

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 131,680 With 41 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Top General Warned Enemies Of Iran Attempt to Diminish Iranians' Self-Confidence and Induce Them To Feel Like They Are Weak in Order To Push Them to Accept the West As Superior and Role Model

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UNGA Urged to Condemn Gen. Soleimani Assassination

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has called on the United Nations General Assembly to issue a resolution condemning the US assassination of the country's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani to safeguard international peace and uphold human rights.

In a statement released on Saturday, the Legal Department of the Iranian president's office marked the second anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani, who arrived on a diplomatic visit in Baghdad, where he was targeted in a US drone strike.

The statement pointed out that former US president Donald Trump openly claimed responsibility for the heinous crime at the time, saying, "This dangerous move by the US government came while the UN Charter, as a fundamental document and basis of international consensus in the post-War period, prohibits governments from engaging in acts that are detrimental to international peace and security."

It said the UN General Assembly should "take all legal initiatives within its authority, including the adoption of a resolution condemning the assassination of government and diplomatic officials by [another] government [and] take measures to prevent such crimes in the future."

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Iran Capable to Destroy Enemy's Interests In Region in 48 Hours

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A senior military advisor to Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said here on Saturday that if Iran's enemies would dare to make a mistake the Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces will destroy the enemies' entire interests in the region in just 48 hours.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi who was speaking for a group of university students on the occasion of 2nd anniversary of Martyr Qassem Soleimani said that as the Supreme Leader has always stressed the Navy is a strategic force.

"America and the global oppression's arms threatened a lot and tried not to permit the 75th IRI Navy Fleet achieve its objectives, but that fleet regardless of the entire threats accomplished their mission within 150 days and night without taking sides along the shores of any other country and were warmly received by the Russians," he said.

Major General Rahim Safavi added that the 75th IRI Navy Fleet's passage through the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel was the best proof for turning Iran into a major regional power with a strategic rope for its naval forces.

He, meanwhile, referred to the Navy warships' escorting of the commercial ships and oil tankers, adding that the IRI Navy performs its escorting missions of the commercial ships and oil tankers in international waters, and particularly in the Red Sea, perfectly well.

Exit in Humiliation Is First U.S. Payback for Assassination



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says a humiliating withdrawal from the region is the first price that the U.S. will have to pay for its assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

IRGC spokesman Ramezan Sharif said Sunday the United States must leave other regional countries following its ignominious pullout from Afghanistan.

"The first recompense that the Americans must pay for the assassination of Martyr Soleimani is to leave the region with humiliation," he said in the northwestern city of Urmia on Sunday.

"Just as the Americans left Afghanistan with humiliation, they must leave other regional countries," he added.

The IRGC spokesman also said despite having less personnel and equipment, General Soleimani managed to defeat terrorists, who were armed to the teeth in Syria and Iraq.

"Long before the complete defeat of Daesh and U.S. allies in the region, Haj Qassem had promised to defeat them. This was achieved thanks to his command and knowledge of the enemy front and the strength of the resistance front."

Gen. Qa'ani recalled recent remarks by former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani who said the Americans had betrayed him. Sharif urged Arab leaders in the region not to rely on the US to avoid a similar fate.

In Tehran, IRGC Quds Force chief General Ismail Qa'ani said Gen. Soleimani reconciled the battlefield and diplomacy.

Addressing a ceremony at the Foreign Ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies, he said one of General Soleimani's initiatives was to establish interaction and synergy between the diplomatic and military corps in order to better confront the enemies.

"Martyr Soleimani established a very good link between the battlefield and diplomacy and was one of the trailblazers and advocates of this logic," Qa'ani said, adding his idea has been adopted by other countries.

The Quds Force chief also described Tehran as "the summit of resistance, the Islamic Revolution and the convergence among different sectors in Islam".

"This is the center of proximity and people like Martyr Soleimani were at the forefront of creating unity and convergence," he added.

General Soleimani was assassinated along with his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Units, in a US drone strike ordered by ex-president Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

Resistance Warns Israel Amid Reports of Plan for Limited Aggression

GAZA (Dispatches) - Hamas has condemned a new Israeli act of aggression on the Gaza Strip as resistance groups based in the besieged Palestinian enclave and the Tel Aviv regime exchange threats via Egyptian mediators.

Early on Sunday, Israel took Gaza under artillery fire and airstrikes in response to alleged rocket fire from the direction of the coastal land.

Palestinian news agency Sama quoted former Israeli communications minister Ayub al-Qara as saying that it was time for Tel Aviv to assassinate Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh and the movement's leader Yahya al-Sinwar.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said in a statement that "the targeting of some Gaza areas and its agricultural lands by the Zionist enemy is an aggression that adds to the regime's crimes against our people."

"The resistance will continue its duty to defend the people and liberate our land and holy sites. Thus, the enemy and its settlers will experience despair and defeat," he added.

Qassem also hailed the confrontation of the resistance's anti-aircraft systems with Israeli warplanes.

"Greetings to the proud men of the resistance who repel the enemy's attack with missiles and anti-aircraft systems, and greetings to our brave people who stand on the front line to confront the enemy," he said.

Al-Aqsa TV reported that during the Israeli raid, Palestinian air defense forces fired two rockets, of SAM-7 type, at Israeli helicopters over Gaza's western coast.

On Saturday, the Israeli army said two rockets were fired from Gaza toward the occupied territories. One of them exploded in the sea off the coast of Jaffa, while the second impacted off the coast of Palmachim.

According to some reports, resistance groups in Gaza blamed the rocket fire on "weather conditions" and said it was not an intentional action.

Israeli military officials, however, told Walla new website that Tel Aviv was seeking to respond in a way that would "not cause an escalation but convey the message that incidents on the border and rocket launches are unacceptable."

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Int'l Bodies Serving the West

People around the world are gradually realizing this point that the international bodies do not act impartially and they act in a way to please the big powers, mainly the West, in dealing some incidents in the world.

The Islamic Republic of Iran due to its anti-West policy is one of the main targets of punishment and condemnation by these bodies and as soon as something happens in the country or abroad, these bodies take stand against Tehran by attributing some charges like human rights or meddling in the affairs of other countries. But when some crime against Iran is committed, these bodies pass it indifferently or even do not pay any heed to it.

On January 3, 2020, the U.S. committed one of the horrible state terrorism acts by assassinating Iranian hero Martyr General Qassem Soleimani and his comrade and Americans admitted it rudely but the international bodies stopped condemning at least verbally this crime and even some of them hailed the U.S. forces.

Of course, Iranians like many freedom-loving people in the world do not expect too much from these bodies which are fed by the West and serve the Westerners and whatever the West dictates, they act.

On Saturday, Iran called on the United Nations General Assembly to issue a resolution condemning the US assassination of the country's top anti-terror commander General Soleimani to safeguard international peace and uphold human rights.

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The statement pointed out that former U.S. president Donald Trump openly claimed responsibility for the heinous crime at the time, saying, "This dangerous move by the US government came while the UN Charter, as a fundamental document and basis of international consensus in the post-War period, prohibits governments from engaging in acts that are detrimental to international peace and security."

It said the UN General Assembly should "take all legal initiatives within its authority, including the adoption of a resolution condemning the assassination of government and diplomatic officials by [another] government [and] take measures to prevent such crimes in the future."

The statement also lamented the fact that the U.S. government infringes upon international laws and regulations via its extreme unilateralism while the international community remains silent.

Undoubtedly, it continued, international peace will be even more in danger if the perpetrators of the terrorist attack are free to walk with impunity.

General Soleimani was assassinated near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020. His companions, including Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who served as the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were also killed during the raid. **See Page 7**

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1st Group of Iranian Pilgrims to Depart for Syria

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization of Iran said that sending pilgrims to Syria was activated as of yesterday.

Head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization said that the first group of Iranian pilgrims will visit Syria for 5 days in 25-pilgrims caravans.

Alireza Rashidian further noted that 75 people have registered to travel to Syria, saying that the first group of pilgrims will depart for Damascus from Imam Khomeini International Airport.

Noora Vaccine Enters Phase III of Human Trial

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's domestically-developed and produced Noora coronavirus vaccine has entered the third stage of human trial after the IRGC chief commander got the jab.

In the third human trial phase of the new Iranian coronavirus vaccine, which began on Sunday in a ceremony attended by the Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, and Iran's Health Minister Bahram Einollahi on the eve of the second martyrdom anniversary of Iran's legendary anti-terror commander Lt Gen Qassem Soleimani, 10,000 doses are to be injected into volunteers.

Major General Salami received the vaccine jab in the ceremony of the beginning of the third phase of clinical studies of the Noora vaccine.

Speaking at the ceremony, Hassan Abolghasemi, the president of Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, said: "Noora vaccine is a recombinant vaccine that was tested on 70 volunteers in the first phase and 300 on the second phase. In the first phase of the human test, the Noora vaccine was proven to be safe and the immunization was evaluated in the second phase, and about ten thousand people will receive the vaccine in the third phase."

According to him, five million doses of the Noora vaccine, produced by Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences with the support of the IRGC, are ready and will be delivered to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education once the third stage of human trial has been carried out.

