

**Health Ministry on Saturday Announced Coronavirus Death Toll In Iran Was 64 During the Past 24 Hours, as the Number of the Total Death Toll Reached 132,745 After Claiming Lives of 64 in the Country**

# IRAN NEWS

**The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Has Said That Without the Cooperation of All Parties Any Agreement in the Vienna Talks Between Iran and The P4+1 Is Impossible**

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## Iran-China Trade Hits \$14.8b in 2021

TEHRAN (MNA) - The value of Iran-China non-oil trade stood at \$14.8 billion in 2021, according to the data released by China's customs administration.

The value of trade between the two countries during January-December 2021 declined by less than one percent in comparison to 2020 in which the figure was reported to be \$14.9 billion, Tasnim news agency reported.

Based on the mentioned data, China's imports from Iran in 2021 grew by more than one percent compared to the previous year and reached \$6.5 billion. China had imported \$6.4 billion worth of goods from Iran in 2020.

However, China's exports to Iran in January-December 2021 fell by about two percent to \$8.3 billion from \$8.5 billion in the previous year.

Iran mainly exports foodstuff and agricultural products to China while importing machinery and industrial raw materials, medical equipment, fabrics, and auto parts.

Iran and China officially signed the document for 25-year comprehensive cooperation in March 2021.

The document was signed between Iran's former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

## Tokyo Urged to Allocate Iran Frozen Money to Health

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Health and Medical Education Bahram Eynollahi has hoped that part of Iranian assets in Japan would be released and allocated to health sector.

Eynollahi made the remarks in a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Tehran Kazutoshi Ikawa, according to the Saturday report of Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Describing sanctions against the Iranian nation as unfair, the minister said that the country makes effort to not let the bans affect people's health.

Further, Eynollahi appreciated Japan for helping Iran during the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed near 5,750,000 worldwide since its outbreak in December 2019.

At his remarks, the minister described Tehran-Tokyo ties as historical and friendly.

He went on to hope that the two countries would witness an increase in scientific cooperation and exchange of university students and professors.

The two could prove that their good relations would be effective in scientific boom worldwide, the minister underlined.

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## Iran's Nuclear Right Cannot Be Restricted



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian security official says the country's nuclear right cannot be circumscribed by any agreement. "Iran's legal right to continue research and development work and maintain its peaceful nuclear capabilities and accomplishments as well as to ensure its safety against supported wicked acts cannot be restricted with any agreement," said Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani in a tweet.

Moreover, he had already made a tweet about reports that contact with the American delegation to the Vienna talks has, so far, been made via unofficial exchanges and that there has not been, and will not be any need for anything beyond that.

"This method will be replaced with other methods only when a good deal is close at hand," he had explained. Iran and the P 4+1 group, namely Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, are engaged in talks in the Austrian capital Vienna in a bid to revive the 2015 nuclear deal - JCPOA - and a possible return of the US to the agreement.

The U.S., under former President Donald Trump, withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, leaving the internationally-recognized deal in tatters.

Meanwhile in reaction to the restoration of sanction waivers to some countries cooperating with Iran, Ulyanov said that the U.S. maximum pressure policy remains the major factor in the advancement of the Iranian nuclear program.

The U.S. restoring sanctions waivers to Iran which allowed it to use the assistance of other countries in the sphere of nuclear energy may slow down the implementation of Iran's nuclear program, Russian Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov said on Saturday, TASS reported.

"Clear provisions of the Iranian nuclear deal are totally misinterpreted by opponents. The US maximum pressure policy remains the major factor in the advancement of the Iranian nuclear programme. Probably waivers can slow it down," he wrote on Twitter.

On Friday, a high-ranking U.S. State Department official reported that the US administration made a decision to restore the sanctions waivers which allowed Iran to receive assistance on peaceful nuclear projects from other countries, including Russia. The official stressed that the waiver "is not a concession to Iran," nor is it "a signal that we are about to reach an understanding on a mutual return to full implementation of the" Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

This is while some believe that the move by the Biden administration is in fact in line with the White House's "blame game" and cannot have economic positive effects on Iran's economy.

## Iranian Scientist Produces Space Shuttle Power Via Plastic Waste

TEHRAN (PressTV) - An Iranian scientist has designed an advanced power generation bioreactor for space shuttles that utilizes the novel microbial fuel cell technique to turn plastic waste into electricity in a process he describes as the quickest and most efficient in the world.

The state-of-the-art reactor has been designed by Hamed Milani, a researcher and physician from the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran.

It also decomposes different types of plastic waste in the shortest time possible, resolving the problem of recycling waste in space.

"The state-of-the-art power generation reactor system to be used in spacecraft has been designed and built for the first time in the world ... It can convert plastic waste into bioelectricity using microbial fuel cell technology," Milani said, IRNA reported.

"The project consists of two new-generation reactors that can convert different types of plastics into their building blocks in 14 hours, which is the shortest time for plastic decomposition in the world, using the carbon produced in the process and the advanced microbial fuel cell system to produce the electricity required by space shuttles," he added.

The issue of recycling waste in space is a major issue faced by astronauts. According to Milani, the amount of waste generated during a space mission is about 2500 kg per year. He said the issue of waste recycling in space has drawn a lot of attention in recent years, describing it as key for long-term space travel.

"Reducing the amount of pollution and biological hazards of space waste in the aviation industry, reducing the overall weight and space occupied in the spacecraft, the ability of bacteria to multiply themselves, developing power generation processes at a lower cost, and reducing the amount of fuel consumed are other benefits of using the novel microbial fuel cell technology," he explained.

Moreover, the Iranian researcher pointed out that his project is more efficient, easier, and quicker than other plastic decomposition methods in the world.

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## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

### U.S., Main Supporter of Wars in Region

For years it has been proved to the world that arrogant countries just think of their own benefits in other countries and whatever they do is just for milking the countries especially in the oil-rich areas in the Middle East and the West Asia.

The U.S. and its Western allies have always claimed that they have been supporting human rights and the nations against the despotic regimes but in fact what they do is for milking the countries and nations and looting their wealth.

In recent years that war in Yemen has escalated, the Western countries, led by the U.S., have urged the warring parties in Yemen to stop war and come to the negotiating table but they have been actually supporting the aggressors, mainly the Saudi-led coalition forces, in practice.

On Thursday and in another supportive action, the U.S. once again showed its impartiality in the Yemen war and revealed his siding with the coalition forces against the freedom fighters of this country.

The U.S. State Department approved sales of weapons, F-16 fighter jets and related equipment to Middle East allies, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a statement on Thursday that the State Department approved Jordan's request for 12 F-16 C Block 70 fighter jets, radios targeting pods and associated munitions components including guided missile tail kits at an estimated cost of US\$4.21 billion.

The Pentagon said the prime contractor for the jets is Lockheed Martin Corp.

Saudi Arabia also got the green light to purchase 31 Multifunctional Information Distribution System-Low Volume Terminals (MIDS-LVT) for as much as US\$23.7 million to upgrade its air missile systems.

The UAE was also approved to buy US\$30 million worth of spare and repair parts for its Homing All the Way Killer (Hawk) missile defense systems.

This comes as there have been increased retaliatory Yemeni missile and drone attacks on the UAE in recent weeks.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital Sana'a on January 31, the spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces said that Yemeni troops and their allies had conducted Operation Yemen Storm III against the UAE, using homegrown ballistic missiles as well as combat drones.

Last November, the United States approved a \$650m sale of air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia, in what was the Biden administration's first major weapons deal with the Persian Gulf kingdom.

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## Iran to Bolster Tourism Diplomacy With Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Iran is committed to expanding bilateral relations with Malaysia in various fields, particularly in tourism, says its embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

In a statement ahead of Iran's National Day on Feb 11, which marks the 43rd Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, the embassy said senior officials of both countries had been looking into opportunities to strengthen tourism between Malaysia and Iran.

"For about two decades, Malaysia has been a destination for Iranian tourists who want to enjoy a nice country and friendly people.

"Iranians who visited Malaysia acknowledge this country as a safe and developed country. Commonalities between Iran and Malaysia are important and positive elements for promoting and expanding tourism," it said.

The Iranian government, it added, had made concerted efforts to attract tourists to the various destinations in the country, with arrivals having increased in recent years.

It said Iran had a diverse tourism industry, with activities ranging from hiking and skiing to beach holidays by the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.

