

Health Ministry Said on Saturday That Some 173 More Iranians Have Died From the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Over the Past 24 Hours as the Death Toll Hit 122,370 in the Country

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Minister of Information And Communications Technology Proposed Formation Of an Iran-Hosted Permanent Communications Committee For D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation

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FM in Syria With Pledge of Strong Support

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has called his country's ties with Syria "strategic", saying Tehran will stand by Damascus as it did during the foreign-backed war against terrorism.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks as he arrived in Damascus to hold talks with Syrian officials. He was welcomed by his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Mekdad, at Damascus International Airport on Saturday.

"Our ties with Syria are strategic and we are trying to expand our cooperation with the country in all fields. Syria is on the path of development and progress, and on this path, Iran will strongly stand by Damascus, as it did during the war on terrorists," Amir-Abdollahian told reporters.

Syria is the third destination of the Iranian foreign minister after visits to Russia and Lebanon.

It is also his second visit to Syria since assuming the post of Iran's foreign minister. On August 29, he met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus.

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Israel in No Position to Make Statements About Iran Atomic Program

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reiterated that the Israeli regime is in no position to make statements about Iran's nuclear energy program.

"This regime is sitting on hundreds of nuclear warheads, is not a member of the NPT, and refuses to join this treaty or any other international monitoring regime," Khatibzadeh told France 24 during a recent interview.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman explained that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has fully complied with its obligations, and 15 consecutive reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency show Iran has fully and sincerely adhered to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Khatibzadeh made the remarks in response to a question about the Israeli prime minister's claim during his address to the United Nations General Assembly that Iran's atomic program has quote crossed all red lines.

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Iran Foreign Trade Doubled In September, Hit \$10b



IRAN NEW ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that foreign trade of the country in the Iranian month of Shahrivar (from August 21 to Sept. 21) doubled as compared to the same period of last year.

Seyed Rouhollah Latifi broke the news on Sat. and stated that 19,841,000 tons of non-oil goods, were exchanged between the Islamic Republic of Iran and world countries from August 21 to Sept. 21, showing a 135 and 98 percent hike in terms of weight and value respectively.

He went on to say that Iran's export of products in the Iranian month of Shahrivar registered a 103 and 25 percent hike in terms of weight and value respectively.

Turning to the destination of Iranian goods in the Iranian month of Shahrivar (Sept. 21), the Republic of Turkey imported 5,839,000 tons of non-oil products, value at \$1.202 billion, from August 21 to Sept. 21, showing a 1,512 and 553 percent growth in terms of value and weight respectively.

In this period, 1,129,000 tons of foreign-made goods have passed from Iranian land and territory, registering a 16 percent hike as compared to a month earlier, Latifi added.

He added that 19.841 million tons of goods have been traded between Iran and other states within the Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (August 23-September 22), showing a 135-percent increase in terms of weight and a 98-percent boost in terms of value in comparison to the previous Iranian month of Mordad (July 23 to August 22).

The country's export volume stood at 14.522 million tons with the value of 4.145 billion dollars, which increased 75 and 56 percent in terms of weight and value respectively compared to the same period in last Iranian year, he added.

Iran's exports also increased in Shahrivar comparing to Mordad by 103 and 25 percent in terms of weight and value respectively, the official noted.

Pointing to export destinations of Iranian commodities, he said, Turkey was the first importer with 5.839 million tons of goods with a value of 1.202 billion dollars, showing 512 and 533 percent in terms of weight and value respectively in comparison to the previous month.

Iraq stood the second importer of Iranian goods with 1.863 million tons worth 677 million dollars, followed by China, the United Arab Emirates, and Afghanistan, which were the third to fifth biggest importers of Iranian commodities in that period, he said.

As to transit of goods through Iran in the sixth month of the Iranian calendar year, Latifi said that 1.129 million tons of foreign shipments were transited through the country, showing a 16-percent increase comparing to Mordad and a 63-percent increase in comparison to Shahrivar last Iranian year.

According to IRNA, Iran's foreign trade volume stood at 79.1 million tons, worth 45 billion dollars, in first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021 to September 22, 2021).

Iran Will Never Abandon Using Peaceful Nuclear Energy

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says the Islamic Republic will never abandon its "main and categorical policy" of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Speaking in the southern province of Bushehr, Raisi said Iran needs "wise and purposeful" planning for the sustainable development of the nuclear industry based on the latest international standards in order to stand at the top economic, scientific and technological position in the region.

He added that the necessary mechanism has been developed in this regard and provided to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

"Nuclear knowledge in the future will determine the remarkable scientific development and progress of countries, and we should not lag behind the world's scientific movement," the Iranian president stated.

He noted that the advancement of nuclear knowledge would lead to the development of other technologies.

Raisi further said the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant is currently operating at its nominal capacity and producing over 1,000 megawatts of electricity, but the figure would be tripled in its development phases.

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U.S. Sanctions Crime Against Humanity

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says unilateral U.S. sanctions on developing countries have violated the indisputable and basic principles of human rights of these nations, stressing that such illegal restrictive measures amount to crime against humanity and contradict the goals of development.

Iran's UN Ambassador Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Friday in an address to the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, which deals with global finance and economic matters.

He described the COVID-19 pandemic as a "wake-up call for the whole world" that reminded humanity that the development, welfare and prosperity of all people are interdependent.

The outbreak, he added, also sounded the alarm over unjust, illegal self-serving and unilateral approaches adopted by certain countries that are undermining multilateralism when it is most needed.

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Bomet County Plans Exporting 2nd Consignment of Tea to Iran

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - Kenya's Bomet Governor Hillary Barchok has revealed plans of delivering the second consignment of tea to the Islamic State of Iran in a bid to solidify economic cooperation between the two countries, especially in the agricultural sector.

Towards the end of September, the county chief travelled to the Middle East country with a delegation of 15 people to deliver the consignment.

The consignment was flagged off from the county two months ago, and in September 30, Dr. Barchok ensured that the delivery of the tea in the foreign country was beamed live on social media as evidence that he meant business.

The deal to start selling tea directly to Iran had kicked off a heated debate which saw the Ministry of Agriculture through Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya weigh in on the matter.

Munya had termed the deal as fake, saying the county neither involved the ministry nor Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA). He asked the farmers to ignore it.

The CS said there was no tea from Bomet that passed through the Port of Mombasa to Iran.

Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted a meeting with a Kenyan trade where they revealed plans to launch a joint venture in the field of tea in Lahijan, Iran.

Yemeni Official Says UN Only Understands Language of Money, Not Law

SANAA (Dispatches) - The deputy foreign minister in Yemen's National Salvation Government has lambasted the recent decision by the UN Human Rights Council to ditch its group of experts investigating abuses and Saudi war crimes in Yemen, stating that the world body only understands the language of money, and has no respect whatsoever for law and regulations.

"The United Nations has shown its resolutions are based on the amount of financial aids it receives, and regulations have no place in its decision-making," Hussein al-Azi said on Saturday, lamenting the measure as "unfortunate".

On Thursday, the 47-member UN Human Rights Council voted against renewing the mandate of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen (GEE) - the first time the United Nations' top rights body has ever rejected a draft resolution since its foundation in 2006.

"The vote against renewing the mandate of the UN team of inspectors is a concrete proof that statements made by the Sana'a government regarding the crimes of the Saudi-led coalition are entirely correct, while the alliance tends to make baseless allegations against Sana'a," Azi said.

"The UN would not have canceled investigation into abuses in Yemen and would not have end the mandate of its inspection team, if it were not for the sake of the Sake coalition."

The draft resolution seeking to extend the GEE's mandate for a further two years was brought forward by several European nations and Canada.

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Iran Condemns Terrorist Attack in Kunduz of Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Friday condemned the terrorist attack on a mosque in Kunduz, Afghanistan.

Khatibzadeh denounced the terrorist acts committed in any forms and by any groups. He expressed his sympathy to the families of the victims, wishing speedy recovery for the wounded people.

A bomb blast near a Shia mosque in Kunduz has killed 15 people and injured 90 others so far, sources have reported.

President Urges Continued Compliance With COVID Protocols

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi called for uninterrupted observance of the health protocols to tackle the coronavirus pandemic in the country, warning that laxity in conforming to the restrictions may trigger a new wave of contagion.

Speaking at a Saturday session of the Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters, Raisi hailed the satisfactory results of public vaccination that has led to a reduction in the new coronavirus cases and the death toll across the country.

Such success in containing the fifth wave of the pandemic does not mean that the health protocols could be ignored, he added, warning that a failure to take the disease seriously will result in a new wave of the pandemic.

Calling on the mass media, particularly the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, to encourage people to get vaccines, the president said all regulations set by the Coronavirus Fight National Headquarters must be observed strictly.

He also unveiled plans for the gradual reopening of schools as the public vaccination program is advancing, noting that the government employees should be present in the workplace in the full and ordinary manner.



Mr Raisi continued by emphasizing the need for scientific and research efforts and not closing the door to research in the field of corona treatment, saying, "Traditional medicine has ideas and opinions in the field of combating diseases, and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education can verify them".

