

Health Ministry Said on Saturday That Some 235 More Iranians Have Died From the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Over the Past 24 Hours, Bringing the Total Deaths to 120,880

IRAN NEWS

President Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday Stressed the Importance Of Coordination Between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education To Vaccinate students Above 12-Year-Old Against COVID-19

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President Calls for Completing Projects

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Completing Unfinished Projects, Main MOP Agenda

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Tehran Blasts Bahrain Move To Welcome Israeli Minister

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has censured Bahrain's welcoming Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid to Manama, saying the move amounts to a betrayal of the oppressed Palestinian people.

"The Bahraini government's welcoming of the foreign minister of the fake Zionist regime is a blatant betrayal of the oppressed and resilient Palestinian people's cause," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said in a post on his official Twitter account on Friday. He added that Iran only recognizes one country named Palestine with al-Quds as its capital.

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In the process of industrial development, one of the fundamental questions is which set of policy-making decisions and executive actions at the national level is the basis for the success of industrial development. The important point is that these measures do not take shape on their own, but require an effective role for the government. Therefore, explaining the position and scope of government duties in the industrial development process has become one of the most controversial topics in the new development literature. In the meantime, it should be noted that the duties of the government will be different by determining the direction and degree of government intervention in different markets. This is strongly influenced by national and international conditions and developments. Therefore, the role of the government in providing these requirements and taking some actions at the level of the national economy with proper supervision and control must be properly explained. The government, as a major force, has always been effective in competitiveness and has had a positive and even negative impact on competitiveness by intervening in political, economic and social affairs as well as enforcing laws and regulations.

Monetary, fiscal and trade policies, tax laws, protectionist policies, administrative and organizational policies, export and import laws, exchange rates, money supply, interest rates, inflation, government spending and other decisions at the micro and macro level, agreements Formal and informal political authorities, the establishment or development of political trade relations or the severance of trade economic relations with other countries are among the most obvious factors affecting the competitiveness of enterprises, industries and countries that are directly related to governments. For example, the issuance of mandatory orders in the value chain of iron ore to steel in recent months has led to a sharp decline in value added of the mining sector (lump iron ore, granulation iron and concentrate) and increased value added of the industrial sector (pellets, sponge iron and steel). Market turmoil has severely affected iron ore value chain products. The ratio of the price of each link in the value chain to the price of steel is equal to the percentage that the government has set the price of that link in the chain to the price of steel. At present, the price of pellets and sponge iron is 20% and 46% of the price of Khuzestan steel ingots, respectively. The problems of this pricing method include: dependence of product selling price on market conditions, dependence of product selling price on time, inconsistency of increasing or decreasing the product price of each ring compared to the product of other links in the chain and not considering justifiable economic conditions in each From chain links. What matters is the role of government in managing opportunities in the post-embargo period. With these policies, the government can take firm steps in the direction of Iranian steel competitiveness and provide the basis for sustainable development: proper management of foreign investment to develop infrastructure and technology, increase the capacity to retain talented labor, increase the country's capacity to attract competent managers ,

Exemption of Humanitarian Goods "Terrible Lie"



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic to the United Nations has censured the U.S. for imposing inhumane restrictive measures against Iran especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, saying the illegal sanctions deprived the country of its right to have access to vaccines at the appropriate time.

In a statement read out by Iranian diplomat Mohammad Ghorbanpour to the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Friday, the mission rejected any claim that humanitarian goods are exempt from bans.

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The steel Industry is not Agile

Increasing the capacity of university and industry cooperation in research and development, pricing pricing of iron ore to steel value chain taking into account technical and economic conditions and supply and demand system of each ring, innovation in the production of new steel products and finally reviewing and preparing industry strategy document Steel according to the potentials of the country and with the participation of all relevant and stakeholders (Iron Ore Association, Steel Association, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and consultants of steel industry, iron ore, etc.).

Challenges of the steel industry

Iran's steel industry has achieved many successes in recent years. But unfortunately, despite the slogans in the field of steel for its value creation, it still remains at the level of "crude sales". Also, the current wrong policies have prevented the full utilization of the capacities of the steel chain. Governments have recently turned a blind eye to corporate governance, which has led to misguided strategies in the steel industry. Most large units of Iran's steel industry are affiliated with the government; Similarly, in the current situation, supporting the performance of these units is preferable to taking the right path and real development of the steel industry.

Beyond successful statistics, some challenges and problems need to be addressed and decided. In particular, the country's steel industry needs to address three key challenges to continue its growing trend:

- Supply of raw materials for 55 million tons of production capacity (iron ore exports);
- Export restrictions as a tool to control the domestic market;
- Restructuring the ownership of steel mining companies with the aim of increasing the capacity of companies in various fields. Of course, non-core steel operators have also created problems, disrupting the needs of downstream producers and reducing exports of steel products. In downstream steel companies, including cold rolling units and units with coated finishing lines, the issue of liquidity and high financial costs has caused a sharp drop in profit margins and increased financial costs and reduced operating profits. In this regard, the government and banks, in order to boost production and ensure the continuity of factory production, must support production units. Experts believe that the failure of the comprehensive steel plan, the problem of iron ore supply, weak government support for producers, unprofessional decisions of the public sector and lack of a clear professional vision are among the problems of the country's steel industry. On the other hand, Iran's steel industry is not agile and restrictive laws must be reduced. The lack of transparent government policies to manage the steel market and the ambiguity in accurate supply and the discovery of its correct price on the stock exchange and the decision-making of parallel institutions are some of the things that have hit this large industry. Some experts believe that proper monitoring of prices and increase of supply by relevant stakeholders, avoidance of incomplete implementation of memoranda, instructions and directives, consultation with the private sector in decision-making, necessary actions by the Competition Council to eliminate or reduce the impact of behavior in monopoly markets (for example, zero tariffs on hot rolled sheet imports), integration in the decision-making system and avoidance of an island view in the chain is one of the most important strategies that can be implemented to eliminate or greatly reduce the challenge in this sector.

Priming of the whole chain in the stock market is a threat to the incentive system of the steel industry

Ignorance of the need for export stability", along with "how to meet the stable domestic demand", "requiring all producers to offer their products on the commodity exchange" and "creating a new policy committee in the steel industry", are the most important that can not be reformed. The future of the steel industry faces risks. Failure to reform these approaches will predispose the market to new problems for the

steelmaking chain. The eight challenges of the steel sector have warned of policy deviations from issues in this area. These mainly affect the production of various steel chain materials from primary mineral levels to complementary cultivars in higher rings. The government's mistakes in controlling inflation and monetary policy have been blamed on steelmakers' desire to export because of the government's constant intervention in the market and the policymaker's insistence on regulating the steel market. They not only do not consider the current export ban policies to be helpful, but also consider them unprofessional and risky. Sustainable development and production of steel chain and steel market for export and attention to all different links of steel production chain is important to support and develop the export of steel chain products. Stable exports of steel chain products also help. Entrusting pricing throughout the chain to the commodity exchange is another factor that could threaten the industry's incentive system. Given the existing facts, the supply of steel chain products by all manufacturers, especially small and medium producers and some units with long-term contracts to supply raw materials, will not be possible and the country's steel chain market will be challenged. It is necessary to expand the export of steel chain products, to provide a sustainable supply of domestic demand. In this case, there is no need to oblige all manufacturers to offer on the commodity exchange.

Prospects for improving conditions

The turmoil in the steel market over the past two years has made production conditions very difficult, especially for downstream industries. Despite the fact that the importance and necessity of the country's industries, especially the steel industry, to compensate for the lack of oil revenues - which has suffered the most severe sanctions in recent years - is very special and sensitive, many problems in the country's steel industry, including raw material supply, supply its inadequacy and transparency in the commodity exchange and its lack of supply for downstream industries have doubled the problems of producers. At the same time, a significant part of the domestic industry needs a proper supply of steel products, and on the other hand, the steel market in the field of exports has a lot to say. Ignoring the need to revise the quotas of some production units has caused the real needy (for example, producers of steel sections), in the turbulent market of this rare commodity, to be forced to supply their raw materials freely and from the so-called "black market". This has become a factor in increasing the cost of production of products and industries related to steel sections and as a result has had a great negative impact on people's livelihood. Also in the discussion of electricity supply during these two years, especially in the early months of 2021, the inappropriate cooperation of the Ministry of Energy with producers and frequent power outages - despite the statements of ministry officials about exempting industrial enterprises across the country from power outages - the products of downstream companies. Has drastically reduced. Tavanir Company's decisions to restrict the electricity of the steel and cement industries and the right to use only 10% of the electricity supply demand required by the factories put them in a critical situation and caused heavy daily losses to this chain and the national economy, and on average more It has reduced factory production capacity by 80 percent, threatened workers' job security, and reduced their incomes. The turbulent situation in the steel market and its consequences were at one point so great that the head of the 13th government - who was then head of the judiciary - also reacted to these developments and the high price of steel in the country, pointing to some corruption. In the steel industry, he strongly criticized the lack of access to steel companies in the country and its supply at exorbitant prices on the black market, and ordered the government and the country's inspection organization to follow up on the issue. Accordingly, and given the existence of such problems, improving the situation of the

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Afghans Are Leaving U.S. Military Bases Before Resettlement

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Rublev Makes San Diego Semis

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Iran Non-Oil Exports to Iraq Hit 28% Growth

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary-General of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said that Iran's export of non-oil goods to Iraq in first six months of the current year hit 28 percent growth as compared to the same period of last year.