Sokhan Gostar Institute

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## Iranian FM, Diplomats Renew Allegiance to Imam Khomeini

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and the other officials of the ministry renewed allegiance and paid tribute to Imam Khomeini, the founder of Islamic Republic of Iran, on Saturday.

The Iranian diplomats laid a wreath of flower at Imam Khomeini's tomb. The event was held in the presence of grandson of Imam Khomeini, Hassan Khomeini.

## Guarantees Key, Basic Issues In Vienna Talks

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Referring to the significance of getting guarantees, the Iranian Foreign Minister said that Iran has stated clearly and explicitly to American parties that they must show their goodwill in practice.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, the Iranian Foreign Minister emphasized that, instead of sending messages through its intermediaries in Vienna talks, the United States must show its goodwill.

In response to a question regarding removal of some restrictions on nuclear sanctions announced by the United States last night, Amir-Abdollahian reiterated, "We have made it clear to the American side, who these days send messages through intermediaries, that they must show their goodwill in practice in negotiations."

"Goodwill" from the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran is something tangible that must happen on the ground, he said, adding that removal of some of the sanctions imposed on Iran could be considered as goodwill that the Americans are talking about. What is happening on paper is good but not enough."

Getting necessary guarantees from the parties, especially the West parties including UK, France and Germany in these negotiations is one of the key and basic issues in Vienna talks, Amir-Abdollahian emphasized.

Meanwhile Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reacted to the



restoration of sanction waivers to some countries cooperating with Iran by the United States saying Washington's move was not enough.

"What the United States needs to do is to lift all sanctions, including the nuclear issue," the Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Khatibzadeh said on Saturday in reaction to the restoration of sanction waivers to some countries cooperating with Iran by the United States.

"The news we hear today is about the dimensions of the lifting of the nuclear-related sanctions, and everyone knows that this is not enough," the Iranian spokesman added.

"Naturally, the Islamic Republic of Iran is waiting for the United States to fulfill its duties and obligations when it comes to the removal of sanctions," he added.

"Naturally, any action that is in the right direction of fulfilling JCPOA obligations will be meticulously taken into account by Tehran," he concluded.

## Refusal to Issue Visa for Iran Athletes Another Sign of U.S. Hostility

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The United States' refusal to issue visa for Iranian wrestlers indicates Washington's constant hostility towards the Iranian nation, a lawmaker said.

Ali Rezaei, the spokesman for the Sports and Youth Fraction of the Iranian Parliament, said that the USA Wrestling Foundation invited Iran's freestyle wrestling team to travel to the country to take part in a friendly match, but the US administration politicized the sport event, so a couple of days prior to the contest, they declared that they would not issue visas for a few number of Iranian wrestling caravan.

Rezaei went on to say that given the fact that the US and Iran have different time zones, the Iranian athletes should travel to the country a few days before the competition to get ready and adjust with the American time zone, but the US administration refused to issue visas for some wrestlers, then both the Islamic Republic



of Iran Wrestling Federation and the Ministry of Sport and Youth reached the conclusion that they should not dispatch the whole team to the United States.

Different administrations of the United States' have adopted hostile policies towards the Islamic Republic of

Iran over the four decades, he said, noting that Washington has always resorted to carrot and stick policy when it came to dealing with the Iranian nation.

Pointing to the US's anti-Iran policies, the legislator argued that the American officials pursue direct talks with the Iranian authorities and simultaneously exacerbate economic sanctions against the Iranian nation.

He further criticized the United States' double standard when it comes to the Iranian people, adding that Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has time and again warned Iranian officials that the US is not trustworthy.

According to the Iranian MP, the Americans refused to issue visa for Iranian athletes this time and in the past, they kept Iranians waiting at airports or conducted fingerprinting process, which amounted to disrespecting Iran's representatives.

## Cancer Rate on Rise Among Iranians

TEHRAN (IFP) - A scientist warns that rate of cancer incidence among Iranians is on the rise, although the figures are still lower than the global average, calling for measures to contain the disease and lower the relevant fatalities.

Dr. Mehdi Tootoonchi, with Iran's Royan Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Technology, said the rate of cancer incidence is estimated to be up 1.5 percent.

Citing figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO), Tootoonchi said "cancer is the second cause of death after cardiovascular diseases in the world and the rate of its incidence has constantly been on the rise worldwide."

Although the rate in Iran has been lower than the global average, it is increasing, with the average annual incidence being 1.5 percent, based the Iranian Health Ministry's figures.

"It is thus necessary to pay attention to elements of stemming cancer, namely prevention, timely diagnosis, and adoption of targeted methods in the treatment process, to prevent the incidence of various types of cancer and lower the number of fatalities caused by the disease," he added.

His comments come as world countries are marking the international Cancer Day, an occasion designed to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.

In turn, the Royan Institute has been holding the third edition of the International Cancer Symposium, of which Tootoonchi is the secretary, with the participation of international scientists, experts and researchers to share views on how to control and cure cancer.

## President Congratulates Re-Election of Italian President

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi in a message on Saturday congratulated the re-election of Sergio Mattarella as President of Italy.

Congratulating the re-election of Sergio Mattarella as President of Italy, President Raisi emphasized the friendly relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Italy.

Recalling the deep-rooted history of political, economic, and cultural relations between Iran and Italy, President Raisi expressed hope that the interactions between the two states will be further expanded in various areas of bilateral, international, and regional cooperation in the light of a joint effort to utilize various capacities of cooperation based on mutual respect.

Iran's president concluded his message by wishing health and success for the president of Italy and prosperity for the people of the Republic of Italy.

## Holding ISCC2022 Necessary For the Steel Industry



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Metallurgy Manager at Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) Mr. Shahin Zare says holding the 2nd International Conference on Steelmaking and Continuous Casting (ISCC2022) is necessary for the national steel industry and its development.

The ISCC2022 will be held by Hormozgan Steel Company on February 22-23.

Speaking in an interview, Mr. Zare talked about the significance of this conference, saying that it is very crucial for the national steel industry.

He first pointed to the importance of the link between industry and the universities in the country which has existed traditionally in the country but it has improved in recent years but it needs to be deepened especially in the industries which are considered strategic in the country.

He added that in recent years national steel industry has been paid great attention and this industry has found a special place in earning forex for the country, and the surplus steel production is offered in the international markets.

Zare said that in order to compete in the international market, it is necessary to improve the quality and increase the quantity of the products and to this end, the country needs to work on research.

He then pointed to the goal of HOSCO for plans of holding the second international conference on steelmaking and continuous casting which will gather together experts of this industry in order to exchange their views. He noted that this conference can be a good place for introducing the potentials of Hormozgan Province to the investors in the field of steel.

Zare added that the conference will be held both in-person and virtual and so far it has been welcomed by the experts. He reiterated to materialize the slogan of the year, any action and brainstorming and sharing experiences and interaction for removing the hurdles in way of production will be practical action for materializing this slogan

## Exports From Mining Sector Up 90%

TEHRAN (MNA)- Iran exported around \$9.489 billion of mining products in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021), registering an increase of 90 percent year on year.

The exports amounted to 42,214 million tons in weight, showing a 9.5 percent rise compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

Steel chain and related products had the biggest share of exports in the mentioned nine months with 55.6 percent, equaling \$5.28 billion of the total value of exports.

Copper products and other minerals were in the second and third places with \$1.409 billion and \$651.33 million shares of the exports, respectively.

In the meantime, the exports of aluminum products registered the biggest growth among other mining products, with \$541.57 million of exports and a 212-percent growth year on year.

During the period under review, 3,098 million tons of mining products worth \$2.691 billion were also imported into the country, indicating an 11.4 percent and 0.8 percent rise in terms of value and weight, respectively.

Steel and steel products were the top imported items in the mentioned time span with \$916.3 million worth of imports. Having 81 different types of minerals, including the world's largest copper, zinc and iron reserves, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing several programs for promoting the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

Iran's proven iron ore reserves are 2.7 billion tons (about 0.8 of the world's total reserves), while the country's copper reserves are 2.6 billion tons (about 0.4 of the world's reserves). The country also has 11 million tons of zinc reserves (about four percent of the world's total reserves).

