

The Spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Said That the Iranian Foreign Minister's Visit to India Was Postponed Due to the Fact That the Indian Foreign Minister Has Contracted COVID-19

# IRAN NEWS

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## U.S. Politicians Not Trustworthy

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says U.S. politicians have proven time and again that they cannot be trusted, stressing that the United States' practical measures constitute the main criterion used by Iran to judge the statements of the American officials.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a tweet on Thursday as the remaining signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), are negotiating in the Austrian capital, Vienna, with the goal of bringing the US back into compliance with the deal and getting Washington to remove the illegal sanctions.

"History, experience, and US behavior have shown that American politicians and rulers cannot be trusted," Amir-Abdollahian wrote.

"For us, the criterion for any judgment will be practical behavior of the United States. On the issue of sanctions removal, Iran's interests must be fully realized and tangible action must be taken on the ground," he added.

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## President Blames Foreign Presence for Increase of Insecurity, Concerns in West Asia



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says presence of foreigners in the West Asia region only serves to increase insecurity in the region as they consider themselves masters of the world.

Raisi made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with the visiting Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, during which the two sides discussed the importance of boosting cooperation among regional countries.

"Deepening of relations and increased synergy among neighboring countries can help establish security" in the region, Iran's president said.

"Presence of foreigners in the West Asia region only leads to increased insecurity and raises concerns," Raisi said, adding, "Foreigners have no respect for the identity and character of regional nations and governments and believe that they are masters of the world."

"However," Raisi noted, "they must give up their arrogant and complacent spirit and recognize the identity and culture of [regional] nations."

Raisi stated that the Iranian nation has always stood on its principled positions on various issues and moves ahead without caring for what the enemies want. "This is why the Americans officially announced that their maximum pressure policy has borne no fruit."

On Tuesday, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has been an "abject failure."

Raisi added that under the new administration, the Islamic Republic of Iran prioritizes expansion of relations with regional and neighboring countries.

"Tehran believes that regional cooperation is in favor of [the promotion of] peace, security and advancement of regional nations and hails it," Iran's president said.

The Qatari foreign minister, for his part, conveyed an invitation from Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for Iran's president, inviting Raisi to take part in the next summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum.

"Qatar is determined to boost all-out relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in various political and economic fields and the Emir of Qatar is personally following up on this issue," he said.

He noted that Qatar shares Iran's stance on the negative outcome of foreign presence in the region, adding, "We believe that regional countries must move toward peace and progress through regional cooperation."

## Tehran Takes Swipe at Canada Over Indigenous Children Killings

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian rights official has denounced Canada for its "hypocritical" double-standard approach to the issue of human rights, after shocking reports emerged of the discovery of new graves near a former school for indigenous children there.

In a thread of tweets on Thursday, Kazem Gharibabadi, the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the country's High Council for Human Rights posted a screenshot of a Wall Street Journal news story, which reported the discovery of 93 unmarked graves at the site of St. Joseph's Mission school in British Columbia.

The Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) said Tuesday that the 93 sites show "reflections" suggesting human burials, in what is possibly the latest discovery of scores of indigenous children's remains over the past year.

Reacting to the tragic reports, which shed more light on widespread violations of the indigenous community's human rights in Canada, Gharibabadi drew attention to the West's support for the ex-Iraqi regime's 1980s war on Iran, which claimed the lives of many Iranian people.

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## Sanctions Impeding Iran's Ability to Assist Afghan Refugees

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations says the United States' sanctions are acting as heavy impediments in the way of the Islamic Republic's efforts to assist Afghan refugees.

Majid Takht Ravanchi made the remarks on Wednesday before a UN Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic has been providing various instances of assistance to the Afghan refugees—thousands of whom enter the Iranian territory every day—amid the United States' inhumane sanctions that "have created tremendous difficulties for our government and people," he said in a statement.

"Due to the imposition of U.S. sanctions, our financial resources are restrained. Obviously, if the international community fails to provide sufficient assistance to the Afghan people living in Iran in a timely manner, we will be unable, on our own, to continue our support to Afghan refugees," Takht Ravanchi said.

The U.S. reimposed the sanctions in 2018 after unilaterally and illegally leaving a 2015 agreement with the Islamic Republic and other countries.

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## Iran Oil, Gas Sector To Grow 19.5% in Year To March

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A study by Iran's parliament's research center shows that Iranian oil and gas sector will grow by 19.5% in the calendar year to late March.

Excerpts of the study published in a Wednesday report by Fars news agency showed that Iran's oil and gas sector had grown by 27.5% in the quarter to late June last year, according to figures by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

The study said that data by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) had indicated a growth of 23.3% for the oil and gas sector in Iran in the June quarter.

That comes as CBI and SCI figures had estimated that growth in the Iranian oil sector was between 5.6% and 8.7% in the calendar year to March 2021.

The study by the Iranian parliament said that major growth reported in the Iranian oil and gas sector activities in the June quarter was due to the global recovery from the coronavirus and efforts made inside Iran to get round U.S. sanctions and to deliver oil shipments to major customers in Asia and elsewhere.

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## Iran Secure Place at 2022 Soccer World Cup

IRAN NEWS SPORTS DESK

TEHRAN - Iran got the better of bitter rivals Iraq in Tehran to become the first Asian confederation side to book their place at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar later this year as people poured into streets to celebrate it.

There were 10,000 fans packed in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, with Iranian women allowed to attend for the first time in almost three years, as the Group A leaders secured victory through Mehdi Taremi's strike.

Victory ensures that Dragan Skocic's Iran side are now 10 points clear of third place in their Asian qualifying group, with just nine points remaining to compete for.

Later this year in Qatar it will be the sixth time Iran has qualified for the biggest tournament on the international football calendar.

They first qualified in 1978 before reaching World Cups in 1998, 2006, 2014 and 2018.

So far 14 teams have sealed qualification to the finals in Qatar with Germany, Denmark, Brazil, Belgium, France, England, Croatia, Spain, Serbia, Switzerland, Holland and Argentina joining Iran and hosts Qatar.

As well as the wild celebrations at the end in Tehran, which saw fireworks let off above the stadium, it was also a landmark day for female supporters of the Iranian national team.

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## Iran Slams U.S. Operation in Syria, Urges Lifting Sanctions

NEW YORK (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zahra Ershadi has condemned the United States' military operation in Syrian soil, calling on international community to pave the way for lifting anti-Syria sanctions.

Ershadi addressed Thursday meeting of the UN Security Council on humanitarian situation in Syria, warning that the current condition in Al-Hasakah province, Syria, is consequence of military presence of foreign forces particularly the US in the war-stricken country and the free transit of terrorist groups who wreak havoc in Iraq, Syria and other countries, which threatens international peace and security.

As to agony of the Syrian people, the Iranian ambassador underlined the need for serious efforts to remove unilateral sanctions on Syria.

Ershadi issued a statement, saying:

I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting and I also thank Under Secretary General Voronkov, for his informative briefing. The most recent attack on a prison in Al-Hasakah, which was claimed by ISIS in Syria's north-east, is an alarming bell, indicating once more that ISIS which is backed by certain states is still a real threat to regional security and stability.

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## Country Is Practically in a Sixth Wave of Coronavirus

TEHRAN (PresTV) - Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has declared the start of a new wave of coronavirus pandemic in the country as hospitals report increasing number of referrals with infections related to the Omicron variant of the virus.

"Unfortunately we should declare that we have practically stepped into the sixth wave with the rise in hospitalization and outpatient cases," Einollahi wrote on Twitter on Thursday.

The minister urged more caution against the disease and said getting booster vaccinations could play a major role in preventing a fresh surge in number of deaths and infections from the virus.

The announcement came as figures published on the website of the Iranian health ministry on Thursday showed that the number of deaths from coronavirus had increased to 30 from a caseload of 14,285 reported over the past 24 hours.

## Guterres Hails Iran Role In Resolving Human Crisis in Yemen

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Secretary-General of the United Nations hailed the constructive positions of Iran in supporting the peace process, paying attention to humanitarian issues, and initiating political talks to resolve the crisis in Yemen.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Antonio Guterres Secretary-General of the United Nations discussed regional and international issues, including the latest developments in Yemen and Afghanistan, as well as the Vienna talks.

Referring to the situation in Yemen and the escalation of attacks on civilian areas, the Iranian top diplomat expressed Iran's support for a political solution to end the war in Yemen.

Referring to the UN approach in the realization of the ceasefire in Yemen, and the holding of political talks in this country, he called on Guterres to play a greater role in ending the humanitarian siege and stopping the widespread bombing of civilian areas.

