

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 123,081 With 213 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

On the Occasion of Hafiz Day, Shiraz Municipality and Iranian Consulate General in Hyderabad Plan to Organize a Cultural Exhibition in the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, India From 13-22, October, 2021

VOL. XXVII, No. 7335 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 13, 2021 - MEHR 21, 1400

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Tehran, Riyadh On Verge of Normalizing Ties

TEHRAN (IFP) - After four rounds of negotiations, Tehran and Riyadh have made progress toward reaching an agreement to ease their years-long confrontation in the Middle East, a foreign diplomat close to the talks said. The official added the two countries have also agreed to reopen consulates.

Regional arch-rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran are showing signs of warming relations, but experts say more work is needed to ease tensions after a five-year rift.

Sunni kingpin Saudi Arabia and Shiite-majority Iran cut ties in 2016 after protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in the Islamic republic following the kingdom's execution of a revered Shiite cleric.

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Army, IRGC Launch Large-Scale Aerial Drills



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Armed Forces have launched a large-scale military exercise, involving air defense units and domestically-developed military hardware, with the goal of strengthening the protection of the country's aerial borders and sensitive sites.

The joint aerial maneuvers, attended by air defense divisions of the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and codenamed Modafean Aseman Velayat 1400 (Guardians of Velayat Sky 1400), kicked off in the country's central desert areas on Tuesday morning.

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iewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Europe and "Wag the Tail" Saga

In recent decades Europe, despite having richer civilization and culture, has been losing the ground to the U.S. and its arrogance, and unfortunately by blindly following the Americans, it has lost its reputation and stance in the world and especially in the international issues.

The Islamic Republic has repeatedly asked countries and especially the European states to be independent and not to obey blindly what the U.S. says despite their repeated suffering of humiliations. If we have a glance at the history and some major events in the past, we will see the U.S. as the landlord and Europe as a vassal which has to obey what its master orders.

The best example for this claim can be seen at the time of the Persian Gulf war when the U.S. attacked Iraq after accusing the Iraqi regime of having weapons of mass destruction. Although the UN found no evidence for this claim, the Americans unilaterally decided to attack Iraq and the UK followed blindly the path of the Americans and joined the American troops. At that time, British media launched a scathing attack on the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair for acting against the UN decision and following the U.S. in this invasion.

British media said, "Britain is just wagging its tail to whatever the United States says ... Bush and Blair are creating big problems for the world." It was very interesting that the UK and U.S. allies were likened to the tail of the U.S.

Now after almost two decades after that event, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has voiced concern over Europe's diminishing role in the world, warning that there is a high likelihood of the EU losing its position as a full-fledged player in the international arena and becoming an object of world powers' policy.

Borrell made the remarks in a Sunday blog post, stressing that the EU should work on strengthening both European and NATO security capacities in order to prevent the risk of losing its player status in international affairs.

"Europeans are at risk of becoming more and more an object and not a player in international affairs, reacting to other people's decisions, instead of driving and shaping events ourselves," Borrell said.

He went on to say the EU should avoid its usual tendency "to have an abstract, and frankly divisive, debate" on whether it should either strengthen Europe's own security capacities or do so in NATO, emphasizing that it clearly needs to do both.

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Appreciation of the CEO of Khuzestan Steel, in the National Meeting of Customer-oriented Management

In the eighth national meeting of customer-oriented management, the CEO of Khuzestan Steel Company was honored with a plaque and a statue of gratitude.

According to the public relations reporter, the eighth national meeting of customer-oriented management was held with a customer satisfaction approach in the Covid-19 and post-Covid-19 eras. This meeting was held on October 4, 2021 in the presence of a group of government officials, CEOs of companies and university professors at the International Conference Center of the National Archives and Library of Iran. In this conference, Dr. Saeed Omrani, Deputy Judicial Prosecutor of the country, pointed out the importance of the economy. He said: "In this period, the judiciary has entered this field with the approach of removing barriers to entrepreneurship."

Customer orientation and ethics are important in business. In case of customer dissatisfaction, economic activity is not justified. The policies of the resistance economy have been determined by the orders of the Supreme Leader and by experts. The implementation of a resistance economy is possible in the context of the efforts of senior and executive managers. Elimination of licensing ceilings, elimination of licenses in various economic and export systems, reducing the time for issuing various types of licenses and work permits are among the measures that are emphasized by the Judiciary. Next, Dr. Mohammad Hosseini, head of the Petroleum Products Development Fund, pointed to the shift in the relationship between producer and customer in the Iranian market. He added: the customer should not be in a demanding position. The right of the customer must be given by



the manufacturer so that the relations between the companies and the customers are in their real place and are institutionalized. Customer satisfaction depends on employee satisfaction. He added: "Corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach will lead to customer satisfaction and this issue should be considered in the vision and strategy of companies." According to the report, important issues were discussed at the meeting,

including obtaining ISO 10002: 2018 and ISO 10004: 2018 certifications in relation to customers, full establishment of CRM system, establishing effective communication with customers, especially during the corona, implementation of social responsibilities, Development activities to meet stakeholder demands and benchmarks. Bahman Tajizadeh, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Vahid Zarif, Director of Steel Production Technology Office, Gholam-Ali

Mansourian, Director of Rehabilitation Production Technology Office, Majid Abiat, Export Manager and Mehdi Charkhab from Sales and Marketing Research Unit of Khuzestan Steel Company attended the meeting. It is worth mentioning that this conference was accompanied by the participation of economic activists in the field of industry and mining and the presence of representatives of the Ministry of SAMT, the Ministry of Economy, the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the judiciary. At the end of the ceremony, Amin Ebrahimi, CEO of Khuzestan Steel, was honored with a statue and a plaque of appreciation. Export Manager Majid Abiat received the plaque and statue on behalf of the CEO.



India's Adani Ports to Shun Cargo From Iran

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's largest port operator has said it will not handle cargo from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran from next month following the seizure of almost three tons of heroin.

Adani Ports, part of the Adani Group conglomerate, said on Monday that its "trade advisory" will apply to all the terminals it operates including third-party terminals from November 15.

It did not give a reason but the decision follows the seizure of almost three tons (6,600 pounds) of heroin from two containers at the Mundra port off India's western coast in Gujarat state last month.

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Envoy Rules Out False Reports on Qaani's Iraq Visit

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi ruled out some fabricated false news on Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, the IRGC Quds Force commander's visit to Iraq.

"Brigadier Qaani has had no recent trip to Baghdad, or anywhere else in Iraq, and the broadcasted news by some media and virtual space are baseless and false news," said Masjedi in a tweet.

Hours ago some media covered rumors on Qaani's visit of Iraq, just 24 hours after the Iraqi Parliament's elections.

Iran Drawing Conclusion On Resumption of JCPOA Talks

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Iranian administration is reaching a conclusion on the resumption of the Vienna talks for the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said.

In a meeting with President of the National Council of Switzerland Andreas Aebi, held in Tehran on Tuesday, Amirabdollahian said the Iranian administration is going to finalize decisions on the resumption of the Vienna talks about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in the near future.

In the next round of the nuclear talks, Iran's actions will be proportional to the deeds and measures of the other parties, he explained.

Elsewhere, the top diplomat hailed the amicable relations between Iran and Switzerland, highlighted the significance of parliaments in enhancing cooperation, and expounded on the new Iranian administration's policy of balanced relations with the foreign countries.

Amirabdollahian also called for closer cooperation between the two countries' small and medium-sized enterprises, stressing the need to hold a new meeting of Cooperation Joint Commission.

On the crisis in Afghanistan, the Iranian foreign minister reiterated the need for the formation of an inclusive government, saying that meeting challenges associated with the refugees, drug trafficking and terrorism requires collective international efforts.



For his part, the Swiss lawmaker praised Iran as a country with pivotal role in the region, hailed the constructive meetings he has held with the Iranian parliamentary officials in Tehran, and called for plans to strengthen Switzerland's role as the representative of interests of a number of countries in Iran.

Aebi also lauded Iran for hosting millions of Afghan refugees in the past decades.

He further expressed Switzerland's willingness to play a role in bringing the views of the negotiating parties closer together in the course of the JCPOA talks.

Elsewhere in the meeting, the two officials talked about the recent negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and the latest developments in Yemen.

Iran, Jordan FMs Discuss Issues of Mutual Interest

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi have exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, including bilateral ties, regional cooperation and Palestine.

During a telephone conversation on Monday, Amir-Abdollahian explained the Islamic Republic's eagerness for friendly, fraternal and respectful relations with regional countries, saying Tehran and Amman should benefit from the existing economic and trade opportunities in the region to improve bilateral ties.

He expressed Iran's support for regional dialog and cooperation free from foreign interference, and said the expansion of cooperation between regional countries, especially Iran, Iraq, Syria and Jordan, would pave the way for economic prosperity and stability.

Amir-Abdollahian said that Iran backed Jordan's historic role in the custodianship of al-Quds al-Sharif and other Islamic and Christian sites in the city in the face of the Zionist regime's attempts to exercise control over those places.

The top Iranian diplomat further underlined the need for all Muslim states to act responsibly vis-à-vis the issue of Palestine and al-Quds and work hand in hand in international assemblies to help end Israel's occupation.

