abdollahian emphasized.

He expressed hope that the relations between the two nations and two governments of Iran and Germany will expand more in the new era.

Israeli Regime Muslim World's No.1 Enemy

TEHRAN (PressTV)- The Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly denounces the United Arab Emirates' recent hosting of the Israeli regime's prime minister, Naftali Bennett.

The regime is "the Muslim world's and Arab countries' number one enemy," spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday night.

"No action towards normalization [of relations with the regime] can cause the lofty Palestinian cause to disappear," he stressed.

Bennett met with the de facto ruler of the United Arab Emirates and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, earlier in the day, becoming the first ruler of the Israeli regime to visit the Persian Gulf state.

The visit came more than a year after the two sides agreed to establish formal relations under a United States-brokered deal.

Khatibzadeh warned against any measure that could reinforce the regime's "destructive and seditious" presence in the West Asia region.

The peoples of the region would never forget the Israeli regime's "sinister and vindictive" actions that are the "root cause" of the region's problems, he said.

Khatibzadeh said Abu Dhabi had received the prime minister of the "illegitimate regime" despite Tel Aviv's 70-year-long history of "acting as the source of instability, tension, and warmongering across the Arab and Muslim countries."

Tehran, Ashgabat Confer On Bilateral Relations on Phone

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held a telephone conversation with Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Muradov to discuss bilateral relations between Tehran and Ashgabat.

In the phone call, which took place on Monday afternoon, the Iranian foreign minister referred to the phone call between the presidents of Iran and Turkmenistan this morning and Raiesi's stress on the importance of relations between the two countries, expressed hope that the visit of the President of Turkmenistan to Iran will take place next year.

Referring to the excellent and extensive relations between the two countries, the Turkmen Foreign Minister stressed the need for further expansion of ties and added, "The contact of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran with his Turkmen counterpart and expressing gratitude for the good holding of the recent ECO Summit in Ashgabat is a sign of deep respect between Iran and Turkmenistan."

Iran, Oman Enjoy High-Level Relations



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Army Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said on Tuesday that despite all attempts to undermine the relationship between Iran and Oman by the enemies of the region, the relationship between the two nations remains at the height of its sustainability.

Oman's Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning Brigadier Abdulaziz Abdullah al-Manthri met and held talks with Iran's Army Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani here on Tuesday.

Heading a delegation, Abdullah al-Manthri is in Iran to promote military and international cooperation.

Terming Oman as a friend and brother country, Rear Admiral Irani said that pacifism and friendship are the main commonalities between Iran and Oman.

Describing the Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman as among the deep-rooted commonalities, Abdullah al-Manthri stated that they have deep roots in the field of religion, culture as well as geography, and most importantly, Iran and Oman have long-standing connections in the field of relations between the two nations.

Earlier, Iran's Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major-General Mohammad Bagheri and Abdullah al-Manthri discussed developing military cooperation.

Armed Forces Ready to Take Part in Peace, Truce Processes

TEHRAN (IFP) - The chief of the general staff of the Iranian armed forces says the country has never missed the opportunity to develop its defensive capabilities and deterrence and is ready to take part in peace and truce processes.

Major General Mohammad Bagheri made the comments during a meeting in Tehran with Iranian envoys in neighboring countries.

He underlined the need for coordination between the strategies and actions of the armed forces and the country's foreign policy.

"In response to the hostilities against our dear country, a series of measures and strategies were put on the agenda of the defense sector ... which pushed the country's defense industry to a point, in terms of growth, improvement, maturity and deterrence, that no power now dares to launch an aggression against the Islamic motherland," Bagheri said.

The general stressed that Iran's strategies are based on the circumstances and the threats the country could be facing. "Our forces, despite trust in the country's deterrence, have never underestimated threats, versus the enemy, and in strategic terms, and proportionate to the situation of the enemy, have the utmost preparedness and awareness in the face of tiniest threats," he said.

Bagheri also said Iran is ready for closer defense cooperation with other countries, especially among its neighbors.

"Seeing the potential and capabilities created in the armed forces ... we are ready to take up roles in peace and truce processes in the region and beyond, which are facing conflict and tensions," he said.

Int'l Obstacles Hinder Iran's Combating of Corruption

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Justice says despite special measures in the fight against corruption, the Islamic Republic of Iran still faces international challenges and obstacles in the field of prevention and fight against corruption.

Amin-Hossein Rahimi said on Monday at the ninth meeting of the member states of the Conference of the States Parties in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt: "Unilateral coercive action, which violates the fundamental principles of international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, has prevented the allocation of the necessary resources to fight corruption in the international arena."

He added that these kinds of actions prevent cooperation with other governments, especially in the area of return of assets and revenues from corruption.

Minister of Justice stated: "The Islamic Republic of

Iran believes that just as any action to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against corruption is necessary, the disruptive actions of this cooperation should be rejected by the international community with the same reasoning."

Iran's Minister of Justice traveled to Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on Monday morning to attend the ninth Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-corruption Convention.

The Conference of the States Parties (COSP) is the main policymaking body of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. It supports States parties and signatories in implementing the Convention and gives policy guidance to UNODC to develop and implement anti-corruption activities.

The 186-member United Nations Convention against Corruption is the most comprehensive document on combating economic and administrative corruption at the international level.

Khatam-al Anbiya Construction HQ Continues South Pars Projects

TEHRAN (IP) - The commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters said that this IRGC body didn't let gas extraction halt in South Pars during the sanctions and it is extracting 650,000 cubic meters of gas daily.

Brigadier General Hossein Hoosh al-Sadat in a press conference on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the establishment of Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters and in response to Iran Press' question about the role of this body of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) in promoting the country's economy during the sanctions, said: "South Pars projects never stopped when foreign companies left South Pars."

He pointed out that the worst sanctions have been imposed on Iran, but part of the South Pars projects was completed by the Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters and the other part by private and semi-private companies.

Hoosh Al-Sadat emphasized the extraction of gas from the joint field of Iran and Qatar and added that if this volume of gas had not been extracted, people would have faced many problems in supplying gas in the country.

Referring to the activities of this headquarters, he said: "Last year, twenty-six national projects in the country were carried out by the Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters."

The IRGC commander added that with the government's support, more than fifty important development projects would be completed and put into operation in fifty weeks by the end of next year.

He emphasized the localization of many projects and said that preventing the outflow of currency was the result.

In the end, Hoosh Al-Sadat referred to the design and implementation of large projects by the Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters and said: "While empowering the country against sanctions, these taken steps builds trust among the people."

Iran, Mexico Cooperating to Empower Low-Income Class

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to Mexico said that Tehran and Mexico City were cooperating to empower the low-income people.

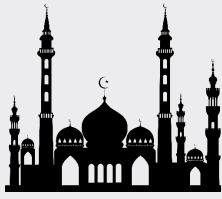
Speaking in the fifth specialized meeting of labor ministries of the two countries and Mexico's National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) on Tuesday, Alireza Qazili said that exchange of experience between the two corresponding ministries would help improve their plans in this area.

Iranian Labor Ministry's International Affairs Advisor Ali

Farnoush gave a positive evaluation of such meetings and expressed hope that cooperation between Iran and Mexico on expansion of trade ties would expand.

