

Majid Takht Ravanch, Outgoing Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Met With UN Chief Antonio Guterres to Say Farewell at the Termination of His 4-Year Mission

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Diplomat in Karachi Expressed His Condolences to Pakistan Government and People Over the Deaths of People during The flooding in That Country and Called on the Iranians to Help The Flood-Hit Pakistanis

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Iran, Russia to Sign Gas Swap Deal Very Soon

TEHRAN PressTV) - Oil Minister Javad Owji says Iran will "very soon" sign a major deal with Russia to import gas from the country for domestic consumption and deliver the same amount to customers at other parts of the Iranian borders.

Owji said that senior official of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) will travel to Moscow in the near future to sign the gas swap deal with Russia.

"The gas purchase and swap (agreement) with Russia has been finalized and it will be signed in the near future in Moscow between the NIGC and the Russian side," the minister said.

The minister made the comments after a meeting in Tehran with Igor Levitin, who is a senior aide to the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Owji described the two-hour meeting with Levitin as very fruitful and said that the two sides had discussed the road ahead for a number of joint projects.

Iran and Russia, the two leading global gas powers, have deepened their energy ties in recent months amid growing economic pressure being piled up by the West on Russia because of the war in Ukraine. **See Page 7**

Gov't Opens First Multi-Purpose Gamma Irradiation Plant

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has launched a first multi-purpose gamma irradiation plant in the country as its chief says 11 other such plants are planned to come on line in the country until March 2024.

AEOI chief Moahammad Eslami, who is also a deputy Iranian president, traveled to East Azerbaijan province in northwestern Iran on Thursday to open the gamma irradiation plant in the city of Bonab.

Eslami said the movable plant will mostly offer waste control services to Iranian farmers in the area, adding that Iran will be able to reduce agricultural waste by over 30% by using the system in other parts of the country.

"The main application of this system is to irradiate food and agricultural products to reduce their susceptibility to pests and to increase their storage life," he said.

The AEOI chief said the organization has identified other locations in Iran for launching similar gamma irradiation plants.

Eslami said works on designing and assembling the gamma plant installed in Bonab had started in January by AEOI technicians and engineers. **See Page 7**

Iran Slams NPT Conference for Refusing To Call on Israel to Join Treaty



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has criticized the ongoing Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference for refusing to call on the Israeli regime to join the treaty.

The Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT began on August 1 and is slated to wrap up on Friday.

In a phone call with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday, Amirabdollahian lamented that the NPT conference's President-designate Gustavo Zlauvinen had, unlike the conference's previous editions, omitted to press the occupying regime to become a signatory to the treaty.

By leaving out all criticism of the Israeli regime, Zlauvinen had "set all of the previous conferences' achievements aside," the Iranian official said, asserting, "[This] is not acceptable by us at all."

Israel, which pursues a policy of deliberate ambiguity about its nuclear weapons program, is estimated to possess 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, making it the sole possessor of non-conventional arms in the Middle East region.

The illegitimate entity has, however, refused to either allow inspections of its military nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or sign the NPT.

What has emboldened Tel Aviv to accelerate its nuclear activities, according to observers, is the support that is provided for by the United States and Europe, which are both most critical of Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program.

Turning to the issue of underway negotiations aimed at potential removal of the US's sanctions against Iran, Amirabdollahian said Washington had on Wednesday responded to Iran's comments about a European Union proposal that is aimed at taking the talks out of its current impasse.

"Currently, my colleagues are engaged in examining [the US's response]," the foreign minister said.

"We possess the serious and real will for conclusion of a strong and sustainable agreement, and have displayed this will in practice," he noted.

Iran and world countries, including the US, struck a nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2015.

However, in a unilateral and illegal move, the US pulled out of the deal in May 2018, under pressure from the Israeli regime and its influential lobby groups in Washington. After withdrawing from the deal, the US also reinstated the draconian sanctions that the deal had lifted.

Since April last year, the Austrian capital of Vienna has been playing host to talks aimed at examining the prospect of Washington's return to the JCPOA, and fresh removal of the sanctions.

The UN chief, for his part, said he would address the Islamic Republic's concerns about the Israeli regime's refusal to join the NPT.

Addressing the issue of the Vienna negotiations, he expressed gratitude towards the Islamic Republic for its "constructive efforts and stances," voicing hope that the talks would lead to a satisfactory resolution.

Iran to Form Aircraft Maintenance Consortium With China, India, Russia

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN Mohammad Mohammadi Bakhsh, the Head of the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran (CAO) has announced that four countries have been sending their commercial passenger planes to the Iran for repairs and maintenance and that it will form a consortium with India, China, and Russia to set necessary standards for aircraft repair services.

Iran has repaired six foreign aircraft and several airplane engines this year and has achieved the required level of airworthiness. Iran is also planning to build three types of jet aircraft in the 50, 72 and 150 seat capacity passenger planes. Russia is also in a partnership with the nearby UAE to develop a new generation of supersonic aircraft.

Aircraft maintenance has become an issue due to the West's sanctions, which prevent replacement parts and maintenance equipment being sent to both Russia and Iran. However, both China and Russia have well-established aviation manufacturing industries; both have been developing their own domestic aircraft for decades, while India has a significant role in the global aviation parts industry.

All these countries possess significant Airbus and Boeing fleets, but will now be opting to install parts and conduct maintenance without the support of the original manufacturers - a blow to the aviation supply chain industry in the United States and Europe. These will talk up issues concerning safety, yet China and India already supply parts to both manufacturers. **See Page 7**

Iran Reviewing U.S. Response To EU Nuclear Deal Text

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has received a response from the United States on its comments to the European Union's draft proposal aimed at salvaging the 2015 nuclear deal and lifting draconian US sanctions, the foreign ministry spokesman said.

Nasser Kanaani announced the response was received through the European Union coordinator Enrique Mora on Wednesday evening, adding that a "careful review" has already commenced.

"A careful review of the U.S. opinions has started, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will announce its views in this context after having completed the review," the spokesperson added. Four days of intense talks between representatives of Iran and the five remaining parties to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), ended on August 8 with a modified text proposed by the EU on the table.

The talks came after a five-month hiatus as the U.S. negotiators failed to overcome their indecisiveness.

Iran submitted its response to the EU draft proposal on August 15, a week after the latest round of talks wrapped up. After submitting its response, Tehran urged Washington to show "realism and flexibility" in order to reach an agreement. **See Page 7**

Number of Iranian Visitors To Turkey Up 200%

ANKARA (Dispatches) - New statistics from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism show that in the seven months of this year, 1,278,000 Iranian tourists entered the country, threefold compared to the same period last year and more than fivefold compared to the seven months of 2020.

Last month alone, about 230,000 Iranian tourists traveled to Turkey.

Iranians make up the largest number of foreign tourists in Turkey after citizens of Germany, Russia, Britain and Bulgaria, the report said.

More than 23 million foreign tourists have arrived in Turkey in the seven months of this year, a 130 percent increase from the same period last year and 326 percent growth compared to the seven months of 2020.

Turkey's improved relations with Arab countries and Israel have also led to the arrival of a large wave of Israeli and Arab tourists, with the number of Israeli tourists in Turkey almost quadrupling to 440,000. **See Page 7**

Iran Targets Oil Output Capacity Boost

LONDON (Dispatches) - Talks to revive the Iran nuclear deal and potentially ease oil sanctions are making "good progress," an Iranian foreign ministry official said, at a time when the country is taking steps to boost its crude oil production capacity.

"Generally, up to now, we have had relatively good progress. But the talks are a package of issues, over every single of them there should be an agreement," foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani told reporters in his weekly briefing Aug. 22. US President Joe Biden spoke with leaders of the UK, France and Germany about the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, the White House said Aug. 21, without being any more specific.

Any deal that could help bolster tight global oil supplies isn't expected this year, according to Platts Analytics, a part of S&P Global Commodity Insights. Iranian oil production has held at 2.58 million b/d for the four months through July, according to the monthly Platts OPEC survey. In an Aug. 16 report, Platts Analytics said it had previously assumed an interim deal by the end of 2022, helping to boost Iranian oil supply by 500,000 b/d through the first quarter of 2023. It now assumes Iranian crude and condensate exports will stay flat at 800,000 b/d for the rest of 2022 and through the end of 2023. **See Page 7**

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Iranian, Qatari FMs Talk on Phone on Regional Developments

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani discussed bilateral relations and regional developments on the phone. Amirabdollahian and Sheikh Abdulrahman, who is also Qatar's deputy prime minister, in their Thursday evening phone talk in addition to reviewing the latest developments in nuclear talks to remove the sanctions, exchanged views on bilateral ties, and other issues of mutual interest.

Iran Calls for Further Cooperation With Russia

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber underlined the need for further cooperation between Tehran and Moscow to carry out Rasht-Astara railway project in northern Iran.

The railway project is of prime importance as it is considered one of the final stages of completing a highly strategic International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC). Speaking during a meeting in Tehran with Igor Levitin, a senior aide to the Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Iranian vice president said that both Iran and Russia have to pursue the project as one of their priorities.

Iran and Russia enjoy major potentials for expansion of bilateral relations so they can upgrade ties in different energy, transit, transportation, industry, and food security areas, Mokhber said.

He also said that a special committee has to be formed to help remove the obstacles in the way of transit ties between the two countries.

The Russian side, for his part, said that he has had constructive talks with Iranian officials during his visit to Tehran.



Levitin said that he has had good meetings with Iranian economic activists at Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) which could help remove difficulties facing trade and economic cooperation between Iran and Russia.