The President went on to say that, we should gradually move towards restoring face-to-face education, saying, "With widespread vaccination, we will see face-to-face education in schools".

Ayatollah Raisi also stressed the need for regular and complete presence of employees in departments to answer and do people's affairs.

The public vaccination program against the coronavirus has gained momentum in Iran in recent weeks with a hike in the imports of vaccine, opening of new round-the-clock vaccination centers, and inoculation of people above the age of 12.

Iran Temporarily Closes Two Border Crossings With Iraq

QASR-E SHIRIN (IRNA) - Trade exchanges through Khosravi and Parviz Khan border crossings connecting Iran to Iraq are closed on Saturday and Sunday due to general election in Iraq.

Qasr-e Shiri Governor Moradali Tatar said that trade exchanges through Khosravi border crossing would be closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Parviz Khan border would be closed on Sunday, he noted, adding that the measure has been taken due to the general election being held in Iraq.

He also said that passengers were banned to pass through these border crossings due to the coronavirus-related restrictions.

Parviz Khan border sees a daily average of over 800 trucks carrying Iranian goods to Iraq. At the same time, 300 trucks also cross Khosravi border on a daily basis.

Smart Police Increase Security

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's police chief says smart police can definitely increase security.

In response to Iran Press, Brigadier-General Hossein Ashtari added that fortunately there was no problem in maintaining security in the borders.

Ashtari said: "Iranian police are fully equipped to observe the borders against any threats."

Commemorating Police Week, the official highlighted that Iranian police maintained and protected people's lives, properties and, more importantly, their security with sacrifice.

According to Ashtari, police have been monitoring the country's borders round-the-clock.

The top official highlighted: "The Iranian police also fully maintained the security of Iran's 13th Presidential Election, which many tried to make sabotage."

The police chief stressed that smart police could increase more services to people.

"After the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution, the country's police have gained promising achievements, one of which is smart police, and a part of those achievements will be displayed this week," he said.

Many countries' individuals left Afghanistan with humiliation despite development and hi-tech equipment, Brigadier-General Ashtari said.

"We carry out utmost efforts to maintain, and protect the country's security," Ashtari outlined, noting, "We are trying to train our police to be more professional, and smart to safeguard the country's security."

"The police have a duty to protect social, economic, political, and public security," the commander said.

FM Emphasizes Preserving Iranian People's Right in Nuclear Talks

TEHRAN (IP) - Foreign Minister says that the country will return to the Vienna talks when the West shows goodwill and fulfills its obligations regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In a press conference at the end of his visit to Beirut on Friday, the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian stated: "It is important that the interests and rights of the Iranian people be fully guaranteed in the nuclear talks."

Noting that Iran would return to the Vienna talks, he underlined: "We will not waste our time in negotiations. It is important for us to receive signals from the other side, including the United States, that the Americans have a strong intention to return fully to their commitments."

The JCPOA deal was scrapped by Donald Trump in 2018, but US officials said they were ready to return to the deal after Joe Biden entered the White House. This desire, however, was only in words, and in practice, nothing significant has happened.

Iran Is an Important Regional Country

BY: F. TAHERPOOR

NUR-SULTAN – Director of Department of the Near, Middle East and Africa of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Kazakhstan believes the Islamic Republic of Iran is an important country in the region and his country is keen to bolster its brotherly and amicable ties with Tehran.



Speaking to IRAN NEW, Ontalap Onalbayev said since the independence of Kazakhstan in 1992, the relation between Iran and Kazakhstan has been friendly and Kazakhstan is eager to bolster its multiple ties with Tehran. He added that for this reason during the SCO Summit in Tajikistan, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met Iran's new President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi to show Kazakhstan's determination for expansion of ties with Iran.

He said Iran is an important country in the region and it plays a colorful role in the region and international equities. He added that Kazakhstan has plans for especial cooperation with Iran in the fields of security, economy and investment.

He then said Kazakhstan's first President Nursultan Nazarbayev in his first foreign visit flew to Iran in 1992 to meet the then Iran President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. He noted that Iran was of the first countries which recognized the independence of Kazakhstan in December 1992 and Nazarbayev immediately in 1993 visited Tehran, adding that in 1992 Nazarbayev signed the Joint Iran-Kazakhstan Commission.

He added that the two countries have signed over 60 joint documents with Iran. Onalbayev went on to say that Iran was of the first countries which opened its embassy in Kazakhstan. He noted that due to the significance of Iran for Kazakhstan in terms of economy and politics, Kazakhstan opened a news consulate in Bandar Abbas in south of Iran which can be a north-south corridor for transit of Kazakhstan goods.

He then said that Kazakhstan opened its embassy in Tehran in 1993 and the political relation between the two states immediately started in January 1993.

Onalbayev then pointed to the joint cooperation between the two states in the regional and international issues, pointing to their countries in the CICA which is a security cooperation. He noted that the next meeting of heads of the CICA will be held next year.

Touching upon recent developments in Afghanistan and the Taliban's taking power, the veteran Kazakh diplomat said that everybody expected some developments in Afghanistan but it happened very fast and it was beyond the expectation and everybody was shocked. He added that Kazakhstan like other countries and Iran is very concerned about Afghanistan and the Taliban's programs. He noted that Kazakhstan is ready for any humanitarian aids for the Afghan people and expressed hope the new government act democratically.

Deputy FM Conducts Consultations in Turkey



ANKARA (IRNA) - Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs Ali Bagheri Kani arrived in Ankara, Turkey, on Thursday night to hold talks with members of the Iran-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship Group.

In the meeting, which was held in a warm and friendly atmosphere, the two sides discussed mutual relationship.

Bagheri Kani also held talks with Numan Kurtulmus, deputy chairman of Justice and Development Party, at the headquarters of the party in Ankara.

In the meeting, the two sides exchanges views on political, cultural and economic ties between Turkey and Iran as well as regional cooperation on issues such as security in Afghanistan.

The Iranian deputy FM plans to meet with Sedat Onal, deputy Foreign Minister of Turkey, at the Turkish Foreign Ministry in Ankara.

President Condemns Kunduz Terrorist Attack

TEHRAN (MNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi has condemned the recent terrorist attack in Afghanistan's Kunduz, saying the heinous crime was carried out with U.S. support.

President Ebrahim Raisi has issued a message of condolences over the martyrdom and injury of a large number of innocent people in a recent terrorist attack in Afghanistan's Kunduz.

Raisi offered his condolences to the people of Afghanistan and to all humanity on the martyrdom and injury of a large number of innocent people of Afghanistan who were worshipping in a holy place when they were attacked.

The Iranian president added, "This crime which was committed with the aim of sowing division among Muslims was committed by those

whose anti-human and anti-religious nature is clear to everyone."

He further said blamed the United States for backing the takfiri terrorist groups, saying, "The United States has facilitated the expansion of the activities of ISIL criminals in Afghanistan and prevented up-rooting them."

Raisi also expressed concern over the continuation of terrorist actions and the combination of "religious sedition" with "ethnic sedition", saying that creating division and sedition is part of the new U.S. security plot for Afghanistan.

The president further called for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan as a way of thwarting the plots for Afghanistan, underlining that Iran's support for Afghan brothers and sisters.

Tehran, Baku to Expand Cooperation in Communications, IT

TEHRAN (IP) - During a meeting with his Azerbaijani counterpart, the Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology discussed the establishment of joint data centers between the two countries.

On the second day of the meeting of the Ministers of Communications and Transport of developing countries in Istanbul, the Minister of Information and Communications Technology of Iran, Issa Zarepour, met with the Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Rashad Nabiyeu.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to expand their cooperation and strengthen the private sector's capabilities in communications by holding joint exhibitions. 219

Iran-Cuba Coronavirus Vaccines Proves 99% Effective

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Pasteurcovac, a coronavirus vaccine jointly developed by Iran and Cuba, proved to be 99 percent effective against COVID-19, the president of Pasteur Institute of Iran said on Saturday.

In a press briefing on the progress of Pasteurcovac development, Dr. Alireza Biglari said that the vaccine was the only COVID-19 vaccine in the world to produce the booster dose along with the two main doses and the only vaccine proper for the people above the age of 3.

Pasteurcovac was also the only vaccine able to be reengineered to be updated according to new coronavirus mutations, according to Dr. Biglari.

He noted that the vaccine passed the third phase for clinical test on 44,000 volunteers in Cuba and 24,000 in Iran and showed 91.6 percent efficacy after the booster dose.

The vaccine provoked immunity in over 99 percent of people after they received the third dose, according to the doctor.

Pasteurcovac, known as Soberana 2 in Cuba, has jointly been developed by Iran and Cuba and successfully passed third phase for clinical test.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:51
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:53
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:44
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:07

36. Now with him there came into the prison two young men. Said one of them: "I see myself (in a dream) pressing wine." said the other: "I see myself (in a dream) carrying bread on my head, and birds are eating, thereof." "Tell us" (they said) "The truth and meaning thereof: for we see thou art one that doth good (to all)."