At the ceremony, the minister of health said that the Iranian people showed their power to fight against the coronavirus in the nationwide vaccination during the past 4 months.

Einollahi added: "People came to the scene and we injected 120 million doses of vaccine in 4 months."



Noora vaccine was put on display during a ceremony in Tehran on June 27 in the presence of Major General Salami, Iran's former health minister Saeed Namaki as well as other Iranian health officials.

Preliminary studies of this recombinant anti-corona vaccine, produced by Iranian researchers at Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences and Imam Hussein University (AS), began in March 2020.

After successfully conducting animal tests and passing all the quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the Food and Drug Administration, Noora vaccine was able to receive the code of ethics in research from the National Vaccine Committee.

The recombinant vaccine then entered the first stage of the human trial after 16 months of research work by Iranian scientists.

Its first dose was injected into the chief medical officer of Baqiyatallah Hospital, Hossein Samadinia.

Noora vaccine's mass production line is under development.

The process of learning about and developing an investigational medicine is divided into different phases. At first, very few people receive the medicine being studied. The number of people participating in clinical studies grows along with our understanding of the investigational medicine, and the research continues as long as the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

Iran to Assist Afghans Against West Pressures

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's deputy ambassador to Afghanistan said that Iran will assist the oppressed nation of Afghanistan in face of the economic and cultural war of the West.

Seyyed Hasan Mortazavi, Iran's deputy ambassador to Afghanistan met and held talks with Khairullah Said Wali Khairkhwa, Taliban's Minister of Information and Culture.

It is the time for Islamic countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to promote a common Islamic culture for Muslim nations through pure Islamic cultural products, Khairkhwa said in this meeting, adding that the new government in Afghanistan is fully prepared to work in this field.

Although the Americans have ended their military presence in Afghanistan, they will not give up the economic and cultural war against the Muslim nation of Afghanistan, the Iranian deputy ambassador said.

Referring to the 40-year experience of the Iranian nation in face of the economic and cultural war of the West, he said that Iran will not leave the oppressed nation of Afghanistan alone in this path.

Iran will provide the Muslim nation of Afghanistan with all its experience, Mortazavi stressed.

U.S. Must Leave Syria Because Game Has Changed

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Condemning the occupation of Syria by any country or forces, the Iranian Ambassador to Syria said that the U.S. has to leave Syria.

Mahdi Sobhani said in an interview that new horizons are opened in Iran-Syria relations and stressed the need for changing the current mindset on security condition in Syria. He also emphasized that all the occupying and terrorist forces must leave Syria.

Sobhani also stated that Iran-Syria economic and trade relations, as well as Iran's cooperation in reconstructing Syria, are important issues in the current sensitive situation which both countries are challenging with economic war and sanctions.

Iranian Ambassador to Syria further noted that several numbers of exhibitions are held in Syria which about 120 Iranian companies have attended.

Pointing to the occupying forces in Syria, Sobhani stated that Iran strongly condemns occupying Syria by any country or force either in Golan, Northwest or Northeast Syria.

Elsewhere Sobhani underlined that although we cannot determine any specific time, sooner or later the US forces will inevitably have to leave Syria.

The United States is no longer able to determine the fate of the region, adding, new powers have emerged and named Resistance and one of the main powers.

Sobhani for his part welcomed opening of new horizons in Syria's foreign relations and expressed hope that they will enhance stability, progress, security and economic development in Syria.

He also underscored that Syria's enemies should know that their policy towards Syria has failed and had nothing but damage for the regional nations.

Russia, Iran to Kick Off Power Network Connection in May

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The operation of connecting power networks among Russia, Azerbaijan Republic, and Iran will begin in May 2022, an Iranian official said.

Mohammad Ali Farahnakian, advisor to Iran's energy minister for international affairs, told IRNA on Sunday that given a contract among the three countries, implementation of the power network connection project will be launched following the presentation of specialized reports by these states to Iranian engineering consultants in May 2022.

Farahnakian noted that the energy corridor in northern Iran will bring about the nation with unimaginable profits and that it can reduce a remarkable need to invest in the electricity sector of the Islamic Republic.

Given the fact that peak demand in Russia happens in winter, but Iran's peak demand is in summer, the power connection project will help both countries to meet their internal demands for electricity, the advisor noted.

Moreover, Iran faces power shortages just in 10 percent of days in a year, he said, adding that the power connection network among neighboring states can assist Iran to get rid of the lack of investment for new projects.

Technical and economic cooperation with the neighboring countries will enhance security because the neighbors will need each other and secure economic development, he argued.

There are two potential corridors for energy sharing, including the Russia-Azerbaijan-Iran corridor and Armenia-Georgia-Russia, Farahnakian said, noting that Tehran prioritizes each project which is being implemented sooner.

The Azerbaijan Republic has done a remarkable job in this respect: so, Moscow, Tehran, and Baku have agreed upon initiating technical studies, which should be conducted by an Iranian consultant company and paid by all three countries equally.

Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said in an online discussion with his Azerbaijani counterpart Parviz Shahbazov that the power network connection project will help Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran to manage peak demand and power shortages.

The Iranian minister also noted that Tehran is ready to exchange electricity with Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Turkey, and Iraq.

Iran, Iraq Railway Connection Significant for Both Sides

TEHRAN (IP)- The Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran said that Shalamchah railway to Basra and Iran's rail connection to Iraq is very effective in both freight and passenger transit, especially in the days of Arbäeen (40th day after Imam Hossein (as)'s martyrdom anniversary).

Rostam Ghasemi, the Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran, said on Saturday night on the live TV program 'Negah Yek' of the Iranian Television Channel 1, stating that the railway connection between Iran and Iraq is important for both countries, adding: "The new agreement between the two countries specifies the start date for the construction of this railway line, and a joint venture must be formed for investment and operation within two months."

Ghasemi stated that this railway route is 32 km long and the important issue in the construction of this railway line is the construction of a bridge between Iran and Iraq.

The Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran stated: "The initial agreement to invest in this joint project is 50% of Iran and 50% of Iraq, and the completion time of this railway line is expected to be a maximum of two years."

The agreement to connect the Iranian railway to Iraq from the Shalamchah axis, southwest of Iran, to the port of Basra, was signed by the officials of the two countries during the recent visit of Rostam Ghasemi, the Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran to Iraq.

Iran Exports \$3.3b Worth of Crops in 8 months

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian official said that in the first 8 months of the year 1400 in the Iranian calendar Iran exported 5,331,000 tons of crops and agricultural products valued at \$3.345b.

Mohammad Ghorbani, Iran's Deputy Agriculture Minister stated on Saturday that during the first 8 months of the year 1400 in Iranian calendar (March 22, Nov 21, 2021), Iran exported \$3.345 b worth of crops and agricultural products.

The Iranian economic official said that during that period, 776,000 tons of watermelon, 553,000 tons of fresh or chilled tomatoes, 470,000 tons of fresh or chilled potatoes, 456,000 tons of fresh apples and 249,000 tons of onions, shallots and garlic has been exported.

Ghorbani also noted that pistachio valued at \$654 m, fresh or chilled tomatoes valued at \$259 m, watermelon valued at \$181 m and tomato with the value of \$150 m and fresh apple valued at \$131 m are at the top of exported crops.

Tehran Denounces Silence of Int'l Bodies To Martyrdom of Iranian Police Officers

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Deputy Judiciary Chief for International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi on Saturday criticized the inaction and silence of international bodies to the martyrdom of Iranian police officers while fighting the traffickers, terrorists, and outlaws.

In a letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, Gharibabadi called on all countries and the international bodies to do their share in the fight against those disrupting the peace, stability and security of the people.

Noting that Iran has been pursuing a principled policy in the fight against different forms of trafficking, the official said that some 40 Iranian police officers have lost their lives in clashes with armed traffickers and outlaws between March 21 and December 3, 2021.

Although the international community and most world countries confirm the measures taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the country not only receives no support from the other countries, but the few aids of the international organizations are often faced with selective and politically motivated acts of certain countries, the official said.

Referring to numerous statements issued by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in support for the criminals who have been convicted in a fair way, Gharibabadi asked why no statement is issued in condemnation of armed terrorist attacks against the Iranian police officers who render the biggest services to the international community with their fight against drug trafficking, human trafficking, and the crimes of organized groups.

U.S. on Verge of Complete Expulsion From Region

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Majlis Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf announced on Sunday that the United States is close to being completely deported from the region.

Qalibaf made the remarks at Majlis open session this morning. Speaking about the second martyrdom anniversary of Lieutenant General Soleimani on January 3, 2022, Qalibaf extended condolences to all who believe in seeking freedom, removing oppression and expanding justice.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Qods Force commander Lieutenant General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the acting commander of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) - known as the Hashd al-Shaabi - were assassinated in Baghdad by US attack on January 3, 2020.

Soon after the terrorist act, the IRGC carried out an operation and targeted the US airbase of Ain al-Assad in Anbar Province in western Iraq in response to the US terrorist attack.

Iran to Participate at FITUR Fair in Spain

TEHRAN (MNA) - Director of Tourism and Handicrafts of the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that 14 Iranian companies will attend the International Tourism Fair FITUR in Spain.

