

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic In Iran Increased to 135,040 With 242 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji Arrived in Doha on Sunday to Accompany the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Who Will Attend the Sixth Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF)

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Serbia Seeks Strong Political, Strategic Relations With Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Serbia's President Aleksandar Vučić says his country seeks to further boost trade and commercial cooperation with Iran, promoting it to the level of strategic ties.

Vučić made the remarks in a late Saturday phone call with Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, during which the two sides discussed bilateral relations as well as major international developments.

"Belgrade is after enhancing the level of commercial and business ties and establishing strong political and strategic relations [with Tehran]," the Serbian head of state noted.

He hailed the Islamic Republic for the "invariably independent positions" that it has adopted over time, saying this could serve as a basis for close bilateral cooperation between the two sides concerning international issues.

Vučić named agriculture, food industry, manufacturing, building, mining, energy, information technology, education, culture, and sports as major areas that yield "great opportunity" for bilateral cooperation.

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Iran Southeastern Borders In Full Security

TEHRAN (MNA) – Chief of Staff of Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri said that security of borders at southeastern parts of the country enjoys positive and reassuring growth.

Speaking among reporters during his visit to southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province on Sunday to inaugurate some operational projects and also defense achievements in the fields of armor, air force and ICT of Army Ground Force, Major General Bagheri said that security situation of southeastern borders of the country is 'satisfactory' as compared to the previous years and there is no major problem in this regard.

Bagheri pointed to the situation of security at joint borders between Iran and Pakistan and stated, "Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, common border between Iran and Pakistan is the border of peace and friendship in a way that trade and business activity is done in this area with peace of mind."

Regarding the joint borders between Iran and Afghanistan, he noted, "In spite of existence of some problems at Afghanistan, borders of the two country enjoy suitable security and if there are some problems in this regard, they will be resolved by border guards of the two countries."

Majlis Lawmakers Set Conditions for Nuclear Deal



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - A large majority in Iran's parliament issued a statement urging President Ebrahim Raisi not to agree to any new nuclear deal without ensuring Iran's demands.

In the Sunday statement signed by 250 lawmakers, out of 290, stressed that getting credible guarantees is a red line to ensure the interests of the Iranian people is protected. Hardliners loyal to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dominate the Iranian parliament since 2020, after elections in which most rivals were banned from contesting.

Iran has been insisting to obtain a political guarantee from the United States that it would not renege on a new nuclear agreement. Former president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, reimposing crippling sanctions on Tehran.

Lawmakers said the negotiations to revive the 2015 deal have reached a critical point, calling on the president not to compromise on any of the demands reiterated by the Islamic Republic. These include not only a political guarantee, but also the removal of all sanctions imposed on Iran, whether for nuclear or other reasons, such as human rights violations or terrorism. The text explicitly mentions guarantees by France, Germany and the United Kingdom, the three European signatories of JCPOA, to remove all sanctions.

The statement said the U.S. and the three European signatories of the nuclear deal have shown in the past eight years that they are not committed to any agreement and used all the possible means against the interests of the Iranian people, adding that they also put sanctions on medicines – a highly questionable claim.

The lawmakers also asked Raisi to get credible will not use JCPOA's trigger mechanism designed to reimpose international sanctions in case Iran violates the nuclear agreement.

According to the statement, the U.S. and the three European countries must lift all the sanctions related to nuclear, terrorism, missiles, and human rights issues, including the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), CAATSA U-turn, and the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA).

The U.S. and JCPOA signatories must fulfill their obligations about sanctions in a manner verifiable for Iran, they said, noting that the administration should brief the parliament on the removal of oil and banking sanctions, then the parliament would approve reducing the nuclear activities.

Saudi Arabia Plans for Fresh Round of Talks With Iran

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on Saturday that if the 2015 nuclear pact was revived that should be "a starting point, not an endpoint" in order to address regional concerns. Saudi Arabia has been critical of the deal for not tackling Tehran's missiles program.

"That will indeed require from our neighbors in Iran a serious desire to address the underlying issues that exist ... We hope that there is a serious desire to find a new modus operandi," he said.

"If we see substantive progress on those files, then yes, rapprochement is possible. So far, we have not seen that," he told the Munich Security Conference.

Tensions between the two countries spiked in 2019 after an assault on Saudi oil plants that Riyadh blamed on Iran, a charge Tehran has denied, and continue to simmer over Yemen.

Prince Faisal said Iran continued to provide the Houthis with ballistic missile and drone parts as well as conventional weapons, a charge both Tehran and Yemen's Houthi group denies.

"This does not contribute to finding a path to settle that conflict, but we are committed and we are supportive of the United Nations representative," he said, referring to stalled UN-led efforts for a ceasefire in Yemen.

Tehran and Riyadh have held four rounds of talks in Iraq, with Baghdad hoping its mediation would stop the neighbours seeking to settle scores on its territory. Saudi Arabia has described the talks as cordial but exploratory, while Tehran says they had gone a "good distance".

Earlier this month Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said Iran was ready for more talks with Saudi Arabia if Riyadh is willing to hold the talks in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect, the semi-official news agency Fars reported.

"Iran is ready to continue these negotiations until reaching an outcome, provided that the Saudis are willing to continue the negotiations in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect," Fars quoted Raisi as saying in a phone call with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

Riyadh and Tehran have said they hope the talks can ease tensions while playing down expectations of a significant diplomatic breakthrough.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Canada, the Bogus Human-Rights Defender

Canada has been one of those countries which has always been boasting its defense of human rights issue and every time the country jumps to meddle in the domestic affairs of other countries after any incident but it has been unable to observe human rights standards on its own lands.

The country in recent months have faced several challenges which have questioned capability of it in handling the human rights issues but when it comes to other countries, it acts more Catholic than Pope.

First in November 2021, an Indigenous community said it found evidence that 215 children were buried on the grounds of a British Columbia school, one of the many in Canada set up to forcibly assimilate them.

For decades, most Indigenous children in Canada were taken from their families and forced into boarding schools. A large number never returned home, their families given only vague explanations, or none at all.

But the Canadian officials and Judiciary have been indifferent and passive towards this kind of behavior against the indigenous people. Suppose such an incident happens in an Asian or African country like Iran or Sudan. Like the Ukrainian plane crash in Tehran. Immediately the Canadian officials jump to condemn the governments under the pretext of defending human rights.

In several occasions Canadian officials have meddled in Iran's domestic issues while they currently have no diplomatic relation and Canada has currently turned into a haven for corrupts and criminals who are at large and are on the wanted list of the Interpol.

In recent days Canada is challenging with another domestic issue, namely the protests of the truckers, that it has resorted to the force and some so-called anti-human measures against the drivers who are protesting against mandatory COVID vaccination.

On Friday, Canadian police resorted to tough measures to stop protesters and used pepper spray and stun grenades to disperse truckers and other demonstrators who had occupied the downtown core of the capital Ottawa in an effort to bring an end to three weeks of protests against the COVID-19 restrictions.

Police officers clashed with protesters who had gathered in front of the parliament building and the prime minister's office on Saturday, arresting several people, a day after clearing part of the blockade and making more than 100 arrests.

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Iran, Qatar Agree to Launch Regular Shipping Lines

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Roads and Urban Development revealed his talk with Qatari counterpart to set up regular shipping lines between the two countries' ports.

In addition, the two sides agreed to make more use of Qatari commercial airlines over Iranian sky, Rostam Ghasemi Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development stated on Sunday before his visit to Qatari capital Doha.

Stating that his visit to Qatar and talks with Qatari counterpart had previously been planned, Ghasemi added, "In this visit, we will explore avenues to develop trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and we hope this visit will pave the suitable way for holding expert-level meetings between businesspersons of the two countries in line with expansion of bilateral trade-economic cooperation."

Turning to the high level of political and economic cooperation between the two countries, Iranian Roads minister added, "Visiting trade and commercial ports and also airports of Qatar has been put atop agenda of the visit and it is tried to pave suitable ground for enhancing bilateral relations in economic field given the serious determination of political officials of the two countries of Iran and Qatar."

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Iran Conditions Final Agreement On U.S., E3 Determination

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday that Iran has already made its serious decisions and "it is now up to the E3 and the U.S. to do the same, urgently".

Khatibzadeh made the remarks in a tweet where he echoed comments by Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian during the 58th edition of Munich Security Conference (MSC2020) underway in the German city.

Iran is determined to successfully conclude the Vienna Talks, he said, adding, "We have already made our serious decisions & have demonstrated our seriousness all along."

Any Vienna Agreement Must Result In Removal of All Sanctions

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says any possible agreement between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries in the Austrian capital of Vienna must include the removal of all sanctions, the provision of valid guarantees and cessation of political issues and claims.

The Iranian president made the remarks in a phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Saturday as the two sides discussed the latest status of the ongoing talks in Vienna between Tehran and the five remaining signatories to the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), aim to secure the revival of the agreement.

Raisi said the Iranian negotiating team has repeatedly announced that it welcomes the initiatives that would guarantee the provision and protection of the nation's rights.

He added that certain "political pressures or claims have been made with the aim of maintaining the leverage of pressure on the Iranian nation which undermine the prospect of reaching an agreement [in Vienna]."

