

Health Ministry Announced
On Wednesday That the Number of
Deaths From the Coronavirus
Pandemic in Iran Increased to
144,085 With **37** More Iranians Killed
By the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

Chief Justice of Iran Gholam-Hossein
Mohseni-Ejei Has Underlined the
Need for Expansion of Judicial
Cooperation and Exchange of Legal
Experiences Between the Islamic
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Iran Army to Stage Two-Day Military Drills

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Army's Ground Force is to stage a two-day-long set of military drills that are aimed at measuring its strength in the face of "new threats."

The Eqtedar (Strength) 1401 maneuvers is to start in the city of Nasr Abad in central Iran on Wednesday, the maneuvers' spokesman Second Brigadier General Amir Cheshak said.

"The military drills seek to evaluate and increase the level of readiness of the Ground Force's [various] units in the face of new threats," he said.

The official said the drills were to be participated by various units that hail from the Army's infantry, armored, artillery, Army Aviation, drone, engineering, airborne, and electronic warfare divisions.

The event assesses the Ground Force's ability to mobilize its servicemen from various countrywide locations to the area that is hosting the maneuvers, he said.

It also seeks to enhance the level of mobility that is possessed by the Ground Force's Special Forces and Rapid Reaction Brigades, Cheshak noted.

According to the official, the Ground Force's Specialized Units would also be practicing implementation of their creative indigenous tactics and various skills.

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Iran Oil Sector Expanded By 9.7% in Year to March

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A new study points to a major growth in the Iranian oil sector in the calendar year to late March, confirming earlier reports that suggested the country's exports of crude oil rose significantly in the second half of 2021 despite American sanctions.

The study by the Iranian trade ministry's Institute of Trade Studies and Researches (ITSR) published, showed that the gross domestic product (GDP) generated by the Iranian oil sector over the past calendar year had increased by 9.7% compared with the previous year.

The figures showed that oil sector was responsible for 35.1% of the total GDP generated by the Iranian manufacturing sector which itself expanded by 6% in the year to March.

ITSR's report said Iranian services sector grew by 4.5% over the same period as the sector recovered from government restrictions imposed a year earlier to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in Iran.

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Top Iran General Warns of Fallout as Israel, CENTCOM Team Up



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's top general has warned of the ramifications of the growing military coordination between the US Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Israeli military, saying the Islamic Republic interprets the development as a direct threat to its national security.

Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri wrote in an online message that the terrorist US military has tried to compensate for the withdrawal of its aircraft carriers, helicopter carriers, and destroyers from the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea by connecting the "child-killing" Israeli military to CENTCOM.

"The meaning of this action is that, from our point of view, the spying - and even operational - facilities of the United States and its allies will be at the disposal of the occupying Zionist regime, and this will increase the threat to our beloved country," Baqeri said.

Late last month, Israeli minister for military affairs Benny Gantz made an unprecedented visit to the headquarters of the US Central Command in Florida, where he was received by CENTCOM Commander General Michael Kurilla.

During the visit, Gantz claimed that Israel's cooperation with CENTCOM and the countries of the region is a "game changer" in confronting Iran, adding that Israel and the US "will continue to deepen cooperation" against Iran's peaceful nuclear program, which he charged was aimed at obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army held a joint simulation training exercise with the CENTCOM-led US forces in late July with the professed aim of "protecting Israel from ballistic threats," according to a statement released by the Israeli foreign ministry on Monday.

In his message, Baqeri also said that regional countries that host American forces have already received written warnings from Iran, which sees the US presence in the region as a serious threat.

"In addition to written announcements, warnings, and conveyance of the message through the Foreign Ministry to countries hosting the US army, we have declared and will declare our readiness and warnings through expanding our presence, including air and sea patrols, deepening our intelligence dominance, and conducting various naval, missile, and drone exercises," he said.

Meanwhile another top Iranian general further said Iran's friendly advice to neighboring countries is to uphold brotherly relations and cooperation to establish security in the region "by our own countries and not by relying on foreigners."

Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, the commander of the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters said Wednesday that Iran's response to any intimidating actions by Israeli regime, its elements and assisting regimes will be decisive.

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ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian Might Is Right In This World

It seems the rule of jungle dominates the current world and everybody who is mighty is right or at least practically it seems so because international bodies which have been set up to defend rights of nations especially the weak ones usually jump to defend the mighty sides. So if you want to survive, you should try to be powerful and stand on your own foot otherwise you are doomed to be lackey of powerful ones.

On Monday, the Islamic Republic of Iran unveiled another magnificent achieving in line with strengthening its military power to defend the country against any hostile action. The Commander of IRGC General Hossein Salami hailed successive achievements of the country in all fields and especially in the military and said that today, the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran is admitted internationally and in the entire region which is a fact that no one can deny, reiterating in this world one should be strong enough to survive.

The general indirectly pointed to this fact that if you want to be independent and to resist against world hegemony, you should be powerful and brave enough otherwise you are doomed to fall and the Islamic Republic of Iran is following this doctrine to become powerful and to become a role model for the Muslim world. For this reason every day a new achievement of the country is unveiled to show muscles to the world arrogance and the hostile states the country's strong determination for full independence.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy unveiled a domestically-developed patrol combat vessel named after the country's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in a U.S. drone strike near Baghdad airport in January 2020.

Martyr Soleimani is a brand for bravery, resistance and anti-terrorism fight and Tehran will present so many achievements named after him to honor him and show his power in humanitarian and military achievements.

During the ceremony, the IRGC Navy also took delivery of Shahid (Martyr) Rouhi and Shahid Dara high-speed and missile-launching assault boats.

The hull of Shahid Soleimani combat patrol vessel is equipped with radar-evading stealth technology, meaning that it has a very low level of radar cross-section, according to Major General Bagheri.

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Iran Has to Do Space Work, Research

TEHRAN (MNA) - The IRGC Aerospace Force Commander says that Iran is under the obligation of doing work and research in the field of space.

The Commander of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh made the remarks speaking in the presence of a delegation from Khajeh Nasir al-Din Toosi University during their visit to IRGC National Aerospace Park on Wednesday.

"We have achieved favorable success in the fields of university and defense cooperation," Brigadier General Hajizadeh stressed, calling for the continuation of this cooperation.

"Considering the realities of today's world and the future horizon, we are under necessity to carry out space research and work, and this is one of the components of the power of any country," he emphasized.

Saying that today, the situation in the region is very favorable, the IRGC Aerospace Force Commander said that Iran has successfully passed a challenging decade with the resourcefulness of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in pursuing the strategy of active resistance.

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Tehran Offers to Complete IP Gas Pipeline Project With Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Ali Hosseini offered his government's support to complete Iran-Pakistan (IP) Gas Pipeline project and hinted to extend cooperation in other fields of mutual interest.

Ambassador Hosseini, in an interview with APP, said Iran was willing to further strengthen mutual trade cooperation; completion of energy projects, especially the IP gas pipeline; progress in the establishment of border markets; finalization of a free trade agreement, and collaboration on major ports and security areas.

He said there were no sanctions on the export of gas from Iran and Pakistan could take full benefit of it to fulfill its energy needs. The IP gas pipeline was a key project in that regard and both the countries realized its importance.

The gas pipeline project was being deliberated by the technical committee, he said, adding its completion would also open new avenues for mutual cooperation between the two countries.

The ambassador said Iran was already exporting 100 megawatts of electricity to Pakistan for meeting the power needs (of its bordering areas) and it would be increased in future.

He said work was also going on another project to provide electricity to Pakistan. Both the countries had taken initial steps in that regard.

Ambassador Hosseini identified opportunities for investors of both countries in various trade sectors, particularly the industrial zones.

Highlighting the role of both countries in regional economic and trade integration, he said and North-South and East-West corridors would not only connect Pakistan to Iran, but also help the former's trade and economic integration with Central Asia, Europe, Middle East and Russia.

He said the two countries were making joint efforts to achieve the target of enhancing their mutual trade to \$5 billion.

He said both Pakistan and Iran were geographically very important countries and their mutual cooperation was of utmost importance to make it useful for their geo-economic interests.

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Iran Condemns Terrorist in Burkina Faso

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman denounced terrorist groups' attack on a humanitarian aid convoy in northern Burkina Faso.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Nasser Kanaani also expressed sympathy toward the Burkinabe people and the government, and the families of the victims.

One of the vehicles of the civil convoy was attacked by a homemade explosive on a road between Djibo and Bourzanga, in which 35 people were killed and 37 others were injured in the attack.

Iran Seeks Enhancing Cooperation With Latin America

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi has reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's policy of enhancing cooperation with Latin American countries, including Venezuela.

During a meeting with Ramon Velasquez, the Venezuelan president's special envoy and minister of transport, in the Iranian capital of Tehran on Tuesday, Raisi said Tehran-Caracas ties are rapidly expanding and that the Islamic Republic has been "a friend of Venezuela's in its tough times."

Pointing to Iran's policy of developing trade and economic ties with friendly countries, Raisi underscored the significance of expanding the level of cooperation between Iran and Latin American states, especially given the diverse capacities available.

"We are ready to expand relations with Venezuela in all areas, especially in trade, energy, technology, science and defense," the Iranian president added.

Velasquez, for his part, expressed satisfaction with the growing level of ties between Iran and Venezuela, stressing Caracas' efforts to boost economic, trade, transit, and political cooperation with Tehran.

The Venezuelan official also referred to the technical and engineering capabilities



of Iran, calling for boosting interaction between the two countries in this regard.

Velasquez also delivered Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's message to the Iranian president at the meeting.