Additionally, he highlighted Iran's proposal for a referendum to determine the fate of the main inhabitants of Palestine, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, saying it is the only solution to the Palestinian issue.

Imposed schemes that ignore the rights of the Palestinian nation and prolong the occupation are unacceptable, he added.

The Jordanian foreign minister, for his part, said his country attached importance to and respected its relations with Iran, stressing the need for reaching an understanding within the framework of collective interests given the conflicts in the region.

He also described terrorism and extremism as common challenges for regional countries.

Palestine is Jordan's foremost issue, he said, citing Jordan's sacrifices to ensure the rights of the Palestinian people.

Separately, Amir-Abdollahian spoke over phone with South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor. They discussed various issues such as boosting cooperation in international and regional fields, holding the 10th political committee at the level of deputy foreign ministers in Tehran, convening the 15th meeting of the Joint Commission between the two countries at the level of foreign ministers in Pretoria, and an official visit by the Iranian president to South Africa.

Amir-Abdollahian underscored the need for the formation of sub-committees on investment, energy and health, and urged efforts to expand trade and economic bonds.

Pandor, for her part, voiced satisfaction with her meeting with the Iranian foreign minister on the sidelines of the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York and emphasized the importance of developing bilateral relations.

Tehran to Soon Host Ministerial Meeting of Afghanistan Neighbors

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The West Asia director general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran said on Tuesday that the foreign ministers' meeting of Afghanistan neighbors would soon be held in Tehran.

There is a significant diplomatic struggle to understand developments in Afghanistan and affect its future, Director General of West Asia in Iran's Foreign Ministry Rasoul Mousavi wrote in a tweet on Tuesday.

Different countries move their diplomacy forward in

different mechanisms, he added, underlining that Afghanistan's future lies in regional cooperation with neighbors.

Mousavi also said that Tehran would host a foreign ministers meeting of Afghanistan neighbors in near future.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh also said yesterday that foreign ministers of Afghanistan neighbors had agreed in the previous meeting to hold the next conference in person in Tehran. He said that the Russian Federation would also be represented in the next meeting at Iran's suggestion.

Israel Attempting to Delay Its Downfall

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Zionist regime is attempting desperately to delay its downward spiral toward dissolution, a ranking IRGC general said, stressing that the Islamic Republic's timely responses and actions against Israel's elements in the region have deterred many terrorist plans targeting Iran.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) deputy commander for operations, Brigadier General Abbas Nilforooshan, said the Zionist regime's pillars have been rattled and it is heading toward dissolution.

The Israeli officials have realized the regime's looming downfall and are making every effort to delay such a demise, he said.

Highlighting the economic, social and cultural challenges that have engulfed the Zionist regime, the general said it would be a joke to envisage "hard threats" from the Israeli regime.

He said even the "semi-hard threats" from the Zionist regime have gotten nowhere, adding, "They (Zionists) have halted many of their terrorist measures against Iran because of the timely responses given by the Islamic Republic which has hit their (Israel's) main ringleaders in the region."

The general also pointed to the Islamic Republic's military advances in recent years, saying the IRGC is employing its homegrown submarines.

The IRGC Navy has been working on an area of technology with which the enemy would run into trouble in any confrontation, he added.

Asked about the situation in Afghanistan after its takeover by the Taliban, General Nilforooshan said it is still early to comment on how to deal with the Taliban, who have changed a lot since 2000.

"Ensuring border security, countering (drug) trafficking, and above all the situation of the oppressed people of Afghanistan are among our concerns, but when it comes to dealing with the Taliban, we should wait and see how much the policies announced by that group match their policies in practice," he stated.

He went on to say that patience with the Taliban could be considered as a strategy.

G-24 Urged to Provide Financial Support to Developing Countries



TEHRAN (MNA) - The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has stressed the need for the financial support of developing countries during the pandemic, in a virtual meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development (G-24).

Speaking in the meeting of the G-24 group's finance ministers and central bank governors, Ali Saleh Abadi stated that strong financial support of developing countries is very important, adding: "We welcome the allocation of \$651 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) resources to battle coronavirus pandemic and accelerate the economic recovery of countries."

He noted that the priority of this group should be financial and technical support of developing countries in order to provide them with fair access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

"The key priority of G-24 Group is the worldwide [COVID-19] vaccination, so it is necessary to accelerate the production and distribution of [COVID-19] vaccines around the world and ensure that all countries have fair access to vaccines."

The official further urged international banks to cooperate in order to help developing countries overcome the problems created by the pandemic.

"Multilateral development banks have an important role to play in supporting pandemic-related measures, reducing financial constraints, and tackling debt crisis, and we urge the World Bank to adopt a medium-term strategy to help middle-income countries," Saleh Abadi said. He also welcomed the strategies taken by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to deal with climate change, saying that this support must be adapted to the economic conditions and structures of all countries.

Saleh Abadi finally noted that reducing carbon emissions should be in line with the efforts of developing countries to alleviate poverty, inequality, and employment growth.

Elsewhere in the meeting, IMF Head Kristalina Georgieva explained the Fund's actions in the field of planning and accelerating the access of countries to the COVID-19 vaccine and said: "It is predicted that by the end of this year, 40 percent of the world's total population will get vaccinated."

Iranian MPS Meet Pakistan's Interior Minister

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - The head and members of Iran-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group in Majlis (Iranian Parliament) met with Interior Minister of Pakistani on the second day of their visit to Islamabad and discussed bilateral relations and border cooperation.

The Iranian parliamentary delegation headed by Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani met with Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed at the Pakistani Interior Ministry in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Members of the Iran-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, and Pakistani Interior Ministry officials, as well as the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Islamabad, Mohammad Ali Hosseini, were also present in the meeting.

The two sides discussed the latest developments in Iran-Pakistan bilateral relations, economic cooperation, cross-border trade, and the strengthening border management.

The head of Iranian delegation thanked the Pakistani government and parliament for hosting the parliamentary friendship group of the two countries and expressed his condolences over the tragic earthquake in Pakistan's Balochistan Province, which resulted in casualties and financial losses.

Emphasizing the importance of Pakistan's bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Pakistani Interior Minister said that Islamabad is committed to strengthen cooperation with Tehran, especially the development of trade at the borders.

He also explained Pakistani government's efforts to strengthen border infrastructure with Iran, the plan to build joint border markets and the opening of two more official border crossings over the past years. The head of the Iranian parliamentary delegation on the occasion said that parliamentary friendship groups of Iran and Pakistan can play an important role in expanding interactions between the two governments and helping to develop economic, trade, and border cooperation.

Amirabadi Farahani stressed that joint trade between Iran and Pakistan should be developed without any foreign obstacles, including U.S. unilateral sanctions, and that the two neighboring countries should accelerate trade through effective mechanisms.

Iran's Enemies Use Information Warfare to Win Economic War

TEHRAN (IP) – Majlis Speaker said that currently, Iran's enemies' use of media and information warfare had surpassed their economic war, and even they are using the information warfare to win the economic war.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, at the closing ceremony of the second biennial selection of the best works of the resistance front and the defense of the holy shrine which was held in Tehran on Tuesday, said: "The ideals of Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution was fruitful in the past decades and was managed so that we stood against powerful enemies."

He added: "The holy shrine defenders were formed in the region who could fight ISIS, while no army could stand against this terrorist group. The holy shrine defenders were units and groups whose members came from different cities of the Islamic world and gathered under the school of Islam and the Quran."

Several commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), including Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi and Brigadier General Ali Fazli, were present at the ceremony.

Budget Settlement Report Presented to MPS

TEHRAN (IP) – Head of Supreme Audit Court read the budget settlement report in the open session of the parliament.

Mehrdad Bazrpash presented a summary of the 32nd report on the budget settlement after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The report includes auditing more than 3700 executive agencies, reviewing and compiling more than 6800 audit reports and performance of the single article notes in the country's budget law of 2020, examination of compound reports of 272 letters, clauses, and parts in the technical and legal working group, and elaborations on the settlement of the single article and its following notes.

The report, collected within 726 pages, was prepared four months before the legal deadline and was sent to the parliament on September 22, 2021.

Bazrpash said that the budget plan of 2021 was delivered to the parliament by President Raisi on Monday, adding that now it was the best time to reform the budget structure because last year's report was submitted to the parliament so that the budget for the second year would be developed effectively and efficiently.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:49
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:46
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:10

40. "If not Him, ye worship nothing but names which ye have named,- ye and your fathers,- for which Allah hath sent down no authority: the command is for none but Allah. He hath commanded that ye worship none but Him: that is the right religion, but most men understand not..."
Surah 12. Joseph (40)

Iran Ready for Swap of Energy With Kazakhstan

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said in a meeting with Kazakhstan's Trade and Integration Deputy Minister that the Eurasia region countries comprise the priority of Iran's foreign trade, and among Eurasian countries Russia and Kazakhstan have special positions.

Ali Reza Peyman-Pak in his meeting with the deputy Kazakh Minister for Trade and Cooperation Kairat Torbayev who has travelled to Tehran, referred to the different and serious approach of the new Iranian government in trade ties with regional countries and neighbors.

This issue is not only announced by the Industries Ministry, but also repeatedly stressed by the president in his election campaign, said Payman-Pak.