He noted that the Iranian delegation is advancing the talks in the Austrian capital with "seriousness," saying, "In the course of the [Vienna] negotiations, the Islamic Republic of Iran has offered constructive proposals and has examined the proposals made by the other side of the talks based on the their conformity with the interests of the Iranian people."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi said Iran's history of interaction with the



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the agency's numerous reports verifying the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear activities proved the false claims leveled by some countries against Tehran.

"In order to prove its good will, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always highlighted [its] professional cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and we need to be vigilant about the enemies' plots in this regard," the Iranian president pointed out.

Pointing to Iran's active role in the fight against terrorism alongside Iraq and Syria, Raisi said effective confrontation of the Islamic Republic, particularly efforts by top Iranian anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani, have prevented the Daesh terrorists from securing a foothold in Europe.

The French president, for his part, said that good progress has been made in the Vienna talks and expressed hope that the negotiations between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries would yield fruit as soon as possible.

The Iranian and French presidents also discussed the latest regional developments and the COVID-19 pandemic.

U.S., Biggest Global Security Problem

TEHRAN (IP) - The Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, during a meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, called the United States the biggest problem of global security.

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan arrived in Tehran today at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart to meet with officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Ali Nikzad, Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, said on Saturday during a meeting with Qasim Khan Suri, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan in Tehran: "The United States has exploited nations through the United Nations, international organizations, environmental issues, the dollar, and whatever it can."

Referring to U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nikzad noted that the United States withdrew from the nuclear deal in violation of its obligations and imposed unjust sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, but despite the problems, we kept our commitments.

The Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament emphasized: "If friendly and neighboring countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan join hands and cooperate with each other in economic and monetary issues, they will achieve valuable achievements."

Qasim Khan Suri, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, referring to the importance of promoting relations between the two countries for Islamabad, said: "The historical, cultural, social and religious commonalities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan have created a favorable environment for expanding relations between the two countries."

"Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran have always helped each other during difficult times," he said.



Iran's Exports to ECO Countries Growing by 51%

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's customs spokesman said that Iranian goods exports to ECO countries members increased by %51 compared to the past year.

Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are the 10 ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) member countries.

Roohollah Latifi, Iran customs spokesman, said: "This year, Iran's trade with ECO member countries has reached more than 13 billion and 110 million dollars and weighs 24 million 758 thousand and 827 tons, which shows an increase of 41% in value and 25% in weight compared to last year."

Latifi added: In the first ten months of this year (started from March 20, 2021), more than eight billion dollars out of 13 billion and 111 million dollars of Iran's trade with ECO was related to exports.

Regarding the export of goods to each ECO member, the Iranian customs spokesman said: "Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan were the main destinations of Iranian export."

Former Iranian Official Served With Jail Term

TEHRAN (IFP) - A former senior official with Iran's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance has been served with a prison sentence and temporary dismissal from civil service over corruption.

"With regards to the warnings we had already given then authorities [of the former administration], one of the top officials of the ministry has been convicted; of course, it is the ruling of first instance and is not final yet; however, due to failure to heed warnings given by the General Inspectorate Organization and the losses suffered by the public, a jail term and sentence of temporary dismissal from civil service have been handed down to him," said Zabiollah Khodaian, the head of the General Inspectorate Organization and spokesman for the Judiciary.

He added the organization has also filed a lawsuit against former members of the Board of Directors of the Tehran Stock Exchange.

"We opened a criminal case against them; they were summoned and asked to give explanation," he noted.

He underlined measures have also been adopted to deal with corruption at the Judiciary.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official said well over six thousand convicts have been pardoned or had their sentences commuted.

"Around 6,313 prisoners were also released on parole," he explained.

"More than 5,600 people also enjoyed a stay of execution of their sentences," he said.

Iran Among Top 10 In Battle Against Covid-19

TEHRAN (MNA) - The health minister Bahram Einollahi hailed Iran's experience in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, saying above 91% of the Iranian population have received the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday on a visit to a hospital in Tehran, health minister Bahram Einollahi hailed Iran's fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The health minister said that 12% of hospital beds and 23% of special beds in the country's hospitals are allocated to the patients with the Covid-19 as the country is going through the sixth wave of the pandemic.

Einollahi said that the World Health Organization hailed Iran's experience in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, saying, "In the region, we can say that we are the first and in the world, the rankings are constantly changing, but Iran is among the top ten countries."

"One of our most important achievements is that fortunately, we have been able to produce the vaccine domestically," he also noted, adding that "Currently, there are 6 vaccine manufacturers and we are able to produce different types of vaccines in the country. As compared to the world and even developed countries, the statistics of vaccination in Iran show that many countries have not yet reached our level of vaccination."

"So far, 91% of people have received the first dose, 81% the second dose and 32% the third dose," the health minister further noted.

Reaching Agreement Hinges On U.S. Political Conduct

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says reaching an agreement with world powers through the Vienna talks depends entirely on the United States' political conduct and the Europeans' attention to the principles of negotiation, asserting that the US and its European allies would be to blame if the talks founder.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with his Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio on the sidelines of the 58th Munich Security Conference (MSC) on Saturday.

He said Iran intends to reach a good agreement "but whether it takes a few days or a few weeks depends entirely on the behavior and will of the United States and Europe's attention to the principles and rules of negotiation."

Addressing the Munich Security Conference, Amir-Abdollahian said Iranian negotiators are facing "double games" played by the Western side over the "text" and the "time."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran participated in the new round of nuclear negotiations in good faith and seriousness," the chief Iranian diplomat stated.

"What we are considering seems absolutely reasonable and fair: the removal of all sanctions inconsistent with the JCPOA, verification of sanctions removal, and presentation of absolutely necessary objective guarantees for the fulfillment of commitments," he added.

"If the nuclear talks between Tehran and world powers fail in Vienna, Western powers will be responsible for it because we want a good deal."

Amir-Abdollahian also said Iran needs to see "tangible steps of goodwill" on the part of the US, such as unfreezing Iran's assets abroad, before even considering direct talks with Washington in the Austrian capital.

He said on Saturday that Iran is ready for an "immediate" prisoner swap with the United States.

"We believe prisoner swap is a humanitarian issue ... unrelated to the nuclear accord.

We can do it immediately," he told a panel at the conference, according to Reuters.

Second Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for Tertiary dodecyl mercaptan(TDM) // 141300KG



Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of Tertiary dodecyl mercaptan(TDM) for ABS production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product.

Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until February 27.

Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: March 10, 2022

Email: Mr.ghorbani@tpco.ir

Phone No.: +98-21-88737355-Int 109

Tender	No	Quantity
Tertiary dodecyl mercaptan(TDM)	PVS-0041063	141300 kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

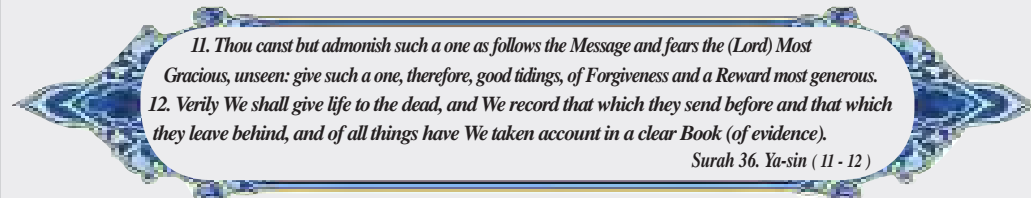
First turn published: February 16, 2022

Second turn published: February 21, 2022



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:17
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:10
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:19
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:43



11. Thou canst but admonish such a one as follows the Message and fears the (Lord) Most Gracious, unseen: give such a one, therefore, good tidings, of Forgiveness and a Reward most generous.
12. Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book (of evidence).
Surah 36, Ya-sin (11 - 12)

Tehran Eyes \$1b Trade With Doha

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said that \$1 billion trade with neighboring country of Qatar is on Iran's agenda.

Alireza Peyman-Pak, Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran said on Saturday with regards to the upcoming visit of Iranian President to Qatar and said, "Participating in Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) and holding bilateral talks with senior Qatari officials have been cited as the two main aims behind upcoming visit of Iranian President Raeisi to Qatar."

Turning to the high capacities and opportunities of cooperation between Iran and Qatar, Peyman-Pak stated, "In addition to holding talks pertinent to oil by senior officials of Iranian Petroleum Ministry, Iranian ministers of industry and tourism will also hold bilateral talks with their Qatari counterparts for the development of trade and tourism cooperation."

He put the current trade volume exchanged between Iran and Qatar at about \$300 and \$400 million which is very negligible and stated, "With the planning made in this regard, it is expected that bilateral trade between the two countries will increase to \$1 billion next year."

Cooperating in the field of industrial development for exporting products to third countries and using high capacities and capabilities of Qatar for development of value chain and transit are of the other issues with regards to expanding trade ties between the two countries, he added.



Elsewhere in his remarks, the deputy minister of industry referred to the opportunity of Free Trade with Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) next year (to start March 21, 2022) and also lucrative \$500 billion market of EAEU and stated that giant steps have been taken in order to expand trade and economic activities with EAEU member states.