In the presence of the two countries' high-ranking officials in Tehran in June, the two presidents oversaw the signing of a 20-year partnership agreement aimed at bolstering cooperation in various fields between Tehran and Caracas.

The partnership agreement included cooperation in the fields of science, technology, agriculture, oil and gas, petrochemicals, tourism as well as culture.

Maduro lauded the 20-year partnership agreement, saying the two sides would be able to expand bilateral relationship by consolidating their ties and drawing a clear vision in the next two decades.

The Venezuelan president also confirmed the launch of direct flights from Caracas to Tehran and vice versa as of July 18, stressing that it would help develop tourism.

Iran Calls for Promoting Cultural Diplomacy

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili said that Iran will promote its cultural diplomacy by actively participating in the annual UNESCO Summit.

Referring to the recent meeting of the Government Delegation with the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Esmaeili said that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in this meeting called the cultural approach of the government the strengths of the government, which indicates that "we must actively and seriously continue our activities".

Pointing to the report by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO, he added that the Ministry of Culture in the new era is concerned with boosting cultural schedules in UNESCO, on the other hand, by sending new cultural consultants to various states, it seeks to promote the cultural approaches of the government in the area of cultural diplomacy.

The Ministry of Culture has adopted a new policy in the international fields and has taken a completely transformational approach, as well as attending the annual UNESCO meeting in Mexico, trying to take a different approach in the field of cultural diplomacy, he highlighted.

Busan Film Festival to Open With Iranian Film



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The 27th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF, Oct 5-14) is set to open with the international premiere of Hadi Mohaghegh's Iranian film Scent of Wind and close with Ishikawa Kei's Venice title A Man.

Hong Kong star Tony Leung Chiu-Wai will also attend the opening ceremony to receive BIFF's Asian Filmmaker of the Year award. The festival will dedicate a six-film showcase dubbed In The Mood For Tony Leung with titles the actor personally selected, including Happy Together, Infernal Affairs and In The Mood For Love.

"This is the first time in three years [since the Covid-19 pandemic started] that we will be normalizing to hold a whole intact festival, in terms of quality and quantity," said BIFF festival director Huh Moonyung.

While complying to the ongoing safety guidelines such as wearing masks in public places, the festival will open 100% of its seating capacity without social distancing measures. Opening and closing ceremonies as well as parties and events will also be held again as in pre-pandemic years.

BIFF has selected 352 films to screen at this year's edition. Of these, 243 films from 71 countries are in the official selection with 89 world premieres and 13 international premieres. Previously announced features include the New Currents competition lineup of 10 world premieres.

The other 111 films being screened by the festival are in the Community BIFF programme, which includes showcases curated by local audience members, short films made by local residents, and real-time interactive online events with audiences and film professionals in Busan and overseas.

President Hails Rise in Establishment of Economic Units

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi urged all the executive bodies to do their best to curb inflation, improve productivity with the aim of increasing the government's efficiency and achieving economic growth, creating real and stable employment and continuing the process of activating production and industrial units in the country.

Raisi stated in the meeting of the Council of Ministers today, "All institutions and departments should follow up on improving productivity with the aim of increasing the government's efficiency and achieving economic growth, and no institution should consider itself exempt from this responsibility".

The President described economic growth dependent on increasing investment and productivity, and obliged the head of the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization to submit a report on the activities of the Productivity Organization in pursuing its missions to improve productivity in the country.

Raisi called attention to the economy as the main issue of the country as the most important demand of the Supreme Leader from the 13th Administration, and emphasizing the need to curb inflation in the country, he stated, "There should be no inflationary action by the institutions".

He called the growth of employment as another important mission of the government, and stated, "Creating real and sustainable employment is one of the important emphasis of the Supreme Leader, the slogan of the year, an obligation by the law and the promise of the Popular Administration, which all institutions must follow with a sense of responsibility".

"Controlling the non-productive activities of banks and preventing them corporate activities" and "providing working capital for production units" were among the other issues mentioned by the President, and he tasked the Governor of the Central Bank and the Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade to follow them up.

In another part of his speech, the President described the establishment of 1,500 economic units in the past year as hopeful news for the people, and by emphasizing the continuation of the process of activation of production and industrial units in the country, he called it necessary to inform and explain this achievement to the public opinion.

Referring to the importance of the Arbaeen pilgrimage, Ayatollah Raisi appreciated the efforts of various institutions to serve the pilgrims of the holy shrines and stated, "Arbaeen is a very important global movement that has many blessings, so all departments should do everything in their power to facilitate the pilgrimage and serve the pilgrims".

He also mentioned the reports received about the concerns and problems of the Arbaeen pilgrims in the field of transportation and urged the officials of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Roads to follow up with the cooperation of other agencies to provide the vehicles needed by the pilgrims with priority so that the pilgrims do not have a problem regarding transportation.

In another part of his speech, the President described anti-corruption as the most important approaches and characteristics of the 13th Administration, and referring to the measures taken in the last year to deal with corruption and remove corruption-causing sources from the structure of the administrative system.

Lake Urmia Could Completely Dry Up in Next Few Years

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Lake Urmia is at risk of completely drying up in the next few years unless efforts to save the lake are prioritized over the needs of farmers, an environmental official warned.

"If the water quotas are not delivered and the approved plans are not fully realized, the lake will definitely dry up and there will be no hope for its recovery," said Arezoo Ashrafzadeh, the head of the wetlands unit in the environment department.

"According to the law, the energy ministry is obliged to provide the environmental water needs of Lake Urmia," she told Iran's ISNA news outlet.

"But the lake has not received its water entitlement due to a decrease in rainfall among other reasons."

Lake Urmia, in northwestern Iran, was once the largest lake in the Middle East and covered 5,000 square kilometers. Its water level has been steadily

declining since the 1990s, according to the UN, because of a combination of reduced rainfall, over-farming, and rising temperatures.

The shrinking and drying up of the salt lake has threatened the habitats of several species of fauna and flora in the region, including shrimps, flamingos, and deer, and has led to pollution in nearby cities and

The lake has not yet completely dried up, said Ashrafzadeh, "but its northern and southern parts have been separated and about 1,000 square kilometers (386 square miles) of the lake remain".

The warning comes less than a decade after Iran and the UNDP launched a Japanese government-funded program to save the lake and reverse one of the region's worst ecological disasters in the past few decades.

The program saw some success by 2017 as the lake expanded to 2,300 kilometers, but then started shrinking again.

Iranian Envoy Meets New Russian Ambassador to Tehran

TEHRAN (MNA) - Alexey Yurievich Dedov will soon start his mission as the Russian new Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Iranian envoy to Moscow Kazem Jalali said referring to their meeting in Moscow.

"I met with Alexey Yurievich Dedov. He will soon start working as the new ambassador of Russia in Iran," the Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali tweeted.

"In this meeting, we both emphasized that Iran and Russia are in one of the best historical periods regarding their bilateral relation," Jalali said.

The Iranian ambassador in Moscow thanked for the efforts of the Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Jagarian and wished success to Alexey Dedov.



Health Ministry Warns of New Covid-19 Wave

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian ministry of health has reported a 50-percent nationwide decrease in observing health protocols to ward off the coronavirus infection amid threats of a new wave of the disease during the upcoming cold weather.

Healthcare experts say since the emergence of the virus nearly 3 years ago, Covid-19 has never stopped mutating, but the emergence of some of new variants has led to surges in the outbreak.

BA.4 and BA.5 sub-strains of the Omicron variant, one of the most infectious human viruses known so far, was responsible for the seventh wave of the surge in Iran, which Iranian epidemiologists say is fizzling out.

However, the media and health officials in Iran have been advising the nation to receive booster vaccines and observe health guidelines, especially in public places.

Last week, Iranian Health Minister Behrang Eshaghi said conditions have improved in recent days but people should not let their guards down as the next wave is possibly to emerge in the fall and as the new school year is beginning in the next two weeks.

Coronavirus has so far killed nearly 144 thousand people in Iran, a country with a population of over 84 million people.

Iran Supports Any Effective Initiative To Stabilize Lebanon

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber said that Iran supports any effective initiative to stabilize Lebanon.

Mokhber made separate telephone conversations with Speaker of the Parliament of Lebanon Nabih Berri and Prime Minister of Lebanon Najib Mikati on Tuesday.

Thanking the bravery of the Lebanese nation and emphasizing the essence of peace and stability in the country, Mokhber said that the Islamic Republic of Iran will support any initiative that is effective for the political and economic stability of Lebanon, as they will not hesitate to help the Lebanese people and government in this way.

The senior Lebanese officials stressed the significance of enhancing and boosting friendly relations between the two states in all fields and urged the Islamic Republic of Iran's support for its energy supply.

They also invited Mokhber to visit Lebanon to further boost ties between the two states.

Iran Defense Achievements Displayed in Baku

BAKU (IP) - The fourth international defense industry exhibition in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, is underway with the active presence of the Islamic Republic.

More than 200 companies producing defense and military equipment from 26 countries are present at the Baku International Defense Industry Exhibition, displaying their latest products in the defense and military field.

Five companies from Iran participated in the exhibition and displayed equipment in ground warfare, air warfare, naval warfare, electromagnetics, telecommunications, and artificial intelligence.

Admiral Amir Rastagari, Deputy Minister of Defense of Iran, said on the sidelines of the exhibition that due to the common border and good relations between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the development of military ties is on the agenda.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:40
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:16
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:42

39. If only the Unbelievers knew (the time) when they will not be able to ward off the fire from their faces, nor yet from their backs, and (when) no help can reach them!
 40. Nay, it may come to them all of a sudden and confound them: no power will they have then to avert it, nor will they (then) get respite.
 Surah 21. The Prophets (39 - 40)

Iran Opens Trade Center in Russia

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran opened its trade center in Russia in a ceremony in presence of Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) Bahman Abdollahi, Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization Alireza Payman-Pak and some of Majlis lawmakers and economic officials.

