

Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Disease In Iran Increased to 132,202 With 30 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

# IRAN NEWS

Second Trade Meeting of the Chambers of Commerce of Iran And Iraqi Kurdistan in the Framework of Economic Transformation and Development Of Trade Was Held for Four Days (January 18-21, 2022) in Erbil

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## UNGA Holocaust Resolution Abuse of Int'l Mechanisms by Israel

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has rejected a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly over the Holocaust, calling it an abuse of international mechanisms by the Zionist regime to cover up its crimes.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that a resolution issued on the Holocaust at the United Nations General Assembly and its articles are unrelated to the Islamic Republic, and called it an abuse of international mechanisms by the Zionist regime to cover up its crimes, declaring it completely null.

The statement reads:

As our country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York has in an explanatory statement officially proclaimed the Islamic Republic of Iran's stance on the Holocaust resolution, it is reiterated that the racist Zionist regime abuses international bodies to cover up its daily crimes against Palestinians. This move by the Zionist regime is another attempt at abusing international mechanisms to cover up the regime's daily crimes, which unfortunately have the unconditional support of the West these days.

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## Iran, India

## Establish Shipping Links

NEW DELHI (Dispatches)- Deputy Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Jalil Eslami has said direct container shipping lines have been established between Iran's southeastern port of Chabahar and two Western Indian ports of Nhava Sheva and Kandla.

According to Eslami, regular container service with a traffic schedule of 10 to 15 days is performed by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) through these lines.

The official noted that PMO is going to offer the necessary tariff incentives and facilities on tolls and transportation costs to support the traders that use the lines.

He pointed out that according to the schedule, the first container service through the mentioned route will enter Iran's Shahid Beheshti port on February 16, 2022.

Iran and India had previously launched shipping lines between Chabahar and the Indian ports of Mumbai, and Mundra.

The first shipping route between the two countries was put into operation in 2017 between Iran's Chabahar port and Mumbai.

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## Tehran Denies Interim Agreement in Vienna Talks



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - In reaction to a foreign media claim that an interim agreement has been proposed in Vienna, a source close to the Iranian negotiating team said that such an agreement was not on the agenda of Iran.

A source close to the negotiating team rejected the news released by foreign media that an interim agreement has been proposed in Vienna.

An interim agreement has never been on Iran's agenda, and Iran will only accept a credible and lasting agreement, the source told the IRNA news agency on Saturday.

NBC in a report on Saturday claimed that Russia has offered Iran an interim nuclear deal to help revive the JCPOA.

As part of an effort to revive the international nuclear deal with Iran, Russia has discussed a possible interim agreement with Iran in recent weeks that would involve limited sanctions relief in return for reimposing some restrictions on Tehran's nuclear program, NBC News quoted two senior US official, one Congressional official, one former US official and four other people familiar with the discussions as claiming about the issue of lifting of unilateral US sanctions against Iran.

The sources said the U.S. is aware of Russia's proposal to Iran, which comes as concern grows within the Biden administration that time is running out on negotiations between Iran and world powers over a full return to the 2015 nuclear deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, NBC claimed.

While the officials and people familiar with the discussions said Russia's talks with Iran about an interim deal have been conducted with the knowledge of the US, senior Biden administration officials distanced the U.S. from the Russian effort, the report added.

The report comes as Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations announced on Friday that Tehran does not want an interim agreement, and according to NBC News, Iran has so far rejected the proposal presented by Russia, the officials and other people familiar with the discussions said.

The eighth round of talks on the removal of anti-Iranian sanctions began in Austria capital of Vienna on December 27 and the negotiators are busy turning ideas into words and sentences.

Meanwhile a senior Biden administration official said an interim "arrangement" is not under serious discussion.

"Though we cannot speak for any discussions that may have taken place between Russia and Iran, at this stage we are certain that no such interim arrangement is being seriously discussed," the official said. "Regarding an interim deal, we will not negotiate in the press or comment on specific claims about the negotiations. Our timeline is based on a technical assessment of Iran's nuclear progress rather than a temporal clock."

## U.S. Safety Firm Withdraws Certification for Two Oil Tankers

LONDON (Dispatches) - Two tankers have had their environmental and safety classification withdrawn by a U.S. company that provides such certification, after accusations by a U.S. advocacy group that they had shipped cargoes of Iranian oil, documents seen by Reuters show.

Countries targeted by tougher U.S. sanctions, including Iran and Venezuela, have responded to the mounting pressure with elaborate strategies to circumvent restrictions on their oil exports. read more

Top oil shipping companies say they have in turn responded by tightening guidelines and deploying technology to prevent accidental sanctions breaches, which U.S. officials have said could lead to them being cut out of the dollar financial system and having assets seized.

Several shipping sources involved in legal advisory and insurance services to the industry have told Reuters that inadvertent breaches are also a growing danger for ship certification societies such as American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), which in the past month withdrew cover for the two tankers.

"Classification societies are faced with the challenge of keeping up with Iran's tactics in order to avoid facing sanctions themselves," Claire Jungman, chief of staff at United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI), said.

Classification societies provide services such as checking that ships are seaworthy.

UANI, the U.S. group, which monitors Iran-related tanker traffic through ship and satellite tracking, alerted ABS in December to what it said were transfers of Iranian oil involving several vessels, including the Panama-flagged Karo and the Belize-flagged Elsa, correspondence between the two groups seen by Reuters shows.

Reuters was not able to find email or telephone numbers for the owners of the two tankers.

Iran views U.S. sanctions as illegal and has said it will make every effort to sidestep them. "There is strong will in Iran to increase oil exports despite the unjust and illegal U.S. sanctions," Iran's oil minister Javad Owji told state TV in September, without elaborating on how Tehran planned to overcome sanctions.

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## ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian Massacre in Yemen Goes On

Saudi-led coalition's massacre and crimes in Yemen and against Yemenis continue while the international bodies and especially the Westerners are indifferent and even they have given a nod of approval for such a crime to those savage forces.

While Saudi-led coalition pours tons of bombs and missiles over Yemeni, on Wednesday the United Nations Security Council was busy for approving a resolution in defense of Zionists and the Holocaust and it bespeaks the indifference of the world regarding Yemenis who are suffering from hunger and invasions.

On Friday, Yemen's Supreme Political Council said the massacres committed by the Saudi-led coalition "will not go unpunished," condemning international silence on the atrocities against the Yemeni people.

According to Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television network, the council said in a statement on Friday that "those who are silent on the massacres" should "swallow their tongues when the screams of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and their users rise," in an apparent reference to the United States and the Israeli regime.

According to the statement, the targeting of telecommunication networks means the coalition aims to "commit more crimes away from the media." Referring to the coalition members as "dirty tools of the Zionists and the Americans," the council stated, "Despite your crimes, you will fail as before." The statement emphasized that the Yemeni army and allied fighters from popular committees will "respond forcefully to all aggressors."

Also on Friday, crowds of Yemenis took to the streets of the capital Sana'a and other cities to condemn coalition bombardment of Sa'ada and Hudaydah. Seventy people were killed and nearly 140 others injured in an attack that targeted a detention center in Sa'ada earlier in the day. And on Thursday, the telecommunications building in Hudaydah was hit.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies - including the UAE - launched a brutal war on Yemen in March 2015. The war was launched to eliminate Yemen's Ansarullah movement and reinstall former President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh. But the campaign, accompanied by a tight siege, has failed to reach its goals, although it has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemeni people.

The UN refers to the situation in Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories.

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## Iran Resumes Exporting Gas to Turkey

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has resumed exporting gas to Turkey which has been suspended due to a technical fault.

"Gas exports to Turkey, which had been suspended yesterday following a gas leak at a station on the Turkish side, have resumed," the Iranian Oil Ministry's news agency SHANA reported. It added that the export of Iran's gas was suspended for a short time because the pressure boosting station in Turkey had to make some changes in order to receive gas by reducing the pressure.

The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has reduced its supply of natural gas to Turkey over technical problems amid reports suggesting that freezing temperatures have caused a record surge in domestic use of gas in Iran.

Turkey's state-run energy company BOTAS said in a Thursday statement that gas imports from Iran had reduced to a third of the daily supply normally provided by the NIGC as the company promised it would do its best to minimize the impacts of the cut on its customers in Turkey.

Turkey relies for 16% of its gas demand on Iran while a bulk of its gas import takes place from Russia and Azerbaijan.

Iran has been faced with a rapidly increasing demand for natural gas in recent years as the country has connected many of its fuel-burning power plants to the national gas pipeline network.



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# Supreme Leader to Receive Group of Ahl al-Bayt Eulogists

TEHRAN (IRNA)- A group of Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) eulogists will meet with Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei today (Sunday) on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra .

The eulogists will meet the Supreme Leader on Sunday January 3th in Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh, observing the health protocols issued to counter the coronavirus pandemic.

## President Calls for Observing COVID-Related Protocols

*IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK*

**TEHRAN – President Seye Ebrahim Raisi praised the efforts and sacrifices made in the fight against coronavirus and the significant reduction in the number of deaths due to coronavirus, and stressed the need to maintain, safeguard and improve the current state of health.**

Speaking on Saturday at the meeting of the National Task Force Against Coronavirus, Raisi thanked the healthcare workers, universities of medical sciences across the country and all those involved in fighting coronavirus, saying, “Today, for the sincere and tireless efforts and sacrifices of all related institutions and people’s cooperation, we have relatively good conditions compared to other countries, and in order to fully control this disease, it is necessary to continue to follow the health protocols carefully”.