Stressing the need to pay special attention to the humanitarian crisis in



Afghanistan, Amir-Abdollahian said, "Iran has received about 800,000 new refugees from Afghanistan in the past few months, an issue that requires serious global attention and participation."

He also reiterated the need to form an inclusive government in Afghanistan, saying that Iran is ready to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to these countries through Iran.

He also referred to the latest status of sanctions removal talks in Vienna, saying, "Negotiation process is on a positive track and Iran has the serious will to reach a good agreement as soon as possible."

At the same time, he stressed the need for practical, tangible, and verifiable action by the West and the United States to prove a lasting and credible agreement.

## Tehran Ready to Shore Up Ties With New Delhi



TEHRAN (IP) - Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Surge in Production in Iran's parliament, met with the Indian Ambassador in Tehran and stressed developing and strengthening Tehran-Delhi cooperation.

"Relations between the two countries have always been growing, but more measures should be taken to further develop and strengthen cooperation," Shamseddin Hosseini said in the meeting with the Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra.

The committee chairman, expressing dissatisfaction with the decrease in the volume of economic and trade exchanges between Iran and India, added: "In recent years, the economic exchanges between the two countries have decreased for various reasons, including US oppressive and inhumane sanctions."

The Indian ambassador in Tehran also said: "India and Iran are two important countries in Asia, and the cooperation between the two countries is getting better every year."

Noting that his country intends to cooperate with Iran in technology and plant protection, Gadam Darmandra added: "India seeks to strengthen its relations and develop cooperation with Iran in various fields, including culture, and welcomes collaboration in political, economic, and agricultural areas."

## Iran, Uzbekistan to Develop Transit Ties



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian and Uzbek officials in a meeting expressed readiness to strengthen cooperation in transit and transportation, information center of Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development announced on Thursday.

The meeting attended by the caretaker of Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development Shahriar Afandizadeh and members of the Uzbek delegation including deputy trade minister of that country.

Also, the unique geographical situation of Iran was highlighted in the meeting and the two discussed use of capacities for improving transit routes in order to foster trade exchange.

Further, the two sides stressed the importance of facilitating trade through capacities of southeastern strategic Iranian port of Chabahar.

Meanwhile on Wednesday Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) said that Railway Cooperation Protocol was signed and sealed between Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Uzbekistan.

Establishing useful preferential tariff conditions, developing rail corridors and regulating combined sea-rail transit were among the topics agreed between senior railway officials of the two countries.

In a tweet on Thursday, Seyyed Miad Salehi wrote, "In line with strengthening international rail cooperation, the Railway Cooperation Protocol was inked between Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Company (RAI) and Railways of Uzbekistan on Wednesday."

During the meeting, the two sides agreed on establishing useful preferential tariff conditions, developing rail corridors and organizing combined rail-sea transit, he added.

## Iran Reacts to UK Foreign Secretary's Claim

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh strongly reacted to the British foreign secretary's comment that Iran will be responsible for a possible impasse in the Vienna talks and in that event, all options will be on the table.

Such irresponsible and unfounded statements are another card in the hollow blame-game of Britain and some Western countries to hide years of their inaction and support the illegal and inhumane U.S. sanctions, Khatibzadeh said.

The Iranian foreign ministry spokesman stressed that using such threadbare statements and empty threats will not reduce Britain's legal and moral responsibility for the violation of the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA, nor will they weaken Iran's determination in the least to achieve a high-quality, lasting and reliable deal that would achieve the interests of the Iranian people.

As it has been repeatedly said, it was only Iran's strategic patience that paved the way for talks at this stage but it is clear that this window will not remain open forever, he added.

The Iranian foreign ministry spokesman said it is necessary that the other sides do all in their power to not let this last opportunity at the negotiating table pass, instead of doing the same repetitive blame-game and using boring languages, as they themselves know better than anyone else how baseless the languages are.

## Increased Military Moves in Region Will Intensify War in Yemen, Region

TEHRAN (PresTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the recent uptick in military moves in the region can worsen the situation and destroy the path to peace.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, in Tehran during which the two sides discussed bilateral ties as well as the most important regional developments.

Pointing to the pace of regional and international developments, Amir-Abdollahian stressed the need for closer consultations between Iran and Qatar alongside efforts to establish peace and stability in Yemen and Afghanistan.

Touching on regional developments, Iran's top diplomat said, "In recent weeks, we have witnessed an increase in military moves regarding Yemen, and such moves will lead to outbreak of further wars in Yemen and the region, and destroy the path to peace."

The Qatari foreign minister, for his part, expressed concern about the escalation of new tensions in the region, saying, "We believe that there is no military solution to the Yemeni crisis. They must reach a solution through dialogue and that the current situation does not serve the interests of either side."

On Tuesday, the two foreign ministers discussed matters of mutual interest in a phone call, stressing the need to bolster the role of diplomacy and dialogue in the resolution of certain important regional issues.

Current issues and ongoing developments in the region as well as the continuation of consultations between the two countries on maintaining and ensuring peace and stability in the regional and global arena were among the topics discussed in the two diplomats' phone conversation.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Qatar also discussed and exchanged views on the further development of bilateral relations between the two countries in various political, economic and cultural fields.

## Tehran, Yerevan Pursue Removal of Blockade on Transportation Routes

TEHRAN (IP) - The Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia and the Ambassador of Iran to Yerevan exchanged views on regional developments and the process of talks on lifting the blockade of transportation hubs.

After the recent developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the war between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Iran's relations with Armenia have entered a new phase.

Iran's Ambassador to Yerevan Abbas Badakhshan met on Wednesday with Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Mehr Grigoryan, who has just been elected chairman of the Iran-Armenia Joint Cooperation Commission, to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation.

Referring to the importance of transportation infrastructure for the development of Iran's economic and trade relations, Badakhshan reminded the readiness of Iranian companies to participate in projects in this field.

The Iranian Ambassador and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia stressed establishing a 17th Iran-Armenia Joint Commission, Referring to the importance of strengthening relations between the two countries in the new era.

It was also decided to review the implementation of the agreements of the 16th Commission in the working meetings of the two sides to prepare the ground for the exchange of high delegations between Iran and Armenia.



## Over 90,000 Foreign Students Study in Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) -The Iranian science minister Mohammad Ali Zolfigol has said that more than 90,000 foreign students are studying at the Iranian universities, exceeding the expectations.

Speaking to the Iranian media, the Iranian science minister Mohammad Ali Zolfigol said that 90,000 foreign students are studying at Iranian universities.

Meanwhile, deputy science minister Salar Amoli said that the increase in the number of foreign students is due to the increase in the rankings of the Iranian universities on the international stage and the high quality of the studies in Iran.

The deputy minister said that more than 40 Iranian universities rank high among good universities in the world.

Most of the students are from neighboring and Muslim countries who are studying different majors at the Iranian colleges and universities in the Persian language.

It was expected in Iran's Sixth 5-year Development Plan that the number of foreign students studying in Iran had to increase to 75,000, while the current figure is 15,000 above the expectations.

## Iran's 80th Naval Fleet Set out for Int'l Waters

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's 80th Naval Fleet embarked for the international and free waters via Bandar Abbas on Thursday in a see-off ceremony attended by the military commanders of Iran's Army Navy Force.

The 80th Naval Fleet of the Army left Bandar Abbas for the free and international waters, accompanied by the military commanders of Iran's Army Navy Force on Thursday.

According to this report, the 80th naval fleet of Iran's Army Navy Force was sent to the internship of students of the Imam Khomeini University of Marine Sciences and Technology.

In the maritime mission, Tonb logistics ship, Bandar Abbas logistics ship and Alvand class destroyer of the strategic navy of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran are present.

## Gov't Halts Gasoil Exports

TEHRAN (PresTV) - A National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) official says gasoil exports from the country have stopped amid a surge in demand for the fuel in power plants where natural gas supplies have dwindled during the current cold season.

NIOC's representative to the Iranian energy bourse Amir Hossein Tebyanian said on Thursday that gas oil shipments were no longer on offer for sales to foreign buyers despite growing number of bids submitted to the exchange market in recent weeks.

"Considering the domestic demand for liquid fuel needed in power plants, gasoil is currently unavailable in the (Iranian) energy exchange," said Tebyanian.

The Oil Ministry official said that resuming gasoil exports from Iran will take months as he insisted that shipments will be on offer again once natural gas consumption in the household sector drops and power plants can burn gas to generate electricity.

The Iranian government has relied heavily on exports of gasoline and gasoil in recent years to offset American sanctions targeting its direct crude exports.

Reports have suggested that gasoil exports have generated up to \$250 million in monthly revenues for the NIOC.

The growth in gasoil exports has been made possible by Iran's extensive plans to develop its natural gas sector in recent years as the country has managed to connect many power plants to the nationwide gas pipeline network.