Hadi Sajjadi Mehr said that Iranian companies will take part in the International Tourism Fair FITUR in Spain. He also added that 14 booths will be constructed for Iranian companies.

International Tourism Fair FITUR is slated to be held on 19-23 January 2022 in the Ifema trade fair center of Madrid. It is the global meeting point for tourism professionals and the leading trade fair for inbound and outbound markets in Latin America. The presence of more than 1,170 media is evidence of the level of expectation this event creates in the industry.

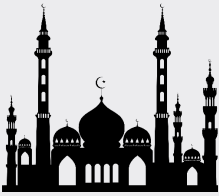
World Needs Lighters Like Martyr Soleimani

TEHRAN (IFP) - Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says that world needs brave fighters like Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the anti-terror icon, not coward warmongers like Donald Trump.

"2 years ago, I lost a friend, Iran a hero & the world a champion in fighting terrorism," Zarif wrote on Twitter on the eve of the second anniversary of Gen. Soleimani's martyrdom "To those in denial, Trump's true colors were on full display only a year later in US Capitol," the former FM stated on Saturday.

"The world needs brave fighters like Soleimani—not coward warmongers like Trump, [former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu & Co.," Zarif added.

On Saturday, thousands of Iranians and Iraqis commemorate the second anniversary of the US assassination of Gen. Soleimani and al-Muhandis.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)

■ Evening (Maghreb)

■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

■ Tomorrow's Sunrise

12:08

17:23

05:45

07:14

40. Nay, it may come to them all of a sudden and confound them:
no power will they have then to avert it, nor will they (then) get respite.
41. Mocked were (many) apostle before thee;
But their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked.

Surah 21. The Prophets (40 - 41)

Barter Trade with Sri Lanka Is Not Fair

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – A member of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce says barter of tea with oil between Iran and Sri Lanka is not fair because Sri Lankans will give Iran second or third degree tea as their low quality tea has no customer in the world.

Speaking to ILNA, Masoud Daneshmand talked about barter trade with Sri Lanka and said that China, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Latin American states and some other countries seek to buy cheap oil from Iran and they also accept Iran’s gas oil and gasoline. He noted that Sri Lanka except its tea has nothing that avails Iran, and Sri Lankans owe oil money to Iran since long time ago because they have received the oil and have not paid back money, and for this reason they owe Iran huge amount of money and they are now ready to give tea in exchange of their oil dues.

Daneshmand said that barter trade in this way is a mere loss for Iran because if Sri Lanka has good and high quality tea, it will definitely sell to other customers and they will give the second or third class tea to Iran under the name of first grade tea and Iran has no way but to get it.

He said this type of barter trade is not fair unless an agreement is signed between the two states on pricing and types of the goods and it is not a good decision to get any goods with any price from the countries because they owe us and we want to settle our account with them.

On the closure of the only refinery of Sri Lanka, Daneshmand said that country like Sri Lanka which is in dire need of gasoline does not close its refinery intentionally to



buy cheaper gasoline from Iran and it is not a logical issue because it will create problem inside the country.

He reiterated that Sri Lanka does not have money to buy oil from the international markets to turn it into gasoline and its only sources of revenues are tourism and tea and due to the pandemic its tourism industry has faced problems and since the country has failed to repay its debts to China it has even lost ownership of some of its installations.

Daneshmand went on to say that if Iran is eager to work with Sri Lanka, it should act wisely with full study and through fixing the amount of bartering and adopting a mechanism for pricing, otherwise it is not wise to pump oil to Sri Lanka and to tell them to pay back its money when they afford to.

He reiterated that this is how the Chinese dealt with Iran and gave any low quality goods to Iran in exchange for oil money because Iran had not signed a certain and fixed agreement with the Chinese and it only flooded oil to China and asked for goods in return.

He reiterated that this is not a barter trade that Iran gives oil and instead Sri Lanka says it has no money and Iran can get tear in exchange of its oil dues.

CBI, Industry Ministry Ink MOU to Implement Plan for Funding Production Units

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with seven acting banks to collaborate on implementing a supply chain financing plan to provide facilities to production units across the country, IRIB reported.

More Than 16.6m Tons of Steel Products Produced in 8 Months



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran produced 16.637 million tons of steel products in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), according to the data released by Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

The country’s eight-month steel products output indicates a 6.6-percent drop as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Meanwhile, as previously announced, Iran exported about \$4.5 billion worth of steel products including ingots, profiles, and sheets in the first eight months of this year, registering a 14-percent rise year on year.

According to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi, steel products accounted for 14.5 percent of the country’s total non-oil exports during the mentioned eight months.

Latifi noted that some 11.067 million tons of various iron and steel products worth \$3.735 billion were exported in the previous year, of which 2.23 million tons were iron ore and other related raw materials.

The exports of steel products in the first eight months of the current year have exceeded the total figure for the previous year by \$800 million, the official noted.

The Iranian steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world’s top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world’s top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

The MOU was signed on Saturday, in a ceremony attended by CBI Governor Ali Saleh-Abadi, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin, and Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi.

Under the framework of the mentioned MOU, CBI and the Industry Ministry will cooperate with the acting banks to provide facilities to production units in various sectors including metals, construction, automobiles, home appliances, machinery, foodstuff, as well as chemical and petrochemical industries.

Unlike traditional methods of providing direct facilities by financial institutions, supply chain financing is a form of financial transaction wherein a third party facilitates an exchange by financing the supplier on the customer’s behalf.

Also, it refers to the techniques and practices used by banks and other financial institutions to manage the capital invested into the supply chain and reduce the risk for the parties involved.

In this method, the production units can also receive other credit instruments such as bonds and negotiable instruments instead of cash facilities, which in addition to reducing the need for liquidity, bank resources are also directed to productive activities.

Based on the MOU, the plan is going to be implemented in a pilot phase and then will become fully operational after being finalized.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Saleh-Abadi said the implementation of this plan will reduce the non-current receivables of banks and it will also make it

easier to manage liquidity and monitor the appropriate allocation of banking resources.

Fatemi-Amin for his part said at the ceremony that with the supply chain financing, banks will pay facilities based on electronic invoices under the framework of the country’s comprehensive trade system.

“This makes receiving facilities transparent and companies cannot get multiple loans for one purpose,” he added.

The official noted that this method is a very effective work in a financing process that increases access to financial resources and prevents the diversion of resources, in other words, by implementing this plan, manufacturing companies and banks will both benefit.

Further in the ceremony, Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi underlined some of his ministry’s programs for developing the country’s productive sectors, saying: “Our main goal is to be able to shorten all the avenues that lead the financing of production sectors to support manufacturing and exporting enterprises so that traders and producers are less concerned about financing.”

Measures such as the supply chain financing scheme not only help and facilitate the financing process but also make the relationship between producers and the banking network more regular, he said.

According to Khandouzi, completing the financing chain, expanding the scope of the chain activities in industrial sectors, and completing the supporting banking network are three steps that should be monitored and followed in the pilot phase of the project and fully deployed next year.

Developing Rail Lines to Reduce Pollution in Metropolises

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Deputy head on planning of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) believes by developing rail lines in the big cities, the amount of pollution in those cities will decrease considerably.

Alireza Rezvanian pointed to several underway environmental projects at the company as well as some other projects which are underway, and said that ESCO under supervision of Department of Environment not only is on the track of green industry but also has provided the ground for developing rail transportation and metro lines with producing rail in order to reduce major pollutants in the big cities, namely, the traffic of cars.

Rezvanian noted that no one can claim that industry like steel industry is not pollutant but reducing pollution has different ways as there are steel plants in some countries in the world which are close to the residential areas and there is no problem regarding pollution.

He added that in fact steel industries should do their best to control pollution but stopping the activities of this industry is impossible because one cannot ask



people not to construct houses or not to use home appliances because all of them require steel industry.

He reiterated that pollution of cars and lack of proper public transportation in the cities is higher than steel industries but is less considered. He said that to increase urban transportation services, developing rail transportation is very important

that the country has witnessed less progress in this field because of the shortage of rail due to sanctions and last year the country set record in developing rail networks by using national rail which was produced by ESCO.

Rezvanian said that if the importance of rail production is not regarded due to different reasons like pollution, rail will not be produced and definitely metro lines will not be expanded and pollution in the cities will continue upward growth.

He added that ESCO has spent over 4,000b rials on its environmental projects and it spends some 14b toman annually for protecting its green space which is around 16,600 hectares.

Improving Int’l Economic Relations, The Main Strategy of Labor Ministry

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Director-General of Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare for International Affairs Hamed Forouzan says the main strategy if the ministry is to boost economic relations and expansion of international trade markets with the regional states.

Forouzan said that in line with reaching the top of the ranking in the region in terms of economy, reinforcing commercial relations, exports to neighboring countries, support from labor and Iranian capital, and expansion of international trade markets for Iranian goods are of the main goals of the ministry.

He went on to say that major part of Iran’s important economic capacities is 15 neighboring states which has population over 560m and they are very close to 25 countries in the region. He added that countries like China, India and Russia are among these countries and they actually and potentially have a big market for inter-regional trade.