Addressing the ceremony in Moscow, Mr. Abdollahi said that Russia's market is a suitable showcase for presenting Iranian products. He went on to say that due to boost in constructive interactions of Iran with Russia and emphasis of high-ranking officials of both countries on easing and broadening bilateral economic and trade ties considering the preferential trade agreement between Iran and Eurasian Economic Union, Russia's market is considered a suitable place for presenting Iranian products especially in the field of construction, foodstuff and agriculture, downstream petrochemical industries, iron and steel, minerals, garment and industrial machineries.

Then Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, for his part, said that Iran intends to set a new record for trade with Russia, adding that the presence of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives and opening of the trade center will help a great deal progress and development of bilateral ties. He expressed satisfaction over the progress in relations of Iran and Russia and said that one of the signs of this progress is the inauguration of trade center between the two countries.

Jalali went on to say that in 2021 there was a good leap in relations of the two countries and their trade volume has reached \$4b which has been unprecedented in the relations of both countries and it is hoped that they reach higher records.



Then Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization Mr. Payman-Pak briefed the participants in the ceremony of activities of this center. He went on to say that one of the most important chapters of this trade center is to manage and coordinate events like holding exhibitions and exchange of trade delegations and restoring trade between the two states. He added that creating cognizance and informing regulations and regulations beside programs of both countries is a great help for awareness of traders of the two countries.

Meanwhile head of cooperatives fraction of Majlis Mr. Seyed Kazem Delkosh, for his part, pointed to the role of this center of broadening trade exchanges of economic activists of Iran and Russia. He stated that this center to ease activities of Iranian and Russian traders and to increase the level of the economic interactions of both states. He added that Russia's market is very important for Iranian economic activists and it provides great opportunity for owners of businesses.

Some of economic officials of both countries were also present in the opening ceremony of Iran Trade Center in Moscow.

Manufacture of Roll Mill By Iranian Engineers

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The fourth National Festival of Hatam (Support of National Production) was held in presence of government officials and some of the economic activists of the country at IRIB Conference Hall.



In the festival, organizers honored Goharzamin Iron Ore Company and awarded the company with top award in the field of indigenizing the roll mill.

It is worth noting that Goharzamin Iron Ore Company, in line with the remarks of the Supreme Leader regarding support of domestic production and materializing the slogan of year (Production, Knowledge-Based and Job Creation), helped manufacture of roll mill for the first time in the country which is considered a unique achievement in indigenizing industry.

Majority of Investors Worried About Future

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The result of an economic newspaper's opinion polls in Iran of 40 economic activists shows that 87 percent of the country's investors have no clear picture of the future."

According to a report published by Donya Eghtesad newspaper, "About half of respondents" have thought about withdrawing their capital, while "more than 70 percent" have withdrawn at least a portion of their capital.

"Instability" is the most important issue that these economic activists object to, and more than half of economic activists said their businesses have "undergone uncontrollable conditions" in the past year or two.

According to some economic experts, in the 2011s alone, the volume of capital accumulation in Iran has fallen by about 40 percent and this fall continued in the first year of Ebrahim Raisi's government.

The lack of investment is the most important factor in the fall in GDP per capita in Iran since the Islamic Revolution, which is based on the World Bank's assessment of the 2015 fixed dollar to 30 percent.

Iran, Uzbekistan Draw Framework of Cooperation in Energy



TASHKENT (IP) - The Iranian Deputy Petroleum Minister for International Affairs and Trade has reached an agreement with the Acting Minister of Energy of Uzbekistan on the framework of cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector.

According to the official news agency of Iran's Oil Ministry, Shana, the high-ranking delegation of the Iranian Oil Ministry, headed by deputy minister Ahmad Assadzadeh, left Tehran for Uzbekistan on Sunday to prepare the first oil cooperation memorandum with the country to be signed at the Shanghai summit.

On Monday, Assadzadeh met with Azim Ahmad Khojaf, Acting Minister of Energy of Uzbekistan in Tashkent.

The delegations of Iran and Uzbekistan discussed the roadmap of short and long-term cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector and determined the cooperation framework early on Tuesday.

The representatives of the Iranian companies present in this meeting, while introducing their abilities and capacities, discussed the existing fields of cooperation with Uzbekistan with the Acting Minister of Energy and other managers of that ministry.

The MoU on the development of bilateral energy cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan was also finalized in this meeting.

The document is supposed to be signed by Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji and his Uzbek counterpart during President Ebrahim Raisi's state visit to Uzbekistan to participate in the Shanghai Summit due on 15-16 September 2022 in Tashkent.

Iran Non-Oil Exports to Neighbors Surge

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's non-oil exports to neighbors in the five months since the start of the Persian year on March 20 rose 27 percent year-on-year to \$10.7 billion, the country's customs figures show.

More than 33.3 million tonnes of non-oil goods worth \$20.6 billion were exchanged between Iran and its 15 neighbors in the period, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) spokesman Ruhollah Latifi said on Wednesday. Iran's overall non-oil trade in the period stood at \$42.5 billion.

Iraq took in 8.6 million tonnes of non-oil Iranian goods worth more than \$2.9 billion, followed by the UAE with \$2.7 billion and Turkey with \$2.3 billion in imports from their resource-rich neighbor.

Next came Afghanistan with \$641 million, Pakistan with \$475 million, Oman with \$452 million and Azerbaijan with \$296 million in imported goods from Iran, the figures cited by official IRNA news agency showed.

Iraq's main purchases from its neighbor are agricultural products, engineering services, construction materials, and energy, such as electricity and natural gas. Baghdad has received waivers from Washington allowing it to buy Iranian electricity and natural gas.

The US has had to repeatedly extend sanctions exemption by 45, 90 or 120 days, to allow Baghdad to import Iranian energy, but it is unhappy with close relationship and trade between Baghdad and Tehran.

Iraq needs more than 23,000 megawatts of electricity to meet its domestic demand but years of war following the 2003 US invasion have left its power infrastructure in tatters and a deficit of some 7,000 megawatts.

In the past, officials in Baghdad have said there is no easy substitute to imports from Iran because it would take years to adequately build up Iraq's energy infrastructure.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has said he wants "excellent relations" with the Islamic Republic. The two countries have called to raise their annual bilateral trade to \$20 billion from around \$10 billion despite the impact of the US sanctions.

Latifi put Iran's imports from its neighbors in the first five months of the Persian year at \$21.6 billion, up 21% from the same period a year before.

The UAE was the biggest exporter at more than \$6 billion followed by Turkey at \$2.1 billion and Russia with \$715 million. Iran foresees a leap in its foreign trade this year without worrying about the effects of the US sanctions which have been a drag on the country's economy for years.

Among the driving forces behind regional diplomacy is Iran's trade route which is proving tremendously attractive to its neighbors.

All projects drawn up last year have been designed in such a way that the fate of the Vienna talks to revive a 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran would have no bearing on their implementation, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Medhi Niazi has said.



Iran, Japan Hold Seminar on Net Zero Emissions by 2050

TEHRAN (IP) - An educational seminar entitled "Introduction of Japan's policies in using hydrogen and ammonia to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050" was held in Tehran.

According to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), an educational seminar titled "Introduction of Japan's policies to use hydrogen and ammonia to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050" was held in Tehran on Tuesday in the presence of Abbas Razmi, Director of Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) of NIOC, Yuka Kida, Head of the Economic Department of the Embassy of Japan in Iran, and Masashi Watanabe, Director of Oil and LNG Policy at the Natural Resources and Energy Agency of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan.

At the beginning of the seminar, the NIOC director of HSE emphasized the necessity of managing gas flaring emissions (no flaring) and gaining awareness of



new methods and their application in managing greenhouse gas emissions in Iran's oil and gas industry, and said: "The main goal of this seminar is to reduce greenhouse emissions and good targeting and planning have been done in the world, especially in Japan."

Stating that Iran is in the list of 10 countries emitting greenhouse gases, he announced: "Based on the plans and goals set, positive steps have been taken regarding the health of humanity;

by 2050, the world will go towards zero emission of greenhouse gases."

The NIOC Director of HSE further underlined the importance of keeping in touch with powerful institutions in using methods for net zero emissions by 2050, adding that it is necessary to create communication and interaction for future plans in the field of reducing flare gases and solving environmental challenges and familiarizing with new methods for estimating the amount of carbon dioxide gas emissions in oil and gas production facilities.

Five Pakistan Soldiers Killed In Clash With Taliban

PESHAWAR (Dispatches) - Pakistan's Taliban accused the military of breaking a fragile ceasefire, after the army said five soldiers and at least four militants died in a gun battle in the country's northwest.

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) declared an indefinite ceasefire in June to facilitate peace talks being brokered by neighbouring Afghanistan, but there have been regular clashes since then despite both sides saying the truce was still on.

In the latest clash on Monday, the Pakistan military said it raided a militant hideout in Boyya, North Waziristan, following an intelligence tip-off.

"Intense fire exchange took place between our troops and terrorists," the military's public relations wing said in a statement.



Palestinian Killed in Israel West Bank Raid

JENIN (Dispatches) - A Palestinian was killed and 16 wounded when Israeli troops entered Jenin in the occupied West Bank to carry out a home demolition, the Palestinian health ministry said.

"The outcome of the Israeli aggression on Jenin at dawn today: a 29-year-old martyr and 16 wounded with bullets and shrapnel were admitted to hospitals," the ministry said.