Those projects have led to a massive increase in natural gas production from the South Pars, the largest gas field in the world which straddles the maritime border between Iran and Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Gas demand in the Iranian household sector rose to an all-time record of nearly 700 million cubic meters on January 23, according to statements by Oil Ministry officials.



100-IMI was achieved in the 1400 ranking conference of Iran's top companies

# Earning the rank of a leading company by Fakour Sanat

## Upgrade the rankings by six steps by increasing productivity

Fakour Sanat Tehran Company, last year in order to create transparency in the steel chain with the supply of 25,000 tons of high quality iron ore concentrate in the commodity exchange, was a leader in creating transparency in this area. The company also won the ranking of the leading company in the ranking of 1400 top companies of Iran-IMI in 1400. The CEO of this company was praised as one of the 10 leading companies in the country's economy. In fact, the main criterion in selecting the leading companies is the change in the sales rank of the companies in the list of the top 100 companies in Iran during the last four years. This ranking is done according to other criteria as well. These include the presence of company information in the IMI-100 ranking for at least the last three years, the fact that the company's sales rating has not changed negatively in the last year, and the company has not lost money. Of course, this is not the first time that Fakour Sanat Tehran Engineering Company, as a company active in the development and completion of upstream and downstream industries of the iron and steel value chain, has won such a title. In the 2020 ranking, the company was ranked 99th out of 500 large and influential companies in the country's economy, and was also ranked as a leading company. But in this year's ranking, we see that this company, with a greater focus on improving performance and increasing productivity, is ranked 93rd among the top 100 companies in Iran. Accordingly, the top 100 companies in the country with exports, provide the currency needed to supply raw materials for industrial activities in a wide chain of small and medium industries in the country. Tehran Fakour Sanat Engineering Company not only has a significant role in this field but also moves along with other top Iranian companies in the country's economy.

### Efforts to make prices transparent

Fakour Sanat Tehran Company is one of the companies that has been much faster than other companies in order to offer commodities and goods in the commodity exchange as a mechanism for real price transparency. The company believed that if all the mining companies listed goods on the stock exchange and supply and demand formed, the price of iron ore would definitely be real. Mohammad Vahid Sheikhzadeh, the powerful CEO of the company, has been recognized many times as the selected manager of the private sector of the steel industry. According to him, if the raw materials of ingots (iron ore, concentrate, pellets, sponge iron) are offered in the commodity exchange, complete transparency will be created in the entire steel chain. Profits are fairly distributed in the chain and supply and demand will determine the price. In this regard, in January of last year, we saw the company enter the Commodity Exchange to supply iron ore concentrate as the first mining company. Eventually, despite all the obstacles from steelmakers, prices for iron ore became somewhat transparent. With three decades of activity, the company has also played a significant role in the realization of crude steel production of 55 million tons in 1404 through the transfer of technical knowledge and localization of modern sciences. By using up-to-date knowledge in the field of management and while applying specialized tools, it has succeeded in gaining valuable experiences. Due to this, it has taken the lead in the field of competition in the industries in the field of activity. Fakour Sanat Tehran Company has also made possible the cooperation between the company's specialists and professors and experts of prestigious Iranian and foreign universities in international partnerships with reputable foreign companies and technology owners. On the other hand, goals in the areas of improving performance, increasing productivity, protecting the environment and saving energy have been set in the company's development process. By becoming a



specialized general contractor and with the cooperation of domestic and foreign companies, this company has made it possible to carry out many large industrial and mining projects in the country.

### Achieving the first rank of total productivity by Chadormelo

The 24th IMI-100 Top Companies Conference was held at the Radio and Television Conference Hall. We also see that Chadormelo Mining and Industrial Company ranked first in terms of total factor productivity among the companies in the Exploration, Extraction and Ancillary Services Group. Chadormelo has obtained this rank based on 32 evaluation indicators. Evaluation indicators include production and sales, attention to social responsibility, moving towards a green economy, creating sustainable development infrastructure, attention to the development of disadvantaged areas, the impact on the national economy, productivity and manpower productivity, exports and job creation. Chadormelo Mining and Industrial Company, with more than 7,000 direct workers and over 42,000 people, indirectly plays a significant role in the production of the country's economy. Due to the high demand for raw material, the company requested the acquisition of mineral zones from the relevant organizations in order to provide suitable exploration zones to the Chadormelo complex. In this regard, the license of large industrial projects including pelletizing units, sponge iron, iron ore concentrate, production of alloy sheets and steels, refractory objects and bricks, steel smelting and coal and solar power plant was approved. These will be implemented in Yazd province in the near future. Meanwhile, an investment of 80,000 billion tomans has been predicted for the implementation of these projects. Most of it is provided from bank facilities and credits, shareholder support, income from the activities of existing mining and industrial units, and management measures and techniques.

### Top companies play the role of drivers of the country's economy

The head of the ranking center of the Industrial Management Organization said at the ceremony of the 24th top companies: "The top companies have played the role of drivers of the country's economy." Majid Darvish stated: The criterion of sales and income, along with 32 other indicators, is the evaluation and ranking criteria of the top companies in the 24th consecutive year. Based on the quantitative indicators whose data were extracted by the software, 500 companies were divided into five hundred categories. Emphasizing that the top 500 companies in Iran are the locomotive of the country's economy, he said: "87% of sales and revenue in the country have been achieved by

the top 100 companies in Iran." The highest sales growth was among the top 100 companies, the United Nations Economic Development Group, the Mahan Industries and Mines Development Company and the Sangan Steel Mining Company. The head of the rating center of the Industrial Management Organization also said: Mobarakeh Steel Company has the first place in the group of basic metals. The most business is due to the sales of banks, which have a 16.5 percent share, followed by the petrochemical group and the base metals group with a 13.5 percent share. First and foremost in terms of petrochemical exports, base metals and petroleum products are in the top position. And certified companies are extracted. Referring to the clear feature of IMI-100 ranking, he said: "The rank of each company in each index can be easily checked and validated." The head of the rating center of the Industrial Management Organization also said: Petrochemical Industries Company and Nouri Petrochemical Company and Iran Copper Industries Company and Ghadir Investment Company have the first to fifth positions in the highest amount of exports as an important evaluation index of top companies. Persian Gulf Petrochemical has the highest market value, he said: Mobarakeh Steel Company is in the second place with the highest market value and the National Iranian Copper Industries Company is in the third place. Pointing out that Iran's economy grew by one percent last year, Darvish said: "The real sales growth of the top 500 companies." It was 23.6 percent, so it can be said that the top companies have played the role of the locomotive of the country's economy.

### Total sales of the top 100 companies, 45% of GDP

A member of the board of directors of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) also said at the conference that the value of the country's industrial products is more than one hundred billion dollars, valued at 30 billion dollars, and the exports of the top 100 companies provide this required currency. Mehdi Sadeghi Niaraki, pointing out that the total sales of the country's top 100 companies are 45% of GDP and the value added of these 100 companies is 18% of the value added of the national economy, said: "In the world, countries' economies are made by companies they do. "We have no choice but to strengthen, support and remove obstacles for the leaders of the national economy," he said, noting that the company is active in the country with less than a million dollars in sales. Sadeghi Niaraki, referring to the composition of the top 500 companies, which is about "50% of them are commodities (raw materials for industries such as oil and petrochemicals, 30% financial and 20%) are construction-oriented," he said. Fill in 30% between sales and value added. He further suggested that the product complexity index be added to the benchmarks of the top companies and said: "Also, the law of maximum use of production capacity also discusses the ranking and this ranking of the Industrial Management Organization can be adapted to the law so that the top companies have advantages." The value of the law. The required currency plays a role in supplying raw materials for other fields of industrial activities in the wide chain of small and medium industries of the country.

### Factors of superiority and stability of large enterprises

Abofazi Kiani-Bakhtiari, CEO of Industrial Management Organization, also stated in this conference about the factors of superiority and sustainability of large enterprises: Innovative intelligence, which is the human cognitive ability to see problems and opportunities in new ways and discover new solutions to complex challenges, is one of the factors of superiority. And sustainability is big business, in other words, innovation intelligence is a response to complexity and the need for leaders in unpredictable environments.



## More Than 15,000 People Displaced in Darfur

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Renewed tribal violence near the western Sudanese city of El Geneina over the past week has displaced more than 15,000 people, the United Nations said.

The war-weary Darfur region has seen an increase in violence recently, humanitarian groups say, which analysts link to a peace deal signed in October 2020 that has led to some groups to jostle for power while not adequately addressing security concerns.

According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a personal dispute in the village of Adikong between two men from the Masalit tribe and an unspecified Arab nomadic group sparked the conflict.