Jahanbakhsh Sanjabi Shirazi broke the news and reiterated that Iran's export of non-oil goods to neighboring Iraq in the first half of the current year (from March 21 to Sept. 22) registered a 28 and 50 percent growth in terms of value and weight respectively as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

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steel market is one of the most important and basic demands of its producers from the government and it is expected that the closure of generating units to solve the problem of electricity supply will be removed from the agenda. And enough in the country's electricity industry, the construction of new production power plants, upgrading existing power plants and improving the network, provide the basis for improving the current situation. Focusing on the issue of export development and releasing it from the shackles of directives and regulatory prices is another demand of steel producers in the country. It is expected that with the increase of steel policy makers and also the high motivation of the thirteenth government in this direction, the unhealthy steel market will be organized soon.

The CEO of Azerbaijan Steel Company announced the upward trend of production in this company, and said: "The nominal realization of the production of various rebars in this company has increased significantly." According to the public relations of the Azerbaijan Steel Company, Alireza Mahmoudi stated that the achievement of the monthly production record was achieved after 14 months with the efforts and perseverance of the employees of the Azerbaijan Steel Company, adding: "Production in the first six months of this year has reached 230,000 tons." He continued: Achieving this amount of production, which has increased by 10% compared to the first six months of 1399, has been the result of measures such as annual quality repairs and relying on the ability of local employees and specialists. He continued: "Among the measures are the complete establishment of the integrated information system of Irisa Company and the extraction of price updates." The CEO of Foodlad Azerbaijan Company, referring to the sabotage of Danieli Company in not providing the relevant drawings, said that this is a factor for more determination of the company's experts and engineers to design and localize technical drawings for shelves, locks, cartridges and mandrels. . Said: this led to currency savings of about 2 million and 870 thousand euros. Referring to the restrictions caused by the oppressive sanctions, the outbreak of the Corona virus and power outages in the work process of the Azerbaijan Steel Company, Mahmoudi said: "Despite these restrictions, we were able to take a step towards sustainable production and thank God for the inauguration of 1400 by the Supreme Leadership was named as the year of production, support and deterrence, let's take firm steps towards the realization of the slogan of the year. The CEO of Azerbaijan Steel Company, noting that all outages in the first six months of the year were about 1132 hours, which was about 125 hours less than the same six months in 1399, continued: Of this amount, 608 hours were due to power outages and according to It is estimated that about 40,000 tons of rebar products have not been produced. He continued by stating that there has been no stoppage in this company due to lack of raw materials: in order to increase the quality of products, the import control of raw materials (ingots) has been reviewed according to the national standard 20300 of Iran and obtaining the European standard certificate is mandatory. Mahmoudi said: "By comparing the statistics between the first six months of 1400 with the same six months of 1399, the amount of non-standard and non-marketable products has decreased by about half a percent." The CEO of Azerbaijan Steel Company stated: Establishment of purchasing engineering unit to make optimal use of the technical ability of manufacturers and ensure the delivery of equipment based on the ordered technical specifications, as well as interaction with the company of intermediate gearbox parts to produce CK45 rebar to support and empower regional industries. Also, planning to perform heat treatment on gearbox parts is one of the operational programs of this company. In the end, he said: "We will use our abilities to increase production and self-sufficiency and we will spare no effort in this direction."

Defense Minister Warns Enemies Against Any Unwise Actions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Defense Minister warned enemies of the country against any unwise and ignorant actions. In a tweet on late Friday, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani wrote, "Enemies of the Iranian nation would definitely receive a crushing response and pay a big price in case they commit any unwise and ignorant action."

His tweet came as Iran's Army Ground Forces started 'Conquerors of Kheibar' military drills in northwestern parts of the country on Friday Morning.

President Calls for Completing Projects

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Speaking at the end of his trip to Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad on Friday evening, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi expressed his dissatisfaction that it was not possible to attend large public gatherings due to the corona conditions, saying, "Before the visit, I had tasked some friends with examining the situation in the province".

The president said that the province has many facilities and capacities, adding, "The completion of semi-finished projects, including dams under construction in the province, is one of the government's priorities for the province".

"217 projects in the field of oil and gas and petrochemical industry, roads and urban planning, agriculture, industry and medicinal herbs have been approved for Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad to accelerate both the development of the province and job creation," he said.

Referring to the reports of a number of ministers on visits to different parts of the province, Raisi said, "In these reports, final plans were announced for the province so that all managers of the province have a common sense that this is their job and should be done eventually".

The President also referred to his visit to the earthquake-stricken area of Sisakht and the report presented at the meeting on the condition of the conex box schools and said, "The situation of rural houses in danger of destruction must also be improved".



Ayatollah Raisi referred to other plans and programs of the government, including providing marriage loans for the young and reviewing the housing situation in the Supreme Housing Council, which will convene soon, and said, "We will definitely try to change the housing situation in the country because the current situation is not acceptable".

We will activate the housing sector as one of the driving forces, he said, adding, "Activating the housing sector will activate many industries".

Stating that the approved plans and the injection of their funds will create good mobility in the province, Raisi said, "We have created a department in the executive deputy of the presidential office whose job will be only to follow the implementation of provincial travel approvals and keeping people updated on the implementation of the plans".

The president called on provincial managers and other executives to make more use of the country's young population capacity.

Araqchi Appointed As SCFR Secretary

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations has appointed the former Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Seyed Abbas Araqchi as secretary of the council

In a Saturday decree, Chairman of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations Kamal Kharazi asked Abbas Araqchi to rebuild the secretariat and expand its role in explaining the policies of the Establishment and enlightening the world's public opinion, and realizing Iran's interests.

Araqchi, who is currently an advisor to the foreign minister as well, has previously held positions such as the ambassador to Finland and Japan, the legal and international affairs deputy of the Iranian foreign ministry, and the Foreign Ministry's political deputy.

He has replaced Mohammad Bagher Khorramshad Kharrazi also thanked Mohammad Baqer Khorramshad, the former secretary of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations.



Army Unveils New Tactical Radar, Long-Range Simulator

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Army has showcased a new homegrown tactical radar system capable of highly accurate detection of targets, and a long-range simulator used to intercept and track ballistic missiles and a wide range of projectiles and flying objects.

During a ceremony in the capital Tehran on Saturday, Commander of the Iranian Army's Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi-Fard unveiled medium-range Hormoz tactical radar.

The domestically-developed Iranian radar system can precisely determine the speed and distance of objects, and send accurate information to the command center of air defense missile units.

Hormoz is also capable of enhancing combat capabilities of armed forces, has long endurance, requires shorter time for repair and maintenance, enjoys higher precision for detecting the direction and altitude of aerial targets, with its antennas having better reception quality that can identify targets faster than other radar systems.

Meanwhile, the strategic long-range Shams simulator can be used against ballistic missiles and a range of other targets.

The homegrown system is capable of simulating actions against various aerial targets, and can swiftly develop and enact modern combat scenarios. Last month, the Iranian Army unveiled the three-dimensional and phased-array Alborz radar capable of detecting and tracking various aerial targets. The radar has a range of 450 kilometers (248 miles), and is capable of intercepting and detecting long-range stealth flying targets with low radar cross-section.

A low-range and low-altitude command-and-control center called Borhan was also put on display.

After receiving and analyzing data from all sources, Borhan transmits them to the highest levels of command to make decisions in the shortest possible time.



Iran Strongly Protests Attack On Its Embassy in Baku

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian ambassador to Azerbaijan has voiced the Islamic Republic's strong protest over an attack on Iran's embassy in Baku, saying Tehran will seriously pursue the case until a result is achieved.

Abbas Mousavi said on Friday that following the attack on the embassy the previous night and Iran's protest through official channels, Azerbaijan's diplomatic police and Interior Ministry have "identified, arrested and interrogated four" people in connection with the issue.

Earlier in the day, the Iranian ambassador vehemently rejected allegations leveled by his Israeli counterpart against the Islamic Republic, saying the Tel Aviv regime would never be able to achieve its dreams for the West Asia region.

"The dreams of Zionism for this region will never be interpreted," Mousavi said in a post on his Twitter account.

His tweet came after Israel's Ambassador to Baku George Deek claimed that Iran oppresses its religious and ethnic minorities and targets Jews in other countries, and said Israel, the United States and Azerbaijan "invest in our diversity and tolerance."

In response to Deek's allegations, Mousavi said Iran regards all Jews, Christians and other followers of the divine religions with "special respect" but "we are sure that the Republic of Azerbaijan and Palestine will remain Islamic countries forever."

Iran will not tolerate foreign, Zionist elements along its borders: Army Ground Force commander

Meanwhile, Commander of the northwestern headquarters of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces Brigadier General Ali Hajilou said on Friday that the Islamic Republic would not tolerate the presence of foreign and Zionist elements along its common borders with neighboring states.

"Friendly countries should know that there is no difference of opinion among Muslim countries and regional nations and it is the usurping Zionist regime that seeks to sow discord," Hajilou told reporters on the sidelines of a massive military drill, codenamed Fatehan-e Khaybar (Conquerors of Khaybar).