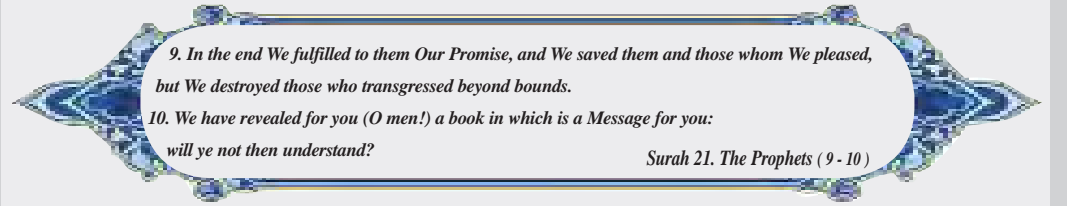
Ahad Rostami, another senior official in Iran's Labor Ministry, said that the ministry's Social Welfare Department signed an MoU in 2015 with the CONEVAL on Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

The CONEVAL has been collecting information on poverty in Mexico from 2008 to 2018 and it has prepared new indexes for 2021, the organization's Executive Secretary José Nabor Cruz Marcelo said.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:59
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:12
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:37
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	07:07



Iran Exports to Surpass \$40b This Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mr. Seyed Reza Fatemi Amin in a TV program said Iran's exports will surpass \$40b by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (mid-March).

Speaking in a TV program on the occasion of the National Exports Day, Fatemi Amin said that the ministry seeks providing and distributing required commodities by the country with good prices.

He added that one of the plans of the ministry is to reform the structures of some markets like cement, steel, petrochemicals and cotton, adding that until two weeks ago there was some turbulence in the forex market but at the same time there was stability in the steel market which is a key issue, reiterating that the country should reach a stability in economy.

He noted that in cooperation with Iran Mercantile Exchange, 25 tools have been prepared that so far 15 tools have been operationalized and four more tools will be operationalized next week.

Fatemi Amin added that employment of these tools will lead to elimination of golden signatures and 20 out of 30 rationed commodity groups will be eliminated.

He reiterated that the more country reduces its dependence, the more its economy will be stable. He said distribution is one of the important issues which needs transparency in its cycle as its control will let us know from A to Z of production to the distribution process.

Referring to the country's \$35b of exports last year, he said this figure will exceed \$40b by the end of the current year and by improving the cycle of exports the amount can grow more.

On control of prices of the goods in the domestic market, he said the ministry is to launch a comprehensive and transparent system for controlling the prices and



it can monitor the shortage or oversupply of the products through this system.

He reiterated that producers have to mention the prices of their products on the distributed goods and soon people will see the outcome of this project in the stores and they can monitor the prices and offenders will be easily identified.

Fatemi Amin noted that the system of choosing the best exporters of the year was changed this year by his ministry and the knowledge-based companies were more under spotlight this year because in the past they were ignored in this category. He reiterated in his opinion, there is difference between someone who sells one million dollars of crude oil with someone who exports knowledge-based equipment.

He also called for easing production and making hard unproductive jobs. He said by reducing the production tax from 25 to 20 and then to 10 percent in 4 years, the profit of production will increase.

He noted that the government emphasizes profitable businesses because if a business is profitable, the government can get tax and job will help employment.

MAPNA Group Named as Distinguished Exporter of Year



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – During a ceremony marking the National Exports Day which was held in Tehran on Monday in presence of First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber, MAPNA Group was feted with the top distinguished exporter of the year award.

In the ceremony, organizers named the seven distinguished exporters as well as 38 top exporters of the year and honored them.

MAPNA Group was one of the seven distinguished companies which was awarded with statue and plaque of appreciation award. MAPNA Group is one of the most important companies, active in the technical and engineering services.

In the meeting, head of commercial department of the MAPNA Group received the award on behalf of the CEO of the company. Meanwhile in the ceremony, the CEO of Monenco Iran Consulting Engineers Company Mr. Alireza Shirani was awarded with the top exporter award due to the efforts of the company.

Iran Oil Earnings Up

TEHRAN (Shana) - The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CB) said that the country's oil revenues had improved.

Ali Salehabadi, at a meeting of the heads of missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in neighboring countries, considered expansion of economic and trade relations with neighbors very important, vital and strategically important, and said: "Central Bank does not tamper

with currency prices in the Nima system and the agreement between the exporter and the importer determines the exchange rate in the system."

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, referring to the increase in hard currency earnings from oil and condensate

exports, expressed hope that this trend would continue and improve until the end of the current calendar year, which began on March 21.

Salehabadi stated: "Good measures have been taken to liberalize the country's hard currency resources, which has increased the central bank's ability to manage the foreign currency market."

Paxan Feted With Exporter of the Year Award

Paxan Company won the top exporter of the year 1400 award of the country



Paxan Company, under the management of Hassan Baghaei, in its latest success and among 500 export companies from various commodity and service groups, was named as the country's top exporter and won the award. First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohsen Rezaee, Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari, and Head of the Trade Promotion Organization Alireza Peyman Pak, state officials and officials of the Trade Promotion Organization gathered on Monday to honor the managers of top exporting industrial units. Paxan Company succeeded in winning the top medal for export for the first time in the history of the country's detergent industry and added another golden leaf to its showcase of honors. In the ceremony, the CEO of Paxan Company Mr. Hassan Baghaei was honored as the helmsman of the biggest and distinguished exporting company of detergent hygiene products that has met the main indicators for being chosen as the top exporter like good statistics of exports and high growth, diversification of exporting target markets, brand and high quality of exports, technology, value added of export products and specialized and technical skills of exporting enterprises in the field of marketing and exports as it helped the company to be feted with the top exporter award for several years in a row and was honored in a special way. In the 25th National Exports Day ceremony which was held on Monday at the Persian Gulf Hall of Tehran International Fairground of Tehran where the top exporters of the year were awarded with statues and plaques of appreciation.

Iranian Co. Resumes Car production in Africa

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran Khodro, the biggest automobile producer in the Middle East, has reactivated its assembly line for production of Samand sedans in Senegal, its deputy director for exports and international affairs says.

The company began assembling cars in Thies, Senegal's second largest city 70 km from Dakar, in 2008 through a local joint venture named Seniran Auto, but the West African country severed diplomatic relations with Iran in February 2011 which disrupted the partnership.

Kianoush Pourmojib, quoted by Fars news agency on Tuesday, said that the Senegalese government had agreed to extend a duty free scheme, following which "necessary measures were taken" to reactivate Iran Khodro's production site in the country and resume production and supply of Seniran products.

For now, the plant has started producing Samand LX cars for use in the taxi fleet, but other products are being introduced to the Senegal market to gauge the needs and tastes of the country's customers, he said.

Pegah Among 7 Distinguished Exporters of the Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Dairy Industries Company (Pegah) was chosen as one of the seven distinguished exporters of the year and was feted with award.



According to reports, during the ceremony marking the National Exports Day which was held on Monday in Tehran, Pegah was named as one of the seven distinguished exporters of the year.

The ceremony was held in presence of First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber and senior government officials.

The organizers named seven distinguished and 38 top exporters of the year in the ceremony and feted them with statue and plaque of appreciation.

Pegah's approach of developing exports and earning the country forex caused this company to materialize all of its export targets despite the hurdles ahead like sanctions, pandemic and closure of borders.

Rebirth of 250 Persons With "Breath" of ESCO

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

ISFAHAN- Continuing actions regarding fight with the spread of COVID and treatment of the infected people, Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO), by implementing the project of "Nazr-e Nafas" (Oblation of Breath) and providing free medical oxygen to the needy people who have been hit by this virus, gave new lives to 250 people.



Deputy head of the company on optimization of fuel and energy management unit Mr. Abdollah Naqdipour who is in charge of this project said that the Nazr-e Nafas project has been started since September with efforts of ESCO and its Basij office, and for its implementation, 100 oxygen capsules with full equipment have been used.

He stated that considering the amount of need to oxygen, 40 capsules have been recharged every week and they are delivered to the needy applicants based on the doctor's prescription.

Meanwhile head of center of Basij of industry engineers of the town of Lanjan, for his part, said that considering the sensitivity of transportation and consumption instruction of these capsules, some brochures have been prepared and by the way one of the experts of the optimization unit will be ready offering required explanations.