## Denmark Starts Pulling Troops out of Mali

COPENHAGEN (Dispatches) - Denmark will start pulling its troops out of Mali, after the African country's transitional junta government this week insisted on an immediate withdrawal, Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said.

"We can see that the Malian transitional government, or the coup generals, last night sent out a public statement where they again reiterated that Denmark is not welcome in Mali, and we of course will not put up with that, so therefore we have decided to withdraw our soldiers home," Kofod told journalist at a press briefing in Copenhagen. Denmark had sent 105 military personnel to Mali earlier this month, after what it said was a "clear invitation" by Mali.



## Russia Keeps Door Open After U.S. Rejects Key Security Demands

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia said it was clear the United States was not willing to address its main security concerns, but kept the door open for further dialogue in their standoff over Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow, which has built up its forces near Ukraine, would not rush to draw conclusions after Washington responded on Wednesday to Russian proposals for a redrawing of post-Cold War security arrangements in Europe.

Describing tensions in Europe as reminiscent of the Cold War, Peskov said Moscow needed time to review the U.S. written response but U.S. and NATO statements that Russia's main demands were unacceptable did not leave much room for optimism.

"Based on what our colleagues said yesterday, it's absolutely clear that on the main categories outlined in those draft documents... we cannot say that our thoughts have been taken into account or that a willingness has been shown to take our concerns into account," he said. "But we won't rush with our assessments."

The nuanced Kremlin reaction made clear that Russia was not rejecting the U.S. and NATO responses out of hand or closing the door to diplomacy.

The Russian foreign ministry said the best way to reduce tensions was for NATO to withdraw forces from Eastern Europe, but also sought to quash fears of a looming invasion.

"We have already repeatedly stated that our country does not intend to attack anyone. We consider even the thought of a war between our people to be unacceptable," said Alexei Zaitsev, a ministry spokesman.

Russian and Ukrainian dollar bonds, which have been hammered by the crisis, rose after Peskov spoke. Russia's dollar-denominated RTS share index rose 4%, and the rouble gained over 1% against the dollar, pulling away from a nearly 15-month low.

Though it denies planning to invade Ukraine, Russia says it wants to enforce "red lines" to protect its own security.

It presented demands in December that NATO halt any further enlargement, bar Ukraine from ever joining and pull back forces and weaponry from eastern European countries that joined the alliance after the Cold War ended.

The written U.S. and NATO responses were not made public, but both had already rejected those demands while expressing willingness to engage on other issues such as arms control, confidence-building measures and limits on the size and scope of military exercises.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington remained committed to upholding NATO's "open-door" policy and NATO said it would not compromise its core principles.



## Italy Fails to Elect President Once More

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy's parliament failed to elect a new president for a fourth day running, with the main political blocs floundering in their efforts to find a mutually acceptable candidate for the powerful role.

Neither the center-right nor center-left put forward any names for today's ballot after various parties had shot down a raft of possible contenders, opening the way for intense, behind-the-scenes haggling in the hours ahead.

"We are faced with the most important choice of the next seven years. Does it seem normal to you to see the sort of games we have witnessed in the last four days?" said former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. "I find it scandalous."

Prime Minister Mario Draghi remains a contender for the job, but his prospects have faded this week, with many lawmakers clearly reluctant to back him, partly because they fear any change to the government could trigger an early election.

Unlike in the United States or France, where presidents get elected in a popular vote, in Italy, some 1,009 parliamentarians and regional representatives pick the head of state in a secret ballot, which party leaders sometimes struggle to control.

Some sort of compromise is inevitable in the fragmented parliament where neither of the main blocs has a majority.

The easiest solution would be for outgoing President Sergio Mattarella to accept a second mandate. He has ruled this out, but support for him has continued to rise in the daily ballots, suggesting many lawmakers want him to change his mind.

On Thursday he won more than 160 votes after securing 125 on Wednesday.

Much is at stake. The Italian presidency comes with a seven-year mandate and has considerable power to resolve political crises that regularly batter the country, including appointing prime ministers and dissolving parliament.

The center-right bloc, which includes the League, Brothers of Italy and Forza Italia, ordered their electors to abstain on Thursday—a way of preventing lawmakers from taking charge of the vote and pushing their own favorites.

In a joint statement, center-right leaders said they wanted to pick a figure with a "high institutional value". The wording suggested they could look beyond the world of politics and seek someone from the judicial sphere, or a senior civil servant.

Among the non-affiliated institutional figures regularly cited in the press are Elisabetta Belloni, a diplomat who heads the secret services and Justice Minister Marta Cartabia, the first woman to chair Italy's constitutional court.

Another possible institutional candidate is Sabino Cassese, an 86-year-old former constitutional court judge.



The narration of the CEO of Isfahan Exhibition about the new approaches of the exhibition that leads to economic development, announced:

# We Introduce Iranian Brands to the World

Once upon a time, Iran was the economic center of the region and the bridge between merchants and traders of the East and the West. This role has always existed throughout history and has strengthened Iran's strategic position. Now, Isfahan International Exhibition seeks to provide the conditions for the development of trade relations between producers and domestic economic actors and foreign markets by using the exhibition space. The company has defined new approaches in this field and seeks to meet the interests of all stakeholders in the field of economics. In this regard, the field of wealth production and interaction between actors in different economic sectors with the audience is provided. Alireza Mortazavi, Managing Director and Member of the Board of Directors of Isfahan International Exhibition, believes that all available infrastructure should be used to introduce Iranian goods and brands to countries around the world. According to him, if we can create a favorable, effective, permanent, legal and disciplined relationship between the stakeholders of provincial and national products, its benefits will eventually flow to all economic actors. This leads to economic development. Read the conversation with the CEO and member of the board of directors of Isfahan International Exhibition below.

**As the first question, let's address the issue of what role the Isfahan exhibition has in itself? Is the routine activities of this company going to continue as in previous years? Or are there new conditions for holding exhibitions?**

Isfahan International Exhibition has an inherent task, which is to hold exhibition events to introduce the achievements, capacities, potentials, goods and products of various companies to their beneficiaries. But in performing this inherent task, different approaches can be predicted and performed to achieve the goals set. Now, Isfahan International Exhibition, in addition to holding exhibition events, has set a new goal, which is to facilitate and introduce the capabilities of economic actors in Isfahan and the country to the general public of Iran and then the people of the region and the countries with which our



country has trade and economic relations. . We are more interested in the smooth flow of exports and the recognition and recognition of our country's products and capabilities by different people in different countries. We try to provide the context for these capabilities to be more visible. The main goal is to make the people of the world and the economic actors of these countries more familiar with the names of Iranian brands. It is necessary to emphasize that the Isfahan International Fair does not have a purely provincial view on this issue, but tries to see and evaluate the results of the activities of all Iranian economic actors abroad.

**This approach is a deep and of course broad approach. What you are doing is exactly what the International Exhibition of the Islamic Republic is striving for. It seems that this increase can create favorable conditions for the introduction of Iranian goods. What vision have you defined for this work?**

Isfahan International Fair is a bridge between producers and traders on the one hand and exporters and consumers on the other. Our aim and purpose is to be able to create a favorable, effective, permanent, legal and disciplined relationship

between the stakeholders of provincial and national products, so that ultimately its profits and benefits flow to all economic actors. This ultimately leads to economic development. When our companies and businesses are empowered and their products and services are well seen and introduced, they will achieve acceptable sales. Behind this acceptable sales, they thought about development, and eventually the issue of development, employment, production, productivity, economic turnover, and so on. This ultimately leads to economic development, which is the ultimate goal of all of us. I would also like to say that we pay special attention to the economic aspects of the subject of exhibition events. But in addition to that, we also pay attention to side programs such as cultural programs. If you look at the document of national development or look at the document of resistance economy, in these two documents and the comprehensive program, special emphasis is placed on the issue of development of non-oil economy. The new perspective of Isfahan International Exhibition is based on the comprehensive plan of resistance economy and the comprehensive document of the country's development and seeks to create a special map in economic development.

**Therefore, your approach at the Isfahan International Fair is to try to facilitate and develop the capabilities of Iranian companies to present their products to domestic and foreign customers. It is true?**

Yes; And this is exactly what our country needs. The goals of Isfahan International Exhibition are the presence of domestic companies and brands in foreign countries, gaining new markets and having the latest technology and using the most modern devices and services that are used in developed countries. In fact, the Isfahan Exhibition seeks to persuade Iranian companies and brands to showcase their capabilities in foreign markets.