Palestinian official news agency Wafa identified the dead man as Mohammed Musa Mohammed Sabaaneh, 29. Sabaaneh's father, Musa Sabaaneh told AFP that a soldier "inside a jeep fired a bullet" at his son.



Zelenskiy Rings NYSE Bell in Quest for Foreign Investment



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy remotely rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange as his nation appealed for billions in private investment to rebuild factories and industries destroyed by Russia.

Zelenskiy's government launched a platform of over 500 projects worth \$400 billion for foreign investors to help rebuild Ukraine's economy, even as war with Russia drags on.

Zelenskiy appeared on a video screen behind the platform overlooking the NYSE floor where the opening bell is traditionally rung. Traders applauded and whooped while a banner read: "We are free. We are strong. We are open for business."

Fresh from a roundtable with top executives from JP Morgan, Pfizer Inc and other U.S. companies, Zelenskiy said in English that Ukraine was already rebuilding its economy, more than six months since the Russian invasion.

"Ukraine is the story of a future victory and a chance for you to invest now in projects worth hundreds of billions of dollars to share the victory with us," he said.

The United States and allies in Europe and Asia have already sent billions in aid, weapons and other security spending.

The "Advantage Ukraine" initiative - first flagged at a recovery conference in Switzerland in July - focuses on 10 key sectors, including the military-industrial complex, energy, pharmaceuticals, metallurgy, woodworking, and logistics.

"It is necessary to invest in Ukraine now, and not wait for the end of the war," Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said in a statement.

Advertising group WPP is leading the marketing campaign for the initiative.

Ukraine is also appealing for some \$5 billion in international aid each month to keep its economy running, in addition to military aid from NATO alliance members.

Svyrydenko told Reuters last month that Ukraine's economy should stabilize over the coming year and expand by as much as 15.5% in 2023, after a likely contraction of 30-35% this year.

On Tuesday, she said Ukraine was keen to bring back foreign direct investment, which had reached \$6.7 billion before the war. "The Russian invasion adjusted our short-term plans, but did not force us to abandon our strategic goals," she said.

After registering on the platform, potential investors will receive information about opportunities.

The economy ministry said it was providing grants to existing businesses, and has already helped relocate 700 businesses from the frontlines of the conflict, of which 480 had already resumed work.

Putin Attends Military Exercises With Chinese Forces

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin has attended large-scale military exercises involving Chinese forces

and the militaries of several other Russia-friendly countries, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told local news agencies. The Vostok-2022 (East 2022) joint military exercises began on September 1 and are being held amid Russia's war in Ukraine and at a time when both Moscow and Beijing face tensions with the United States.

Putin was at the Sergeevski military range on Tuesday to meet with Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu and military chief of staff Valery Gerasimov and would observe the final phase of the military exercises, Peskov was quoted as saying.

General Gerasimov has personally overseen the drills, which involve troops from several ex-Soviet nations as well as from China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Syria.

More than 50,000 soldiers and more than 5,000 units of military equipment, including 140 aircraft and 60 ships, are involved in the exercises which run until Wednesday across several training grounds in Russia's Far East and in the waters off its eastern coast.

The exercise continues a series of joint war games by Russia and China in recent years, including naval drills and long-range bomber patrols, and showcases ties between Moscow and Beijing, which have grown stronger since Putin sent his troops into Ukraine.

Chinese defense ministry spokesperson Colonel Tan Kefei said last week that China's participation in Vostok-2022 aims to deepen "cooperation between the militaries of the participating countries, enhance the level of strategic cooperation among all participating parties, and enhance the ability to jointly respond to various security threats".

Similar drills were last held in 2018.



27 Dead as Al-Qaeda Launches Attack on Yemen Fighters

ADEN (Dispatches) - Twenty-one separatist fighters and six members of Al-Qaeda's Yemen branch were killed Tuesday as an attack by the jihadists punctured months of relative peace in the war-torn country, government and security sources said.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) attacked positions held by the UAE-trained Security Belt group in Abyan province in Yemen's south, the sources told AFP.

The violence came just days after the jihadist group released a video of a United Nations worker whom it abducted in the same province more than six months ago.

About three hours of fighting "left 21 dead among the (Security Belt), including an officer, and six among the Al-Qaeda combatants", a government official said on condition of anonymity. Two security sources confirmed the death toll.

Yemen has been gripped by conflict since Huthi rebels took control of the capital Sanaa in 2014, triggering a Saudi-led military intervention in support of the beleaguered government the following year.

AQAP and militants loyal to the Islamic State group have thrived in the chaos.

The Security Belt, a powerful southern Yemen separatist force, has played a decisive role in the fight against the jihadists, forcing them to retreat from towns into rural areas.

Tuesday's fighting comes as the Huthis and forces supporting the ousted government observe a shaky ceasefire in the years-long civil war.

Riven by divisions, the groups opposing the Huthis, who originate from the north, include southern separatists who support the re-establishment of South Yemen.

The country was divided into North and South Yemen until reunification in 1990.

Protests Across Indonesia as Anger Mounts Over Fuel Price Increase

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Thousands of people rallied in Indonesia's biggest cities on Tuesday, demanding the government reverse its first subsidized fuel price increase in eight years amid soaring inflation.

Under pressure to control a ballooning energy subsidy budget, President Joko Widodo said he had little choice but to cut the subsidy and let fuel prices rise by about 30% in the country of 270 million people. Oil prices are about 32% higher than a year ago.

Protests took place in and around the capital, Jakarta, and in the cities of Surabaya, Makassar, Kendari, Aceh, and Yogyakarta, among a series of demonstrations led by students and labor groups that police say could draw big crowds this week.

Thousands of police were deployed across Jakarta, many guarding petrol stations, fearing they could become targets of mounting anger over a price increase that unions say will hurt workers and the urban poor the most.

"Workers are really, really suffering right now," said Abdul Aris, a union official, vowing to keep fighting until the government gives way.

Small rallies took place at the weekend and on Monday, with tyres burned and some roads blocked as demonstrators vented their anger over the decision, which comes amid rising food costs and with the

economy still reeling from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Thousands gathered in Jakarta on Tuesday, marching and chanting slogans denouncing the government's decision and calling for an increase in the minimum wage.

One demonstrator was seen shirtless with feet shackled to an empty petrol tank, carrying a sign highlighting the hardship brought by rising costs.

Textile factory worker Adi Asmadi, 29, said his daily transport expenses would go up sharply.

"If the fuel price is hiked and wages increase too, that's OK," he said. "If it's not, we object."

Subsidised fuel is a sensitive issue in Southeast Asia's biggest economy, but the government has sought to soften the blow through compensation measures for 20 million households, including direct cash transfers. The price increase is expected to push up inflation.

Authorities said 24.17 trillion rupiah (\$1.62 billion) in additional welfare programmes would go to those needing them, while hotlines would be set up to hear complaints.

"These are very difficult conditions, but if you look at the assistance provided by the government, it is quite large," Minister of Social Affairs Tri Rismaharini told a news conference.

"We hope this could help cushion the rise in prices that the people are facing."



Truss Appointed as Britain's PM, Johnson Bows Out

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liz Truss took over as British prime minister, facing one of the most daunting set of challenges for an incoming leader in post-war history led by soaring energy bills, a looming recession and industrial strife.

Truss, the fourth Conservative prime minister in six years, flew to the royal family's Scottish home to be asked by Queen Elizabeth to form a government. She replaces Boris Johnson who was forced out after three tumultuous years in power.

"Ms Truss accepted Her Majesty's offer and kissed hands upon her appointment as Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury," Buckingham Palace said.

The 47-year-old former foreign secretary will later address the country from Downing Street before appointing her government. Johnson urged the country and his warring party to unite behind the new leader.

Truss inherits an economy in crisis, with inflation at double digits, the cost of energy soaring and the Bank of England warning of a lengthy recession by the end of this year. Already, workers across the economy have gone on strike.

Her plan to revive growth through tax cuts while also potentially providing around 100 billion pounds (\$116 billion) for energy has rattled financial markets, prompting investors to dump the pound and government bonds in recent weeks.

She also enters the latest crisis to buffet Britain with a weaker political hand than many of her predecessors.

Having held a place in the cabinet of senior ministers for eight years, she defeated rival Rishi Sunak in a vote of Conservative Party members by a tighter margin than expected, and more of the party's lawmakers initially backed her rival.

Johnson, who tried to cling on to power in July despite ministers resigning en masse over a series of scandals, told reporters and politicians gathered in Downing Street early on Tuesday that the country must unite.

"This is it folks," he said in his farewell speech. "What I say to my fellow Conservatives, it's time for politics to be over, folks. It's time for us all to get behind Liz Truss and her team and her program."



Fossil Fuels Causing Cost-of-Living Crisis



PARIS (Dispatches) - The cost-of-living crisis pushing millions of people towards poverty in Europe is driven by fossil fuels, according to a leading Earth systems scientist, who has warned that global heating risks causing runaway climate change.

Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and co-author of the new book *Earth For All*, said that spiralling inflation was in large measure a result of decades of government failures to decarbonise their economies.

"I find it very disturbing that our political leaders in Europe are unable to communicate that high living costs right now are caused by higher prices on fossil fuels," he told AFP at the book's launch on Tuesday.

"So this is fossil fuel-driven, supply-driven inflation. If 20 years ago you invested in solar (panels) or had a share in a wind farm, you're not affected today.

"The only reason why we have this crisis now is that we've had 30 years of underinvestment in preparing towards this turbulent phase which we knew would be coming," said Rockstrom.

"We've been saying since 1990 that we need to phase out the fossil fuel-driven economy towards a renewable-driven economy. And now here we are — we're now hitting the wall."