The project has been carried in collaboration between the unit and security department of ESCO as well as the Basij offices of Shahid Tondgoyan and Imam Ali (A), and so far it has given lives to 250 people.

Rescuers Retrieve Four Bodies After Sicily Blast

RAVANUSA (Dispatches) - Rescuers have pulled four more bodies out of the rubble of houses destroyed by a suspected gas explosion in the Sicilian town of Ravanusa, bringing the total death toll to seven, the fire brigade said on Monday.

Two people are still missing following Saturday's blast, which demolished four houses and badly damaged another three.

Sniffer dogs located the four bodies, including a nurse who was nine-months pregnant, in the early hours and emergency services worked through the night to clear away the debris in order to reach them safely.



Britain Reports First Death With Omicron

LONDON (Dispatches) - At least one person has died in the United Kingdom after contracting the Omicron coronavirus variant, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday, the first publicly confirmed death globally from the swiftly spreading strain.

Since the first Omicron cases were detected on Nov. 27 in Britain, Johnson has imposed tougher restrictions and on Sunday cautioned that the variant could overcome the immune defenses of those inoculated with two shots of vaccines.

Britain gave no details on the death other than the person had been diagnosed in hospital. It was not clear if the patient had been vaccinated or had underlying health issues.



EU Stands United on Russia Sanctions



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - European Union foreign ministers agreed on Monday that any Russia aggression against Ukraine would trigger economic sanctions on Moscow, trying to keep up the pressure after similar statements by NATO and the Group of Seven nations.

"The European Union stands united in support of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told a news conference after the meeting.

"The ministers, all of them, have been very clear today that any aggression against Ukraine will come with political consequences and with a high economic cost for Russia."

The EU and the United States imposed economic sanctions on Russia in July 2014, targeting its energy, banking and defense sectors, and is considering further measures if Russia tries to invade Ukraine after a troop buildup on its borders.

Borrell, who chaired the meeting, earlier said: "We are studying together with the U.S. and the UK what (sanctions) could be, when and how, in a coordinated manner."

Western leaders fear an attack on Ukraine by Russia, which annexed Crimea in 2014 and backs separatists who control parts of eastern Ukraine and are fighting Ukrainian government forces.

Russia says it has no intention to invade Ukraine and accuses Kyiv of deploying half its army to confront the separatists.

"We are convinced that Russia is actually preparing for all-out war against Ukraine. It's an unprecedented event probably since the Second World War," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said.

"If it's an unprecedented attack ... that means that the answer has to be unprecedented from the Western countries as well."

EU diplomats told Reuters discussions were focused on a potential gradual increase of any sanctions, ranging from possible travel bans and asset freezes on Russian politicians to banning financial and banking links with Russia.

Sanctioning the Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany to prevent it becoming operational was also an option, as well as targeting more Russian state-owned defence and energy companies or cancelling natural gas contracts.

Envoys said such steps were likely to be considered only if the Russian military attempted a full invasion of Ukraine.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has warned Russia that the Western military alliance is standing by Ukraine. read more Foreign ministers of the Group of Seven rich democracies warned Russia on Sunday of "massive consequences" if it attacks Ukraine.

Russia May Be Forced to Deploy INF in Europe

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has said it may be forced to deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe in response to what it sees as NATO's plans to do the same.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Russia's RIA news agency in an interview on Monday that Moscow would have to take the step if NATO refused to engage with it on preventing such an escalation.

His comments further raised the stakes in an East-West standoff in which Russia is demanding security guarantees from the West while the United States and its allies are warning Moscow to pull back from what they see as a possible invasion of Ukraine - something Ryabkov again denied was Russia's intent.



Petkov Elected as Bulgaria's Prime Minister

SOFIA (Dispatches) - Bulgarian lawmakers on Monday voted in Kiril Petkov, a Harvard-educated entrepreneur, as prime minister and approved the lineup of his broad coalition government, ending months of political deadlock in the European Union's poorest member state.

Petkov, 41, whose new centrist faction We Continue The Change (PP) won Bulgaria's third national election this year in November, secured a clear majority of 134 votes in the 240-member parliament to take over the reins of the Balkan country.

He will lead an unprecedented ruling coalition with the leftist Socialists, anti-establishment ITN party and the center-right Democratic Bulgaria, united under the motto "zero tolerance to corruption", for a four-year term.

"I will insist that corruption from the lowest to the highest level be exposed," Petkov told the chamber prior to his election, appealing to all lawmakers to support legal changes needed to overhaul the judiciary.

The new government takes over following eight months of political impasse and two interim administrations after anger against high-level graft ended the decade-long rule of former centre-right premier Boyko Borissov.

Wearing a black face mask, Petkov shook hands with his closest allies as he received a standing ovation from the ruling coalition's lawmakers upon his election.

Petkov will navigate a four-party alliance of Borissov's political foes with a vow to clean up public life, speed growth to over 5% a year and catch up faster with richer Western peers.

His cabinet will have to steer Bulgaria through challenges ranging from high energy costs and low COVID vaccination rates to preparing the economy for euro zone entry in 2024.

"My first task will be to keep the electricity costs for consumers at bay and boost the level of vaccinations at least to the average level in the EU," Petkov told reporters.

Intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe were banned under a 1987 treaty agreed between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan in what was hailed at the time as a major easing of Cold War tensions. Washington quit the pact in 2019 after complaining for years of alleged Russian violations.

Ryabkov said there were "indirect indications" that NATO was moving closer to redeploying INF, including its restoration last month of the 56th Artillery Command which operated nuclear-capable Pershing missiles during the Cold War.

"Lack of progress towards a political and diplomatic solution to this problem will lead to our response being of a military and technical military nature," he said.

"That is, it will be a confrontation, this will be the next round, the appearance of such resources on our side. Right now there aren't any, we have a unilateral moratorium. We call for NATO and the US to join this moratorium."

Indonesia Cites Strong U.S. Commitment

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a strong commitment to Indonesia on Monday, a senior official said, as he kicked off a Southeast Asia trip aimed at strengthening ties with a region that has become a strategic arena for Washington and Beijing.

In his first trip to the region since U.S. President Joe Biden took office in January, Blinken met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, the first of several top officials he will see on a four-day tour that includes Malaysia and Thailand.

Summarising the meeting with Jokowi, as the president is known, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said Blinken showed a keen interest in partnering with their country, especially in infrastructure.

"The U.S. commitment was very noticeable," Retno told reporters.

Southeast Asia is a key stage for a rivalry between the United States and China, with a heated struggle for influence as the Biden administration seeks to reconnect with a region to which U.S. commitment was questioned under President Donald Trump.

Blinken congratulated Jokowi on Indonesia's G20 presidency and expressed support for its Indo-Pacific

leadership role, as a "strong proponent of the rules-based international order," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said, adding human rights, the pandemic and the climate crisis were also discussed.

Indonesia is Southeast Asia's biggest economy and its most populous nation. It is the third-largest democracy in the world, and also home to a third of its rainforests.

Blinken was to deliver a speech on U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy on Tuesday in the capital Jakarta, among other events, before meetings in Malaysia and Thailand on Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

Blinken will pursue Biden's aim of elevating engagement with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc and discuss the president's vision for an Indo-Pacific economic framework, a top U.S. diplomat for Asia said ahead of the trip.

The United States has also been pushing back against Beijing's assertiveness in the South China Sea, a conduit for \$3 trillion of annual trade, and accuses its vast coastguard fleet of bullying countries including Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia by disrupting energy and fishing activities.

China claims almost the entire sea as its own, and has rejected U.S. actions as interference by an outside power.