Surah 12. Joseph (36)

Finland Can Partly Resolve Iran Water Problem

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Chairman of Iran-Finland Joint Chamber of Commerce Gholam-Hossein Jamili believes Iran can take advantage of Finland's capacities to partly resolve its water problems, reiterating that the geography of trade is changing in the world.

Speaking to ILNA and touching upon the latest condition of the trade between Iran and Finland, Jamili said that the Iran-Finland Joint Chamber of Commerce has been established in recent month, and said Iran should not forget the necessity of ties with countries because countries like Finland can help Iran to develop its industries in different field.

On the goals of the chamber, he said Finland has high talent in transfer and export of new technology and it can be considered by Iran for developing its current industries. He added that Finland is among the top countries in the field of start-ups and it can be a good model for Iran which is itself among the top countries in the Middle East.

Jamili went on to say that the issue of water is one of the vital issues in the life and modern world and not only Iran is struggling with it but also most countries have serious restrictions and problems in the field of water and they are looking for reforming the consumption and management models. He noted that in fact Finland acts much distinguished in this field comparing to other countries and Iran can take advantage of this capacity for solving some part of its water shortage.

He also pointed to the importance of Finland in the field of education, and said in the field of education Finland also has different modern, sophisticated and distinguished models which can advance some works to help the country's education climate.

Jamili reiterated that Iran's presence and relation in Europe has been mostly in West and South Europe and it has paid less attention to the Nordic and Scandinavian areas



while there are many commonalities in this field for Iran, and the capacity of Iranians residing in those areas have always been unnoticed.

He said Denmark, Finland, and Sweden are of those countries which can have potential capacities for Iran to take advantage of it.

On the trade volume of the two countries, he said that the trade volume is not a criterion for weighing the level of the ties, adding that Finnish companies are essential conservatives and even after the signing of the JCPOA, they were among the last countries which expressed their interests for cooperation with Iran.

He expressed hope that by the launch of the Iran-Finland Joint Chamber of Commerce, the ground for transparent trade between Tehran and Helsinki would be paved and the trade volume of the two countries moves towards considerable rise.

He admitted that the trade volume of the two countries has declined this year comparing to the preceding year.

Jamili also stressed that the geography of trade and trade exchanges in the region, South East Asia, China, India, the Persian Gulf states, CIS and East Europe states is changing and new balance will be formed and some of them will be because of the routes of trade exchange and logistics.

He reiterated that recent tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan will have no impact on Iran's trade with Finland.

Tehran to Host Iran-Kazakhstan Business Forum Tomorrow

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The Iran-Kazakhstan Business Forum will be held on Monday, October 11, at Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

According to reports, the Kazakh trade delegation, led by Vice Minister of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Kairat Torebayev, is to partake in the forum. The forum will be held in joint collaboration between QazTrade Company of Kazakhstan and Iran's chamber of commerce with support of Kazakhstan Embassy in Tehran.

Over 30 Kazakh trade representatives are to participate in the forum and will exchange views with over 100 Iranian counterparts.



KSC Hailed at National Conference of Customer Satisfaction



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) was honored and awarded with the plaque of appreciation and statue during the 8th National Conference of Managing Customer Satisfaction.

According to the reports, the 8th National Conference of Managing Customer Satisfaction with an approach on customer satisfaction during the pandemic and post-pandemic was held last week in Tehran in presence of some state officials, managing directors of companies and university teachers.

In the conference, the Attorney General's official Dr. Saeed Omrani pointed to the importance of the economy and said in this term, the Judiciary with an approach on lifting hurdles in way of entrepreneurship has stepped into the scene. He reiterated that customer orientation and ethic-orientation are very determining in an economic enterprise because in case of customer's dissatisfaction, the activities of the enterprise will not be justifiable.

For choosing the best economic enterprises, some factors like getting ISO certificates, good communication with customers during the pandemic, implementing social responsibilities and developmental and infrastructural activities were taken into consideration during evaluation.

At the end of the ceremony, the CEO of KSC Mr. Amin Ebrahimi was honored with the prize and director of export department of the company Mr. Majid Abiat received the award in behalf of Mr. Ebrahimi.

Some senior managers of the company like Mr. Vahid Zarif, Gholamali Mansourian and Mehdi Charkhab were present in the ceremony.

Plans Underway to Invest \$22b to Maintain Gas Production



TEHRAN (Shana) – Oil Minister Javad Owji said the country would need to invest \$22 billion in the gas sector given the drop in gas pressure within the next 6 to 8 years.

Speaking on Friday, Mr. Owji underlined the rich gas reserves in Bushehr Province, and said that about 50% of gas reserves and about 10% of Iran's oil reserves are in the province.

"During our visit to Bushehr Province, we will closely follow the completion of half-finished projects in oil and gas."

Stating that part of the refinery project of phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field would come on stream by the end of the current Iranian calendar year which began on March 21, he said: "Also, planning and studies of increasing pressure on various phases of South Pars will begin."

"Due to the drop in gas pressure in the field, we estimate that over the next six to eight years, we will have to invest about \$22 billion to maintain gas production," the Iranian Minister of Petroleum went on to add.

Iranian, Turkish Communication Ministers Discuss Bilateral Ties

ANAKARA (IRNA) - Minister of communication and information technology Issa Zarepour and Turkish minister of communication and infrastructure Adil Karaismailoğlu in a meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, on Friday discussed bilateral relations.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 12th information and communication council and the D-8 Summit in Istanbul.

During the meeting, Zarepour proposed cooperation between the two countries in the field of infrastructure, border-to-border transit, establishment of joint border data centers and increased cooperation between Iranian and Turkish operators.

Referring to Iran's capabilities in the field of satellite construction, he pointed to Iran's readiness to help Turkey in these areas.

He considered the interaction between the elites of the



two countries as necessary especially in the field of space issues and called for cooperation between the two countries in international organizations and institutions.

In this meeting, Karaismailoğlu appreciated the presence of the minister in Istanbul, emphasizing that the world is changing rapidly and ICT has high capacities for cooperation.

He announced his country's readiness to cooperate in this field with neighboring countries.

Referring to Turkey's capabilities in building satellites, Karaismailoğlu also expressed satisfaction with cooperation with Iran in this field. The summit is attended by 11 ministers and representatives of countries in the region, Europe and Africa.

Zarepour also said: In this meeting, the issues of interest of the two countries in the field of communication were examined.

Role of Interaction Between MSC And Isfahan Chamber Highlighted

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Isfahan Chamber of Commerce Masoud Golshiri in meeting with the new CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company hailed this appointment and emphasized the key and constructive role of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) as the leader of provincial and national industrial and economic development and also the impact of the mega industrial complex in the social welfare and development of the infrastructure in the province.

Golshiri also said it is necessary to focus on reinforcement of developmental infrastructures of the province like the project of water transfer of the Persian Gulf, Tehran-Isfahan express train, logistic village and Isfahan airline as the main Isfahan's public expectations from the popular and revolutionary government and also Mobarakeh Steel Company.

In the meeting, both sides pointed to the alliance of the chamber and the company for materializing this goal. They also pointed to the necessity of using potentials and capabilities of MSC as the economic and industrial leader in the provincial and national economy in line with making network between the economic activists and helping the materialization of the resistant economy during the economic war. It was also decided in the meeting that regular meetings are held monthly to exchange views and participation in materializing the pre-set goals.



Home Appliance Trade Balance to Become 100% Positive in 4 Years

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin has said the country's home appliance exports are set to become twice as much as the volume of imports by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).

Speaking in a meeting with the representatives of the country's home appliance manufacturers on Saturday, Fatemi Amin said: "Statistics show that the export of home appliances is much less than the imports in this sector."

Emphasizing that despite the growth of production in the home appliance industry, the ratio of exports to imports is not defensible, the official added: "This trend should change so that the exports to imports ratio would double by 1404."

ESCO Sets New Record for Production of Structural Steel Sheets

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – By the launch of new saw and drill in the rail production line, aimed at boosting the production capacity of this product in the Rolling Unit 650 through the efforts of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO)'s staff, the company faced a considerable rise in production and it set new record for producing structural steel sheets.

On the sidelines of visiting the launch of the project, the CEO of ESCO Mr. Mansour Yazdizadeh said that with efforts of his colleagues in the company, ESCO could resolve problem in the process of producing rails with adding one new saw and rail line. He noted, planning and design of this purchased production line in the ESCO has been defined based on 120 meters and since the Road Ministry had not approved production of rail over 18 meters, some problems had been created for production which was resolved by adding the saw and drill.

He also pointed to the development and increase in producing different products

with higher value added and said that structural steel sheet and said that structural steel sheet is of that type of products that with producing 400 tons of 20x300 sheets in just one working shift of 8 hours, a new record was registered in the company and its production will reach 600 tons in the future.

Yazdizadeh also pointed to the breaking the 25-year record of producing coil and said the company is trying to keep the current trend of production of coil in the upcoming months. He added that coil is both for domestic consumption and exports and it is considered as a strategic product, adding that despite the pandemic and other problems, the company hopes it advance its export programs as schedule.



Sierra Leone Abolishes Inhumane Death Penalty



FREETOWN (AFP) - Sierra Leone's president on Friday signed a bill abolishing the death penalty, declaring the West African country had "exorcised horrors of a cruel past" after a long campaign to end capital punishment.