The total proven reserves of Iran's mines are estimated at about 60 billion tons, which is expected to reach more than 100 billion tons with the implementation of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's exploration programs over 500,000 square kilometers of new mineral zones.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

### TENDER NO.:

## 08-38 -9640005



National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
02	ACCESSORIES FOR COILED TUBING LOGGING	8 RL

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir), not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 30,175/- EURO or 7,926,975,579 /- RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: [www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab](http://www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab)

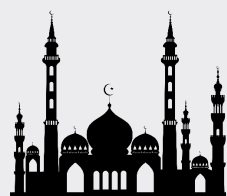
**ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN**  
**PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL**  
**NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID**

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## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:18
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:55
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:34
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:59

96. Until the Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every hill.  
97. Then will the true promise draw nigh (of fulfilment): then behold! the eyes of the Unbelievers will fixedly stare in horror: "Ah! Woe to us! we were indeed heedless of this; nay, we truly did wrong!"  
Surah 21, The Prophets (96 - 97)

## Over 100 Companies to Partake in Iran-UAE trade Conference in Dubai

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** Head of Iran Trade Center in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Mohammad-Reza Talaei said over 100 Iranian and foreign companies are expected to attend an Iran-UAE trade conference which is set to be held at the mentioned center in UAE.

As reported by the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the conference is scheduled to be held on Tuesday and a virtual exhibition is also going to be held alongside the conference during February 8-19.

According to Talaei, a trade delegation comprised of 25 Iranian companies will embark on a trip to Dubai on Sunday to first visit Expo Dubai and then participate in the Iran-UAE Business Opportunities Conference on Tuesday.

"We estimate that by Tuesday, over 50 Iranian companies based in the UAE and as many foreign companies will be present at the conference," Talaei said.



"The event will be attended by Iranian companies residing in the UAE, the Iranian trade delegation, and the representatives of the UAE companies as well as foreign firms based in the UAE," he added.

The official noted that members of Dubai, Oman, and Qatar chambers of commerce and all Dubai-registered chambers of commerce have been also invited to attend the conference.

The foreign embassies based in Tehran have also been notified about the conference to inform their companies in the UAE to attend the conference.

The purpose of this conference is to develop trade relations between Iran and the UAE and to introduce Iran's trade and investment opportunities to companies based in the UAE, according to the ICCIMA board member.

"In this conference, we intend to introduce the existing potentials of the country in various sectors of agriculture, industry, mining and trade and also promote the capabilities of our knowledge-based companies," the official said.

## Uzbekistan's Joining Chabahar Agreement in the Final Stage



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** Head of Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce says the process for Uzbekistan's signing Chabahar agreement is in the final stage and will be soon finalized.

Speaking to ILNA, Mousa Aqae said recently Uzbek officials paid a visit to Chabahar Port, adding that joining of Uzbekistan to Chabahar Port is a win-win one economically for both sides.

He then pointed to the latest development in trade ties between Iran and Uzbekistan and said Iran's exports to Uzbekistan in nine months this year have been around \$350m and at the same time its imports have been around \$150m and on the whole Iran and Uzbekistan enjoy good interactions.

He then added that Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce has been launched for around one month and it tries to provide the grounds for expansion of trade ties between the two countries more than the current level.

Aqae added that Iran and Uzbekistan have great potentials for broadening their economic cooperation, adding that for example he can point to some fields for cooperation like technical and engineering services, construction materials, agriculture, transportation and petrochemicals. He went on to say that to operationalize it, both countries need to provide some grounds, adding that they have problem in the rail and air transportation and if Iran and Uzbekistan prepare these grounds, their bilateral trade will grow considerably and it may even reach one billion dollars.

On the latest development on Uzbekistan's joining to Chabahar Agreement, he said that Uzbekistan's joining to this agreement is good economically and if they invest in the projects it will be a win-win deal.

He went on to say that it will be also the benefit of the other Central Asian countries and Iran should pave this ground for Uzbekistan to invest. He added that the agreement is on the verge of being finalized but the details have not been revealed yet.

## Telecommunications Center Launched at KSC

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** The new telecommunications center with new and modern capabilities has been launched at Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) and it is poised to come on stream.

The new telecommunications center of the company Mitel (IP-PBX) with the capability of 1000 analogue extension lines and 100 digital IP extension lines in the new switching board with having advanced conference system based on the up-to-dated technologies was launched and to come on stream.

Head of automation and precise tools department of Khorasan Steel Complex Company Mr. Yazdani highlighted the advantages of this new system which is equipped with tone dialing and having E1 input device, and said with using digital telecommunications lines, the company will see improvement of the quality and



ease in transfer of the calls.

He then pointed to the technologies used in this system for improving and facilitating the calls, adding that this system can be improved and upgraded in the

future due to the future needs of the company.

He then referred to the defects and problems of the previous system that one could see during his dialing and calling like noise and restriction in the number of the extension lines.

Then the head of telecommunications of the company Mr. Parchami pointed to the advantages of the new telecommunications center and said all contacts from the main center with seven sub-centers of the company are done via optical fiber network and it will improve the quality and ease the telephone contacts.

Parchami also pointed to the change in the telephone numbers and the extensions, adding that these changes are implemented gradually, adding that those who want to contact with the company can dial the telephone number 41520000 and contact their extension lines via the operator.

## Interactive Meeting of Caretaker of ESCO With Lanjan Officials

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**ISFAHAN -** The caretaker of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) had an interactive meeting with officials of the town of Lanjan of Isfahan Province and during the meeting both sides exchanged views for boosting cooperation.

In the meeting, Friday Prayer Leader of the town of Zarinshahr Hojjatoleslam Baqerian felicitated the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution as well as appointment of Eng. Rokhsati as the caretaker of ESCO as an ESCO manager.

He also hailed the good cooperation and interaction of the management of ESCO and said as he knows Mr. Rokhsati, his appointment will help the cooperation between ESCO with the region to continue strongly in the future. He went on to say that development of ESCO and the town of Lanjan and ultimately serving the sacred



Islamic Republic establishment provides the ground to make the public be content.

Then Mr. Rokhsati, for his part, felicitated the Ten-Day-Dawn festivities of the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution and said that Hojjatoleslam Baqerian as the Friday leader of Zarinshahr is actually the imam of this region and in all affairs of the town has effective and constructive decisions.

He then said that more interactions and involvements in the economic exchanges of the region for helping the development of the town is of the priorities of the company, saying that interaction and cooperation for resolving the problems of the region and the organization as well as exchanging views in the common affairs like the environment, occupation and cultural activities will continue strongly.

Rokhsati also I meeting with representative of Lanjan constituency in Majlis Mr. Hossin Rajae emphasized issues like bilateral cooperation for resolving problems in the region and ESCO, developing participation activities in different fields as well as increasing the interaction between officials for synergy of the capabilities.

He also said that problems of ESCO should be resolved in a joint co-operation and the ties should be defined in a win-win condition.

## IME Experiences Higher Records Both In Trade Value and Volume

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** The Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,040,000 tons of commodities with a total trading value of almost \$862m, posting growths of 29% in volume and 77% in value of trades compared to the figures of the previous week.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1,750,000 tons of commodities valued at almost \$645m.

Commodities sold on this floor included 857,181 tons of cement, 799,003 tons of steel, 43,500 tons of zinc dust, 37,000 tons of iron ore, 7,465 tons of copper, 6,400 tons of aluminum, 2,000 tons of sponge iron, 1,000 tons of zinc ingots, 480 tons of lead, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 18 tons of precious metals concentrate and 1 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 280,048 tons of commodities worth more than \$209m.

The exchange customers purchased on this floor 90,723 tons of bitumen, 81,739 tons of polymeric products, 63,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 30,825 tons of chemicals, 10,500 tons of lube cut, 2,830 tons of base oil, 1,390 tons of sulfur and 70 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 10,455 tons of commodities traded on it.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

### TENDER NO.:

# 08-38-9940005

N.I.S.O.C.  
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH  
OILFIELDS COMPANY  
AHVAZ-IRAN

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
02	COILED TUBING REEL STRING	17 RL

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir), not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 60,701/- EURO or 15,756,570,000/- RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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## Macron to Meet Putin In Moscow Next Week

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron will meet Russian leader Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Feb. 7 and the leader of Ukraine on Feb. 8 to discuss the Ukraine situation, as Western world leaders try and avoid a major conflict with Russia over Ukraine.

Macron's office added he would meet Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky in Kiev a day after his meeting with Putin. Macron has said that finding a negotiated path towards de-escalating tensions over Ukraine was a priority, even as the United States has said it was sending 3,000 extra troops to Poland and Romania as Russia amassed troops near Ukraine.



## Denmark's PM Reshuffles Cabinet

COPENHAGEN (Dispatches) - Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen reshuffled her cabinet on Friday after the transport minister resigned over revelations he failed to disclose information to parliament about a major infrastructure bill passed in July.