**Have you taken any steps to implement these visions and plans?**

Yes; In the first step, we tried to organize the permanent location of Isfahan International Exhibitions in Basra, Iraq, so that from now on, numerous exhibitions and different titles will be held there. In this way, in addition to holding an exhibition event every week on the Isfahan exhibition site, we will also organize and hold exhibition events in Basra so that Iranian economic activists can expose their products to the people of this province and neighboring provinces in Iraq. Give. Apart from Basra, we have also planned to set up an exhibition center in Isfahan in other provinces of Iraq. These provinces are very desirable in terms of distance. We have also planned and planned three exhibitions in Armenia. In Turkey, we are in contact with five reputable sites to create an exhibition space between Isfahan and Turkey. These steps will be implemented soon and will have very valuable results for the economy of Isfahan and Iran.

**Do you follow these cases to reduce the gap between exhibition events in Iran and other countries?**

This is one of the goals. You are aware that the countries we know as developed countries have strong exhibitions with basic and up-to-date infrastructure. We can not name a country that is technically, technologically, industrially and culturally first in the world but has a weak exhibition. Undoubtedly, exhibitions can be effective in advancing economic goals, updating technology and changing the tastes of consumers. In this regard, we did a special job at the Isfahan exhibition, which was to launch virtual exhibition tours. The virtual tour of Isfahan International Exhibition, which is uploaded on the exhibition website, can be of great help to the new development in this field. With this possibility, anyone anywhere can see virtually every title of the exhibition held in Isfahan. Our distance from developed countries is not just about technology; But also in the infrastructure and the view of the type of exhibition, the view of the visitors, the view of the exhibitors and in general the type of attitude towards all the stakeholders of the exhibition; Accordingly, we try to gradually bring ourselves closer to the global standards for holding exhibition events.



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## Global Helicopter Market Is Recovering

PARIS (Reuters) - The global helicopter market is staging a mixed recovery but will take two to three years to recapture pre-crisis levels, the head of the helicopters division of planemaker Airbus said.

"We have had a first sight of recovery in the worldwide market, which progressed by 40% in 2021 from 2020," Airbus Helicopters Chief Executive Bruno Even said.

"It will take two to three years to recover levels before the crisis, but the trend is there," he told reporters, adding he expected trends seen in 2021 to be confirmed in 2022. The world's largest commercial helicopter maker said earlier that deliveries rose 13% to 338 units in 2021, up from 300 in 2020.



## U.S. Goods Trade Deficit Hits Record High

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. trade deficit in goods widened to a record high in December amid a continued rise in imports, suggesting that trade likely remained a drag on economic growth in the fourth quarter.

But the report from the Commerce Department on Wednesday also showed an acceleration in the pace of inventory accumulation at retailers and wholesalers, which likely offset the impact on gross domestic product from the larger trade gap.

"Strong demand and shifting consumer preferences during the pandemic led to a surge in imports that continues to outstrip exports and is contributing to all-time highs in the deficit," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics in White Plains, New York.

The goods trade deficit rose 3.0% to an all-time high of \$101.0 billion last month. The trade gap is likely to remain large for a while as business continue to replenish depleted inventories. Goods imports increased 2.0% to \$258.3 billion, likely as the backlog at ports continued to be cleared. The increase in imports was driven by capital goods, motor vehicles and consumer goods. But imports of food and industrial supplies declined.

Goods exports rose 1.4% to \$157.3 billion. There were increases in exports of consumer goods, industrial supplies and motor vehicles. Capital goods exports also rose, but food exports tumbled.

The report was published ahead of Thursday's advance fourth-quarter GDP data. Trade has subtracted from GDP growth for five straight quarters.

According to a Reuters survey of economists, the economy likely grew at a 5.5% annualized rate last quarter, an acceleration from the third quarter's 2.3% pace.

Inventory investment likely accounted for much of the anticipated acceleration in GDP growth last quarter. Growth last year is expected to have been the strongest since 1984.

The Commerce Department report showed retail inventories shot up 4.4% in December after increasing 2.0% in November. Inventories of motor vehicles and parts jumped 6.8% after rising 4.3% in November. They had been hampered by a global semi-conductor shortage, which has undercut motor vehicle production.

Retail inventories excluding motor vehicles accelerated 3.6% after rising 1.2% in November. This component goes into the calculation of GDP growth.

Inventories at wholesalers increased 2.1% last month after advancing 1.7% in November. There were increases in stocks of both durable and nondurable goods.

Inventory accumulation had been constrained by COVID-19-related global shortages, and the solid increases over the last two months offer hope that the worst of the supply chain disruptions was behind.

"It will likely take time for the supply-chain issues to ease, which could keep U.S. goods inflation elevated," said Ryan Sweet, a senior economist at Moody's Analytics in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

## Lebanon Signs Power Deal With Jordan, Syria to Boost Ailing Grid

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Power-starved Lebanon signed an agreement to import electricity from Jordan via Syria with the aim of reducing chronic outages and heeding international calls for reform.

The agreement signed by Energy Minister Walid Fayad with his Jordanian and Syrian counterparts is expected to give Lebanon two extra hours of mains electricity a day, doubling the supply currently provided by the cash-strapped government which has struggled to afford fuel imports for its power plants.

"This is an important, historic moment for Lebanon... not because of its impact but because of its symbolism," Fayad told a news conference.

He described the deal as a "modest but very important agreement for the Lebanese people, who need every extra hour of electricity."

Lebanon has not had round-the-clock mains electricity since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war.

But an unprecedented financial crisis has led to power cuts lasting 22 hours a day, forcing most Lebanese to rely on expensive private generators.

Jordanian Energy Minister Saleh al-Kharabsheh said the step comes as "our brothers in Lebanon face sensitive and difficult circumstances".

Lebanon and Jordan also signed an electricity transit agreement with Syria, which said that it stands ready to connect its power grid.



"We are ready to connect to the power grid at any time," Syrian Energy Minister Ghassan al-Zamil told reporters in Beirut.

Lebanon's parliament must now ratify the agreement, which was funded by the World Bank, Fayad said, adding that he expects payments to be finalized within two months before the start of implementation.

Importing electricity from Jordan will cost Lebanon about \$200 million per year, Fayad told AFP in an interview last week.

Power sector reform is one of the key conditions set by international creditors for disbursing billions of dollars in desperately needed financial support.

## UK Trade Deal With India Could Be Bigger Than U.S. Agreement

LONDON (Dispatches) - The UK's trade deal with India could provide the UK with a bigger deal than its defunct agreement with the US, new research has shown — although it carries more uncertainty and risk.

According to the Resolution Foundation, Britain's pivot towards closer trade ties with the Indo-Pacific region could deliver big economic benefits after the UK's exit from the European Union.

Its latest report for The Economy2030 Inquiry with the London Stock Exchange (LSEG.L), funded by the Nuffield Foundation, said that much of the focus around the UK's pivot towards Asia is around its ambition to become the first European nation to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

This agreement could cover 8% of current UK trade.

However, as the UK already has Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with 95% of CPTPP members, a trade agreement with India could have a far bigger impact.

The Foundation said that India is a faster growing economy than the CPTPP bloc, whose imports are expected to grow at below the world average in the years ahead.

The agreement will create significant benefits for both countries and could almost double UK exports to India, boosting UK total trade by up to £28bn (\$37.7bn) a year by 2035, and increasing wages by up to £3bn.

The short-term benefits for UK supply chains are, however, limited by the two countries' trade being less complementary, meaning Indian exports are less well matched to UK import demand.

UK firms exporting to India currently face far higher tariffs — 19% on average — than they do to the US at 2%, "so there is far more scope for trade liberalisation", the report said.

Securing an FTA with India could also give UK firms a "first mover" competitive advantage over exporting firms in the US and EU, which don't have preferential access to the Indian economy.

India is forecast to become the world's third largest import market by 2050, while its demand for business, telecommunications and computer services — sectors where UK export firms already perform well — is expected to treble over the course of the 2020s.

UK business services exports currently under-perform in India relative to other Indo-Pacific regions — accounting for just 1.8% of imports to India, compared to 3% in China, and 4.2% in Malaysia.

It came with warnings that UK firms will also be exposed, however, to far more uncertainty about competition from Indian exporters, with eight sectors emerging as new comparative advantages for India — including pharmaceuticals and research and development (R&D) — compared to just one in the US in the past 10 years.

## Qatar Could Reroute Some Gas to Europe With U.S. Mediation

LONDON (Dispatches) - Qatar will need help from the United States to persuade Doha's natural gas buyers to reroute some supplies to Europe in case a Russia-Ukraine conflict disrupts Russian deliveries to the continent, a source familiar with the discussions said.

The issue will be discussed at talks in Washington next week between the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and U.S. President Joe Biden, one of the sources said.

The U.S. administration has in recent weeks approached Doha and other major energy producers to see if they can help in case Russia attacks Ukraine and the United States imposes sanctions on Russia.