Referring to transit and transportation cooperation with Iran, the Russian official said that Iran can act as an alternative transportation route for Russia and become a transit hub for the country.

He noted that with the completion of Rasht-Astara railway project, a major part of Russia's transit can be carried out via this route.

Iran Created Nearly 1m Jobs in Year to August

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Labor ministry says nearly one million jobs have been created in the country in the year to late August despite economic problems facing the country because of foreign sanctions.

Deputy labor minister for employment Mohammad Karimi said on Thursday that a total of 975,633 jobs had been created in Iran in the year that has passed since a new administration took over in the country in early August 2021.

Karimi cited figures from the National System of Employment Monitoring and said that job creation in Iran quickened in the calendar year starting late March as the number of new jobs registered in the five months to late August reached over 634,000.

He said the government had directly funded the addition of around 100,000 new jobs between March and August, adding that nearly half of those jobs were in the Iranian services sector.

Permanent new jobs processed by non-government recruitment agencies exceeded a record of 15,000 in the five months to August, said the official, adding that female employment had accounted for 30% of all jobs created in Iran over the period.

The figures come as Iran still faces a regime of unilateral American sanctions that have put a strain on its government finances.

However, the US bans on Iran's exports of crude oil has led to a surge in activity in the country's non-oil sector while helping the government to create more manufacturing and agricultural jobs.

Iran to Become Hub of Designing, Building Nuclear Plants



TEHRAN (IRNA) - ehran, IRNA - Head of Iran Atomic Energy Organization (AEIO) referring to prevailing fuel crisis in the world, said we must be able to implement this plan in upcoming years, and turn the country into one of the hubs of designing and manufacturing nuclear plants.

Mohammad Eslami who was speaking at the opening ceremony of Bonab portable gamma ray projection plant, said, "Today, the world is faced with a fuel crisis and almost all European countries have moved towards construction of nuclear plants, while we have had for a while neglected this field, but by implementing this plan, in the horizon of the upcoming years, we must be able to turn our country to one of the poles of designing and manufacturing nuclear plants."

"The nuclear industry did exist in our life and our national economy, but at a limited scale, of course today, thanks God, and thanks to the efforts made by our colleagues, we managed to proceed with this project to such a phase. This project is inclusive of designing and manufacturing the portable gamma ray projection device, which is used in the world for ray projection over agricultural products."

He said that implementing the gamma rays project began on December 22, 2021, it was unveiled on August 22, 2022, and now, on Thursday, August 25, 2022 it began production.

The IAEA head reiterated that the portable gamma rays' projection terminal's usage is projection on foodstuff and the agricultural products to immunize them in confrontation with pests, elongate their life, and the period they can be kept in the warehouses, and thus 30% of agricultural products and foodstuff loss in the country will be noticeably harnessed and controlled.

He added that this plan is implemented by the IAEA, based on a document on broadening usage of the gamma rays' projection, that was designed, manufactured, and implemented based on the predicted needs at 12 industrial centers of the country, expressing hope that all those 12 centers will be equipped with it within three years' time.

Iran, Tanzania to Set Up Roadmap to Boost All-Out Ties

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says Iran and Tanzania will set up a roadmap to accelerate the expansion of relations in various fields.

Amirabdollahian made the remarks while speaking to reporters upon his arrival in Tanzania on Thursday on the second leg of his three-nation tour. He wrapped up a visit to Mali and is scheduled to travel to Zanzibar.

The Iranian foreign minister, who was welcomed by his Tanzanian counterpart Liberata Mulamula, said he plans to meet the African country's president to hand over to him an invitation from President Ebrahim Raisi for a visit to Tehran.

He said businessmen and industrialists accompanying him in this trip would hold an important meeting in the city of Dar es Salaam to discuss ways to improve mutual relations.

The Tanzanian foreign minister hailed the visit by her Iranian counterpart to her country and told reporters that the two countries enjoy very close relations.



Addressing a joint press conference with his Malian counterpart Abdoulaye Diop in Bamako on Tuesday, Amirabdollahian said terrorism in West Asia and Africa is a product of interference by extra-regional countries.

"Interference by some extra-regional countries is the reason behind formation of some terrorist groups in the West Asia region and Africa," the top Iranian diplomat said.

At the end of the first meeting of the Iran-Mali joint cooperation commission, the two countries signed a document and agreed to hold the next session in Tehran.

Before setting off for his regional tour of Africa on Monday, Amirabdollahian said the Islamic Republic pays serious attention to improvement of ties with all regions of the world.

With regard to foreign policy, "Our priorities include Asia, neighboring countries as well as some other countries, including [those in] the African continent," Iran's foreign minister said.

Iran Slams UK Envoy's Contentious Remarks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign ministry spokesman slams UK Ambassador to Tehran Simon Shercliff for making controversial remarks about his compatriots' "negative" view of the Iranian nation while ignoring the monarchy's long history of oppression against the Iranians.

In comments at a recent meeting with members of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Shercliff raised eyebrows by saying that he respected Iran's negative perception of the British monarchy but the Britons had a similar view of the Iranians, too.

The UK diplomat, however, made no mention of his government's long list of brutal policies vis-à-vis the Iranian nation in modern history.

He was met with criticism at the meeting, with the participants attributing the troubled trade ties between the two countries to the UK's pursuit of a destructive Iran policy and prioritization of US sanctions against Iran.

The UK diplomat, however, blamed the Iranian side for the decrease in trade exchanges.

Reacting to the development, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani advised Shercliff to "study history" to get to know about what Britain had done to Iran throughout history.

"I advise the UK ambassador to study history in case he is uninformed about his government's long record of oppression against the Iranian nation, stop making baseless and unfounded claims, do his utmost instead to make up for the British government's wrong policies and unacceptable measures against the Iranian nation, and focus on efforts to advance bilateral ties based on the principles of mutual respect and interests," he said.

Britain owes its notoriety in Iran to its role in two coup d'états in 1921 and 1953.

The colonial monarchy is also to blame for a deadly famine in Iran during World War II, when it hoarded food supplies to feed its soldiers.

The UK also provided support to the ex-Iraqi regime's eight-year war on Iran in the 1980s.

Most recently, London has been serving as a promoter of draconian US sanctions targeting ordinary Iranians.

Marandi Rejects Al Arabiya Report

TEHRAN (IFP) - An advisor to Iran's negotiating team rejects as "totally wrong" the claims by a Saudi-run media outlet about the content of the US response to Iran's proposals aimed at helping restore the 2015 nuclear agreement.

According to Iranian media, Mohammad Marandi dismissed Al Arabiya's claims that the US had rejected what it claimed to be Iran's "additional conditions" for a revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Iran has just started assessing [Washington's] response and will then inform the coordinator of the negotiations" of its own views, Marandi was cited as saying.

Iran said Wednesday it had received a response from the US to an EU-drafted plan to salvage the 2015 nuclear deal.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Tehran was making a "detailed review" of the US response, which was received through EU coordinator Josep Borrell.

US officials also confirmed on Wednesday that the response to Iran's comments on the EU-drafted plan had been sent, without providing further details.

However, in a report, the Persian-language service of Al Arabiya claimed that the US, in its response, had called for uranium enrichment of up to four percent by Tehran and for the lifting of all restrictions for inspections of Iran's atomic facilities.

Iran, Nigeria to Develop Military Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Nigerian defense minister Bashir Salihi Magashi in a meeting with the Iranian ambassador to Nigeria Mohammad Alibak stressed the need for expanding and strengthening Iran-Nigeria military cooperation.

"Nigeria pays attention to the true allies and their support as the country battles multiple threats to its territorial integrity," Magashi stressed, adding that suggestions have been offered to improve the military relations between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Nigerian minister of defense also asked the Iranian envoy to provide applicable models for establishing strong interactions between the armed forces of the two countries.

Recently, Iran and Nigeria signed 9 documents of cooperation between the two countries in various fields of cultural tourism, oil, agriculture, sports and business.

The sixth meeting of the joint commissions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Federal Republic of Nigeria was recently held in Tehran with the presence of Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade Reza Fatemi Amin and Zubairu Dada, the Nigerian foreign minister.

Iranian Drones Destroy Mock Targets With Precision Weapons

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Army's cutting-edge drones have successfully hit and destroyed a set of "sensitive and vital" mock enemy targets using state-of-the-art weapons with pinpoint accuracy on the second day of massive countrywide drills.

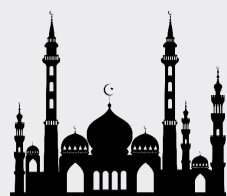
Vice Admiral Seyyed Mahmoud Mousavi, the spokesman for the drone exercises, said on Thursday that the second day of the maneuvers witnessed "combat training using actual weapons." He added that a considerable part of the designated targets have so far been destroyed and the mission will be concluded in the hours to come.

Mousavi said various types of combat drones operated by the four units of the Army, namely the Ground Force, Navy, Air Force and Air Defense Force, hit the pre-determined targets in the general area of the exercises — which cover almost all Iranian territory and strategic southern waters — with precision and high-accuracy weapons in the major operational phase of the maneuvers.

In this phase, he added, Kaman, Mohajer, Ababil, Karrar, and Bavar drones used homegrown weapons, including Qa'em bombs, Almas missiles and MK-82 bombs, to target positions ranging from command and control centers to fuel tanks, ammunition depots, and radar and missile systems.

Mousavi said a variety of drones with pre-determined operational plans were flown from different remote parts of the country and carried out their missions under the supervision of the drills' tactical air direction (TAD) center.