"The low bilateral trade volume is not appropriate with the objectives of the two sides and increasing the trade volume is the most important objective in line with improving the bilateral trade ties, which calls for both sides' strong will" he added.

He announced Iran's readiness for swap of energy with Kazakhstan, adding that Kazakhstan is a good market for Iranian products and at the same time Kazakhstan can meet most of Iran's needs. He went on to say that bilateral or multilateral agreements in the fields of logistics, baking and trade are of the solutions for immediate removal of the obstacles for trade. He also said a big Iranian trade delegation will likely to visit Kazakhstan soon for more coordination.



Payman-Pak also pointed to the significance of exhibition units in promoting trade between the two states and called for holding exhibitions on capabilities of Kazakhstan in Iran and also Iran's capabilities in Kazakhstan.

Torbayev, for his part, said that Kazakhstan is pursuing the regional development objective, adding: The Corona pandemic led to imitations that blocked pursuing the objectives of both sides planned programs.

"Keeping in mind the status of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), as the regulator of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign trade we tried to eliminate the obstacles in the way of bilateral cooperation in collaboration with Iranian officials during this visit," he said.

He pointed to a trade delegation accompanying during his visit to Tehran and said the delegation includes representatives of 20 big Kazakh companies who are in Tehran to meet their Iranian counterparts and it shows the determination of Kazakhstan for expanding trade ties with Iran.

Iran's Manufacturers Commit to \$7b In Power Generation Investment

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian manufacturers will invest nearly \$7 billion in the next three years to build new power plants to respond to their growing electricity needs.

A senior official in the Iranian industry ministry (MIMT) said on Monday that the investment would add around 10 gigawatts (GW) to Iran's current electricity generation capacity of 88 GW.

Seyed Mehdi Niazi, who serves as deputy minister for planning and projects at the MIMT, said that power plants planned to be built by manufacturers across Iran would start supplying electricity to the national power grid by 2024.

The comments came after the MIMT and the Iranian Energy Ministry signed a document to finalize the massive investment project.

Homayoun Haeri, a deputy energy minister who signed the document, said that the Iranian manufacturing sector is responsible for nearly 37% of the total demand for electricity in Iran with an estimated consumption of 100 megawatt hours reported over the calendar year to March.

Official Blasts Illegal Water Service Lines

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – The CEO of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company (ABFA of Isfahan) says the most important obstacle in way of fair distribution of services by ABFA is the existence of illegal service lines.



In meeting with manager and officials of the subscribers' affairs of ABFA, Mr. Hashem Amini said some people by using illegally and unlicensed water service lines prevent the fair distribution of ABFA's services to other subscribers.

He also urged all officials of the subscribers' affairs offices of the company to put on agenda taking action for identifying the illegal water and wastewater service lines and cutting them.

Amini also termed a successful experience the launch and activities of the non-in-person services system 1522 in the recent five years which has considerably reduced travels of the subscribers in the city and towns for getting services. He noted that the experiences of this system should be used for transparency in information and continuous and sustainable services to subscribers in 98 towns and 949 villages under the coverage of the company.

He also hailed the launch of electronic system for providing and circulating the latest status reports which is aimed at developing e-services.

Overhaul Operation Kicks Off at EORC

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Manager of Maintenance Department of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) says the operation for the overhaul in the distillation and liquefied gas of Unit No.3 of the company began and it is expected to be carried out in 14 days.



Alireza Qazvini Zadeh said the Unit N0.3 was launched 3 years ago and it was aimed at reducing operational problems and crude oil feeding traffic.

He went on to say that in this period, all machines, equipment, towers and pipelines of the inspection units were inspected and in case of needs, they will be overhauled. He noted that in the overhaul process of the distillation and liquefied gas Unit No.3 of EORC, all capabilities and expertise of over 2000 people have been employed and termed the overhaul of the refining units is of the sensitive activities.

He went on to say that these operations are conducted every four years to boost production process and making ready the operational units of the refinery.

Qazvini Zadeh stated that the overhaul operation is carried out in the shortest time possible to avoid any halt in production with observing all safety issues.

EORC provides 22 percent of national oil products and it produces products like gasoline, liquefied gas, oil gas, jet fuel and fuel oil.

Iran, Switzerland Discuss Agricultural Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Parliament's Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Environment Commission said here on Monday that one of the existing mechanisms for increasing Iran-Switzerland trade ties is barter transactions so that "we could use Tehran-based Swiss firms' capacities".

Mohammad Javad Asgari said in a meeting with visiting Swiss Parliament Speaker Andreas Aebe that the Iranian nation has a good mentality about Switzerland and know your country as a non-aligned state has managed to play a good role.

The two nations' relations date back to 100 years ago and the two countries have managed to have good exchanges in various fields.

The Swiss Parliament Speaker Aebe, too, said in the meeting that he has many objectives in visiting Iran, including seeing into the revival and being implemented of the memoranda of understanding (MOUs) sighed during the past years.

"Switzerland is a country with lots of water resources and Iran has vast lands. Now if the conditions will be provided for agricultural cooperation very good things can happen. Swiss is well developed in animal husbandry and is a meet exporter country. Also, we have progressed noticeably is wood and tea exports," he said.

Speaker Aebe said that the reasons for decreased trade transactions between Iran and Switzerland are definitely the coronavirus pandemic and the sanctions.

"55% of the Swiss nation's requirements are produced inside their own country and the rest are imported," he said, adding that Switzerland is interested in importing fruits from Iran.

Foreign-Made TVs Account for 40% of Iran's Market

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Although the country is in under sanction and imports of foreign-made TVs is banned, LG, Samsung and Sony are dominating brands in Iran's TV market.

Speaking in a press conference, Head of Association of Home Appliances Manufacturers (AHAM) Mr. Mohammad Reza Dayyani said currently LG's share of Iran's TV market is 16%, Samsung's is 17% and Sony's is 8% while the country is under sanctions and imports of those products are banned.

He went on to say that during the past three years, imports of the home appliances have been banned and it has led to the rise in production and occupation in this industry but now some people condemn production and defend imports.

Dayyani reiterated that today the mafias of importing the home appliances who feel the danger have started attack at domestic products and defended imports and they try to bring down this successful industry of the country.

He said in recent years huge investment has been done in this industry and imports of the home appliances will lead to the bankruptcy of the investors. He stated that for this reason producers wrote a letter to the Supreme Leader and called for banning the imports of the foreign-made home appliances.

Dayyani also criticized South Koreans and said while the Koreans were not ready even to reply to Iranian's e-mails, they have announced readiness to send home appliances to Iran in exchange for Iran's frozen assets.

He said South Koreans in 1960s banned imports of



Japanese electronic goods for 12 years and even sales of Japanese goods were banned in their stores. He added that even the U.S. permanently changes the tariffs on imports to support its industries.

Dayyani reiterated that the association does not seek full ban on imports but it wants imports of home appliances to be managed and controlled for a period of five years in order that home-made products can improve their quality and standards to compete with foreign rivals.

He added that Turkey due to its policy last year earned \$45b through production of home appliances production which was two times of Iran's oil revenues and we should study how Turkey has been able to achieve such success.

Meanwhile the data released by Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry indicates that manufacturing of TV sets in Iran has increased 11.7 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year. As reported, 447,700 TV sets have been manufactured in the five-month period of this year.

Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran has risen 8.7 percent during the first five months of the present year, as 2.61 million sets of such products have been manufactured inside the country.

Home appliances manufacturing has also increased 78 percent to stand at 15 million sets in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Rise in home appliances manufacturing and export has been also planned for the current year.

Joint Barter Chamber, a Solution to Boost Iran-Pakistan Trade

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - The head of the Iran-Pakistan Friendship Group in the parliament, while referring to the U.S. sanctions and sabotage to prevent free trade in the region, especially between neighbors, said a joint barter chamber should be established for trade between Tehran and Islamabad.

Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani expressed these views during his first working meeting with the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of Pakistan's National Assembly in Islamabad on Monday.

He first expressed his condolences to the government and people of Pakistan, especially the members of the Pakistani parliament, over the deaths of dozens of Pakistanis following the recent earthquake in Balochistan and the death of the country's founder of nuclear technology.

Referring to the special view of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and members of parliament on strengthening relations with neighbors, including friendly and brotherly Pakistan, the MP said strengthening bilateral trade, promoting economic ties, and strengthening security and border relations are issues that friendship groups follows it closely.

Appreciating Pakistan's support to Iran against US sanctions and support in the SCO, he said apart from the problems of sanctions, we expect Islamabad as a more friendly and brotherly government to take further steps to overcome these issues.

The head of the Iran-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, referring to the

volume of joint trade between the two neighbors in recent years, said this amount of trade and economic exchanges is not satisfactory and is not suitable for the real capacities of Iran and Pakistan.

He emphasized during the friendship group's visit to Pakistan two years ago, the Iranian side proposed the establishment of a joint barter chamber and announced its full readiness to start a new trade process.

Amirabadi Farahani added Iran and Pakistan can supply each other's items and goods under this joint mechanism.

He pointed to the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the 24-hour customs operation at the border crossings, especially at Mirjaveh-Taftan, seven days a week without interruption, and added, the closure of one or two days of customs on the Pakistani side may affect trade.