"Doha may be able help in case of a major global disruption like it did in 2011 during Fukushima," the source said, referring to Japan's nuclear reactor accident.

Doha, one of the world's top liquefied natural gas (LNG) producers, can send to Europe some additional spare gas. But it doesn't have much spare gas as most volumes are contracted under long-term deals, the source said.

"Major Qatari gas customers will need to be persuaded by the US or others to allow to reroute their gas to Europe as a short-term solution."

In the longer term, Qatar expects its LNG exports to rise significantly. But in order to ensure energy security, the European Union needs to think about committing to long-term LNG contracts to avoid future supply shocks, the source said.

## Crypto Money Laundering Rises 30% in 2021

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Cybercriminals laundered \$8.6 billion in cryptocurrencies last year, up 30% from 2020, according to a report from blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis released.

Overall, cybercriminals have laundered more than \$33 billion worth of crypto

since 2017, Chainalysis estimated, with most of the total over time moving to centralized exchanges.

The firm said the sharp rise in money laundering activity in 2021 was not surprising, given the significant growth of both legitimate and illegal crypto activity last year.

Money laundering refers to that process of disguising the origin of illegally obtained money by transferring it to legitimate businesses.

About 17% of the \$8.6 billion laundered went to decentralized finance applications, Chainalysis said, referring to the sector which facilitates crypto-denominated financial transactions outside of traditional banks.

That was up from 2% in 2020.

Mining pools, high-risk exchanges, and mixers also saw substantial increases in value received from illicit addresses, the report said. Mixers typically combine potentially identifiable or tainted cryptocurrency funds with others, so as to conceal the trail to the fund's original source.

Wallet addresses associated with theft sent just under half of their stolen funds, or more than \$750 million worth of crypto in total, to decentralized finance platforms, according to the Chainalysis report.

Chainalysis also clarified that the \$8.6 billion laundered last year represents funds derived from crypto-native crime such as darknet market sales or ransomware attacks in which profits are in crypto instead of fiat currencies.

"It's more difficult to measure how much fiat currency derived from off-line crime — traditional drug trafficking, for example — is converted into cryptocurrency to be laundered," Chainalysis said in the report.

"However, we know anecdotally this is happening."

## OPEC+ Expected to Stick to Planned March Output Target Increase



LONDON (Dispatches) - OPEC+ will probably stick with a planned increase in its oil output target for March when it meets on Wednesday next week, several sources from the producer group said, as it sees demand recovering despite downside risks from the pandemic and looming interest rate rises.

While two OPEC+ sources said oil at a seven-year high close to \$90 a barrel might prompt the group to consider further steps, the vast majority of sources said no new decision was expected at the Feb. 2 online meeting.

One Russian source told Reuters the country was concerned the price rally might revive a boom in U.S. shale production.

"OPEC+ countries should be on high alert with this price level given the bullish forecasts for shale oil production in 2022," the source said.

The source added that high oil prices were also hurting profit margins of Russian refineries.

OPEC+, which groups the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Russia and other allies, has raised its output target each month since August by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) as it unwinds record production cuts made in 2020.

Current plans would see OPEC+ do so again in March. "We are very likely to go for another 400,000 barrels per day," one of the OPEC+ sources said. "There are no reasons against it."

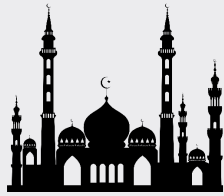
OPEC+ has resisted pressure from the United States since last year to raise supplies more quickly.

Despite its increased targets, actual output from OPEC+ has not kept pace as some members struggle with capacity constraints, and this has been a factor underpinning prices.

OPEC+ missed its production target by 790,000 bpd in December as members such as Nigeria and Angola struggled to raise output, the International Energy Agency said.

Several banks and analysts including Morgan Stanley and JP Morgan, expect oil prices to top \$100 barrel later in the year amid tight OPEC+ spare capacity and strong demand.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:17
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:47
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:39
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	07:05

82. And of the evil ones, were some who dived for him, and did other work besides; and it was We Who guarded them.  
83. And (remember) Job, when He cried to his Lord, "Truly distress has seized me, but Thou art the Most Merciful of those that are merciful."  
Surah 21, The Prophets (82 - 83)

## India's Households Wrestle With Inflation as Incomes Dip

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's households are grappling with rising living costs at a time when jobs and incomes have taken a hit amid the pandemic, but economists are not hopeful the government's annual budget due next week will provide much relief.

Tea, edible oil, pulses, meat, cooking gas and services have gone up by 20%-40% since the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020 - hurting consumers while their incomes have fallen below levels seen before the health crisis.

Retail prices have risen nearly 10% in the last two years compared with 8% in the previous five-and-half years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, an analysis of inflation data compiled by the Ministry of Statistics showed.

Modi, who remains popular among voters, plans to raise import tax on more items to support local manufacturing and increase spending on long-term projects.

Economists blame higher taxes, a widening fiscal deficit, Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) easy monetary policy and supply constraints during the pandemic for a sharp rise in prices.

India's government has offered little aid to households except free foodgrains for the poor.

According to official estimates, average per capita income stands at 93,973 rupees (\$1,258) for the current fiscal year ending March, lower than 94,566 rupees before the pandemic.

The unemployment rate was at 7.9% in December, with nearly 35 million people looking for work, a report by Mumbai-based think tank Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said.

Meanwhile, the economy is projected to grow 9.2% in 2021/22 after a 7.3% contraction the previous year.

The increase in import tariffs on hundreds of goods in the last two years, climbing global crude oil and commodity prices have added to the burden on households.

Cooking gas prices rose 43.36% in two years ending December 2021, compared with a 30.68% rise in the previous five-and-half years, data showed.

However, domestic electricity and education costs rose at a slower pace reflecting a fall in economic activity and the closure of educational institutions during the pandemic.

Inflation is expected to push even higher as manufacturers pass on rising



input costs while the central bank delays monetary tightening in efforts to support the economic recovery.

Retail inflation accelerated to a five-month high of 5.59% in December from a year earlier, while wholesale price-based inflation, a proxy for producer prices, marginally eased to 13.56%, but remained in double-digits for nine straight months.

"The COVID period has been a nightmare for Indian workers," said K.R. Shyam Sundar, a labor economist at XLRI, Jamshedpur, and the author of "Impact of COVID-19, reforms and governance on labour rights".

He added that households suffered job losses, fall in incomes and a sharp rise in prices during the pandemic.

"RBI and the government, which have excessively focused on supporting industry and boosting growth, should now take steps to rein in inflation and provide a relief to households."

## WTO Lets China Impose Tariffs on U.S. In Obama-Era Case

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The World Trade Organization (WTO) authorized China to impose \$645m of compensatory tariffs against the United States in a ruling likely to receive a cool reception in Washington.

China went to the WTO in 2012 to challenge anti-subsidy tariffs the United States imposed between 2008 and 2012, mainly during the term of U.S. President Barack Obama, on 22 Chinese products ranging from solar panels to steel wire.

The decade-long case into alleged subsidies has centered on whether the United States could treat Chinese companies in which the government owns a majority stake as controlled by the state.

U.S. officials have argued that China benefits from easier treatment at the WTO, while subsidizing manufactured goods and dumping them on world markets.

China had initially asked the three-person WTO panel to award it the right to impose tariffs on \$2.4 billion of U.S. goods.

The actual award is dwarfed by U.S. tariffs on more than \$300 billion of Chinese goods imposed by former U.S. President Donald Trump, most of which are still in place.

However, it is another symbolic victory for Beijing at the Geneva-based trade body. In November 2019, the WTO awarded China the right to retaliatory tariffs of \$3.58 billion after finding fault with the way Washington determined if Chinese products are being dumped on the U.S. market.

## IASC Products Should Be Distinguished in the World

TEHRAN - Representative of Velayat-e Faqih and Friday Prayer Leader of City of Yazd Ayatollah Naseri during his visit to Iran Alloy Steel Company (IASC) hailed the efforts of the company and was informed of the latest achievements of the company.

In his meeting with board of directors and senior officials of the company, Ayatollah Naseri called for using the latest scientific methods in the company and said in the scene of the knowledge-based sciences, the company should move in a way its products to be distinguished in the world for their unique properties.

The Yazd Friday Prayer Leader also reiterated that the company should keep up with the scientific developments in the world for improving its performance and even the company should move in the direction of production and technology by creating its own methods.

He then pointed to the U.S. and Western countries' sanctions against Iran for stopping the country from achieving any progress in the industrial and scientific fields. He said by reinforcing and encouraging the spirit of learning and education, the country should take advantage of the capacities of its youths and elites in the

### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



fields of producing science for progress and growth in order that the country should not be dependent on any foreign country any longer in any field.