"Given the fact that the drills take place countrywide, the Army's Zolfaghar tactical air direction center and a number of other secondary bases in different locations of the country have been in charge of strategic and operational management of the maneuvers," he added.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:05
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:57
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:05
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:33

17. If it had been Our wish to take (just) a pastime, We should surely have taken it from the things nearest to Us, if We would do (such a thing)!
18. Nay, We hurl the Truth against falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood doth perish! Ah! woe be to you for the (false) things ye ascribe (to Us).
Surah 21. The Prophets (17-18)

Iranian, Russian Automotive Firms Sign \$700m Worth of MoUs

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian automotive companies and their counterparts in Russia have signed some \$700 million worth of deals to expand their cooperation at a time the two countries are shoring up their defenses against Western sanctions.

Iranian and Russia carmakers and parts manufacturers had signed a total of 12 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) during a ceremony held on the sidelines of MIMS Automobility Moscow 2022, a Russian car show that started earlier this week.

The report said the contracts will focus on key areas of works in the car manufacturing sector, including the production and sales of powder metallurgy parts by Iranian parts makers.

It said Iran's Mega Motor company, a subsidiary of the second largest car manufacturer Saipa, will start a partnership with a Russian car engine maker as part of the contracts signed during the Russian auto show.

Iran's ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali, who oversaw the signing of the MoUs, said the contracts would enable Iran to increase its exports to Russia from a current annual figure of nearly \$1 billion which is mostly focused on agrifood exports.

"Our car parts manufacturers shined during the (Moscow) car show and made the



country proud," he was quoted as saying by the IRNA.

The deals come amid efforts in Iran and Russia to expand the industrial cooperation between the two countries as they seek to offset the impacts of American sanctions on their economies.

The push for closer economic and trade ties between Iran and Russia intensified in February when Moscow came under a raft of Western sanctions because of its military involvement in Ukraine.

Dozens of companies from Iran's automotive sector have participated in Russia's main car show, a sign the country is serious about its plans to capture a major share of the Russian car market.

Iran had the largest presence at the MIMS Automobility Moscow 2022, an event being held from August 22 to 25. The report said some 50 Iranian companies were showcasing their parts and equipment in an area of 1,700 square meters in Moscow's Expo Center.

1st VP Tours IDRO Pavilion In Iran Business Exhibition

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – First Vice-President on Wednesday and in the opening of Iran Business Exhibition visited pavilion of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO).

According to reports, IDRO with displaying 10 service systems of business via Iran Industrial Management Institute and Information Technology Development Center has attended this exhibition.

First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber during his visit of the pavilion got acquainted with the latest products and services of Information Technology Development Center (known MAGFA) and Iran Industrial Management Institute (IIMI) in the field of easing business and related experts explained required details.

In this specialized exhibition, the participant companies and organizations have presented different businesses and services in line with boosting knowledge-based sciences to the enthusiasts of this field that one can point to design and construction of plant, revival of idle plant, technology services, marketing, imports and exports, smartization and financing services. The exhibition opened on Wednesday August 24 and will end today, August 28.

First VP Visits Chadormalu Pavilion

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber, accompanied by Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and his entourage, paid a visit to Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company pavilion in the first Exhibition of Iran Business With Approach on Knowledge-Based.

During the visit, First Vice-President Mokhber got acquainted with the activities of Chadormalu Company in line with indigenizing manufacture of mineral and industrial parts and equipment which is done in collaboration with the knowledge-based companies, universities, research and scientific centers and capable domestic manufacturers.

It is worth noting that so far over 30,000 of industrial parts in Chadormalu and Industrial Company has been indigenized.



6-Year Efforts of ESCO Increased Value of 50% of Products

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Head of Exploitation of Isfahan Steel Company (ESCO) says the efforts of the company in the past six years have industrialized and increased value of 50 percent of products.

Mehrdad Tavallaiean said that the efforts of the company in the past six years have increased value of almost half of its construction profile products and they have been turned into products with high value added and industrial products.

He added that these developments have been achieved fully through using knowhow and mainly domestic equipment. He noted that in the rolling engineering unit there are capable engineers and experts who act based on the engineering



principles like a strong R&D body and before producing new type of profile based on trial and error and spending billions of rials, it is produced through using design and assimilation softwares with precision over 95%, and design and production of switch rail is the best example for it that in the first attempt, the product was delivered to Iran Rail Industries Development Company (IRID).

He then pointed to some important products of ESCO which are produced with high value added and said different strategic railway and metro rails and mining rails are some other value added products.

Tavallaiean went on to say that the company had other high value added products like girder, electrode, industrial structural sheets which are stronger and safer than other normal materials.

Eng. Abdollah Ozzari Ahwazi in Highlighting Company's One-Year Performance in the 13th Gov't

18% Rise in Production Capacity of Arvandan Oil and Gas Co. With the Prospect of Producing Nearly 1m BPD by End of 13th Gov't



The CEO of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company, referring to the company's view of becoming knowledge-based in the near future and extensive activities in this field, said: The research activities of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company caused an 18% increase in power capacity between October last year and the end of July this year. have production According to the public relations report of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company, Abdollah Ozzari Ahwazi, on Tuesday, September 1st, in a press conference held to present the company's one-year performance report in the 13th People's Government, said: the prospect of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company is to extract in 1404 according to the plans. 900 thousand to one million barrels of oil per day.

He added: Currently, the Oil and Gas Technology and Innovation Park and the Scientific and Industrial Research Organization of Iran have signed memorandums of understanding with Arvandan Oil and Gas Company to meet technological needs, but our effort is to build a knowledge-based economy in the path of realizing a resistance economy and to turn Arvandan Oil and Gas Company into a knowledge-based company. Stating that the approach of the 13th government in the discussion of increasing investment in point fields, especially joint point fields, for which contracts have been signed, he said: The Oil Industry Research Institute has been working on the separation of asphaltene, wax and resin from crude oil since July 2019. Surface facilities and its technical and economic evaluation is considered a capital project and 95% progressed. The CEO of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company stated that the research and technological studies for the development of technologies to optimize the production processes and

increase the harvest rate in the Darkhojn field have progressed by about 76%, and added: several memorandums of understanding have also been concluded for the development of domestic construction projects. Events were also held for them during this period, and for this purpose, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Presidential Office of Science and Technology to meet the technological needs of the company. MOUs were signed with the Oil Industry University for technical, laboratory and educational services, and with the Oil Industry Research Institute for specialized projects in the upstream, downstream, energy and environment fields. Ozzari Ahwazi mentioned that an important part of the activities of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company is focused on maintenance plans and increasing the production capacity and noted: Accordingly, the repair and rehabilitation of eight wells in the northern Azadegan field was aimed at increasing the production capacity in this field. While appreciating the personnel and colleagues of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company and their significant role in the successes achieved, he added: in South Azadegan field, by repairing, removing obstacles and reviving a number of closed wells with in-well operations and using a mobile brain tube. Also, the application of the new ultrasonic method by knowledge-based companies to remove the obstacles inside the well, which was the implementation of 2 rings of closed wells with this method, is currently being done. The CEO of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company, while appreciating Dr. Khojastemehr, the CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company, for his follow-ups in concluding memorandums of understanding and welcoming research and knowledge-based projects, continued: the research activity of constructing a pilot for the separation of asphaltene wax and resin compounds in order to lighten heavy oil in surface facilities and evaluate In the period of 10 months (from October 1400 to July 1401), it was able to increase production capacity by 18% compared to October 1400.

Saving \$8m in Forex by activating the West Karun processing unit

He explained: At the same time, by transferring part of the oil from one of Azadegan's units to West Karun's processing unit, we saved 8 million dollars in foreign currency annually, and so far 700 thousand dollars have been realized in one month. This oil used to be refined at a price of one and a half dollars per barrel in one of the mobile refineries. Ozzari Ahwazi said: In addition to the goals of the plans to maintain and increase production, other goals were also achieved in line with these goals, such as the project of constructing a concrete pond for the purpose of burying drilling logs in the operational area of Darkhojn, which improves production according to It leads to

environmental protection indicators. Referring to the project of construction of flow pipelines and surface facilities of wells No. 32 and 26 of Darkhojn field, he said: In line with these plans, the project of constructing a 12-inch gas transmission line from the source of Darkhojn exploitation unit to NGL 3200 with an estimated budget of 14 million dollars is being implemented. For this purpose, the draft investment contract with Yadavaran Gas Refining Company of the Persian Gulf was sent to the National Oil Company. According to the CEO of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company, the surface part of the drilling and repair project of four wells in the Darkhojn field is underway, and the first rig will start operating in September of this year, which is estimated to increase the daily capacity of 10,000 barrels in order to maintain and increase production. be realized

Strong presence of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company in social responsibilities

Ozzari Ahwazi named one of the important contracts in the field of converting light oil into heavy oil and said: in the field of social responsibilities of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company in building a school and health center in deprived areas, helping sports teams and building a football field, water supply by tanker and Has contributed to the reservoir and helping students from underprivileged areas. He reminded that Arvandan Oil and Gas Company was also active in the Metropoli incident by sending 114 light, heavy and extra heavy machines, providing food, equipment and the like to the scene. Adhari Ahwazi stated: In the discussion of Arba'in, Arvandan Oil and Gas Company, as the representative of Iran's National Oil Company at the border of Shalamcheh, will establish the headquarters of Arba'in and provide logistical facilities and, like last year, by setting up a procession, will provide equipment and facilities for the pilgrims of Hosseini's Arba'in. Was.