France, Hungary Set Conciliatory Tone as Macron Visits Budapest

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday France was willing to "work together for Europe" with Hungary despite the countries' political differences, striking a conciliatory note as Paris prepares to take over the European Union's presidency.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban also held out an olive branch before talks in Budapest. He said Hungary respected the French leader and backed moves by Macron to make the EU more self-sufficient in defense, nuclear energy and farming.

Paris and Budapest are at odds over issues including LGBT rights, the rule of law and democratic standards. But Macron wants other EU states to support the priorities he has set for France's six-month presidency of the bloc starting in January, including better protection and control of EU borders.

"We have political disagreements which are well known, but we have the willingness to work together for Europe and to be loyal partners," Macron said after arriving in Budapest.

Setting aside the sometimes harsh rhetoric he has aimed at the Hungarian government, Macron said last week he regarded Orban both as a political opponent and as a European partner.

"Hungary's relation towards President Macron is that of respect," Orban said in a statement before talks with the French leader.

"France is the home of encyclopedists, they are the best when it comes to definitions, so we accept their definitions: what we heard lately from Mr President is that we are political opponents and at the same time European partners."

Despite the conciliatory tone of the leaders' public statements, Macron also sent Orban a message by starting his trip to Budapest by laying a wreath at the tomb of Agnes Heller, a Hungarian philosopher who opposed Orban.

He was also expected later to meet leaders of the opposition alliance that is set to challenge Orban in an election next year, and will attend a meeting of the Visegrad group, which includes leaders of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Orban has in the past two months received far-right leaders Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour, who are candidates in France's presidential election next year in which Macron is expected to seek a second term.



Mahmoodieh (\$2500)
240sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J
L.balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Jordan Villa (\$3000)
800sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
green yard
parquet fl
Fully Furn

←←← Parsian →→→

(\$2400) Farmanieh
280sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
Fully Furn

Darrous Apts
140sq.m, 2bdrs (\$1400)
220sq.m, 3bdrs (\$2000)
300sq.m, 4bdrs (\$2700)
with All facilities

(\$20000) Andarzgoo bldg
7storey, 20bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg lots
balcony, Brand new

Gheitarieh
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, & F.F

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

Vali-e-Asr
100, 200, 300sq.m, 5bdrs
(\$26 per sq.m) pkg lots

IRAN NEWS ADVERTISING
44253401

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

IRAN NEWS
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS
ADVERTISING

TEL: 44253448-50
FAX: 44253234
ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM

Musk Named Time Magazine Person of the Year

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Time magazine on Monday named Tesla founder and space entrepreneur Elon Musk as its person of the year, capping a roller-coaster 2021 for the technology magnate.

The brash South African-born 50-year-old with grand ambition overtook space race rival and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to become the world's richest person this year.

In October his electric car company's valuation soared above a trillion

dollars, and throughout the year his company SpaceX has teamed up with US space agency NASA to launch various missions including smashing a rocket into an asteroid in a test run for redirecting any future Earth-bound space rock.

"Person of the Year is a marker of influence, and few individuals have had more influence than @elonmusk on life on Earth, and potentially life off Earth too," tweeted Time editor-in-chief Edward Felsenthal in announcing the winner.



OPEC Upbeat on 2022 Oil Demand

LONDON (Dispatches) - OPEC on Monday raised its world oil demand forecast for the first quarter of 2022 and stuck to its timeline for a return to pre-pandemic levels of oil use, saying the Omicron coronavirus variant would have a mild and brief impact.

The upbeat view from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries comes as oil prices have recovered some of the slide seen when the variant emerged last month. Still, the World Health Organization says Omicron poses a "very high" global risk.

In a monthly report, OPEC said it expects world oil demand to average 99.13 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first quarter of 2022, up 1.11 million bpd from its forecast last month.

"Some of the recovery previously expected in the fourth quarter of 2021 has been shifted to the first quarter of 2022, followed by a more steady recovery throughout the second half of 2022," OPEC said in the report.

"Moreover, the impact of the new Omicron variant is projected to be mild and short-lived, as the world becomes better equipped to manage COVID-19 and its related challenges."

Oil dropped 10% on Nov. 26 when reports of the new variant emerged as traders feared a renewed hit to demand. But OPEC and its allies decided on Dec. 2 to stick to a planned production increase for January, a gamble that looks to have paid off as prices stabilize.

In the report, OPEC maintained its forecast that world oil demand will grow by 4.15 million bpd in 2022. This year's growth forecast was also kept unchanged.

World consumption is expected to surpass the 100 million bpd mark in the third quarter of 2022, in line with last month's forecast. On an annual basis according to OPEC, the world last used over 100 million bpd of oil in 2019.

Oil pared an earlier decline after the report was released and was trading close to \$75 a barrel, up from a dip below \$66 on Dec. 2.

The report also showed higher output from OPEC as the group and allies, known as OPEC+, gradually unwind record output cuts put in place last year.

At its Dec. 2 meeting, OPEC+ agreed to boost monthly output by 400,000 bpd in January, despite fears about the new variant.

The report showed OPEC output in November rose by 290,000 bpd to 27.72 million bpd led by increases in top two producers Saudi Arabia and Iraq and a recovery from outages in Nigeria.

Traders are watching for signs of a big rebound in U.S. shale supply as higher prices prompt more investment, which could prove a headwind to OPEC+ efforts to support the market.

But this month, OPEC left its prediction for growth in U.S. tight oil, another term for shale, largely steady at 600,000 bpd in 2022. The growth forecast for overall non-OPEC supply in 2022 was left unchanged.

For now, OPEC has room to raise output further from November's rate, the report indicates. OPEC said it expects the world to need 28.8 million bpd from its members in 2022, up 200,000 bpd from last month.

China to Ease Energy Use Curbs to Relieve Economic Pressures

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China will loosen blanket restrictions on energy consumption in order to ensure environmental and climate targets do not erode future economic growth, according to a policy document issued after an agenda-setting meeting of the country's top leaders.

The country will also move towards capping carbon dioxide emissions from overall energy use to meet its environmental goals, rather than setting energy consumption targets, said the statement issued late Friday after the annual Central Economic Work Conference.

China, the world's biggest coal consumer and greenhouse gas emitter, has set rigorous national and regional targets for total energy consumption use and energy intensity - the amount of energy consumed per unit of economic growth.

But some high energy-consuming provinces have struggled to meet their targets, and new restrictions imposed late last year caused widespread and disruptive power outages, cutting off supplies to industries and residents.

The statement said China's economic tasks in 2022 would "prioritize stability", while "all regions and departments should shoulder the responsibility of stabilizing the macro economy," read more

To help guarantee energy supplies, newly added renewable capacity and "feedstock energy" would now be exempt from any energy consumption cap, it said.

The document did not specify what would be included in "feedstock energy", but analysts from CITIC Futures said the move could signal a relaxation of restrictions on heavy industries like coal-chemicals and petrochemicals.



The new approach reflected a "rethinking" in China's campaign to curb carbon emissions over the past few months, Nomura economists Ting Lu and Jing Wang said in a note.

In early August, China's top decision-making body said it would stop any "campaign-style" efforts to cut emissions by local authorities and promised to meet its peak carbon and carbon neutrality targets in an "orderly" manner.

The new policy document said China aims to transition as soon as possible from energy consumption targets to the "dual control" of both total carbon emissions and carbon intensity. "This reignites hopes that China would put out a target on a total carbon emission cap, though there is no timeframe," said Li Shuo, senior climate adviser with environment group Greenpeace.

Turkish Lira Plummets To New Low

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's lira crashed as much as 7% to a record near 15 to the dollar on Monday before whip-sawing back after the central bank intervened, gripped by worries over President Tayyip Erdogan's risky new economic policy and prospects of another rate cut.