He added that Iran has never carried out an act of aggression over the past two centuries but has always defended its rights and interests decisively. The commander emphasized that the Islamic Republic would not accept any geographical change in common borders with regional states.

"Today is the time for peace, security and the reconstruction of the liberated areas, as well as the expulsion of the Zionist regime from the region. The sinister Zionist regime seeks to sow discord in the region... and we, the Muslim countries of the region, will have a region full of peace and stability through [our] awareness and togetherness."

Iran Pursuing Banking Problems That Students Face in S. Korea

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Seoul said that reports on freezing bank accounts of Iranian students in South Korea stemmed from a misunderstanding between the university and KEB bank.

Iranian Embassy in Seoul held a meeting with officials of South Korean Foreign Ministry as soon as it was informed of the banking problem faced by some Iranian students in the university, the embassy said.

Concerning the reports that Iranian students received emails informing them of suspending banking services to them, the Embassy said that the Korean government investigated the issue and announced the its was stemmed from a misunderstanding between university and KEB bank.

Iran's Embassy also underlined that the Korean government policy was not to limit banking services for Iranian students who will soon be informed of the issue via emails. However, the Embassy stressed that it was pursuing the issue.

Iran Plays Important Role In Int'l Arena

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Kazakh author Bakhtjan Rostamov said that Iran is a large country and has an important role in the international arena and Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei is the only leader in the world who follows late Imam Khomeini's steps.

Iran's cultural attaché in Kazakhstan, Ali Akbar Talebian during the visit to the Independence and Friendship of nations exhibition, had a meeting with Bakhtjan Rustamev, leading author of Kazakhstan and translator of anthropology at the ideas of Imam Khomeini.

"Iran is a great country and plays an important role in the international arena, and Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, is the only leader in the world who follows Imam Khomeini's steps without any fear," Rustamev said.

He pointed out that Ayatollah Khamenei is the only figure who has stood up to the United States and believes in his decision. This prominent Kazakh writer went on to say that he Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is a great intelligent and religious figure who (with his faith, will and determination) is a strong help and support to the oppressed of the Islamic world.

Iran to Continue Medical Aid To Syria to Counter COVID-19

SYRIA (IP) - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Syria announced the continuation of Iranian medical assistance to Syria to counter the coronavirus outbreak.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is always with the Syrian people and government in all areas, and there is good cooperation between the two countries in areas, including political, economic, scientific, cultural as well as others," said Mehdi Sobhani, Iran's Ambassador to Syria.

He added that Iran decided to stand by Syria and help this country with all its might.

شناسه آگهی ۱۱۹۶۳۴۰

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9150313



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
12	P/F"BORSIG"CENTRIFUGALGAS COMPRESSOR TYPE:RH 035/05,SER.NOS.23-1765/6	20

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. 1, available at: 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 1,525 EURO or 416,526,798 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

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

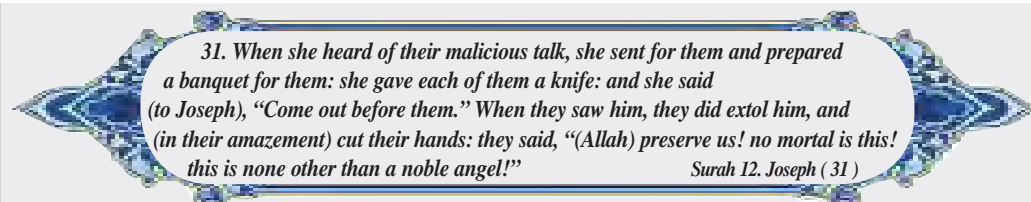
FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:53
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:03
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:38
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:02



31. When she heard of their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a banquet for them: she gave each of them a knife: and she said (to Joseph), "Come out before them." When they saw him, they did extol him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands: they said, "(Allah) preserve us! no mortal is this! this is none other than a noble angel!"
Surah 12. Joseph (31)

Completing Unfinished Projects, Main MOP Agenda

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Oil Minister Javad Owji said completion of the petroleum industry's half-finished projects is the main concern of the Raisi administration.

Speaking during a visit to the western province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad on Friday, Mr. Owji said the province sits atop 13% of the country's oil and gas reserves, adding, "We will start the development and maintenance plans of Gachsaran 1 and 2 oil fields, Gachsaran 3 and 4 oil fields and Bibi Hakimeh field with an increase in production by 40,000 barrels per day and the investment volume of these three fields is about €260 million Euros."

Owji announced that the projects will begin in the coming weeks and will be operational in two and a half years.

He also said over 62 corporate social responsibility plans are scheduled to be implemented in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad.

During a visit to the province on Friday, Owji said the province's oil production capacity stands at 620,000 b/d while it sits atop 13% of the country's oil reserves.

Emphasizing the need to support the people living in the areas where the oil industry operates, the Minister of Petroleum stated: "More than 62 social



responsibility projects are being implemented in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad."

"I believe that industrial towns have a good capacity, and if the oil industry is to develop, the power of these towns must be used," Owji said.

He further said, "Given the efforts of the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) and the allocated credit, I promise you that this project will be operational by September 2022."

Owji, stating that the operation of this project will create employment and favorable income for the province, also referred to the development of the petrochemical chain, and said: "Part of the ethylene produced by Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex will be used to feed the petrochemical unit located next to this complex."

He announced the annual production capacity of this petrochemical complex as one million to one million and 200 thousand tons of ethylene, noting: "The proposal to build a petrochemical unit next to this complex has been given to help eliminate poverty in the county."

Tashkent Welcomes Tehran's Membership in SCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Tehran Bakhodir Abdullaev says Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will help the trade between Iran and Uzbekistan to grow more.



Speaking on the sidelines of his press conference on the upcoming presidential election in Uzbekistan, Abdullaev hailed the improvement in the bilateral trade with Iran and said that the trade volume of Tehran and Tashkent in the first half of 2021 has been around \$250 and the trade balance has been almost equal.

On Iran's admission as one of the permanent members of the SCO, the Uzbek diplomat hailed it and said his country has been one of the supporters of this membership. He expressed hope that this membership would strengthen the relations between Iran and Uzbekistan.

He also said that Uzbekistan has invited representatives of Iran's Majlis to be present in Tashkent during the presidential election on October 24.

Abdullaev reiterated that in any international event being held in Uzbekistan some representative from Iran is present.

Talks with Tokyo Underway For Unfreezing Iran's \$3b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Chairman of the Iran-Japan Joint Trade Committee says Japan's Ambassador to Tehran and also Iran's Foreign Minister are pursuing the issue of unfreezing Iran's money in Japan and President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi is also involved in it in order to use the money in some way and it seems we will hear good news soon.



Speaking to ILNA and touching upon the current condition of trade between Iran and Japan, Bahram Shakouri said the trade exchange between Iran and Japan has seen not only growth but also it has faced decline because Iran's major export to Japan, oil, has declined.

He added that Iran's other exports have also faced slump due to the sanctions and the country's imports from Japan were mostly machineries which slowed down. He noted that actually other countries like China have replaced Japan, adding that these items are imported from other countries than Japan but since the Japanese are the trade partner of the U.S. and has invested considerably in the U.S., they are cautious in trade with Iran.

He stated that the trade volume of Iran and Japan is so low that it does worth to be mentioned, adding that in some issues Iran has exchanges with Japan but it does it via the third party country due to the sanctions and for this reason there is no precise figure for the trade between the two states. He noted that Iran's trade with Japan seems to be done via neighboring countries like Turkey, the UAE and Oman.

When Shakouri was asked on Iran's carpet exports to Japan, he said Iran has always had carpet exports to European and Asian countries like Japan and it still has but its amount is not considerable now, adding that Iran exports carpet, shrimps and fruit juice to Japan.

He said naturally and logically Iran should not have oil export to Japan even unofficially because in case the Japanese are willing to buy Iran's oil unofficially they will be unable to pay as they have not paid for Iran's previous oil sales and therefore oil export to Japan is not logical.

On the condition of Iran's frozen money in Japan, Shakouri said that Iran's frozen money in Japan is around \$3b and the new government is pursuing it to unfreeze the money. He noted that the committee's suggestion was to use the frozen money for buying vaccines but it is unlikely those frozen money to have been used for vaccine.

He reiterated that the government should strive to freeze the money in any form and the money can be used for imports of machineries and technologies. He said however Japan is a country enjoys having the most advanced technologies and whatever Iran looked for it in the U.S. and Europe Japan and therefore Iran can import equipment and technology in exchange for its frozen money. Shakouri said for example Iran can import mining machineries or machineries being used in drilling and exploration.

He concluded talks are underway as Japan's ambassador and Iran's foreign minister are trying to resolve this problem and it seems soon we witness good results and news.

Car Production Exceeds 429,000 in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) - Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 429,414 vehicles during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Septemehr 22), the data released by Codal website showed.

According to the data, the production by the mentioned companies has risen just 0.837 percent compared to the previous year's same six months in which the output stood at 425,695.

During the said six months, IKCO manufactured 205,934 vehicles, which was 2.7 percent less than the output in the first half of the previous year.

During this period, this industrial group was able to produce 135,587 vehicles in the Peugeot group, 25,738 vehicles in the Samand group, 25,626 Dena vehicles, 14,130 Rana vehicles, 2,689 Haima vehicles, and 2,061 Tara vehicles.