The head of Iran's parliamentary delegation added we must take more serious measures in the field of customs activity and activation of common border markets with the role of Iran-Pakistan friendship groups in order to achieve more success.

Amirabadi Farahani added recently, China has been added to the Iran-Pakistan friendship group in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and we propose a joint meeting between the representatives of the Iran-China-Pakistan friendship groups, and we are ready to host this meeting in Tehran.

He emphasized the close cooperation between Tehran-Beijing-Islamabad in the region will ensure stability and security and will achieve common interests.

German Far-Right Party Co-Chief Quits

FRANKFURT (AFP) - The co-chief of Germany's far-right AfD Joerg Meuthen said on Monday that he would not seek to continue as head of the eurosceptic and islamophobic party.

After six and a half "incredibly challenging" but also "enriching" years, Meuthen said in a statement that he would "no longer bear the role of federal spokesman" for the party.

Formed in 2013, the AfD first won seats in the German parliament in 2017 but lost ground in elections at the end of September this year. Despite topping the poll in two former east German states, the party received around 10 percent of the vote nationally, down two percentage points on its previous result.



Czech President Stable in ICU

PRAGUE (Dispatches) - Czech President Milos Zeman was in a stable condition in an intensive care unit on Monday, a hospital spokeswoman said, as his illness delayed the initial steps in post-election talks to form a new government.

Zeman, 77, was taken to the hospital on Sunday and was receiving treatment in the hospital's highest-type of intensive care ward due to what the hospital director said were complications related to an undisclosed chronic condition.

Prime Minister Andrej Babis's ANO party narrowly lost a parliamentary election completed on Saturday to the centre-right Together coalition and their allies the liberal Pirates/Mayors and appears to have no chance of forming a ruling majority.



EU to Start Collapsing Unless It Takes on Polish Challenge



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union "will start collapsing" unless it challenges a ruling by Poland's top court that national legislation trumps European laws, a senior official with the bloc said on Monday.

Poland's constitutional tribunal ruled against the central tenet of European integration last week, sharply escalating a row over fundamental values between eurosceptics ruling in Warsaw and most of the other 27 EU countries.

More than 100,000 people protested in Poland on Sunday in support of the EU, sounding the alarm about what they fear is a prospect of their country following Britain and leaving the bloc in a "Polexit".

"If we don't uphold the principle in the EU that equal rules are respected the same everywhere in Europe, the whole Europe will start collapsing," said Vera Jourova, EU Commissioner from Poland's neighbor, the Czech Republic.

"That is why we will have to react to this new chapter which the Polish constitutional court started to draw," said Jourova, in charge of values and transparency at the executive European Commission.

One way or another, the tribunal ruling is likely to cost Warsaw.

It follows prolonged and divisive disputes in which Poland stands accused by many Western countries, international rights watchdogs and advocates of curtailing the independence of media and courts, as well as infringing on the rights of women, migrants and LGBT people since the Law and Justice (PiS) party won power in 2015.

The commission, the guardian of EU treaties, is already withholding its approval for Poland's recovery plan necessary to let Warsaw to tap into billions of euros available on top of other handouts from the bloc and meant to help revive economic growth mauled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Apart from blocking the disbursement of COVID recovery funds to Poland, the commission might press ahead with a new and yet-to-be-tested enforcement tool to suspend funding for states deemed violating key values enshrined in European laws.

Other countries in the bloc could revive a stalled probe into the undercutting of democratic rights in Poland, which could go all the way to suspending Warsaw's vote in the bloc. But that is unlikely.

The Brussels-based commission could also launch a new legal case against Warsaw for violating EU laws. It could culminate in the European Court of Justice (ECJ) slapping penalties on the Polish government.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on Monday dismissed the idea of "Polexit".

"This is a harmful myth which the opposition substitutes for its lack of ideas on the proper position of Poland in Europe," he said.

New Austrian Chancellor Sworn In

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Austria's top diplomat Alexander Schallenberg took over as chancellor on Monday as the ruling party tries to emerge from a corruption scandal that cost the job of one of Europe's youngest leaders.

Sebastian Kurz, a 35-year-old once feted as a "whizz kid", said late Saturday he was quitting the top job after being implicated in a corruption scandal.

Schallenberg, 52, was sworn in by President Alexander Van der Bellen shortly after 1:00 pm (1100 GMT).

Van der Bellen said the government now had the "great responsibility of restoring trust".

Kurz's centre-right People's Party (OeVP) and their junior Green coalition partners are hoping to move on from the scandal and serve out the rest of their term until 2024.

However, the fallout from last week's events may continue to reverberate.

On Wednesday prosecutors raided several OeVP-linked locations, including the chancellery and party headquarters,

over allegations that between 2016 and 2018 finance ministry resources were used to pay for "partially manipulated opinion polls that served an exclusively party-political interest".

Prosecutors allege that payments were made to a newspaper in return for publishing these surveys. The offices of the Oesterreich tabloid were also raided on Wednesday as part of the probe.

The offences were allegedly committed to help Kurz, already a government minister at the beginning of the period in question, take over the leadership of the OeVP.

While Kurz initially insisted there was no reason for him to resign – and continues to vehemently protest his innocence – he then reversed course, saying he was putting the country before his own interests.

But many say Kurz bowed to pressure from the Greens and from within his own party.

Kurz's critics point out he will still be head of the OeVP and will now sit as leader of its bloc in parliament – an ideal position from which to exercise influence as a "shadow chancellor".



Iraq Arrests IS Finance Chief Wanted by U.S.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq has captured the alleged finance chief of the Islamic State group, Sami Jasim al-Jaburi, who was sought by the United States, in an operation abroad, Iraqi authorities said Monday.

Jaburi, also the suspected former deputy to the late IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was arrested "in Turkey", a senior Iraqi military source told AFP without elaborating.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi had earlier announced on Twitter that Jaburi was arrested by the intelligence services "outside the borders" of Iraq, in a "complex external operation," without naming the location.

It was not immediately clear if Turkish authorities were involved and there was no immediate reaction from Ankara.

The U.S. had offered a reward of up to \$5 million for the capture of Jaburi.

The U.S. Rewards for Justice programme said Jaburi had "reportedly served as the equivalent of... finance minister (for IS), supervising the group's revenue-generating operations from illicit sales of oil, gas, antiquities and minerals".

In September 2015, the U.S. Treasury Department labelled Jaburi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

IS took over one third of Iraq in a lightning offensive in 2014, expanding their self-declared "caliphate" stretching across the Syrian border.

Iraq's government declared victory against the jihadists in late 2017 after a grinding military campaign backed by a U.S.-led military coalition.

Baghdadi was killed in a raid by U.S. special forces in northwestern Syria in October 2019. IS sleeper cells still periodically launch attacks in Iraq, against both the security forces and civilians.

According to an official from the US-led coalition who spoke on condition of anonymity, IS is now "stretched" financially and its operations in Iraq are "very localized".

China, India Lash Out After No Progress in Border Talks

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China and India on Monday blamed each other for the failure of high-level talks to ease tensions along a disputed Himalayan border between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

The strategically important Galwan river valley between Tibet and India's Ladakh region became a high-altitude flashpoint last year after one of the deadliest troop clashes in decades.

Senior military officials from the two countries held their first round of talks in two months, but it ended without any progress.

India made "unreasonable and unrealistic demands", Chinese military spokesman Long Shaohua said in a statement issued by the People's Liberation Army's western theatre command.

The statement did not say what the demands were.

In response, India's defense ministry said China was "not agreeable" to discussing "constructive suggestions... (and) could not provide any forward-looking proposals".

India said both sides have agreed to maintain communications and stability.

China and India -- whose border runs for

3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) -- fought a full-scale war in 1962 and have long accused each other of trying to seize territory along their unofficial border, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The latest talks focused on resolving "remaining issues" along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, the Indian defense ministry said.

Long said China had tried to ease tensions along the boundary area, but warned India "not to misjudge the situation" and to act "in good faith".

India has blamed the tensions on what it calls unilateral moves by China to "alter the status quo", in violation of existing bilateral agreements.

Earlier this month, India's army chief said China was sending "considerable numbers" of troops to the border, prompting a matching deployment by New Delhi.

His comments came days after Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said Indian soldiers had made illegal incursions into Chinese territory, an accusation that New Delhi denied.

Media in both countries have reported a border confrontation between Indian and Chinese last month, but neither side has confirmed it.



Tunisia President Appoints New Gov't

TUNIS (AFP) - Tunisia's President Kais Saied issued a decree appointing a new government on Monday, 11 weeks after he fired the last one in a controversial power grab amid acute economic and political crises.

State television broadcast a swearing-in ceremony of the cabinet headed by Najla Bouden, the North African country's first ever female prime minister.

In her first public speech since her nomination, Bouden said Monday that "the fight against corruption will be the most important aim" of the new government. She also vowed to "raise living standards" of Tunisians and "restore their faith in the state".

But Saied has significantly pared back the powers of her office and will technically head the administration himself. The president on July 25 sacked the previous prime minister, suspended parliament and granted himself judicial powers in moves that opponents have termed a coup.