The central bank said it entered the market to sell dollars for the fourth time in two weeks, triggering the rebound after the currency had touched 14.99 - where it was worth just half its value at the beginning of the year.

The bank moved to keep the lira below 14 last week but abandoned that level on Monday. Depreciation fuels inflation in the big emerging market economy that depends heavily on imports, and which is rattled after 400 basis points of interest-rate cuts since September.

The interventions are an additional risk for a central bank that is not only easing policy in the face of rising inflation, but that also has had depleted foreign reserves.

According to calculations of bankers analyzing official data, the central bank sold \$1.5-2 billion in dollars on Monday alone, after sales worth \$2.5 billion in the first three efforts.

The lira had trimmed losses in thin market trading to 13.79 - its strongest point on the day, but still down 31% since the beginning of last month.

"The central bank has continued to intervene to soften the blow but this is akin to putting a band-aid on a gaping wound," said Win Thin, global head of currency strategy at Brown Brothers Harriman.

In response to the market turmoil - which has upended Turks' economic lives - Erdogan held talks with Central Bank Governor Sahap Kavcioglu, Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati and the heads of state banks in Istanbul, sources told Reuters.

Any decisions from the meeting were not clear and no announcements had been made.

The central bank, under pressure from Erdogan, is expected to cut its policy rate by 100 basis points to 14% this week, a Reuters poll showed on Friday, despite inflation soaring to 21.3% last month.

Kavcioglu has said boosting the current account, which showed a surplus of \$3.156 billion in October, was key to price and lira stability. But many analysts are sceptical.

"We doubt that either intervention or a balanced current account will be effective in stabilizing the currency," Morgan Stanley said in a note.

The central bank's relatively thin reserves means interventions could be counter-productive, it added.

Japan's Service-Sector Mood Improves



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's service-sector mood improved to a two-year high but the recovery among manufacturers stalled, a closely watched central bank survey showed, a sign rising raw material costs was weighing on the economy's recovery from the pandemic.

Big firms expect conditions to worsen ahead as high fuel prices and a weak yen push up import costs, reinforcing market expectations Japan will maintain massive fiscal and monetary support to underpin a fragile economy.

"Nonmanufacturers' sentiment got a boost from the end to pandemic curbs, while supply constraints hit manufacturers," said Toru Suehiro, an analyst at Daiwa Securities.

"Overall, business confidence lacks strength with both manufacturers and nonmanufacturers expecting conditions to worsen," he said.

The headline index gauging big manufacturers' sentiment stood at plus 18 in the final quarter of 2021, unchanged from the previous quarter and below a market forecast for plus 19, the Bank of Japan's tankan survey showed on Monday.

Positive figures mean optimists still outnumbered pessimists, but the survey likely underrepresents concerns over the omicron variant as close to 80% of companies had responded by Nov. 29, only days after omicron was flagged as a variant of concern.

Rising costs and auto output disruptions hit industries such as nonferrous metals, chemicals and machinery, it showed.

By contrast, big nonmanufacturers' sentiment improved for the sixth straight quarter at plus 9, up from plus 2 in September and exceeding market forecasts of plus 6.

The index hit the highest level since December 2019, as the Sept. 30 lifting of state of emergency curbs to combat the COVID-19 pandemic boosted morale among retailers.

But rising raw material costs added to uncertainty by squeezing profits of firms just emerging from the pandemic's hit.

Afghan Currency Plunges to Record Low Against Dollar

KABUL (Dispatches) - Afghanistan's currency dived to a record low against the U.S. dollar on Monday, taking its losses over the last week to 30 percent as an economic collapse and humanitarian crisis grip the country.

There has been an enormous shortage of dollars since the Taliban seized power in August as international donors suspended billions in aid provided annually to the previous U.S.-backed regime.

Afghanistan's Money Exchange Commission said it has urged the central bank to intervene in the market to shore up the afghani, which sagged to 130 against the dollar in Monday trade, down from around 100 a week ago.

"We asked them to interfere in the market and distribute dollars," said Haji Zeerak, a spokesman for the commission. Since the Taliban takeover, the central bank has been cut off from nearly \$10 billion in reserves it held overseas, mainly in the United States.

The afghani's depreciation began gathering pace early last week, propelled by market fears that a major bank might collapse.

Banks have placed severe restrictions on customer withdrawals, rocking confidence in the financial system. The country's cash crunch has fed into an economic collapse that has left it facing a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Many people in the capital Kabul have resorted to selling personal items to feed themselves.

"I have sold my gold jewelry to have some dollars for the expenses of our house," said housewife Khalida, lamenting a surge in prices for cooking oil and flour.

Malaysian Economy Expected to Rebound in 2022

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia's economy is expected to rebound in 2022 as activities in the manufacturing, services and agriculture sectors have picked up, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

He said the oil and gas sector has also performed slightly better over the last few months.

"For 2022, we are a bit bullish about prospects as trade and investment have done well. So overall, I want to say that looking at supply side, whether it

is manufacturing or agriculture or mining, there are evidence of pick up and all these indicators are pointing to a good recovery next year.

"We are cautiously optimistic and this is relevant in the context of domestic consumption and investment. We foresee a revival in domestic investment, and in domestic consumption as well," he said after the Advocacy Talks: Economic Planning Unit (EPU) briefing on the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) to Eurocham Malaysia here.

However, he said that for as long as international borders are closed, it would be quite difficult to have full economic recovery but Malaysia remained optimistic with its gross domestic product (GDP) growth projection of 5.5 to 6.5 per cent in 2022.

"Of course, the borders are gradually opening with Singapore as it is an important partner for Malaysia. We hope it will progress well and we are also talking to Indonesia and Thailand as well," he said.

Earlier in his keynote address, Mustapa reiterated that under the 12MP, Malaysia aspired to be a high-income country and have a better quality of life by 2025.

In order to be a high-income nation, he said Malaysia needed to attract higher quality investment and talent is key in making the nation a more attractive investment destination.

"So to be high-income nation, next we need to create more high quality investment and provide quality human capital. We want to create a very comfortable environment for our friends from overseas.

"We want to be sure that your stay here, experience here is hassle-free. We want to facilitate your investment. Of course we have issues sometimes but the Malaysian government is open to discussing openly and frankly with our colleagues from Europe and many other parts of the world," he said.

Mustapa said Malaysia has been partnering with some institutions in Europe such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to bring in better quality technical people to Malaysia.

“A Hero” Nominated For Golden Globe Award

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Celebrated Iranian director Asghar Farhadi’s “A Hero” has been nominated for Golden Globe’s Best Motion Picture in the Foreign Language category. Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) revealed nominations for 79th Annual Golden Globe Awards in an online event on Monday. The film “A Hero” directed by the Oscar-winning Iranian filmmaker

Asghar Farhadi was nominated for Best Motion Picture Award in the Foreign Language category in this edition. “A Hero” has to compete with “Compartment No. 6”, “Drive My Car”, “The Hand of God”, and “Parallel Mothers”. Winners will be announced on January 9, 2022. The film made its debut in the 74th Cannes Film Festival, winning the Grand Prix of the jury.



Global Economy Set for Sturdy If Uneven Growth in 2022

LONDON (Dispatches) - The global economy remains well on the road to robust recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. That is the good news for 2022. Less comforting, it will be a bumpy ride over the next few months as governments impose fresh restrictions to tackle the emergence of new variants, while higher inflation will lead to monetary policy divergence that could unsettle financial markets.

At Scope Ratings, we estimate global growth will ease to around 4.5% next year from its rapid 5.8% early recovery rebound estimated this year. However, that lower estimate remains well above its long-run potential of around 3%.