Referring to the effectiveness of the vaccine in controlling the spread of coronavirus, the President said, “It is necessary for the mass media and scientific figures to explain and convince the importance and effectiveness of corona vaccine for those people who are still skeptical, and explain the importance of receiving the third dose to them”.

President Raisi also called on the officials of various agencies to seriously control the observation and monitoring of the implementation of health protocols and passenger crossing from all borders.



He also referred to the report on the poor condition of public transportation, especially the metro, and stressed the need for continued strict controls and attention to physical distancing.

President Raisi on Friday after arriving from Moscow went to Jiroft to be informed about the situation of the flooded areas in the south of Kerman and to monitor the process of providing relief to the people.

He went to Jiroft to look into the situation of the flooded areas and monitor the relief process.

The President, who was in Moscow yesterday, instructed his chief of staff to contact the interior minister and the governor general of Kerman to follow up on the situation of the flood victims in southern Kerman.

Also, Raisi personally contacted the governor general of Kerman on Friday morning, immediately after arriving at Mehrabad Airport, and issued the necessary instructions to expedite the relief work.

## Iran-Russia Common Capacities Should Be Leveraged

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy chairman of Iran-Russia parliamentary friendship group drew attention to the common capacities and advantages of Iran and Russia in production sector.

Kambiz Mirkazemi said that Iran can produce certain products at a discount.

He highlighted the necessity of long-term planning in exports, saying that export-banning directives have caused a lot of troubles in exports and production sectors and they can be seen as detrimental to domestic consumers.

One of the problems in exports is that producers invest in a certain product each year saturating the market and a shortage is face with the next year, Mirkazemi said, adding that all manufacturers flock to another product, as a result.

Exports ban would also lead to losing target markets, he added.

## Excellent Cooperation to Take Place In Iran-Russia Ties “New Chapter”

TEHRAN (MNA) – Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that in the new chapter of Iran-Russia relations, the two countries will witness very excellent levels of cooperation.

Referring to his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during President’s Raeisi’s visit to Moscow, Amir-Abdollahian in a tweet on Friday wrote, “I had important talks with Mr. Lavrov on the cooperation of Iran and Russia in accelerating the construction of new nuclear power plants in Iran, the comprehensive development of cooperation in the light of the recent agreements between the presidents of the two countries, as well as the consular affairs of the citizens of the two countries.”

“In the new chapter of Iran-Russia relations, the two countries will witness very excellent levels of cooperation,” he added.

The Iranian and Russian foreign ministers met in Moscow on Thursday to discuss bilateral relations and developments in the region and stressed the need to finalize a roadmap for relations between the two countries.

Heading a high-ranking political and economic delegation, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to Moscow on Wednesday at the official invitation of his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

## Admiral Hails Naval Drill

CHABAHAH (IP) - Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination said that better coordination and closer communication between the navies of the countries in the region are the achievements of the Trilateral Combined Naval Exercise “Maritime Security Belt 2022”.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said the exercise would establish maritime trade security in the North Indian Ocean, better coordination and closer communication between the navies of countries in the region and beyond, and the exchange of maritime experiences in relief and assistance in maritime disasters.

Spokesman for the Trilateral Combined Naval Exercise “Maritime Security Belt 2022”, Second Admiral Mostafa Tajoddini, also stated that during the exercise, the naval and air units of Iran, China, and Russia carried out operations to free the hijacked ship and extinguishing fire.

## Gov’t Coordinated Currency, Trade Policies Help Iran’s Export Value Top

TEHRAN (IFP) - The chief of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) expressed his satisfaction with the worth of exports, saying the coordination between the government’s currency and trade policies has effectively helped Iran’s exports touch more than \$40 billion.

Gholamhossein Shafei added although the new administration took office less than six months ago, it has adopted policies in the currency and trade sectors that the businessmen have assessed as very positive.

The ICCIMA head said the country’s foreign trade would witness greater growth if the current trend keeps going. He said the government’s measures to remove obstacles to exports encourage exporters to do their job without any concerns. According to Shafei, the administration of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi has managed to remove some 60 percent of obstacles in the way of trade and exports, causing the country’s exports to soar.

He referred to the years-long problems facing Iran’s trade with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, adding President Raisi’s recent visit to Tajikistan led to their settlement and the country’s trade volume with Iran started to grow since then.

Shifting to the trade between Iran and Iraq, Shafei said the Raisi administration is resolved to boost trade with the neighboring states.

He predicted that Iran-Iraq trade volume would hit \$20 billion during the current government.

The chief of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture added a trade center will be set up by Iranians in the Iraqi city of Karbala in the near future.

## Iranian Embassy Reject Baseless Pakistani Daily’s Claims

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran rejected baseless accusations against Tehran by a Pakistani daily regarding a conflict between the UAE an the war-torn Yemen.

Responding to the baseless accusations, the Iranian embassy said that constructive approach of Iran is based on good neighborliness to establish a ceasefire and resolve disputes between Yemen and the countries involved in the war against the impoverished Arab country, IRNA reported.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Press Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Embassy in Islamabad said that an editorial published in the esteemed Pakistani daily newspaper “Dawn” on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, under the headline “UAE was targeted,” made negative and baseless accusations and allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Embassy categorically denied the allegations in its statement, noting that making such claims would harm public opinion of the two countries’ relations and obscure the positive dimensions of relations and cooperation between the two governments for peace and long-term stability in the region.

Such viewpoints, it added, ignore the Islamic Republic of Iran’s respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors, including the United Arab Emirates, as well as the Islamic Republic

of Iran’s constructive approach based on good neighborliness to establish a ceasefire, resolve disputes among the countries involved in the Yemen crisis, and end this human crisis.

The Islamic Republic of Iran’s government is working hard to keep the region peaceful and secure.

According to the statement, the Dawn Editorial accused Iran of supporting the attack on the UAE without providing any evidence or documentation. Furthermore, while the UN has established that Iran was not engaged in the attack on Aramco oil facilities, it is unclear on what basis and with what proof the publication made the accusation.

“Regarding the published material and the baseless accusation of Iran’s possible role in the attacks on Aramco oil installations, while explicitly and seriously denying this accusation, the esteemed editor is requested to take note of the UN report on this incident, which states: The United Nations has not found any evidence that the Islamic Republic of Iran was involved in this incident and rejects such a claim,” it noted.

In September and November, the UN sent a team of weapons experts to Saudi Arabia to examine missile and drone wreckage, according to the report.

## EU Delivers 2.2m Vaccines to Afghan Refugees in Iran

*IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK*

TEHRAN - Responding to a request for assistance from Iran, the European Commission coordinated the delivery of 2.2 million COVID-19 vaccine doses for Afghan refugees in Iran.

A cargo of 2.2 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine arrived at Tehran’s international airport on Wednesday, January 19. The delivery is meant to “ensure the protection of Afghan refugees,” states a press release from the EU.

The vaccines were requested by the Iranian authorities via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, an EU civil protection mechanism through which emergency assistance can be requested by countries in Europe and beyond.

The European Commission coordinated the delivery of the shipment to Iran and financed 75% of its transportation costs, while Spain funded the donation, according to the European Commission’s news portal.

“Sharing vaccines globally is the most effective way to end this pandemic and to save lives,” said the EU Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič, adding that the donation was “another solid example of European solidarity.”

Poland and Sweden are to follow suit and plan to donate a total of 6.2 million doses to Iran’s Afghan refugees, set to be delivered in the next few days, the EU statement said.

So far, more than 37 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have reportedly been delivered to countries worldwide via the Civil Protection Mechanism.

Iran has received several vaccine shipments, donated by countries including Japan, Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Germany, throughout the past few months.

Spain’s vaccine package, along with the donation of 50,000 jabs made by India in January, is meant exclusively for Afghan refugees in Iran.

The country has bought millions of jabs through COVAX and other international channels while manufacturing its own vaccines.

A reported 63,6 % of the population (about 85 million) are fully vaccinated and 128 million doses have been distributed in the country so far, according to the Our World in Data project at the University of Oxford.

Based on information from the Norwegian Refugee Council published in November 2021, some 3.6 million Afghans are living in Iran -- some 780,000 of them are officially recognized as refugees. In addition, there are over 2 million undocumented Afghans, and more than half a million Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas.

Since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, hundreds of more Afghan citizens have fled the country, many of whom were forced to seek shelter in neighboring Iran and Pakistan.

## IRGC Sets Up Field Hospital in Flood-Hit Region South of Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force set up a mobile field hospital in Iran’s southern province of Kerman, where flooding has displaced many families.

According to the IRGC spokesperson, the field hospital has been erected in Roodbar region, south of Kerman Province, as local residents affected by the recent floods are in dire need of medical services.

The mobile medical center includes 13 vehicles and has operating rooms, general ward, emergency room, laboratory, medical imaging sector, and pharmacy with a staff of 100, including 30 specialists, General Ramezan Sharif said.