European energy prices soared to new records last week ahead of what many analysts expect to be a challenging winter as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to disrupt oil and gas supplies.

The year-ahead contract for German electricity reached €995 per megawatt hour, while the French equivalent surged past €1,100 — a more than tenfold increase in both countries from last year.

In Britain, energy regulator Ofgem said it would increase the electricity and gas price cap almost twofold from October 1 to an average £3,549 per year.

Rockstrom, who helped pioneer the concept of planetary boundaries — thresholds of pollution or warming within which humanity can thrive — said he hoped the current energy price crisis would be "communicated as another nail in the coffin" for oil, gas and coal.

"This should accelerate our transition towards renewable energy systems," he said.

Rockstrom has spent two years working on *Earth For All* — a guide to help humans survive climate change — with several of the authors of *The Limits to Growth*.

Written 50 years ago, that groundbreaking work warned that the development of civilisation could not go on indefinitely with no limit to resource consumption.

The new book outlines two growth trajectories this century.

The first — *Too Little, Too Late* — sees the economic orthodoxy of the last 40 years endure, leading to ever starker inequality as the Earth's average temperature rises by 2.5 degrees Celsius (36.5 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2100.

The second — the *Great Leap* scenario — sees unprecedented mobilization of resources to produce five changes: eradicate poverty and inequality, empower women, transform the global food system towards more plant-based diets, and rapidly decarbonise energy.

In particular, the book says the International Monetary Fund must provide US\$1.0 trillion (RM4.47 trillion) annually to poorer nations to create green jobs, and rich governments to cancel debt to low-income creditors while giving their own citizens a "universal basic dividend" to help share corporate windfalls.

Rockstrom said the tools are already available to make the *Great Leap* possible.

"(It) is to do with the current knowledge on all the current existing technologies and practices and policies. If we could put in place all the five turnarounds and scale them up very fast, that's the best outcome we can have."

Doomscrolling Linked To Poor Physical and Mental Health



LONDON (The Guardian) - There's no shortage of bad news in the media to "doomscroll", from a global pandemic to the war in Ukraine and an impending climate crisis, but new research suggests the compulsive urge to surf the web can lead to poor mental and physical health outcomes.

Doomscrolling is the tendency to "continue to surf or scroll through bad news, even though that news is saddening, disheartening or depressing", a practice researchers found has boomed since the onset of the pandemic.

The study, published in the journal *Health Communication*, found 16.5% of about 1,100 people surveyed showed signs of "severely problematic" news consumption, leading to greater levels stress, anxiety and poor health.

Associate Prof Bryan McLaughlin, the study's lead author and a researcher at Texas Tech University, said the 24-hour-news cycle could bring about a "constant state of high alert" in some people, making the world seem like a "dark and dangerous place".

"For these individuals, a vicious cycle can develop in which, rather than tuning out, they become drawn further in, obsessing over the news and checking for updates around the clock to alleviate their emotional distress," he said.

"But it doesn't help, and the more they check the news, the more it begins to interfere with other aspects of their lives."

About 27.3% of those surveyed reported "moderately problematic" levels of news consumption, 27.5% were minimally impacted and 28.7% experienced no problems.

While some readers can comfortably receive news updates without any tangible psychological effects, others demonstrate a more compulsive obsession with the media, and struggle to detach themselves from the bad news they're reading.

These respondents scored high on five problematic news consumption dimensions listed by the researchers: becoming absorbed in news content, being preoccupied with thoughts about the news, attempting to reduce anxiety by consuming more news, finding it difficult to avoid the news and having news consumption interfere in their daily life.

And those with higher levels of problematic news consumption were "significantly more likely" to experience poor mental and physical health, the survey found, even when controlling for demographics, personality traits, and overall news use.

Of those with severely problematic consumption levels, 74% reported experiencing mental health problems and 61% reported physical problems compared to 8% and 6.1% of all other study participants.

"We did anticipate that a sizeable portion of our sample would show signs of problematic news consumption. However, we were surprised to find that 17% of study participants suffer from the most severe level," McLaughlin said.

"This is certainly concerning and suggests the problem may be more widespread than we expected. A lot of people appear to be experiencing significant amounts of anxiety and stress due to their news consumption habits."

Dr Kate Mannell, a media studies researcher at Deakin University in the Australian state of Victoria, said Covid-19 made the public "more inclined" to engage in doomscrolling because of the amount of bad news, coupled with extra spare time.



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Bangladesh Not to Face a Situation Like Sri Lanka

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her country will not face a situation like the economic crisis in Sri Lanka although her government has sought loans from global agencies amid a fall in its reserves and surging import costs. read more

In an interview with Reuters partner ANI, aired ahead of her visit to India on Monday, Hasina said that Bangladesh's

economy remained strong despite the impact of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Bangladesh's \$416 billion economy has been one of the fastest-growing in the world for years but dwindling foreign exchange reserves due to inflated import bills have prompted the government to seek loans from global agencies, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



Turkey's Inflation Hits New 24-Year High Beyond 80%

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's annual inflation climbed to a fresh 24-year high of 80.21% in August, a bit below expectations according to data, after the central bank unexpectedly cut interest rates and stoked a nearly year-long cost-of-living crisis.

Inflation has raced higher since last autumn when the central bank gradually cut its policy rate by 500 basis points to 14%, in an unorthodox easing cycle sought by President Tayyip Erdogan that set off a lira crisis.

Despite expectations that inflation will remain lofty, the bank cut rates by another 100 basis points last month to 13%, citing a slowing economy. Month-on-month, consumer prices rose 1.46%, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) said, compared to a Reuters poll forecast of 2.0%. Annually, inflation was forecast to be 81.22%.

Last month's reading was the highest since 81.4% in August, 1998, when Turkey was battling to end a decade of chronically high inflation.

The domestic producer price index rose 2.41% month-on-month in August for an annual rise of 143.75%.

"The central bank has resumed cutting interest rates. This, and the continuing huge PPI inflation rate, are the main worries for Turkey which are steadily, but surely, eroding the lira's fundamentals," said Commerzbank's Tatha Ghose.

The highest annual inflation was seen in transportation, where prices rose 116.87% year-on-year, despite prices in the sector dropping 1.78% month-on-month. In the key food and non-alcoholic drinks' sector, prices jumped 90.25%.

After the data at 0840 GMT the lira was unchanged at 18.2240.

Last month's cut came as world central banks have been raising rates. Ankara has said inflation will fall with its economic program prioritizing low rates to boost production and exports, and achieving a current account surplus.

Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati said that while major global economies were concerned about recession at the same time as inflation rises, Turkey was continuing its "fight against inflation without stopping investment and production".

Opposition lawmakers and economists have questioned the reliability of TUIK's figures, which TUIK has stood by. Opinion polls show about 50% of Turks believe inflation is far higher than official data.

Data last week showed retail prices in Istanbul leapt 99.9% in Istanbul in August and BlueBay Asset Management strategist Tim Ash highlighted the gap.

"I no longer believe the official (TUIK) series. It looks like fantasy, wishful thinking. How can you conduct economic policy when the basic economic data cannot be trusted?" Ash wrote in emailed comments.

Economic fallout from war in Ukraine and the lira's decline have stoked prices. The currency shed 44% last year and is down more than 27% this year.

According to government forecasts released on Sunday, Turkey expects inflation to ease to 65% by end-year. The Reuters poll showed an end-2022 level of just below 71%.

UK Economy Slides Into Contraction in August

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's economy ended August on a much weaker footing than previously thought as overall business activity contracted for the first time since February 2021 in a clear signal of recession, a survey showed.

Data company S&P Global revised down its composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which covers the services and manufacturing sectors, to 49.6 from a preliminary "flash" August reading of 50.9.

It marked the first sub-50 reading - denoting a contraction in output - since British businesses were reeling from a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought back lockdowns in late 2020 and early 2021.

The data showed Britain's economy is on course to slip into a recession caused by soaring energy costs that are feeding double-digit rates of inflation.

Addressing the cost-of-living crisis will be a top priority for the new Prime Minister Liz Truss.

"Demand for consumer-facing services such as restaurants, hotels, travel and other recreational activities is collapsing under the weight of the cost-of-living crisis," said Chris Williamson, S&P Global chief business economist.

The services PMI for August was revised down to 50.9 from the flash reading of 52.5.

A further cooling of input cost pressures - while still historically high - was one of the few bright spots in the survey.

"Jobs growth is already starting to weaken and, with hiring tending to lag changes in order books, the recent slump in demand alongside surging energy prices points to a growing reticence to employ staff in coming months," Williamson said.

India's Services Activity Grows Faster in August

BENGALURU (Dispatches) - India's dominant services industry grew faster than expected in August thanks to a solid expansion in demand and a continued easing in cost pressures, encouraging firms to hire at the quickest pace in more than 14 years, a private survey showed.

Driven by strong growth in services and manufacturing activity, Asia's third-largest economy expanded at its fastest annual pace in a year during the April-to-June quarter.

However, that momentum is unlikely to be sustained over the coming quarters as higher

interest rates, elevated price pressures, and growing concerns about a global recession pose significant risks to the economy.

Still, the S&P Global India Services Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 57.2 in August from 55.5 in July, surpassing the 55.0 estimate in a Reuters poll. It remained above the 50-mark separating growth from contraction for a 13th straight month.

"The pick-up in growth stemmed from a rebound in new business gains as firms continued to benefit from the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and ongoing marketing efforts," noted Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global.

"Finance and insurance was the brightest area of the service economy in August, leading with regards to growth of sales and output."