Iran and Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the two countries' seventh Joint Economic Committee meeting which was held in Isfahan in late November 2020.

Based on this MOU, the two sides agreed to cooperate in forming a joint trade working group between the two countries, establishing trade centers between the private sectors of the two sides, establishing commercial affiliates in the embassies of the two countries in Tehran and Doha, and using the ports of the two countries to boost the export and import of goods.

Cooperation between the two countries' chambers of commerce to encourage the private sectors of the two sides for joint ventures, the development of cooperation in the fields of agriculture, electricity, water and wastewater and gas, cooperation in the field of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism, including holding a cultural week in Isfahan, were among other provisions of the mentioned MOU.

Webinar on Years of Iran-China Relations

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce is to hold a webinar on Tuesday on the 50 years of Iran-China and looking to the future of the ties.

According to the reports, Iran-China Chamber of Commerce in collaboration of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and embassies of the two countries will hold this webinar "50 Years of Iran-China Relations and Looking Ahead" on Tuesday morning.

Iran's Ambassador to China Mohammad Reza Keshavarz Zadeh, Head of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce Mr. Majid Reza Hariri, China's Ambassador to Tehran Mr. Chang Hua and Vice-President of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade are to deliver speech.

ABFA of Isfahan Accepts Over 32,000 New Subscribers in 10 Months



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

ISFAHAN – Water and Wastewater Company of Isfahan Province, known as ABFA of Isfahan, has handed over 19,600 water and over 12,500 wastewater branches to new subscribers in 10 months of the current year.

Subscribers Services and Revenue Deputy of ABFA of Isfahan Mr. Seyed Mohsen Saleh said that the company has handed over 19,593 new water and 12,516 wastewater branches to subscribers in Isfahan Province.

He added that with the new branches, the number of branches which have been handed over by the company in 98 towns and cities and 949 villages under coverage of the company hits 1,432,206 water and 728,863 wastewater branches.

Saleh reiterated the total number of branches being used in Isfahan Province is 2,410,158 water and 1,540,181 wastewater branches, adding that it means each branch may be used by different units and as sub-branch.

He added that the company also discovered 584 illegal water and wastewater branches in 10 months. He also went on to say that 74,152 broken or damaged water meter have been identified in this period and 21,950 meters have been totally replaced by new ones and some of them have been repaired.

MSC Designs, Manufactures Hot Compressing Device With Fixed Strain Rate

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - Production

Process Research Chief at

Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel

Company (MSC) on the

sidelines of the third

National Iranian Steel

Festival and Exhibition

(NISF) announced the design and manufacture of hot

compressing device with fixed stable rate which was

achieved by the company.

Jamshad Jamshidian said that the hot compressing

device is a device with advanced technology that for

the first time in the industrial scale has been redesigned

and manufactured by Iranian scientists and experts.

He added that this device can implement the fixed

strain rate in the range of 0.001 per second up to

5 per second. He noted that the most famous

manufacturer of hot compressing device in the world is

Gleeble Company of the U.S. which is not allowed to

sell its product to Iran due to sanctions.

He went on to say that in line with indigenizing and

preventing the flight of forex from the country, this

manufactured device saves considerable forex amount

and it makes the country needless of its imports.

Jamshadian added that this achievement is a big step

towards materialization of the strategic goals of

Mobarakeh Steel Company in the field of design and

production of new products.

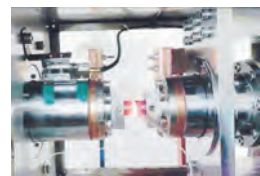
He then elaborated the technical properties of the

device and how it functions.

He then noted that this device has been designed and

manufactured by the financial support of Mobarakeh

Steel Company and by Isfahan University of Technology.



Kuwait Expels Iranian Workers

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Abdullah Raisi, executive secretary of Shahrekord's Worker's House, pointed out that Kuwait was one of the overseas destinations for workers in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, saying, "Kuwait does not accept Iranian workers and has expelled those who were working."

He did not mention the number of Iranian workers fired, but said hidden unemployment in the province had increased and if problems were not solved, the province would witness massive economic and social crises.

The unemployment rate in the province is more than 13 percent, according to the latest government statistics.

The executive secretary of Shahrekord's Worker's House also pointed out that hyperinflation has caused farmers to be unable to afford their living expenses, saying that farmers in the province have been forced to migrate "to southern provinces such as Bushehr, Hormozgan, Khuzestan or Chabahar" as seasonal workers in order to cover living expenses.

He also said the employment crisis has pushed the marriage age in the province from 20 to 34, with the number of drug sales, theft and corruption increasing.

Iran, Brazil to Mull Over Customs Tariff of Commercial Goods

TEHRAN (MNA) – Islamic Republic of Iran and Brazil will explore the customs tariff of commercial goods exchanged between the two countries.

Visiting Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply of Brazil Tereza Cristina Corrêa da Costa Dias welcomed expansion of trade ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and said that setting customs tariff is one of the main barriers facing trade and business activity of the two countries.

Speaking in the signing and sealing ceremony of cooperation agreement between Iran and Brazil, she added, "In the past 50 years, Brazil has tried to be one of the largest food producers in the world. Of course, Iran has made salient progress in the field of agriculture."

The two countries of Iran and Brazil enjoy high potentials



and capacities which can broaden their cooperation in agricultural field suitably, she emphasized.

Referring to the beginning of a new chapter in relations between Iran and Brazil, the Agriculture Minister of Brazil stated that trade exchanges between the two countries in the field of agriculture can increase optimally, so that private sectors of the two countries can play a leading role in this respect.

"We also seek to facilitate trade relations with Iran which requires increasing exchange of trade delegations between the two countries and we must also expand trade by establishing a trade office," she stressed.

The Brazilian minister arrived in Tehran on Wednesday evening to expand and broaden cooperation with Iran in the field of agriculture.

Pakistani Business Delegation in Tehran

TEHRAN (MNA) – A Pakistani business delegation consisting of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry's officials arrived in Tehran on Sunday to strengthen trade relations, especially with the Iranian provincial chambers of commerce.

Heading a delegation, President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Noman Kabir arrived in Tehran to attend a joint business forum in Tehran.

The visit of Lahore's senior business activists and the city's officials of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce is set with the coordination of the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Lahore. Parts of the efforts have been made to expand interactions between the provinces of Iran and Pakistan. The Pakistanis are scheduled to visit Tehran, Isfahan, Mashhad and Zahedan to meet with the Iranian business and provincial officials.

They will also discuss ways to develop joint trade and increase economic and trade relations between Punjab and Iranian provinces with their counterparts. Strengthening ties between the private sectors of Iran and Pakistan and explaining mutual capacities for the development of cooperation in the fields of investment, tourism, industry, import and export are other objectives of the Pakistani business delegation's visit to Iran.

First Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for
TITANIUM DIOXIDE (TiO2)// 191000 kg



Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of TITANIUM DIOXIDE (TiO2) for ABS production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until March 03.

Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: March 14, 2022

Email: me.rahimi@tpco.ir

Phone No.: +98-41-34282592

Tender	No	Quantity
TITANIUM DIOXIDE (TiO2)	PVS-0041067	191000 kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

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KSC Exemplary Production Unit of Province

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) was chosen as the exemplary production unit of Khorasan Razavi Province during the 33rd Festival of Emtenan (Gratitude).

Deputy of Khorasan Steel Complex Company on human resources and social affairs Mr. Fereydoon Sabourian announced this achievement and said that in the closing ceremony of the festival and during honoring of the exemplary units of the province which was held in presence of deputy Labor Minister and director generals of Social Welfare Organization of Khorasan Razavi, Khorasan Steel Company was chosen as the exemplary production unit of the province by scoring highest points during evaluation process and the plaque of honor and statue were presented to the company.

Director of administrative and human resources of the company said the Emtenan Festival is held to choose and award the exemplary workers, work groups and production units and KSC which is considered the biggest industrial hub of eastern country won the award.

Sabourian received the award on behalf of the CEO of the company Mr. Kasra Ghafoori.



At Least 13 Killed by Suicide Bomber in Central Somalia

MOGADISHU (Dispatches) - At least 13 people have been killed in central Somalia on Saturday after a suicide bomber detonated explosives in a restaurant packed with local officials and politicians.

The dead were mostly civilians and 20 other people were wounded in the town of Beledweyne, police spokesman Dini Roble Ahmed said. The blast caused "huge damage", he added. Witnesses said a large explosion tore through an open area of the Hassan Dhiif restaurant where people gathered under trees to eat lunch. "I saw dead bodies of several people and I could not count how many wounded that were rushed to hospital," said witness Mahad Osman. "Some of these people were waiting for their ordered meals to come while enjoying the fresh weather when the blast occurred."