Transport Minister Benny Engelbrecht stepped down on Thursday after the Red-Green Alliance, which backs the minority Social Democratic government, threatened a vote of no confidence against him in parliament over allegations he misled lawmakers. Engelbrecht did not provide estimates to parliament for projected CO2 emissions when a major infrastructure bill was passed in July, a decision he explained later by saying the estimates had been too uncertain to include in the package.



## Putin Unveils New Gas Deal with China's Xi



BEIJING (Dispatches) - President Vladimir Putin unveiled a new Russian gas deal with China at a meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Friday, promising to increase Moscow's Far East exports at a time when Putin is at odds with European customers over Ukraine.

Russia, already Beijing's No. 3 gas supplier, has been strengthening ties with China, the world's biggest energy consumer, reducing its dependence on its traditional European energy customers.

"Our oilmen have prepared very good new solutions on hydrocarbon supplies to the People's Republic of China," Putin said in a meeting with Xi to discuss closer cooperation. "And a step forward was made in the gas industry, I mean a new contract on supplying 10 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year to China from Russia's Far East," said Putin, who was in Beijing to attend the Winter Olympics.

Putin has accused the United States of stoking tensions over Russia's neighbor Ukraine, which seeks NATO membership. More than 100,000 Russian troops have amassed near the border with Ukraine. Western countries accuse Moscow of planning an invasion, which it denies.

Russia is Europe's biggest provider of natural gas, and Western countries are worried that already strained supplies could be interrupted in the event of a conflict. However, the new deal with Beijing would not let Moscow divert gas otherwise bound for Europe, as it involved gas from the Pacific island of Sakhalin, unconnected to Russia's European pipeline network.

Russian gas giant Gazprom said in a statement that it plans to increase gas exports to China to 48 billion cubic meters a year, including via the newly agreed pipeline which will deliver 10 bcm annually from Russia's Far East.

Under previous plans, Russia aimed to supply China with 38 bcm by 2025. The announcement did not specify when it would reach the new 48 bcm target.

An industry source told Reuters earlier on Friday that Gazprom, which has a monopoly on Russian gas exports by pipeline, had agreed a 30-year contract with China's CNPC, with the first gas to flow through the new pipeline in two or three years.

Russia now sends gas to China via its Power of Siberia pipeline, which began pumping supplies in 2019, and by shipping liquefied natural gas (LNG). It exported 16.5 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas to China in 2021, including 10.5 bcm via the Power of Siberia pipeline, a network that is also separate from the pipelines that send gas to Europe.

Putin is accompanied by several Russian officials and business executives, including Igor Sechin, head of oil giant Rosneft. Alexei Miller, the head of Gazprom is not in the delegation. Rosneft and CNPC signed a deal on supplying 100 million tonnes of oil to China through Kazakhstan for 10 years, the Russian company said, effectively prolonging the existing deal.

## U.S. State Department Backs Latest raft of Saudi, UAE, Jordan Arms Sales

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. State Department has approved Washington's latest raft of proposed weapons sales to the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) preliminarily approved for deals - if they are not blocked by U.S. Congress.

The sales come at a time of heightened tensions with Iran, and as the UAE has seen a rare string of attacks claimed by the Houthis, a group that a Saudi-led military coalition, of which the UAE is a member, continues to fight in Yemen. Saudi Arabia has been regularly targeted by Houthi missile and drone attacks in recent years.

The United States has said it will continue to support the defense capabilities of its allies in the region - notably Saudi Arabia and the UAE - and has emphasized arms sales as one avenue for that support.

However, President Joe Biden announced in February last year that the US was ending support for offensive operations by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen and all "relevant" arms sales.

Advocates and legislators have since decried the approval of a \$650m sale of air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia in November as undermining that pledge.

The most recently approved sales to Saudi Arabia include 31 communication and navigation terminals at a cost of \$23.7m to upgrade the kingdom's missile defense system, according to the Pentagon.

## Poland Receives U.S. Army Equipment

WARSAW (Dispatches) - U.S. military equipment has begun to arrive in Poland, the Polish defense ministry said, to reinforce NATO's eastern flank as the West and Russia wrangle over Russia's military presence near the Ukrainian border.

President Joe Biden's administration announced on Wednesday the deployment of nearly 3,000 American troops to Eastern Europe in the coming days amid a standoff with Russia over Ukraine.

Around 1,700 soldiers from the Fort Bragg-based 82nd Airborne Division are meant to come to Poland, Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak and the Pentagon said on Wednesday, but only on a temporary basis.

In addition, roughly 300 troops will be based in Germany, where a joint headquarters is expected to be set up.

Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak announced on Thursday evening that an "advance group" had already arrived in Poland.

"This is a clear signal of allied solidarity," he wrote on Twitter, posting photos of soldiers unloading equipment from a single C-130 Hercules transport plane.

Private broadcaster TVN24 showed the unloading of two American aircraft on Friday in Rzeszow-Jesionka airport in Southern Poland. The broadcaster reported that so far six American planes had landed.

It is not yet clear when U.S. soldiers will arrive and where they will be based. The Polish Defense Ministry's operation center referred Reuters to the U.S. Army, which did not immediately answer Reuters' request for additional information.

The U.S. military already has about 4,500 troops in Poland in both a NATO and a bilateral capacity, mostly stationed in the west of the country on a rotational basis.

## Sri Lanka Calls for Diaspora Investment on Independence Day

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka marked its independence day on Friday with an appeal to its diaspora to send money home to overcome the island's worsening economic crisis and a pledge to protect foreign investments.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa urged millions of Sri Lankans abroad to invest their savings in their home country, which is facing its worst debt crisis since independence from Britain 74 years ago.

"Expatriate Sri Lankans who provide foreign exchange to the country are a major resource to us," Rajapaksa said. "I invite all expatriate Sri Lankans to invest in their homeland."

Colombo's foreign reserves, which stood at \$7.5 billion when Rajapaksa took office in November 2019, have fallen by more than half, to \$3.1 billion.

Worker remittances, Sri Lanka's number one foreign currency source, fell nearly 60 percent in December. For 2021 as a whole, the figure dropped a record 22.7 percent, to \$5.49 billion.

Tourism, another key source of income for the country, has been battered by the coronavirus pandemic.

The government imposed a broad import ban in March 2020 in a bid to save foreign currency, leading to shortages of food and fuel as well as raw materials needed for manufacturing and export-oriented industries.

Rajapaksa, who came to power two years ago pledging to "retake" all state enterprises either leased or partly sold to foreign companies by the previous administration, called for greater foreign involvement in Sri Lanka's economy.

"Foreign investment is especially important for large-scale projects, industries requiring modern technological know-how and new ventures that open up global market opportunities for us," he said.

He criticized "those who attempt to propagate incorrect public opinion against foreign investments, based on political motives".

His own coalition cabinet is divided on a move to sell a stake in a state electricity utility to a US company.

Faced with record inflation, falling reserves and warnings from international rating agencies about Sri Lanka's ability to service its \$35 billion external debt, Rajapaksa's finance minister brother Basil announced Wednesday that he had sought technical advice from the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF responded by saying it was ready to discuss "options" if the government asked for financial support.

"While the IMF has not received a request for financial support from Sri Lanka, the staff stands ready to discuss options if requested," mission chief Masahiro Nozaki said in a written statement to AFP in Washington.



## Turkey, Israel Can Jointly Bring Gas to Europe

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey and Israel can work together to carry Israeli natural gas to Europe and the two countries will discuss energy cooperation during talks next month, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying.

The two countries expelled their ambassadors in 2018 after a bitter falling-out. Ties have remained tense since with Ankara condemning Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its policy toward Palestinians, while Israel has called on Turkey to drop support for the militant Palestinian group Hamas which rules Gaza.

However, Turkey has been working to repair its strained ties with regional powers as part of a charm offensive launched in 2020. In an apparent easing after years of animosity, Erdogan said on Thursday that Israeli President Isaac Herzog would visit Turkey in mid-March.

"We can use Israeli natural gas in our country, and beyond using it, we can also engage in a joint effort on its passage to Europe," Erdogan told reporters on a return flight from Ukraine.

"Now, God willing, these issues will be on our agenda with Mr Herzog during their visit to Turkey," he was quoted by Turkish TV media as saying. Erdogan had visited Ukraine to discuss the crisis there. While Erdogan has spoken to Herzog amid tensions before, the Israeli presidency is a largely ceremonial role. In November, he spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, the first such call in years.