While that encouraged firms to raise headcount at the fastest pace since June 2008, signs of demand remaining resilient boosted business confidence to its highest in over four years.

But overseas orders contracted for a 30th consecutive month on persistent weakness in global demand.

Input prices, albeit elevated, increased at their slowest pace in nearly a year in August. Persistent strength in demand allowed firms to transfer some of their high-cost pressures onto their customers.

Although overall inflation is widely expected to slow over the coming months, it is unlikely to decline to within the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target range of 2%-6% anytime soon.

That means the RBI, which has already raised its key repo rate by 140 basis points since May, is expected to continue with its rate hikes.

Faster expansion in services activity and strong manufacturing growth boosted the composite index to 58.2 in August from 56.6 in July.

Dubai Housing Market Outlook Dims on Increase In Borrowing Costs

BENGALURU (Dispatches) -

Property prices in Dubai will rise this year and next at a slower pace than previously thought as higher mortgage rates and the cost of living crisis will reduce foreign demand, a Reuters poll of property market analysts suggested.

With an economic rebound propelled by higher energy prices, Dubai's property market recovered strongly from 2020's severe downturn with buyers snapping up luxury units after the emirate eased pandemic restrictions faster than most cities around the world.

But most property market analysts in a Reuters poll said the recovery was fragile and uneven, and an oversupply of residential properties along with rising interest rates would pressure prices over the coming months.

Home price rises were forecast to slow to 6.5% in 2022 and 3.0% in 2023, down slightly from 7.5% and 4.5% in a May poll, respectively, according to the median forecast of 10 property analysts polled on Aug. 15-Sep. 2.

That outlook stands in stark contrast with other world property markets including Canada, Australia and New Zealand where house prices were expected to fall this year and next.

"Demand for residential properties has reached an all-time high this year, but this trend could change due to the rising cost of living, increasing mortgage rates, and anticipated new supply," said Haider Tuaima, director and head of real estate research at ValuStrat.

"Smaller apartment units in areas where much new stock is anticipated, have already seen prices stabilize, and most likely face negative growth in the short to medium term."

An oversupply of homes from previous years has come to the rescue of this once-hot property market by keeping affordability in check. Many other major property markets are struggling with runaway house price inflation.

When asked to describe the level of Dubai house prices on a scale of 1 to 10, from extremely cheap to extremely expensive, the median response was 6.

"Given that Dubai continues to be a buyers' market, developers will refrain from increasing prices substantially. Therefore, affordability may continue for some years," Anuj Puri, chairman at ANAROCK Property Consultants, said.

"In fact, given that there was an oversupply in many of the areas, the market failed to push for higher prices in recent times. Prevailing lower prices have made the Dubai market attractive for both foreign and local investors as well."

But Asteco Property Management, Deloitte, Property Monitor, Morgan's International Realty and ValuStrat said average house prices would have to fall between 5-20% to make housing affordable.

Economic Loss Due to Pakistan Floods Rises to \$12.5b



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The estimated economic loss to Pakistan from floods has increased from USD 10 billion to USD 12.5 billion.

The catastrophic floods in Pakistan resulted in the loss of lives. Inflation is projected to go up to the range of 24 per cent to 27 per cent and will touch 30 per cent for the current fiscal year, reported Geo News.

Moreover, poverty and unemployment will go up manifold from 21.9 per cent to over 36 per cent. Some 37 per cent population was hit by poverty after floods in 118 districts, as estimated by the Pakistan government.

A high-profile committee with representation from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, State Bank of Pakistan, FBR, PIDE and others evaluated that poverty and unemployment have gone up manifold, rising from 21.9 per cent to over 36 per cent.

Unemployment has gone up significantly but the government has decided to share any number after holding consultations with relevant stakeholders.

The unemployment rate stood at 6 per cent before the recent severe floods. Official sources said that the GDP growth would be reduced from 5 per cent to 2 per cent for the current fiscal.

The State Bank of Pakistan revealed that growth would be reduced from 4 per cent to 4.5 per cent to 2 per cent for the current fiscal, The News reported.

Agriculture growth faced a much more severe impact in the aftermath of floods and the value addition of agro growth in the range of over Rs500 billion might evaporate in the current fiscal year. The agriculture growth target and services sector faced severe impacts.

The country's GDP growth has been projected to evaporate by 3 per cent and it will be hovering around 2 per cent of GDP against the initially envisaged growth rate target of 5 per cent on the eve of the budget for 2022-23, reported Geo News.

Germany, Europe Set for Energy Rationing After Russian Gas Cuts

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German gas importer Uniper has said that the country does not rule out undertaking gas rationing at some point following Russia's decision to indefinitely halt gas flows via the Nord Stream I pipeline.

Uniper, Germany's biggest importer of Russian gas, says it's also considering legal action against Gazprom to compensate its shareholders for a 90% drop in the company's market value following a sharp drop in Russian gas supply since June.

"We cannot rule out that Germany might look at rationing gas as something that might have to be considered. We know that the government wants to avoid this as much as possible because that would be a disaster for so many reasons," CEO Klaus-Dieter Maubach has told Reuters.

Europe's gas prices surged 26% on Monday after Russia stopped pumping via Nord Stream 1, a major supply route to the continent.

On Friday, Gazprom shut Nord Stream indefinitely after claiming it had found an oil leak at a vital pipeline turbine, blaming Western sanctions and vowing to keep the pipeline offline until sanctions were lifted. That announcement follows a G7 announcement of an agreement to implement a price cap on Russian oil by December, with Moscow responding by threatening to stop selling oil to any country that supports price caps.



But it's not just Europe's largest economy that might be forced to go to extremes to preserve its gas stockpiles especially during the upcoming winter season. The rest of the continent might be forced to follow suit if the season turns out to be more severe than expected.

Gas rationing will come at a heavy price: the partial shutoff of gas deliveries is already affecting European growth momentum, darkening the Eurozone outlook.

Indeed, the Eurozone economy GDP is expected to grow by 2.4% in 2022 but slow down to 1.3% in 2023. The world's largest chemical producer, BASF, says it's closely monitoring the natural gas markets and could cut production if needed.

Queiroz Signs Contract to Lead Iran at World Cup

TEHRAN (IP) - Carlos Queiroz has agreed a deal to lead Iran's national soccer team at the World Cup in Qatar in less than three months' time, the media manager of the national football team the country announced on his Twitter page.

Mohammad Jamaat, media manager of Iran's national football team, thanked Dragan Skocic for his efforts and wrote on his Twitter page: "Carlos Queiroz has been chosen as the new head coach by the decision of the Football Federation's Board of Directors."

With 75 days left until the World Cup kicks off, Carlos Queiroz has returned to coach Iran for a second period, spelling the end of Dragan Skocic's tenure.



UN Warns Famine at the Door in Somalia

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - The United Nations warned today that Somalia was on the brink of famine for the second time in just over a decade, and that time was running out to save lives in the drought-ravaged country.

"Famine is at the door and we are receiving a final warning," UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told a press conference in the Somali capital Mogadishu.

"The unprecedented failure of four consecutive rainy seasons, decades of conflict, mass displacement, severe economic issues are pushing many people to... the brink of famine." Millions of people are at risk of starvation in Somalia and its neighbours in the Horn of Africa including Ethiopia and Kenya which are in the grip of the worst drought in four decades after four failed rainy seasons wiped out livestock and crops.

A food and nutrition report has "concrete indications" that famine will strike Baidoa and Burhakaba in the Bay region of south-central Somalia between October and December, said the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), who began a visit to the country on Thursday.

"I've been shocked to my core these past few days by the level of pain and suffering we see so many Somalis enduring," he added.

"We are in the last moment of the 11th hour to save lives." Humanitarian agencies have been ringing alarm bells for months and say the situation in the Horn of Africa is likely to deteriorate with a likely fifth failed rainy season in the offing.

Griffiths said the situation was worse than during Somalia's last famine in 2011 when 260,000 people died, more than half of them children under the age of six.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) last month said the number of people at risk of starvation across the Horn had increased to 22 million.

"Our worst fears for Somalia are now a reality: Famine is imminent if funds do not arrive immediately," WFP executive director David Beasley said on Twitter.

"The world MUST act now — this is a global call to action." In Somalia alone, the number of people facing crisis hunger levels is 7.8 million, or about half the population, while around a million have fled their homes on a desperate quest for food and water, UN agencies say.

Griffiths described scenes of heart-rending suffering during a visit to Baidoa, describing it as the epicentre of the crisis where he saw "children so malnourished they could barely speak" or cry.

He said 1.5 million children across the country were at risk of acute malnutrition by October if nothing changed.

Conflict-wracked Somalia is considered one of the most vulnerable to climate change but is particularly ill-equipped to cope with the crisis.

A deadly insurgency by the radical Islamist Al-Shabaab group for more than a decade and a half against the fragile federal government is limiting humanitarian access to many areas.

A long-running political crisis also diverted attention away from the drought, but new President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud used his inauguration speech in June to appeal for international help to stave off disaster.



In recent years, increasingly extreme droughts and floods have added to the devastation caused by a locust invasion and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has said the Horn was likely facing a fifth straight failed rainy season over the months of October to December.

'Sleepwalking' to catastrophe — At the start of this year, the WFP had put the number of people facing hunger across the Horn at 13 million, and appealed for donors to open their wallets.

Funds were initially slow in coming, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine among other crises drawing attention from the disaster in the Horn, humanitarian workers said.

The war in Ukraine has also sent global food and fuel prices soaring, making aid delivery more expensive.

In June, British charity Save the Children had issued an alert that the international community was "sleepwalking towards another catastrophic famine" in Somalia.