Lithuania Asks U.S. to Strengthen Baltic States With Troops

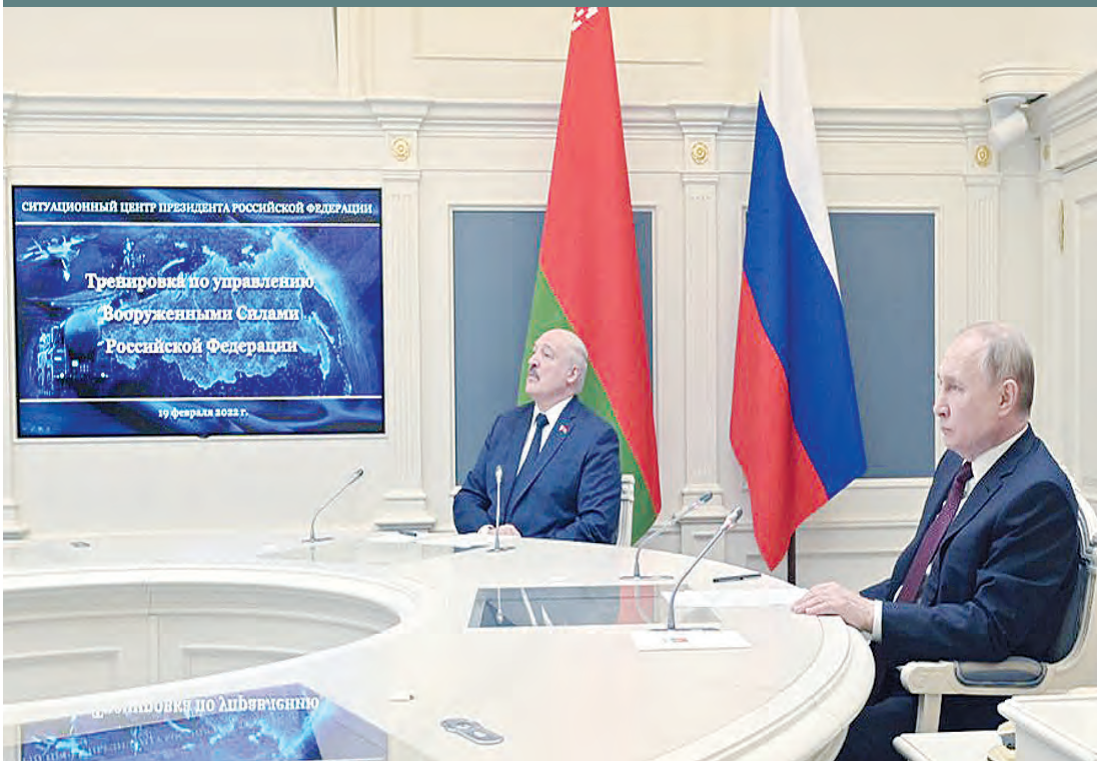
VILNIUS (Dispatches)- Lithuania's president called today for Baltic states' security to be boosted with US troops as the region worries about Russia's massing of troops near Ukraine.

"The Russian military buildup at the eastern NATO border is changing the security situation," President Gitanas Nausėda said in a statement after the meeting U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in Vilnius.

"It is critically important to strengthen the (Baltic states) regional security with additional troops from the United States and quicken cooperation in military procurement," he added.



Putin Launches Nuclear Drills as Russia Poised to Invade Ukraine



DONETSK (Dispatches) - Russia's President Vladimir Putin launched exercises by strategic nuclear missile forces on Saturday and Washington said Russian troops massed near Ukraine's border were "poised to strike".

As Western nations fear the start of one the worst conflicts since the Cold War, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Russian forces were beginning to "uncoil and move closer" to the border with its former Soviet neighbor.

"We hope he steps back from the brink of conflict," he told a news conference on a visit to Lithuania, saying an invasion of Ukraine was not inevitable.

Russia ordered the military build-up while demanding NATO stop Ukraine ever joining the alliance but says predictions it is planning to invade Ukraine are wrong and dangerous. It says it is now pulling back while Washington and allies insist the build-up is mounting.

Russian-backed separatist leaders in eastern Ukraine earlier declared a full military mobilization, a day after ordering women and children to evacuate to Russia, citing the threat of an imminent attack by Ukrainian forces.

Kyiv flatly denied the accusation and both it and Washington say increased shelling across the ceasefire line this week is part of Russia's plan to create a pretext for an invasion of Ukraine.

Moscow said on Saturday a Ukrainian shell had exploded inside Russia and Russian news agencies later cited an unnamed source reporting a second.

Multiple explosions could be heard on Saturday morning in the north of the separatist-controlled city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine, as more people got on buses to leave, a Reuters witness said. The origin was not immediately clear. Ukraine said earlier that one of its soldiers had been killed.

"It's really scary. I've taken everything I could carry," said Tatyana, 30, who was boarding a bus with her 4-year-old daughter.

U.S. President Joe Biden, who has given regular warnings of an impending invasion, said on Friday he now believes the capital Kyiv would be targeted by Russia but that he does not think Putin is even remotely contemplating using nuclear weapons.

Biden said Putin would invade in the coming days. "As of this moment, I am convinced that he has made the decision," he told reporters.

The Kremlin said Russia had successfully test-launched hypersonic and cruise missiles at sea and land-based targets during the exercises by Russia's nuclear forces.

Putin sat observing the exercises on screens along with the president of neighboring Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, from what the Kremlin described as a "situation center". Austin said the nuclear exercises were stoking concern among defense leaders around the world given that Russia's military was focused on a massive build-up of forces around Ukraine.

U.S., YPG Carry Out Military Exercise in Syria's East

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) - The United States and the PKK terrorist organization's Syrian wing, the YPG, conducted a military exercise in the war-torn country's eastern Deir el-Zour province, according to local sources.

U.S. troops launched the armed training with YPG terrorists in the morning in and around the industrial zone located in the Abu Khashab desert, northwest of Deir el-Zour, according to the sources who spoke on condition of anonymity over security concerns.

Combat aircraft and helicopters, as well as several tanks and armored vehicles, are joining the exercise.

The YPG terrorists will get training on using mortars, artillery fire and guided anti-tank missiles during the exercise, in which some troops from the Global Coalition Against Daesh are participating.

In December 2021, U.S. troops conducted joint armed exercises with the YPG terrorists in the desert.



Cuba to Deepen Ties With Russia

HAVANA (Dispatches) - Russia and Cuba will deepen ties and explore collaboration in transportation, energy, industry and banking, Cuba's Foreign Ministry said following a visit from Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov.

In a statement, Cuba's communist-run government expressed support for Russia as tensions mount in Ukraine, and accused long-time rival the United States and its allies of targeting Moscow with what it called a "propaganda war" and sanctions.

Cuba "reiterates its position against the unilateral and unjust sanctions imposed by the West on the Eurasian country and against the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization towards the Russian borders."

Borisov earlier this week visited Nicaragua and Venezuela, key Russian allies in Latin America, and said Russia would also deepen bilateral ties with both countries.

His tour follows visits to Moscow by Latin American leaders - including Argentina's Alberto Fernandez and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro - for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, prompting some analysts to suggest Russia is courting the region as tensions rise over Ukraine.

Putin launched exercises by strategic nuclear missile forces on Saturday, as Washington said Russian troops massed near Ukraine's border were "poised to strike".

Cuba and Russia have a long history of deep economic and military collaboration since Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution, though in recent decades those ties have faded.

Borisov, who met with Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Ricardo Cabrisas, said in Cuba's statement that Russia had ramped up humanitarian aid to Cuba between December 2021 and January 2022. He also noted prior shipments of medical supplies to the island amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Russia said in December that escalating tensions over Ukraine could lead to a repeat of the Cuban missile crisis, when the world stood on the brink of nuclear war.

Indonesia Urges G20 Collaboration

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - The crisis in Ukraine overshadowed a gathering of finance leaders from the world's top 20 economies that kicked off on Thursday, with host Indonesia's president warning "now is not the time" to create new risks to a fragile global recovery.

Russia's military presence on its borders with Ukraine has led to one of the deepest crises in East-West relations for decades, jolting financial markets and adding to the headwinds facing a global economy emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Geopolitical risks and the economic fallout from the pandemic will likely be among key topics of debate at the G20 finance leaders' meeting, as well as rising global inflation and tighter monetary policy in some regions.

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo urged G20 nations to focus on collaboration to revive a global economy that is "still shaken" from the pandemic.

"In a situation like now, it is not the time for rivalry," he said in opening remarks at the G20 meeting, which many ministers are attending online due to the pandemic.

"It is not the time to create a new tension that disrupts the global recovery, especially one that endangers the safety of the world like what is happening in Ukraine now."

Analysts, however, warn the diverse membership of the G20, consisting of the United States and its allies but also

rivals China and Russia, may make policy coordination hard.

In a draft of the G20 communique to be issued at the end of the two-day meeting on Friday, the finance leaders flagged inflation and "(current) geopolitical tensions" as major risks to a global recovery that has become "asynchronous" due to uneven access to COVID-19 vaccines.

The use of brackets in the draft seen by Reuters suggests that the word "current" may be deleted in a final version.

With the U.S. central bank moving toward raising interest rates and some of its counterparts expected to follow suit, the G20 finance leaders are likely to call on major central banks to communicate their intentions clearly to prevent big market swings.