Saied, a former legal academic, has repeatedly criticized the constitution Tunisia adopted in 2014 which brought in a mixed parliamentary-presidential system, three years after a revolution that overthrew veteran dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

The president named Bouden, a geologist, as premier on September 29, more than two months after sacking the administration of Hichem Mechichi and removing lawmakers' immunity.

In a speech following Monday's ceremony, Saied reiterated that his moves were constitutional in light of "imminent peril" facing Tunisia.

He said he had acted to "save the Tunisian state from the clutches of those who lurk at home and abroad, and from those who see their office as booty or as a means to loot public funds".

He also vowed to "cleanse the judiciary".

Saied, elected on an anti-system ticket in late 2019, seized an array of powers amid a socio-economic crisis aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although his July measures enjoyed significant support from a public tired of political parties seen as self-serving and incompetent, civil society groups have warned of a drift away from democracy.





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J, balcony
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Elahieh Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

Velenjak (\$2000)
260sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F
brand new

Elahieh (\$1800) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, F.F
Niavaran (\$2200) 300sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, F.F

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Saudi to Supply Additional Crude to Some Asian Refiners

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Saudi Aramco has agreed to supply additional crude to at least two North Asian buyers in November, while meeting full contractual volumes for three others, sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Full supply volumes were expected for the month, one of the sources said. The world's top oil exporter has been supplying full crude volumes to Asia despite limiting output to comply with a pact between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, a group known as OPEC+.



WORLD BANK GROUP

Poor Countries' Debt Rose 12% To Record \$860b in 2020

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The debt burden of the world's low-income countries rose 12% to a record \$860 billion in 2020 as countries responded to the COVID-19 crisis with massive fiscal, monetary, and financial stimulus packages, the World Bank said in a report released Monday.

World Bank President David Malpass said the report showed a dramatic increase in the debt vulnerabilities facing low- and middle-income countries and called for urgent steps to help countries reach more sustainable debt levels.

"We need a comprehensive approach to the debt problem, including debt reduction, swifter restructuring and improved transparency," Malpass said in a statement accompanying the new International Debt Statistics 2022 report.

"Sustainable debt levels are vital for economic recovery and poverty reduction," he said.

The report said the external debt stocks of low- and middle-income countries combined rose 5.3% in 2020 to \$8.7 trillion, affecting countries in all regions.

It said the rise in external debt outpaced gross national income (GNI) and export growth, with the external debt-to-GNI ratio, excluding China, rising five percentage points to 42% in 2020, while their debt-to-export ratio surged to 154% in 2020 from 126% in 2019.

Malpass said debt restructuring efforts were urgently needed given the expiration at the end of this year of the Group of 20 major economies' Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which has offered temporary deferral of debt payments.

The G20 and Paris Club of official creditors launched a Common Framework for Debt Treatments last year to restructure unsustainable debt situations and protracted financing gaps in DSSI-eligible countries, but only three countries - Ethiopia, Chad and Zambia - have applied thus far.

The report showed that net inflows from multilateral creditors to low- and middle-income countries rose to \$117 billion in 2020, the highest level in a decade.

Net lending to low-income countries rose 25% to \$71 billion, also the highest level in a decade, with the IMF and other multilateral creditors providing \$42 billion and bilateral creditors \$10 billion, it said.

Carmen Reinhart, the World Bank's chief economist, said the challenges facing highly indebted countries could get worse as interest rates rose.

"Policymakers need to prepare for the possibility of debt distress when financial market conditions turn less benign, particularly in emerging market and developing economies," she said.

The World Bank said it expanded the 2022 report to boost transparency about global debt levels by providing more detailed and disaggregated data on external debt.

The data now include a breakdown of a borrowing country's external debt stock to show the amount owed to each official and private creditor, the currency composition of this debt, and the terms on which loans were extended.

For DSSI-eligible countries the data also show the debt service deferred in 2020 by each bilateral creditor and the projected month-by-month debt-service payments owed to them through 2021.

Goldman Cuts Forecast for U.S. Economic Growth in 2021 and 2022

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Goldman Sachs cut its U.S. economic growth target to 5.6% for 2021 and to 4% for 2022 citing an expected decline in fiscal support through the end of next year and a more delayed recovery in consumer spending than previously expected.

The firm previously expected 5.7% gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2021 and 4.4% growth in 2022, according to research released on Sunday from authors including its chief economist Jan Hatzius.



They pointed to a "longer lasting virus drag on virus-sensitive consumer services" as well as an expectation that semiconductor supply likely will not improve until the first half of 2022, delaying inventory restocking until next year.

And on top of the near-term virus drag, they also expect spending on some services and non-durable goods to stay persistently below pre-pandemic trends especially "if a shift to remote work results in some workers spending less overall."

On a quarterly basis Goldman cut both its fourth-quarter 2021 and first-quarter 2022 GDP estimates to 4.5% from 5% and shaved its second quarter 2022 estimate to 4% from 4.5% while reducing its third quarter estimate to 3% from 3.5%.

However, it increased its fourth-quarter 2022 estimate to 1.75% from 1.5%.

Sri Lanka President Admits "Not Delivering" as Prices Soar

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa admitted his government is "not delivering" as shortages persist of food, medicines and other essential items because of a dire foreign exchange squeeze.

"The people may have a sense of displeasure towards me and the government for not delivering as they expected," Rajapaksa's office quoted him as saying.

"I accept that. Not only me, but all ministers and Members of Parliament should accept it," he told troops in a speech marking the 72nd anniversary of the military's founding.

A shortage of foreign currency has hindered the ability of the island nation of 21 million people to import goods, prompting the government to declare a state of emergency and impose rationing.

On Friday, the government removed price restrictions on essential foods in a desperate bid to end hoarding of staples such as rice, sugar, lentils and milk powder. Within hours of Rajapaksa's remarks on Sunday, the government also announced an 85 percent hike in the price of liquefied petroleum gas used in cooking stoves, starting Monday. The prices of wheat flour and cement were also increased by nearly 10 percent.

The state-run Petroleum Corporation said it was asking the government to substantially increase retail prices for all fuels to offset losses of \$350 million in the first eight months of this year.

Private economists and international rating agencies say Sri Lanka's economic woes predate the pandemic. Foreign reserves were \$7.5 billion when Rajapaksa took office in November 2019 but had fallen to \$2.5 billion by the end of September, raising concerns about Colombo's ability to service its huge foreign debt.

Soon after coming to power, Rajapaksa slashed sales taxes by half and drastically reduced taxes on corporate profits and personal income, hoping it would boost investments and strengthen the economy.

UAE, Syria Agree on Plans to Enhance Economic Cooperation

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates' economy ministry has said the Persian Gulf state and Syria agreed on future plans to enhance economic cooperation and explore new sectors.

The move underscores shifting regional dynamics after 10 years of war in Syria.

The UAE supported the Syrian opposition during the early years of the conflict. But as the Syrian army recaptured most of the territory from the opposition, the UAE and other Arab countries made openings towards President Bashar al-Assad's government.

The ministry wrote on Twitter the value of

non-oil trade between the two countries in the first half of 2021 was one billion dirhams (\$272m).

In 2018, the UAE reopened its embassy in Damascus for the first time since the start of an organized Arab diplomatic boycott in 2011 and in a bid to counter the influence of non-Arab actors such as Iran, which along with Russia backs al-Assad, and Turkey, which backs opposition forces.

Last week, the UAE's economy minister met his Syrian counterpart on the sidelines of the Dubai Expo 2020, where they looked at ways to expand their relationship, according to the state-run WAM news agency.

Earlier this year, the UAE said sweeping US sanctions imposed on the war-torn country made it more challenging for Syria to return to the Arab League.

Under Washington's Caesar Act passed last year, the United States has attempted to prevent any reconstruction efforts or trade deals from being made without first enacting human rights reforms.

The sanctions target Syria's president, his close circle of associates, family, senior security officials and troops, as well as the central bank and any institutions believed to have played a role in the violence during the war.

While al-Assad may have won the military campaign against his opponents with the help of backers Russia and Iran, he faces a bigger challenge of governing while more than 80 percent of his people live in poverty.

The war in Syria killed at least 350,000 people, according to the UN. The conflict, which started as a mass uprising against al-Assad's rule in March 2011, quickly morphed into a full-fledged war and sparked the world's biggest refugee crisis.

Qatar Unhappy With High Gas Prices

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar, the world's biggest liquefied natural gas exporter, said Monday it was not pleased with current global prices which have surged to record peaks.

"I am unhappy about gas prices being high," Energy Minister Saad al-Kaabi told a press conference.

High prices, he said, "are negative for the customer, and the customers being satisfied is the most important thing to me."

Kaabi added: "If the customer is unhappy, he's not going to buy."

Low energy prices during the Covid-19 pandemic were expected to wipe out Qatar's budget surplus and lead to a deficit for 2021, the government had forecast in December.

Gas prices have since soared while oil has struck multi-year highs, fuelling global fears over spiking inflation and rocketing domestic energy bills.

Kaabi said Qatar's production was "maxed out" at 77 million tons per year.

"We have never 'less than' maxed out... we've not gone down, we've not gone up," he said. "We're just consistent. We're producing what we can."

European and UK gas prices surged last week to record peaks, energized by fears of runaway demand in the approaching northern hemisphere winter.