President Julius Maada Bio signed the abolition bill during a ceremony in the capital Freetown after lawmakers approved the text in July.

In a statement, the president denounced capital punishment "inhumane." "We today affirm our belief in the sanctity of life," he said.

Libya Ready for Polls Despite Wrangling



TRIPOLI (Dispatches) - Preparations are almost finished for polls in war-torn Libya, the head of the electoral commission says, despite wrangling over voting laws and warnings the outcome could be contested.

"We are 80 or 90 percent ready" for the presidential and parliamentary votes in December and January, Imed al-Sayeh, head of the country's High National Election Commission (HNEC), said in an interview with AFP.

"I think there will be very strong turnout for these elections, especially as there will be direct presidential polls for the first time since Libya's independence" in 1951, he said at his office in Tripoli.

Suicide Bomber Kills at Least 50 At Shiite Mosque in Afghanistan



KUNDUZ (Dispatches) - A suicide bomb attack on worshippers at a Shiite mosque in the Afghan city of Kunduz killed at least 50 people Friday, in the bloodiest assault since U.S. forces left the country.

Scores more victims from the minority community were wounded in the blast, which has not been claimed but appears designed to further destabilize Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban takeover.

The extremist Islamic State group, bitter rivals of the Taliban, has repeatedly targeted Shiites in a bid to stir up sectarian violence in Sunni-majority Afghanistan. Matiullah Rohani, director of culture and information in Kunduz for Afghanistan's new Taliban government, confirmed to AFP that the deadly incident was a suicide attack.

A medical source at the Kunduz Provincial Hospital said that 35 dead and more than 50 wounded had been taken there, while a worker at a Doctors Without Borders (MSF) hospital reported 15 dead and scores more wounded.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid had earlier said an unknown number of people had been killed and injured when "an explosion took place in a mosque of our Shiite compatriots" in Kunduz.

Residents of Kunduz, the capital of a province of the same name, told AFP the blast hit a Shiite mosque during Friday prayers, the most important of the week for Muslims.

Zalmay Alokzai, a local businessman who rushed to Kunduz Provincial Hospital to check whether doctors needed blood donations, described horrific scenes.

"Ambulances were going back to the incident scene to carry the dead," he said.

An international aid worker at the MSF hospital in the city told AFP there were fears the death toll could rise even further.

"Hundreds of people are gathered at the main gate of the hospital and crying for their relatives but armed Taliban guys are trying to prevent gatherings in case another explosion is planned," he said.

Graphic images shared on social media, which could not immediately be verified, showed several bloodied bodies lying on the floor. Pictures showed plumes of smoke rising into the air over Kunduz.

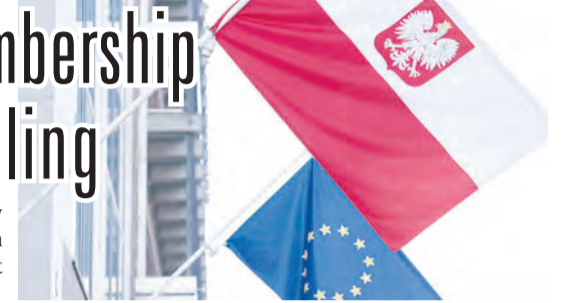
Another video showed men herding people, including women and children, away from the scene. Frightened crowds thronged the streets.

Aminullah, an eyewitness whose brother was at the mosque, told AFP: "After I heard the explosion, I called my brother but he did not pick up."

"I walked towards the mosque and found my brother wounded and faint. We immediately took him to the MSF hospital." A female teacher in Kunduz told AFP the blast happened near her house, and several of her neighbours were killed. "It was a very terrifying incident," she said.

"Many of our neighbours have been killed and wounded. A 16-year-old neighbor was killed. They couldn't find half of his body. Another neighbour who was 24 was killed as well."

Poland Defends EU Membership Amid Backlash Over Ruling



WARSAW (Dispatches) - Poland's government on Friday insisted it wanted the country to stay in the European Union as it faced a growing backlash against a court ruling that analysts said could lead to "Polexit".

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Poland must "fully and completely" implement EU law, while France's Europe Minister Clement Beaune said the ruling was an "attack against the EU".

Poland's Constitutional Court on Thursday challenged the primacy of EU law over Polish law by declaring several articles in the EU treaties "incompatible" with the country's constitution.

It also warned EU institutions not to "act beyond the scope of their competences" by interfering with reforms of Poland's judiciary -- a major bone of contention with Brussels.

But right-wing Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said that the process of Poland and other Central European countries joining the EU in 2004 was "one of the highlights of the last decades".

"Poland's place is and will be in the European family of nations," he said in a Facebook post after former EU chief and now opposition leader Donald Tusk called for a major rally in Warsaw for Sunday "to defend a European Poland".

Brussels responded sternly on Thursday, with EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders warning that the EU would use "all the tools" at its disposal to ensure the primacy of EU law.

Before the ruling, the EU had warned that the case could have "consequences" for tens of billions of euros in pandemic recovery grants and cheap loans for Poland which have still not received approval from Brussels.

Speaking to French network BFM-TV on Friday, Beaune said the ruling was "very serious" and there was "a risk of a de-facto exit" of Poland from the EU.

Maas told the Funke newspaper group: "If a country decides politically to be part of the EU, then it must ensure that the agreed rules are fully and completely implemented."

Turkey Asks U.S. to Buy 40 F-16 Jets

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Turkey has made a request to the U.S. to buy 40 Lockheed Martin-made F-16 fighter jets and nearly 80 modernization kits for its existing warplanes, as the NATO ally looks to modernize its Air Force after the purchase of F-35 jets fell through, sources familiar with the matter said.

The deal, worth billions, is still working its way through the Foreign Military Sales process which is subject to approval by the U.S. State Department as well as the U.S. Congress which can block deals.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the deal.

"As a matter of policy, the Department does not confirm or comment on proposed defense sales or transfers until they have been formally notified to Congress," a spokesperson for the State Department said. The Turkish Embassy in Washington declined to comment. Ankara had ordered more than 100 F-35 jets, also made by Lockheed Martin Corp, but was removed from the program in 2019 after it acquired Russian S-400 missile defense systems.

The decades-old partnership between the NATO allies has gone through unprecedented tumult in the past five years over disagreements on Syria policy, Ankara's closer ties with Moscow, its naval ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean, U.S. charges against a state-owned Turkish bank and erosion of rights and freedoms in Turkey. The request for the jets will likely have a difficult time getting approval from the U.S. Congress, where sentiment towards Turkey has soured deeply over recent years, primarily due to Ankara's purchase of the S-400s and its problematic human rights track record.

Ankara's purchase of the S-400s has also triggered U.S. sanctions. In December 2020, Washington blacklisted Turkey's Defense Industry Directorate, its chief, Ismail Demir, and three other employees.

Since then the U.S. has repeatedly warned Turkey against buying further Russian weaponry. But last week, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan indicated Ankara still intended to buy a second batch of S-400s from Russia, a move that could deepen a rift with Washington.

Bangladesh Plans to Move 81,000 Rohingya to Island

COX'S BAZAR (Dispatches) - Bangladesh wants to send more than 80,000 Rohingya refugees to a remote island in the Bay of Bengal after sealing an agreement for the United Nations to provide help, officials said today.

Some 19,000 of the Muslim refugees from Myanmar have already relocated from crowded camps on the mainland to Bhashan Char island, despite doubts raised by aid groups, officials said.

Bangladesh refugee commissioner Shah Rezwon Hayat told AFP that tens of thousands more would go once the monsoon storms that batter the Bay of Bengal each year end in November.

"We are aiming to relocate some 81,000 (Rohingya) to Bhashan Char by the end of February to complete the 100,000 quota," he told AFP. The government has spent about \$350 million (RM1.4 billion) building shelters on the 53 square kilometer island which was formed by tidal silt deposits about 20 years ago.

On top of the inhospitable weather, the island is 60 kilometers from the Bangladesh mainland and some Rohingya groups say people were forced to go there.

About 850,000 Rohingya are packed into camps along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Most fled a Myanmar military clampdown in 2017 that the UN says could be genocide.

Bangladesh has been praised for taking in the refugees who poured across the border but has had little success finding them permanent homes.

While a Bangladesh security intelligence agency is responsible for relocating the refugees, the government denies that any coercion has been used.

Still, several hundred Rohingya have fled Bhashan Char only to be detained on other islands or in coastal villages. Dozens died after a fishing boat packed with Rohingya trying to flee the island sank in August.

The UN had expressed doubts about the relocations. But Bangladesh and UN officials said a deal has been agreed to give the UN a role in providing humanitarian assistance and monitoring conditions on the island.

"We can confirm that the UN will sign a memorandum of understanding with the government to protect Rohingya refugees in Bhashan Char on Saturday," a spokesperson for UNHCR, the UN's refugee agency, told AFP.

Refugee commissioner Hayat said the UN would play a bigger role on the island than they do now in the mainland refugee camps, where they already have extensive operations.