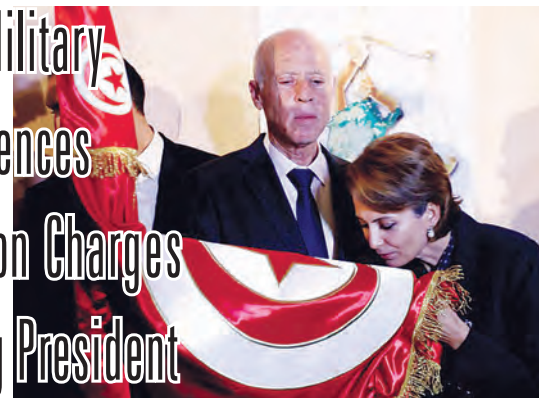
The G20 policymakers are also expected to warn emerging nations to brace for potential market fallout from monetary tightening in major economies, according to a document with the agreed position of European G20 members, seen by Reuters.

"Divergent economic recovery may have significant implications, since it can lead to a different pace of policy normalization and potentially create a tighter global financial condition," Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati told the G20 finance leaders.

"In this regard, global coordination, including a discussion on exit strategy, will be critical," she said.



Tunisia's Military Court Sentences Lawmaker on Charges Of Insulting President



TUNIS (Dispatches) - A member of Tunisia's suspended parliament, Yassin Ayari, told Reuters that a military court sentenced him in absentia to 10 months in prison on charges of insulting the president and the army after he described the president's move to freeze parliament as a military coup.

President Kais Saied suspended the Parliament on July 25, dismissed the government and seized control of most authorities, drawing widespread criticism at home and abroad.

The prison sentence will reinforce opposition fears that Saied is seeking revenge on his opponents, after he also dissolved the Supreme Judicial Council, the body which guarantees independence of the judiciary.

Ayari in a Facebook post had described Saied's actions as a military coup.

"It's ridiculous. ... Yesterday Saied said in Brussels that he is not a dictator and today a military court issues a prison sentence against freedom of expression to a lawmaker," Ayari told Reuters by phone from Paris.

Saied's critics accuse him of seeking dictatorial powers and undermining the rule of law.

Saied has said he will uphold rights and freedoms won in the 2011 revolution that brought democracy to Tunisia and will put a new constitution to a referendum this summer, with new parliamentary elections to follow in December.

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EU's Oil and Petroleum Consumption Hit Record Low in 2020

LONDON (Dispatches) - Pandemic restrictions in 2020 reduced the European Union's oil and petroleum consumption in energy use to its lowest in 30 years, the bloc's statistics office said on Friday.

Eurostat said the final consumption of oil and petroleum products across the region registered its sharpest drop ever, falling by about 10% to 310 megatons of oil equivalent (Mtoe) in only one year.

In March 2020 EU governments began to limit people's movements to curb

the spread of COVID-19, leading to a significant decline in consumption of transport fuels such as diesel and gasoline.

The use of kerosene-type jet fuel in aviation, which in 2019 reached an absolute high at 48.2 Mtoe, slumped more than 56% in 2020 as travel restrictions forced airlines to cancel flights.

Luxembourg registered the largest decrease in oil and petroleum products consumption in energy and non-energy use, down 21% from 2019.



EU, Africa Vow Renewed Ties, But Covid Vaccine Row Persists

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - EU and African leaders agreed to a "renewed partnership" at a summit Friday with pledges of major investments, but Europe was accused of ignoring calls to waive patents for Covid-19 vaccinations.

"We now have a historic opportunity to look at the basis of a new kind of partnership, a renewed partnership, we want to build together," Senegal's President Macky Sall, who currently chairs the African Union (AU), told a closing press conference.

The EU has announced mammoth ambitions to mobilize 150 billion euros (\$170 billion) from the public and private sectors for investments in Africa over the next seven years as it looks to challenge Chinese and Russian influence.

A final declaration from the Brussels summit said investments would focus on key infrastructure including internet access, renewable energy and transport -- but gave few concrete details on funding.

The EU repeated a pledge to give Africa 450 million Covid-19 vaccines by mid-2022 and offered 425 million euros to help health services on the continent deliver the jabs.

But there was no breakthrough at the summit -- the first since 2017 -- over a dispute around Africa's calls for a temporary intellectual property waiver to allow the generic production of vaccines and treatments.

Europe -- the home of some of the major companies behind the vaccines -- has opposed the move arguing that the first priority was to build up production capacity in poorer countries.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said EU officials would hold talks in Brussels with counterparts from the AU this spring to try to come up with a solution.

"EU leaders continue to make a song and dance about the importance of their relationship with the African continent. Yet they once again put the interests of their profit-hungry pharmaceutical corporations first," said Jeroen Kwakkenbos, Oxfam EU aid expert.

"The point-blank refusal to even consider the waiver at this summit is shameful and an insult to the millions of people in poorer countries."

Earlier Friday, the World Health Organization in Geneva announced that six African countries have been chosen to establish their own mRNA vaccine production.

Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia were selected as the first recipients of technology from the WHO's global mRNA vaccine hub, in a push to ensure Africa can make its own jabs to fight the Covid and other diseases.

As used in the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna Covid-19 vaccines, mRNA technology provokes an immune response by delivering genetic molecules containing the code for key parts of a pathogen into human cells.

The EU also faced criticism at the Brussels summit for not making headway on a key demand from Africa to provide it with a bigger share of post-Covid recovery aid from the International Monetary Fund.

The final summit statement called for "ambitious voluntary contributions" to add to funds worth some \$13 billion already pledged by EU member states.

Argentina's \$40b IMF Deal Trundles Closer Despite Push-Back

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentina's deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to refinance over \$40 billion in debts is trudging closer to the finish line, despite protests in the South American country that has a long and uneasy history with the global lender.

The two sides have been in winding talks for over a year to revamp a failed \$57 billion facility agreed in 2018 under former conservative president Mauricio Macri, which was unable to keep Argentina from sliding into debt, currency and economic crises.

A final agreement that could be worth \$40-45 billion appears likely in coming weeks after an "understanding" with the IMF in late January. The accord would still need IMF board approval and support in Argentina's Congress, where some lawmakers have openly opposed it.

"We understand that it may be soon," presidential spokeswoman Gabriela Cerruti told reporters when asked about sending the agreement to Congress.

"We are going to reach the best possible agreement that will help us start finding a solution to the largest debt Argentina ever took on, and also the largest that the IMF ever gave out."

The difficult talks have buffeted stocks and sovereign bonds, which are in distressed territory even after a major \$110 billion debt restructuring with private creditors in 2020.

Some local media reported a deal could come as early as this weekend, though officials privately talked down this possibility, signaling it would likely be later this month.

"My understanding was next Friday an agreement on the IC (letter of intent) would be sealed and after March 1 it would be sent to Congress," one official said.

Another government official with knowledge of the talks said: "We keep working. No news is expected over the weekend. Of course it is closer and we will have to be attentive next week or the following one."

Both sides are keen to seal a deal before major payments from the 2018 agreement start to come due next month, with the country grappling with depleted foreign currency reserves and a drought that is weighing on grain crops, its key export.

Argentina's central bank lifted the benchmark interest rate to 42.5% on Thursday, its steepest hike since 2019, aiming to rein in annual inflation now running at more than 50% and edge towards positive real interest rates.



France Unemployment Hits 13-Year Low in Boost for Macron

PARIS (Dispatches) - France's unemployment rate fell in the final quarter of last year to the lowest level since 2008, data showed on Friday, boosting Emmanuel Macron's economic credentials less than two months before a presidential election.

The unemployment rate fell to 7.4% from 8.0% in the previous three months, the INSEE statistics agency said. A Reuters poll of eight economists had on average forecast 7.8%.

It was the lowest level of unemployment since the third quarter of 2008, with the exception of an anomalous unrepresentative drop at the start of the pandemic because jobseekers could not look for work during a nationwide lockdown.

Stubbornly high unemployment has long been the bane of previous French presidents, and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire called the drop in the fourth quarter a "great victory against resignation and fatalism".

"With Emmanuel Macron we tried something different, we reformed the labour market, we supported apprenticeships, we cut taxes and overhauled the tax system, now the results are there," Le Maire said on RTL radio.

The drop put the rate within reach of a campaign promise Macron made in 2017 to cut unemployment to 7% by the end of his term.

Widely expected to seek second five-year term in an election in April, Macron is heading into the vote with one of the strongest economic track records in generations for an incumbent president.

India Makes Record U.S. Soybean Purchases

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - Indian traders have contracted to import a record 100,000 tons of soybean from the United States because of limited supplies from drought-hit South America, at a time when prices of rival palm oil are scaling record highs, three dealers told Reuters.

The higher purchases from the United States are expected to support U.S. soy oil prices, which have climbed nearly 20% this year to close to their highest in a decade, fuelling worries about food inflation.

The world's biggest edible oil importer traditionally buys soybean from Argentina and Brazil, but lower bean output in these two leading exporters of the commodity forced New Delhi to turn to the United States, they said.

"Indian buyers have bought U.S. soybean vessels. Prices were attractive and supplies were not enough in South America," said the India head of a global trading firm, who sought anonymity because of the company's policy.

"Buying of another two vessels in the short term is possible."

India usually gets two-thirds of its soybean needs from Argentina, and the rest from Brazil.

But last season's reduced soybean output has tightened soybean reserves in Argentina, forcing Indian buyers to shop around for alternatives, such as sunflower oil from the Black Sea region.