Arvandan Oil and Gas Company is the leader in job classification scheme

The CEO of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company added: This company was the first company to take action in this regard in changing the status of employees in the National Iranian Oil Company. Also, the job classification plan according to the employees of the oil company and supplementary insurance is another thing that was done. He pointed out: the personnel of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company in the worst weather conditions and in the temperature above 50 degrees of the province with the overhaul and repairs of equipment and devices has made the production stable and the positive approach of the Minister of Oil towards the increase of salaries and benefits has taken positive measures and Article 10 of the employees will be implemented soon.

More U.S. Lawmakers Set to Visit Taiwan

TAIPEI (Dispatches) - Another group of U.S. lawmakers will arrive in Taiwan this evening, Taiwan's official Central News Agency reported, the third such visit this month and defying pressure from Beijing for these trips not to take place.

China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory against the strong objections of the democratically-elected government in Taipei, launched military drills near the island after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi came in early August.

The Central News Agency did not name the lawmakers who were coming on Thursday, saying only that they would arrive on a U.S. military aircraft at Taipei's downtown Songshan airport and would meet Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen.



Colombia to Suspend Air Strikes on Armed Groups

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Colombia will suspend aerial bombings targeting illegal armed groups in a bid to avoid collateral damage to civilians and deaths of minors who have been forcibly recruited, Defense Minister Ivan Velasquez said.

The announcement - which Velasquez said was also a gesture of government willingness to engage in possible talks with armed groups - is a shift in Colombia's strategy against left-wing guerrillas and drug-trafficking gangs.

The country's almost six-decade conflict has killed at least 450,000. Aerial bombardments in recent years by the military have dealt heavy blows to armed groups such as dissidents of the demobilized FARC who reject a 2016 peace deal, the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the organized crime gang Clan del Golfo, killing important leaders.



Putin Signs Decree to Increase Size of Russian Armed Forces



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree today to increase the size of Russia's armed forces from 1.9 to 2.04 million, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

The figure, which includes a 137,000 increase in the number of military personnel to 1.15 million, comes into effect on Jan 1.

Meanwhile the last regular line supplying electricity to Ukraine's Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant is working again after being cut earlier on Thursday, the United Nations said, an outage that underlined the potential peril posed by nearby fighting.

Ukrainian state nuclear company Energoatom said earlier that fires broke out in the ash pits of a coal power station near the Zaporizhzhia reactor complex, Europe's largest such facility, disrupting lines linking the plant to Ukraine's power grid.

"As a result, the station's two working power units were disconnected from the network," Energoatom said in a statement.

"Thus, the actions of the invaders caused a complete disconnection... the first in the history of the plant."

The last electricity supply to the plant was restored later in the day, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Vienna-based U.N. nuclear watchdog, said in a statement.

"Ukraine told the IAEA that the ZNPP... at least twice lost connection to the power line during the day but that it was currently up again," it said, adding that information on the direct cause of the outage was not immediately available.

Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February, captured the Zaporizhzhia plant in March and has controlled it since, although Ukrainian technicians from Energoatom still operate it.

Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of shelling the site, fuelling fears of the potential for a nuclear disaster.

Nuclear experts have warned of the risk of damage to the plant's spent nuclear fuel pools or its reactors. Cuts in power needed to cool the pools to avoid a disastrous meltdown are another worry.

The United Nations is seeking access to the plant and has called for the area to be demilitarised. IAEA officials are "very, very close" to being able to visit Zaporizhzhia, agency Director-General Rafael Grossi said on Thursday.

As the war entered its seventh month, Russia said its forces had struck a railway station in eastern Ukraine the previous day, confirming an attack which Kyiv says also hit a residential area and killed 25 civilians as the nation marked its Independence Day.

The Russian Defense Ministry said an Iskander missile had hit a military train at Chaplyne station that had been set to deliver arms to Ukrainian forces on frontlines in the eastern Donbas region.

UN Rights Chief Under Tremendous Pressure Over Report on Uyghurs

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The UN human rights chief said that she is still aiming to release a long-anticipated report on China's treatment of its Uyghur minority in Xinjiang by the end of her four-year mandate next week amid "tremendous pressure" from all sides.

But the lack of a firm commitment by former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet in her final press conference stoked further criticism from civil society groups who have accused her of being too soft on China since a May visit.

The report has been in the works for three years and promised for months but has not been published for unclear reasons. "We are trying very hard to do what I promised," Bachelet said, referring to a pledge to release the report before the end of her term on Aug. 31.

Asked to elaborate on why it has not been released, Bachelet said she needed time to integrate new information from her visit and to review input on the report's contents from China.

Rights groups accuse Beijing of abuses against Uyghurs, a mainly Muslim ethnic minority that numbers around 10 million in the western region of Xinjiang, including the mass use of forced labor in internment camps. The United States has accused China of genocide.

S. Korean President Orders Update of War Plans Over N. Korea's Threats

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's president Yoon Suk-yeol ordered an update of the military's operational plans to address North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats, his office said.

Yoon gave the instructions at his first visit to a military bunker in the capital Seoul that would serve as a command post the event of a war.

His visit coincided with the start on Monday of military drills by the armed forces of South Korea and the United States that are the largest in years.

The annual summertime exercises have been renamed Ulchi Freedom Shield and due to finish on Sept. 1. They involve the first field training between the two militaries since 2017 after being scaled back amid the COVID-19 pandemic and under Yoon's predecessor who sought to improve relations with North Korea.

Yoon highlighted that this year's drills were conducted under a changed scenario and the operational plans reflect North Korea's evolving threats.

"We need to urgently prepare measures to guarantee the lives and property of our people, including updating the operational plans against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats that are becoming a reality," Yoon told military commanders during the visit.

North Korea has conducted missile tests at an unprecedented pace this year and is ready to conduct its first nuclear test since 2017 at any time, Seoul officials said this week.

The isolated, nuclear-armed North fired two cruise missiles from the west coast last week, after South Korea and the United States began preliminary training for the drills.

Pyeongyang has long criticized the combined exercises as "hostile policy" and a rehearsal for invasion.

Yoon, who has vowed to boost drills and overall readiness against the North,

called for beefing up the military's independent capability to counter North Korean missiles, while reinforcing the extended U.S. deterrence including its nuclear umbrella.

Macron in Algeria for Visit Aimed at Resetting Relations

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Algeria for a three-day visit aimed at mending ties with the former French colony, which this year marks its 60th anniversary of independence.

The first French president to be born after Algerian independence, Macron is hoping "to lay a foundation to rebuild and develop" a sometimes difficult relationship with the North African nation, his office said.

Accompanied by seven ministers, Macron arrived at the Houari Boumediene Airport in the capital Algiers, where he was received by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

The two heads of state are set to visit a monument to martyrs of the country's war for independence, which ended more than 130 years of French colonial rule with Algeria's independence in 1962.

Franco-Algerian relations have seen repeated crises since then.

The French leader, on his second visit to Algeria since he took power in 2017, "has chosen to direct this visit towards the future, (focusing on) start-ups, innovation, youth, new sectors," the Élysée said on Tuesday.

Macron, alongside a 90-strong delegation, will meet entrepreneurs in Algiers as well as young people in the second city Oran.

French President Emmanuel Macron delivers a speech during a reception to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Reflection, in memory of the civilian and military victims of the war in Algeria, on March 19, 2022.

Ties between Paris and Algiers have been particularly stormy since last year, when Macron questioned Algeria's existence as a nation before the French occupation and accused the government of fomenting "hatred towards France".

Tebboune withdrew his country's ambassador in response and banned French military aircraft from its airspace.

But Macron's office issued a statement saying he "regretted" the misunderstandings caused by his comments, and his aides believe that both sides have moved on.

They note the resumption of normal diplomatic relations and overflights to French army bases further south in Africa.



Pakistan Court Grants Interim Bail To Former PM Khan

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - An anti-terrorism court in Islamabad has granted interim bail to Imran Khan, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and former prime minister, in a case registered against him last week for his remarks against senior police officials and a female judge.

The judge, Raja Jawad Abbas, on Thursday granted Khan bail until September 1 against a surety of 100,000 Pakistani rupees (\$460).

Later in the day, additional sessions judge Tahir Abbas Supra also granted Khan interim bail until September 7 over an unlawful assembly charge against a surety of 5,000 Pakistani rupees (\$22.8).

A hearing over a contempt of court charge will take place on August 31. The cricketing icon-turned-politician has faced mounting legal challenges over the last few days. The last week saw multiple cases filed against him, including one under anti-terrorism laws for "threatening" senior police officials and a female judge, as well as contempt of court and unlawful assembly.

Before Khan arrived in court on Thursday, his lawyer contended that the terrorism case against the PTI chief was registered by police as an "act of revenge".

Strict security was in place around the judicial complex where the hearing took place, with law enforcement officials deployed outside the courts.

On a rainy Thursday, Khan arrived at the court just before midday, where he was surrounded by senior PTI leaders and party supporters.

In a packed courtroom, Khan's lawyer Babar Awan said that the three individuals Khan was accused of threatening had not filed charges.

Awan, while repeating Khan's statements from the rally, questioned how Khan's comment of "have some shame", which is often used colloquially, is considered threatening.

After a short hearing, the court granted interim bail, while also issuing notices to the prosecutor and the PTI's lawyers for their replies, and adjourned proceedings.

After the hearing, Khan spoke to reporters and criticised the state's actions against him, saying efforts to sideline him have made the country a "joke".