SAIPA manufactured 165,463 vehicles in the mentioned period. Production by this automaker rose 0.53 percent in comparison to the previous year's same time span. Pars Khodro also manufactured 58,017 vehicles in the period under review, 17.3 percent more than the output in the first half of the past year.

Successful Implementation of Circulating Gas Compressor's Dry Seals

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Isfahan Oil Refining Company successfully implemented the project of changing the system of circulating gas compressor's dry seals at its isomax units by reliance on the domestic capabilities and without using the foreign assistance.

Head of rotating machines maintenance department of Isfahan Oil Refining Company said that during the overhaul of the isomax unit No.2 of the company, the project of changing the system of dry seals in the circulating gas compressors was carried out successfully without reliance on the foreign companies and just by



reliance to the domestic forces.

Mehdi Nasr Azadani said that that this compressor has been in the network for two months and it has worked with no problem. He added that the compressor is one of the most complicated refining devices and change in the system of its dry seals is of the most delicate and specialty jobs whose changes have been conducted from A to Z by the experts of the company.

He then pointed to some advantages of implementing this project which will help saving the waste of very expensive lubricants in the system. He went on to say that the old system was fully eliminated from the Compressor and was replaced with the new one.

Start of Exploration and Study Operation In 17 Points in Chadormalu



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company emphasizes the significance of exploration and drilling in the promising mineral points of the country and its impacts in the economic development and growth, and said mines are great wealth that is hidden in any part of this country and it is considered a big investment for the development of the country.

Eng. Taghizadeh said that job creation, developing the underprivileged areas and access to knowhow and technology are of the advantages of exploiting the mines and increasing the value of economic resources. He went on to say that currently this company by providing 8 deep drilling machines and setting up a capable team of experts and specialists of the drilling of the country is able both to conduct exploration and drilling operation in the Central Desert of Iran and to offer discovery services to any applicant in any point of the country.

Taghizadeh also called on all experts of discovery and drilling sector and said the company has planned programs for training skillful forces to meet the company's needs and set up discovery teams. He added that currently 150 people are passing the training course. He expressed hope in the near future the company would turn into a capable company in discovery and drilling in the Middle East.

PGS Refinery Source of Pride and Independence of Islamic Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Commander of Hazrat Zeinan (S) Headquarters during his visit to Persian Gulf Star Refinery hailed the actions taken in the refinery and called the refinery the source of pride and dignity and independence of Islamic Iran and presented his ring blessed with Hazrat Zeinab (S)'s Shrine to the CEO of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company to honor the actions of this refinery.

Brigadier Rahim Noei Moqaddam during his visit to the refinery and getting acquainted with the jihadi actions in the refinery met the CEO and staff of the refinery and said he hails those who work and strive hard in this tough condition and thanks God he has this honor to be present in the refinery.

Noei Moqaddam who was Martyr Qasem Soleimani's comrade, said that any achievement of the company and refinery is very valuable for him and the country, and anybody who takes any step for the pride and dignity of the country is valuable.

He reiterated that if a big institution in the country is threatened by enemies, the armed forces are ready to sacrifice their lives to repel the threats as they do not kid with anybody over the national security.

He said security is one of the factors of independence, adding that in line with independence, jihadi activities of laborers and engineers in the industry scene are very crucial and anybody serves the Iranian people and boosts independence, dignity, pride and economic growth is the source of pride for the armed forces.



Blinken Heads to France After Submarine Spat

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Paris next week after ties between the United States and France were strained when Australia scrapped a French submarine contract in favor of a pact with Washington last month.

Blinken visits Paris from Monday to Wednesday and will chair a meeting of ministers from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as well as holding talks with French officials, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement today. Blinken will be joined by U.S. climate envoy John Kerry, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and other U.S. officials in Paris, Price said.



Guinea Coup Leader Sworn In as Interim President

CONAKRY (Dispatches) - Guinea has sworn in Colonel Mamady Doumbouya as interim president, who promised to respect the West African state's international commitments while transitioning to civilian rule.

Doumbouya, who led the overthrow of President Alpha Conde on September 5, was sworn in on Friday by Supreme Court head Mamadou Sylla for a transition period of unspecified length.

The new interim president spoke of his "commitment" that neither he nor any member of the military government would stand in any future elections that the military has promised to organise after the transition period.



Afghans Are Leaving U.S. Military Bases Before Resettlement



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Something unexpected is happening at U.S. military bases hosting Afghan evacuees: Many hundreds of them are simply leaving before receiving U.S. resettlement services, two sources familiar with the data told Reuters.

The number of "independent departures," which top 700 and could be higher, has not been previously reported. But the phenomenon is raising alarms among immigration advocates concerned about the risks to Afghans who give up on what is now an open-ended, complex and completely voluntary resettlement process.

In the speed and chaos of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August following 20 years of war, many evacuees were brought into the United States under a temporary status of "humanitarian parole." Once transferred to U.S. military bases, refugee resettlement groups and U.S. officials have been trying to connect people with services for a smooth transition to the United States. In a statement, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spokesperson declined to comment on the figures provided to Reuters by sources but said people who had left the bases "generally" had ties to the United States, like family members of friends, and resources to support themselves.

The spokesperson said that in addition, at the outset of the operation many of those evacuated were U.S. citizens, permanent residents or had approved Special Immigrant Visas so were able to depart quickly.

But leaving early could cost other Afghan evacuees critical benefits - like expedited work permits - and create a slew of legal problems down the road, given the complexities of the U.S. immigration system.

The benefits the evacuees have received have been more limited, so far, than what's offered to refugees. But that appears set to change following legislation passed on Thursday by Congress - despite opposition from Republicans - that would give Afghan evacuees the more extensive assistance usually provided to refugees.

"We should do everything in our power to help our Afghan allies get off to a strong start in their new homes," Democratic Senator Jeff Merkley said in a statement.

The new legislation says Afghan asylum applications should be expedited. But those who leave U.S. bases early might not get all the legal orientation they need start their applications.

Immigration experts say Afghans who leave the bases are not breaking U.S. laws and military officials have no legal authority to hold law-abiding Afghans against their will at any of the eight locations hosting 53,000 Afghans who fled the Taliban on U.S. evacuation flights.

The scale of the independent departures vary from base to base, according to the sources - more than 300 alone at Fort Bliss in Texas - a figure that is likely to alarm both advocates and critics of the massive U.S. resettlement operation.

Natural Gas Prices in Europe Hit Record 100 Euros

LONDON (Dispatches) - European gas surged to a record 100 euros as China stepped up a global fight for energy supplies, in a move that threatens to derail the economic recovery. Prices later retreated.

In volatile trading, benchmark futures gained as much 2.3% on Friday before retreating. China ordered its state-owned energy companies to secure supplies for this winter at all costs, according to people familiar with the matter. That will intensify a battle for liquefied natural gas and coal cargoes just as flows into Germany via a key Russian pipeline tumbled.

Energy prices are rising from the U.S. to Europe and Asia as the economy recovers from the global pandemic and people return to the offices. Europe is struggling to secure enough gas and coal ahead of the winter, with rising prices forcing some of industrial giants from fertilizer producers CF Industries to Yara International ASA and chemicals giant BASF SE to shut plants or curtail output.



Iraqis March in Baghdad to Mark Protests Anniversary

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Hundreds of Iraqis have taken to the streets in Baghdad to mark two years since fierce protests roiled the Iraqi capital, fuelled by anger over corruption and unemployment.

About 1,000 protesters marched to Tahrir Square on Friday, carrying photos of friends and relatives killed by security forces during the uprising, which began in October 2019 and fizzled out after a bloody crackdown resulted in the death of over 600 people.

"You will not silence the voice of Tishreen," Arabic for October, one banner read. The commemoration comes ahead of early elections, which had been a key demand during the protests.

Some protesters who demand an overhaul of the entire political system have called for a boycott of the vote, scheduled for October 10.

"I am against participating in these elections because they are meaningless. It's the same parties in power and nothing will change," Walid al-Madani, a 39-year-old civil servant taking part in Friday's protest, told The Associated Press.

Demonstrators also decried a string of targeted assassinations against civil society groups and outspoken activists since the protests began. No one has yet been held accountable.

Placards read "When will we see the killers behind bars?" and "No to corrupt parties, no to corrupt politicians."

Marching under heavy police scrutiny, a 20-year-old protester, who identified himself as Ibrahim, told AFP news agency that he was doing so "in memory of the martyrs" and "the massacres committed by the government against young pacifists". He vowed not to cast his ballot in the upcoming elections.

"The election will reproduce the same corrupt system, and the same corrupt parties. Only the names and faces change," he said.

The 2019 demonstration saw tens of thousands camp out in Tahrir Square until early 2020, when the crackdown and the onset of the coronavirus pandemic turned the streets largely quiet.

German "Kingmakers" Meet on Coalition

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's Greens and Free Democrats met on Friday for a second round of talks to explore possible common ground on which to form a new coalition government with either the Social Democrats or the conservatives, both of whom are courting them.

The Greens and Free Democrats, from opposite ends of the political spectrum and at odds on a range of issues, have moved center stage after the Social Democrats (SPD) won Sunday's election by a narrow margin that leaves them seeking partners.