"Sunflower oil is cheaper than palm and soybean, but some buyers are sceptical about deliveries because of geopolitical tension (in Russia)," said Sandeep Bajoria, chief executive of Sunvin Group, a vegetable oil brokerage and consultancy firm.

"They are going with soybean."

Crude palm oil (CPO) is being offered at about \$1,575 a ton, including cost, insurance and freight (CIF), in India for March shipments, compared with \$1,620 for crude soybean oil and \$1,515 for crude sunflower oil, traders said.

Soybean was cheaper than palm and sunflower oil last month, but the sudden jump in soybean demand has lifted prices by 16% in a month to the highest in 14 years, traders said.

India gets nearly two-thirds of its edible oil needs through imports, mainly palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia.

But Indonesia's decision to curb palm oil exports has lifted the price of the tropical oil to a record and created scarcity in the edible oil market, said a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm.

"Edible oil importers were looking for an alternative in the form of soybean, but massive output reduction is going on for the soybean crop in South America," the dealer said.

Turkey's Annual House Sales Surge 25% In January

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Residential property sales in Turkey surged 25.1% year-over-year in January, official data showed on Friday, but dropped from the extremely high level a month earlier.

Sales jumped to 88,306 properties in January, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) said. Total sales in December had soared 113.7% year-over-year to 226,503, the data showed.

The reading of last month reflected last year's low base effect caused by the coronavirus pandemic when sales were well below historical averages, sector analysts said. Sales were thus more than 60% lower than in December.

"Due to restrictions and weak sales during the pandemic, we have a low base effect. Turkey's average monthly house sales are around 100,000-110,000 units," said Makbule Yönel Maya, general manager of the TSKB Real Estate Appraisal company.

According to central bank data, new house prices surged 67% year-on-year in December. Official data for January showed consumer prices rose by 48.69% annually, a 20-year high. The government has pledged to act and vowed to safeguard households against soaring prices.

"We have several reasons for the weakening demand: high inflation, skyrocketing house prices and high mortgage rates. People are pausing investing in houses," Maya said.

Monthly mortgage rates for new houses are close to 2% among private banks.

Istanbul, Turkey's largest city by population, had the highest share with 17.1%, or 15,110, house sales in January, followed by the capital Ankara with 9.3%, or 8,255, and the Aegean province of Izmir with 6.2%, or 5,486.

The data showed January mortgage sales jumped 69.4% from a year earlier to 18,183.

Real estate sales had accelerated amid a depreciation in the Turkish lira, with the authorities pursuing the new economic policy of low interest rates to boost credit, exports and investments, saying it would help the country weather inflation.

To support the drive, Turkey's central bank had brought down the benchmark policy rate by 500 points since September to 14% but paused the easing cycle in January and kept the one-week repo rate unchanged this week again.

In 2021 as a whole, total house sales dropped 0.5% to around 1.49 million properties, with mortgaged sales down 49%.

The lira has been broadly stable since the start of the year following a 44% decline in 2021. It traded 0.3% lower at 13.63 against the United States dollar as of 3 p.m. local time (12 p.m. GMT) on Friday and eyed a weekly decline of 0.8%.

With buyers pausing investment in houses due to surging inflation, one major builder is offering buyers land instead of homes as a novel way for Turks to invest in real estate.

Credit Suisse Aims For 2022 Profit



ZURICH (Dispatches) - Credit Suisse aims to make a profit this year, Chief Executive Thomas Gottstein told Swiss newspaper Finanz und Wirtschaft in an interview published on Friday.

"We expect a profit in 2022. But uncertainty factors such as Russia, China, inflation and the interest rate environment are difficult to assess," he said.

Switzerland's second-biggest bank has been plagued by scandal and last week reported a \$2.2 billion quarterly loss. It said 2022 earnings would be weighed down by restructuring and compensation costs.

Gottstein said he was convinced the bank's strategy of focusing even more on wealth management would pay off in the long run.

Asked about his relations with new Chairman Axel Lehmann, Gottstein said they were good. "We agree 100% on strategic issues and are concentrating on implementing the new strategy," he said.

Addressing speculation that a plunge in the bank's stock price had left Credit Suisse exposed to a takeover, Gottstein said he believed the group was substantially undervalued.

"That this can trigger takeover fantasies is neither new nor surprising. If the bank is so undervalued, you should have had an offer on the table long ago," he said.

"Firstly, taking over a systemically important bank is not easy. Secondly, and more importantly, Credit Suisse, with its 165-year history, has many strengths that arouse interest among rivals. But we want to play to our strengths ourselves, both nationally and internationally," he added.

Iranian Film to Be Screened at Zilant Int'l Festival

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian short film "Lessness" directed by Mehdi Safavi which is a joint production between Iran and Russian is to be displayed in the Zilant International Film Festival.

The event is annually held on February 19-22.

The festival tries to create special atmosphere for live connection between writers and audiences aiming to discover talented filmmakers and to search for new genres.



Islamophobia Infiltrates Educational Institutions in France

PARIS (Dispatches) - A recent study conducted in France revealed that those with a Muslim name and surname applying to graduate programs are discriminated against more than those with ethnically French names.

Researchers at both the Higher Education Discrimination and Equality Monitoring Agency (ONDES) and Gustave-Eiffel University sent more than 1,800 emails in March 2021 to the education directors of 607 graduate programs from 19 universities to test the latter's discrimination against people with disabilities and those with foreign origins, according to local media.

The test was conducted by researchers with false names, for both those with disabilities and those without – used as test cases – to graduate program directors.

The directors whom researchers contacted claimed to embrace diversity in their applicants and did not prioritize people who come from a European background, but the researchers found otherwise.

Those with a Muslim name, the study found, were 12.3% less likely to receive a response to emails sent to each of their graduate programs. This rate was 33.3% in the field of law, 21.1% in the fields of science, technology and health, and 7.3% in the fields of language, literature, art, humanities and social sciences.

The researchers anonymously interviewed the same educational directors three months after the study concluded on behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education "about the difficulties they encountered in the process of recruiting students," finding then the double standard when it came to the directors' desire to embrace diversity.

No discrimination was found for students who said they were physically disabled.

The rights of Muslims have been the subject of intense debate over the past decade in France as the country has struggled with violent extremist events like the Charlie Hebdo attacks of January 2015 that killed 12 people, followed by the horrific Bataclan attacks in November the same year in which 130 people died in one night of coordinated violence. Teacher Samuel Paty was beheaded in mid-October 2020 outside the middle school where he taught north of Paris. Around two weeks later, three people died at the hands of a knife-wielding man inside the Notre Dame basilica in Nice, one of them beheaded as well.



All were carried out by professed members of the Daesh terrorist group.

Despite the separation of church and state being a founding principle of France's democracy dating to the French Revolution, the government has a particular approach to its adherence to a secular ideology, and even a term for it: "laïcité." The somewhat hands-off perspective is meant to reinforce the true democratic principles of equality, tolerance and fairness while the state maintains a neutral stance and does not recognize religious differences between citizens.

Indonesia Banks May Attract More Foreign Investment

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia's lenders are likely to attract more foreign investment as they prepare for stricter capital requirements by end-2022 and as the country's economic growth prospects improve.

Nearly half of 83 Indonesian banks covered by S&P Global Market Intelligence will need to raise new capital from investors to meet more stringent capital requirements, based on their Tier 1 capital levels as of Sept. 30, 2021. All lenders must have at least 3 trillion rupiah of Tier 1 capital by Dec. 31, as part of the Financial Services Authority's efforts to strengthen the nation's banking system. At least 32 banks had capital below 2 trillion rupiah as of Sept. 30, 2021.

More deal activity is likely among smaller, less capitalized lenders in 2022, analysts said. These banks may turn to foreign investors that have long been drawn to the Indonesian banking system for its above-average margins and loan growth, said Yulinda Hartanto, an analyst at brokerage CGS-CIMB Sekuritas Indonesia.

This year "will be the last year for banks to meet the requirement and some banks have not met this capital level; thus, it shall continue in 2022," Hartanto said.

Indonesia's banking and payment sector companies offer attractive growth prospects to foreign investors seeking to tap the nation's population of more than 270 million people. The aggregate return on average equity of Indonesian banks was 7.37%, 12.31% and 12.93%, respectively, for the last three years. Banks' aggregate net interest margin was 4.96% in 2020, well above most other jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region, according to Market Intelligence data. Economic growth prospects are improving for the country amid the ongoing recovery from a pandemic-induced slowdown, with Asian Development Bank anticipating GDP to grow 4.8% in 2022.

Since 2017, the Southeast Asian country has seen 35 banking M&A deals and 9 payments sector deals, according to data compiled by Market Intelligence. Deal activity cooled after a busy 2019 when more than a dozen deals were announced, including Bangkok Bank PCL's \$2.40 billion acquisition of PT Bank Permata Tbk.

Indonesian banks and payments companies could also see investments from technology companies as more such players make a shift to financial services. Ride-hailing service provider Grab Holdings Ltd. recently teamed up with Singtel to buy a combined 32.52% stake in PT Bank Fama International. The acquisition followed foreign investments in mobile wallet PT Visionet Internasional and payments infrastructures iKaaz Software Pte. Ltd. and KuDo Technology Indonesia LLC.