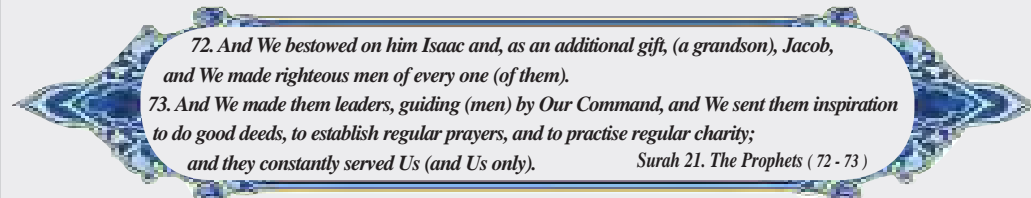
He also noted that the IRGC Ground Force has deployed engineering units and special machinery to the flood-stricken areas of Kerman and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces to reopen the roads and help people in the rural regions.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:16
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:41
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:42
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	07:09



72. And We bestowed on him Isaac and, as an additional gift, (a grandson), Jacob, and We made righteous men of every one (of them).  
73. And We made them leaders, guiding (men) by Our Command, and We sent them inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practise regular charity; and they constantly served Us (and Us only).  
Surah 21, The Prophets ( 72 - 73 )

# Iran Advised Not to Get Loans From China

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - Head of Investment and Consultancy Center of Tehran Chamber of Commerce Ms. Ferial Mostofi believes some countries like Sri Lanka and Cambodia have had bad experiences in dealing with China because they have been unable to repay their loans and China has taken the control of some of those countries' projects for a long time, expressing hope that this would not happen to Iran and Tehran should focus on attracting investments rather than getting loans from China.**

Speaking to ILNA and touching upon the beginning of the 25-year cooperation document between Iran and China, Mostofi said that time is passing and the country needs boosting its bilateral cooperation with different countries to boost its economic growth and China is one of them and currently the biggest trade partner of Tehran.

She added that Iran and China are countries with historic background which have long ties, adding that China not only has trade tie with Iran but also has ties in different fields like security, diplomacy and cultural. And the One Road One Belt project can link different civilization and the Silk Road in the past began from Xian and passed from Iran and the silk trade was done via this road.

Mostofi added that since Iran is located in a strategic point, it can connect the east to the west and the south to the north. She added that due to having gas and oil resources as well as good infrastructures in the country and China's need to energy, this cooperation document can be a win-win cooperation for both sides.

She stipulated that all depends on the details of the documents and the demands of the both sides. She reiterated that the country needs to cooperate with the world



especially in the economic issues and this document can also be good but since its details are not revealed and kept in secret, it causes concerns in the society.

Mostofi reiterated that a document is good when it has a win-win condition for both sides and not for one and China is Iran's major trade partner which will be the economy number one in the world by 2030 and therefore trade with China will benefit us. She noted that but all depends on the details of the agreements and it is better details of the document to be announced for better analyzing it.

She went on to say that Tehran Chamber of Commerce had set a committee on the document and had worked on it for six months and it has decided the country can cooperate with China in eight fields like infrastructures, technical and engineering, developing ITC projects, agriculture, energy, health, environment and banking and monetary.

Mostofi noted that due to what has happened in Sri Lanka and Cambodia, she recommends Iran not to get loans with China and it suggests Iran to attract investments.

She also defended China and said China has good quality goods which are exported to the U.S. and Europe but unfortunately Iranian traders import the low quality goods from China which has painted a negative picture of Chinese goods in the country.

Mostofi added that on the whole, China can be a good trade partner but Tehran should be focused on the details of the agreements and it should pursue win-win agreements. She admitted that the private sector can play a good role in the trade but unfortunately in the country the private sector is ignored.

She also called for the launch of joint Tehran-Beijing bank for resolving their banking problems.

## Chabahar Needs Special Attention of Gov't in Earmarking Basic Goods

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - Director General of Ports and Maritime Organization of Sistan and Baluchestan Province in an interview said that Chabahar Port needs special attention of the government in earmarking at least 50% of the basic goods and livestock inputs to the port.



Behrouz Aqaei said that Chabahar Port is located at the northeastern country and adjacent to Oman Sea and the Indian Ocean and this property has turned it into the only oceanic port of the country. He said unlike other big southern ports of the country which are located on the surrounded Persian Gulf, Chabahar Port is out of the sensitive Persian Gulf region and it is located in a distinguished position in terms of the passive defense and protecting the national marine current.

Aqaei then pointed to the properties of this port and its distinguished position and urged the government to have a special attention on it by allocating at least 50% of the basic goods and livestock inputs. He said the port has some advantages that even some ports in the UAE and Oman lack them and therefore it can turn into a hub in the region.

He went on to say that with huge investment and using the capacities of Chabahar Port, this port can be an embarking point for imports of raw materials, required goods by the consuming centers and eastern country's industries. He added that this port can also be the focal point for imports of the basic goods, livestock inputs and raw materials for the factories especially the raw materials required by the steel industries in the eastern and central parts of the country.

Aqaei added that to this end, the port needs special attention of the government by earmarking 50% of the basic goods, granting 25% exemption in the commercial profits of the five commodities goods, 25% discount in the exports tariffs, and 15% discount for the export of minerals for three years as well as completing the transportation infrastructures to the port.

## Tehran, Baku Continue Construction of Khudafarin, Giz Galasi Hydro Junctions



**IRAN NEW ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Iran and Azerbaijan have reached an agreement to continue construction of the Khudafarin and Giz Galasi hydro junctions, as well as their subsequent operation, Trend reports citing Iranian Energy Ministry.

According to the report, a meeting of the joint Iran-Azerbaijan working group on continuing the construction of the Khudafarin and Giz Galasi hydro junctions was held in the Khoda Afarin County of Iran's East Azerbaijan Province. The meeting was attended by Deputy Energy Ministers of both Azerbaijan and Iran and other relevant officials.

Before that, in 2016, Azerbaijan and Iran signed an agreement in Tehran related to construction of Khudafarin and Giz Galasi hydro junctions and hydroelectric power plants on the Araz River, operation and joint use energy and water resources of them.

The Giz Galasi and Khudafarin hydro junctions have a capacity of more than 1.6 billion cubic meters. Also, the hydroelectric power plants of the same name will have a capacity to generate 280 megawatt-hours of electricity in total.

These hydro junctions and hydroelectric power plants will allow both sides to share the water and energy resources of the Araz River.

## Passenger Transport Via Railway Up

TEHRAN (MNA) - The number of passengers carried on Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Decemebre 21, 2021) increased by 110 percent on year, the nine-month report released by Transport and Urban Development Ministry shows.

The report said that 14.7 million passengers were transported by rail across Iran during the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was seven million in the same time span of the past year.

## Agricultural, Foodstuff Exports Exceed \$3.8b in 9 Months

TEHRAN (MNA)- Iran exported 6.263 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff products worth \$3.878 billion in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), Deputy Agriculture Minister Mohammad Ghorbani said.

According to Ghorbani, Iranian farmers exported 795,000 tons of watermelon, 617,000 tons of fresh or chilled tomatoes, 598,000 tons of fresh apples, 528,000 tons of fresh or chilled potatoes, and 284,000 tons of onions, shallots, and garlic in the mentioned period, IRIB reported. The above-mentioned products were the top exported items during the mentioned nine months in terms of weight, the official said.

He also noted that in terms of value, pistachio, tomatoes, watermelons, dates, and apples were the top exported items, respectively. In the mentioned period, over 23.411 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff products were also imported into the country, Ghorbani noted. The five major imported items in the said time span in terms of weight were livestock corn with 6.893 million tons of imports, wheat with 5.28 million tons, barley with 2.678 million tons, soybean meal with 1.971 million tons, and soybean with 1.823 million tons of imports.

## Weekly Commodities Traded on IME Exceed 1,725,000 Tons

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed trade of 1,725,000 tons of commodities with a total trading value of almost \$554m on its physical market.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1,353,000 tons of commodities valued at almost \$334m.

On this floor, the IME's customers purchased 835,381 tons of cement, 335,987 tons of steel, 97,000 tons of sponge iron, 85,000 tons of iron ore, 6,125 tons of aluminum, 4,680 tons of copper, 975 tons of zinc ingots, 500 tons of lead ingots,



500 tons of coke, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 21 tons of precious metals concentrate and 20 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 354,836 tons of commodities worth more than 208 million USD.

Commodities sold on this floor included 142,284 tons of bitumen, 77,084 tons of polymeric products, 61,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 37,000 tons of lube cut, 20,622 tons of chemicals, 12,845 tons of sulfur, 4,011 tons of base oil and 170 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 16,713 tons of commodities traded on it.

## MSC's Water Abstraction Fallen to 1.5% This Year

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

ISFAHAN – Senior manager of technical services and support department of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) says the amount of raw water consumption in the company has fallen to 2.2 cubic meters per ton, adding that water abstraction from the Zayanderud River this year has been 428 liters per second which equals to 1.5% of the total water of the river.

Mohammad Kazem Sabbaghi Harandi said that this year MSC has had the lowest water abstraction from Zayanderud with abstracting water lower than 1.5% of the river's water and by continuing measures for reducing water consumption, this amount will drop to less than one percent next year.

He went on to say that the company was launched in 1978 with the license to abstract 1260 liters per second of water for producing 2.4m tons of raw steel per year. He added that after the launch of the company, completion of developmental projects, rise in the production and implementing the projects for reducing and efficient water consumption, the amount of water abstraction from the river last year hit 650 liters per second for producing 7m tons of crude steel. It means although the production has been three fold since the foundation of the company, the amount of water abstraction from the river has been halved.