Erdogan on Wednesday met Nachirvan Barzani, the president of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region. Asked what was discussed, Erdogan said Ankara wants to sign a natural gas supply deal with Iraq and is holding talks on this.

"We have now taken the Iraq issue on our agenda. We are now thinking about it. There may be a supply on the natural gas side from Iraq to Turkey," Erdogan said, adding Barzani had promised to facilitate talks.





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## Tesla Plans to Build Cathode Building

AUSTIN (Dispatches) - Tesla Inc applied for a permit to extend its existing Austin-based car factory with a building to produce cathodes for battery manufacturing, according to city filings and a spokeswoman. An application submitted on Wednesday for an Austin building permit under the program name "Cathode" listed the Colorado River Project LLC as a co-applicant. That is the name Tesla has used throughout the permitting process for its new Texas factory on the state and local level. "I can confirm that this is for the Tesla project and this permit is for a cathode building," a spokeswoman for the city's development services department said on Thursday, adding that the city did not have further information.



## UK to Support Consumers as Energy Price Cap Rises 54%

LONDON (Dispatches) - The UK government stepped in to help the hardest-hit households struggling with the rising cost of living, announcing a £9 billion (RM51.3 billion) package to offset soaring energy bills.

It followed an announcement by that energy regulator that the price cap on how much suppliers can charge consumers will jump by 54 per cent due to soaring wholesale gas prices.

The annual price cap for consumers not on a fixed deal with their supplier will rise by £693 to £1,971 in England, Wales and Scotland from April, Ofgem said.

Northern Ireland has a separate regulator and has also announced sharp hikes in average household gas bills.

UK inflation rose to a near 30-year high in December and more costly household bills are further stoking fears about a cost-of-living squeeze, with government tax rises looming.

The government, under pressure due to lockdown-breaching parties but also struggling to claw back eye-watering pandemic spending, is being urged to get tackle the issue.

Finance minister Rishi Sunak said electricity customers will get a £200 discount on their bill in October, to be repaid over five years, while lower and middle-income households will see a £150 rebate on local taxes in April.

"For me to stand here and pretend we don't have to adjust to paying higher prices would be wrong and dishonest," Sunak told MPs in parliament.

"But what we can do is take the sting out of a significant price shock for millions of families by making sure the increase in prices is smaller initially and spread over a longer period," added the minister, saying it amounted to £9 billion and would help 28 million households.

Soaring wholesale prices are blamed on a cold European winter in 2020-2021, which put pressure on supplies, increased demand from Asia for liquefied natural gas and a number of broader geopolitical issues, including uncertainty on the Russia-Ukraine border.

The cap is reviewed every six months, and the new regime will come into force from April 1.

Ofgem chief executive Jonathan Brearley said that "we know this rise will be extremely worrying for many people, especially those who are struggling to make ends meet, and Ofgem will ensure energy companies support their customers in any way they can."

"The energy market has faced a huge challenge due to the unprecedented increase in global gas prices, a once in a 30-year event," he added.

"Ofgem's role as energy regulator is to ensure that, under the price cap, energy companies can only charge a fair price based on the true cost of supplying electricity and gas."

Adding to potential household overheads, the Bank of England today raised interest rates from 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent as it attempts to tame rampant inflation.

Richard Walker, managing director of supermarket chain Iceland, told BBC radio that 2022 "is probably set to be the hardest year ever for many UK families".

## Canadian Dollar Forecasts Turn More Bullish as Oil Hits 7-Year High

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Canada's dollar will strengthen more than previously thought over the coming year as oil prices climb and investors bet the Bank of Canada will hike interest rates at a faster pace than the Federal Reserve, a Reuters poll showed.

The median forecast in the Reuters poll was for the Canadian dollar to gain around 2% to 1.25 per U.S. dollar, or 80 U.S. cents in three months, compared to 1.26 in last month's forecast.

It was then expected to climb to 1.22 in a year's time.

Oil is one of Canada's major exports. Its price has climbed to nearly \$90 a barrel, the highest since October 2014, and some experts are expecting further gains.

"Our energy analyst in the Middle East has just raised quite notably his forecasts for crude oil for 2022," said Derek Halpenny, head of research, global markets EMEA and international securities, MUFG Bank. "We see that as one of the factors helping lift CAD."

Major oil producers blame surging prices on the failure of consuming nations to ensure adequate investment in fossil fuels as they shift to greener energy, while recent tensions between Russia and Western powers have added to concerns about tight supply.

The potential for the Bank of Canada to tighten monetary policy more than the Federal Reserve in 2022 could also support the loonie, Halpenny said.

Last week, Canada's central bank left its benchmark interest rate on hold at a record low of 0.25% but said hikes would be needed to cool inflation. Money markets expect the first hike in March and six in total this year, which is one more than expected from the Fed.

Canada's economy climbed to above pre-pandemic levels for the first time in November, while a preliminary estimate shows gross domestic product grew an annualized 6.3% in the fourth quarter, beating the BoC's forecast of 5.8%.

The Canadian dollar was the only G10 currency to gain ground against the greenback in 2021, rising 0.8%.

Potential for further gains has not been lost on speculators. They have raised bullish bets on the currency to the highest level since July last year, data from the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission shows.



## Iraq Produces Well Below Its OPEC+ Crude quota in January

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq pumped 4.16 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in January, below its allowed limit of 4.28 million bpd

under a pact with other so-called OPEC+ producers, data from state-owned marketer SOMO seen by Reuters showed on Thursday.

Iraq, like several other OPEC members, is struggling to pump more even as prices trade at a seven-year high.

Its output actually fell by 63,000 bpd from December, the data showed.

Iraq's January exports were affected by adverse weather conditions, technical issues, and maintenance on export facilities, an Iraqi oil official told Reuters.

Insufficient storage capacity forced Iraq to reduce production, the source said.

The SOMO figures included output from Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, which produced 425,000 bpd, according to a Reuters calculation.

Iraq's undersupply meant its compliance with the OPEC+ pact stood at 132 per cent last month, the SOMO figures show.

OPEC+, a grouping of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, uses an average of secondary source production figures to determine compliance.

OPEC pumped 28.01 million bpd in January, a Reuters survey found on Monday, up 210,000 bpd from the previous month but short of the 254,000 bpd increase allowed under the supply deal.

Production fell or did not increase in Angola, Congo, Iran, Iraq and Libya, the survey found, in many cases owing to a lack of capacity to produce more or because of unplanned outages.

## Japan Must Quadruple Foreign Workers by 2040 To Meet Growth Target

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan needs about four times more foreign workers by 2040 to achieve the growth path the government has outlined in its economic forecast, a group of Tokyo-based public think tanks said.

The findings highlight a growing Japanese reliance on migrant labor to make up for a shrinking population while its ability to attract overseas talent has been thrown into questioned by strict Covid-19 border controls that have shut out students and workers.

Japan must boost the number of foreign workers to 6.74 million by 2040 to sustain average annual economic growth of 1.24 per cent, based on a bullish "high-growth" scenario the government has set out in its long-term projection, the think tanks, including a research arm of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) affiliated with the foreign ministry, said in a report.

The figure would be nearly 300 per cent more than the current 1.72 million foreign workers, who make up about 2.5 per cent of the workforce.

"We must discuss accepting foreign workers with a greater sense of urgency, as the competition for workforce would grow in the future against countries like China," JICA president Shinichi Kitaoka told a symposium focused on the research on Thursday.

"We need to take actions to make Japan attractive in the longer term, a country to be chosen by foreign workers."

The study assumed Japan would lose more than 10 per cent of its domestic workforce over the next two decades.

Its population peaked in 2008 and has declined since then because of its low birth rate to about 125 million as of last year. The working-age population is shrinking even quicker due to aging.

The study also took into account the stock of capital, which it assumed would continue to grow at 1 per cent a year thanks to investment in automation technologies.

The question of foreign workers and immigration in general has long been sensitive in the world's third-largest economy where many people prize ethnic homogeneity.

But pressure has mounted to open borders and a shortage of blue-collar jobs has prompted the government to create new visa categories.

About half of Japan's foreign workers come from Vietnam and China. The think tanks said they expected the number of immigrants from places such as Cambodia and Myanmar to rise quickly in the next two decades.

However, the group said the supply of migrant labor would constantly fall short of demand under the current immigration system and Japan must consider more long-term visas.

The strict closure of borders to non-Japanese people because of the coronavirus has raised concern that Japan could lose its reputation as an attractive destination for foreign talent.