Both the center-left SPD and Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative bloc, which slumped to a record low result, would need the center-right Free Democrats (FDP) and leftist Greens as partners to get a parliamentary majority for a ruling coalition.

"The process began today in a good atmosphere, but has not finished," FDP leader Christian Lindner told reporters, adding that the smaller "kingmaker" parties were looking at where they could build bridges on policy issues.

Lindner spoke standing next to Greens co-leaders Annalena Baerbock and Robert Habeck, who said: "We have built up a culture of conversation with each other that makes a factual discussion possible."

Habeck added that the smaller parties would next each meet the larger SPD and conservatives, and "then we will see what kind of dynamic unfolds in the coming days, or perhaps weeks."

Merkel, in power since 2005, plans to step down once a new government is formed and will stay on until that point.

Baerbock said the Greens and FDP would keep their lips sealed about the content of their talks. After their meeting on Friday, the FDP and Greens both plan to speak separately with the larger SPD and CDU/CSU in the coming days.

The Greens favour a three-way tie-up with the FDP and SPD, while the FDP would prefer the two smaller parties to join forces with Merkel's conservatives in a "Jamaica" coalition - so-called as their colours match the island nation's flag.

"Jamaica has a chance," Markus Blume, general secretary of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), sister party to Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), told reporters.

A survey by pollster Forschungsgruppe Wahlen for broadcaster ZDF showed that 59% of respondents favoured a government alliance of SPD, Greens and FDP, with 76% saying they would like to see the Social Democrats' Olaf Scholz as the next chancellor.

Asked in an interview with Spiegel magazine whether he would become chancellor after talks with the Greens and FDP, Scholz said: "Yes", adding that the partners in such a tie-up must engage with each other in a "joint government with their ideas".



Police Regain Control Of Ecuador Prison After Riot Carnage

GUAYAQUIL (Dispatches) - Police gained control of an Ecuador prison Thursday where rioting has left at least 118 inmates dead, some of them decapitated, as rival drug gangs went to war armed with guns and grenades.

Another 86 inmates were wounded, six of them critically, according to Ecuador's prisons authority, in one of the deadliest prison battles in South American history.

The riot broke out Tuesday at a prison complex in the port city of Guayaquil between prisoners believed to have links to Mexican drug gangs — mainly the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels.

By late Thursday police commander General Tannya Varela told reporters that the inmates "no longer have control of the cell blocks," adding that the prisoners were now back in their cells and "everything is calm."

The restored order came after a massive security operation involving some 900 officers and members of tactical units engaged in what the police service said was a "mega-operation" to regain control.

On Wednesday at least two officers were injured when rioting inmates, armed with guns, attacked police sent in to retake control of the facility.

Soldiers and tanks were also stationed outside the jail, where hundreds of worried family members have gathered, desperate for news from the men locked up inside. "It is a very painful thing.... They say people have had their heads taken off," said Juana Pinto, who was seeking news about her inmate son.

Ernes Duarte, 71, who came from the nearby rural town of Salitre, said his son "was only 15 days away from being released. I came because I saw a video, sent to me by cell phone, where I recognised his head."

According to local news site Primicias, the violence erupted when prisoners from one gang celebrated the birthday of one of their leaders and bragged about their control of the prison, sparking the fury of rival groups elsewhere in the facility.

Tuesday's violence was the latest in a series of bloody prison clashes that have claimed the lives of more than 230 inmates in Ecuador so far this year.

At least six victims were beheaded, according to the national prosecutor's office.



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S/p, Sauna
J, L.balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Elahieh Villa (\$4000)

1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Zaferanieh Apt
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
(\$2000) F.F

Darrous Apt (\$3000)
300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p
S, J, & F.F

Elahieh bldg
4storey, 12bdrs
enough pkg lots
(\$5000) renovated

Sa`adat abad (\$1400)
130sq.m, 2bdrs, & F.F

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EU, Australia Trade Talks Postponed Amid Subs Row

SYDNEY (Dispatches)- A long-planned round of Australia-EU free trade talks have been postponed, a European official confirmed Friday, after fury over Canberra's decision to cancel a major French submarine contract.

"The FTA trade round has been postponed for a month until November," an EU official in Canberra told AFP, throwing the future of the far-reaching pact into doubt.

Australia last month abruptly cancelled a multibillion-dollar contract for 12 French submarines, opting to buy nuclear-powered U.S.-designed vessels instead.



Venezuela Recalibrates Battered Currency

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela unveils new banknotes on Friday to once again slash zeroes off its currency, battered by runaway inflation that has compounded the country's economic collapse and left many struggling to put food on the table.

The national economy has shrunk by 80 percent since 2013 as the oil price crashed and output dwindled during decades of under-investment, U.S. sanctions, and mismanagement by successive socialist governments.

The latest devaluation is the third in 13 years and gives Venezuela the dubious distinction of becoming the South American country to have removed the most zeroes from its currency. Seven one-million bolivar notes -- the highest denomination and very hard to come by -- were needed to pay in cash for one loaf of bread in the once-rich oil-producing nation, now battling the world's highest inflation rate.

Consumers have struggled to make payment for even the most basic goods or services and public sector workers have found themselves receiving salaries paid in millions of bolivars that are effectively worth nothing.

"We earn, fortnightly, less than three dollars," teacher Marelys Guerrero, 43, told AFP in Caracas. Rent for an apartment in a modest suburb of the capital starts from about \$150, while a basket of basic groceries for a family of five costs about \$220.

Most payments in bolivars are done by debit card or bank transfer, but seventy percent of transactions are now conducted in U.S. dollars, according to private sector estimates, and prices on many shop shelves are displayed in the US currency, to keep things simpler.

The bolivar lost three zeros in 2008 under now-deceased President Hugo Chavez, whose successor Nicolas Maduro eliminated five more in 2018.

With Friday's change, a million bolivars will overnight become one -- still the equivalent of about 25 US cents.

In Venezuela's border regions, besides the dollar, it is common to also pay for goods in Colombian pesos or Brazilian reals, and even grams of gold.

In the rest of the country, cash is used almost exclusively for purchasing public transport tickets, but even this presents a headache as notes are scarce and can only be obtained by standing in long queues at the bank.

"I'll buy your dollar!" -- children with thick wads of bolivar bills yell at buses that, along with bus stops, have become informal currency exchange offices.

"We pay one dollar for four million bolivars. The fare costs two million," said William Hernandez, a 56-year-old bus driver.

The government will issue new banknotes in denominations of five, 10, 20, 50, and 100 bolivars, as well as a one-bolivar coin after Friday's change.

But the government has also said that it wants the economy to become entirely digital, a move, experts say, is meant to avoid printing money that will just continue devaluing.

"It is very likely that in about three or four years the government will have to reconvert again," Luis Arturo Barcenas of economic consultancy Ecoanalitica told AFP.

Euro Zone Inflation Jumps to 13-Year High

FRANKFURT (Reuters) - Euro zone inflation hit a 13-year high last month and looks likely to jump higher still, further clouding the European Central Bank's benign view of the biggest price spike since before the global financial crisis.

Consumer price inflation in the 19 countries sharing the euro accelerated to 3.4% year on year in September from 3% a month earlier, the highest reading since September 2008 and just ahead of analyst expectations for 3.3%, data from Eurostat, the EU's statistics agency showed on Friday.

Prices rose predominantly on a surge in energy costs, mostly a reversal of the oil price crash that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the impact from production and shipping bottlenecks was also showing as durable goods prices rose 2.3% from August.

With natural gas prices surging and bottlenecks impacting everything from car production to computer manufacturing, inflation could hit 4% by the end of the year, twice the ECB's target, before what the bank anticipates will be a relatively quick decline in early 2022.

But supply-chain disruptions appear to be getting worse, raising the chances that the inflation hump seeps into underlying prices and creates more permanent pressures as firms adjust pricing and wage policy.

For now, the ECB is sticking with its narrative that this bout of inflation will quickly pass and price growth will then linger under its target for years to come, requiring depressed borrowing costs.

But ECB President Christine Lagarde struck a more cautious tone this week, pointing to increased inflation risks, even if she called for patience and warned against overreacting.

UK Factory Growth Hits Seven-Month Low

LONDON (Dispatches) - The ongoing supply chain disruption and labor shortage has constrained growth in the UK manufacturing sector, new data has shown.

According to IHS Markit's manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI), the rate of expansion last month fell to its weakest since February, hitting a seven-month low. The PMI slipped to 57.1 in September, down from 60.3 the previous month, but beating flash estimates of 56.3. Any reading over 50 indicates growth.

Manufacturing production increased for the sixteenth consecutive month in September, however, in addition to the supply chain delays, the slowdown was caused by an easing of new orders and rising costs of materials.

The PMI slipped to 57.1 in September, down from 60.3 the previous month, but beating flash estimates of 56.3.

New export business also fell for the first time in eight months, while jobs growth fell to the weakest since January. Jobs growth slowed at medium and large sized companies in particular.

Where higher employment was recorded, this was generally to meet production requirements, combat rising backlogs of work and preparations for future growth, IHS Markit said. Outstanding business increased at one of the fastest rates on record, with over 30% of firms experiencing an expansion.