Sabbaghi Harani noted that the water abstraction from the Zayanderud River this year has been 428 liters per second which equals to 1.5% of the river's water and with continuation of the projects for reducing the water consumption, it will decline to lower than one percent.

He reiterated that the main goal of the company since its foundation is to reduce dependence to the Zayanderud water and for this reason several projects have been defined and implemented and one of the projects which has been launched with 650b tomans since 8 years ago is to centralize the wastewater of the suburb towns of Mobarakeh Steel Company and to this end the company has built some water treatment plants in some towns.



## "Data Science" Event Wraps Up



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – The closing ceremony of the Data Science Event was held at the conference hall of Hormoz Hotel of Bandar Abbas in presence of Iranian and foreign experts.

Deputy CEO on Technology and Development of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) Mr. Alireza Kazemi, addressing the closing ceremony, expressed his gratitude for presence of experts and their welcoming this event ad seminar, and said the goal of the company for holding such events and seminars is to resolve the current and future problems of the company through specialized solutions.

He noted that as everybody knows, data has overshadowed the lives of all people and the reason that the company held this Data Science Event is that the data of the company is first converted into information and then to knowledge and ultimately broken into wisdom, adding that the company expects through its support this achievement can be attained via the capability of the domestic researchers and experts.

Kazemi reiterated that since the approach of the company to resolving problems is an applicable way, in this event it raised a topic for discuss on reducing the defects of slab steel by using the data which has been collected since the day one of the company and HOSCO expects researchers and experts to offer applicable solutions. He reiterated that HOSCO will try to share its achievements in this event with other steelmakers like Mobarakeh Group.

The Data Science Event was held on January 18-20 at Hotel Hormoz of Bandar Abbas by HOSCO.



## Lebanon to Sign Electricity Deal With Jordan Next Week

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Crisis-hit Lebanon will sign a deal with Jordan next week to bring in electricity via Syria to help ease gruelling power cuts, the energy minister has told AFP.

The agreement, which comes as the country grapples with round-the-clock power cuts, is part of a wider government effort to eventually provide state power for eight to 10 hours a day, up from just two now in most parts of the country.

"The deal is important primarily because it will increase state power supply, which is cleaner and cheaper" than electricity produced by "expensive and polluting private generators", Walid Fayad told AFP in an interview on Thursday.



## Pakistan Records Most Daily Covid-19 Cases

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Pakistan reported today over 7,000 Covid-19 cases in a single day, its highest daily number of infections since the pandemic began, as the south Asian nation imposes new restrictions to curb the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

At least 7,678 cases in the past 24 hours pushed the positivity ratio to 12.93 per cent, the highest ever in the last two years, 23 deaths were also reported in the last 24 hours, according to data from the National Command Operation Centre (NCOC), which is overseeing the pandemic response.

Karachi, the country's largest city, recorded its highest ever positivity ratio of 46.58 per cent in the last 24 hours.



## U.S., Russia Hold High-Stakes Talks on Ukraine War Fears



GENEVA (Dispatches) - Washington and Moscow's top diplomats met in Geneva in an urgent bid for a solution over Ukraine, with the United States increasingly worried that Russia will invade despite warnings of severe reprisals.

The talks between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov come just 11 days after their deputies met in Geneva and agreed to preserve dialogue amid Russia's build-up of tens of thousands of troops on Ukraine's border.

As the meeting started at Geneva's lakeside luxury Hotel President Wilson, Lavrov warned that Moscow was not expecting any "breakthrough".

Blinken stressed that Washington remained open to finding a diplomatic solution, but warned of a "united, swift and severe" response if Russia does invade Ukraine.

Unlike the January 10 session, which lasted for nearly eight hours, Blinken and Lavrov are expected to have a concise exchange as they determine whether diplomacy remains possible.

Veteran diplomats who have encountered each other for years, Blinken is known for his unflappable calm and Lavrov for his mordant intensity.

President Joe Biden bluntly assessed on Wednesday that his counterpart Vladimir Putin is likely to "move in" on Ukraine and warned of a "disaster for Russia".

The United States and its allies have warned of severe economic sanctions for an invasion.

Russia, which already fuels a deadly insurgency in eastern Ukraine that has killed more than 13,000 people since 2014, has demanded guarantees that NATO never admit the former Soviet republic or expand otherwise in Moscow's old sphere.

The United States has declared the idea a "non-starter" and accused Russia of undermining Europe's post-Cold War order by bullying another country into submission.

Russia went a step further in its demands today, with the foreign ministry saying Moscow wants the "withdrawal of foreign forces, hardware and arms" from countries that were not NATO members before 1997, including Bulgaria and Romania.

Blinken headed to Geneva after a solidarity trip to Kyiv and talks with Britain, France and Germany in Berlin.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned today that Russia would pay a "considerable and serious price" if it invades Ukraine.

In a phone call on Thursday evening, the two leaders agreed that "further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine must be averted" and there would be consequences if the situation were to escalate, the German chancellor said.

Even while rejecting the core Russian demands, the Biden administration has said it is willing to speak to Moscow about its security concerns.

## China Incensed By French Parliament's Genocide Declaration

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China condemned a French parliament resolution on today that accuses Beijing of carrying out a genocide against its Uyghur Muslim population, a move that has strained ties two weeks before the Winter Olympics.

The resolution adds to a chorus of western nations that have criticised Beijing for placing around one million Uyghurs in forced labor camps, terming "the violence perpetrated by the People's Republic of China against the Uyghurs as constituting crimes against humanity and genocide".

France's National Assembly joins Canada, the Netherlands, Britain and Belgium in having parliaments where lawmakers have passed similar motions. The United States government has formally accused China of genocide in western Xinjiang.

But China rejects such accusations and hit out at French lawmakers.

"The French National Assembly's resolution on Xinjiang ignores facts and legal knowledge and grossly interferes in China's internal affairs," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said at a regular press briefing.

"China firmly opposes it."

The French motion was proposed by the opposition Socialists in the lower house of parliament but also backed by President Emmanuel Macron's Republic on the Move (LREM) party.

The non-binding resolution by France's National Assembly was adopted with 169 votes in favour and just one against yesterday.

It calls on the French government to undertake "the necessary measures within the international community and in its foreign policy towards the People's Republic of China" to protect the minority group in the Xinjiang region.

"China is a great power. We love the Chinese people. But we refuse to submit to propaganda from a regime that is banking on our cowardice and our avarice to perpetrate a genocide in plain sight," Socialist party chief Olivier Faure said.

He recounted testimony to parliament from Uyghur survivors who told of conditions inside internment camps where men and women were unable to lie down in cells, subjected to rape and torture, as well as forced organ transplants.



## Lula Could Win Brazil's October Election in First Round

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Former leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is pulling ahead of his likely rival, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, and could win outright in the first-round of Brazil's October election, a new poll shows.

If the election were held today, Lula would win 42% of the votes against 28% for Bolsonaro, the survey by PoderData published late on Thursday said. In the previous poll one month ago, Lula had 40% and Bolsonaro 30%.

Voter support for Lula is now almost the same as the total support for all other candidates, which is at 45%, indicating that he could win the election in the first round by getting more than 50% of the valid votes cast.

PoderData, the poll division of the digital journal Poder360, polled 3,000 voters by telephone in 511 cities between Jan. 16-18. The survey has a margin of error of 2 percentage points up or down.

Neither Lula nor Bolsonaro have formally declared their candidacy, but financial markets are already reacting to the prospect of the Workers Party (PT) leader returning to power.

On Wednesday, Lula touted moderate former Sao Paulo Governor Geraldo Alckmin as his possible running mate, helping boost the real currency to its strongest level against the dollar since November.

Analysts said the choice of Alckmin would signal fiscal responsibility by an eventual PT government.

Lula, 76, governed Brazil from 2003-2010 and his government's social programs pulled millions of Brazilians from poverty. He spent time in jail on corruption charges that were later annulled, allowing him to run for office again.

If the election went to a second-round run-off, Lula would defeat Bolsonaro by 54%-32% of the votes, PoderData said.

Male voters tend to favor Bolsonaro, but 48% of women polled said they would vote for Lula, who does best among younger voters and in poorer Northeastern Brazil. Bolsonaro does best in the North of Brazil, which includes the Amazon region.

## Taliban to Meet Western Officials in Norway for Aid Talks

OSLO (Dispatches) - The Taliban will hold talks with Western officials in Oslo next week on human rights and humanitarian aid in their first official visit to the West since returning to power, the Norwegian and Taliban governments said.

The visit from Sunday to Tuesday will see meetings with "Norwegian authorities and officials from a number of allied countries", including Britain, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy and the United States, it said.

"We are extremely concerned about the grave situation in Afghanistan, where millions of people are facing a full-blown humanitarian disaster," said Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt.

The Taliban swept back to power in Afghanistan last summer as international troops withdrew after a two-decade presence.

A U.S.-led invasion in late 2001 had toppled the Taliban in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated drastically since August. International aid came to a sudden halt and the United States has frozen \$9.5 billion (8.4 billion euros) in assets in the Afghan central bank.

Famine now threatens 23 million Afghans, or 55 per cent of the population, according to the United Nations, which

says it needs \$5 billion from donor countries this year to address the humanitarian crisis in the country.

The Taliban said foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi would lead the delegation.