## Germany Eyes Lockheed F-35 Fighter Jet



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany is leaning toward purchasing the U.S. fighter jet F-35 built by Lockheed Martin to replace its ageing Tornado in the role of nuclear sharing, a German defense source told Reuters on Thursday, but a final decision has not been taken.

Another source, close to the German military, said a possible F-35 purchase was "back on the table", but no decisions were expected anytime soon.

"There have been recent efforts to inform Germany of how to move ahead with a potential F-35 purchase," a third source involved in the effort told Reuters.

A government spokesperson in Berlin was not immediately available for comment.

"As a matter of policy, we will not publicly confirm or comment on proposed defense transfers or sales until they have been formally notified to Congress. We refer you to the German government to speak to its future defense procurement plans," a spokesperson for the State Department in Washington said.

Germany needs to replace its ageing Tornado jets swiftly to remain part of NATO's nuclear sharing agreement, something the new government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz has pledged to do.

The Tornado is the only German jet capable of carrying U.S. nuclear bombs, stored in Germany, in case of a conflict. But the air force has been flying the jet since the 1980s, and Berlin is planning to phase it out between 2025 and 2030.

Germany's new coalition said it will purchase a replacement early in its four-year term in office. Without this move, Berlin would drop out of nuclear sharing when the last Tornado retires around 2030.

The German defense source said Scholz was expected to raise the issue during a trip to Washington next week.

## Turkey's Inflation to Peak Below 50% in April

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's inflation will peak in April before falling to single digits by the June 2023 general elections, the treasury and finance minister said as he underlined that the country will stick to its current policies, ruling out the possibility of an interest rate hike.

Nureddin Nebati made the comments in an interview published Thursday in the financial newspaper Nikkei Asia, in which he noted that he expects the lira to stabilize this year.

On the predicted peak in inflation, Nebati said he does not believe Turkey will see 50%, adding "I hope I am not wrong." The minister's comments came before the country's statistical institute, TurkStat, on Thursday reported a 48.7% increase in the consumer price index (CPI) in January compared to the previous year, representing the fastest increase in the index since April 2002.

Nebati acknowledged that Turkey has a "serious inflation problem ahead" but added that similar problems are being experienced around the world. "We expect high inflation in January, and then it will maintain its level for some time. In the summer it will start to show recovery and will radically decline in December due to the base effect," he said.

Speaking about the economic administration's potential toolbox to fight inflation, Nebati said, "of course, we think of instruments for protection against inflation, but for now we have no such need."

He reiterated that Turkey's new economic model based on low-interest rates will boost production, employment and exports while solving the country's current account deficit problem and contribute to stabilizing the lira.

The Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT) last month also revised up its forecast for inflation at the end of 2022 to 23.2% from 11.8%.

The bank paused a four-month streak of interest rate cuts in January, providing relief for the lira, which has held largely steady this year.

The lender cut the benchmark rate by a cumulative 500 basis points to 14% between September and December last year.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan over the weekend once again rejected the conventional understanding that high borrowing costs help bring down consumer prices by limiting demand and slowing economic activity.





## Pasteurcovac 100% Effective Against Omicron Variant

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Biglari said that Pasteurcovac Vaccine, jointly developed by Iran and Cuba, has proved to be 100% effective against Omicron variant of the COVID-19.

Addressing the reporters in a virtual press conference on Saturday, Biglari said that Pasteurcovac is permitted to be injected to children and adults.

He described Pasteurcovac as the safest vaccine against coronavirus, saying it had been tested against Beta Variant in Cuba and against Delta Variant in Iran and had been proved to be 96% effective.



## Brussels Labels Gas and Nuclear as Sustainable Investments

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Commission on Wednesday defied protests from green campaigners and dissent in its own ranks to give a sustainable finance label to investments in both gas and nuclear power.

Austria immediately responded by warning that it would go to court to try to halt the measure, underlining the passions roused by the issue.

Opponents of gas want to discourage investment in a fossil fuel technology they say only fuels the climate change crisis, while critics of nuclear energy point to the threat posed by accidents and nuclear waste.

Austrian Environment Minister Leonore Gewessler said: "The decision is wrong because it endangers the future... We are giving our children a backpack full of problems... It's irresponsible."

But the EU executive, under pressure from nuclear-powered France and gas-reliant Germany, argues that both have a role to play as cleaner power sources during the transition to a net-zero carbon future.

"The end is a low-carbon future powered by renewable energy. We do not have the capacity for that yet, but we still need to act urgently with all the means at our disposal," EU commissioner Mairead McGuinness said.

"We need to move as fast as we can from the highest carbon energy sources like coal during this transition. That may mean accepting imperfect solutions. Today's delegated act may be imperfect, but it is a real solution."

Green activists expressed outrage. Greenpeace sustainable finance campaigner Ariadna Rodrigo said: "I'd like to report an attempted robbery, please."

"Someone is trying to take billions of euro away from renewables and sink them into technologies that either do nothing to fight the climate crisis, like nuclear, or which actively make the problem worse, like fossil gas."

The debate over the bloc's so-called "taxonomy" -- its classification of "green" energy sources -- had raised opposition in the European Parliament where there is an outcry over including gas and nuclear.

Even within EU chief Ursula von der Leyen's commission, backing was not unanimous for the decision -- the 27 members had to hold a vote before making the announcement.

But McGuinness defended the decision, arguing that the plan imposes safeguards on how nuclear and gas projects are conducted under sustainable finance rules.

The fight over the European Union's classification of power sources is the latest dust-up in discussions between the member states on how to achieve a net zero-carbon economy by 2050.

Brussels had high hopes that the EU would help set a global standard on determining sustainable projects and direct big flows of Wall Street money towards saving the planet.



But EU member states often have widely differing energy mixes, with France, for example, proudly reliant on nuclear power -- which has negligible carbon emissions once built -- for its electricity needs.

France lobbied hard for nuclear energy to be included in the sustainable finance bracket. Its government declined to provide any immediate reaction to the decision in Brussels.

Germany, meanwhile, is highly dependent on natural gas piped in from Russia. It is also in a small group of nations that believe nuclear energy is unsafe, while gas could help coal-hungry economies like Poland's to turn the page.

Berlin and Paris were adamant that their chosen energy industries are fit to receive the Green label and the commission -- the EU executive -- was handed the politically poisonous task of reconciling the positions.

To win the label, gas and nuclear projects are subject to constraints: projects must be approved by 2030 and 2045 respectively, as well as meet a long list of sector-specific criteria.

Four EU member states on Tuesday came out firmly against the inclusion of gas projects, arguing that the bloc's promise to set a "gold standard" for investors on how to classify energy sources was compromised.

Even with conditions, calling gas sustainable "is largely incompatible" with the goals of the Paris climate agreement, said a letter to the commission from Denmark, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands.

That proposal will now be subject to a possible veto by a super majority of member states or by the European Parliament, though insiders believe this is unlikely.

## U.S., Main Supporter of...

FROM PAGE 1

The Pentagon announced in a statement on November 4, 2021 that Massachusetts-based firm Raytheon would be the "principal contractor" for the sale of AIM-120C-7/C-8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) and related equipment.



The sale came months after President Joe Biden said he would end US support for Saudi Arabia's "offensive operations" in Yemen, including "relevant arms sales".

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies, backed by the United States and European powers, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah resistance movement.

The war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead and displaced millions more. It has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases there.

The U.S. State Department's decision once again showed that the Americans do not like tension and war in the West Asia to end because by spreading different phobias like Iran or Yemeno they can sell their weapons to the warring countries at the time when the U.S. is struggling with its worst domestic inflation rate in recent decades.

So with such a decision and supplying sophisticated weapons to the coalition forces, one cannot expect the war in Yemen to come to its end but the Americans are better to stop crying foul when the Yemeni forces attack at the facilities in the UAE and Saudi Arabia because they are entitled to defend themselves against the aggressors.

The Americas and its allies in the region and in the world should realize this point that the era of hit-and-run has come to its end and freedom and independence-seeking nations will not accept any oppression from the arrogant powers with sitting and watching what the Westerners do.

Yemeni forces will continue their struggle against aggressors till their last drop of their blood no matter the aggressors are equipped with the sophisticated weapons because belief in God and strong determination is the secret of victories of the nations against the colonialists and aggressors like the Islamic Republic of Iran did in 1979, it now enjoys independence and prosperity and it has turned into an influential actors in the region and even in the world by establishing an anti-arrogance system which is turning 43-year old this week.