Rob Dobson, IHS Markit director, said: "The September PMI highlights the risk of the UK descending towards a bout of 'stagflation', as growth of manufacturing output and new orders eased sharply while input costs and selling prices continued to surge higher.

"Companies are facing a growing list of headwinds, which includes declining new export orders, component shortages, delays to air, land and sea freight, staff shortages exacerbated by COVID-19 illnesses, Brexit disruptions, sharply rising costs and now fuel shortages."

Meanwhile, Duncan Brock, group director at the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply, said: "The sector is feeling the strain of an ongoing onslaught of snags and hitches at every stage of the supply chain from sourcing raw materials through to component shortages and delivery disruptions.

"Like a whack a mole game where once one difficulty is resolved, another appears soon after, the sector may be challenged but remains stoically convinced that things can only get better in 2022 once the next few grueling months are at an end."

October 1, 2021, International Day Of Older Persons

By: UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Director Björn Andersson

Asia-Pacific is the world's most rapidly ageing region, but are we ready?



Imagine it is the year 2050. In Asia-Pacific, one in four people will be over the age of 60; three times the number of older persons in 2010. With close to 1.3 billion senior citizens in less than 30 years from now, are countries in the region prepared to fully address the needs of older persons so that they age with dignity?

Let's rewind.

Today, 72-year old Ping sells three kilos of sticky rice each day in her remote village in a Southeast Asian country, earning barely enough for a basic living. She's been doing this for more than 10 years, ever since her husband passed away. Her son died two months ago, and her two daughters have married and moved to another province. Ping gets some consolation from the health insurance she is entitled to, as maintaining good health during her old age is her main concern.

Back in the day, Ping and other women in numerous countries across Asia-Pacific may have been supported by their families and communities. Yet, times are changing. Migration and urbanization have shifted traditional support systems for the elderly, and more and more governments are grappling with increasing healthcare costs and a shrinking workforce. While less than a third of older persons in the region currently receive a pension of some sort, pension payments are increasing as the older population increases, straining governments further.

More than ever there is an urgent need for policy reform in addressing population ageing. This must be driven by a shift in mindset to convert the challenges into a demographic opportunity.

Population ageing is not a threat, but an opportunity

We must rethink population ageing, celebrating it as the triumph of development that it truly is. More and more people are living longer due to the result of successive advancements in health, nutrition, economic and social well-being.

Along with longer life-expectancy, couples are having fewer babies. This is due to a variety of reasons such as challenges couples face in striking a work-life balance to not being able to afford having more children. However, low fertility and longer life-expectancy are not the problem. The real problem is not being ready to face this rapidly changing demographic shift.

This is why governments must act now. Policy makers must work together with academia and civil society to incorporate rights-based ageing policies and systems into national development plans. While some countries in Asia-Pacific have already taken steps, implementation must be strengthened, particularly within the contexts of COVID-19 and escalating humanitarian crises that increase vulnerabilities of older persons.

Adapting a life-cycle approach

In Asia-Pacific, with more than half of the older population being women, it is crucial to adapt a life-cycle approach to population ageing, grounded in human rights.

Life-long discrimination leaves women even more disadvantaged in an ageing society. Older women are often more financially dependent than older men due to generally lower education levels and unpaid work, having often carried the burden of being the family caregiver.

Investing in each stage of life, starting from before a girl is born, determines the path of her life course. When a woman is able to safely deliver her baby, this in turn improves the long-term health of both mother and child. When a girl has access to quality education, it helps her make informed decisions about life-changing matters as she transitions from childhood to adolescence and on to adulthood. When a woman has equal opportunity to contribute to the workforce and has autonomy, she has the power to shape her own future.

The decisions she makes, and is allowed to make, at every stage of her life, paves the way towards a healthier and more financially secure silver age.

There is little time to lose

We need to take action now. The megatrend of rapid demographic shifts is altering Asia-Pacific and our entire world.

This is why the years 2020-2030 have been declared the UN Decade for Healthy Ageing, complementing the Madrid International Plan of Action for Ageing (MIPAA) whose 20th anniversary next year will bring together governments in Asia-Pacific, and globally, to review progress made and better plan for the challenges ahead.

While there is no single comprehensive policy that can address population ageing, we must invest in forward-thinking, rights-based policies that focus on the needs of people at every age of their life. In so doing, countries in the Asia-Pacific region can aspire to, and achieve, a better future for all, where no one is left behind.

On Friday and on International Day of Older Persons, the UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office launched a regional advocacy campaign titled 'For Every Age' to raise awareness on the rights-based life-cycle approach towards population ageing across Asia-Pacific. The campaign is underpinned by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) and aims to encourage all countries within the region to actively adopt national policies and systems that enhance the livelihoods of older women and men, through investments throughout their life-cycle.

German Inflation Accelerates at Record Pace in September

BERLIN (Reuters) -German inflation accelerated at a record pace in September, data showed on Thursday, highlighting growing price pressures as Europe's largest economy recovers from the pandemic and its companies grapple with supply shortages.

Consumer prices, harmonized to make them comparable with inflation data from other European Union countries, rose by 4.1% year-on-year compared with 3.4% in August, the Federal Statistics Office said.

That was the highest rate recorded since January 1997, when the EU-harmonized series began.

Christian Lindner, leader of the business-friendly Free Democrats (FDP) and a candidate to become the next finance minister in a possible three-way coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens, took to Twitter to call for a return to a more conservative fiscal policy.

He said the high inflation rate was another reminder that policymakers "should focus on reducing the burden for the middle class and returning to solid public finances".

Under outgoing Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, who is in pole position to succeed Chancellor Angela Merkel following the SPD's election victory, Germany ditched its fiscal policy of balanced budgets and took on record new amounts of debt to fight the pandemic.

A breakdown of the inflation data showed that the price of energy and food items had risen the most.

Inflation has surged this year on one-off factors from tax hikes to supply bottlenecks and commodity price rises, fuelling a debate about the need for exceptionally loose monetary policy.



The Bundesbank said this week that German inflation is likely to accelerate from already high levels and will stay above 2% through mid-2022, exceeding the European Central Bank's target for the 19-nation euro zone.

Fritzi Koehler-Geib, chief economist at state lender KfW, said in a note that while one-off effects should disappear in the new year, other factors like natural gas and coal supply shortages could maintain the pressure on prices.

"Energy prices are currently also rising for other reasons: For example, there are shortages of coal and natural gas and supply problems on the part of Russia and Norway. In addition, the cold past winter has emptied stocks, and wind energy is suffering a weather-related lull," said Koehler-Geib.

Foreign Investment in Iranian Medicine Plans Is High

KARAJ (IRNA)- Head of Alborz Province Commerce, Industry, Mining, and Agriculture Chamber has said that foreign investors had welcomed investing in the medical equipment and medicine sector in Iran.

Parham Rezaei who was paying a visit to Barekat medical industrial park in Alborz Province on Saturday said that an Asian

country that is active in medical equipment has asked to be allowed to invest in Alborz medical equipment and medicine sector.

He also said that Alborz Province was a hub of medicine production in Iran and Barekat industrial park, in particular, has proper infrastructure to establish and expand medicine production plants.



Merck's COVID-19 Pill Cuts Risk of Death, Hospitalization by 50% in Study

BERLIN (Dispatches)- Merck & Co Inc's experimental oral drug for COVID-19, molnupiravir, reduced by around 50% the chance of hospitalization or death for patients at risk of severe disease, according to interim clinical trial results announced on Friday.

Merck and partner Ridgeback Biotherapeutics plan to seek U.S. emergency use authorization for the pill as soon as possible, and to submit applications to regulatory agencies worldwide. Due to the positive results, the Phase 3 trial is being stopped early at the recommendation of outside monitors.

"This is going to change the dialogue around how to manage COVID-19," Robert Davis, Merck's chief executive officer, told Reuters.

If authorized, molnupiravir, which is designed to introduce errors into the genetic code of the virus, would be the first oral antiviral medication for COVID-19.

The news sent Merck's shares up almost 8% in pre-market New York trading.

Rivals including Pfizer Inc and Swiss pharmaceutical Roche Holding AG are racing to develop an easy-to-administer antiviral pill for COVID-19 but so far, only antibody cocktails - which have to be given intravenously - are approved for treating non-hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

A planned interim analysis of 775 patients in Merck's study found that 7.3% of those given molnupiravir were either hospitalized or had died by 29 days after treatment, compared with 14.1% of placebo patients. There were no deaths in the molnupiravir group, but there were eight deaths of placebo patients.

"Antiviral treatments that can be taken at home to keep people with COVID-19 out of the hospital are critically needed," Wendy Holman, Ridgeback's CEO, said in a statement.

Scientists welcomed the potential new treatment to help prevent serious illness from the virus, which has killed almost 5 million people around the world.

"The availability of a well-tolerated, effective oral antiviral will be particularly useful in supplementing vaccination as a means to reduce the proportion of patients needing hospital care," Professor Penny Ward, visiting professor in pharmaceutical medicine at King's College London.

In the trial, which enrolled patients around the world, molnupiravir was taken every 12 hours for five days.

The study enrolled patients with laboratory-confirmed mild-to-moderate COVID-19, who had symptoms for no more than five days. All patients had at least one risk factor associated with poor disease outcome, such as obesity or older age.