Europe's reference Dutch TTF gas price hit 162.12 euros per megawatt hour and UK prices leapt to 407.82 pence per therm on October 6, before easing.

Gas demand is also heightened in Asia, particularly from China, a major customer for Qatar. In 2019, the same year Qatar walked out of the OPEC oil cartel, the Persian Gulf emirate said it aimed to increase its liquefied natural gas output to 126 million tons by 2027, based on a rise in its proven reserves.

That was at the height of a diplomatic rift and economic blockade -- settled early this year -- of Doha by its neighbors.

At the press conference where he announced a name change for state-owned Qatar Petroleum to QatarEnergy, Kaabi reiterated that Qatar has no plans to return to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"It (oil) is not our main business. That's why we opted to get out. Some people made it political," he said.

"We see, going forward, we're always going to be more of a gas company and country... it doesn't fit our strategy."

Gas has helped fuel Qatar's rise to become one of the world's richest countries, transforming one of the smallest Arab states and helping it to successfully bid for the 2022 football World Cup finals.

N Korea's Leader Calls for Improving Lives Amid Grim Economy



PYONGYANG (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has urged officials to focus on improving the lives of the country's citizens amid a "grim" economic situation, according to state media.

Kim made the appeal as he marked the 76th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea on Sunday, KCNA news agency said.

Kim discussed the "unprecedented difficulties" facing the North and called for the party's single-minded unity in developing the state economy in face of the "grim situation," it reported.

Pyongyang marked the anniversary with art performances, galas and a fireworks show but there was no sign of any large military parade, which are sometimes held on such occasions.

Analysts say Kim is facing perhaps the toughest moment of his nearly 10 years in power. He failed to win badly needed sanctions relief in his summits with then-President Donald Trump in 2018 and 2019, then closed North Korea's borders amid the coronavirus pandemic unleashing a further economic shock after decades of mismanagement and sanctions over its banned nuclear and weapons programs.

Heavy rains and floods have also taken a toll on the country with the United Nations warning last week the most vulnerable are at risk of starvation.

Officials should not wish for privilege and preferential treatment, and "should always consider whether their work infringes upon the interests of the people or causes trouble to the people," Kim said.

Kim has so far rejected U.S. government offers to restart dialogue without conditions, saying that Washington must first abandon its "hostile policy," a term the North mainly uses to refer to sanctions and U.S.-South Korea military exercises.

The U.S. State Department last week accused Kim's government of being primarily responsible for the humanitarian situation in the country.

Iranian Film at Polish Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian short film ‘Hole’ by Amir Roueeni, has won the main award of the ZOOM – ZBLIŻENIA Festival in Poland.

Written and directed by Amir Roueeni, the short film depicts an odd situation in a malfunctioning mortuary. The failure in the mortuary’s function has resulted in stinking corpses.

“This is one of the most difficult short films ever made, and its screenplay has won a number of international awards so far. Working with non-actors, especially children, is really difficult,” Roueeni said about his short film.

The short film’s cast includes Amir Ali Roueeni, Nazanin Karimi, and Davoud Zarchi.



Card, Angrist and Imbens Win 2021 Nobel Prize in Economics

OSLO (Dispatches) - Economists David Card, Joshua Angrist and Guido Imbens won the 2021 Nobel economics prize on Monday for pioneering “natural experiments” to show real-world economic impacts in areas from the U.S. fast-food sector to migration from Castro-era Cuba.

Unlike in medicine or other sciences, economists cannot conduct rigidly controlled clinical trials. Instead, natural experiments use real-life situations to study impacts on the world, an approach that has spread to other social sciences.

“Their research has substantially improved our ability to answer key causal questions, which has been of great benefit to society,” says Peter Fredriksson, chair of the Economic Sciences Prize Committee.

Past Nobel Economics prizes have been dominated by U.S. institutions and this was no exception. Canada-born Card currently works at the University of California, Berkeley; Angrist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Dutch-born Imbens at Stanford University.

One experiment by Card on the impact on the fast-food sector of a minimum wage increase in the U.S. state of New Jersey in the early 1990s prompted a review of the conventional wisdom that such increases should always lead to falls in employment.

Another studied the impact of a move by Fidel Castro in 1980 to allow all Cubans who wished to leave the country to do so. Despite high ensuing migration to Miami, Card found no negative wage or labour effects for Miami residents with low levels of education.

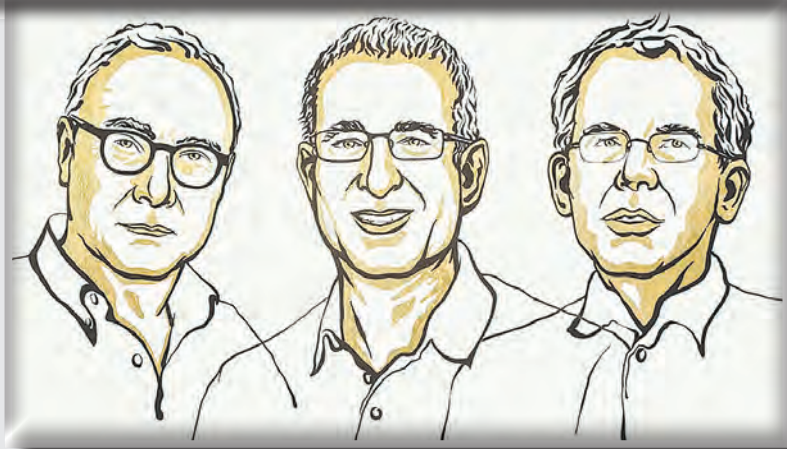
“Many important questions are about cause and effect. Will people become healthier if their income increases. ...do lockdowns reduce the spread of infections?” Nobel panelist Eva Mörk said.

“This year’s laureates have shown that it is still possible to answer these broad questions about cause and effects and the way to do that is to use natural experiments.”

Mörk, economics professor at Uppsala University, noted that the pandemic had created scope for a good natural experiment on education outcomes due to the varying disruption caused to children in different school years but whose birth times in some cases were only separated by hours.

“So here, nature has given us an experiment that makes it possible to answer questions that otherwise would not have been possible to answer,” she said.

The committee noted that natural experiments were difficult to interpret, but that Angrist and Imbens had in the mid-1990s solved methodological problems to show that precise conclusions about cause and effect can be drawn from them.



“I was just absolutely stunned to get a telephone call, then I was just absolutely thrilled to hear the news,” Imbens said on a call with reporters in Stockholm, adding he was thrilled to share the prize with two of his good friends. Angrist was best man at his wedding.

The prize, formally known as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, is the last of this year’s crop of Nobels and sees the winners share a sum of 10 million Swedish crowns (\$1.14 million).

The prestigious prizes for achievements in science, literature and peace were created and funded in the will of Swedish dynamite inventor and wealthy businessman Alfred Nobel.

They have been awarded since 1901, though the economics prize - created through a donation from Sweden’s central bank on its 300th anniversary - is a later addition that was first handed out in 1969.

While the economics award has tended to live in the shadow of the often already famous winners of the prizes for peace and literature, laureates over the years include a number of hugely influential economists, such as the Austrian-British Friedrich August von Hayek and American Milton Friedman.

Americans Slapped in Face By Iran in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN (IRNA) - IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said that the navy force has successfully carried out six operations against the aggressor U.S. forces, breaking the nobility of U.S.’ flimsy power in the Persian Gulf.

Tangsiri said the remarks in the commemoration ceremony of the Day of IRGC Navy on Tuesday attended by Military Attachés of several countries.

He added that Iran has never begun a war in the Persian Gulf and practiced restraint during the Eight-Year War when the U.S. targeted Iran’s tankers, and oil platforms and terminals.

However, Iran entered a 1.5 year war with the U.S. and the Americans incurred six slaps in the face, the commander said, referring to six operations by Iran against the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf in 1980s.

Iran won’t tolerate any insecurity and conflict in the Persian Gulf which is a home for Iran and neighbor countries, Tangsiri added, underlining that the US forces have no place in the Persian Gulf, as they brought insecurity everywhere they showed up.

He also stressed that the Israeli regime disturbs security of the Persian Gulf with its presence there and Muslim countries shouldn’t let them to have a presence there.

The IRGC Navy and the Army Navy would stand against any aggressor as a single force, he warned, saying that Iran was proud to build its defense equipment on its own.

Singapore to Forge on With Economic Recovery

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore’s economy will stay on its recovery path in the third quarter but the global spread of the Delta coronavirus variant has clouded the outlook and will likely prompt the central bank to stay on hold, a Reuters poll showed.

Eleven of 13 economists forecast the Monetary Authority of Singapore will make no changes to its policy settings on Oct. 14. Two expect the MAS to tighten slightly and begin normalizing its policy, in line with other central banks. Another poll showed analysts forecast the economy continuing to expand albeit at a more modest pace in the third-quarter.

Preliminary data, also to be released on Thursday, may show the economy grew 6.6% on year, according to the median of 16 forecasts, versus 14.7% in the prior quarter on milder low base effects and stricter curbs after a rise in COVID-19 cases.

“We suspect what has likely held up relatively well are manufacturing and financial services, whilst some of the more contact-intensive segments such as retail/wholesale and food/lodging likely moderated more,” Morgan Stanley economists said in a report last week.