## Sony Hikes Annual Profit Forecast on Film, Gaming Success



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Sony upgraded its full-year net profit forecast today, buoyed by the success of its latest Spider-Man movie and strong results in the gaming sector despite the global chip shortage.

The Japanese tech giant already logged a record net profit in 2020-21, with a pandemic boom in gaming swelling its profits.

Although the huge demand for gaming is tapering as virus restrictions are eased in many countries, Sony said it is continuing to see a strong performance across sectors including film, gaming and electronics.

The conglomerate now projects a net profit of ¥860 billion (RM31.4 billion) for the fiscal year to March 2022, having already hiked its full-year estimate to ¥730 billion in the previous quarter.

"Operating income is expected to be higher than the October forecast due to expected increases in operating income in the pictures, game and network services, electronic products and solution and music segments," Sony said in a statement.

A favorable foreign exchange rate and expected decrease in operating losses in other sectors including its corporate division will also boost its bottom line, it said.

Sony expects higher sales in its film division, "primarily due to an expected increase in sales... resulting from the strong theatrical performances of Spider-Man: No Way Home and Venom: Let There Be Carnage," it said.

No Way Home, released in December in the United States, became the first billion-dollar-grossing film of the pandemic era over the Christmas weekend, according to industry watcher Exhibitor Relations.

Sony expects the global chip shortage to hit sales of its PlayStation 5 console this financial year, but said operating income in its gaming sector would still be higher than previously forecast "due to an expected decrease in selling, general and administrative expenses".

The company has faced challenges rolling out the PS5, which is regularly sold out and remains hard for consumers to get hold of in part due to global supply chain disruption.

The forecast comes as Sony finds itself in a battle for gaming supremacy after U.S. rival Microsoft snapped up Call of Duty maker Activision Blizzard in a landmark US\$69 billion deal.

## Struggling Socialist Candidate Insists in Tune With France

PARIS (AFP) - Lagging in the polls and struggling to make an impact barely two months before France's presidential election, Socialist candidate Anne Hidalgo believes her time will come in the campaign.

"The real issues are household budgets, quality of life, and people's worries about the future of their children, and I think I'm in tune with those expectations," she told AFP in an interview on Tuesday.

The 62-year-old mayor of Paris has so far failed to make her voice heard during a campaign dominated by debate on immigration, identity and security, driven by the far-right and conservatives.

"It's true that you're heard in television studios when you make outrageous statements about foreigners or French identity, but it's not because you get clicks and likes with hateful speeches that this is what the larger population wants," Hidalgo said.

The campaign, notable for the emergence of anti-Islam TV pundit Eric Zemmour, has left her and others wondering "how the country ended up here, with this media show that makes you want to be sick?" she said.

The mother-of-three has refused to engage in personal attacks, remains focused on social spending and the environment, and has steered clear of engaging with Zemmour -- unlike her hard-left rival Jean-Luc Melenchon.

But the tactic has often left her appearing to be on the sidelines looking in, lacking political punch.

Portugal's Socialists may have won elections last week and Germany's left-wing Social Democrats have regained power, but there is so far little sign of the Socialists in France ousting centrist President Emmanuel Macron.

The latest survey on Monday suggested Hidalgo would win just 3.5 percent in the first round of the election on April 10.

Such a result would be another catastrophe for her



party, which has been one of the dominant forces of post-war politics in France.

Does she feel the pressure, given that a final score of under 5.0 percent could spell financial disaster for the Socialists because her campaign spending would not be refunded by the state?

Anne Hidalgo is polling around three percent ahead of

the first round of the presidential election on April 10 "Not on my own. And this shared destiny is something that carries you too," she says. "When the left has been in power, it has enabled all the major social advances."

Recent developments have given her camp little reason to feel they are any closer to recapturing past glories.

The left-wing field of candidates was already crowded, but Hidalgo's weakness has led a fifth person to enter the fray, former Socialist justice minister Christiane Taubira, who launched her bid in January.

Hopes of a common left candidate were dealt perhaps a final blow at the weekend when a "people's primary", an online vote by nearly 400,000 left-wing supporters, endorsed Taubira.

But all her rivals rejected the result, including Hidalgo who trailed in fifth place.

Melenchon, a former Trotskyist, appears best placed to challenge the three front-runners in the polls: Macron, far-right leader Marine Le Pen and conservative Valerie Pécresse.

Explanations for the demise of the French Socialist party as a national political force are numerous and varied.

Many point the finger at ex-president Francois Hollande whose five-year term from 2012-2017 ended in calamity when he decided not to run for a second term after a series of gaffes and catastrophic polling figures.

"I say to people 'we've learned from our errors, you have to recognise that,'" Hidalgo added.

## Iran Re-Launches Port Passenger Line to UAE

BANDAR ABBAS (IP) - The passenger line of Shahid Bahonar Port in Hormozgan province, southern Iran, has resumed its activities to the United Arab Emirates.

Shahid Bahonar Port is the third export port of Iran and is active in the export of non-oil goods and the transportation of domestic and international passengers.

Good geographical location and access to open waters through the Persian Gulf and international waterways have made Shahid Bahonar Port a strategic center.

The passenger line of Shahid Bahonar Port in Hormozgan province to the UAE has resumed its activities since February 3, 2022, after a two-year suspension due to coronavirus outbreak.

Passengers from Shahid Bahonar Port to the UAE and vice versa, in compliance with health protocols and maximum use of masks and vaccinations, travel in a fast passenger boat on this route.

## Iranian Scientist...

FROM PAGE 1

"Until now, mechanical and chemical methods have been used to decompose different types of plastics, and only a few countries, including the United States and Japan, have developed the novel biotechnology to decompose plastics," he added.

Last year, Milani received the silver medal of the Istanbul International Inventions Fair (ISIF) 2021 World Invention Competition in Turkey for his work on increasing the rate of plastic decomposition and his discovery of the new strain of bacteria.



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## DeChambeau Out of Saudi Int'l

RIYADH (Dispatches) - American Bryson DeChambeau withdrew ahead of the second round of the Saudi International due to left hand and left hip injuries, organizers of the Asian Tour event said.

World number nine DeChambeau had a disappointing first round of 73 yesterday and organizers of the US\$5 million (RM20.9 million) tournament confirmed that he would not be able to continue.

Italy's Matteo Manassero took a two-shot lead in the opening round after carding a brilliant 62 to finish at eight-under.

## Haas Unveil 2022 F1 Challenger

LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S.-owned Haas on Friday became the first team to take the wraps off their 2022 Formula One car when they unveiled a digital rendering of their VF22 challenger, which they hope will lift them off the back of the grid.

The car has been designed to Formula One's radically new rules, with revised aerodynamics aimed at improving wheel-to-wheel racing and 18-inch wheels. It will be raced by Mick Schumacher, son of seven-times world champion Michael, and Russian Nikita Mazepin, whose father owns the team's title sponsor Uralkali, and will sport the same Russian-themed livery as last year.

# Thompson Passes Kobe Bryant on 3-Pointer List

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Klay Thompson passed Kobe Bryant on the all-time list with the sixth of his seven 3-pointers as the Golden State Warriors used a long-distance assault to thump the Sacramento Kings 126-114 in San Francisco.

Thompson finished with a team-high 23 points, Stephen Curry had 20 and Jonathan Kuminga 18 for Golden State, which won its league-best eighth in a row en route to becoming the NBA's second 40-game winner. The Warriors trail only the Phoenix Suns in the Western Conference and league standings. Thompson shot 7-for-9 on 3-point attempts, improving his career trey total to 1,829, passing Kobe Bryant (1,827) and moving within one of Chauncey Billups (1,830) for 19th on the NBA's all-time list.

Rookie Davion Mitchell had a season-best 26 points and Harrison Barnes scored 25 for the Kings, who were playing for the second consecutive night. Sacramento beat the visiting Brooklyn Nets 112-101 on Wednesday to snap a seven-game losing streak.

**Clippers 111, Lakers 110**

Marcus Morris Sr. scored 29 points and Reggie Jackson added 25, including the go-ahead score with 4.1 seconds remaining, as the Los Angeles Clippers enjoyed their long-awaited return home with a victory over the visiting Los Angeles Lakers.

Serge Ibaka added 20 points and eight rebounds as the Clippers won after going 4-4 on a road trip.

The Lakers' Anthony Davis scored 30 points and secured 17 rebounds, but he missed a running jumper for the win at the buzzer. The Lakers lost Carmelo Anthony late in the first half due to a right hamstring ailment.