"Bhashan Char residents will receive similar treatment, humanitarian response-wise, to what is now provided to people in the Cox's Bazar camps," he said.



Japan PM Vows to Devote Himself To Ending Covid-19 Crisis



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he would do his utmost to lead Japan out of the Covid-19 crisis while protecting its territory and people in an increasingly tough security environment.

Kishida took the top job in the world's third-largest economy on Monday, replacing Yoshihide Suga, who had seen his support undermined by surging Covid-19 infections. Daily cases have recently fallen and a long state of emergency was lifted this month.

"I'm determined to devote body-and-soul to overcome this national crisis with the people, carve out a new era and pass on to the next generation a country whose citizens are rich at heart," Kishida said in his first policy speech to parliament.

A big early test for him will be leading his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) into a general election on October 31.

The 64-year-old former foreign minister, who has a reputation as a low-key consensus builder, said the government would quickly put together a stimulus package to support those hit hard by the pandemic and take legislative steps to secure medical resources.

He did not specify the size of the stimulus package in his speech but last month he suggested a sum of ¥30 trillion (RM1.1 trillion).

Earlier, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said he hoped to compile an extra budget to fund the stimulus immediately after the elections and have it approved by parliament by the end of the year.

Kishida underscored the need to support those in need to win public cooperation and he called for cash payouts to companies hit hard by the pandemic.

He also pledged to give cash payouts to so-called non-regular workers, families with children, and those struggling to make ends meet because of the pandemic.

Kishida reiterated his resolve to overcome deflation and said he would press on with bold monetary easing, expeditious fiscal spending and a strategy for growth.

"We will conduct fiscal spending without hesitation to respond to crises and make sure all possible measures are taken," he said.

On national security and foreign affairs, Kishida said he would protect Japan's peace and stability.

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S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Tajrish Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, Jacuzzi
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

Kamranieh (\$2200) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F
Zaferanieh (\$2500) 230sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F
Gheitarieh (\$1800) 160sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F
Pasdran (\$2300) 170sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Darrous Apt (\$2000)
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Jordan Aims to Supply Lebanon With Electricity by Year-End

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Jordan hopes to start supplying Lebanon with electricity by the end of the year, its energy minister said on Thursday, as the Lebanese government tries to tackle its crippling energy shortages amid the country's financial meltdown.

Hala Zawati told Sky News Arabia that Lebanon was seeking World Bank financing for the project, part of efforts backed by the United States to address Lebanon's energy crisis.

Under an agreement announced last month, Egypt will supply natural gas to Lebanon via a pipeline that passes through Jordan and Syria to help boost Lebanon's electricity output. The plan, as outlined by the Lebanese presidency in August, also involves using Egyptian gas to generate electricity in Jordan for transmission to Lebanon via the Syrian power grid. U.S. senators visiting Lebanon last month said they were seeking ways to address the complicating factor of U.S. sanctions on Syria.



Bright Future Predicted For IOFS and Its Programs

BY: F. TAHERPOOR

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh former Islamic Development Bank Acting Governor and the current Director General of the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) believes a bright future is on the way of the IOFS and its programs and the organization expects the number of its members to increase.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with IRAN NEWS in Nur-Sultan, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Yerlan Baidaut highlighted the performance of the IOFS in the past and its future programs, and reiterated that the organization is determined to act more positively in helping its member states and even other countries.

He said he has been many times in Iran and in November he is to visit Tehran for the meeting with Iranian officials on the IOFS programs. He then termed Iran a beautiful country with a good history especially in architecture and engineering, adding that he has seen many great architects in Iran and he has had good cooperation and friends in Iran.

He further briefed about the establishment of the IOFS, its goals and programs and noted that the initiative for launching the organization was first raised by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2011 and during the OIC CFM meeting. He noted he was working with the IDB and he was in charge of adding the text of Kazakh President's speech on this issue before Mr. Nazarbayev expressed the idea.

He reiterated that the President's initiative had been inspired by success of the Jeddah Food Security Declaration for Africa realised by the Islamic Development Bank in 2009-2011. He reiterated the IOFS as a specialized entity of OIC is nearly a young organization in the small scale of the similar UN body but with a focus on deeper and more result-oriented programs for certain areas.

Yerlan Baidaut then said that finally in April 2016 and for the first time the General assembly of the IOFS convened. He added that so far the organization has 36 member countries who have signed the Statute and 16 of them have ratified it. He added that between 2018 and 2019, Kazakhstan for two years had voluntary aids to the organization.

In May 2019 he joined the IOFS as the Director General and since then the organization entered its active era, so he officially started his work from the second General Assembly which was held in August 2019 in Saudi Arabia. He noted that the IOFS has actually commenced its programming activities thereafter although the President's initiative was raised in June 2011.

He added that during his first year in charge, the organization developed 9 program concepts and seven more added during his second year. He reiterated that since he joined the organization 3 more countries entered its membership and the number is increasing every year. He went on to say that Jordan and Lebanon also have recently announced readiness to join the wagon.

Director General went on to say that OIC nowadays has 56 members and he hopes more countries to join the organization. He said helping the poor people is under food humanitarian programs of the organization as in September, the ten-year strategy of the organization was set, reiterating that during the 3rd General Assembly of the IOFS in Ankara in December 2020, 16 strategic programs of the organization were approved.

He added that that strategic framework of the IOFS as of 2020 consisted of five pillars embracing the whole scope of OIC-related food security matters:

- 1: Plan of Action for strategic commodities
- 2: Food Security Reserves
- 3: Science, Technology and Innovation Agenda 2026
- 4: Private sector driven agro-food trade and investment promotion
- 5: Food humanitarian programs.

As per the IOFS Vision 2031 Strategy, new programs on bio & agritech, on climate change and on talent development are going to be launched soon.

In conclusion, he noted about the intention to visit Iran in November. The primary objective of this working trip to one of founding member countries is to develop bilateral cooperation and future engagement opportunities, with a specific focus on the country interests in developing agriculture and sustaining food security.



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Indonesia Passes Major Tax Overhaul Bill, VAT to Rise Next Year

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia's parliament approved a law on Thursday for one of the country's most ambitious tax overhauls, including raising VAT next year, a new carbon levy and cancelling a planned corporate tax cut.

The law is aimed at optimizing revenue collection and improving tax compliance, after state coffers took a big hit this year and in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said the new fiscal measures will increase next year's tax revenue by around 139.3 trillion rupiah (\$9.80 billion), taking the tax ratio of Southeast Asia's biggest economy to 9.22% of GDP, from 8.44% without the new law. But some business groups and analysts have questioned the timing of the tax hikes, with the economic recovery from the pandemic seen as fragile.

The law calls for the value-added tax (VAT) rate for sales of nearly all goods and services to be raised from 10% now to 11% next April and to 12% by 2025.

It also scraps a planned corporate tax cut and introduces a higher income tax rate for wealthy individuals, a new carbon tax and a new tax amnesty program.

All political parties but one in parliament approved the legislation.

"Through this law we want to optimize government revenue, create a fairer tax system ... as well as expand our tax base in this globalization era when the digital technology is very dominant," Sri Mulyani said.

The new tax measures would add less than 0.5 percentage point to headline inflation and have little impact on economic growth, the minister said.

The government has made some concessions from its original proposals. Initially, it had sought to raise VAT to 12% in one go and proposed a minimum tax for loss-making companies suspected of tax avoidance. Hariyadi Sukamdani, chairman of the Indonesian Employers' Association, said he appreciated the staggered VAT hike, but hoped the government would reconsider the corporate tax cut in three to four years "because if they don't, we will be less competitive".

Josua Pardede, economist at Bank Permata, expected a positive impact on long-term fiscal sustainability, but he warned the VAT hike would erode the purchasing power of low income earners, who are sensitive to rising prices.



German Industrial Production Slumps on Supply Chain Disruption

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German industrial output suffered its steepest drop in August since April last year, due to supply chain disruptions that are holding back growth in Europe's biggest economy and hitting the auto sector particularly hard, official data showed on Thursday.

The Federal Statistics Office said industrial output fell by 4.0% on the month after an increase of 1.3% in July. A Reuters poll had pointed to a decline in August of 0.4%.

"Manufacturers continue to report production constraints due to supply shortages of intermediate products," the office said in a statement.

Production of cars and car parts fell by 17.5% on the month.

German car companies are struggling to meet a post-pandemic surge in demand since the start of the year, due to a lack of microchips and other intermediate products.

Carmaker BMW said its group deliveries were down 12.2% in the third quarter, hit by the microchip crunch.

On Tuesday, Daimler truck boss Martin Daum said he expected the global chip shortage to continue to affect production next year. "We will definitely deliver less than we could have sold, and that also applies to next year," he said, adding that it was impossible to say how big the shortfalls would be.

"It's a fight for every chip," he added.

Official data released on Wednesday showed German industrial orders fell more than expected in August on weaker demand from abroad following two months of unusually strong gains due to major contracts.

Iraq Signs Deal With Consortium Led by Scatec for 525 MW Solar Plants

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq signed an agreement with a consortium led by Norway's Scatec Solar to build two solar power plants with a total capacity of 525 MW as OPEC's second-biggest producer accelerates push to lower reliance on oil and gas for power generation.