Meltdown Averted But Six Months on, Russians Face Economic Pain

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's economy has avoided the meltdown many predicted after Moscow sent its forces into Ukraine six months ago, with higher prices for its oil exports cushioning the impact of Western sanctions, but hardships are emerging for some Russians.

After predicting at one point that the economy would shrink more than 12% this year, exceeding the falls in output seen after the Soviet Union collapsed and during the 1998 financial crisis, the economy ministry now expects a 4.2% contraction.

High global energy prices have helped the Kremlin follow through on President Vladimir Putin's pledge in March to reduce poverty and inequality despite crippling Western sanctions and inflation. Some economists have compared the situation to the COVID-19 pandemic, when authorities increased payments for those most vulnerable to the crisis.

"So far, there are no signs that the drop in living standards could lead to unrest," said Alexei Firsov, founder of social studies think tank Platforma.

"The living standards decline has not reached the point where attitudes towards reality start to change significantly and the fridge clearly begins to beat the TV" - a reference to a Russian saying that describes the tension between people's experiences and what state television has led them to expect.

Russia's current account surplus - the difference in value between exports and imports - more than tripled year-on-year in the first seven months of 2022, to a record \$166.6 billion, as revenues soared while sanctions caused imports to plunge.

Putin has ordered 10% rises in pensions and the minimum wage to soften the blow from inflation, while major employers such as No.1 lender Sberbank and gas giant Gazprom raised salaries from July.

The unemployment rate was 3.9% in June, its lowest since the statistics service started publishing the figure in 1992, according to the Eikon database.

Putin's approval rating was 83% in July, up more than 10 percentage points since the Ukraine campaign started on Feb. 24, according to polling by the independent Levada Centre.

Inflation, which soared to a 20-year high of 17.8% in April after the rouble collapsed to a record low against the U.S. dollar, is now seen ending the year at 13.4%, according to the economy ministry.

Emergency capital controls have since helped the rouble firm more than 25% this year, making it the world's best-performing currency so far in 2022. That has helped rein in inflation and stopped the panic-buying seen after sanctions were imposed by Western countries.

While sanctions mean consumer goods like Guinness beer, Zara clothes and Nespresso coffee capsules have disappeared from the shelves, some Russians told Reuters they were also struggling to find staple goods including some medicines.

Some complained about a shortage of car parts as many Western manufacturers have either suspended operations or left Russia entirely. Russia's biggest carmaker AvtoVAZ has cut production and is offering some workers voluntary redundancy due to lack of components.

"I, as a retired person, cannot afford what is on offer. Prices for the products I buy have jumped by 30% on average," said Larisa, a 65-year-old pensioner from Belgorod, a city near the Ukrainian border.

Official figures show consumer prices have gone up 10.7% so far this year, compared with a 4.7% increase in the same period of 2021.

But according to statistics service Rosstat, prices for sanitary pads have risen 41% year-to-date, those for foreign-made cars are up 39%, and toilet paper prices are up 27%.



Malaysian Embassy In Tehran Holds MTCP Alumni Reception

BY: F. TAHERPOUR

TEHRAN – Embassy of Malaysia in Tehran on Thursday in Tehran held a dinner reception at Espinas Hotel of Tehran to host those who have attended Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP) courses in Malaysia.

Charge d' Affaires of Malaysia Mohd Nizam Halimi hosted the event and welcomed the guests. Addressing the participants, Mr. Halimi highlighted the purpose of the event which was to promote continuous engagements and foster a long-lasting bond of friendship with all who have attended the MTCP courses.

He added that it is also to establish closer relations and strengthen the networking between the Embassy of Malaysia in Tehran with former MTCP participants, particularly from Iran. He then pointed to the history of MTCP and said that it was launched by the Malaysian government in 1980 and this program stands as proof of the commitment of the government of Malaysia towards the promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries, offering support in areas where Malaysia has the experience and expertise and it sees MTCP fundamental towards strengthening mutually beneficial bilateral relations.

Mr. Halimi went on to say that the MTCP forms part of the strategy and commitment of the Malaysian Government to the promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries, strengthening regional and sub-regional cooperation, and nurturing collective self-reliance among developing countries. He added that MTCP annually offers more than 60 technical training and capacity building programs in various areas such as agriculture, economy, finance and trade, education, environment, industrial technical training, diplomacy, public management and administration, professional services, social development, science, technology and ITC, adding that to-date, close to 411 participants from Iran have benefited from these various programs.

The Malaysian diplomat then pointed to the longstanding and friendly diplomatic relation between the two countries which was established in 1968. He also highlighted the strong ties between Malaysia and Iran which underpinned by mutual interests, friendly people-to-people relations and the fact the MTCP has helped foster greater cooperation between the governmental agencies of the two countries and inspired deeper collaboration between their private sectors. He reiterated that Malaysia is to encourage more future participation from Iranian officials in the MTCP, as it would not only be beneficial to its bilateral relations but will also assist in the career development of the participants.

Mr. Halim then touched upon the trade relation between Kuala Lumpur and Tehran despite sanctions and said that the trade between the two increased to 76.6% in 2021 with the total trade was worth \$566.5m. He noted majority of this total volume is contributed by the export of palm oil and palm-oil based agriculture products which account to 73.7% share of the total trade volume.

He then thanked all MTCP alumni members for their commitment to make the MTCP program a success.

Then an Iranian government employee who had attended the MTCP course delivered a speech on behalf of other alumni participants.

Ms. Nilofar Dehghan in her speech hailed Malaysia and expressed her gratitude for such courses and MTCP programs.



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Brazil Central Bank Chief Predicts 6.5% Inflation in 2022

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazilian central bank chief Roberto Campos Neto predicted that inflation will reach 6.5% or a little lower this year, amid government measures that lowered taxes on key goods. The estimate is more optimistic than private economists' expectations of inflation at 6.82%, according to a central bank weekly survey, but still above the official target of 3.5%, plus or minus 1.5 percentage point. "This year, inflation is going to be around 6.5%, perhaps a little bit lower. We are not celebrating that very intensively, we still think there is a very hard job to do," said Campos Neto during an event hosted by Moneda Asset Management in Chile.



World at Rising Risk of Recession As Inflation Hits Consumers

LONDON (Dispatches) - The global economy is increasingly at risk of sliding into recession, surveys showed, as consumers faced with generation-high inflation rein in spending while central banks are tightening policy aggressively just when support is needed.

And supply chains yet to recover from the coronavirus pandemic have been further damaged by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's strict COVID-19 lockdowns, hurting the manufacturing industry.

A myriad of purchasing managers' surveys published on Tuesday from Asia to Europe to the United States showed business activity contracting and pointed to little hope of a turnaround anytime soon.

"Put simply, it's the extremely high rates of inflation that is resulting in households having to pay more for the goods and services they have to buy which means they have less to spend on other items," said Paul Dales at Capital.

"That's a reduction in economic output so that's what's driving the recession. Higher interest rates are playing a small part but really it's the higher inflation."

U.S. private-sector business activity contracted for a second straight month in August and is at its weakest in 18 months, with particular softness registered in the services sector.

There is a 45% chance of a U.S. recession within a year and 50% within two years, according to economists in a Reuters poll on Monday who did however largely say it would be short and shallow.

It was a similar story in the euro zone where the cost of living crisis meant customers kept their hands in their pockets and business activity across the bloc contracted for a second month.

The gloomy data pinned the euro to a 20-year low against the dollar, with surging gas prices adding to misery dragging Europe towards recession.

In Britain, outside the European Union, private sector growth slowed to a crawl as factory output fell and the larger services sector eked out only a modest expansion, indicating a recession was coming there.

Japan's factory growth slowed to a 19-month low this month as output and new order declines deepened while Australia's composite Purchasing Managers' Index fell below the 50 mark separating growth from contraction.

Inflation has reached multi-decade highs in many parts of the world, forcing central banks to tighten monetary policy as their mandate is to maintain price stability.

The Federal Reserve has lifted its benchmark overnight interest rate by 2.25 percentage points this year as it tries to curb decades-high inflation and is expected to raise it again next month, a Reuters poll found on Monday.

Yet despite that aggressive policy inflation was likely to stay above the Fed's target beyond this year and next. Last month the Bank of Canada surprised markets with a larger than expected 100 basis point increase to its key interest rate and said more hikes would be needed.

The European Central Bank, which struggled to get any meaningful inflation for years but is now facing it well above target, kicked off its rate hiking cycle in July, raising interest rates more than expected and a Reuters poll forecasts it will continue on its tightening path.

Turkey's Economy Expanded 7.5% in Q2

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's economy expanded 7.5% annually in the second quarter of the year, a Reuters poll showed, while the full-year growth forecast stood at 4%, pointing a drop in economic activity in the second half of the year reflecting weaker demand conditions.

The economy expanded 7.3% year-on-year in the first quarter, driven by strong performances strong exports and robust domestic demand. It is expected to have kept up the strong performance in the second quarter.

President Tayyip Erdogan's new economic programme has prioritised growth and exports, while aiming to tackle inflation by shoring up Turkey's chronic current account deficit instead of rate hikes.

An easing cycle under Erdogan's programme led the lira to end last year down 44% against the dollar and shed another 27% so far this year, sending inflation to a 24-year high of nearly 80% in July.

While the rate cuts aimed at stimulating the economy, analysts predict that activity could cool in the second half of the year due to a downward trend in demand and an expected economic slowdown in Turkey's largest trade partners.

The median estimate of 13 economists in a Reuters poll for annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the second quarter stood at 7.5%, within a range of 5% and 8.7%.