**Raptors 127, Bulls 120 (OT)**

Scottie Barnes tied the game with a layup in the final second of regulation and scored the go-ahead jumper in overtime as Toronto defeated visiting Chicago.

Pascal Siakam recorded 25 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists for the Raptors, who won their fourth straight game. Barnes, Fred VanVleet and OG Anunoby all scored 21 points. Chris Boucher and Gary Trent Jr. scored 16.

## Tezos Set to Announce \$20M-a-Year Sponsorship Deal With Man United

LONDON (Dispatches) - Blockchain platform Tezos is set to secure a multiyear deal to sponsor soccer team Manchester United's training kit for more than £20 million (\$27 million) a year, according to a report by The Athletic.

The club's previous training-kit sponsorship agreement, with professional services firm AON, expired at the end of the last season and was worth £120 million over eight years. That means Tezos will be paying some 33% more than its predecessor.

While Tezos has previously secured sponsorship deals with Formula 1's McLaren Racing and Major League Baseball's New York Mets, the Premier League club is considered to have among the biggest fanbases of any soccer club in the world, along with Spain's Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, as well as being one of the most valuable.

Sponsorship deals between sports teams or events and crypto firms have become more frequent in recent months - FTX and Crypto.com have both been particularly active in this area over the last year.

## Federer, Nadal Set to Team Up at Laver Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are set to team up for Europe against the rest of the world in the fifth edition of the Laver Cup later this year.

The announcement on Thursday comes despite uncertainty over Federer's future in tennis following a long period of inaction after knee surgery.

The Swiss great, 40, said on Wednesday he would know by "April-May" if he will be able to return to the court after being on the sidelines since last year's Wimbledon.

Federer and Nadal will be seeking to maintain Team Europe's perfect record at the event in London, under the captaincy of Bjorn Borg.

The three-day team competition, inspired by golf's Ryder Cup, pits six of the best players from Europe against six players from Team World.



**Hawks 124, Suns 115**

Trae Young scored 43 points as Atlanta busted Phoenix's 11-game winning streak and won for the eighth time in nine games.

Young made 16 of 25 shots -- 6 of 11 from 3-point range -- in his return from a one-game absence caused by a right shoulder contusion. Kevin Huerter sank five 3-pointers and joined John Collins in finishing with 19 points. Collins, however, left late in the fourth quarter with an apparent right arm injury.

Devin Booker scored 32 points for the Suns. Mikal Bridges added 24 points and eight rebounds, and Chris Paul recorded 18 points and 12 assists.

**Heat 112, Spurs 95**

Tyler Herro scored 24 points as visiting Miami swamped short-handed San Antonio to snap a three-game losing streak.

The Heat were up six two minutes into the third quarter before running off a 15-3 spurt that all but decided the game. Bam Adebayo had 18 points and 11 rebounds for Miami, while Jimmy Butler and Duncan Robinson scored 17 points each.

Derrick White led the Spurs with 22 points and Tre Jones added 16. San Antonio, which has lost three games in a row, played without starters Dejounte Murray (wrist), Doug McDermott (ankle) and Jakob Poeltl (concussion).



**Thiem Eyes Indian Wells Return**

PARIS (Dispatches) - Former U.S. Open champion and world number three Dominic Thiem, who has been sidelined since June with a wrist injury, said yesterday he hopes to be back on court at the Indian Wells Masters in March.

Austrian star Thiem, 28, had planned to return to action in Cordoba in Argentina this week but withdrew because of pain in his hands between his knuckles.

"In addition to the Cordoba Open, Dominic Thiem has also withdrawn from the Argentina Open, Rio Open and Chile Open. He will look to make his comeback to competition at Indian Wells in March," said a statement by his management team.

Thiem, who won his only major at the 2020 US Open and is a two-time French Open runner-up, has slumped to 37 in the world during his prolonged absence.

"It's never easy to return to competition after a seven-month break. I will follow the doctor's advice, rest for a few days and resume training next week," Thiem said.

The Indian Wells tournament runs from March 10-20 and is the opening Masters event of the season.



## Liverpool Still Interested in Carvalho Signing

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said the club are still very much interested in signing Fulham midfielder Fabio Carvalho in the summer, after a January move broke down at the final hour.

Klopp confirmed widespread media reports that Liverpool made a move to bring in the 19-year-old on Monday's deadline day, only for the club to run out of time to complete the transfer — something that will not deter the Reds from trying again.

"We will see with that. Of course, we are obviously still interested," Klopp told a news conference today ahead of this weekend's FA Cup clash with Cardiff City. "It would be crazy if we were not."

"It was late to do the deal before the transfer window closed again. And so in the end

it did work out but yeah, we'll see what happens. These things are sometimes out of our hands."

One deal Liverpool did get over the line was the capture of Porto winger Luis Diaz for a reported fee of €45 million (RM216 million), and Klopp could not contain his excitement.

"We like pretty much everything about him," Klopp said. "I followed him for a while. Not only since we played them (Porto) twice in the Champions League, so he is an exceptional player."

"He has this speed, skill set, he has the character to have a really good career and we all want him to have this career here with us."

"He is maybe a little bit of a late bloomer, but he has bloomed exceptionally well. We are really happy that we could get him in now and we can help him and he can help us."

Klopp also revealed youngster Harvey Elliott could be named in the squad for Sunday's clash at Anfield. The winger has been missing since September after suffering a serious ankle injury and undergoing surgery.

## Beijing Olympics Officially Inaugurated

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The opening ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics was held on Friday night, the culmination of preparations that were beset by the COVID-19 pandemic and criticism over human rights in China that led several countries to mount a diplomatic boycott.

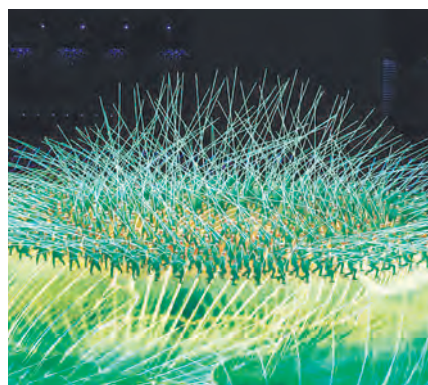
Held on the first day of Spring by the Chinese calendar, the event began with a performance by dancers waving glowing green stalks meant to convey the vitality of the season, followed by an explosion of white and green fireworks that spelled the word "Spring".

After that, the Chinese flag was passed among 56 people representing China's different ethnic groups before the flag was raised and the national anthem performed.

On a three-dimensional cube resembling a block of ice, imagery from each of the previous 23 Winter Games was carved by lasers. The block was then "broken" by ice hockey players, enabling the Olympic rings to emerge, all in white.

That was followed by the traditional "parade of nations", with the announcement of "Hong Kong, China" generating applause in the stadium. Friday's ceremony began shortly after President Xi Jinping and International Olympic Committee Chairman Thomas Bach entered the iconic Bird's Nest stadium, its rim bedecked by the flags of the 91 competing nations and regions.

Directed by Zhang Yimou, reprising his role from Beijing's 2008 Summer Games triumph, the event was to feature 3,000 performers on a stage comprised of 11,600 square metres of high-definition LED screen resembling an ice surface.



## Lingard Denies Asking for Time off At Man Utd

LONDON (Dispatches) - Jesse Lingard has disputed Ralf Rangnick's claim that he requested time off to help clear his head after Manchester United blocked his move away from the club during the January transfer window.

Newcastle, West Ham — where he excelled on loan last season — and Tottenham were among the suitors for the 29-year-old, who is out of contract at the end of the season, but United decided to keep him at Old Trafford.

Rangnick revealed yesterday that the frustrated England midfielder had been granted a short leave of absence and missed FA Cup fourth-round tie against Middlesbrough.

But Lingard said it was the club's decision to grant him time away and that he was ready to play if called upon.

"The club advised me to have time off due to personal reasons!" he tweeted.

"But my headspace is clear and I'll always be professional when called upon and give 100 percent." Lingard's rebuttal comes after Anthony Martial — now on loan at Sevilla — last month contracted Rangnick's claim he refused to be in a match squad, saying he would "never disrespect the club".

Rangnick said the situation regarding Mason Greenwood was partly behind the decision to keep Lingard for the rest of the campaign.

Greenwood, who was arrested on Sunday on suspicion of the rape and assault of a woman, has been released on bail pending further investigation and remains suspended by United.