The project is part of plans to develop 7.5 GW of renewable power before 2023, oil minister Ihsan Ismael said in a statement.

The other companies in the consortium are Egypt's Orascom Construction and Iraq's Bilal.

The deal with Scatec follows the signing of an agreement with UAE's Masdar, the renewable energy firm owned by sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investment Co., to develop 1 GW of renewable power from five plants in an initial phase. The second phase includes the development of another 1 GW.

Iraq has been striking a number of renewable agreements to help lower its dependence on oil and gas as feedstock for power generation.

In September, Iraq signed \$27 billion worth of deals with TotalEnergies that include building a 1 GW solar power plant.

Iraq and state-owned PowerChina have also signed an initial agreement to develop up to 2 GW of solar power plants, the prime minister's media office said August 25.

In the first phase, PowerChina will develop 750 MW, the media office said, without disclosing more details about the agreement.

Iraq is courting international oil companies to develop its gas resources to meet its power generation needs and lower dependence on Iranian gas, Ismael said.

The ministry's target is to reach 4 Bcf/d of production from associated gas and another 1.5 Bcf/d from free gas by the end of 2025, Ismael told Energy Intelligence Forum on Wednesday.

However, Iraq's power sector needs a minimum of 7 Bcf/d as feedstock for its 40 GW of installed electricity capacity, which means that independence from Iranian gas is a long way off.

Moreover, annual energy consumption is growing 5%-7% due to the expanding population.

Iraq is under increasing pressure from the U.S. to wear itself off electricity and gas imports from Iran, which has been subject to U.S. sanctions since 2018.

The U.S. administration has been granting Iraq waivers since 2018 to continue importing Iranian energy.

Iranian intermittent supply of gas and electricity has led to widespread shortages in Iraq this summer, when the temperature has soared to 50 degrees Celsius, especially in the south.

World Food Prices Hit 10-Year Peak

ROME (Dispatches) - World food prices rose for a second consecutive month in September to reach a 10-year peak, driven by gains for cereals and vegetable oils, the United Nations food agency said on Thursday.

The Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also projected record global cereal production in 2021, but said this would be outpaced by forecast consumption.

FAO's food price index, which tracks international prices of the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 130.0 points last month, the highest reading since September 2011, according to the agency's data.

The figure compared with a revised 128.5 for August. The August figure was previously given as 127.4.

On a year-on-year basis, prices were up 32.8% in September.

Agricultural commodity prices have risen steeply in the past year, fueled by harvest setbacks and Chinese demand.

The FAO's cereal price index rose by 2.0% in September from the previous month. That was led by a near 4% increase for wheat prices, with the UN agency citing tightening export availabilities amid strong demand.

"Among major cereals, wheat will be the focus in the coming weeks as demand need to be tested against fast rising prices," FAO Senior Economist Abdolreza Abbassian said in a statement.

World vegetable oil prices were up 1.7% on the month and showing a year-on-year rise of about 60%, as palm oil prices climbed on robust import demand and concerns over labor shortages in Malaysia, FAO said.

Palm oil futures have rallied further in early October to hit record highs as a surge in crude oil markets has lent further support to vegetable oils used in biodiesel.

Global sugar prices rose 0.5% in September with concern over adverse crop weather in top exporter Brazil partly offset by slowing import demand and a favorable production outlook in India and Thailand, according to FAO.

For cereal production, FAO projected a record world crop of 2.800 billion tons in 2021, up slightly from 2.788 billion estimated a month ago.

That would be below world cereal use of 2.811 billion tons, a forecast revised up by 2.7 million tons from a month earlier mainly to reflect increased wheat use in animal feed, FAO said in a cereal supply and demand note.

Global cereal stocks were expected to ease in 2021/22 but would still be at a comfortable level, FAO added.

IMF Chief's Lawyer Claims Data Probe Violated World Bank Staff Rules



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Lawyers who investigated World Bank data-rigging allegations against IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva violated World Bank staff rules by failing to notify her that she was a subject of the probe and by not allowing her to respond to its findings, Georgieva's attorney said.

In a letter to the International Monetary Fund Executive Board released on Thursday, Covington & Burling attorney Lanny Breuer asked directors to consider "fundamental procedural and substantive errors" with the investigation report by WilmerHale, a law firm hired by the World Bank's board to investigate data irregularities in the lender's flagship "Doing Business" rankings of country business climates.

The WilmerHale report alleged that while Georgieva was World Bank CEO in 2017, she applied "undue pressure" on World Bank staff to make data changes that boosted China's ranking at a time when the bank was seeking Beijing's support for a major capital increase. Georgieva has denied the allegations.

The new claims from Breuer, a former U.S. Justice Department official and special counsel to former President Bill Clinton during his 1999 impeachment trial, come as Georgieva tries to persuade the IMF board to support her.

Georgieva on Wednesday called the accusations that she pressured staff to make inappropriate data changes "outrageous and untrue" and said some of her statements were taken out of context by WilmerHale. She publicly released her lengthy statement to the board on Thursday.

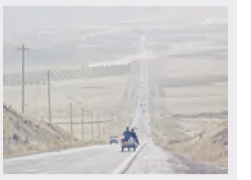
"Ms Georgieva has never been notified that she is a subject of the investigation, or been given an opportunity, as guaranteed by Staff Rule 3.00 to review and respond to the report's findings," wrote Breuer, her attorney.

The rule covers the World Bank Office of Ethics and Business Conduct procedures.

"Gabriel" to Take Part Into French Short Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Directed by Youssef Kargar, the Iranian short film "Gabriel" entered Tous Courts Short Film Festival in France.

Directed by Youssef Kargar, 'Gabriel' will take part in the competition section of the 30th Tous Courts Short Film Festival in France. The 30th edition of the festival will be held in France from November 30 to December 4. 'Gabriel' narrates the story of a father who has to decide under difficult conditions between love, faith, and conscience.



Two Journalists Win 2021 Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO (Dispatches) - Journalists Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov, who braved the wrath of the leaders of the Philippines and Russia to expose corruption and misrule, won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, in an endorsement of free speech under fire worldwide.

The two were awarded "for their courageous fight for freedom of expression" in their countries, Chairwoman Berit Reiss-Andersen of the Norwegian Nobel Committee told a news conference.

"At the same time, they are representatives of all journalists who stand up for this ideal in a world in which democracy and freedom of the press face increasingly adverse conditions," she added. "Free, independent and fact-based journalism serves to protect against abuse of power, lies and war propaganda."

Muratov dedicated his award to six contributors to his Novaya Gazeta newspaper who had been murdered for their work exposing human rights violations and corruption.

"Igor Domnikov, Yuri Shchekochikhin, Anna Politkovskaya, Stas Markelov, Anastasia Baburova, Natasha Estemirova - these are the people who have today won the Nobel Prize," Muratov said, reciting the names of slain reporters and activists whose portraits hang in the newspaper's Moscow headquarters.

In an interview with Reuters in Manila, Ressa called the prize "a global recognition of the journalist's role in repairing, fixing our broken world".

"It's never been as hard to be journalist as it is today," said Ressa, a 35-year veteran journalist, who said she was tested by years of legal cases in the Philippines brought by the authorities over the work of her Rappler investigative website.

"You don't really know who you are until you are forced to fight for it."

The prize is the first Nobel Peace Prize for journalists since the German Carl von Ossietzky won it in 1935 for revealing his country's secret post-war rearmament programme.

Muratov, 59, is the first Russian to win the peace prize since Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990. Gorbachev himself has long been associated with Muratov's newspaper, having contributed some of his Nobel prize money to help set it up in the early post-Soviet days when Russians expected new freedoms.

Ressa, 58, is the first winner of a Nobel prize in any field from the Philippines. Rappler, which she co-founded in 2012, has grown prominent through investigative reporting, including into large scale killings during a police campaign against drugs.

In August, a Philippine court dismissed a libel case against Ressa, one of several lawsuits filed against the journalist who says she has been targeted because of her news site's critical reports on President Rodrigo Duterte.

She was one of several journalists named Time Magazine Person of the Year in 2018 for fighting media intimidation, and her legal battles have raised international concern about the harassment of media in the Philippines, a country once seen as a standard bearer for press freedom in Asia.



In Moscow, Nadezhda Prusenkova, a journalist at Novaya Gazeta, told Reuters staff were surprised and delighted.

"We're shocked. We didn't know," said Prusenkova. "Of course we're happy and this is really cool."

Russian journalists have faced an increasingly difficult environment in recent years, with many being forced to register as agents of foreign states, a designation that invites official paperwork and public contempt.

"We will leverage this prize in the interests of Russian journalism which (the authorities) are now trying to repress," Muratov told Podyom, a journalism website. "We will try to help people who have been recognised as agents, who are now being treated like dirt and being exiled from the country."

Reiss-Andersen said the Nobel committee intended the award to send a message about the importance of rigorous journalism at a time when technology has made it easier than ever to spread falsehoods.

"We find that people are manipulated by the press, and ... fact-based, high-quality journalism is in fact more and more restricted," she told Reuters.