Meanwhile in the meeting, the CEO of Iran Alloy Steel Company Mr. Alireza Chaychi briefed Ayatollah Naseri of major activities and achievements of the company and said that the company as the only one in the national steel industry in the field of knowledge-based science today produces over 550,000 tons of products through 430 forms of products which are used in other industries like auto making, oil and petrochemical, rail and ship building sectors.

Chaychi added that some part of the raw materials of the company which is less than 25% of its needs is imported while in the past the figure was 50%. He added that since its foundation, the company's policy was to focus on exports and effective presence in the international markets but the sanctions created some problems and some export market were changed.

He then pointed to the actions of the company in line with environmental issues, adding that the company has so far won six times the award of the top national green industry unit.

## Iran Slams...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran is closely monitoring the developments in the east of the Euphrates, especially in Al-Hasakah province.

What we are witnessing today in Al-Hasakah is the result of the continued illegal occupation of parts of Syria by foreign forces including the United States.

More importantly, free movement of terrorist groups including ISIS members in territories under the illegitimate occupation of foreign forces in Syria and Iraq, as well as their transfer to other countries threatens regional and international peace and security. We consider the recent incident in that context.

The Al-Hasakah incident clearly shows that the occupying force and its allies have been unable to restore security and order in the occupied areas. This has assisted ISIS to expand its influence in the region, thus jeopardizing the lives of civilians living there.

This incident reminds us once again that the presence of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and their accompanying families in the conflict zones is still a growing source of insecurity and instability to the entire region. It is deeply regrettable that those countries who constantly and repeatedly claim to pioneer human rights refrain from repatriating their own nationalities, especially women and children, who are trapped in deplorable conditions in conflict zones.

Considering the threats caused by FTFs for security and stability of the region, the Security Council must address the repatriation of FTFs to their own countries as a matter of priority.

Fighting terrorism must not be used as a pretext to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

The continued occupation of parts of Syria is the main factor in creating conducive grounds for such terrorist activities in Syria and must be ended forthwith.

We believe that the effective exercise of sovereignty by the Syrian government over all its territory is an important element in restoring stability and security to this country. In this regard, as reaffirmed by the UNSC resolutions, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria must be respected.

The Syrian Government has the legitimate and inherent right to counter terrorist activities in its territory and under its jurisdiction and any measure taken to counter terrorism must be coordinated with the Syrian Government.

Countering terrorism can only be effective once all states carry out their obligations fully and responsibly and refrain from taking double-standards or selective approach. Iran will continue to support Syria's efforts in countering the threats posed by terrorist groups, thus ensuring its unity and territorial integrity.

The Islamic Republic emphasizes on the need for respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling for end of occupation of parts of the country, stopping Israeli regime's incursions into Syrian territories and lifting all illegal and inhuman sanctions against Syria.

## U.S. Politicians...

FROM PAGE 1

The Iranian top diplomat's remarks followed media reports denoting that the American officials are seeking direct negotiations with the Iranian delegation over the fate of the 2015 landmark deal, which the U.S. unilaterally left in 2018.

Earlier in the week, Amir-Abdollahian pointed to the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital for the removal of sanctions imposed on Tehran, saying that there have so far been no direct talks between Iranian and U.S. delegations.

"The American side sends messages in various ways, calling for some degree of direct negotiations with Iran," the top Iranian diplomat said, noting that Tehran is engaged in talks with the P4+1 group of countries and has "non-paper" contacts with the U.S. through Enrique Mora, the European Union's deputy foreign policy chief and head of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA, and one or two signatories to the deal.

Amir-Abdollahian also rejected reports about direct talks between Tehran and Washington.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) also said in a tweet on Tuesday that "contact with the American delegation in Vienna has been through informal written exchanges, and there was no need, and will be no need, for more contact, so far."

Iran and the remaining participants to the JCPOA have been holding talks in Vienna since April last year with the aim of reviving the deal by bringing the US into full compliance.

## Tehran Takes Swipe...

FROM PAGE 1

"Underneath the soil we step on lies the bodies of people who have sacrificed their precious lives during an imposed war whose money and weapons came from the West. Elsewhere in Canada, when you dig the grounds, there you discover the remains of innocent indigenous children!" he wrote.

He criticized Canada and other Western states for applying dual policies to the issue of human rights and said, "The biggest threat to human rights comes from hypocrisy, politicization, and double standards."

Canada was shocked in May 2021 after an indigenous community unmarked a mass grave containing the remains of 215 children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.

The incident prompted calls for justice and accountability for the victims and survivors of the residential school system, which forcibly separated indigenous children from their families between the late 1800s and 1990s. Canada forced more than 150,000 Indigenous children to attend institutions run by various churches, most notably the Roman Catholic Church.

The children, who were stripped of their languages and culture, were also subjected to abuse, rape, and malnutrition. Thousands are believed to have died while attending those schools. Canada's dark past keeps haunting the North American nation, as a new search has gone underway for the unmarked graves of indigenous children at a notorious former residential school near Toronto.

Indigenous community leaders and survivors began the grim search in November for the remains of children at the former Mohawk Institute Residential School site in Brantford, Ontario — one of Canada's oldest and longest-running institutions of that type.

Canada has long been trying to portray itself as a defender of human rights. Under that pretext, it has repeatedly targeted Iran at the United Nations by drafting resolutions against what Ottawa and its allies call rights abuses inside the Islamic Republic.

## Sanctions Impeding...

FROM PAGE 1

Washington strictly refuses to relax the bans even for such staples as food and medicine, although the Security Council Resolution 2615, which was adopted unanimously last year, exempts humanitarian assistance and other activities from sanctions regimes.

"We, once again, call on the international community and in particular donor countries to live up to their responsibilities and extend new and additional financial resources to Afghanistan's neighbors to help refugees and displaced persons," the Iranian official stated.

## Iran Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

It said that Iranian crude oil output had reached nearly 2.47 million barrels per day (bpd) in the six months to late September.

The study cited output data by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and concluded that Iran had exported 770,000 bpd of crude oil in the June quarter before increasing shipments to 820,000 in the September quarter.

The figures come as a major blow to efforts by the United States to cut Iranian oil exports to zero in line with a unilateral regime of sanctions imposed by Washington on Iran since 2018.

## Iran Secure Place...

FROM PAGE 1

World football's governing body FIFA ordered Iran back in September 2019 to allow women access to stadiums without restriction.

Iranian women were allowed entry to a 2022 World Cup qualifying match between Iran and Cambodia at the Azadi Stadium back in 2019 but this represented the first match since.

The ISNA news agency reported that of the 10,000 tickets sold, 2,000 were exclusively sold to women.

Immediately after the match, President Ebrahim Raisi offered congratulations on the victory of the national football team (also known as Team Melli) in the World Cup qualifier against Iraq and advancing to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, due to be held in Qatar in summer.

In a message to the Iranian nation on Thursday night, President Raisi congratulated Iran's national football team on qualifying for the 2022 World Cup.

"The consecutive and authoritative victories of our national football team in the qualifying round of the World Cup and qualifying for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, brought a wave of joy and happiness for the proud nation of Iran," he said.

"Congratulating this great success to the Supreme Leader and the proud people of Iran, which is the manifestation of the dynamism and glory of a nation, I sincerely thank all the valuable efforts of all managers, coaches and especially the capable players of the national football team," the president added, according to his official website.



## Marquez sights set On Sepang

PARIS (Dispatches) - Six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez will take part in next week's pre-season testing in Sepang after recovering from double vision, his Honda team announced today.

The 28-year-old Spaniard had been suffering from diplopia since an off-road training crash at the end of October. He then missed the final two rounds of the season and the Jerez test session in December.

He was given the green light for the Malaysia tests on February 5-6 after riding first on a motorcross track then at the MotoGP circuits in Portimao and Aragon.

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## Guimaraes Close to Completing Newcastle Move

MADRID (Dispatches) - Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes is set to join Newcastle United for a transfer fee of €40 million (RM188.4 million), a source close to the negotiations told Reuters on Wednesday even though his club Olympique Lyonnais denied any deal had been reached.

Reuters understands that the 24-year-old will undergo a medical over the weekend in Brazil as he is in South America on international duty.

The source told Reuters that Newcastle agreed to all the conditions requested by Lyon and Guimaraes had agreed personal terms to join the Premier League club.

# Hornets Score Franchise-Record 158 Points in Victory

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kelly Oubre Jr. connected on 10 shots from 3-point range on his way to 39 points and LaMelo Ball had a triple-double as the record-setting Charlotte Hornets overwhelmed the Indiana Pacers in a 158-126 rout at Indianapolis.