Forouzan stated that existing capacities in the labor, cooperatives and social welfare ministry include petrochemical industry, steel, social services, agro and foodstuff sectors, pharmaceutical, concrete, transportation, cellulose industry and tourism which can be good grounds for increasing forex revenues of the country and boosting economic boom in the country.

He also pointed to the national and international achievements of Martyr Genera Qasem Soleimani in the field of international economy relations and sated that activation of transit route to Syria, Mediterranean Sea and Africa, reinforcing big market of exports of goods and engineering, social and technical services, economic union of Iran, Iraq and Syria, revival of the Silk Road in the West Asia, forming headquarters for promoting economic relations in the region and revival of economy-centered diplomacy have been of major achievements of Martyr Soleimani for sublime of the position of Islamic-Iran economy.

Forouzan then reminded that removal of executive hurdles, support of exporters’ rights in the target countries and supervising it in the international bodies, using modern methods of active marketing with cooperation of economic enterprises of the ministry as well as attracting foreign investment for participation in the technology and innovation projects and easing provision of effective capital goods in the production are all on the agenda of the ministry.



Felicitations Message of CEO on Foundation Anniversary of HOSCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – On the occasion of the foundation anniversary of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO), the CEO of the company Mr. Ataollah Maroofkhani in a message felicitated the day and conveyed its congratulation to his colleagues in the company.

In his message, Maroofkhani said ten years are passing from the foundation of HOSCO which is the second big steel company which has been established after the Islamic Revolution and it has been established by the Iranian experts, and the company proudly is stepping into the second decade of its life.

He added that with following the path of Martyr Soleimanis and martyrs of the Islamic Revolution in economic war and cruel sanctions and in the era of pandemic, the company could progress and improve step by step due to tireless efforts of its staff and experts, and with continuation of production and setting consecutive production has played an effective role in the dynamism of the national economy.

Maroofkhani then pointed to the projects which are underway for developing production of wide sheet and steel of Simin Hormoz Star by using the domestic capabilities and experts and at the end he congratulated the day to his colleagues in the company and wished a prosperous future for the company.



UAE to Ban Non-Vaccinated Citizens From Traveling Abroad

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates will ban non-vaccinated citizens from traveling abroad from Jan. 10, the state news agency WAM reported on Saturday, citing the foreign ministry and the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority.

The report said that fully vaccinated citizens would also require a booster shot to be eligible to travel. The ban would not apply to those with medical or humanitarian exemptions.



Bolsonaro Creates \$126m Credit Line to Flood-Ravaged Northeast

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro announced on Friday a 700 million reais (\$125.67 million) relief credit line to help the northeastern region with the impacts of severe flooding, a day after declining an offer of aid from Argentina.

At least 24 people have died and tens of thousands have been left homeless as record rains hit parts of the northeast, causing some dams to fail.



North Korea's Leader Says Focus on Economy, Food Production for 2022



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un put the economy front and center of an agenda-setting speech at the end of a key ruling party meeting, state media reported Saturday, with no mention of the United States.

Instead of the policy positions on diplomacy for which Kim's New Year statements have been closely watched in recent years, he focused on food security and development at a plenary of the central committee of the Workers' Party of Korea.

The impoverished, nuclear-armed nation has been under a rigid self-imposed coronavirus blockade that has hammered its economy.

In a speech at the end of the party meeting on Friday, Kim acknowledged the "harsh situation" in 2021 as he laid out plans for the coming year, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

He described the challenges of 2022 as "a great life-and-death struggle" and set "an important task for making radical progress in solving the food, clothing and housing problem for the people", KCNA said.

The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting border closure saw the country record its biggest economic contraction in over two decades in 2020, according to the South Korean central bank.

Concerns have grown about a full-blown food crisis in North Korea, and a United Nations human rights expert warned in October that the most vulnerable were "at risk of starvation".

Kim, who took power just over a decade ago after the death of his father Kim Jong Il, said battling the pandemic was one of the main goals for the coming year.

"Emergency epidemic prevention work should be made a top priority in the state work," Kim said according to KCNA.

Analysts pointed to the impact of Covid as the reason for the sharpened focus on the economy.

"The pandemic continues to constrain North Korea's diplomacy, decimate its economy, and make border controls the top security issue," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at the Ewha Womans University in Seoul, told AFP.

But he said Pyongyang would continue to build up its military capabilities keeping in mind "the military environment of the Korean peninsula" and the changing international situation.

That includes ensuring loyalty and obedience in the military, improving militias, and "the production of the powerful equipment corresponding with the modern warfare", KCNA quoted Kim as saying.

It did not provide further details.

"Overall, Kim might be aware that revealing sophisticated military development plans while people are suffering food shortages and harsh conditions outside of Pyongyang might not be such a good idea this year," tweeted Chad O'Carroll of specialist website NK News.

"North Korea is more or less in survival mode for 2022 -- and doesn't really know what to do... (about) foreign policy right now."

Taiwan President Urges China To Curb Military Adventurism

TAIPEI (Dispatches) - Taiwan's president on Saturday urged China to curb its "military adventurism", with tensions between the two sides at their highest level in years.

Beijing has ramped up military and diplomatic pressure on Taiwan since Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016, as she rejects the stance that the island is Chinese territory.

Chinese warplanes have made a historically high number of incursions into Taiwan's air defense zone in recent months.

The authorities in Beijing "should stop the spread of military adventurism within their ranks", Tsai said in her New Year speech.

"The use of military means is absolutely not an option for resolving the differences between our two sides."



China Reopens Embassy in Nicaragua After Diplomatic Switch

MANAGUA (Dispatches) - China has reopened its embassy in Nicaragua, a few weeks after the Central American country switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to Beijing.

That change was a political win for China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has stepped up pressure to isolate the self-ruled island on the international stage.

The announcement three weeks ago leaves Taiwan with just 14 diplomatic allies, even as Taipei strengthens ties with multiple unofficial Western friends including the United States.

Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Denis Moncada, speaking at a ceremony marking the reopening of the embassy, said: "You are welcome in our Nicaragua ... with the certainty that both countries have ahead of us a future of successes and victories in our brotherly relations."

The new Chinese embassy will be under the orders of Yu Bu, who inaugurated it at the ceremony with Moncada and other officials including Laureano Ortega, a son of an adviser to President Daniel Ortega.

In a virtual meeting with Moncada on Friday, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing welcomes and appreciates the right decision made by Nicaragua. The time and conditions were all there for it to happen, Wang was quoted by China Daily as saying.

China has spent decades encouraging Taiwan's dwindling diplomatic allies to switch sides, including three others in Latin America in recent years -- Panama, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

On December 9, the Ortega administration announced that Nicaragua was following suit. "The People's Republic of China is the only legitimate government representing all of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory," Moncada said at the time.

A firebrand Marxist in his youth, Ortega ruled Nicaragua from 1979 to 1990.

He previously changed recognition to China in 1985 but a successor, Violeta Chamorro, switched it back five years later.

Stampede at India Religious Shrine Kills 12

SRINAGAR (Dispatches) - At least 12 people died and 13 were injured in a stampede at a religious shrine in India in the early hours of Saturday as thousands of pilgrims massed to offer prayers, officials said.

The disaster happened around 3:00 am (2130 GMT) while it was still dark on the route to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Indian-administered Kashmir, one of the country's most revered Hindu sites.

"People fell over each other... It was difficult to figure out whose leg or arms were tangled with whose," witness Ravinder, who gave only one name, told AFP by phone from the scene.

"I helped pick up eight bodies by the time ambulances arrived after about half an hour. I feel lucky to be alive but am still shaking with memory of what I saw," he said.

One official said that there was a rush to offer special prayers for New Year but this was not confirmed by others.

Millions of shrines dot Hindu-majority India's cities, towns and villages as well as remote sites in the Himalayas or in jungles in the south.

Some are hugely important pilgrimage sites and

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government has invested heavily in improving infrastructure to ease access.

Before the pandemic, every day about 100,000 devotees would trek up a steep winding track to the narrow cave containing the shrine to Vaishno Devi.

Authorities had capped the daily number to 25,000 but witnesses and press reports said that this may have been exceeded several times over.

Two stampedes in as many months in India in 2008 left more than 370 Hindus dead. Others in Kerala in 2011 and in Madhya Pradesh two years later each killed more than 100.

In the latest incident, other reports suggested an argument had broken out between devotees.

Rescue operations started immediately and the injured -- some of whom were reported to be in a serious condition -- were taken to hospital.

Video footage on social media showed small minivan ambulances with flashing lights rushing to hospitals while it was still dark, as well as massive crowds.

Access to the shrine was halted after the stampede but later resumed.



Blair and Covid Officials Receive Knighthoods



LONDON (Dispatches) - Queen Elizabeth II on Friday announced a knighthood for former prime minister Tony Blair, while the traditional New Year's Honors also decorated officials who spearheaded Britain's fight against Covid-19.

The Queen personally appointed Blair as Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the most senior order of knighthood.

She previously knighted former Conservative Prime Minister John Major in this way in 2005.

Blair, now 68, defeated Major with a landslide Labor victory in 1997 and spent a decade in office.