"This (visit) will open the way for talks, meetings and understanding with the countries of the European Union," government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP.

Talks will also take place with representatives of Washington on "pending issues" like the release of the locked funds, he added.

Stressing that Norway would be "clear about our expectations", particularly on girls' education and human rights, Huitfeldt said the meetings would not represent a legitimisation or recognition of the Taliban.

"But we must talk to the de facto authorities in the country. We cannot allow the political situation to lead to an even worse humanitarian disaster," Huitfeldt said.

The European Union announced on Thursday that it would re-establish a "minimal presence" of its staff in Kabul to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid.

No country has yet recognized the Taliban government.

The international community is waiting to see how the Taliban Islamic fundamentalists intend to govern Afghanistan, after having largely trampled on human rights during their first stint in power between 1996 and 2001.



## Russia-Ukraine Conflict Would Be "Serious Violation" of Regional Peace

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan warned that military conflict between Russia and Ukraine would amount to a "serious violation" of regional peace and unacceptable for Turkey, while repeating his offer to mediate.

NATO member Turkey has good ties with Kyiv and Moscow, but opposes Russian policies in Syria and Libya, and its annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014. Turkish diplomatic sources said on Thursday that both Russia and Ukraine were open to Turkey playing a role to ease tensions.

"Any development in the region between Russia and Ukraine, from border violations to a war breaking out, will bring about a serious violation of regional peace and will cause serious discomfort in the region," Erdogan said.

He also told reporters in Istanbul that Turkey had great ties with Ukraine - to which Ankara sold armed drones last year, angering Russia - and that its ties with Moscow were advancing "in a peace that hasn't been seen in our history".

"We cannot accept these positive developments turning into negatives between Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, we can be a mediator in finding peace between Russia and Ukraine," he said, adding he had told his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts that Turkey was ready to play any role it can to resolve things.

On Thursday, Erdogan said he would be visiting Ukraine in early February and that he hoped to bring together Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin soon.

He said on Friday that he may visit Moscow to discuss the issue with Putin as well, but did not elaborate.





**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Elahieh Apt (\$2500)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/p, Sauna  
J, balcony  
fireplace  
Fully Furn

**Niavaran Villa (\$5000)**  
1000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
S, J, & pkg  
marble floor  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

**Niavaran (\$2700) 280sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, pkg, & F.F**

**Jordan (\$2200)**  
230sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/p, S, J, pkg  
balcony, & F.F

**Velenjak Apt (\$2200)**  
220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

**Zaferanieh bldg**  
5storey, 20bdrs  
S/p, pkg lots, storages  
brand new (\$8000)

**Darrous (\$1600)**  
150sq.m, 2bdrs, & F.F

**Jordan office (\$2000)**  
300sq.m, 4bdrs, pkgs

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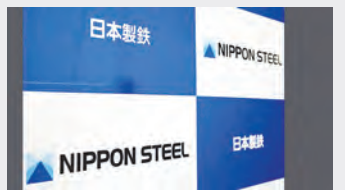


## Nippon Steel to Buy Thai Steelmakers in Deal Worth Up to \$763m

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's biggest steelmaker Nippon Steel Corp will buy two electric arc furnace steelmakers in Thailand in a deal worth up to \$763 million, it said on Friday, as it seeks to cut its reliance on blast furnaces that use coking coal and emit carbon dioxide.

Nippon Steel will pay about \$300 million to buy stakes in Thai steelmakers G Steel and GJ Steel. The total cost of the acquisition will be up to \$763 million, a spokesperson told Reuters.

The company was in talks to buy a steel mill in Southeast Asia to secure iron-making resources in the growing market, a senior executive told Reuters in November.



## China Cuts Key Rates, Steps Up Monetary Stimulus to Boost Economy

SHANGHAI (Dispatches) - China lowered mortgage lending benchmark rates as monetary authorities step up efforts to prop up the slowing economy, after data earlier in the week pointed to a darkening outlook for the country's troubled property sector.

The cut to the one-year and five-year loan prime rates (LPR) followed surprise cuts by China's central bank on Monday to its short- and medium-term lending rates, and came days after the central bank's vice governor flagged more moves ahead.

With the property sector's downturn seen persisting into 2022 and the fast-spreading Omicron variant dampening consumer activity, many analysts say those easing measures will be necessary, even as other major economies, including the United States, appear set to tighten monetary policy this year.

December economic data showed further weakening in consumption and the property sector, both major growth drivers.

At a monthly fixing on Thursday, China lowered its one-year loan prime rate (LPR) by 10 basis points to 3.70% from 3.80%. The five-year LPR was reduced by 5 basis points to 4.60% from 4.65%, its first cut since April 2020.

China's central bank "should hurry up, make our operations forward-looking, move ahead of the market curve, and respond to the general concerns of the market in a timely manner," People's Bank of China Vice Governor Liu Guoqiang said on Tuesday, heightening market expectations for more stimulus.

All 43 participants in a snap Reuters poll had predicted a cut to the one-year LPR for a second straight month. Among them, 40 respondents also forecast a reduction in the five-year rate.

The cut to the 5-year rate suggested that "the Chinese authorities are keen to lower the cost of credit lending, so total credit growth is expected to rebound after the Spring Festival to ease the pressure on macro economy," said Marco Sun, chief financial analyst at MUFG.

"China's monetary policy still has some room for easing in the first half of this year, depending on the policy transmission effect and the growth target set by annual parliamentary meeting in March."

Property firms' shares and bonds jumped on Thursday following the LPR cut, as investors hoped it and other recent government measures would help to ease a funding squeeze in the sector that has seen a growing number of developers default on their debts.

Sheana Yue, China economist at Capital Economics, expects a further 20 bps cut to the one-year LPR in the first half of this year.

Interest rates on medium-term lending facilities (MLF) serve as a guide to the LPR. Market participants believe moves to the LPR should mimic adjustments to MLF rates.

Most new and outstanding loans in China are based on the one-year LPR. The five-year rate influences the pricing of mortgages.

## Russia Proposes Ban On Use and Mining of Cryptocurrencies

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's central bank today proposed banning the use and mining of cryptocurrencies on Russian territory, citing threats to financial stability, citizens' wellbeing and its monetary policy sovereignty.

The move is the latest in a global cryptocurrency crackdown as governments from Asia to the United States worry that privately operated and highly volatile digital currencies could undermine their control of financial and monetary systems. Russia has argued for years against cryptocurrencies, saying they could be used in money laundering or to finance terrorism. It eventually gave them legal status in 2020 but banned their use as a means of payment.

In a report published today, the central bank said speculative demand primarily determined cryptocurrencies' rapid growth and that they carried characteristics of a financial pyramid, warning of potential bubbles in the market, threatening financial stability and citizens.

The bank proposed preventing financial institutions from carrying out any operations with cryptocurrencies and said mechanisms should be developed to block transactions aimed at buying or selling cryptocurrencies for fiat currencies.

The proposed ban includes crypto exchanges. Cryptocurrency exchange Binance told Reuters it was committed to working with regulators and hoped the report's release would spawn dialogue with the central bank on protecting the interests of Russian crypto users.

Restrictions on owning cryptocurrency are not envisaged, said Elizaveta Danilova, head of the central bank's financial stability department. Active cryptocurrency users, Russians have an annual transaction volume of about US\$5 billion (RM20 billion), the bank said.

The central bank said it would work with regulators in countries where crypto exchanges are registered to collect information about the operations of Russian clients. It pointed to steps taken in other countries, such as China, to curb cryptocurrency activity.

In September, China intensified its crackdown on cryptocurrencies with a blanket ban on all crypto transactions and mining, hitting bitcoin and other major coins and pressuring crypto and blockchain-related stocks.

"For now, there are no plans to ban cryptocurrencies similar to the experience of China," Danilova said. "The approach we have proposed will suffice."

Joseph Edwards, head of financial strategy at crypto firm Solrise Group, played down the report's significance, saying no one outside Russia would be losing sleep over it.

"Moscow, like Beijing, is always rattling its sabre over 'crypto bans', but Russia has never been a pillar of any facet of the industry in the same way as China has been at times," he said.

Russia is the world's third-largest player in bitcoin mining, behind the United States and Kazakhstan, though the latter may see a miner exodus over fears of tightening regulation following unrest earlier this month.

The Bank of Russia said crypto mining created problems for energy consumption. Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are "mined" by powerful computers that compete against others hooked up to a global network to solve complex mathematical puzzles. The process guzzles electricity and is often powered by fossil fuels.

"The best solution is to introduce a ban on cryptocurrency mining in Russia," the bank said. In August, Russia accounted for 11.2 per cent of the global "hashrate" — crypto jargon for the amount of computing power being used by computers connected to the bitcoin network.

## Ukraine Raises Rate to 10%

KIEV (Dispatches) - Ukraine's central bank raised its main interest rate to 10% from 9% on Thursday, crossing into double digits for the first time since April 2020, to try to tackle persistently high inflation and the economic fallout from a standoff with Russia.

The National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) said it could hike rates again at its next policy meeting in March and signaled that monetary conditions would remain moderately tight. It would also increase banks' reserve requirements next month.

Ukrainian assets and its hryvnia currency have been pounded by weeks of tensions as Russia massed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's borders and talks between the West and Russia failed to produce a breakthrough.

The risk of conflict comes with Ukraine's central bank already grappling with inflation that hit double digits last year on higher energy and food prices, and prompted five rate rises in 2021.