It was also a way to shine a light on the difficult situations for journalists, specifically under the leadership in Russia and the Philippines, she added.

EU Urged Against Labelling Gas as a Green Investment



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The environmental law firm ClientEarth has warned the European Union that it would be breaching its own laws if it labels investments in gas-fuelled energy as "green" in upcoming finance regulations.

In a Wednesday letter to the bloc's executive seen by Reuters, ClientEarth said categorising gas as environmentally friendly would violate other laws, including the EU's legally binding target to reduce its net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 from 1990 levels, and bring them to zero by 2050.

The EU is close to finishing the climate portion of its sustainable finance taxonomy, a first-of-its-kind regulation that aims to steer private capital out of polluting economic activities and into those the EU deems environmentally friendly.

The European Commission is expected to make a decision in the coming months on whether the climate taxonomy, the bulk of which it proposed rules for earlier this year, will label natural gas and nuclear energy as green investments.

"If it were adopted, this is likely to increase investments in activities utilizing natural gas and would be in total contradiction with the commitments undertaken by the European Commission both at international and EU level," ClientEarth said in the letter.

A European Commission official said it had received the letter and would respond "in due time".

ClientEarth said legislation that supported funding for gas would divert money that could otherwise be spent on renewable energy. The taxonomy would not block investors from putting money into gas projects, but it would ban them from labelling such investments as sustainable.

The lawyers added gas also fails to meet a key plank of the taxonomy regulation, which states that to be deemed climate friendly investments must "contribute substantially to the stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic climate change."

While gas is not as polluting as coal, it still produces carbon emissions when burned and is linked to potent methane emissions, both of which must be rapidly reduced to meet the Paris climate goals.

However, some EU countries see gas as a transition fuel and say it should be included in the taxonomy to support investments that would help them phase out coal-fuelled energy.

Novelist Gurnah Wins 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature

OSLO (Dispatches)- Novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah has won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature for his "uncompromising and compassionate" look at "the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee", the Nobel Committee announced on Thursday.

"I think it's just brilliant and wonderful," Gurnah told Reuters shortly after the prize was announced. "I am very grateful to the Swedish Academy for nominating me and my work."

Gurnah was born in Zanzibar in 1948, according to the Nobel Prize website. He arrived in England in 1968.

He was honored with the Literature prize "for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents", the academy said in its announcement.

The chairman of the Nobel Committee for literature, Anders Olsson, called Gurnah "one of the world's most prominent post-colonial writers". He said Gurnah's characters "find themselves in the gulf between cultures", caught "between the life left behind and the life to come".

Gurnah's first three novels – Memory of Departure (1987), Pilgrims Way (1988) and Dottie (1990) – describe the experience of immigrants living in modern-day Britain, according to the British Council website. His novel Paradise (1994) was set in colonial-era east Africa during World War I and made the short list for the Booker Prize.

Iranian, Italian MPs Mull Over Boosting Environmental Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a meeting between the Iranian parliamentary delegation and head of the Italian Parliament's Committee on Environment, the two sides called for boosting bilateral cooperation in various fields related to the environment.

Iranian parliamentary delegation has traveled to the Italian capital of Rome to attend the Pre-COP26 Parliamentary Meeting.

The delegation met and held talks with the head of the Italian Parliament's Committee on Environment.

At this meeting, the two sides stressed the need for boosting bilateral cooperation in various fields of environment and clean technologies and the promotion of environmental standards.

Expressing satisfaction over her meeting with the Iranian parliamentary delegation, the Italian official hailed Iran's

historical and long-standing relationship with Italy.

She also described Iran as the cradle of civilization, adding, "Relying on these relations, Iran and Italy must work more closely together to protect the environment."

She also expressed hope that this meeting will be a turning point in joint environmental efforts.

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is the foremost international conference on climate change. It brings together leaders from across the globe to advance climate action and to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the world's major legally-binding international treaty on climate change. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has long supported the engagement of parliaments in annual COP meetings through the organization of parliamentary meetings.

Yemeni Official Says...

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Some 21 countries voted against the draft resolution, 18 voted in favor, seven abstained and Ukraine did not register a vote at all.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) decried the result on "intense lobbying" by the Riyadh regime. CIHRS said the vote amounted to "a blatant attempt by Saudi and its allies to ensure blanket impunity for themselves after having been linked to war crimes and other grave violations of international law in the country."

"Today's vote represents a grave failure – one that will inevitably lead to more violence and suffering in Yemen," Jeremie Smith, director of the CIHRS Geneva office, said.

He added, "States that voted against the renewal or abstained have chosen to appease Saudi Arabia instead of protecting the lives of millions." Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and regional allies, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing popular Ansarullah resistance movement.

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

Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees, however, have grown steadily in strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

FM in Syria...

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"Following trips to Moscow and Beirut, we will today meet and exchange views with Mr Bashar al-Assad and Syrian officials in Damascus to complete our consultations. We are always interested in dialog and consultation with our friends, including Syria, about the latest developments in the region," the top Iranian diplomat said.

In recent weeks, important agreements have been reached on the expansion of relations as well as economic, trade and tourism cooperation between Iran and Syria, he noted.

"We are seeking to implement the bilateral deals as soon as possible so that we can see the results shortly."

The top Syrian diplomat, for his part, said Damascus supports Iran's nuclear energy program and its stance in negotiations with the West and strongly condemns all US measures meant to manipulate the case and other issues in the region.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-sponsored militancy since March 2011, with the US and its allies aiding terrorist groups.

Israel in...

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He touched on the negotiations between Iran and the remaining parties to the nuclear deal on a possible U.S. return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, saying the United States needs a key to return to the negotiating room.

"Iran and the P4 + 1 are all members of the JCPOA, and it is the United States that wants to return to the negotiating room; so it needs an entry key, and this key is in fact the ability of this country to respond to the demand of the P4 + 1 countries and Iran," Khatibzadeh noted.

He stressed that the U.S. must lift all sanctions that have been imposed, re-imposed, or imposed under other categories by former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration against Iran, and provide guarantees that no one else in the United States will violate the agreement again.

Iran says it will soon resume negotiations with Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany in the Austrian capital Vienna on a possible U.S. return.

Iran Will Never Abandon...

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He added, "One of the important missions of the Atomic Energy Organization [of Iran] is to increase the country's electricity generation capacity to up to 10,000 megawatts which will be materialized within the next three years."

The Buzher power plant started operating in 2011 and reached full capacity the following year, but Iran and Russia agreed to expand it. They signed a number of documents in November 2014 for the construction of up to eight new nuclear power plants at the site and expand cooperation in the field of peaceful use of atomic energy.

In November 2017, Iran began building two more nuclear reactors in a joint project with Russia's Rosatom energy firm in Bushehr.

U.S. Sanctions...

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"The illegitimate unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States on developing countries as well as the inaction of the international community on these violations of the inalienable principles of international law have turned claims of leaving no one behind into purely decorative, absurd and meaningless gestures," Takht-Ravanchi said.

"Such actions violate the indisputable and basic principles of human rights of nations, including the right to development, and deprive governments of access to executive tools for development and progress."

He further noted that amid the current health crisis, "taking unilateral coercive measures has fundamentally targeted and paralyzed the countries' health care systems. Such move amounts to a crime against humanity and contradicts the goals of development."

The Islamic Republic redoubled efforts to build a future full of hope and pride for its people despite the U.S. pressure, including the restrictions caused by Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and its re-imposition of illegal sanctions on the Iranian nation, the envoy emphasized. Iran, he said, ranked 59th out of 166 states in terms of development indicators in the Sustainable Development Report 2020, and this shows the country's great achievements.

In spite of all challenges, Iran continues to rank high among nations in such areas as education, women's participation in public life and biotechnology, Takht-Ravanchi said, adding that it has also become one of the world's manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines.

Additionally, Iran is taking strong steps on climate change mitigation and adaptation, having made significant strides in moving towards a low-carbon economy, he pointed out.

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Kante Returns to Training With Chelsea

LONDON (Dispatches) - N'Golo Kante has returned to training at Chelsea following a period of self-isolation after he tested positive for coronavirus, the Premier League club announced. The World Cup-winning midfielder has missed Blues' matches against Juventus and Southampton, and also sat out France's international fixtures but could be back for the match against Brentford on October 16. Kante, 30, had battled ankle trouble earlier this season, only to return a positive Covid test.

Hamilton Zips Through Turkish GP Practice

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Reigning world champion Lewis Hamilton was fastest in both of practice sessions for the Turkish Grand Prix but has to take a 10-place grid penalty for using too many engine parts. Championship leader Hamilton was quickest in the second practice with a slick 1min 23.804sec ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, the only other driver to rival him in the session. Valtteri Bottas in the other Mercedes was third, followed by Red Bull pair Sergio Perez and Max Verstappen.

Germany, Netherlands Edge Closer to World Cup Finals

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany needed a late winner from Thomas Mueller to beat Romania 2-1 while the Netherlands eked out a 1-0 win in Latvia to stay on course for the World Cup finals on Friday.