"[Indonesia] would be the focus for all the tech companies entering the financial sector, especially the lending segment," Hartanto said.

Investors from Japan, South Korea, Thailand and other Asian markets have remained active in Indonesia's banking sectors in the past few years as they sought to gain scale and get higher returns outside their home markets. Between 2014 and 2019, Japanese financial institutions paid or pledged at least US\$9 billion for stakes in several Indonesian lenders. Those investments included Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc.'s multi-billion-dollar acquisition of PT Bank Danamon Indonesia Tbk in 2017.

Renault Looks to Tap Into Electric Boom

PARIS (Dispatches) - Renault is looking at creating separate divisions for electric and combustion engine cars, an idea other automakers have resisted in case it weakens their ability to use profits from polluting vehicles to fund a cleaner future.

The French automaker announced its "strategic studies" on Friday as it reported an annual profit for the first time in three years and said its turnaround plan was ahead of schedule.

With its finances on a surer footing, the company is now accelerating efforts to catch up with the likes of Tesla (TSLA.O) and Volkswagen, whose share prices have soared as they take a lead in the switch to electric vehicles.

In a presentation to investors, Renault said a "pure electric entity" could be focused on France and be open to partnerships, while a separate one for combustion engine and hybrid cars could be focused outside France and do the same.

Spain is Renault's main hub for hybrid powertrain production. The company sources combustion engines from Romania, Turkey and South Korea.

The growing preference among investment managers for companies focused on low-carbon technology has helped Tesla become the world's highest-valued automaker, and led some investors and analysts to urge other carmakers to consider separating their combustion engine and electric businesses.

However, companies such as General Motors have resisted those calls, arguing profits from petrol and diesel vehicles will fund the transition to electric ones.

European governments are pushing automakers to phase out combustion engines, and the Renault car brand has said it is aiming to be all-electric in Europe by 2030. But other markets, including Latin America, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe, are expected to continue using petrol and diesel for longer.

Renault also said its finance chief of six years, Clotilde Delbos, would move to lead its Mobilize business full time.

The business, which covers areas such as car sharing and data management, is part of its strategy to achieve carbon neutrality in Europe by 2040.

Delbos will continue as deputy to CEO Luca de Meo



and be succeeded as finance chief by her current second-in-command deputy, Thierry Pideon.

De Meo is leading a wide-ranging restructuring effort under the name "Renaulution" aiming to cut costs and emphasize value over sales volume.

Rocked by the 2018 arrest of Carlos Ghosn, the architect of its alliance with Japan's Nissan, Renault was then hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But now de Meo's efforts are bearing fruit,

Last month, Renault and Nissan said they would work more closely together on electric vehicles, as they detailed a five-year, \$26 billion investment plan.

Sources familiar with the matter told Reuters that Nissan and other alliance partner Mitsubishi Motors were only recently informed that Renault might move its internal combustion engine and hybrid operations into a separate entity.

But they said in almost identical emailed statements to Reuters that they "believe this step to be a preparation for the next stages of the Renaulution plan," adding they would "continue to collaborate as an alliance partner."

Asked whether the plan might change the alliance structure, de Meo said: "It's a project that on paper we are capable to do on our own, we don't need anyone to do it, but obviously we will leave the door open to our partners in case they are interested in making the company's structure evolve."

Renault reported a bigger than expected net profit of 888 million euros (\$1.0 billion) for 2021, and an operating margin of 3.6%. The "Renaulution" plan had aimed for a margin of above 3% in 2023.

The company cut fixed costs by 2 billion euros between 2019 and 2021, one year ahead of plan.

Helped by the improved finances, Renault said it aimed to repay the 4 billion euros of state aid it received during the pandemic by the end of 2023, ahead of the 2024 deadline.

It did not propose a dividend for 2021, while it prioritises the turnaround plan and repaying the state loan.

Renault's shares were up 0.8% at 1420 GMT, after spiking 4.8% in earlier trade.

For this year, the company is targeting an operating margin of more than 4%, and an automotive operational free cash flow of at least 1 billion euros.

Paraguay Soy Crushers, Hit by Drought, Risk Running out of Beans

ASUNCION (Dispatches) - Paraguay's soybean crushing industry will run out of beans to process by the middle of the year due to a drought hammering production, the country's trade industry body told Reuters, adding it was in talks to import beans for the first time ever.

The landlocked South American country, the world's fourth largest soybean exporter, is facing its worst soy harvest in a decade, with a drop in production that could see just half the amount of soy versus the previous season.

The Paraguayan Chamber of Oilseed and Cereal Processors (Cappro) told Reuters the impact of the drought could be even worse, estimating a drop of around 60% compared with the previous campaign, when the soy harvest was some 10 million tons.

"This figure could worsen, depending on rainfall in the coming months," the chamber said in exclusive replies to Reuters questions, adding that idle crushing capacity could be 60%-70% in the latter half of 2022. "Given this situation, it is expected that firms will hardly be able to continue processing soybeans during the second half of the year."

Canada, the Bogus...

FROM PAGE 1

"We told you to leave.

We gave you time to leave.

We were slow and

methodical, yet you were

assaultive and aggressive

with officers and the horses,"

police said in a statement to

the truckers posted on Twitter.

Police also used loud speakers to warn the crowd to

disperse or face arrest. They also smashed vehicle

windows to arrest people locked inside, while some

loud bangs of stun grenades were heard.

Ottawa has been gridlocked by a so-called "Freedom

Convoy" consisting of truckers and other motorists

for nearly three weeks now. The government has

already declared a state of emergency in the city.

What started last month as a movement opposing a Canadian

vaccine mandate for cross-border drivers, a requirement

mirrored by a U.S. rule, has morphed into a rallying point

against the government's public health measures.

The drivers have occupied areas outside government

buildings in the capital city as well as three border

crossings with the United States.

If such an incident or protest had happened in Iran or

any anti-West country, Canada would have definitely

jumped to condemn the governments of those states and

would have defended human rights issue while it has

apparently ignored it in its own lands.

These western countries usually use human-rights issue

as a tool to suppress the governments and increase

pressure on them in order that they obey blindly the West

but when it is their own turn, they ignore it and try to

justify any incident in their own countries.

The world has not yet forgotten several massive protests

in the U.S. and France and the brutal reaction of their

security forces. They beat and even killed protesters under

different pretexts but they have never considered this point

that they were ignoring the human-rights principles.

It seems human rights issue has turned into a

laughing stuff for the world when the Western

countries talk about it because it is the apparent sign

of double standard approach to any issue by the West.

Canada by the assistance of its elder brother the U.S. tries

to prove the world that it is the cradle of liberty and all

human rights principles are observed in this country but in

practice, they are unable to observe and even sometimes

they ignore it intentionally because it benefits ignoring it.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been

critical of the Canadian officials for their biased

approach regarding human rights issues in Iran

because it believes when a country is unable to

defend its true national (indigenous) rights and

meddle biasedly in the domestic affairs of other

nations, it is not in a position to preach other countries

or boast of being a human-right defender.

Serbia Seeks...

FROM PAGE 1

Raisi, for his part, said the Islamic Republic was

determined to expand and strengthen its political,

commercial, and economic relations with Serbia in

line with the two nations' interests.

The Iranian chief executive further stressed that

there existed manifold and expansive opportunities

and capacities for the expansion of cooperation

between the two countries.

"Expansion of joint cooperation, especially in the

economic and commercial areas, bears mutual

interests for the two sides that should be identified

and activated," the Iranian president concluded.

Iran, Qatar...

FROM PAGE 1

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ghasemi pointed to the

imminent visit of Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim

Raisi to Qatari capital Doha on Monday and added,

"It is hoped that the two sides will clinch good

agreements in transportation and transit fields."

Turning to the strategic significance of the country

in the region and its location in East-West and North-

East Corridor, he stated that development of relations

with neighboring countries is of the main political

and economic strategies of the government.

Tsitsipas Stunned by Safiullin in Marseille

MARSEILLE (Dispatches) - World number four and top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas suffered an embarrassing straight sets defeat to 163rd-ranked Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin in the Marseille ATP quarter-finals.

Safiullin, 24, clinched a memorable 6-4, 6-4 win over his Greek opponent who was runner-up at the French Open last year.

"It's the greatest victory of my career," said the Russian, a former junior Australian Open champion. "It was my first time in a quarter-final and the first time I have beaten a top 10 player."

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Nigerian Sprinter Okagbare Banned for 10 Years

LONDON (Dispatches) - Nigerian sprinter Blessing Okagbare has been banned for 10 years for doping and refusing to cooperate with the investigation, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) said.

Okagbare, who won silver in the long jump at the Beijing 2008 Games, was provisionally suspended last year after testing positive for human growth hormone before the Tokyo Olympics and later hit with three separate anti-doping charges.

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SPORTS

MONDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2022

Doncic Propels Mavs Past Pelicans

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Luka Doncic recorded 49 points and 15 rebounds and the visiting Dallas Mavericks never trailed in a 125-118 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Doncic fell two assists short of a triple-double and two points short of his season high.