Merck said viral sequencing done so far shows molnupiravir is effective against all variants of the coronavirus, including highly transmissible Delta.

The company said rates of adverse events were similar for both molnupiravir and placebo patients, but did not give details of the side effects.



Merck has said data shows molnupiravir is not capable of inducing genetic changes in human cells, but men enrolled in its trials have to abstain from heterosexual intercourse or agree to use contraception. Women of child-bearing age cannot be pregnant and also have to use birth control.

Merck said it expects to produce 10 million courses of the treatment by the end of 2021, with more doses coming next year.

The company has a U.S. government contract to supply 1.7 million courses of molnupiravir at a price of \$700 per course.

CEO Davis said Merck has similar agreements with other governments worldwide, and is in talks with more. The company said it plans to implement a tiered pricing approach based on country income criteria.

Merck has also agreed to license the drug to several India-based generic drugmakers, which would be able to supply the treatment to low- and middle-income countries.

Molnupiravir is also being studied in a Phase 3 trial for preventing coronavirus infection in people exposed to the virus.

Merck officials said it is unclear how long the FDA review of the drug will take. "I believe that they are going to try to work with alacrity on this," said Dean Li, head of Merck's research labs.

Dubai Expo New City Will Exist For Decades



DUBAI (Dispatches) - Dubai has created a "new city" for Expo 2020 that will exist for decades, the head of the event told AFP, promising most of the vast site will remain in use after the six-month world fair.

The \$7 billion, purpose-built showground occupies a vast site on Dubai's outskirts, with hundreds of pavilions and exhibitions sprawling across an area twice the size of Monaco. Expo 2020, which has sustainability as one of its main themes, wraps up in March. But director general Reem Al Hashimy said the lavish, largely air-conditioned development would not go to waste.

"It was never an investment to host an Expo, it was an investment to create a new city that is equal distance between Dubai and Abu Dhabi and really the city of the future," she said in an interview. "That investment goes into a city to 2040, 2050 and beyond. In addition to that, we have also made a commitment not to dismantle all Expo-related facilities. "Everything that we're building, a very large majority, over 90 per cent or so, will actually remain for that future city."

The United Arab Emirates city has witnessed breakneck development in its growth from a small fishing settlement to a major center with the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa.

The Expo project is connected to the Dubai metro and lies en route to the capital Abu Dhabi, the richest and most powerful of the UAE's seven emirates.

Expo is intended to draw millions of foreign visitors, but pandemic-related travel restrictions worldwide are likely to have a dampening effect.

And whether the 5G-enabled site thrives or languishes after Expo depends on what businesses can be persuaded to base themselves there.

"Given the focus on technology and sustainability we're looking to attract industries, residents that are inclined to operate in those spaces," said Al Hashimy, who is also the UAE's minister of state for international cooperation.

"So in part we're looking at industries related to climate or green technology if you will, a lot around ag-tech. There's an interesting combination of new sectors that have emerged that we're going to be able hopefully to capitalize on by having this Expo."

UN Reports Unprecedented Malnutrition in Tigray

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) - The UN warned of "unprecedented" malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women in Ethiopia's war-hit Tigray region, in a report published hours after the government sparked outrage by expelling senior UN officials.

The latest situation report from the UN's humanitarian coordination office, posted online late Thursday, also described "alarming" malnutrition among children as fears of mass starvation grow nearly 11 months after northern Ethiopia erupted in conflict.

"Of the more than 15,000 pregnant and lactating women screened during the reporting period, more than 12,000 women, or about 79 per cent, were diagnosed with acute malnutrition," the report said.

The level of moderate malnutrition among children under five "is also exceeding global emergency threshold of 15 per cent, at about 18 per cent, while cases of children with severe malnutrition is 2.4 per cent, above the alarming 2 per cent level," it said.

On Thursday Ethiopia announced it would expel seven senior UN officials for "meddling" in its affairs, including the local heads of the UN children's agency UNICEF and its humanitarian coordination office.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "shocked" by the decision, and diplomats said an



emergency UN Security Council meeting would be held behind closed doors Friday to discuss the matter.

The UN officials were given 72 hours to leave the country.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, sent troops into Tigray last November to topple the regional ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a move he said was in response to TPLF attacks on army camps.

Fighting ground on for months before Tigrayan rebels retook the regional capital Mekele in June and government forces largely withdrew from the region.

Since then, the TPLF has launched offensives into neighboring Amhara and Afar regions.

Tigray itself is receiving only about 10 percent of the aid it needs, and in July the UN warned that 400,000 people across the region had "crossed the threshold into famine".

Federal officials blame the TPLF for obstructing deliveries, but a US State Department spokesman told AFP last week that access to essential supplies and services was "being denied by the Ethiopian government" and that there were "indications of a siege".

Iran Non-Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

Turning to the volume of products exported, he said that 13.9 million tons of products, valued at \$3.8 billion, were exported to neighboring Iraq from March 21 to Sept. 22, showing a 28 and 50 percent growth in terms of value and weight respectively.

China and Turkey are Iran's rivals in the Iraq market, but there are other countries like Saudi Arabia and Jordan which are planning to increase their share of exporting products to Iraq, he said, adding effective steps must be taken in the field of getting lion's share of exporting products to this neighboring country.

Meanwhile in a meeting between the President of Iran National Standard Organization (INSO) and officials of the Iraqi Standard Organization, the two sides stressed the need to remove barriers to exports from Iran to Iraq.

Gholamreza Shariati, the President of INSO, in a meeting with the head and officials of the Iraqi standard, emphasized facilitating and developing trade relations.

Shariati, who has traveled to Iraq to address the problems of exports, said: "In this meeting, the two sides emphasized removing technical and trade barriers between the two countries, especially the recent problems in the field of exports."

Referring to the high volume of exports of Iranian goods to Iraq, Shariati added: "Good decisions were made for exports, and the minutes of these decisions were prepared."

The meeting reviewed the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2015.

The trip is also attended by the deputies of the head of the National Standard Organization of Iran and Masoumeh Pashaei, a member of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and a member of the Supreme Council of Standards.

Exemption of...

FROM PAGE 1

"We strongly condemn the imposition of inhumane, illegal and unilateral American coercive measures, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. These illegal measures, which have been taken by the United States with the support of its allies, are aimed at confiscating Iran's resources abroad and preventing third countries from legitimate trade with Iran, especially the supply of humanitarian goods," it said.

"Inhumane, illegal and unilateral coercive measures deprived even the Islamic Republic of access to COVID-19 vaccines. It is unfortunate that some countries arrogantly claim that humanitarian goods are exempt from sanctions, and this is a terrible lie."

Also in its statement, the mission reaffirmed Iran's unwavering commitment to the principles and goals of the UN Charter, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and non-interference in other countries' domestic affairs.

It further stressed a non-selective approach towards human rights and non-politicization of the issue.

Large-scale human-rights violations have become routine, it said, pointing to "the seemingly unending war on Yemen" and ethnic cleansing in the occupied Palestinian territories by the "despotic Israeli regime."

"In fact, those who advise others about human rights and present themselves as leading defenders of human dignity not only lack the necessary determination and will in this regard, but also pursue the path of hypocrisy in fulfilling their human rights obligations. They are the main supporters of the criminals in the occupied Palestinian lands and sophisticated weapons that are used against Palestinian and Yemeni women and children on a daily basis," the mission underlined.

"Unfortunately, the world is witnessing horrific crimes committed by the so-called flag-bearers of human rights against indigenous people. Recent revelations in Canada about crimes against indigenous people prove that the methods of occupying lands through ethnic cleansing ... have either become normal or accepted."

The Iranian mission also emphasized that dialog and cooperation based on mutual respect is the only way to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights at the international level, noting that using human rights as a weapon, adopting a selective approach and relying on double standards do not help achieve common goals.

Expressing concerns for the people of Afghanistan, particularly the displaced, it said the situation in the South Asian country "clearly demonstrates the true face of the United States" and others who invaded two decades ago under the pretext of fighting terrorism and upholding human rights.

"The right to development is a fundamental right for developing states. We condemn any attempt by some countries to prevent the development of developing states and maintain their own all-out monopoly on international relations," it added.

Tehran Blasts Bahrain...

FROM PAGE 1

The top Iranian diplomat expressed confidence that the presence of Israel in the region would result in nothing but insecurity for Bahrain and the entire region.

Lapid arrived in Bahrain on Thursday to open the Israeli embassy in Manama and sign cooperation deals with the Arab country. He met Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. Lapid's visit to Bahrain is aimed at advancing the US-pushed normalization deals between Israel and a number of Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

The Israeli minister has already opened the Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi and promised to establish the regime's embassy in Rabat soon. However, Sudan's foreign minister said over the weekend that her country has no plans to open an Israeli embassy in Khartoum.

In a statement on Friday, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Bahrain's "despicable" welcoming of the Israeli minister is at odds with the will of the Bahraini people, stressing that the visit left an "un-removable stain" on the reputation of the rulers of the Persian Gulf country.

Bahraini protesters on Thursday staged nationwide rallies to express implacable opposition to the visit. The demonstrators poured into the streets of the capital Manama to protest Lapid's visit as they carried banners in condemnation of normalization with Tel Aviv, and set ablaze Israeli flags in rejection of the trip.