Four-time world champions Germany now have a six-point lead in Group J after their win in Hamburg.

However, it was another rollercoaster evening for the European giants. Romania took a shock ninth minute lead when Rangers winger Ianis Hagi ghosted through the defence and fired past Germany goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, a late replacement for injured Manuel Neuer.

Serge Gnabry equalised with his 20th goal in 30 internationals after 52 minutes. Mueller then came off the bench for his 107th Germany appearance to claim his 40th international goal nine minutes from time.

"It was annoying to concede the early goal, but the team fought, never gave up and played with confidence," said Germany head coach Hansi Flick.

"In the end, the win is more than deserved as we dominated for long stretches."

The result extends Germany's lead at the top of Group J ahead of Monday's next qualifier away to North Macedonia.

A win in Skopje would put the Germans on the brink of punching their World Cup ticket. Davy Klaassen scored with a fine volley after 19 minutes in Riga to give the Dutch the three points in a 1-0 win over Latvia which kept them in charge of Group G.

They have a two-point advantage over Norway who drew 1-1 with third-placed Turkey.

Kerem Akturkoglu gave the Turks, coached for the first time by Stefan Kuntz, a sixth-minute lead in Istanbul.

However, his maiden international goal was cancelled out by Kristian Thorstved four minutes before the interval.

Former German international Kuntz was brought in to replace Senol Gunes who was



axed after Turkey were thumped 6-1 by the Netherlands last month.

In Group E, Aaron Ramsey and Daniel James inspired Wales to a 2-2 draw with the Czech Republic in Prague.

Both teams have eight points in the fight for the second spot in Group E, trailing runaway leaders Belgium with 16, but Wales have a game in hand.

Ramsey, skipping the team in the absence of the injured Gareth Bale, opened the scoring on 36 minutes following a Neco Williams cross.

The Czechs were level a minute later when goalkeeper Danny Ward cleared a half-shot, half-pass from Filip Novak and Jakub Pesek was ready with a rebound.

The hosts went ahead with a farcical own goal on 49 minutes as Ramsey back-passed, but Ward was not ready and the ball rolled over his foot and slid in at the lefthand post.

James equalized for Wales on 69 minutes as he blasted the ball past goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik following a superb pass from second-half substitute Harry Wilson.

"I thought the lads were outstanding, we've created enough to win four games of football," said Wales coach Rob Page who backed Ward to recover from his own-goal howler.

Croatia, the runners-up to France in the 2018 World Cup final, still lead Group H after a 3-0 win in Cyprus.

Ivan Perisic, in first-half injury-time, and goals in the last 10 minutes from Josko Gvardiol and Marko Livaja secured the three points.

Croatia have 16 points as do Russia after the 2018 hosts beat Slovakia 1-0 in Kazan thanks to a 24th-minute own-goal by Milan Skriniar.

Ronaldo Wins Premier League POTM Award



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United forward Cristiano Ronaldo has been voted as the Premier League's Player of the Month for September.

The Portuguese superstar netted three times in as many league appearances over the course of the month in which he returned to England, ensuring he would top the vote and win the accolade for the fifth time in his career.

Ronaldo, of course, started his second spell at United in incredible style, scoring a brace against Newcastle United on his blockbuster return to the Theatre of Dreams. He then found the back of the net once again versus West Ham United in London as the Reds came away from the capital with three points, just over a week later.

To win September's Player of the Month award, Ronaldo beat off competition from Manchester City full-back and international compatriot Joao Cancelo, Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger, Newcastle forward Allan Saint-Maximin, Watford winger Ismaila Sarr and Liverpool's Mohamed Salah.

The prize winner is decided by votes from supporters on the Premier League website combined with an assessment from a panel of football experts.

Laporta: I Hoped Messi Would Offer to Play for Free

MADRID (Dispatches) - Barcelona president Joan Laporta admitted on Friday he hoped Lionel Messi would change his mind about leaving the club and offer to play for free.

Messi joined Paris Saint-Germain in August after Barca decided not to renew the Argentinian's contract due to La Liga's strict salary limits.

"There came a time when both parties saw that it would not be possible. There was disappointment on both sides," Laporta told Catalan radio station RAC1.

"He wanted to stay but they also had a lot of pressure because of the offer they had. They knew if he didn't stay, he would go to PSG."

Laporta continued: "I hoped Messi would do a u-turn and he would say he would play for free."

"I would have liked that and I would have been all for it. It is my understanding La Liga would have accepted it. But we cannot ask a player of Messi's stature to do this."

Laporta reiterated the club's atrocious financial situation meant they were unable to keep Messi on the same terms.

Barca recorded losses of 481 million euros (\$556 million) last season, with a gross debt of 1.35 billion euros.

"We had the conclusions of the audit (on Wednesday) and the investment in Leo would have put us at risk," said Laporta, who also suggested Barcelona could yet sign up to a deal with investment fund CVC Capital Partners.

La Liga told Barca in August they could keep Messi if they agreed to the deal, which involved the league selling 10 percent of the commercial business, including television rights, for the next 50 years, in exchange for 2.7 billion euros. Barcelona, Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao rejected the offer.

"We do not need more debt," said Laporta. "I understand La Liga clubs are suffering. We have not ruled ourselves out of this operation but they have to change it. They are trying to reformulate the deal."

Laporta also confirmed his support for Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman, whose future has been uncertain in recent weeks.

Rashford Receives Honorary Doctorate From University of Manchester



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford has become the youngest recipient of an honorary doctorate from The University of Manchester for his campaign against child poverty, the Premier League club said on Friday.

The England international earned widespread praise after successfully campaigning for school food vouchers to be provided over the summer holidays in Britain, revealing that he had relied on such support as a boy.

The 23-year-old Rashford joins club greats Alex Ferguson and Bobby Charlton in receiving the honorary doctorate, the highest honour the university bestows.

"To be here in the presence of a great such as Sir Alex and those who played a huge role in my journey to where I am today is very special. I appreciate you all making the time for me today," Rashford said at a ceremony at Old Trafford.

"I'm here to receive my honorary doctorate for my work around child poverty. Yesterday, millions of families across the UK lost a lifeline and a means of staying afloat," he added, referring to the UK government ending a temporary increase of 20 pounds (\$27) in weekly benefit payments to support the country's poorest families.

"A move that could see child poverty rise to 1 in 3 children. For that reason, today is bittersweet. It's time that representatives got out into communities like mine. It's time they saw first-hand the true measure of struggle."

"COVID-19 can no longer be used as an excuse."

Rashford had helped to raise around 20 million pounds with charity Fareshare UK to supply meals to struggling families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saudi Consortium Completes Takeover of Newcastle United

RIYADH (Dispatches) - A Saudi-Arabian backed consortium completed its purchase of Premier League club Newcastle United on Thursday as a long-running takeover saga finally reached the conclusion the majority of the club's supporters desired.

Fourteen months after Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) withdrew a 305 million pounds (\$415.07 million) bid to buy the north-east club from owner Mike Ashley following the Premier League's failure to give regulatory approval, a deal was announced after a day of mounting excitement on Tyneside.

After the Premier League confirmed the struggling club had been sold to a consortium consisting of PIF, PCP Capital Partners and RB Sports & Media with immediate effect, fans began celebrating outside the St James' Park stadium.

A statement from Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of PIF who will become non-executive chairman of Newcastle United, said the deal would mean long-term investment to "harness the club's potential and build upon the club's legacy."

"We are extremely proud to become the new owners of Newcastle United, one of the most famous clubs in English football. We thank the Newcastle fans for their tremendously loyal support over the years and we are excited to work together with them," he said.

The takeover, fronted by PCP Capital Partners' chief executive Amanda Staveley, ends an unhappy era at St James' Park and means Newcastle will be one of the world's richest clubs. Staveley will have a seat on Newcastle's board of directors along with Jamie Reuben of RB Sports & Media.



Medvedev Adjusting to Life In the Limelight

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev said he has enjoyed his moment in the sun following his breakthrough win at Flushing Meadows last month, where he earned his maiden Grand Slam title with a straight-sets win over Novak Djokovic.

Receiving texts from players he grew up worshiping and being front page news around the world — especially in his native Russia — was a thrill, he said.

But there is one element of his newfound fame that has left him baffled.

"I don't know why, but a lot of people try to pay for me in the restaurants," Medvedev told reporters yesterday ahead of his first match at Indian Wells, where he is the top seed.

"I usually try to refuse it, because I don't see why I'd accept that from people I don't know. But sometimes the waiter comes and says 'You cannot pay for anything more because it's already been paid'. It's pretty funny, but it's strange in a way."

The world number two received \$2.5 million (RM10.5 million) for winning the U.S. Open and has amassed nearly \$20 million in prize money over his career, so it is safe to say he can afford to pay for his own meals.

Medvedev, 25, said that despite achieving such a big goal in New York — one that has eluded so many other players in his age group — he remains motivated.

"Of course, it was a big goal for me, a big dream come true, but I'm still here at Indian Wells," he said.

"I have motivation. I came here prepared. I was in Los Angeles for a week to try to bring my tennis up a level because that's what I'm always trying to do with my coach."