Risk to the economic outlook in 2022 is mostly on the downside. Output will expand by around 3.5% in the US, 4.4% in the euro area, 3.6% in Japan and 4.6% in the UK. China will grow nearer its longer-run trend of 5% – normalising from its high 2021 growth but also dampened by restructuring within the property sector and supervisory tightening.

A temporary slowdown in recovery during the current quarter and first three months of next year – if not an outright fall in output – is possible as governments, notably in Europe, take new measures to slow rates of Covid-19 infection as the omicron variant goes global. Restrictions on those who are not vaccinated are being phased in. The economic rebound ought then to pick up speed again by the spring of 2022.

The pandemic’s choke point in the advanced world remains capacities of health systems to cope with surges in more serious cases, hence re-imposition of partial lockdown and vaccination requirements. More reassuring is that the risk Covid-19 poses to economic recovery ought to continue moderating with time as governments adopt more targeted responses, the virus becomes more transmissible but less lethal and businesses and people adapt to working under more stringent public health restrictions.

As we slowly exit this pandemic crisis, inflation is a concern. Inflationary pressures are likely to remain more persistent than central banks project, running above pre-crisis averages even after price changes begin to moderate substantially throughout 2022.

Higher and more persistent inflation has both good and bad implications for sovereign credit ratings. Somewhat higher inflation supports higher nominal economic growth, helping reduce debt-to-gross domestic product ratios, and curtails a long standing risk of deflation in the euro area and Japan. However, rising interest rates push up debt servicing costs, especially for governments with high debt and running budget deficits. Emerging economies, with weakening currencies and subject to capital outflows, are especially at risk.

Under this context, monetary policy is set to diverge notably among the world’s largest economies. As central banks withdraw some crisis-era monetary stimuli, the process could crystallize risks associated with high debt and frothy asset prices.

This is especially true for the UK and US, where inflation is likely to continue



testing central bank mandates of keeping price increases to around 2%. The Bank of England and Federal Reserve will increase rates next year.

By contrast, inflation is much less of a concern for the Bank of Japan, while inflation might remain below 2% in the long run in the euro area. The Bank of Japan and European Central Bank are expected to maintain their current lending rates throughout 2022. The ECB will halt the pandemic emergency purchase program next year, although it and other asset purchase facilities may be adapted while markets adjust. The sharp increase in euro area inflation to 4.9% in November is likely to test the ECB’s resolve in keeping policies accommodative.

In this respect, any reduced capacity central banks have in calming financial markets might expose latent risk associated with debt accrued in the past, should high inflation increasingly constrain monetary room for manoeuvre. The latest statistics from the Bank for International Settlements show non-financial sector debt of reporting countries hitting a new high of \$225tn in the second quarter of 2021, equivalent to 273% of GDP.

Diverging monetary policy puts pressure on central banks otherwise reluctant to tighten policy to protect currencies from further depreciation, which may further stress underpinning inflation. Central banks are now holders of significant amounts of government debt. The resulting fiscal dominance might slow normalisation of monetary policy, although any such delay could accentuate inflation risk.

Still, we ought not be overly pessimistic. Monetary policy innovations during the pandemic – such as the flexibility the ECB introduced with the PEPP – has enhanced the resilience of sovereign borrowers during crisis phases, assuming such innovative monetary instruments are available for redeployment in future downturns.

Zionists, Source of...

FROM PAGE 1

“Elimination of any form of tension and even misunderstanding, all-out development of cooperation, especially in economic, defense and security fields, and promotion of strategic partnership are among the most important priorities of Iran’s foreign policy with regard to its neighbors,” Iran’s security chief said.



Shamkhani added that promoting Iranophobia and creating tension in Iran’s relations with its neighbors are among major strategies pursued by the Zionist regime.

“This is why we believe that any presence of this [Zionist] regime in the Persian Gulf would create crisis and tension and would be detrimental to the interests of regional countries and nations,” he said.

Unfortunately Zionists are trying to cement their foothold in the region by the full support of the U.S. and Western countries and some rulers in the region are falling in the trap of the Zionists.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly warned the Muslim states of being vigilant about the Zionists’ vicious plans in the region but unfortunately they have ignored the warning and some of them are normalizing ties with this criminal regime.

Of course this is Iran’s rights to boost its military power as well as its vigilance for the possible atrocities of the Zionists, and the neighboring states should not expect any Iran’s passiveness against the Zionists’ atrocities if they are plotted in their countries against Iran.

Tehran has always recommended the countries in the region and in its neighborhood that the peace and stability can be guaranteed by only the countries in the region and not by the aliens from thousands of miles away from the Persian Gulf.

Therefore the UAE is recommended not to be fooled by the Israelis because the Zionists are looking for tension and rift among the countries especially among Muslim states, and those countries can turn into a tool in the hands of Israel to be employed against Tehran.

Iran has always welcomed good and friendly ties with Muslim countries especially in the West Asia but unfortunately some of their rulers, because of their shaky status in their own countries, have decided to turn towards the U.S. and friendship with Israel as a shield against Iran while Iran has never sought any hostility with them and they have been deceived by the Iranophobia.

As Mr. Shamkhani has said, Zionists are source of all tensions and instabilities in the region and they should be rejected by all Muslim states in support of Palestinians, peace and humanity because the Zionists do not understand what humanity and peace is and their existence relies on rift and tension in the region.

Western Parties...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Iran’s Ambassador to Britain Mohsen Baharvand said in response to the European diplomats’ statement that Iran cannot trust the West.

“If you’re worried about time, start lifting sanctions. At least show us that you are serious; we do not trust you,” Baharvand said in an interview with the BBC.

Senior diplomats from Iran and the P4+1 group – Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany – have been trying to find a way to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by allowing the United States to return the 2015 nuclear deal and remove anti-Iran sanctions.

Tehran Not to...

FROM PAGE 1

“When they [other signatories to the nuclear deal] do not fulfill their obligations and impose severe and cruel illegal sanctions and expand them every day, that leaves us with no reason to stay committed to the JCPOA obligations they are pressuring us to meet. We act within the framework of the Safeguards Agreement and the NPT and accept nothing beyond that.”

Eslami further stressed that it is impossible for Iran to fulfill its share of the agreement while other parties do not meet their commitments. He said these are the issues Iran is discussing with the IAEA to find a path forward.

Eslami also said that 3 new pharmaceutical drugs are manufactured locally by the Iranian researchers. He pointed to the production of radiopharmaceuticals in Iran, saying that yesterday 3 new radiopharmaceuticals were unveiled which are considered necessary for the medical sector of the society.

Newly produced radiopharmaceuticals are under the process to receive final licenses to be used by the medical sector, he added. The AEOI head added that the three radiopharmaceuticals are produced to treat patients with prostate cancer, and other cancers such as in the head and neck and large intestines. They also include one diagnostic radiopharmaceutical, he added.

Germany Committed to Ukraine’s Gas Transit Role

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Germany is committed to safeguarding Ukraine’s role as a transit route for gas into Europe, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said, as Russian troop movements along the Ukrainian border increased pressure on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Nord Stream 2, which would carry Russian gas to Germany and bypass Ukraine, has not been certified due to regulatory hurdles, while Poland and the United States have demanded a halt to the pipeline should Russia invade Ukraine.

Germany’s new government, sworn in on Wednesday, has not made a public commitment to block it.

During his first visit to Poland as chancellor, Scholz said Germany felt responsible for ensuring that Ukraine’s gas transit business was successful, echoing his predecessor Angela Merkel.