His successes included securing peace in Northern Ireland and massively expanding gay rights. But he was widely reviled at home for his support for the 2003 US-led war in Iraq. Blair said "It is an immense honor to be appointed Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and I am deeply grateful to Her Majesty the Queen."

The main New Year's Honours list gave knighthoods to Chris Whitty, the UK government's chief medical adviser, and England's deputy chief medical officer Jonathan Van-Tam.

Van-Tam in particular has gained a cult following over his colorful use of metaphors involving football and trains at Downing Street news conferences.

The Queen's traditional annual honors recognize the achievements and contributions of people across Britain, including a minority from the worlds of showbiz, sport and politics.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson then signs off on the choices, before the Queen awards the honor at ceremonies during the year.

This time nearly one in five honors were virus-related, the Cabinet Office said.

The recipients "have inspired and entertained us and given so much to their communities in the UK or in many cases around the world," Johnson said.

The chief scientific advisor to the government, Patrick Vallance, became a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath after receiving a knighthood in 2019. His counterparts in Scotland and Wales were also knighted Friday.



Velenjak Apt (\$2700)
250sq.m, 4bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Pasdaran Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

(\$2500)
Farmanieh
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, S, J
Large balcony
Nicely Furn

Gheitarieh (\$1600) 2bdrs, & F.F
Darrous (\$2000) 3bdrs, & F.F

Shahrak-e-Gharb (\$1800)
160sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F

(\$6000)
Elahieh bldg
4storey, 12bdrs
enough pkgs
renovated
Semi Furn

Jordan Apt (\$2000)
140sq.m, 2bdrs, & F.F

Cell: +989121907875
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
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China to Extend Preferential Tax Policies for Foreigners Until end-2023

BEIJING (Reuters) - China will extend preferential income tax policies for foreigners residing in the country to Dec. 31, 2023, the finance ministry said on Friday, as part of measures to ease the burden on taxpayers.

Previously, China said benefits and allowances for foreigners including housing rental and education for their children would cease to be income tax-exempt starting Jan. 1, 2022.

In recent days, the government has pledged to further cut taxes and fees in 2022 to support struggling businesses. China will also extend some favourable income tax policies to ease the burden for middle- and low-income groups.



Global Economy to Grow By About 4% in 2022

ONDON (Dispatches) - The year ahead will be dominated by efforts to fight inflation along with climate change, while global economic growth will be reasonably strong and stock markets weak, according to an economic forecaster.

The world starts the year with economies held back by a supply chain crisis and the rapid spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant, but the global economy is still expected to grow by about 4% in 2022, compared with an estimated 5.1% in 2021, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), a UK thinktank.

Douglas McWilliams, the founder and executive deputy chairman of the CEBR, said the group had been forecasting 6.7% growth for the UK in 2021 but reduced it to 6.6% after a weak December. "We estimate £3bn or so of lost GDP from people staying at home and not spending, plus the impact of the restrictions in Wales and Scotland." Similarly, the 2021 forecast for global growth was cut by 0.1 percentage points to 5.1%.

The new year will start slowly for the UK, but as supply issues get resolved and with unspent savings burning holes in people's pockets, GDP is forecast to grow by at least 4% in 2022.

The biggest issue facing policymakers around the world, especially in the US and the UK, is likely to be inflation, the thinktank said. The Bank of England unexpectedly lifted interest rates in December after a rise in inflation to a decade high of 5.1% and signalled that more rate rises will follow in 2022 as soaring energy costs are expected to push inflation to 6% in the spring.

The U.S. Federal Reserve has pencilled in three rate hikes next year and accelerated the rate at which it cuts spending on government bonds in the face of what one official called "alarmingly high inflation". The CEBR said inflation could jump beyond 6% in the UK and to more than 7% in the US, where it reached a 39-year high of 6.8% in November.

While wages will also rise amid a tight labour market with declining unemployment and growing numbers of vacancies, soaring inflation will lead to a cost-of-living squeeze in the UK. The Resolution Foundation thinktank has warned that UK households are facing a "cost-of-living catastrophe" because of stalling wages, and rising tax and energy bills.

In the face of higher interest rates and the rolling back of quantitative easing, global bond, equity and property markets are expected to fall around the world, with declines ranging from 10% to 25%, and some of the impact to last into 2023, the CEBR forecast.

While 2021 was the year when environmental concerns went mainstream and the business sector took a more aggressive stance than governments, 2022 will be one "where policy has changed [and] pledges have been made but the technology is still in its early stages", the CEBR said.

China to Scrap Subsidies for Electric Vehicles

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China will end subsidies for electric and hybrid cars at the end of the year, authorities have announced, saying the strength of sales in the sector meant state support was no longer needed.

In a statement published Friday, the Ministry of Finance said purchase subsidies would be reduced by 30 percent from the beginning of 2022 before being scrapped completely by the end of the year.

"Given the growth of the industry for vehicles with new energy, the sales trends and the smooth transition of manufacturers, the subsidies... will end on December 31," the ministry said.

"Vehicles registered after December 31, 2022 will not be subsidized."

Sales of electric and hybrid cars have boomed in China, with increases of more than 100 percent year-on-year in recent months.



The cars are set to represent 18 percent of all vehicle sales in 2022, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) estimated last week. In 2019, they accounted for only five percent.

Of the 27.5 million vehicles set to be sold this year, according to CAAM, five million will be electric and hybrids.

Overall growth in the world's largest market for vehicles will likely come in at 3.1 percent for 2021, according to CAAM -- the first year of sales growth since 2018.

China, the world's largest polluter, has set ambitious goals for the widespread adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles, and aims to have the majority of cars powered with clean energy by 2035.

S. Korea Exports Grow 25.8% y/y in 2021, Sharpest in 11 Years

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's exports expanded at their fastest pace in 11 years in 2021, with the total export value reaching a record high, supported by post-pandemic recoveries in global demand.

For the full year, exports rose 25.8% from a year earlier to \$644.54 billion, trade ministry data showed on Saturday, the fastest pace since 2010.

That also marked the first growth in three years after contractions of 5.5% and 10.4% in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

"Now is the time to head towards the \$700 billion export era ... The trade ministry will step up policy efforts so that industries and exports can tow the complete (economic) normalisation this year," Minister Moon Sung-wook said.

A breakdown by items showed exports of semiconductors jumped 29% year-on-year to a record \$128 billion, while those of petrochemicals also surged 54.8% to a record \$55.1 billion. Other items such as cars and steel jumped 24.2% and 37%, respectively.

By destination, exports to China, South Korea's biggest trading partner, rose 22.9%, and those to the United States and the European Union jumped 29.4% and 33.9%.

Meanwhile, imports for the full year jumped 31.5% to a record \$615.1 billion, rebounding from a 7.1% contraction in 2020.

Moon also said the ministry is reviewing joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and aims for more trade pacts to expand its export markets. Saturday's data also showed exports in the final month of the year expanded 18.3% year-on-year, extending growth into a 14th straight month, though the rate was slower than 32% in November. A Reuters' poll of 13 economists had expected 22% growth.

Total exports stood at \$60.74 billion in December, the largest ever monthly figure. A 35.1% jump in semiconductors exports led December growth, while overall exports to China and the United States also soared 20.8% and 22.9%, respectively.

Malaysia's Machinery and Parts Manufacturing Sector Remains Strong

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia's machinery and parts manufacturing sector remains strong and is committed to delivering quality products and service excellence despite global trade disruptions, according to the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade).

In a statement, the national trade promotion agency said the machinery industry has transformed from general fabrication and machining works to the assembly of higher-end machinery modules and components, including heavy machinery and precision components manufacturing.

Matrade said the machinery and equipment (M&E) industry is Malaysia's seventh largest export sector, contributing US\$9.41 billion (US\$1=RM4.17), or four per cent of total exports in 2020.

The top 10 export destinations for the M&E industry include Singapore, the United States, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Australia, Germany, and Taiwan.

"Malaysia's M&E capabilities are mainly in four subsectors, including specialized process machinery or equipment for specific industries; power generating machinery and equipment; general industrial machinery and equipment, components and parts; as well as metalworking machinery.

"It also covers the manufacturing of a broad category of products including heating and cooling equipment, factory automation, pumps, compressors, air conditioning plants, cold room equipment, elevators, cranes, conveyor systems, and welding machines. Malaysia is currently one of the world's largest exporters of air conditioning equipment," the agency said.

Matrade said other capabilities included manufacturing machine tools and parts for metalworking including laser-cutting machine, machining centres, Electro-Discharge Machines (EDM), milling and forging machines.

Malaysia is also renowned for producing semiconductor equipment. It is currently the tenth largest in the world with electrical and electronics (E&E) being the largest sector. This has helped to position Malaysia as a production base for the world's top electronics companies, it said.

The machinery and parts sector also excels in deep water production equipment for the oil and gas industry, robotic automation solutions production for the food and beverage industry, precision moulding equipment, and power generation.

Malaysia also produces generating sets for power plants, refinery, exploration platforms, petrochemical plants, and commercial buildings.