Singapore has fully vaccinated about 83% of its 5.45 million people against the virus but reimposed some coronavirus restrictions to buy time to prepare to live with the disease.

Missile Program “Non-Negotiable”

TEHRAN (MNA) – Referring to Iran’s nuclear issue, Vice-Chairman of Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission emphasized that Iran’s missile program is not negotiable.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has previously negotiated on the nuclear issue under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and accordingly, Iran will not negotiate on other issues, said Abbas Moghtadaei said.

Reacting to the recent statements raised by some Western officials that Iran’s missile issues should also be discussed in Vienna talks, he stated that westerners should know that an independent and powerful country like Iran is not a country to pay ransom for bullying and coercive measures.

Iran fought against global arrogance during the eight years of Sacred Defense (Iraqi imposed war against Iran in 1980-1988) and resisted tough sanctions in order to defend its independence in the international arena, he emphasized.

Army, IRGC...

FROM PAGE 1

During the exercises, domestically-developed, air defense missile systems, radars, reconnaissance equipment, electronic warfare devices, communication systems and a visual surveillance network were put to test.

Commenting on the first phase of the drills, Brigadier General Qader Rahimzadeh, commander of the country’s Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base, said the deployment of air defense systems was carried out, with a special focus on mobility and rapid reaction of operational forces and in accordance with principles of passive defense to deceive the mock enemy.

Moreover, secure and multi-layered communication links were established among defense systems, command and control centers, and the country’s integrated air defense network in order to adopt proper decisions in case of a threat.

Rahimzadeh added that manned and unmanned aircraft of the Army and IRGC conducted reconnaissance sorties over the area, before detection and combat systems carried out tactical and defensive operations against hostile aircraft. All stages of air defense, up to the phase of electronic impact (EI), were performed.

The senior Iranian military official said deployment of IRGC Regional Command and Control Systems (ROC), and operation of indigenous Me’raj, Fath-2, Bashir and Quds radar systems, tactical detection and reconnaissance systems, electro-optical systems in addition to electronic warfare systems were among other measures taken at the first stage of the war game.

He said control and command centers are using active and passive radar systems capable of signal and electro-optical monitoring of the exercise area during Guardians of Velayat Sky 1400 drill, and missile air defense systems will use artificial intelligence and decision-making techniques as they discover a hostile target to launch an attack.

Rahimzadeh added that the entire detection, reconnaissance, interception and missile systems that the Army and IRGC air defense units are employing in the drill are homegrown and manufactured by Iranian defense specialists.

“Formation of secure layers of air defense in order to protect the Islamic Republic of Iran’s airspace, besides comprehensive defense of sensitive centers of the country are among the objectives of the exercise. Air defense units and operational forces of the Army and the IRGC are skillfully and intelligently undertaking their tasks round the clock under the operational auspices and control of the country’s joint air defense base,” Rahimzadeh said.

Iran’s Armed Forces regularly hold military maneuvers to elevate their preparedness and military prowess.

The drills serve as a warning message to the enemies against any act of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

Tehran, Riyadh...

FROM PAGE 1

In recent weeks, officials from both countries, on opposing sides in multiple Middle East conflicts, have spoken positively about breakthrough talks held in Baghdad since April.

The discussions were launched under Iran’s former moderate president Hassan Rouhani and have continued under his ultraconservative successor, Ebrahim Raisi.

A foreign diplomat residing in the kingdom who is privy to the negotiations said that the two sides “were on the verge of agreeing... to ease tensions between them and the (diplomatic) proxy war in the region” during the last round of talks. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has confirmed a fourth round took place in September, and expressed hope they would “lay the foundation” to address issues between the countries. His Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, has stated the discussions are “on the right track”. “We have achieved results and agreements, but we still need more dialogue,” he noted earlier this month.

he foreign diplomat added the two sides would “most likely put the final touches to an agreement” in a new round of talks that could come within days. “They, in principle, have reached an agreement to reopen consulates... and I think an announcement of normalisation of ties may come in the next few weeks,” the diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity. Saudi media have toned down their rhetoric towards Tehran, with the state-run Al-Ekhabariya television last week reporting “direct and honest” discussions that would “achieve stability in the region”. It also cited Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s statement this year

that Riyadh wants “a good and special relationship” with Tehran. Last month, Saudi King Salman expressed hope that talks with Iran would “lead to tangible outcomes to build trust” and revive bilateral cooperation.

But he also called on Tehran to cease “all types of support” for armed groups in the region, referring especially to Yemen’s Huthi rebels, who have escalated missile and drone attacks on the kingdom. Since 2015, Riyadh has led a military coalition to support the government against the Huthi insurgents after they seized the capital Sanaa. Riyadh accuses Iran of supporting the Huthis with weapons and drones, but Tehran says it only provides the rebels with political support. “Saudi Arabia is interested in ending the conflict in Yemen... which has cost it billions of riyals,” the foreign diplomat stated.

But Tehran also seeks economic opportunities with Riyadh as it looks to revive its sanctions-battered economy, according to the diplomat. Saudi government adviser Ali Shihabi said that while the atmosphere was positive, Tehran would have to take “substantive” action, particularly on Yemen, before Riyadh would agree to measures like the reopening of embassies.

“Iran needs to take real steps, not just (engage) in nice talk,” Shihabi told AFP.

Yasmine Farouk, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted Saudi Arabia wants attacks on the kingdom to stop as it diversifies its economy away from oil and spends billions on ambitious megaprojects to attract tourists and investors. “There is a greater chance for an agreement now, because Saudi Arabia is sure there will be no US military response to Iran attacking” the kingdom, she added.

Europe and...

FROM PAGE 1

Borrell further pointed to a multi-polar dynamic where actors like Russia and China are seeking to increase their sphere of influence, either regionally or globally.

He suggested that Europe can react to the geostrategic developments either by “burying its head in the sand” and remaining a regional actor, or find ways to become more proactive.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Borrell said the United States expects Europeans to carry a greater share of responsibility for their own and world’s security, adding that he plans to travel to Washington in the coming days to discuss these issues with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

He also noted that the EU’s new Strategic Compass plan, which will lay out Europe’s security and defense strategy until 2030, will be drafted before the end of this year.

The latest development comes as top EU officials have branded as a “wake-up call” the recent decision by the United States and Britain to exclude France from a \$40-billion agreement to supply conventional submarines to Australia.

French and German ministers have also said that the Western decision to strip France of the submarine supply contract was a stark reminder the EU must bolster its capacity to act independently.

Back in September, the U.S., Britain, and Australia established a security alliance – dubbed AUKUS – for the Indo-Pacific to protect what they called their shared interests and help Australia acquire American nuclear-powered submarines.

The new security pact effectively scuttled a previous \$40 billion deal between France and Australia that was signed to supply French-designed conventional diesel-electric submarines to the Australians.

Borrell has already said the AUKUS alliance carries significant implications for the future of EU relations with Washington.

The top EU official’s confession on Europe’s losing its power is a simple example to the weakness of countries of this continent in dealing with the U.S and remaining independent.

In observing their JCPOA obligations, Europeans unfortunately turned their back to Iran and followed the U.S. unilateral sanctions and losing a good market and powerful country in the region while they could take advantage of the rift between Tehran and Washington to boost trade with Tehran, strengthen their international position and become influential forces.

If Europe does not separate its path from the U.S.’s, it will have no better fate than what the U.S. has had internationally, and the wave of hatred and mistrust will sweep away it. Now it is better for Europe to be independent and to get logical stands regarding any international issue especially in the Middle East, or else it loses historic reputation just for the sake of blindly following a falling power, the U.S.

India’s Adani...

FROM PAGE 1

The consignment, which authorities said originated from Afghanistan, was worth an estimated \$2.65bn, one of the biggest such hauls ever in the country.

Indian authorities had also seized heroin worth over \$20m and arrested six Iranian men in a deep-sea drug bust off the Gujarat coast in September. In response to the seizures, Adani Ports had said it did not have the authority to examine the millions of tons of cargo that pass through its terminals.

Mundra port, a major economic and logistics gateway in India, handled 130 million tonnes of cargo last year and also has the country’s largest coal import terminal. Most of the world’s opium and heroin comes from Afghanistan, despite major efforts by the United States to combat the drugs trade. Russia, Iran, Pakistan and China are major smuggling routes and huge markets for Afghan drugs.



Im Roars to U.S. PGA Tour Title

LAS VEGAS (Dispatches) - South Korean Im Sung-jae torched the TPC Summerlin course with nine birdies in a nine-under-par 62 on Sunday to win the PGA Tour's Shriners' Children's Open by four strokes.

Im's impeccable day included a 30-foot birdie to open his round and five birdies in a row from the ninth through the 13th as he built a 24-under-par total of 260 in Las Vegas. That was plenty for a player who started the day three shots off the pace and finished with his second U.S. tour title, four strokes in front of American Matthew Wolff.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE	
Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448	E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com
Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450	ISSN 1024-6053
Editorial Board: 44253449	P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395	Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Advertising Department: Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234	Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com	Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
	Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Brazil's Unvaccinated President Misses Soccer Match

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said he was not allowed to attend a league match between Santos and Gremio because the home club did not allow unvaccinated supporters into their stadium.