Florenzi out for a Month After Knee Surgery

MILAN (Dispatches) - AC Milan defender Alessandro Florenzi will be out for around a month after undergoing knee surgery, the Italian club said.

The Italy international had an operation at a Rome clinic and is now set to miss an important run of games for club and country. "The arthroscopic operation, which was carried out to correct a partial tear to the medial meniscus in his left knee, went perfectly to plan. The estimated recovery time is 30 days," read a note on Milan's website.

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Gosens Sidelined By Thigh Injury

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany coach Hansi Flick confirmed that Atalanta left-back Robin Gosens had suffered a serious leg injury amid reports the defender will be sidelined for months.

The 27-year-old Germany international had to be helped off clutching his thigh in the opening minutes of Atalanta's 1-0 win over Swiss side Young Boys on Wednesday in the Champions League.

Flick confirmed the severity of Gosens' injury when he left the defender out of the Germany squad for upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Romania and North Macedonia.

Rublev Makes San Diego Semis

SAN DIEGO (Dispatches) - Top-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia beat sixth-seeded Diego Schwartzman of Argentina for the second time in two weeks, prevailing 6-1, 7-5 in the quarterfinals of the San Diego Open.

Rublev edged Schwartzman last week in the Laver Cup at Boston, winning 11-9 in an extended tiebreaker that stood in for the third set after the players split the first two sets. Rublev helped Team Europe win the Laver Cup. Up next for Rublev is a semifinal matchup against Great Britain's Cameron Norrie, who cruised past fourth-seeded Denis Shapovalov of Canada 6-3, 6-1.

The final two semifinalists were due to be determined Friday night. Second-seeded Casper Ruud of Norway was set to oppose Lorenzo Sonego of Italy, and Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria was ready to face Aslan Karatsev of Russia.

Italy's Jannik Sinner, the tournament's top seed, overcame a slow start in both sets to emerge with a 7-6 (4), 6-4 win over Australia's James Duckworth in the quarterfinals at Sofia, Bulgaria. Duckworth won the first three games of the match and had a chance to seal the opening set while serving at 5-4, but Sinner rallied to pull level. Sinner took the opening four points in the tiebreaker, which he closed out on his third set point.

Duckworth broke serve again to open the second set, but he dropped his final two service games to end the match. Sinner moves on to a semifinal match against fifth-seeded Serbian Filip Krajinovic, who topped Poland's Kamil Majchrzak 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

The other semifinal will feature second-seeded Gael Monfils of France, a 6-2, 6-2 winner over Italy's Gianluca Mager, and the United States' Marcos Giron, who upset eighth-seeded John Millman of Australia 6-4, 6-2.

Meanwhile Nick Kyrgios said he will undergo treatment to fix a painful knee that has been bothering him for two months and hopes to be fully fit for his home major at the Australian Open in January.

The mercurial Australian, 26, headed



home after playing the Laver Cup in Boston, his last event in the 2021 season.

"Hey guys, over the last couple months, I haven't been near 100% healthy," Kyrgios wrote on an Instagram story.

"I've been dealing with left knee patella tendinopathy, and continuing to play without fully treating it can lead to further pain and greater set backs."

Kyrgios, who reached a career-high ranking of 13 in 2016, has slipped down the ladder and is now ranked 96th in the world after playing very few tournaments in the last two years during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He remains a fan-favorite with his shot-making wizardry and is among the few players in the world to beat the Big Three of Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

Kyrgios had pulled out of a highly-anticipated first-round match against Britain's Andy Murray at the Winston-Salem Open due to knee pain in the buildup to the U.S. Open but was fit to play the major and the Laver Cup subsequently.

"I've chosen to fly back to Australia to reassess and am planning to get PRP treatment to settle down and rehab my knee," he added.

Dybala Out of Argentina Squad Due to Injury

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Juventus forward Paulo Dybala has been ruled out of Argentina's squad for this month's World Cup qualifiers due to injury, the country's football governing body said.

Dybala was initially included in coach Lionel Scaloni's squad announced on Monday but he will now miss their qualifiers against Paraguay (away), Uruguay and Peru (both home) from October 8-15.

The 27-year-old picked up a thigh injury while playing for Juventus in last weekend's 3-2 Serie A win over Sampdoria, where he scored the opening goal before limping off in tears.

Dybala missed Wednesday's 1-0 Champions League win over Chelsea and Juventus expect him to be available after the international break.

Argentina are second in the South American qualifying group for the 2022 World Cup, with five wins from eight games. They are six points behind group leaders Brazil.

Solskjaer Defends Sancho

MANCHESTER (Dispatches)- Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer dismissed England coach Gareth Southgate's questions over Jadon Sancho's form and said the winger will soon be a "top player".

Southgate named Sancho in his squad for this month's World Cup qualifiers but said that the 21-year-old's selection was "probably not" deserved if based on his performances over the last few weeks.

Sancho flourished at Borussia Dortmund but has struggled for game time at United following his £73 million (RM413.6 million) transfer in the summer, and has drawn criticism for some of his performances.

But Solskjaer defended Sancho, praising his display in Wednesday's 2-1 win over Villarreal in the Champions League group stage.

"Was that interview (with Southgate) done before Wednesday night?" Solskjaer said before Saturday's Premier League home game with Everton. "Jadon was exceptional, he was electric, the crowd loved him."

"I think he felt that connection with the crowd, and that is what we want from him, to be direct, positive, go past players numerous times."

Sancho played a limited role in England's run to the European Championship final in the summer and missed World Cup qualifiers against Hungary, Andorra and Poland with an injury.

He has yet to score for United, having started only two of his five Premier League games and featured three times in Cup competitions.

"Yeah he's not scored yet but that night I thought, 'Yeah that's Jadon' and we're going to see loads of that," Solskjaer added.

"And Gareth has also said it's important Jadon knows they believe in him. They have invested time in him. He will be a top player."



FIFA Announces Football Tribunal Is Up and Running

PARIS (Dispatches) - FIFA said new "Football Tribunal" to unite its various disciplinary and dispute-resolutions- processes under a "single umbrella body" had started operating.

The world governing body said the tribunal will, ultimately, be made up of three chambers. The "Dispute Resolution Chamber" will decide "employment-related disputes between players and clubs" and financial issues over training.

The "Players' Status Chamber" will resolve disputes between coaches and clubs or associations and transfer disputes between clubs as well as making "regulatory" decisions on international transfers and national-team eligibility.

The members of those panels have already been chosen.

The plan also calls for an "Agents Chamber", to be created after FIFA has revised its rules on agents.

FIFA estimated that the first chamber will decide "approximately 3,500 disputes per year", while the second would "rule on approximately 700 disputes and 6,000 regulatory applications" annually.

Rashford Returns To Full Training After Shoulder Operation

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford returned to full training after a recent shoulder operation and should be available after the international break, manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said.

Rashford said in August he had undergone surgery on a shoulder injury, which he picked up during the latter part of the 2020-21 season.

The injury cut short his game time, with the 23-year-old playing only a limited role with England during their run to the Euro 2020 final in July, where they lost to champions Italy.

"Marcus trained fully for the first time today (Friday) with contact," Solskjaer said ahead of Saturday's Premier League home game with Everton.

"There were a few tackles flying in on him and he seemed okay, which was nice to see. Marcus is fit, he's worked really hard, but he's not had any contact (until now)."

"If his shoulder can take the contact now, he should be ready after the internationals."

The international break begins on Monday, with United returning to action in the league on Oct. 16 against Leicester City.

Defender Luke Shaw, who suffered a shoulder injury in last weekend's 1-0 defeat at Aston Villa, will undergo a late fitness test for Saturday's game. He also missed Wednesday's 2-1 Champions League win over Villarreal due to illness.

"Luke feels better in himself. He's been ill but he's still got the shoulder injury," Solskjaer said. "We've got to make a decision on him."



Koeman Hanging On To Barcelona Job By a Thread

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Embattled Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman said he was "fed up" of having to defend himself amid reports that the Dutchman is on the brink of being sacked.

Koeman was roundly criticized in the wake of Barca's 3-0 defeat at Benfica in the Champions League in midweek, a result that left the Catalans with no points and no goals after two group games in this season's competition.

With Barcelona struggling in La Liga too, and Koeman's relationship with president Joan Laporta frayed, his days at the Camp Nou appear numbered even if he remains in charge for trip to reigning champions Atletico Madrid. "Nobody has said anything to me. The president was here but I haven't seen him because we were preparing for tomorrow's game," Koeman said at a press conference.

"I am still here, but I have eyes and ears and a lot of things filter through."

The former Everton and Netherlands coach refused to answer a question about his relationship with Laporta, simply saying: "I am still here." As well as struggling in Europe since Lionel Messi departed, Barca are sixth in La Liga, five points behind leaders Real Madrid albeit with a game in hand.

"I am not the most important. A positive result is more important than one person. Everyone knows I am here out of love for the club. I came in a very complicated situation," added Koeman, Barcelona's match-winner as a player in the 1992 European Cup final.

"I am fed up of having to defend myself. It makes no sense. Today is not the time, but one day I would like to talk all about what I think of all this."

When asked by one journalist what had been his best and worst moment in charge at the Camp Nou since arriving just over a year ago, Koeman replied: "The best moment? When I signed to become Barca coach. The worst moment? When Messi left."