Pandemic Sets Back Asia-Pacific's Poverty Fight by 2 Years

MANILA (Dispatches) - The pandemic has set back the fight against poverty in the Asia-Pacific region by at least two years, and many nations will find it harder to escape poverty, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

Had the pandemic not happened, the proportion of people in the region facing extreme poverty - defined as those living on less than \$1.90 a day - could have eased to 2.9% in 2020 instead of rising to 5%. The figure stood at 3.8% in 2021 and is projected at 3% this year.

Extreme poverty is expected to drop below 1% of the population by 2030, the Manila-based lender said in a report. At least 20% of developing Asia's population were either extremely or moderately poor in 2021. This proportion could be halved by 2030 if governments focus on resilience, innovation, and inclusiveness to provide more balanced economic opportunities and greater social mobility, the ADB said.

"The poor and the vulnerable have been hit hardest by COVID-19, and while economies are recovering, many people may find that getting out of poverty is even more difficult than before," said ADB Chief Economist Albert Park.

Uncertainties like the full impact of learning losses challenge the chances of poor people of moving to a higher economic level, the ADB said.

Only about half the region's economies have reverted to their pre-pandemic levels in terms of gross domestic product growth, and economic recovery remains volatile owing to new COVID-19 variants and global economic uncertainty caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the ADB said.

OPEC+ Can Cut Output to Address Oil Slump

LONDON (Dispatches) - OPEC stands ready to cut output to correct a recent oil price decline driven by poor futures market liquidity and macro-economic fears, which has ignored extremely tight physical crude supply, OPEC's leader Saudi Arabia said.

Saudi state news agency SPA cited Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman as telling Bloomberg OPEC+ has the means and flexibility to deal with challenges.

Oil prices have dropped in recent weeks to around \$95 per barrel from as high as \$120 on fears of a Chinese economic

slowdown and a recession in the West.

Earlier this year, prices rose to not far off an all-time high of \$147 per barrel after Russia invaded Ukraine and the West responded by imposing tough sanctions on Moscow, triggering fears of the worst energy supply crisis since the 1970s.

Prince Abdulaziz was quoted as saying the oil futures market has fallen into "a self-perpetuating vicious circle of very thin liquidity and extreme volatility", making the cost of hedging and managing risks for market participants prohibitive.

He also was quoted as saying prices were falling based on "unsubstantiated" information about demand destruction and confusion around sanctions, embargoes and price caps, which have been proposed by the United States on Russian oil.

Meanwhile, risks of supply disruptions remained high and a global spare capacity cushion was very thin, said Prince Abdulaziz, adding that a new deal between OPEC+ partners beyond 2022 would help.

"Soon we will start working on a new agreement beyond 2022," he said, without giving details.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, a group known as OPEC+, agreed to increase output by 648,000 bpd in each of July and August as they fully unwind nearly 10 million bpd of cuts implemented in May 2020 to counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group agreed earlier this month to raise production quotas by another 100,000 bpd in September as it faced pressure from major consumers including the United States which are keen to cool prices.

Only Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are believed to have spare capacity and the ability to increase production in a meaningful way.

But Prince Abdulaziz pointed to thin liquidity and extreme volatility taking focus away from the issue of spare capacity.

Norway Eyes High Gas Output Until 2030

OSLO (Dispatches) - Norway plans to maintain its current high gas production level until the end of the decade as Europe plans to ditch Russian imports over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, its energy minister said.

"I expect that we can maintain the production levels we are at now until 2030," Terje Aasland told Reuters in an interview.

"We see that there are projects and also plans for development and operation coming now that can help maintain the high gas volumes going forward," he said.

The Nordic country is expected to produce some 122 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas this year, according to official forecasts made in May, an increase of 8% from 2021, possibly beating a record set five years ago.

The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate predicted in January that gas output would be at 118 bcm - lower than the current level - in 2026, the furthest year out forecast by the regulator.

Norway is now Europe's biggest supplier of gas, according to Refinitiv Eikon data, overtaking Russia, which has cut back on its gas deliveries.

The minister said he was also more confident about long-term demand for Norwegian gas in Europe after the non-EU member and the European Union signed an agreement in June to enhance gas imports from the Norwegian continental shelf.

"This is an important message to get from the EU," Aasland said.

Norway has already responded to higher demand from Europe by diverting more gas for exports instead of injecting it back into the ground to boost crude oil production.

The price of European gas has almost tripled this year, having repeatedly hit new records. Still, Norway does not plan to sell gas at below market price, as some analysts and media have proposed.

"In principle, the market is predictable. When there is scarcity, prices are high. That also contributes to increasing production and steers the gas to the markets that need it most," Aasland said.

"To disturb the market and make... rules that look good right now could contribute to ruining some of the ground for building stability and trust over time."

He added Norway did not plan to introduce a windfall tax on Norwegian oil companies, despite them reaping record-high cash flows.

"We are not having any discussions now about extra taxes. The additional revenue companies are potentially making now is forming the basis for future investments and the basis for the entire transformation of the energy sector," Aasland said.

Norway's largest oil and gas producer, majority state-owned Equinor, aims to boost investments in renewable energy and low-carbon technologies to become a 'broad energy' company.

The company however has said that it would step up exploration for new resources to meet demand in Europe for Norwegian hydrocarbons.

Pakistan's Exports to China Increase Nearly 12% in Jan-July



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's exports to China crossed \$2.190 billion in the first seven months of 2022, up 11.14 percent on a year-on-year basis, APP reported on Tuesday, citing data from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC).

Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counsellor at the Pakistani Embassy in China, told China Economic Net that Pakistan's exports to China increased even when trade decreased with other countries in the month of July. Qadir said that the increase shows the commitment of the government to enhancing bilateral trade.

"It is very promising that Pakistan's exports to China are growing. The Government of Pakistan is keen to harness the real potential of exports through value addition, digital marketing, export-oriented investments, and encouraging enterprises from both countries to make Pakistan an integral part of China's supply chain", Qadir added.

According to data from GACC, in the month of July, Pakistan's exports to China increased nearly 13 percent on a year-on-year basis to \$272.92 million, whereas in the same month last year, it was \$242.30 million.

Overall, from January-July 2022, China's imports from and exports to Pakistan counted \$16.73 billion, up 13.51% on a year-on-year basis while in the same period in 2021, it was \$12.76 billion irrespective of monsoon, flood, and COVID-19 which impacted Pakistan's exports to other countries in FY2022.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Pakistan's exports declined by around 3 percent on a year-on-year basis in July and the major reasons are monsoon, flood, and COVID-19, with the major decline noted in cotton yarn, copper, and Chromium.

Women Attend Football Match In Tehran's Azadi Stadium

TEHRAN (IFP) - Women in Iran for the first time bought tickets to watch a national football match between two soccer clubs at Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Videos and pictures posted on social media show hundreds of women inside the stadium as the national league game between Esteghlal FC and Mes-e Kerman kicked off.

The women spectators were waving blue team flags of Esteghlal FC and cheering from their seats, in a special area designated for them at the 100,000-seat stadium. The international football's governing body FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), had earlier called on Iranian authorities to allow women into league matches.



China's Weak Crude Imports and Pariah Purchases Ease Global Market

LAUNCESTON (Dispatches) - China is inadvertently helping ease tightness in the crude oil market through declining imports, and by favouring cargoes from exporters being shunned by much of the rest of the world.

China, the world's largest oil importer, seems set for another soft outcome in August, with Refinitiv Oil Research estimating arrivals of 8.33 million barrels per day (bpd).

This would be below the official customs data figure of 8.79 million bpd in July and the 8.72 million bpd in June.

For the first seven months of 2022, China's crude oil imports were 9.98 million bpd, down 4% from the same period last year.

Looking at the monthly data and it's clear that after a reasonable start to the year, China's oil imports started to slump from June onwards.

There are several factors behind China's recent weakness in crude oil imports.

Domestic fuel demand has been hit by strict COVID-19 lockdowns in several cities in the second quarter, and the relatively modest bounce back in economic activity since these have been largely lifted.

Refinery processing has also been lower because of a lack of export quotas for products, which has meant Chinese refiners have been unable to take full advantage of the tight regional markets for fuels, especially diesel.

High crude prices in the wake of Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine are likely to have deterred oil purchases as well, with Brent crude futures trading above \$120 in May, at a time when cargoes from June and July delivery would have been arranged.

The question is what would the state of the global crude oil market be if China had continued importing at the level it was in the first five months of 2022, namely more than 10 million bpd?

There is little doubt that the global market would have been substantially tighter and prices would have been under strong upward pressure.

Another factor worth noting is from where China is sourcing its crude oil, with a notable shift occurring in recent months.

Russia was China's top supplier in July for a third month, with imports via pipeline and tankers coming in at 1.68 million bpd, according to customs data released on Aug. 20.

Chinese refiners have been willing buyers of steeply discounted Russian crude, snapping up cargoes that would likely have gone to countries like Japan and South Korea prior to Moscow's attack on Ukraine.

For the first seven months of the year China's imports from Russia have totalled 1.67 million bpd, just behind traditional top supplier Saudi Arabia's 1.72 million bpd.

Slightly more murky is China's imports from Iran and Venezuela, both of which are under U.S. sanctions.

China didn't report any purchases in July from either country, but its



customs data lists imports of 787,000 bpd from Malaysia.

This figure is largely assumed by market participants to mainly be oil from Iran and Venezuela, especially since Malaysia's total crude production has been averaging under 600,000 bpd this year, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Currently it suits the United States and other Western nations to turn a blind eye to China's imports from Iran and Venezuela because if Beijing really did buy zero barrels from the two producers, it would significantly tighten the global market.