"As many of the pro-inflationary risks have materialized, tighter monetary policy is needed in order to improve inflation expectations and ensure steady disinflation toward the target of 5%," the central bank said in a statement.

It raised rates five times last year as inflation spiked to the highest level since 2018, reaching 10% in December. Analysts polled by Reuters had predicted the central bank would raise its key interest rate to 9.5%-10.0% to tackle worsening inflation expectations and a weakening hryvnia due to fears of a Russian military offensive.

The central bank also raised its inflation forecast for 2022 to 7.7% from 5.0% and warned that inflation would only ease back into its target range of 5% in 2023.

## Pakistan Registers 5.3% Economic Growth in 2020-21

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan on Thursday again revised its economic growth rate for 2020-21, this time from 3.9 per cent to 5.37 per cent.

This is the second time the GDP rate for 2020-21 has been revised, from an initial 2.3 per cent set in the 2020 annual budget to 3.9 per cent later.

Planning and Development Minister Asad Umar took to Twitter to announce the new growth data regarding the 2020-2021 fiscal, which ended on June 30 last year.

He said the National Accounts Committee (NAC), a body that reviews economic indicators, had approved the revised GDP growth estimate.

"NAC approved revised estimates of GDP growth for 2020-21. The growth in 2020-21 was 5.37%, he said.

The minister said the previous estimate was based on July, 2020 to March 2021 numbers, while the new data covers the entire fiscal year from July 2020 to June 2021.

"This is the 2nd highest growth in the last 14 years. Higher growth versus provisional estimates which were based on Jul-Mar numbers, was mainly due to very strong industrial growth in Apr-June, he said.

Separately, the planning ministry said that the statistics bureau shifted its economy's baseline, which further pushed the figure up to 5.57 per cent, and with the new 2015-16 baseline, the total GDP has reached USD 346.76 billion with USD 1,666 per capita income.

The government for the current fiscal 2021-2022 set the target of 4.8 per cent but it hoped to cross 5 per cent.

The rosy number, however, doesn't reflect the ground reality of raging inflation at over 12 per cent, which has made life miserable for ordinary citizens.

Meanwhile, the price of the US dollar could cross rupees 200 in the currency market in Pakistan after the imposition of a withholding tax on exchange companies by the government.

Malik Bostan, chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan, said on Thursday that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has already started sending notices to the exchange companies for the tax payments in some cases even a billion rupees.

The same withholding tax was first introduced on exchange companies in 2014 but withdrawn in 2016 but Bostan said it had been reimposed in the mini-Budget as the government tries to lower its deficits and meet revenue targets.

## U.S. Inflation Spike Also Due to Generous Pandemic Stimulus

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden blames global supply snarls for the wave of price increases hitting U.S. consumers and businesses, but the trillions of dollars injected into the economy during the pandemic also share responsibility.

The Covid-19 crisis disrupted manufacturing worldwide and caused shipping snags, creating global shortages of key materials that combined to push prices higher.



Amid a rapid recovery from the pandemic, U.S. consumer prices soared seven percent last year, the highest in nearly four decades.

"Inflation has everything to do with the supply chain," Biden said during his lengthy press conference Wednesday.

But many economists and Biden's Republican opposition say massive federal stimulus and new spending also bear some of the blame for the inflation wave -- which the president's critics have labeled "Bidenflation."

"The last year, the glut of federal dollars that's been pumped into our economy, has fueled the surge in prices," said Stephanie Bice, a Republican lawmaker from Oklahoma.

Not long after he took office one year ago, Biden pushed a \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan through Congress, the third pandemic aid program, despite overwhelming Republican opposition.

Some economists say the package should have been more compact and targeted.

"My view last year was that the stimulus bill was needed but should be smaller," said Harvard economics professor Jason Furman, who was an adviser to former president Barack Obama.

"In retrospect, rather than being \$2 trillion, it could have been \$1 trillion, Furman told AFP.

Another Democratic economist, former U.S. Treasury secretary Larry Summers, long warned that the additional stimulus though "admirably ambitious," could "set off inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation."

However, current Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday she expects price pressures to recede, and inflation to fall back close to two percent by the end of 2022, as supply issues ease and the Federal Reserve raises borrowing rates.

"If we are successful in controlling the pandemic I expect inflation to diminish over the course of the year and hopefully to revert to normal levels by the end of the year," Yellen said on CNBC.

But she noted that the Federal Reserve has a role to play and "needs to recalibrate monetary policy to facilitate those adjustments."

The Fed is expected to lift the benchmark borrowing rate off zero in March and hike as many as four times this year to contain inflation.

The pandemic inflation wave is not unique to the United States, but other major economies have seen more modest price increases. The eurozone also saw record inflation, but the increase was only five percent, according to official data, while Britain saw a 30-year high of 5.4 percent.

## Turkish Central Bank Halts Rate Cuts After Currency Crisis



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's central bank held its policy rate steady at 14% on Thursday as expected, halting an unorthodox and aggressive easing cycle that had sparked a currency crisis and sent inflation soaring to a 19-year high late last year. The bank said it would monitor the impact of its previous policy decisions and expects the "disinflation process to start", bringing stability. It also said it began a "comprehensive review of the policy framework" in order to prioritize the currency and help meet its inflation mandate.

Under pressure from President Tayyip Erdogan, the central bank began easing in September, cutting its policy rate by 500 basis points to 14%.

The bank signaled the pause last month, saying it would monitor the impact of the cuts in the first quarter but removed the timeframe in Thursday's statement. Bankers said they took it as a sign that the bank could wait longer before cutting again.

The cuts have already left real yields in deeply negative territory as inflation accelerated to 36%, and sparked a crisis that saw the lira lose 44% of its value against the U.S. dollar last year. The bank targets 5% inflation.



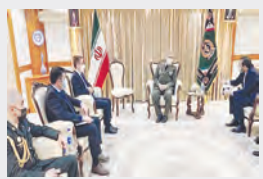
## Iran, Azerbaijan Discuss Prospects For Military Cooperation

TEHRAN – Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani met and held talks with Azerbaijani Ambassador to Tehran Ali Alizade on the military cooperation.

During the meeting, the sides emphasized Azerbaijani and Iranian presidents’ special attention

to the bilateral relations and hailed the close ties between the two countries.

They stressed the necessity of continuing cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran in all fields as friendly and close neighbors. They touched upon issues of cooperation in military and military-technical fields.



## Germany Wants to Attract 400,000 Skilled Workers From Abroad Each Year

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany’s new coalition government wants to attract 400,000 qualified workers from abroad each year to tackle both a demographic imbalance and labour shortages in key sectors that risk undermining the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

“The shortage of skilled workers has become so serious by now that it is dramatically slowing down our economy,” Christian Duerr, parliamentary leader of the co-governing Free Democrats (FDP), told business magazine WirtschaftsWoche.

“We can only get the problem of an ageing workforce under control with a modern immigration policy... We have to reach the mark of 400,000 skilled workers from abroad as quickly as possible,” Duerr added.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s Social Democrats, Duerr’s libertarian FDP and the environmentalist Greens agreed in their coalition deal on measures like a points system for specialists from countries outside the European Union and lifting the national minimum wage to 12 euros (\$13.60) per hour to make working in Germany more attractive.

The employer-friendly German Economic Institute estimates that the labour force will shrink by more than 300,000 people this year as there are more older workers retiring than younger ones entering the labour market.

This gap is expected to widen to more than 650,000 in 2029, leaving an accumulated shortage of people of working age in 2030 of roughly 5 million. The number of Germans in employment grew to nearly 45 million last year despite the coronavirus pandemic.



After decades of low birth rates and uneven migration, a shrinking labour force also poses a demographic time bomb for Germany’s public pension system, in which fewer employees are burdened with the task of financing the pensions of a growing mass of retirees who are enjoying longer life expectancy.

## Crashed World War II Aircraft Found in India After 77 Years

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - A missing World War II plane has been identified in India’s remote Himalayas nearly 80 years after it crashed with no survivors, following a treacherous search that led to the deaths of three guides.



The C-46 transport aircraft was carrying 13 people from Kunming in southern China when it disappeared in stormy weather over a mountainous stretch of Arunachal Pradesh state in the first week of 1945.

“This aircraft was never heard from again. It simply disappeared,” said Clayton Kuhles, a US adventurer who led the mission after a request from the son of one of those on board the doomed flight.

The expedition took months and saw Kuhles and a team of guides from the local Lisu ethnic group ford chest-deep rivers and camp in freezing temperatures at high altitudes.

Three guides died of hypothermia at an initial stage of the project while camped out during a September snowstorm.

But the team finally stumbled upon the plane on a snow-clad mountain top last month, where they were able to identify the wreckage by the tail number.

There were no human remains in what was left of the craft.

Kuhles was tasked with conducting the search by Bill Scherer, whose officer father was aboard the plane when it crashed.

“All I can say is that I am overjoyed, just knowing where he is. It is sad but joyous,” Scherer told AFP by email from New York.

“I grew up without a father. All I can think of is my poor Mother, getting a telegram and finding out her husband is missing and she is left with me, a 13 month old baby boy.”

Hundreds of U.S. military planes went missing around the theatre of operations in India, China and Myanmar during World War II.