OCHA has said the March-May 2022 rainy season was the driest on record in the last 70 years, and 2020-2022 had surpassed "the horrific droughts in both 2010-2011 and 2016-2017 in duration and severity".

"An estimated 2.3 million girls and boys are at imminent risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and death from severe acute malnutrition as result of food and nutrition crisis across Somalia," it said in August.

In 2017, more than six million people in Somalia, more than half of them children, needed aid because of a prolonged drought across East Africa.

But early humanitarian action averted famine that year.

Might Is Right...

FROM PAGE 1

The vessel, thanks to its shape, can undertake all kinds of operations in open seas, and is capable of cruising in adverse weather conditions.

Shahid Soleimani military watercraft also has a much higher maneuverability and a much smaller turning radius compared to vessels of the same size, enabling it to implement various offensive and defensive missions.

The vessel runs on four indigenous high-power engines, which give it the chance to be quickly dispatched to the designated zone, and go on long-haul maritime missions without the need for coastal support as it defends the interests of the Islamic Republic in high seas.

Moreover, it can carry helicopters, and is equipped with large helipads intended for use by military choppers as well as vertical take-off and landing unmanned aerial vehicles.

Shahid Soleimani vessel, given its combined combat features, can also carry and launch various types of fast attack craft during operations in open seas.

During the ceremony, Chief of Staff of Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri once again warned the U.S. and hostile countries of committing any miscalculated move against Tehran. By such remarks, Major General pointed to the power of the country that even world arrogance is unable to bully it.

Major General Bagheri said that "In recent months, we have witnessed the growth and enhancement of the position of the strategic navy (army navy)."

He hailed the role that the Iranian navy plays in securing the Strait of Hormuz, the Oman Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Red Sea, and other places in the world. He further stressed that "We declare that we will not tolerate such hostile activities and threats, and will not make any compromises on the rights of the Iranian nation and the security of our seas and lands."

It means that the Islamic Republic of Iran is on the right track of becoming a world power as General Salami has said and this is a bad news for the West and its ally the Zionist regime which have always tried to bully Tehran about their powers but they are now facing a powerful country which does not fear of any confrontation and response to their bullies or probable attacks.

So Iranians are proud of such achievements and their military forces who are strengthening the defensive and even offensive power of the country which immunizes it against any ill-wish of enemies because enemies now are aware that the era of bully and hit-and-run has ended and Iran is a solid rock which can give crushing response to ill-wishers, no matter it is the U.S. or the Zionist regime and Tehran will stick to this saying "might is right" to survive in this world that it seems rule of jungle dominates and international bodies like the United Nations are unable to defend the nations and they have themselves to fight for their rights by getting strong in all-aspects.

Top Iran General Warns of...

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking on the sidelines of the Eqtedar (Strength) 1401 maneuvers to a group of the Iranian Army Ground Force commanders, Major General Gholam Ali Rashid pointed to the official statements from the criminal officials of the Zionist Israeli regime and their acceptance of the responsibility for the threat of security-military action against the Iranian nuclear facilities, interests and national security and said, "From the point of view of the central headquarters of Hazrat Khatam al-Anbiya (PBUH), the Zionist regime as a threat to national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the top priority."

The Iranian general added that "According to this headquarters, any intimidating actions from the usurping Zionist regime against Iran's interests and national security will be considered based on the United States' information, coordination and support, and the response of the [Iranian] armed forces will be definite and at the same level."

He also pointed out that "All mercenary elements and groups and regimes that cooperate with the Zionist regime in threatening the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran will have to pay a price for those intimidating actions."

General Rashid further pointed to Eqtedar (Strength) 1401 military exercise by the Army Ground Force saying that "The Army Ground Force maneuvers have been planned and carried out in accordance with future wars and predicted threats."

The Iranian Army's Ground Force's Strength drill is planned to start later today in central Iran and will last for two days with the aim of assessing ground forces' strength in the face of "new threats."

African Leaders Slam Western Absence From Climate Summit

ROTTERDAM (Dispatches) - African leaders criticized the lack of Western counterparts at a meeting in Rotterdam where they pleaded for funds to help their countries adapt to global warming.

Senegalese President and African Union chief Macky Sall, and Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi said wealthy countries responsible for most CO2 emissions should have been there.

They were speaking at the Africa Adaptation Summit in the Dutch port city, which comes two months before the crucial COP27 climate conference in Egypt in November.

"I cannot fail to note with a touch of bitterness the absence of the leaders of the industrialised world," Sall said at the opening of the event.

"Because these are the main polluters of our planet and it is they who should finance adaptation."

The Senegalese leader added that it was "not just the fate of Africa that is at stake but the fate of humanity and the future of the planet."

Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo also had harsh words for Western leaders, with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte being the only one who showed up to the summit in person.

"I deplore the absence of the leaders of the industrialised nations and the private sector who are, as we know, the greatest polluters," Tshisekedi said.

"The African continent has the smallest impact on climate change, but paradoxically suffers the majority of its consequences," he said.

The continent of Africa emits just some three percent of global CO2 emissions, former UN chief Ban Ki-moon added.

"We have a moral duty" to help African countries adapt, he said.

Iran Has to Do...

FROM PAGE 1

He also added that the enemies of Iran now have admitted that the maximum pressure campaign has failed and Iran has turned into an undisputed power.

Brigadier General Hajizadeh went on to say that Iran's security is indigenous and at an excellent level, adding, "In the space field, we put a satellite into orbit in less than three years, we are among the top 20 countries in the world in radar production, and we are among the top powers in the field of drones and pin-pointing missiles."

Iran Army to...

FROM PAGE 1

The force's professional brigades would, meanwhile, exercise the level of coordination that exists among them in performing hybrid operations, he said.

Finally, the official noted, the participating forces would try to manage the situation on the battleground based on the realities that have governed recent real world battles.

Chashak said the approach that was to be assumed during the drills was practice-oriented, but also offensive and defensive in nature. The news about the drill came days after Iran's Defense Ministry said it had equipped 51 cities across the country with civil defense systems to monitor and thwart any threats at the shortest possible time.

Iran Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

Iranian economy as a whole grow by 4.3% over the year to late March, said the report, confirming statements by Iranian government authorities which suggest the country emerged from an economic recession caused by US sanctions and worsened by the pandemic last year.

Experts say Iran's promising growth figures prove American economic pressure on the country has definitely failed.

The US imposed an inclusive regime of sanctions on Iran in 2018 after it withdrew from an international deal on the country's nuclear program. The sanctions were mainly aimed at choking off Iran's oil revenues to force the country into a series of military and foreign policy concessions.

Tehran Offers to...

FROM PAGE 1

The ambassador said the two countries could find ways for mutual economic partnership and trade. There was possibility of opening a banking channel in the near future, he added.

He said barter trade between the two countries could be promoted as "we have the example of mutual trade in rice and meat". As regard the movement on the Pakistan-Iran border, he said new crossing points had been opened. The two countries were committed to provide more facilities at the crossing points to not only facilitate the movement of common people but also transit trade.

He said it was decided in principle to set up six border markets in order to promote mutual trade relations. The Pishin border market had been completed and its inauguration was on the cards, while work on Gabd, Rimdan and Kohak markets would start soon, he added.

About the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the ambassador said several rounds of negotiations had taken place between the two countries. Mutual trade lists had been exchanged, with consensus developed on trade items, he added.

He recalled that the two countries had signed the Preferential Trade Agreement in March 2004, which, he said, required to be reviewed and made more effective.

He stressed the need of tariff rationalization and other reforms for enhancing the volume of mutual trade to \$5 billion. It would also help promote regional trade, he added.

As regards the two countries' role in the promotion of regional trade, the ambassador said both transit routes and transport were too important in that regard. The Pakistan-Iran-Turkey train link

had been restored, which would not only promote economic and trade relations among the three countries but also increase regional economic and trade integration.

The three governments had agreed to equip the train route with facilities, which would promote mutual trade and goods trade operation, he added. He said the Taftan-Quetta train section needed to be repaired, and both Iran and Pakistan had a consensus to do that.

He said the train link among Pakistan, Iran and Turkey could play a very important role in regional trade integration as it could connect Central Asia, Middle East and Europe economically and commercially. He said Iranians had expertise in train and wagon production. Likewise, his country had special expertise in the field of transportation, which was very important for transit trade.

To a question, the Iranian ambassador said direct air connectivity between Tehran and Islamabad, and other big cities of the two countries was very important for the promotion of mutual relations.

He said there was a lot of potential in religious tourism in both the countries. The people of Pakistan visited Iran for pilgrimage to sacred sites. He expressed the hope for the possibility of an open visa policy between the two countries.

The ambassador said for the promotion of e-commerce trade between the two countries, the young population should be involved. Similarly, he said, cooperation between the chambers and business communities of both countries would promote cordial relations on both sides.

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Pacquiao Eyes Boxing Return With Exhibition Fight

MANILA (Dispatches) - Manny Pacquiao, who retired from boxing last year for a tilt at the Philippines presidency, told AFP that he is considering an exhibition fight in Saudi Arabia in January. The 43-year-old legendary former world champion is to hold talks over a fight against French former sparring partner Jaber Zayani in Riyadh. "We will just start discussions," Pacquiao, who previously ruled out a return to professional boxing, said by telephone from his home city of General Santos where he is preparing for a charity bout against a South Korean YouTuber.

Pogba Out for Surgery Until January

ROME (Dispatches) - Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba may not return to action for the Serie A club until January due to a knee injury which requires surgery, manager Massimiliano Allegri said, casting doubts over the Frenchman's World Cup participation. Last month Pogba decided not to have surgery after damaging his meniscus in training following his move back to Juve from Manchester United in the close season but Allegri said circumstances had changed after he tried to train again.