It should also be pointed out that China isn't helping ease tightness in the global crude market out of the goodness of its heart, rather pure economics are at work.

China is buying cargoes from Russia, Iran and Venezuela at discounts to what it would pay from its other suppliers.

As long as these discounts are on offer, and customers for Russian, Iranian and Venezuelan crude are limited by geopolitics, then Chinese refiners are likely to continue to buy.

Making the global crude market somewhat less tight is just a side benefit that nobody really wants to talk about.

The opinions expressed here are those of the author, a columnist for Reuters.

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Poland Prepares New Support Measures to Tame Soaring Energy Costs



WARSAW (Dispatches) - The Polish cabinet on Tuesday approved a new package of financial support measures designed to shield consumers from soaring energy prices prompted by the war in neighboring Ukraine.

The measures will compensate households and vulnerable public users including hospitals and schools that use pellets, heating oil, liquefied petroleum gas and wood for heating.

In addition, heating plants will receive compensation in exchange for hiking prices by no more than 40%, while municipalities will get 13.7 billion zloty (\$2.86 billion) to help Poles cope with higher energy bills, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki told reporters.

"Energy security remains the core of our thinking as energy and fuels have become weapons in the hands of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, but given our good budget balance we're trying to support everyone," Morawiecki said.

Russia denies using its oil and gas reserves as a weapon against the West as it wages what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine. Poland's proposed new measures, which require parliament's approval, follow one-off payments to households to cover the rising cost of coal. The cost of tax breaks, fuel subsidies for households, and other measures aimed at curbing energy prices will amount to 50 billion zlotys, the government said earlier this month.

Poland, which relies on coal for some 80% of its electricity generation, in April banned imports of coal from Russia in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Over the summer, soaring prices and shortages of coal have become a political issues in Poland, where more than 3 million households use the fuel for heating.

The government will also prepare measures to intervene in the fertilizer market affected by soaring natural gas prices, Morawiecki said, commenting on decisions by producers to cut production.

Russia Tightens Grip on Internet as Yandex Sells Assets to State-Run VK

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Russian government tightened its grip on the internet, as a state-controlled company with close links to President Vladimir Putin agreed to buy the news feed and homepage of the country's most popular website.

Yandex, often referred to as Russia's Google, said it was selling its news aggregator, content platform Zen and yandex.ru homepage to VK to focus on other business areas, such as food delivery and ride-hailing.

In exchange, Yandex will acquire food delivery company Delivery Club from VK. Values for the assets were not disclosed.

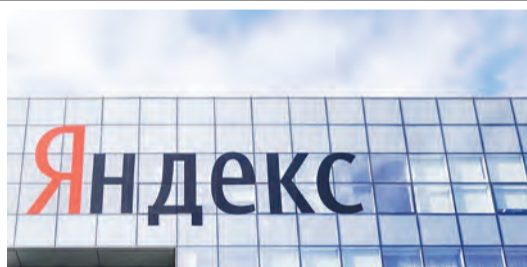
VK runs Russia's largest social network, VKontakte, and an overhaul last year saw state-controlled gas exporter Gazprom and banker Yuri Kovalchuk, whom Putin has publicly called a personal friend, assume greater control over the company.

Vladimir Kiriyyenko, the son of Putin's first deputy chief of staff Sergei Kiriyyenko, is its CEO.

Russia's years-long suppression of independent media intensified after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24. It passed a law banning what it calls "false information" about the armed forces and quashing many organizations' ability to broadcast freely.

It has blocked access to some foreign platforms, including Meta Platforms' (META.O) Facebook and Instagram.

"The board and management of Yandex have concluded that the interests of the company's stakeholders ... are best served by pursuing the strategic exit from its media businesses and shifting to a focus on other technologies and services," Yandex said in a statement.



Yandex has, like many Russian companies, had a turbulent few months. It plunged to a first-quarter loss and its shares tumbled to six-year lows before trading was suspended in late February. Revenues and profits recovered in the second quarter, and while

its Nasdaq-listed shares remain suspended, trading in its Moscow shares resumed after about a month.

Yandex has in recent years complied with Moscow's demands, under threat of fines, over which publications' stories can feature on its news aggregator, drawing criticism from free-speech advocates.

Moscow has not blocked access to most foreign-language media, which remain freely available in Russia and on Yandex, but search results do restrict access to any sites that communications regulator Roskomnadzor has banned, many of which are Russian-language independent media.

In February, Yandex started warning Russian users seeking information about events in Ukraine of unreliable information online.

A former head of Yandex News, Lev Gershenzon, on March 1 described Yandex as a key element in hiding information about the conflict in Ukraine. Yandex has denied being complicit in censorship.

"We are buying our freedom," a source close to Yandex said. "This business had been such a weight on our feet. This will enable us to do our business significantly depoliticized, practically completely depoliticized."

Yandex dominates Russia's online search market with a share of around 62%, according to its analytics tool Yandex Radar. Google accounts for about 36%, with VK's mail.ru at less than 1%.

Iran Targets Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

Negotiations to revive the nuclear talks had broken down in March mostly over Tehran's demand that Washington delist the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. Talks resumed in Doha, Qatar, in June. The US is unlikely to make any more notable concessions, at least until the November 2022 midterm elections, and in the meantime, will likely continue attempts to persuade Iran by sanctioning petrochemical and other trade, Platts Analytics says.

Iran's oil production capacity will be increased to 4.038 million b/d by the end of the current Iranian year in March 2023, or within seven months, oil ministry news service Shana reported Aug. 22, citing a National Iranian Oil Co. official. Iran's capacity is currently 3.8 million b/d.

Iran's oil industry has suffered from years of underinvestment. Any increase in capacity would require rigs, equipment for new drillings, repair and renovation of existing wells onshore and offshore fields as well as replacement of pipeline equipment, NIOC director for production supervision, Hormoz Ghalavand, said, according to Shana.

Some other facilities in need of overhaul or replacement include oil processing units, desalination, pressure boosting and turbo compressors, he said, adding that skid mounted equipment is also needed to reach the target.

Iran, Russia...

FROM PAGE 1

Last month, Iran's state oil company the NIOC and Russia's Gazprom signed an initial joint investment deal worth \$40 billion.

Iranian Oil Ministry authorities said at the time that gas swap could be a part of the historic energy cooperation deal signed between Iran and Russia.

Media reports over the past month have suggested that Iran's supply of natural gas to Turkey could increase significantly if Iran signs a gas swap deal with Russia.

Iran is currently in a gas swap arrangement with Turkmenistan under which the gas imported from the country is consumed in northeastern Iran and the NIGC delivers the same amount of gas to Azerbaijan in its northwest.

Gov't Opens...

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The official said the current version of the home-made gamma irradiation plant is able to process 20 metric tons of agricultural products per day, adding that the capacity could increase depending on the need of the farmers and the readiness of the privately-owned food processing factories in Iran.

AEOI is mostly known for its technical responsibility over Iran's nuclear program. However, the organization is also the country's leading provider of research in various fields of science and technology, including particle accelerators, laser devices and irradiation.

Iran Reviewing...

FROM PAGE 1

However, it took almost ten days for the Biden administration to submit its response to Iran's comments on the EU draft.

On Monday, Kanaani said Tehran had responded to the EU's draft proposal and was awaiting Washington's response.

"Iran has participated seriously, constructively, and responsibly in the negotiations, responded to the proposals of the European side in a timely manner, acted innovatively, and showed the necessary flexibility for the conclusion of an agreement," the spokesman said at a press conference.

Number of Iranian Visitors...

FROM PAGE 1

Saudi Arabia's tourist numbers have also more than doubled to 130,000. A similar situation is seen regarding the travel of citizens of other Arab countries, especially the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Last week, the Turkish Statistical Center also published a monthly report on housing sales to foreigners, showing that Iranians are in second place after the Russians.

During the mentioned period, Iranians bought 5,315 housing units from Turkey, up 44 percent from the same period last year. But the largest growth in housing sales to Russian citizens has occurred, so that Russians have surpassed Iranians in the seven months of this year with 6,887 housing units and have been at the forefront of foreign buyers of Turkish housing.

The purchase of housing in Turkey by Russian nationals has tripled during this period compared to the same period last year.

In total, 40,000 housing units in Turkey have been sold to foreign citizens during the seven months of this year, up 58 percent from the same period last year.

Citizens of Russia, Iran, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Germany, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Yemen are among the top buyers of housing in Turkey.

Iran to Form Aircraft...

FROM PAGE 1

China especially will be highly diligent in its approach to parts, as a one-party state it cannot afford to have its citizens exposed to airworthiness problems – prior to covid Chinese airlines carried 585 million passengers. Asia carried more passengers (35%) in that year than any other region, including Europe (27%) and North America (22%). Currently, air traffic post-covid is at about 65% of 2019 levels.

The decision to form an aircraft repair and maintenance consortium between China, India, Iran, and Russia will also surely lead in future to the development of an Asian-built passenger airliner to challenge, in time, the West's dominance of the aviation industry and to provide alternatives as Western sanctions motivate them to do so.

This is already occurring. To reduce their reliance on Western systems, China and Russia are improving their indigenous technologies: Russia is hoping to carry out the first test flight for the in-development high-thrust Aviadvigatel PD-35 engine later this year, while China is working on its CJ-2000 turbofan, aimed at powering the CR929 passenger airliner that both are jointly working on. That could be in service by 2025-26.