While hostile fire from Japanese forces did account for some aircraft losses, Kuhles said the majority are believed to have been brought down by ice damage, hurricane-force winds and other severe weather conditions.

### Iran, India...

FROM PAGE 1

In January 2019, Iran and India inaugurated the second direct shipping route which passes through Mumbai, Mundra, Kandla, Chabahar, and finally Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

India is using the mentioned shipping routes to transit goods to Afghanistan and Persian Gulf nations as well as the countries in Central Asia.

Through Chabahar port India aims at bypassing Pakistan and transport goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia, while Afghanistan can get linked to India via sea.

Iran has awarded India the project for installing and operating modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

The strategic Chabahar port in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country’s economic affairs.

Back in September 2021, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called on Central Asian countries to benefit from Chabahar Port capacities for expanding their trade in the region

## Traditional Fishermen in Despair Over Peru Oil Spill

Callao (Peru) (AFP) – Hundreds of traditional fisherman living just outside the Peruvian capital fear their livelihoods are ruined following an oil spill caused by a volcanic eruption thousands of miles away.

Authorities called the spill, caused by an eruption on the other side of the Pacific near Tonga, the worst ecological disaster in Lima in recent times.

Traditional fisherman in Ventanilla, a district to the north of Lima’s port in Callao, on Wednesday protested outside the gates of the Pampilla Refinery owned by Spanish energy giant Repsol, demanding compensation for the spill that occurred as freak waves hit a tanker during offloading on Saturday.

“How will we live now? That’s our worry,” Miguel Angell Nunez, who led the protest, told AFP.

“We’ve lost our source of work and we don’t know when this will end.

“We want them to recognize the damage. The spill was caused by (Repsol’s) negligence.”

It is an area teeming with sole, lorna drum and Peruvian grunt, commonly used in the local delicacy ceviche, a marinated raw fish dish that Peru is famous for.

Traditional fishermen use small scale, low technology, low capital practices, mostly from the beach or rocks.

The few that own small boats only travel short distances along the shoreline.

The Ventanilla spill sent 6,000 barrels of oil into the sea.

The environment ministry said 174 hectares -- equivalent to 270 football fields -- of sea, beaches and natural reserves were affected.

The attorney general’s office said the spill had “put at risk flora and fauna in two protected areas.”

Authorities pulled dead fish and birds covered in oil out of the sea, and had to seal off three beaches, meaning hundreds of fishermen had nowhere to go to work.

Refinery officials said they had erected “containment barriers that cover all of the affected zones and brigades with specialist sea and land teams have been deployed.”



But fishermen, some of whom live hand to mouth, fear that they could be prevented from working for years.

Around 1,500 traditional fisherman work in the area, usually earning between 50 and 120 soles (\$12-\$30) a day from their catch.

“This catastrophe won’t last one or four

months. It will last years,” fisherman Roberto Carlos Espinoza told AFP.

“Today we don’t have work, what are we going to do?”

Espinoza blames Repsol for “lacking a contingency plan” for the damage to flora and fauna.

The spill has spread to beaches in neighboring districts where authorities have found dead sea lions and penguins.

The health ministry said 21 beaches have been affected and warned bathers not to visit them.

Repsol work teams wearing white suits, boots and gloves were removing oil from beaches and crags on the Caverro beach in Ventanilla on Wednesday.

Workers use dustpans, shovels and long sponges to soak up the oil that cloaks the beach and gives off a pungent stench, while the navy guards the area.

Toiling in the summer sun, they tip the collected oil into barrels and plastic bags.

“It’s not easy to work with this (oil) but unfortunately we have to work,” said Giancarlo Briseno.

“The work is tough, quite toxic and burns your face,” added Pedro Guzman.

Former environment minister Fabiola Munoz said it would take two years to clean up the spill.

The public prosecutor has opened an investigation for environmental pollution against the refinery.

It said the owners could face a fine of up to \$34.5 million.

“The State will be inflexible,” warned Environment Minister Ruben Ramirez.

Tine van den Wall Bake Rodriguez, Repsol Peru’s spokeswoman, said “we cannot say who is responsible” for the oil spill, which the company has blamed on the freak waves.

“We are extremely affected” by it, she added.

The Pampilla refinery has the capacity to process 117,000 barrels a day, which represents more than half of Peru’s total oil output.

### U.S. Safety Firm...

FROM PAGE 1

Iranian officials, who do not divulge details about their efforts to bypass the sanctions, did not answer a call or respond to an email request for comment from Reuters on Friday, which is the weekend in Iran.

ABS is the only U.S. firm among the top 12 ship classification societies, which are otherwise based in Europe and Asia, are essential to the running of thousands of vessels in the global shipping fleet.

Without their certification, vessels are unable to secure insurance cover or call at most international ports.

The ABS website shows that so-called class cover, which includes vessel safety inspections, for a ship named the Elsa was withdrawn on Dec. 17, with sanctions cited as the reason, while cover for a second ship, the Karo, was withdrawn on Jan. 13, with sanctions also cited as the reason for the move. No further details were given.

An ABS spokesperson said that as a U.S. company it “strictly follows U.S. sanctions law and takes seriously and investigates all claims and information received that might suggest that any vessel in ABS class is trading with a sanctioned country”.

“In the event that the information is confirmed, ABS has and will cancel the involved vessel’s ABS class, in accordance with our policies and procedures,” the spokesperson said, declining to comment on individual cases.

### Massacre in Yemen...

FROM PAGE 1

Although the UN admits the condition in Yemen is deteriorating but it is nor ready to take any serious action against these atrocities and instead it rushes to the rescue of the Zionists.

On Friday even Saudi activists took to social media to condemn the displacement of the residents of several areas across Jeddah with the aim of implementing the projects of the so-called Saudi Vision 2030, which was launched by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016.

Lebanon’s al-Mayadeen television network said in a report on Friday that the activists, over the past days, slammed the Saudi authorities for destroying the entire residential neighborhoods in Jeddah Province, and denounced the displacement of the residents without giving them a deadline to find alternative homes.

The demolitions come as the crown prince last month launched a new investment project dubbed “Jeddah Central Project,” which will include four landmarks: an opera house, museum, sports stadium, and oceanarium, as part of the implementation of Vision 2030.

Yahia al-Hadid, a Human Rights Defender and the Chairman of Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR), censured in a tweet the Saudi government for destroying the residents’ homes, “without any consideration of their humanitarian situation.”

The citizens of the oil-rich country “live below the poverty line and are being humiliated, despite the oil wealth that have been scattered over the seasons of entertainment.”

Despite these protests and complaints, there is no serious action from the United Nations Security Council to condemn or put pressure on the Saudi-led forces and this has emboldened these forces to continue their crimes comfortably and it is time for the Yemeni fighters themselves to take action against these aggressors. And every time it wants to condemn the aggressors, it also condemns Yemenis as well because it wants to please the West and Saudis. Unfortunately Muslim world except few countries have been silent against these crimes and even some have sided with the Saudi-led forces.

Yemenis need to be stronger and more united than ever against aggressors in order to gain independence and expelling the invaders and the international bodies which are silent against the aggressors are better to remain silent when Yemenis retaliate and to stop their double standard approach to the issues of peace and human rights because aggressors in Yemen have been ignorant to all human rights issues and even to its primary principles.

So countdown has begun for retaliation from Yemenis to expel aggressors because their silence will embolden the Saudi-led forces for more attacks and pressure and ultimately losing independence and pride of the country. And it is now the time Muslim world to come to the support of Yemenis at least verbally or to stop siding with Saudis who care committing one of the most horrible massacres in the history in Yemen.

There is a proverb which says “You want a thing done, do it yourself” and Yemenis need to rely on themselves than pinning hopes to the international bodies’ aids.

### UNGA Holocaust...

FROM PAGE 1

As is clear to all, the atrocities during the Second World War took place with the two motives of racism and expansionism, two satanic traits inherited and represented now by the Zionist regime. The regime’s racist approach has been affirmed in numerous international documents, and in spite of the solid will of the international community, Israel remains the sole racist regime with an expansionist ideology.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has considered genocide an act to be condemned and unjustifiable under any circumstances, and that is the reason why, during the Second World War, Iran hosted people displaced by the conflict in some European countries. This is while the faux Zionist regime has constantly attempted to exploit victims of the World War II and Jews as justification for its egregious and aggressive acts.

This regime and its leaders have over the past seven decades committed all acts of criminality and specially crimes against humanity against the people of Palestine and the peoples of regional countries by violating international law. Genocide, assassinations, ethnic cleansing, the demolition of houses, and siege are some of the crimes that the Zionist regime is constantly in the process of committing.

The statement concludes: The Islamic Republic of Iran once again stresses that historical research is needed to avoid the repetition of historical catastrophes, which should be conducted without political prejudgments; and thus, such constrictive approaches are not acceptable, and such a resolution is not deemed based on consensus, and is thus null.





## Pele Released From Hospital After Tumor Treatment

PARIS (Dispatches) - Brazilian football great Pele was discharged from hospital on Thursday after undergoing two days of treatment for cancer, the Sao Paulo clinic that treated him said.

Pele, who had a colon tumor removed last year, has been undergoing chemotherapy in the months since.

The 81-year old was admitted to hospital and "was discharged on Thursday and is in a clinically stable condition," said the Albert Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo.

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## Leeds Striker Bamford Suffers Injury Setback

LONDON (Dispatches) - Leeds United striker Patrick Bamford has suffered a setback in his return to fitness following a foot injury, manager Marcelo Bielsa said.