Mbappe, Haaland Shine In PSG, Man City Wins

PARIS (Dispatches) - Kylian Mbappe and Erling Haaland starred as Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City made winning starts in the Champions League group stage, but big-spending Chelsea suffered a shock 1-0 defeat away to Dinamo Zagreb.

Real Madrid rode their luck at times before demonstrating their class to kick off their title defence with a 3-0 win at Celtic despite the loss of Karim Benzema to injury.

Mbappe showed why PSG were so desperate to keep him at the end of last season when he seemed set to depart for Real by scoring both goals in PSG's 2-1 victory at home to Juventus, to launch the French champions' quest for the biggest prize in European club football.

"We played well and we got a win in a tremendous atmosphere at home," Mbappe told Canal Plus.

"We always want to play against big teams -- that's why you play in the Champions League. It's that sort of atmosphere we love; matches like this, in which you have to show character."

The France forward volleyed Neymar's delightful scoop past Mattia Perin in the fifth minute at the Parc des Princes before adding another brilliantly-worked goal midway through the first half.

Substitute Weston McKennie headed Juventus back into the game but PSG held on and are level with Benfica in Group H. The Portuguese side beat Maccabi Haifa 2-0 courtesy of goals from Rafa Silva and Alex Grimaldo.

Pep Guardiola has warned Haaland alone cannot lead City to Champions League glory this season, but the Norway striker kept up his scintillating form for his new team with two goals in their 4-0 rout of Sevilla.

Having already scored 10 times in six Premier League outings, Haaland put City in front on 20 minutes in Spain as he poked in a Kevin De Bruyne cross.

Mbappe, PSG Coach Face Backlash for Laughing Off Private Jet Question

PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris St Germain coach Christophe Galtier and striker Kylian Mbappe were facing a backlash for laughing off a question about why the team took a private jet for a short trip to a game in Nantes at the weekend.

"Are you serious, responding like this?" Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo tweeted. "Wake up guys???" Quizzed on PSG's jet trip to Nantes at a news conference yesterday, Galtier and Mbappe looked at each other and the World Cup winner burst out laughing as his coach responded with a quip.

"This morning we talked about it with the company which organises our trips and we're looking into travelling on sand yachts," Galtier said.

Asked for his views on the matter, Mbappe said he did not have any. A video of their comments immediately went viral, triggering angry responses from social media users, environmentalists and ministers.

Photoshopped memes of Mbappe and Galtier on sand yachts could be seen across social media and the controversy occupied the top three trending topics on Twitter in France.

PSG have not made an official comment on the issue.

A source within the club, however, told Reuters that Galtier's annoyance stemmed from the fact that PSG have been negotiating with French train operator SNCF for six months but the company has refused to organize night trains for return trips after matches.

The controversy started on Sunday when a senior SNCF official tweeted: "Paris-Nantes is less than two hours by TGV (high speed train). I renew my proposal of a TGV offer adapted to your specifications, for our common interest: security, speed, services and eco-mobility."

The use of private jets has been a much-discussed topic both in France and globally this summer, with social media users tracking — and criticizing — their use amid a series of heatwaves, droughts and floods triggered by climate change.

"I love Mbappe, we can all have the giggles at the least opportune moment and it really was the least opportune moment," Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told BFM TV.



First-half goals from Marco Reus and Raphael Guerreiro had the hosts cruising, with 19-year-old England international Jude Bellingham delivering a late third.

Scottish champions Celtic were left to rue not making the most of a bright start against Real in Glasgow as Callum McGregor rattled the post before the Spanish giants made their experience count.

Vinicius Junior, who grabbed the winning goal in last season's final, opening the scoring on 56 minutes and Luka Modric soon doubled the advantage.

Eden Hazard, who came on for the ailing Benzema, netted his first goal for the club since January to seal victory.

Shakhtar Donetsk romped to a memorable 4-1 win over RB Leipzig in Germany in the other Group F game.

Shakhtar, who have not played in their home town since 2014, did not have any competitive matches this year until August 23 due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

They have lost multiple key players since as FIFA allowed foreign players and coaches to suspend their contracts and leave the club.

Marian Shved scored twice on his full debut either side of Mohamed Simakan's equaliser. Mykhaylo Mudryk and Lassina Traore made sure of the win for Shakhtar.

Chelsea made a miserable start to their Champions League campaign as Dinamo Zagreb ruined Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's debut.

Thomas Tuchel's side were expected to cruise through Group E after being drawn with Dinamo, Red Bull Salzburg and AC Milan.

But their task might not be so simple after Mislav Orsic's first-half strike punished the Blues for another sloppy display.

Having spent £250 million (\$280 million) on new signings since the end of last season, Tuchel is under pressure to deliver silverware in return for that huge investment.

Italian champions Milan began with a 1-1 draw at Salzburg as Alexis Saelemaekers cancelled out Noah Okafor's opener for the hosts.



Messi Tipped For Return To Barcelona

MADRID (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi has been tipped to return to Barcelona next summer, with ex-teammate Carles Puyol suggesting "it's not too late" for the superstar to rejoin the Catalan club from PSG.

Messi reluctantly left Barca last summer due to the financial peril engulfing the club and opted to join the likes of former Camp Nou teammate Neymar and World Cup winner Kylian Mbappe in Paris on a mega-deal.

The Argentine struggled somewhat during his first year in France, scoring just 11 goals in 34 appearances and failing to help his new side reach their stated goal of finally winning the Champions League, but the early signs this term are promising - with his six assists the joint-highest of any player in Europe's top five leagues and three goals to boot.

However, his PSG contract runs out next summer and, given the emotional way he left Barca last year, Puyol believes a Camp Nou comeback could be on the cards.

"It's not too late for a Leo Messi return," Puyol said, via Goal. "He has one year left in his contract and many things can happen in that time. It depends on [Barcelona boss] Xavi and Leo, but he will always be welcomed at Barca."

Marcelo Gets Rapturous Reception at Olympiakos



"I am very happy and satisfied. And my family too. I hope to be here and help the team

ATHENS (Dispatches) - More than 20,000 Olympiakos supporters welcomed Brazilian star Marcelo at their stadium as the Greek champions rolled out the red carpet for the 34-year-old left-back.

Marcelo has joined Olympiakos as a free agent after Real Madrid brought down the curtain on his 16 years at the club.

with great dedication," the five-time Champions League winner told the crowd attending his presentation.

The 58-times capped Marcelo is the most successful player in Real's history being part of teams that won 25 trophies, but he only managed seven starts for them last term.

Olympiakos failed to make it into the Champions League group stage this season and will contest the Europa League instead, facing French side Nantes first in Group G on Thursday.

Marcelo began his career at Fluminense before moving to Real aged 18. He played for Brazil at both the 2014 and 2018 World Cup.

Joshua Accepts Fury Challenge

LONDON (Dispatches) - Anthony Joshua said he would be ready to fight world champion Tyson Fury in December after he was issued a public challenge to fight a 'Battle of Britain' for the WBC heavyweight boxing belt.

Joshua, 32, suffered a second straight loss to Ukraine's WBA, WBO, IBF and IBO champion Oleksandr Usyk in a title rematch in Saudi Arabia last month and has said he wants to return to the ring before the end of the year.

Fury announced last April that he was fulfilling a promise to his wife to retire but has subsequently said he will fight again.

"I think you've all heard that I am going to be fighting soon within the next few months," Fury said in a video directed at the former champion on social media.

"Anthony Joshua, I know you've just lost a fight to Usyk and you're bout-less at the moment, and I'd like to give you an opportunity to fight me for the WBC heavyweight championship of the world and the lineal championship in the next few months.

"You're coming off a 12-round fight, so you're match fit, you're ready. I'm giving you a few months' notice," added the 34-year-old.

Usyk said after the fight in Jeddah that he was only interested in a bout with Fury but media reports have said he will not fight again this year in order to rest and spend time with his family.

"If you're interested I'll send you the date over and we can rumble," Fury told Joshua in the video.

"A Battle of Britain for the WBC heavyweight championship of the world. Let me know if you're interested, if not I will select another opponent." Joshua responded saying he would be ready to fight if Fury stuck to his word.



Nadal Stunned by Tiafoe at US Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal fell to his earliest US Open loss in six years when he was knocked out by Frances Tiafoe.

Four-time US Open champion Nadal, bidding for a 23rd Grand Slam title, lost 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in the last-16 to 26th-ranked Tiafoe.

The American's free-swinging performance conjured up 18 aces and 49 winners past a sluggish Nadal.

For Australian and French Open champion Nadal, it was a first Grand Slam loss of 2022 after an abdominal strain forced him to forfeit his Wimbledon semi-final.

His defeat came just a day after world number one and defending champion Daniil Medvedev was knocked out also in the fourth round by Nick Kyrgios.

"I wasn't able to push him back. Tennis is a sport of positions a lot of the time," said 36-year-old Nadal.

"You need to be very quick and very young. I am not in that moment anymore," Nadal added: "I was not able to cause great damage. He was better than me." Tiafoe, 24, will face Andrey Rublev, who he defeated over five sets in the third round in 2021, for a place in the semi-finals.

"I don't know what to say, I'm so happy. He's one of the greatest of all time and I played unbelievable tennis today," said Tiafoe who had only previously reached one Slam quarter-final in Australia in 2019.

"Something special happened today. Honestly when I first came on the scene I wasn't ready for it mentally and mature enough.

"I've been able to develop and I have a great team around me. With you guys, it's been great." Seventh seed Rublev shrugged off a rain delay to breeze past Cameron Norrie and reach the quarter-finals for the third time with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 win.