The soccer match was Santos' first with supporters present since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the club insisted it would only permit entry of vaccinated people or those who had a negative PCR test.

Germany Qualify for Qatar 2022; Belgium Made to Wait

BERLIN (Dispatches) - A Timo Werner double on Monday helped Germany stamp their ticket for the 2022 World Cup with a 4-0 win over North Macedonia, but Belgium will have to wait until next month after Wales carved out a narrow win in Estonia.

Hansi Flick's men avenged a shock 2-1 home loss to the Macedonians earlier this year to claim their seventh win in eight qualifiers and take an unassailable eight-point lead at the top of Group J, with two matches remaining.

Germany went into their match in Skopje knowing that they could secure their passage if they won and Armenia failed to beat Romania.

After a goalless first half, Kai Havertz broke the deadlock five minutes after the interval before Chelsea's Werner struck twice in three minutes to clinch the tie for the Germans.

His first came on 70 minutes when Thomas Mueller, who had teed up Havertz, flicked the ball into the path of Werner who crashed the ball past Stole Dimitrievski in the Macedonian goal.

Three minutes later, substitute Florian Wirtz got the touch through for Werner to curl his shot past Dimitrievski and chalk up his fifth goal in his last five qualifiers.

Jamal Musiala, 18 years and 227 days old, rounded things off with his first goal in international football, becoming the youngest person to score for Germany since Marius Hiller, then 17, scored against Switzerland in 1910.

More importantly, Musiala sealed the win that sees the Germans become the first team, other than hosts Qatar, to qualify for the 2022 finals.

The second part of the bargain which secured their place in Qatar in 2022 came in Bucharest where Alexandru Mitrita's goal on 26 minutes gave Romania a 1-0 win at home against the Armenians.

Kieffer Moore's early goal in Tallinn gave Wales a slender 1-0 win over Estonia which keeps their hopes alive of catching Group E leaders Belgium, who were not in action after their involvement in the Nations League finals.

Wales are five points behind Belgium with two games to play and can still claim top spot and automatic qualification.

The Czech Republic won 2-0 in Belarus to remain in the running for second place



in the group. They are level on points with the Welsh but have played one match more.

Wales are all but certain to drop into the playoffs even if they finish below the Czechs, courtesy of winning their 2020-21 Nations League group.

Russia and Croatia guaranteed themselves a top-two finish in Group H but top spot remains open. First-half goals from Igor Diveev and Georgi Dzhikiya gave the Russians a 2-0 cushion in Slovenia and, in spite of Josip Ilcic's strike just before half-time, the visitors held on to claim the three points.

Russia are two points ahead of Croatia who needed Luka Modric's 71st-minute equaliser to claim a 2-2 draw at home to Slovakia.

The Russians can secure their qualification when they travel to Croatia on November 14. Memphis Depay scored twice for the Netherlands as they thrashed Gibraltar 6-0.

The Dutch, who missed the 2018 World Cup, top Group G but Burak Yilmaz's 99th-minute penalty which gave Turkey a 2-1 win in Latvia means they must wait until next month to secure a top-two finish.

Norway, without the injured Erling Haaland, are two points behind the Netherlands in second place after beating Montenegro 2-0.

World Cup in 2022 Will Be Neymar's Last

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Brazil star Neymar said that the 2022 World Cup will be his last as he "doesn't have the strength to put up with more football".

"I think it will be my last World Cup," the 29-year-old told DAZN.

"I will play it like it is the last because I don't know if I will still have the mental strength to put up with even more football."

Neymar, who has played in two World Cups and is his country's second top scorer of all time behind Pele, will be 34 when the 2026 tournament rolls around.

"I will do everything to get to the 2022 World Cup in great shape and will do everything to win for my country, to fulfill my biggest dream since I was little," added the Paris Saint-Germain star.

Neymar played in the 2014 World Cup on home soil and scored four goals.

However, he was to suffer a back injury before Brazil were humiliated 7-1 by Germany in the semi-finals.

Four years later, in Russia, Brazil were knocked out by Belgium in the quarter-finals.

So far, his international honours have been limited to the 2013 Confederations Cup and an Olympic gold medal in Rio in 2016.

Rashford Thanks Fans for Overwhelming Support

LONDON (Dispatches) - England and Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said he had never experienced the kind of support he received from fans after he was the target of racist abuse following his penalty miss in the final of the European Championship in July.

Rashford's penalty miss in the shootout against Italy ultimately cost England the title at Wembley. The 23-year-old's young team mates, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, were also targeted after missing their spot kicks.

A Rashford mural in Manchester was defaced too but the community came together and left messages of support to cover up the vandalism and the player said that was a "special moment".

"It's nice to have that support from different types of people. It's probably something that I've not really experienced before," Rashford told the BBC.

"You never want to get that far in the tournament and then get to the final game and lose. But to lose on penalties it's such, such fine margins.

"But there's never a time that racism is acceptable, or we should accept racism and just get on with our lives. But probably on the biggest stage that racism has been in front of us as young players, it was nice to see so many people supporting us without us even saying anything."

Rashford has been sidelined ever since after undergoing surgery for a shoulder injury he said he had been carrying since September last year but is on the comeback trail after returning to full training.

"My recovery is, I wouldn't say coming to an end because obviously I have to keep looking after it, but I'm in a much better place physically and mentally," he said.

Rashford also said he was looking forward to playing with Cristiano Ronaldo having been a fan of the 36-year-old during his first stint at the Old Trafford club.

Don't Expect Me to Be Polite and Calm on Radio



was told to pit for a tyre change, against his wishes of staying out in a bid to catch up with Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

Hamilton responded angrily over the radio when he discovered he had lost two places in

LONDON (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton said he was not furious with his team after their pit strategy cost him a podium finish at Sunday's Turkish Grand Prix, saying his anger over the radio came from the heat of the moment while jostling for position.

The seven-times world champion, who started 11th on the grid due to engine penalties, was running in third place when he

the pits as he finished fifth, allowing Verstappen to build a lead of six points in the drivers' standings with six races left.

"Don't ever expect me to be all polite and calm on the radio when I'm racing, we are all very passionate and in the heat of the moment that passion can come out, as it does for all drivers," Hamilton wrote on Instagram on Monday.

"My heart and spirit are out there on the track, it's the fire in me that's got me this far but any angst is quickly forgotten and we talked it through, already looking ahead to the next race."

Formula One tyre supplier Pirelli backed Mercedes' strategy on Sunday, with their head Mario Isola saying it was dangerous on Hamilton's part to push the boundaries of the intermediate tyres to 58 laps.

Hamilton had said after the race that it was hard for him to give up the position as he did not have the full picture.

Courtois Lashes Out Over Number of Games

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Belgium and Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has launched a scathing criticism of UEFA and FIFA for scheduling more and more matches at the expense of player welfare.

Courtois hit out at the growing football calendar after his side's 2-1 defeat by Italy in the UEFA Nations' League third-place playoff, labelling the match, in which both teams rotated their squads, a "money game".

"We are not robots. It's just more and more games and less rest for us and nobody cares about us. When will we get a rest? Never," Courtois said. The football calendar has been squeezed in the last 18 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Champions League and many of the continent's top leagues taking place in shorter spaces of time but with the same amount of matches.

The European Championship and Copa America were both held at the end of the gruelling season and there is to be no let-up in the near future.

Next year's World Cup takes place between November and December -- in the middle of the club season -- while the Nations League finals will be held in June 2023.

FIFA, meanwhile, wishes to hold an expanded Club World Cup and its head of Global Football Development, former Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, has outlined proposals for a biennial World Cup.

"Next year we have a World Cup in November, we have to play maybe until the latter stages of June again. We will get injured," added Courtois.

"So in the end top players will get injured and injured and injured. It's something that should be much better and much more taken care of."

UEFA has opposed the plan for more frequent World Cups and the proposed European Super League, but Courtois said the European organizing body was not interested in player welfare either as they too keep adding to the fixture calendar.



Murray Rallies To Beat Alcaraz At Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - Andy Murray rallied to win an inter-generational battle at Indian Wells, beating Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the third round of the WTA and ATP Masters event.

Murray, who has touted Alcaraz as a future world number one, nevertheless wasn't conceding any ground to the talented teen in the California desert.

The 34-year-old Scot, still battling to return from injury that has seen his ranking fall to 121 in the world, raced to an early 3-0 lead before Alcaraz -- who reached the quarter-finals of the US Open last month -- found his range and regained a break.

After saving a set point the 18-year-old Spaniard broke Murray for a second time to take the opening set, but again gained the opening break in the second set and this time held on.

Murray, who accepted a wild card into the draw, had just eight unforced errors in the second set to Alcaraz's 14.

He broke 30th-seeded Alcaraz to open the third set then saved four break points in the next game to maintain the advantage.

A second service break gave Murray a comfortable cushion, and it was the teen requiring late treatment on an injured foot before the oft-injured Murray sealed the victory after three hours and four minutes.

"He's obviously got so much potential, so much firepower and these conditions it's not easy to finish points off quickly, but he's able to because he has so much pace from the back of the court," former world number one Murray said of Alcaraz. "So I had to fight extremely hard, coming back from a set down.

"I felt like in the second set he played maybe better. First set I felt like I had more of the opportunities but didn't get it so yeah, happy with the way I fought."