“The same goes for future opportunities,” Scholz said at a joint news conference with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. “We will also help Ukraine be a country that will be a major source of renewable energy and the necessary production that results from that. We are in concrete talks around how we can help achieve that,” Scholz said. Merkel had said the political basis for operating Nord Stream 2 was Russia’s commitment to continue to use Ukraine as a gas transit route.

Russia has amassed troops on its border with Ukraine, sparking fears of a possible invasion. U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday warned Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin that Nord Stream 2 could be disrupted and tough economic sanctions put in place if troops invaded.

U.S. officials have told members of Congress they have an understanding with Germany about shutting down Nord Stream 2 if Russia invades Ukraine, a senior congressional aide said.

German officials have not confirmed that, but Scholz said on Wednesday that there would be consequences if Russia breached Ukraine’s border, a line confirmed by the Group of Seven richest democracies on Sunday.

“It is important that Europe makes clear together that we will not accept this and that we do not agree with what is happening there,” Scholz said in Poland. “We will not accept a violation of those borders.”

Scholz’s visit also included talks on the Belarus migrant crisis and Poland’s judicial independence.

Kish to Host 12th Int’l Maritime Industries Exhibition

TEHRAN (MNA) – The 12th International Maritime Industries Exhibition will be held on Kish Island in January after two years of hiatus due to the spread of coronavirus.

Prestigious domestic and international companies will showcase their latest achievements and innovations in maritime industries to the public view. Introducing high potentials and capabilities of the country in the field of production, trade and services related to the maritime industries and maritime tourism, identifying and introducing obstacles and weaknesses in these industries, trying to attract the support of relevant governmental organizations from functionaries of these industries, creating suitable platforms to attract investors, taking advantage of existing capacities and familiarize concerned officials with the latest products, innovations and capacities in other countries as well as making effort to reach the global standards are of the main objectives of the exhibition.

Establishing relations between maritime universities and maritime companies, promoting product-export approaches to other countries and establishing trade relationships with foreign partners, attracting the attention of officials to the necessity of sea-based development as a national necessity as well as establishing relationships with knowledge-based companies relevant to the maritime industries are of the other objectives behind organizing this international exhibition.

Manufacturers and suppliers of maritime equipment, shipbuilding and repair industries, maritime and port services, offshore equipment will showcase their latest achievements in this edition of the exhibition.

The 12th Iran International Maritime Industries Exhibition will be held on Kish Island on January 17-20,

Iran Victim of U.S...

FROM PAGE 1

In addition, while the principles of international law as well as the principles and purposes of the UN Charter apply to the ICTs in the context of international security, we believe that the existing international law cannot adequately meet the requirements of cybersecurity such as securing safe cyberspace.

Therefore, to fill numerous legal vacuums in this field, we need a legally binding instrument in which the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders can be defined in a balanced manner. In this way, relying on customary international law and limiting the discussions on the implementation of the 11 norms should not overshadow the need for legally binding obligations. Reiterating the mandate given to the previous OEWG as contained in resolution 75/240, we underline the need for further discussions and development of the issues of concern. This includes the consideration of any relevant outcome of the GGE, by members and non-members of the GGE alike.

Reminding of our previous proposals to establish subgroups as envisaged by resolution 75/240, we suggest to commence the discussions on this proposal in the legal subgroup within the OEWG. This, in turn, will contribute to CBMs.

In the context of the said resolution, it is necessary to adopt further new rules, norms and principles on the responsible behavior of non-state actors, including digital platforms.

Given the number of unresolved issues and ambiguities around the developments in ICTs in the context of international security, any recommendation on such

Action-oriented outcome is completely premature, and the implementation phase should start only when those issues are resolved. A practical method to address this issue is to start negotiating the outstanding issues reflected in the final report of the previous OEWG and the annex thereof. Our proposal regarding the next rounds of substantive sessions on a rolling text basis of the negotiations remains on the table. It needs to be emphasized that all the national initiatives and proposals should be treated equally.

Finally, it is unfortunate to note that the Host Country has once again failed to issue a visa in a timely manner for the only member of my delegation from the Capital. This is unacceptable. We urge the UN family and the Secretariat to use all available means to call upon the Host Country implement the Headquarters Agreement in good faith.

Iran Changes...

FROM PAGE 1

China is Iran’s main crude oil customer, despite the U.S. pressure on all crude buyers not to deal with the Islamic Republic.

According to traders who spoke to Argus, the benchmark change for European crude sales could signal that Iran intends to resume exports when—and if—the ongoing talks on the deal result in the lifting of the U.S. sanctions.

The indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran on potentially returning to the deal were adjourned ahead of the Iranian presidential election in the early summer.

Talks resumed early this month, but after the first week of negotiations, both the U.S. and Iran were pessimistic about a successful outcome soon.

Currently, it looks like a possible successful outcome is months away, and a legitimate return of Iranian barrels to the oil market, further still. Last week, Germany said that Iran should return to the talks with realistic proposals that don’t breach previously reached compromises. Talks resumed for another round last Thursday, and the U.S. signaled it was ready to “turn to other options” if diplomacy fails.

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

South Korea Says No Boycott of Beijing Olympics

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - South Korea's president today ruled out joining a US diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, citing the need to work with China. Visiting Canberra, Moon Jae-in said he was "not considering" snubbing the Olympics to protest China's human rights abuses as several Western nations have done. "We have not received a request from any other country including the United States to participate in the diplomatic boycott," he said.

RTF Sanctions Russia For Doping Offences

LONDON (Dispatches) - World Triathlon has imposed sanctions on the Russian Triathlon Federation (RTF) that will be effective for one year due to a "significant number" of doping cases in the country, the governing body said in a statement on Monday. As part of the sanctions, Russia will not be able to organize any World or European Triathlon events until the end of 2022, and RTF officials will have to resign from the events' governing bodies for the period of one year.

Durant Delivers Monster Night Against Pistons

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Kevin Durant used all the weapons in his arsenal, exploding for an NBA season-high 51 points and dishing out nine assists as the Brooklyn Nets clobbered the struggling Detroit Pistons 116-104.

The 11-time all-star and the league's current leading scorer recorded his seventh 50-point game of his career and equalled the fifth highest scoring performance in Nets' franchise history. Deron Williams holds the record with 57 points against Charlotte in 2012.

Durant knew he had to take on a bigger role Sunday because the Nets were missing 2018 MVP James Harden and power forward Paul Millsap.

Kyrie Irving, who is refusing to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, has yet to play a game this season.

"I knew I probably needed to pick up a little more of the scoring tonight," said Durant, who took 31 shots.

Durant added seven rebounds as the Nets won for the third time in their last four games.

Patty Mills added 18 points and five assists for the Nets, while LaMarcus Aldridge had 15 points and Cam Thomas scored 13 for Brooklyn, who held the Pistons to just 13 points in the fourth quarter.

Cade Cunningham had 26 points, eight rebounds and six assists for the Pistons, who are last in the Eastern Conference with just four wins on the season. Frank Jackson had 25 points and Saben Lee finished with 17 points.

Earlier Sunday, the league slapped Durant with a \$25,000 fine for cursing at an Atlanta Hawks fan in Atlanta on Friday.

Heading into the Pistons game, Durant was leading the league in scoring with a 28.5 points per game average. He also averaging 7.6 rebounds and 5.4 assists through 24 starts.

Golden State's Stephen Curry is the only other NBA player to score 50 points in a game this season, against Atlanta on November 8.



"He was just incredible tonight," said Nets coach Steve Nash of Durant. "He even had a couple blocks and played incredible defense in the fourth quarter."

In New York, Giannis Antetokounmpo posted his first triple-double of the season and Chris Middleton scored 24 points to lead the visiting NBA champion Milwaukee Bucks to a dominant 112-97 victory over the Knicks.