West Ham Sign Emerson From Chelsea

LONDON (Dispatches)- West Ham United have completed the signing of left back Emerson Palmieri from Chelsea, the Premier League club announced on Tuesday, with the Italy international signing a four-year contract.

British media reported that West Ham paid a fee in the region of £13 million (RM69 million) for Emerson, who was part of the Italy team that lifted the European Championship last year.

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ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by:Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Bailly Joins Marseille On Loan

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United central defender Eric Bailly has moved to French Ligue 1 side Olympique Marseille on loan for the rest of the season, the Premier League club said.

Bailly has a contract with United until 2024 but Marseille have the option of making his move permanent at the end of the 2022-23 season. The Ivorian joined United in 2016 but has had limited playing time in recent seasons, making only three Premier League starts in the last campaign.

Bayern to Play Barcelona In Champions League Group Stage

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich were placed in the same section as Robert Lewandowski's Barcelona in Thursday's draw for the UEFA Champions League group stage in Istanbul, while Erling Haaland will face his former club as Manchester City were paired with Borussia Dortmund.

Bayern and Barcelona will also come up against Inter Milan in Group C, which is completed by the Czech champions Viktoria Plzen.

Bayern beat Barcelona 8-2 in a one-off quarter-final in Lisbon in 2020, while the Catalans also lost 3-0 twice to the Germans last season as they were eliminated in the group stage.

Lewandowski, 34, signed for Barcelona during the close season for a fee that could reach 50 million euros (\$49.9m) after scoring 344 goals in eight years at Bayern.

Haaland left Dortmund for Premier League champions City in the close season. Those sides will also face Sevilla and Danish champions FC Copenhagen in Group G.

Last season's beaten finalists Liverpool will play Ajax, Napoli and Rangers in Group A, while reigning champions Real Madrid will face Celtic as well as RB Leipzig and Shakhtar Donetsk in Group F.

Paris Saint-Germain will face familiar foe Angel Di Maria when they take on Juventus in the UEFA Champions League group stage, while Marseille will take on Antonio Conte's Tottenham Hotspur in an evenly balanced group.

PSG - who again start among the favorites to win a trophy that has continued to escape them since the



Qatari takeover of more than a decade ago - were paired against their former Argentinian ace Di Maria in Thursday's draw in Istanbul.

The Parisians will also face Benfica and Israeli champions Maccabi Haifa in Group H.

Marseille, the other French club in the competition, were drawn against last season's Europa League winners Eintracht Frankfurt in Group D, along with Conte's Spurs and Sporting Lisbon.

Chelsea, winners in 2021, will take on Serie A champions AC Milan as well as Red Bull Salzburg and Dinamo Zagreb in Group E, while Tottenham Hotspur will face last season's Europa League winners Eintracht Frankfurt along with Sporting Lisbon and Marseille in Group D.

Porto and Atletico Madrid meet for the second season running in Group B, which also featured Bayer Leverkusen and Belgian champions Club Brugge.

This season's group stage will begin with the first round of games on September 6 and 7.

All six matchdays will be played in the space of nine weeks, finishing on November 1 and 2, with UEFA needing to complete the group stage before the World Cup begins on November 20. The match calendar is expected to be released following the draws on Friday for the group stages of the Europa League and Europa Conference League.

The final will be played on June 10 next year at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, which was supposed to host the final in 2020 and again in 2021 -- on each occasion UEFA moved the game to Portugal due to pandemic-related restrictions.



Guardiola Hoping To Keep Silva

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said he is keen to retain the services of Bernardo Silva, but added that the Portuguese international "likes Barcelona a lot".

Silva has been linked with a move to the Spanish side in recent weeks and Guardiola left the door open for the midfielder's potential departure from the Premier League champions.

"I'm not one to tell Barca to forget about (signing) Bernardo," Guardiola told reporters on Wednesday, speaking after Barcelona and City drew a friendly game 3-3 at Camp Nou.

"We want him to stay with us, but I don't want anyone who's not happy. The first thing would be for the clubs to come to an agreement, but there has been no offer for him in these last two years.

"I don't want him to go, he's a superlative player and a great person ... And there are only seven or eight days left (in the window) and we would have to turn to the transfer market. I want him to stay. That said, it is true Bernardo likes Barcelona a lot." Barcelona manager Xavi, who was sitting beside Guardiola in the news conference, said any move would "depend on City".

Iran Wins First Gold at FIS Grass Skiing World Cup

IRAN NEWS SPORTS DESK

TEHRAN - Head of League Organization of Iran Ski Federation and Winter Sports says Iran won its first gold medal during the FIS Grass Skiing World Cup which is under way at Dizin International Ski Resort of Iran.



Mehdi Azadvari announced this victory and said that Iran won its first gold medal in this world championship by Morteza Jafari in the men's Super G event.

He said that the championship started at Dizin Pite and in the first day Jafari won the gold in men's Super G and Italy's Lorenzo Dante Marco Gritti and Filippo Zamboni won silver and bronze medals respectively.

Azadvari went on to say that in the women's event and in the Super G event, Italy's Margherita Mazzoncini won gold medal and Eliska Rejchrtova and Karolina Rasovska from Czech Republic won silver and bronze, respectively.

He then said that 29 top skiers from Italy, Czech Republic, Austria and Slovakia and Iran are competing in the Grass Skiing World Cup in three events of slalom, giant slalom and Super G in Dizin International Ski Resort of Iran.

Woods, McIlroy Launch New In-Arena Golf Series

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy launched a new technology-sparked golf series made for television, with team competition before live audiences using giant video screens with a January 2024 debut.

McIlroy and Mike McCarley, founder of TMRW Sports, announced the partly virtual golf league on the eve of the season-ending US PGA Tour Championship at East Lake in Atlanta.

"It's rooted in the traditions of the game, but it's taking a big step into the future," McCarley said. "It starts with having the two biggest superstars in the game, Tiger and Rory, committed to play." Events would be played at a yet to be determined venue that would be custom made to allow for playing chips and putts live and sending longer shots into a video screen for virtual results.



Benzema, Putellas Win UEFA Player of the Year Awards

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Karim Benzema and Alexia Putellas were rewarded for outstanding seasons by winning the UEFA men's and women's player of the year prizes at a ceremony in Istanbul on Thursday.

France striker Benzema captained Real Madrid to victory over Liverpool in the Champions League final and scored 15 goals in the competition, while Putellas was the top scorer in the Women's Champions League, helping Barcelona reach the final which they lost to Lyon.

Benzema took the men's honours ahead of club team-mate Thibaut Courtois and Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, succeeding Chelsea midfielder Jorginho who won the award last year. The 34-year-old scored hat-tricks against Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea in the Champions League knockout rounds and netted three times across the two legs of the semi-final against Manchester City.

He struck 44 times in 46 games altogether as Real also won the Spanish title. Putellas, 28, claimed the prize for a second straight year despite suffering a serious knee injury that ruled her out of Euro 2022.

She finished ahead of England forward and European champion Beth Mead, the joint leading scorer at the tournament, and young Germany midfielder Lena Oberdorf.

Carlo Ancelotti was named best men's coach for his success with Real, with Dutchwoman Sarina Wiegman crowned best women's coach after leading England to Euro glory on home soil last month.

Draper Reaches Last Eight at Winston-Salem

WINSTON-SALEM (Dispatches) - Britain's Jack Draper defeated 2020 US Open champion Dominic Thiem 6-1, 6-4 to reach the ATP Winston-Salem Open quarter-finals.

The 20-year-old Englishman, who reached his first ATP Masters Series quarter-final two weeks ago at Montreal, ousted the Austrian who won his first major title two years ago in New York.

Thiem missed most of last year with a right wrist injury, including the chance to defend his US Open title.

World number 231 Thiem hadn't played a hardcourt match since March 2021 until this week but advanced to the third round when top seed Grigor Dimitrov retired in the second set of their second-round match.

Dutch second seed Botić van de Zandschulp advanced by beating Spain's Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-3 to book a quarter-final match against French 10th seed Benjamin Bonzi, who dispatched Brazil's Thiago Monteiro 7-5, 6-2.

Two other Frenchmen advanced with Richard Gasquet rallying past American Steve Johnson 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-3 and Adrian Mannarino ripping Spanish eighth seed Albert Ramos 6-3, 6-3.

Mannarino will next face US fourth seed Maxime Cressy, who ousted Italy's Lorenzo Sonego 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 7-6 (7/3) while Gasquet faces Serbian Laslo Djere, who outlasted Australian Jason Kubler 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (9/11), 6-3.



Newcastle, Leeds Progress In League Cup

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Premier League clubs Newcastle United and Leeds United overcame lower division opposition to secure their places in the League Cup third round with victories.

The third-round draw pitted Newcastle against Crystal Palace while Leeds travel to Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The big match of the next round pits Premier League champions Manchester City against last season's League Cup runners-up Chelsea.

Newcastle had to fight back from a goal down to beat fourth tier (League Two) Tranmere Rovers who had taken the lead through a 24th-minute Elliott Nevitt finish.

Jamaal Lascelles brought Eddie Howe's side level with a close-range drive before the interval and New Zealand striker Chris Wood glanced in a superbly delivered corner from Kieran Trippier to secure a 2-1 win in the 52nd minute.

Leeds also had a scare before running out 3-1 winners over Yorkshire neighbors Barnsley. A Louis Sinisterra strike from 20 metres put Leeds on their way before Mateusz Klich doubled the advantage from the penalty spot.

A diving header from Mads Andersen gave Barnsley hope and they could have drawn level from the penalty spot but Callum Styles hit the post.

Klich made sure of the win with a curling shot in the 56th minute.