"Malaysia's M&E industry is highly competitive and we are consistently seeking to innovate with the most advanced technologies and automation. We actively explore Industry 4.0 technologies to reshape our manufacturing activities through the adoption of digitalisation and technological transformation.

EU Drafts Plan to Label Gas and Nuclear Investments as Green

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) -The European Union has drawn up plans to label some natural gas and nuclear energy projects as "green" investments after a year-long battle between governments over which investments are truly climate friendly.

The European Commission is expected to propose rules in January deciding whether gas and nuclear projects will be included in the EU "sustainable finance taxonomy".

This is a list of economic activities and the environmental criteria they must meet to be labelled as green investments. By restricting the "green" label to truly climate friendly projects, the system aims to make those investments more attractive to private capital, and stop "greenwashing", where companies or investors overstate their eco-friendly credentials.

Brussels has also made moves to apply the taxonomy to some EU funding, meaning the rules could decide which projects are eligible for certain public finance.

A draft of the Commission's proposal, seen by Reuters, would label nuclear power plant investments as green if the project has a plan, funds and a site to safely dispose of radioactive waste. To be deemed green, new nuclear plants must receive construction permits before 2045.

Investments in natural gas power plants would also be deemed green if they produce emissions below 270g of CO2 equivalent per kilowatt hour, replace a more polluting fossil fuel plant, and receive a construction permit by December 31, 2030. Such plants must meet other conditions including that they are technically equipped to burn low-carbon gases.

Gas power generation would be labelled green on the grounds that it is a "transitional" activity — defined as one that is not fully sustainable, but which has emissions below industry average and does not lock in polluting assets during the shift to clean energy.

The Commission could not immediately be reached for comment.

EU countries and a panel of expert advisors will scrutinize the draft proposal, which could change before it is due to be published later in January. Once published, the proposal could be vetoed by a majority of EU countries or by the European Parliament.

The policy has been mired in lobbying from governments for more than a year and EU countries disagree on which fuels are truly sustainable.

Natural gas emits roughly half the CO2 emissions of coal when burned in power plants, but gas infrastructure is also associated with leaks of methane, a potent planet-warming gas.

The EU's expert advisers had recommended that gas plants not be labelled as green investments unless they met a lower 100g CO2/kwh emissions limit, based on the deep emissions cuts scientists say are needed to avoid disastrous climate change.

Pakistan Tables Mini-Budget In National Assembly



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's National Assembly introduced a 'mini budget' which reportedly fails to solve problems caused by increasing inflation under the Imran Khan-led govt.

In the backdrop of a derailed economy, on December 30 Pakistan's National Assembly introduced a 'mini budget' which fails to solve the increasing problems caused by inflation that the Prime Minister Imran-led government is struggling to contain. At the outset, Pakistani Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin dismissed every suggestion of the new taxation regulation being inflammatory in existence.

Tarin further refuted claims of withdrawal of tax exemptions and an increase in the sales tax rate on a large number of goods ranging from iodised salt to pharmaceutical ingredients, baby formula milk and cars and more, Dawn reported.

However, it is argued that the inflationary impact will be somewhat milder than what was generally being anticipated. Moreover, these fiscal actions were also required to support the recent actions taken by the Pakistan State Bank in order to contain money supply in the market to limit inflation.

Also, the passage of the bill along with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Act, 1956. Since then, the SBP Act has been amended several times to reflect changes to economic thought globally, including advocating for an independent role of central regulatory banks. Major revisions in the SBP Act came in 1994, 1997, 2012 and 2015.

Pakistan's return to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program will extract other avenues, leading to the immediate release of a \$1 billion tranche from the IMF and assist the country in raising funds from the international bond market to meet its foreign payment obligations in the next six months and beyond.

Shipping, Flight Lines Launched Between Iran and Qatar

BUSHEHR (IP) - The governor of Bushehr said: considering the holding of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, efforts are being made to launch shipping and flight lines from this province to Qatar. Bushehr Governor Ahmad Mohammadzadeh added: "Holding the World Cup in Qatar is an opportunity that should be used."

He said: The closest route from Iran to Qatar is in Bushehr province, and in this regard, in addition to ports, there are five airports in this province that should use these capacities.



Turkey's Lira Logs Worst Year in Two Decades Under Erdogan

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's lira has logged its worst year since President Tayyip Erdogan came to power nearly two decades ago, despite his appeal yesterday for Turks to trust his unorthodox policies of slashing interest rates in the face of soaring inflation.

The lira — by far the worst performer in emerging markets in 2021, as well as in the last few years — shed 44 per cent of its value against the dollar over the year and 19 per cent in the last week alone.

The currency crisis accelerated in recent months, rattling the US\$720 billion (RM3 trillion) economy, largely due to Erdogan's "new economic programme" focused on exports and credit despite the lira's collapse and inflation of more than 21 per cent.

To ease the turmoil, the president unveiled a scheme two weeks ago in which the state protects converted local deposits from losses versus hard currencies, sparking a sharp 50 per cent rally in the lira with support from the central bank.

Yesterday, Erdogan — whose opinion poll ratings are sliding ahead of an election in 2023 — called on Turks to keep all their savings in lira and shift gold into banks, saying the market volatility was largely under control.

"As long as we don't take our own money as a benchmark, we are doomed to sink. The Turkish Lira, our money, that is what we will go forward with. Not with this foreign currency or that foreign currency," he told a business group.

"We have been waging the battle to save the economy from the cycle of high interest rates and high inflation," he said, reiterating his unorthodox view that high rates lift prices.

In response, the lira weakened to as far as 13.63 before recovering to end the day flat at 13.1875.

The currency crisis, the second since 2018, has badly eroded Turks' savings and earnings while the record volatility has upended households' and businesses' budgets and future plans. The lira has whipsawed from 18.4 to 10.25 versus the dollar in the last two weeks, capping its worst year since 2001, when International Monetary Fund support stemmed a crisis in Turkey.

Erdogan's conservative AK Party began governing the next year. Subsequent economic gains reversed around 2013 when measures of Turks' prosperity, equality and employment began sliding.

The currency crash was triggered by the central bank's 500 basis points of rate cuts to 14 per cent since September, carried out under pressure from Erdogan, who appointed the bank governor in March and has since replaced much of its leadership.

Economists and former central bankers have called the easing reckless given inflation is expected to hit 30 per cent in December due to the lira depreciation. Goldman Sachs expects it to reach as high as 40 per cent by mid-2022.

The new deposit scheme is intended to reverse a tide of dollarization. Under it, the state covers the difference between deposit rates and the foreign exchange and gold rate for lira converted into the new instrument.

Marek Drimal at Societe Generale said it provided some backstop, though "market participants need to see tangible steps to address underlying problems in the economy".

Many economists have warned that if the lira continues to depreciate, the scheme could



further stoke inflation and add to the state's fiscal burden. Some political analysts say Erdogan is betting that protecting deposits, along with a 50 per cent hike in the minimum wage, will halt the slide in his poll ratings and open a window for early elections.

Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati said earlier in the week that Turks' dollar holdings have fallen, but official data showed local holdings of hard currencies, which includes companies, soared to a record US\$238.97 billion last week.

At the same time the central bank's net foreign currency holdings — its effective buffer against financial crisis — plunged to a near two-decade low of US\$8.63 billion.

The central bank announced five direct interventions to support the lira in early December, including more than US\$2 billion in the first three efforts.

It has announced none since the anti-dollarisation scheme was unveiled on December 20, though its reserves drop-off signals it backed some US\$8 billion in additional state interventions, according to bankers and others.

Erdogan's economic policy has sent real yields deeply negative and amounted to a red flag for foreign investors, who have fled Turkey in the last five years, a period in which the lira has shed some three-quarters of its value.

The premium demanded to hold Turkish hard currency sovereign bonds over safe-haven US Treasuries soared by 136 basis points throughout 2021, based on the JPMorgan EMBI global diversified index.

The cost of insuring exposure to Turkish debt based on five-year credit default swaps (CDS) nearly doubled over the year to 566 basis points from 305, IHS Markit data showed.

Indonesia Bans Coal Exports in January Over Domestic Supply Worries



JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia, the world's biggest exporter of coal used in electricity generation, on Saturday said it has banned January exports of the fuel in a move aimed at safeguarding its domestic power supply.

Rising demand for electricity in the country risks widespread blackouts unless more supplies are diverted to power stations, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said in a statement.

Indonesia exports the majority of its coal but mandates that producers must set aside minimum amounts to supply the nation's power plants.

The decision comes against a backdrop of surging demand, as post-pandemic economic growth across the world drives electricity needs that cannot be met from less-polluting alternatives.

The International Energy Agency last month said global demand for coal, the world's biggest source of greenhouse gases, hit a record in 2021 and would be sustained into 2022, threatening plans set out at last year's COP26 climate change conference to cut emissions.

Last January, Indonesia exported almost 30 million tons of coal, according to the Central Statistics Bureau.

The export ban was imposed after coal miners failed to meet the so-called Domestic Market Obligation, under which they are obliged to supply at least 25 percent of a mine's approved production plan at a maximum sales price of US\$70 per metric ton -- less than half the global benchmark price.