Antetokounmpo scored 20 points with 10 rebounds and 11 assists among seven players who scored double figures in the wire-to-wire win.

Bobby Portis added 19 points and Rodney Hood scored 14 off the bench for Milwaukee, who led 61-48 by halftime. The Bucks outscored the Knicks 46-30 in the paint and converted 12 offensive rebounds into 22 points.

The short-handed Knicks lost for the eighth time in 10 games. Forward Quentin Grimes, making his first NBA start, led the Knicks with 27 points. He set a Knicks rookie record with seven three-pointers on 13 attempts.

In Los Angeles, LeBron James had a triple double of 30 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists to power the Los Angeles Lakers to a 106-94 win over the Orlando Magic.

James scored 14 of his points in the third quarter for the Lakers, who have won five of their last seven contests. The Lakers used a 36-10 advantage in the third quarter to record their second straight win and move two games above .500 for the first time in a month.

James earned his 101st career triple-double as the Lakers won their second straight with all-star Anthony Davis out with an injured left knee. Coach Frank Vogel said Davis is expected to return soon.

In Portland, Anthony Edwards scored 24 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves spoiled Damian Lillard's return with a 116-111 win over the Portland Trail Blazers. Portland star Lillard returned after missing the last five games due to an abdomen injury and tallied 24 points, 11 rebounds and six assists in 37 minutes.



LONDON (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton will receive his knighthood on Wednesday (today) as the British driver comes to terms with controversially losing the Formula One world title.

Hamilton is due to attend an investiture at Windsor Castle to be honored for services to motorsports.

The 36-year-old was given his knighthood in the New Year Honors list in 2020 following pressure on Prime Minister Boris Johnson to approve the accolade.

Despite being one of the UK's most successful sportsmen, Hamilton, who matched Michael Schumacher's record seven world titles in 2020, had previously been overlooked.

Hamilton's knighthood was awarded in the overseas list as he relocated to Monaco in 2010. His royal appointment comes just days after he was denied a record eighth Formula One crown.

Max Verstappen pipped the Mercedes star to the world title on Sunday after his battle with Hamilton came down to a one-lap shoot-out in Abu Dhabi.

The Red Bull driver stormed past his title rival in the closing stages of the Grand Prix season finale at the Yas Marina Circuit, having benefitted from a late safety car decision that bunched up the pack.

Mercedes are expected to appeal again after two protests they made against Verstappen's victory were rejected by stewards.

Barcelona to Play Napoli in Europa League Knockout Stage

PARIS (AFP) - Barcelona will face Napoli in the Europa League knockout round play-off stage after the Catalan giants crashed out in the Champions League group stage for the first time since the 2000-01 season.

Xavi Hernandez's Barca will continue their European campaign in the second-tier competition, with the winner of their tie with Napoli advancing to the last 16.

"Napoli are a great team of real European pedigree. They've got a lot of experience so we're aware it's going to be really hard," said Barca director of football Mateu Alemany.

"Obviously the draw hasn't been very generous to us but that's how these competitions are."

The first leg will take place at the Camp Nou on February 17 with the return on February 24 at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium in Naples. The late Argentine great played for both Barca and Napoli during his career.

Napoli and Barca met in the last 16 of the 2019/20 Champions League, with Barca advancing 4-2 on aggregate.

"I'd say that our glass is completely full: Barcelona v Napoli and then Napoli v Barcelona will be two great matches at Champions League level!" tweeted Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis.

The draw for the play-off round, introduced this season as part of a slimmed-down Europa League format, includes the eight runners-up from the group stage and the eight third-placed teams from the Champions League group stage.

Borussia Dortmund were paired together with Rangers in Monday's draw, setting up a first meeting between the clubs since the 1999/2000 UEFA Cup.

Rangers coach Giovanni van Bronckhorst played for Rangers in that tie alongside former USA international Claudio Reyna, whose son, 19-year-old Dortmund midfielder Gio, was named after the Dutchman.

Van Bronckhorst is unbeaten since taking charge at Ibrox, winning five of six matches following Steven Gerrard's departure for Aston Villa.

Raducanu Pulls out of Abu Dhabi Exhibition With Covid



The 19-year-old Briton was due to face Olympic champion Belinda Bencic on Thursday in the exhibition tournament.

Instead, Raducanu, who had already travelled to the United Arab Emirates, will now have to complete a period of isolation.

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu pulled out of this week's Mubadala World Tennis Championship in Abu Dhabi after testing positive for Covid-19, organizers announced on Monday.

Providing she does not experience any lingering illness, however, the world number 19 should still be able to travel to Australia ahead of the first Grand Slam tournament of 2022.

"I was very much looking forward to playing in front of the fans here in Abu Dhabi, but unfortunately, after testing positive for Covid-19, I will have to postpone until the next opportunity," Raducanu said in a statement released by the organizers.

"I'm isolating as per rules and hopefully will be able to get back soon." Raducanu, who became the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam when she beat Leylah Fernandez in the US Open final at Flushing Meadows, has been working with new coach Torben Beltz ahead of what will be her first full season on the WTA Tour.

Rohit Hopes to End India's World Title Drought

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's new limited-overs captain Rohit Sharma said he hopes to win a world title for the cricket-crazy nation, an achievement that eluded his sacked predecessor Virat Kohli.

During Kohli's five-year tenure India rose in the one-day, Twenty20 and Test rankings but missed out on securing a single international tournament.

India, who last won a world crown -- the Champions Trophy -- in 2013, failed to make the semi-finals in this year's T20 World Cup and got knocked out in the last four of the 2019 50-over showpiece event.

The team also lost the inaugural World Test Championship final to New Zealand in June. "The last ICC trophy we won was in 2013, since then we haven't won but I don't think we did anything wrong after that," Rohit, 34, said in a video on the Board of Control for Cricket in India's official website on Sunday.

"We played as a team, we performed as a team, it's just that we couldn't get that extra inch that we look forward to," he said. "There is a lot of World Cup coming up. India will definitely be eyeing to do well in all those World Cups."

Kohli was fired as captain of India's ODI side last week, a month after he stepped down as the T20 leader following the T20 World Cup.

But the 33-year-old remains Test captain and will lead India in three Tests in South Africa starting on December 26.

Rohit praised Kohli for his leadership since he took over the limited-overs job from M.S. Dhoni in 2017.



PSG to Face Real Madrid in Champions League Last 16

PARIS (AFP) - Paris Saint-Germain will play Real Madrid while Liverpool take on Inter Milan in two of the standout ties in the last 16 of the Champions League after an embarrassed UEFA was forced to redo Monday's draw following a "technical problem".

PSG had initially been paired together with Manchester United but the reworked draw sees them play Real while the Old Trafford side will face Spanish champions Atletico Madrid.

UEFA had earlier blamed a "material error" due to a "technical problem with the software of an external service provider" as it announced that the draw for the first knockout round of its flagship competition would have to be redone.

With the draw being streamed live from UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, the problem was made evident when Manchester United's name was drawn to face Villarreal, despite the fact the two clubs could not have played one another having been in the same group.

Record 13-time European champions Real are unlikely to be happy with the new draw as they had initially been paired with Benfica in the very first tie before the problems occurred -- a clash with the PSG of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe is, on paper, a far tougher tie.

Liverpool face a similar situation. Having initially been drawn against knockout-phase debutants Red Bull Salzburg of Austria, they now face three-time former winners Inter, the Serie A champions and current Italian league leaders. Salzburg instead got Bayern Munich, while Manchester City take on Sporting Lisbon and Benfica will play Ajax.

Villarreal face Juventus, while the one tie in the original, botched draw that was repeated later sees reigning champions Chelsea face French title-holders Lille.

The first legs will be played in the second half of February with second legs in early March.