England international Bamford has not played for Leeds since scoring in their 2-2 Premier League draw with Brentford early last month.

The 28-year-old was Leeds's top-scorer last season with 17 league goals but has scored only twice in six games in this campaign after sustaining ankle and hip injuries.

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SPORTS

SUNDAY JANUARY 23, 2022

# Nadal, Zverev Advance, Osaka Crashes Out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Sixth seed Rafa Nadal dropped his first set at this year's Australian Open but still powered through to the fourth round with a 6-3 6-2 3-6 6-1 defeat of Karen Khachanov.

The Spaniard, seeking to claim a record 21st Grand Slam title in the absence of great rivals Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, was sensational as he took a two-set lead.

But Khachanov, seeded 28th, threw caution to the wind in the third set, stalling Nadal's charge with some ferocious hitting.

Olympic runner-up Khachanov had lost all seven previous meetings with 2009 Australian Open champion Nadal but briefly looked capable of mounting a comeback.

Nadal seized back control with a break of serve at the start of the fourth, however, and with the clock having ticked past midnight on Rod Laver Arena he finished it off in a hurry.

Nadal, who has reached the last-16 in Melbourne for the 15th time in 17 appearances, will face another Russian, 18th seed Aslan Karatsev, or Frenchman Adrian Mannarino next.

"I played a great player tonight and happy that this was my best match since coming back," the 35-year-old Nadal, who missed the second half of 2021 with a foot injury, said on court.

"I've been going through some tough times in the last year but night's like tonight mean everything."

Meanwhile Alexander Zverev did not have it all his way but eased into the fourth round of the Australian Open without dropping a set after a 6-3 6-4 6-4 victory over Romanian qualifier Radu Albot on John Cain Arena.

The world number three, still seeking the Grand Slam title that many have predicted for him, struggled with his serve at times but was always in full control as he set up a clash with Canadian Denis Shapovalov.

Albot, who plays much of his tennis on the second-tier challenger circuit, made a contest of the match but was unable to



match the quality of the German's play in the decisive moments and failed to convert any of his five break points.

Zverev, who reached the quarter-finals last year at Melbourne Park and lost to Dominic Thiem in the semi-finals in 2020, remained on course for a potential meeting with Nadal in the last eight.

In the women's event, American Amanda Anisimova, ranked 60th in the world, saved two matchpoints and smashed winners at will to beat reigning champion Naomi Osaka 4-6 6-3 7-6 (10-5) in the third round.

Anisimova produced a superb display to knock out the Japanese and disappoint those who had been salivating at the prospect of a fourth-round showdown between the four-times major winner and Australian world number one Ash Barty.

Osaka, who has won all her major titles on hardcourts, had two opportunities to close out the match in the 10th game of the deciding set.

But she watched helplessly as the 20-year-old Anisimova, who has seen her ranking plummet due to injury issues, saved both and then converted her first opportunity in the deciding super tiebreak with an ace to seal the match.

The American dropped her racquet and hid her face with her palms as the crowd at the Margaret Court Arena exploded in appreciation.

## Ansu Fati Out Again With Femoral Biceps Injury

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Teenage sensation Ansu Fati was injured again as Barcelona were knocked out of the Copa del Rey by Athletic Club, losing a 3-2 extra-time thriller in Bilbao.

The striker, who was working his way back into the team after being out for the last two months with a femoral biceps injury, was a second half substitute in yesterday's game. However, Fati had to withdraw minutes after the game at San Mamés went into extra time with the same injury he had in November 2021.

"Ansu Fati has a femoral biceps injury in his left thigh and tests will be required to determine the full extent of the problem," Barcelona announced this morning. He is expected to be out from four to six weeks, Spanish media reported.

Fati, who inherited Barcelona's number 10 jersey from Lionel Messi when the Argentine left for Paris St Germain, came through the youth system at the Catalan club and has had to fight his way back from four surgeries to repair an injury to his left knee, suffered in November 2020. Yesterday was only his tenth appearance this season.

Fati burst onto the scene for Barcelona at 16, when he became the second youngest player in La Liga history.

## Tan Yar of Shiraz Crowned As Iran's National Rugby Sevens Champions



IRAN NEWS SPORTS DESK

TEHRAN - Tan Yar Club of Shiraz were crowned as the champions of the national sevens championship which was held at Shahid Shiroodi of Tehran on January 20-21.

According to reports, 17 teams from different provinces of the country participated in this two-day competitions and finally Tan Yar of Shiraz could be crowned as champions at seven-a-side team competition.

Atashneshanan of Rey, Pesaran of Shiraz and Datis of Tehran ranked second to fourth in this thrilling competition.

Rugby sevens (commonly known as simply sevens and originally known as seven-a-side rugby), is a variant of rugby in which teams are made up of seven players playing seven-minute halves, instead of the usual 15 players playing 40-minute halves.

## Suns Rally to Down Mavs

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Devin Booker scored 28 points and Chris Paul added 20 points and 11 assists as Phoenix beat the Dallas Mavericks 109-101 in a see-saw battle that saw the Suns improve their NBA-leading record.

Phoenix closed strong to win their fifth game in a row -- all on the road -- halting the Mavericks' winning streak at four.

Luka Doncic, coming off a 41-point performance in a win over Toronto on Wednesday, scored 28 points with eight rebounds and eight assists for Dallas. Jalen Brunson scored 19 and Kristaps Porzingis chipped in 18 points and 11 rebounds.



World Cup winner had agreed a new contract with the London club and they made an official announcement early today.

# Lloris Signs New Contract at Tottenham

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham announced today that France international goalkeeper Hugo Lloris has signed a new contract at the Premier League club.

The 35-year-old, who joined Spurs in 2012, was free to talk to foreign clubs from the start of this month but has committed his future to Tottenham in a deal that runs until 2024.

It was widely reported yesterday that the

"We are delighted to announce that Hugo Lloris has signed a new two-and-a-half-year contract with the club, which will run until 2024," Spurs said in a statement.

Tottenham's revival since Antonio Conte's appointment as manager in November is understood to have convinced Lloris to stay.

Earlier this month Conte said: "He's our captain, he is a top goalkeeper for us. H has great experience. He knows very well Tottenham. He loves this shirt and this badge. For me he is an important player and I'm sure that they are going to find a solution for him to continue to play with Tottenham."

Lloris joined from Lyon in 2012 and has made 395 appearances for the club.

He is Tottenham's record Premier League appearance holder and is on a run of 67 consecutive starts in the league, going back to March 2020.

## Lewandowski Eyes Toppling Own Record of 41 Bundesliga Goals

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Having scored a record 41 goals in just 29 league games last season, Bayern Munich star Robert Lewandowski aims to stay injury-free in order to better his own Bundesliga milestone this campaign.

The Poland striker scooped Fifa's "The Best" male player award for the second year running on Monday, two days after chalking up his 300th league goal with a hat-trick as Bundesliga leaders Bayern swept aside Cologne.

Lewandowski has scored 23 goals in 19 league games this campaign and featured in every Bundesliga game for Bayern.

Only last May, he finally broke Gerd Mueller's legendary record of 40 Bundesliga goals in a single season despite missing four games due to injury in April and was rested for one match in October 2020.

The 33-year-old, nicknamed "The Body" by team-mates, is famous for his fitness regime and hopes to stay injury-free in order to play and score in as many games as possible to better his own record.

"I missed a few games last year through injury, but hopefully I will be able to play 34 (league) games this season and maintain the same level of goals," Lewandowski told the German Football League (DFL).

He says a record-breaking season happens "once, maybe twice if you are lucky" in a career, "but I am always trying to keep this high level of quality".

Bayern's win in Cologne means the present team set another league record of scoring in their last 66 Bundesliga games and remain on course to win a tenth straight German league title.

Reaching the milestone of 300 Bundesliga goals means Lewandowski is in sight of Gerd Mueller's all-time record of 365 German league goals.



## Infantino Vows To Prioritize Player Welfare

LONDON (Dispatches) - FIFA President Gianni Infantino vowed player welfare will be a top priority as the world governing body reshapes the international fixture schedule.

FIFA's proposal for a biennial World Cup drew widespread criticism last year amid concern over burn-out due to the increased demands placed on players.

Infantino discussed the issue in Manchester on Thursday after accepting an invitation from the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) to meet leading players and union representatives.

The meeting also included Manchester United's Paul Pogba and Juan Mata, PFA chief executive Maheta Molango and FIFA chief of global football development Arsene Wenger.

"It was really a great meeting. I was very happy that the players reached out to us, to me in particular, because we want really to listen to everyone," Infantino said.

"The players are crucial when it comes to the game. Of course, we need to care about the players, we want to protect the players and, in order to know really what their concerns are, we need to talk to them directly.

"At the end of the day what we want for men's and women's football is that the players can perform at their best, not only in one competition but in all the competitions they have to play.

"The women and the men are facing the same issue - go back and forth, back and forth and play a competition, a finals tournament and then go back and immediately after you go somewhere in another part of the world.

"We need to bring some more coordination in the international match calendar."

Infantino acknowledged the game has changed considerably since the current international calendar was drawn up, with more players now playing away from their home countries, requiring much more travel. "Times have changed, globalization is coming in. In England you have players from 100 nationalities playing the professional game," he said.