The Hornets set a franchise single-game record for points while establishing an NBA season high. The Hornets' all-time record had come this season in a 146-143 overtime loss to the Houston Rockets on Nov. 27. The Memphis Grizzlies previously held the 2021-22 mark thanks to a 152-79 rout of the Oklahoma City Thunder on Dec. 2.

Oubre tied the franchise record for made 3-pointers, and Ball poured in 29 points to go with 13 assists and 10 rebounds as Charlotte produced a season-high point total.

Miles Bridges posted 22 points to help the Hornets snap a two-game losing streak.

### Cavaliers 115, Bucks 99

Kevin Love and Cedi Osman scored 25 and 23 points off the bench, respectively, to lead Cleveland past visiting Milwaukee.

Love, who also grabbed nine rebounds, sank five 3-pointers, and Osman added six more from beyond the arc. Osman entered the game having made just 1 of 20 attempts from 3-point range over his previous five games. Darius Garland celebrated his 22nd birthday by collecting 19 points and eight assists for Cleveland.

Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo had 26 points and nine rebounds in his return from a one-game absence caused by right knee soreness. Bobby Portis scored 22 points and Khris Middleton chipped in 21 for the Bucks.

### Suns 105, Jazz 97

Devin Booker scored 43 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as Phoenix increased its winning streak to eight with a victory over Utah in Salt Lake City.

Booker scored 21 points in the first quarter,



helping the Suns take an early 21-point lead, and then took turns with teammate Chris Paul hitting clutch jumpers down the stretch to thwart Utah's comeback attempt. Paul finished with 21 points.

### Clippers 111, Magic 102

Amir Coffey had 19 points, six rebounds and five assists, and Los Angeles followed up the largest comeback in franchise history with a win at Orlando.

The Clippers, who trailed by as many as 14 points in the first half, outscored Orlando 35-24 in the fourth quarter. Los Angeles converted 23 of 25 free throws in the final period after having only two total attempts through three quarters. A night earlier, the Clippers erased a 35-point deficit to beat the Washington Wizards.

Franz Wagner totaled 21 points and nine assists for Orlando, but the Magic missed an opportunity to post their first two-game winning streak in more than a month.

### Mavericks 132, Trail Blazers 112

Kristaps Porzingis scored 22 points to lead seven players in double figures as visiting Dallas led wire to wire in a win over depleted Portland.

Jalen Brunson contributed 20 points, 11 assists and six rebounds for Dallas, which led by as many as 23 and won for the 12th time in 15 games. Luka Doncic recorded 15 points, 15 assists and 10 rebounds.



MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - American Danielle Collins showed she will provide a formidable obstacle to home favorite Ash Barty's hopes of winning the Australian Open with a crushing 6-4 6-1 defeat of Poland's Iga Swiatek to reach her first Grand Slam final.

After Barty's demolition of American Madison Keys earlier, the 30th ranked Collins produced an equally dominant display to give former French Open champion Swiatek no chance.

World number one Barty will be the overwhelming favorite on Saturday as she attempts to become the first local to win the Australian Open since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

But the 28-year-old Collins, a product of the American college system and twice an NCAA champion, showed against Swiatek that she can mix it with the best.

She made a lightning start on Rod Laver Arena, overwhelming Swiatek with her power and aggression to race into a 4-0 lead.

Seventh seed Swiatek responded to claw back some of the damage but 28-year-old Collins held firm to close out the set.

It was a repeat show in the second set as a dominant Collins, who elected not to sit down at changeovers such was her eagerness to get the job done, again roared 4-0 ahead.

## Italy to Put Forward Proposal to Host Euro 2028 or 2032

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy will put forward a proposal to European football's governing body Uefa for the nation to host either the 2028 or 2032 European Championship, the head of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) said.

Italy had originally planned to bid to host either Euro 2028 or the 2030 World Cup, but a smaller project is more appealing and gives the country a chance to make some much-needed renovations to its stadiums.

"The decisive step for the 2028 Euros is in March and we will present our candidacy before the Uefa Executive committee, which is also open for 2032," FIGC president Gabriele Gravina told a news conference.

"We will evaluate one of the two options. We'll do it in serious fashion, because there is great desire for renewal of infrastructures, for example in Florence, Cagliari, Bologna and Bari."

Some Italian stadiums have not been updated since the 1990 World Cup, the last major football tournament hosted by Italy alone.

In Florence, Fiorentina President Rocco Commisso has repeatedly vented his frustration in the media at the refusal of politicians to let him invest in building a new stadium or even reconstruct the existing Stadio Artemio Franchi.

Several other nations have confirmed they will also bid to host Euro 2028, including the football associations of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, who announced a joint United Kingdom and Ireland bid for the tournament.

## Premier League Clubs Agree Changes to Covid Postponement Rules

LONDON (Dispatches) - Premier League clubs must have at least four positive coronavirus cases in their squad before a match can be called off under new guidance issued today following a number of controversial postponements.

The change comes after criticism of the way some clubs were perceived to be exploiting the previous rules. If a club could not field 13 outfield players and a goalkeeper either from their squad list or appropriately experienced under-21 players, the match would be postponed.

# Watford Appoint Hodgson as Manager



LONDON (Dispatches) - Watford have named former England and Liverpool coach Roy Hodgson as manager the day after sacking Claudio Ranieri following 3-0 home drubbing by fellow strugglers Norwich City, the Premier League club said.

Hodgson has been brought in to keep Watford in the top flight, a task he achieved for four seasons in a row with Crystal Palace, the last team he managed.

"Watford FC is delighted to confirm the appointment of Roy Hodgson as the

club's manager," the club said in a statement.

"The ex-England national team boss is joined by his trusted assistant Ray Lewington, who managed the Hornets so admirably from 2002 until 2005.

"Hodgson and Lewington begin preparations immediately for Watford's next Premier League fixture, away to Burnley on Saturday Feb. 5."

Ranieri was sacked on Monday after just over three months in charge following a dreadful run of results which has left the club in the Premier League's relegation zone.

The 70-year-old Ranieri took charge in October after Xisco Munoz parted ways with the club just seven league games into the season and with the team in 14th place.

## Djokovic to Play In Dubai After Vaccine Controversy

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Unvaccinated world number one Novak Djokovic has signed up to play at next month's ATP Dubai tennis tournament, reports said on Wednesday, after his deportation from Australia prevented a tilt at a record 21st Grand Slam title.

A leaked entry list shared by tennis journalists on social media and picked up by several outlets showed Djokovic named as the top seed for the February 21-26 event.

The 34-year-old Serb lost a legal battle to remain in Australia and defend his Australian Open crown this month in a Covid controversy that made headlines around the world.

Djokovic's next moves have been unclear since he flew out of Melbourne and home to Belgrade, via Dubai, as the tournament he has won a record nine times got under way in Melbourne.

The pandemic has proved damaging for the all-time tennis great, who organised a super-spreader tournament series in 2020 and was pictured maskless at an awards ceremony a day after he tested positive in December.

He was first handed an exemption to play by Tennis Australia despite his unvaccinated status, but Australian authorities revoked his visa in a decision that was ultimately upheld by the Federal Court.

Djokovic, who shares the record of 20 major titles with Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, now faces diminishing possibilities to add to his haul with France, host of Roland Garros, barring unvaccinated sportspeople and New York, home of the US Open, also under stringent virus rules.

Coronavirus vaccination is not a requirement to enter the United Arab Emirates, where 100 percent of residents have had at least one jab.



## Infantino's Remarks Spark Anger

PARIS (Dispatches) - FIFA president Gianni Infantino sparked criticism when he said increased revenues from a biennial World Cup could create opportunities for Africans who otherwise may find "death in the sea" crossing the Mediterranean.

He later said his address to the Council of Europe, the continent's leading human rights organization, had been "misinterpreted" and that he meant that football could "help improve the situation of people around the world".

The idea of a World Cup every two years has been gathering steam with Infantino trying to get support from national federations, saying the switch would create an extra US\$4.4 billion (RM18.4 billion) in revenues for the world body.

FIFA has said that the additional funds would help reduce the gap in revenues between the developed and less developed football markets.

In his speech, Infantino stressed the importance of making football more inclusive for countries outside of Europe.

"This topic is not about whether we want a World Cup every two years, but about what do we want to do for the future of football," Infantino said. "If we think about the rest of world and the vast majority of Europe, then we have to think about what football brings."

"Football is about opportunity, about hope, about the national teams. We cannot say to the rest of world give us your money, but watch us on TV. We need to include them."

"We need to find ways to include the whole world to give hope to Africans so that they don't need to cross the Mediterranean in order to find maybe a better life but, more probably, death in the sea."