The temporary export ban would prevent almost 20 power plants providing a total of 10.9 gigawatts of power from shutting down, a senior official at the ministry, Ridwan Jamaludin, said in a statement Saturday. The government would re-evaluate the policy after January 5, he said.

"We can't let the companies' disobedience to comply with the DMO disrupt the investment climate and the national economy," he said. Indonesia has pledged to stop building new coal-fired power plants from 2023 and to be carbon neutral by 2060.

However, despite an outcry from environmental activists, the current development of the Suralaya coal plant on Java island is still ongoing. The enormous plant is one of the biggest in Southeast Asia and can power about 14 million homes a year.

Singapore to Bring in Much-Needed Migrant Workers

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore will bring in much-needed migrant workers and ensure international talents feel welcome and are able to complement Singaporeans, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on January 1.

Singapore taps labour, skilled manpower and professionals mostly from Bangladesh, China, India and the Philippines.

"We will also press on to bring in much-needed migrant workers and ensure international talents feel welcome and are able to complement Singaporeans," the Channel News Asia reported, citing the Prime Minister's New Year message, laying out the recovery path for the COVID-19-battered economy.

Mr. Lee added that 2022 will be a "time of transition" as the economy steadily recovers and the city state reconnects with the rest of the world.

Expecting the gross domestic product (GDP) to grow by 3% to 5% next year, Mr. Lee said Singapore's economy "should grow in step with global economic recovery", barring fresh disruptions.

The government is "planning ahead to achieve longer-term goals", he added.

For instance, it will press on with industry transformation efforts to enhance existing strengths, and help companies restructure and workers upgrade their skills.

"As we brace ourselves for the impact of Omicron, we can be quietly confident that we will cope with whatever lies ahead," he said.

Mr. Lee said that the government's immediate tasks go beyond managing COVID-19, noting that Singapore must generate new growth, new jobs and prosperity in a post-pandemic economy.

Much will depend on a stable global and regional environment, and central to this are the relations between the U.S. and China.

"The differences between the two powers remain many and deep, but their recent high-level engagements and practical cooperation on climate change are encouraging," the channel quoted Mr. Lee as saying.

"We will continue to pursue trade liberalisation and regional integration for the benefit of our people, including through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which comes into force on the first day of 2022," said Mr. Lee.

The 10 member country economic partnership is the world's largest trade bloc led by China with Australia, Brunei,



Cambodia, Japan, Laos, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

For its part, Singapore will continue engaging partners "near and far", Mr. Lee said.

However, Mr. Lee cautioned that the fight against COVID-19 is not over, as the new Omicron variant has brought new uncertainties. Singapore reported 344 new COVID-19 cases and 158 Omicron

variant infections on December 31.

"Thankfully, our position is now greatly strengthened compared to two years ago," he said.

"We have rolled out booster jabs and started vaccinating children below 12. We have also learnt to better manage the public health challenges while minimising the hit on our economy.

"As we brace ourselves for the impact of Omicron, we can be quietly confident that we will cope with whatever lies ahead." Meanwhile, Singapore will ease COVID-19 measures for travellers outside the vaccinated travel lane (VTL) arrangement.

From 11.59 p.m. on January 7, 2022, non-VTL travellers from category 2 to 4 (rated as coronavirus risk) countries will no longer need to take on-arrival COVID-19 tests, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced on December 31.

Travellers from category 2 and 3 countries are required to serve stay-home notice at home for seven and 10 days respectively. Those from category 4 countries need to serve 10 days at a dedicated facility.

The earlier requirement for on-arrival tests "was to pick up the Omicron cases early, as the variant was new, and we wanted to learn more about it", said MOH in a press release.

"As we have gathered more information on the Omicron variant, we have further assessed that OATs (on-arrival tests) for non-VTL travellers ... are no longer required," the Channel quoted MOH.

The travellers will have to test negative on a PCR test at the end of their notice period, "further reducing the risk of onward transmission", said the ministry.

VTL travellers will continue to be required to take COVID-19 tests up till day seven of their arrival. This enhanced measure will be extended by four weeks from its initial cut-off date of Jan 2 until Jan 30.

As of December 30, Singapore has detected 912 imported Omicron cases, 685 of whom were detected through the enhanced testing regime for VTL travellers.

Int'l Bodies...

FROM PAGE 1

It will be a good test for the UNGA to prove its impartiality for spreading peace and justice in the world but we do not pin any hope on an anti-U.S. reaction or resolution from the UNGA because of bitter previous experiences.



In another move on Saturday, the secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights criticized silence and inaction of international bodies over the killing of the country's police forces in their fight against terrorists, armed smugglers and thugs, saying countries and global organizations must uphold their responsibilities in dealing with the elements that undermine peace, stability and security.

In a Saturday letter to Michelle Bachelet Jeria, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, Kazem Gharibabadi, who also serves as the Iranian judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs, said some countries are pursuing a selective and political approach to terrorist groups and international smugglers.

He added that around 40 Iranian police forces have lost their lives from March 21 to December 3, 2021 in the fight against criminals and armed smugglers equipped with all kinds of smart weapons and heavy equipment.

Imagine this that Iranian enforcement forces kill some drugs smugglers in their encounters or Iranian court sentences the smugglers to death penalties. Suddenly all international bodies and even this Ms. Bachelet Jeria begin criticizing Tehran and accuse Iran of committing anti-human rights acts like what happened during the execution of a young murderer.

Pointing to "numerous" statements issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights against Iran, Gharibabadi slammed lack of even a single statement condemning the terrorist and armed acts against the police forces of a country that has "rendered the greatest services to the international community through the fight against drug trafficking, human trafficking and organized crime."

History has shown us that Iranians or other nations who do not give in to the Western powers should not expect any impartiality from such international bodies which are used as tools for paving the ground for domination of the arrogant powers. But one day the whole world will realize this and will take a serious action against these bodies and will reform them in favor of justice and impartiality. Time is ticking.

UNGA Urged to...

FROM PAGE 1

The statement also lamented the fact that the US government infringes upon international laws and regulations via its extreme unilateralism while the international community remains silent.

Undoubtedly, it continued, international peace will be even more in danger if the perpetrators of the terrorist attack are free to walk with impunity.

General Soleimani was assassinated near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020. His companions, including Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who served as the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were also killed during the raid.

Early on January 8, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) targeted the US-run Ain al-Assad air base in Iraq's western province of Anbar with a barrage of missiles in revenge.

Resistance Warns Israel...

FROM PAGE 1

Citing unnamed sources, Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television network said Hamas had informed Egyptian mediators that if Israel struck Gaza, it would lead to a response.

In a separate development, Daoud Shehab, the spokesman of the Gaza-based Islamic Jihad resistance group, warned Israel against the consequence of possible death of hunger-striking Palestinian inmate Hisham Abu Hawash.

Abu Hawash, a father of five children, was arrested in October 2020 and held in an Israeli jail under administrative detention, a form of imprisonment in which the individual is never tried and can be held indefinitely. He is one among several other hunger-striking Palestinians who are demanding an end to their detention without charge.

Ban Overall Winner of Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Ichi Ban was confirmed Saturday as the overall handicap winner of the gruelling Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race, pipping rival Celestial which finished faster but was hit by a time penalty. It was the third Sydney-Hobart handicap victory for the 52-foot (15.9-metre) Ichi Ban, owned and skippered by Matt Allen. But the win was overshadowed by controversy because of the penalty against Celestial, imposed after protests were lodged by Ichi Ban and by the race organisers.

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Thailand Win Suzuki Cup For Record Sixth Time

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - ingapore (AFP) – Thailand lifted the AFF Suzuki Cup for a record sixth time on Saturday, after a 2-2 draw with Indonesia in the final's second leg sealed a 6-2 aggregate victory at the National Stadium in Singapore. Ricky Kambuaya gave Indonesia some hope of turning around the four-goal deficit from the first leg with an early goal, but the Thais put the match out of reach with a strike by Adisak Kraisorn and an own goal early in the second half.

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SPORTS

MONDAY JANUARY 3, 2022

Spain, Argentina Secure Easy Wins at ATP Cup

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Spain and Argentina both won their ATP Cup ties with some ease as men's professional tennis returned for the 2022 season in the lucrative team tournament at Sydney's Olympic Park.

Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut and Pablo Carreno Busta made light of the absence of Rafa Nadal with contrasting victories over Chileans Cristian Garin and Alejandro Tabilo. Carreno Busta was forced to come from 0-3 down in both sets, and again from 1-3 in the decisive tiebreak, before overcoming tricky lefthander Tabilo 6-4 7-6 (4) in the first match of the year on Ken Rosewall Arena.

Bautista Agut then steamrolled world number 17 Garin 6-0 6-3 to give the Spaniards an unassailable lead in the Group A tie before Alejandro Davidovich Fokina and Pedro Martinez made it a 3-0 sweep with a tough 7-6(3) 4-6 10-7 win over Marcelo Tomas Barrios Vera and Alejandro Tabilo.

"It was very early on the first day of the year to play tennis," said Bautista Agut, the world number 19. "Today was a good start for me, I played a very solid game, I felt had a good rhythm, a good speed on the ball, I'm really happy."