Jalen Brunson added 23 points, Maxi Kleber scored 20 and Dorian Finney-Smith had 14 as the Mavericks won for the sixth time in their final seven games before the All-Star break.

CJ McCollum scored 38, Jaxson Hayes had 18, Jonas Valanciunas added 16 points and 18 rebounds, Devonte' Graham and Brandon Ingram scored 12 each and Tony Snell had 11 for the Pelicans. New Orleans finished 2-4 on its longest homestand of the season.

76ers 123, Bucks 120

Joel Embiid scored 42 points and visiting Philadelphia survived Milwaukee's second-half comeback. The 76ers snapped a six-game losing streak against their Eastern Conference rivals that dated back to the 2019-20 season.

Embiid hit 14 of 21 shots and added 14 rebounds to help the 76ers get back on track after a 48-point loss to the Boston Celtics on Tuesday. Tobias Harris chipped in 19 points, eight rebounds and four assists. Tyrese Maxey also had 19 points, and Georges Niang tallied 18.

Giannis Antetokounmpo paced Milwaukee with 32 points (on 13-of-23 shooting) plus 11 rebounds and nine assists. Jrue Holiday added 24 points and Khris Middleton contributed 19, but he missed a potential game-tying 3-pointer at the final buzzer.

Heat 111, Hornets 107 (2 OT)

Jimmy Butler hit a pair of jumpers in the final 66 seconds of the second overtime as Miami beat Charlotte in the last game for each team prior to the All-Star break.

Kyle Lowry scored 25 points, Duncan Robinson tallied 21 and P.J. Tucker, Bam Adebayo and Butler all had 15 for the Heat. Adebayo had 13 rebounds, and Tucker and Butler both pulled in 10 boards.

Miles Bridges racked up 29 points and Montrezl Harrell posted 24 for the Hornets.



Kelly Oubre Jr. and P.J. Washington both had 15 points, and LaMelo Ball notched 14 points, 14 assists and 10 rebounds.

Clippers 142, Rockets 111

Marcus Morris Sr. scored 27 points and Luke Kennard added 25 as Los Angeles went into the All-Star break with a rout of visiting Houston.

Terance Mann scored 20 points as the Clippers won for the third time in their past four games. Their only setback in that stretch came on the road against the Phoenix Suns, the team with the best record in the NBA.

Jalen Green scored 21 points and Jae'Sean Tate added 19 as the Rockets lost their seventh consecutive game. Christian Wood scored 13 points for Houston, returning from a one-game absence caused by an unspecified illness.

Wizards 117, Nets 103

Rui Hachimura scored 13 of his season-high 20 points in the fourth quarter as Washington recorded a victory over Brooklyn in New York.

Rookie Corey Kispert added 16 points and sank four of Washington's 12 3-pointers as the Wizards beat the Nets for the second time in eight days. Ish Smith added 15 points and Deni Avdija contributed 13 for the Wizards, who shot 55.4 percent.

Patty Mills scored 17 of his 22 in the first half and rookie Cam Thomas added 20 overall, but the Nets shot 40.4 percent and were outscored 54-28 in the paint.



Bernal Pedals Again After Horror Road Accident

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Less than a month after a road accident nearly claimed his life while training, Colombian Egan Bernal -- Latin America's only Tour de France champion -- is on the road to recovery.

In a video posted to his Instagram account, Bernal kicks a football twice, while in another he pedals on a stationary bike as two fluffy dogs look.

A wheelchair is seen behind the exercise bike, and the video pans over a long scar visible along Bernal's spine.

The video was posted with the message: "Never let anyone tell you that you cannot do something." Bernal has said he "almost died" after smashing into a bus during a training run last month.

The 25-year-old broke 11 ribs, a knee cap, a thigh bone, two vertebrae and a thumb, as well as puncturing both lungs, while practicing for the Tour de France -- a title he won in 2019 aged just 22 -- with his Ineos Grenadiers teammates near Bogota.

Traffic police said he was "so focused" that he did not hear warning shouts from his teammates that the bus in front of him had stopped.

He underwent five bouts of surgery, and was discharged from the University Clinic of La Sabana, on the outskirts of Bogota, after two weeks.

Conte Slams Talk of Rift with Spurs Chairman Levy

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham manager Antonio Conte insists his relationship with chairman Daniel Levy will not be damaged by people trying to "create problems" after his controversial comments about the club's transfer policy.

Conte appeared frustrated with Levy's January transfer window moves during a recent interview with Sky Sports Italia.

The 52-year-old Italian said Tottenham's squad was "on paper weakened" after Levy signed Juventus duo Dejan Kulusevski and Rodrigo Bentancur and allowed Tanguy Ndombele, Dele Alli, Giovani Lo Celso and Bryan Gil to leave.

Conte also admitted it will take time for Levy's policy of focusing on younger players to pay off.

But, with the club asking him not to do any more interviews with Italian media, Conte tried to smooth over the row on Friday.

Adamant he does not need to use the press to give Levy his thoughts, Conte told reporters: "I don't understand why someone wants to try to create a problem with me."

"I read stories in the past about this club and it creates a problem with the coach and the chairman and the club."

"The chairman knows very well my thoughts. If I have to speak with him, I go to speak with him."

"Sorry but I was a bit disturbed by this situation, especially because I had an interview with the Italian media."

"It means the club now doesn't want me to speak to Italian media because the translation was not so clear with my thoughts."

Conte was sacked by Chelsea after two seasons, despite winning the Premier League title and FA Cup, after falling out with the club over his outspoken views on their signings.

Amid fears he is heading for a similar fate across London at Tottenham, Conte attempted to clarify his position on Levy's wheeling and dealing.

Kohli, Pant Help India Clinch T20 Series Against Windies



KOLKATA (Dispatches) - Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant hit attacking half-centuries to set up India's eight-run series-clinching victory over West Indies in the second Twenty20 international on Friday.

Chasing 187 for victory, West Indies finished on 178 for three despite a threatening century stand between Nicholas Pooran (62) and Rovman Powell (unbeaten 68 off 36 balls) in Kolkata.

India, who whitewashed the West Indies 3-0 in the preceding one-day matches, took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20 series.

Pooran, a left-handed wicketkeeper-batsman, smashed five fours and three sixes in his 41-ball knock before falling to pace bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar in a four-run 19th over.

With 25 needed off the final over, Powell attempted a final onslaught with two sixes off Harshal Patel but the bowler held his nerve.

German Newcomer Nolte Blazes to Olympic Bobsleigh Gold

YANQING (Dispatches) - Laura Nolte blazed to Olympic gold in the two-women bobsleigh Saturday, just a year after winning the junior world title, as Germany again ruled at the Winter Games sliding center.

Nolte and her brakewoman Deborah Levi dominated, setting track records in three of the four heats to clock a combined winning time of 4min 3.96sec.

The 23-year-old Nolte left a field of former Olympic medalists in her wake with German team-mate and 2018 Pyeongchang champion Miriama Jamanka second, 0.77sec behind.

The USA's Elana Meyers Taylor, 37, was third at 1.52sec to win the fifth Olympic medal of her career and the second of these Games after taking monobob silver.

Her team-mate Kaillie Humphries, the 2010 and 2014 two-woman Olympic champion and the monobob gold medalist in Beijing, lost time in Saturday's opening heat and ended up seventh.

It was a stunning display by Nolte, who earned a world bronze last year and has racked up 14 podium places on the World Cup circuit since her debut season of 2019/20.

Having finished fourth in the monobob on Monday, Nolte was peerless Saturday, clocking a top speed of 133 kilometres per hour (83 miles per hour) on her third run.

Her victory means Germany have won eight of nine events at the Yanqing National Sliding Centre.

They can make it nine victories from ten in the men's four-man event on Sunday with Francesco Friedrich holding a narrow lead over fellow German pilot Johannes Lochner going into the final day.



Britain Stripped Of 4x100m Olympic Silver

LAUSANNE (Dispatches) - Great Britain were Friday stripped of their silver medal in the men's 4x100 meters relay at last year's Tokyo Olympics after CJ Ujah was found to have committed a doping violation.

Ujah tested positive for the prohibited substances ostarine and S-23, commonly used to build muscle, after the race on August 6.

The British team just lost out to Italy for the gold medal in Japan. Canada are expected to be awarded silver, with China promoted to the bronze-medal position.

A statement from the Court of Arbitration for Sport's anti-doping division said: "Ujah is sanctioned with the disqualification of his results in the 4x100m sprint relay final... together with the forfeiture of any medals, diplomas, points and prizes."

Ujah said in a statement that he accepted the decision with "sadness" but claimed he had "unknowingly consumed a contaminated supplement".

The 27-year-old apologized to his teammates, Zharnel Hughes, Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake and Richard Kilty.

"I would like to make it clear that I unknowingly consumed a contaminated supplement and this was the reason why an anti-doping rule violation occurred at the Tokyo Olympic Games," Ujah said in a statement.

"I would like to apologize to my teammates, their families and support teams for the impact which this has had on them."

"I'm sorry that this situation has cost my teammates the medals they worked so hard and so long for, and which they richly deserved. That is something I will regret for the rest of my life."