Federico Delbonis earlier made light work of Aleksandre Metreveli with a 6-1 6-2 win at the Sydney Super Dome to give Argentina a 1-0 lead in their Group D tie against Georgia.

Diego Schwartzman then trounced Nikoloz Basilashvili by the same score before Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni beat Zura Tkemaladze and Saba Purtseladze, again 6-1 6-2, in the doubles to complete the 3-0 win.

In the evening session, Greece fell to a 2-1 loss to Poland as world number four Stefanos Tsitsipas pulled out of his singles match with Hubert Hurkacz due to a niggling right elbow issue.



Kamil Majchrzak gave Poland the lead with a comfortable 6-1 6-4 win over Michail Pervolarakis before world number nine Hurkacz swept aside Tsitsipas' replacement, Aristotelis Thanos, 6-1 6-2.

"I was expecting to play Stefanos and I was preparing tactics with my coach and Marcin (Matkowski), so it was difficult when I found out," said Hurkacz.

"I'd never played (Thanos) before, or seen him play. He had a big serve and fortunately I was returning quite well and put pressure on him."

Tsitsipas, however, returned for the doubles rubber, partnering Pervolarakis to claim a hard-fought 6-4 5-7 10-8 win over Hurkacz and Jan Zielinski.

In the other Group A encounter, Filip Krajcinovic and Nikola Cacic helped Serbia, who are without world number one Novak Djokovic, earn a 2-1 victory over Norway after downing Casper Ruud and Viktor Durasovic 7-6(3) 6-3 in the doubles decider.

The two teams had shared the singles rubbers, with Krajcinovic overcoming Durasovic 6-2 7-5 in the opening match before world number eight Ruud saw off a spirited challenge from Dusan Lajovic 6-3 7-5 to level things up.

"It was a high-quality match from the beginning until the end," said Ruud. "Near the end I got a bit nervous... I haven't been playing matches for four or five weeks now, so it is a bit difficult to get that rhythm going."

The third edition of the \$10 million tournament has 16 teams divided into four groups playing at two venues at Sydney's Olympic Park.

The absence of Djokovic, Nadal and Roger Federer for various reasons has robbed the event of some sparkle, but 14 of the world's top 20 players are in action as they prepare for the start of the Australian Open on Jan. 17.

Man Utd Not Only About Ronaldo-Fernandes Partnership

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United interim boss Ralf Rangnick said he hopes to improve the understanding between all his players on the pitch and not just Portuguese attackers Cristiano Ronaldo and Bruno Fernandes.

Ronaldo has scored 14 goals in all competitions since he rejoined the club in the close season while Fernandes -- one of United's key players last season -- has suffered a dip in form prompting questions on whether the pair can play together.

Fernandes was suspended for United's 3-1 Premier League win over Burnley on Thursday and Rangnick said he was happy with the way his players adapted.

"Against Burnley, we had to play without Bruno and again we did well, we played with two strikers, two wingers, two number sixes, every player in his best possible position," Rangnick told Sky Sports.

"This is another thing we're trying to achieve, no matter which formation we're trying to play we have every player in his best possible position.

"So it's not only about the partnership between Cristiano and Bruno, it's about partnerships between other players."

DeRozan Buzzer Beater Lifts Bulls

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Chicago's DeMar DeRozan sank a three-pointer at the buzzer to lift the Bulls over Indiana 108-106, stretching their NBA win streak to six games, while LeBron James scored 43 points to spark a Los Angeles Lakers romp.

DeRozan added six assists, three rebounds and three steals while scoring 13 of his game-high 28 points in the fourth quarter as the Bulls improved to 23-10, matching Brooklyn for the Eastern Conference lead.

"I looked up at the clock, I said, 'I've got to make something happen,'" DeRozan said. "I just tried to get enough space to get it up. As soon as it left my hand it felt good."

DeRozan rated the 28-foot game-winning shot among his best buzzer beaters.

"I rank it up there," DeRozan said. "It was one of those games where it felt like nothing was going our way. It felt like we were getting beat up."

"But we grinded it out and won it on a big shot. It was a hell of a win to pull out."

The Bulls, missing coach Billy Donovan due to Covid-19, have thrived despite adversity.

"It's credit to our hard work," DeRozan said. "For our team to be able to hold all those things off and, at the end of the year, to be on top of our conference speaks volumes to what type of team we are."

In the NBA's final game of 2021 and the first game for James since turning 37 on Thursday, the four-time NBA champion delivered a season-high point total on 16-of-26 shooting, going 5-of-10 from 3-point range to lead the Lakers over visiting Portland 139-106.

James enjoyed his 67th career game with 40 or more points, with 27 points and 10 rebounds at halftime.

He contributed 14 rebounds, four assists, two steals and two blocked shots without a turnover in 29 minutes for the Lakers, seventh in the Western Conference at 18-19.

Lakers guard Russell Westbrook delivered his NBA-best ninth triple double of the season, and fourth in a row, with 15 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists.



Raducanu Caps Stunning Year With New Year Honor

LONDON (AFP) - Emma Raducanu was named in Britain's New Year Honors list on Friday -- alongside a clutch of Olympic stars -- in recognition of her stunning breakthrough victory at the US Open.

Cyclists Jason and Laura Kenny -- who have won 12 Olympic gold medals between them -- received a knighthood and damehood and there was recognition for Tokyo gold medallists Tom Daley, Adam Peaty and Max Whitlock.

The honors list recognizes outstanding achievements in various fields including showbusiness, sport and politics, as well as the contributions of people across society.

A number of medical chiefs leading Britain's battle against coronavirus have also been given awards in the latest list.

Raducanu, who became the first British woman to win a Grand Slam since Virginia Wade in 1977, has been made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

"It makes me immensely proud and grateful to be listed to receive an MBE from

Her Majesty the Queen," said the now 19-year-old Raducanu, who did not drop a set at Flushing Meadows on her run to the title.

"This year has been full of amazing surprises for me so to end 2021 with this appointment is very special."

Jason Kenny has received a knighthood after becoming Britain's most decorated Olympian of all time at the Tokyo Games, winning his ninth medal -- and seventh gold -- on the final day.

His wife, Laura Kenny, Britain's most successful female Olympian, has been given a damehood -- the female equivalent of a knighthood.

British Cycling's performance director, Stephen Park, who himself becomes a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire), praised the Kennys for their achievements.

"Not only are Jason and Laura true masters of their craft, they are also wonderful teammates, role models and ambassadors for our sport," he said.

Diving star Daley, who won his first Olympic gold at his fourth Games, was awarded the OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) for services to diving, LGBTQ rights and charity.

Southgate Chases England's Missing Piece

LONDON (Dispatches) - England manager Gareth Southgate has set his sights on the nation's "missing piece" as he targets World Cup glory in 2022.

England were denied a first major trophy since 1966 when they lost the Euro 2020 final on penalties to Italy in July.

That heartbreaking defeat at Wembley came three years after England lost to Croatia in the 2018 World Cup semi-finals.

But Southgate's men are back in the hunt for silverware after qualifying for the 2022 World Cup with ease.

England will head to Qatar as one of the favorites and Southgate knows winning a trophy would cap his impressive reign.

"We went to Russia in 2018 having not won a knockout game for 10 years, and that was our first objective," Southgate told Sky News.

"Now we're in a position where we've been to a final, we've turned over a lot of historic records and created moments of our own history, so the missing piece for us is a trophy and that's incredibly difficult but we've got that belief that we can do that."

"We know there are other teams, there are two teams (Italy and Portugal) that have got to a play-off that could win that trophy, frankly, so the level is really high and is quite even among the top teams."

"Although we feel that we've got good players, we know other teams have got good players as well... we know the level is high but we feel we're in that group of teams."



Man City Late Show At Arsenal Opens Up 11-Point Lead

LONDON (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola admitted an exhausted Manchester City had luck on their side to open up an 11-point Premier League lead as the English champions came from behind to beat 10-man Arsenal 2-1 to start 2022 off on a winning note.

City are well on course for their fourth title in five seasons thanks to an 11-game winning run, but were made to toil until Rodri's winner deep into stoppage time by the Gunners.

A 5-0 thrashing by City when the sides last met in August saw Arsenal off to their worst start to a league season in 67 years. But Mikel Arteta's men have rallied to rise to fourth in the table and showed why as they deservedly led at half-time through Bukayo Saka's seventh goal of the season.

Riyad Mahrez levelled from the penalty spot before Gabriel Magalhaes stupidly got himself sent off for two quickfire bookings just before the hour mark.

And the 10 men just failed to hold out for a point when Rodri poked home from close range after Aymeric Laporte's shot was blocked.

Plastic bottles rained down on the Spanish international as he celebrated with the Arsenal supporters furious as they voiced their frustration at the officiating after seeing a penalty appeal of their own waived away in the first half.

"They were better," said Guardiola. "It was difficult because we didn't have energy."

City are one of only two Premier League teams not to have had a match postponed in recent weeks due to rising cases of coronavirus, meaning they have played nine games in the last 32 days.

Arsenal's clash with Wolves in midweek had been called off and they looked the fresher side.

