

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **144,319** With **18** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Between the Demining Centers Of the Islamic Republic of Iran And the Republic of Armenia Was Signed on Monday

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Iran Opens UN Fight to Free Billions Frozen in U.S.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran took the U.S. to the Hague-based ICJ in 2016 after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered some \$2 billion in Iranian assets to be frozen.

Iran opened its legal battle before the UN's top court on Monday to unfreeze billions of dollars in U.S. assets, which Washington says must go to victims of terrorist attacks blamed on Tehran.

The case before the International Court of Justice comes as hopes fade of reviving a landmark deal -- which former U.S. president Donald Trump withdrew from in 2018 -- that sought to tame Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Tehran took Washington to the Hague-based ICJ in 2016 after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered some \$2 billion in Iranian assets to be frozen, ordering the cash to go to survivors and relatives of attacks blamed on the Islamic republic.

These included the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut which killed 299 people including 241 U.S. soldiers, and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia which left 19 dead.

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IAEA Resorting to Zionist Regimes' Baseless Accusations

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has resorted to the Zionists sources leveling unfounded allegations against Iran.

The Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami made the remarks in a televised interview, adding that the West and Zionists have repeatedly leveled allegations against Iran's nuclear industry over 20 years ago.

The series of anti-Iran measures have been taken by the enemies, particularly by the Zionists, over the said period in the international entities such as United Nations Security Council and the IAEA, he underlined.

The taken measures have led to imposing heavy sanctions against Iran, he further noted.

It is strange that an international organization that operates under the supervision of the United Nations follows in the footsteps of the anti-Iranian group whose hands are stained with the blood of thousands of Iranians, he pointed out.

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President Says Deal Without Guarantees "Meaningless"



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi said ahead of his travel to New York to participate in the 77th United Nations General Assembly that a deal without guarantees was meaningless for Iran because of the United States broke its promises.

In an interview with CBS 60 Minutes' Lesley Stahl on Sunday night, Raisi said: If it's a good deal and fair deal, we would be serious about reaching an agreement. It needs to be lasting. There needs to be guarantees. If there were a guarantee, then the Americans could not withdraw from the deal.

Raisi said: You see, the Americans broke their promises. They did it unilaterally. They said that, "I am out of the deal." Now making promises is becoming meaningless.

Asked about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for Iran, the president said: Like in medicine, agriculture, oil, gas. "We have responded to these claims several times. They are baseless. The Islamic Republic of Iran has said many times that possessing nuclear weapons has no place in our doctrine," the Iranian president noted when asked by Stahl on the allegations that Iran has been working on nuclear weapons.

On the difference between the Trump administration and the Biden administration in Iran's view, President Raisi said: The new administration in the U.S., they claim that they are different from the Trump administration. They have said it in their messages to us. But we haven't witnessed any changes in reality. The sanctions are very tyrannical. This is a tyranny against the people of Iran. It is important to us to have the sanctions lifted.

When asked about American citizens detained in Iran, Raisi replied: There are Iranian nationals also imprisoned inside the U.S. These people are only in there because they simply tried to circumvent sanctions. And the Americans, we have told them that we can talk to them about this. It can be conducted separately from the nuclear talks. It can be done between the two countries. It is a humanitarian issue. This can be negotiated.

"No," Raisi said about the possibility of a meeting between him and US President Joe Biden in New York, adding: I don't think that such a meeting would happen. I don't believe having a meeting or a talk with him will be beneficial.

"Do you believe the Holocaust happened," Stahl asked the president and he answered: Look... Historical events should be investigated by researchers and historians. There are some signs that it happened. If so, they should allow it to be investigated and researched.

"You see, the people of Palestine are the reality. This is the right of the people of Palestine who were forced to leave their houses and motherland. The Americans are supporting this false regime there to take root and to be established there," Raisi noted.

On the assassination of the General Qassem Soleimani by the U.S. army, the Iranian president said: What the then American government did, by the direct order of Trump himself, to assassinate Mr. Qassem Soleimani, this was a heinous crime. We want justice to be served. We are not going to forget about this.

When asked if this "justice" meant an answer assassination, Raisi underlined: That's the type of the actions that the Americans and Zionist regimes are doing in the world, we are not going to carry out the same actions.

Meanwhile on Monday and before departure for New York, President Raisi said he has no plans to meet with his American counterpart Joe Biden on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Raisi is to deliver a speech at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly later this week.

"There is no plan for talks or meetings with American rulers during the trip," Raisi said, dismissing speculations, for the second time since last week, about a meeting with Biden.

The trip, however, will include separate meetings with leaders of some countries, according to the president.

Referring his scheduled speech, he said he would openly defend the rights of the Iranian people and highlight U.S.-led acts of oppression against them.

He expressed hope that the trip would be fruitful for "our country and system and the Muslim and oppressed nations of the world."

Iran Non-Oil GDP Growth At 4.3% in Q1

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) excluding oil grew 4.3 percent in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 - June 21) compared to the same period last year, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

According to SCI data, the figure including oil increased 3.8 percent, IRIB reported.

The SCI put the average inflation rate in the three-month period at 40 percent, expecting the figure to reach 30 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023).

Back in June, SCI had put the country's GDP growth at 4.3 percent including oil, and at 3.5 percent excluding oil in the previous year.

As reported by the center, based on the fixed prices in the Iranian year 1390 (ended on March 19, 2012), the country's GDP stood at 7.569 quadrillion rials (about \$26.28 billion) including the oil sector, and at 6.511 quadrillion rials (about \$22.6 billion) excluding the oil sector in the past year, while the figures were 7.254 quadrillion rials (about \$25.18 billion) and 6.289 quadrillion rials (about \$21.83 billion), respectively, in 1399.

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Revival of JCPOA Meets Interest of All States

TEHRAN (MNA) - Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov considered the revival of the nuclear deal with Iran in the interest of all parties.

The negotiation process on reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program has some debatable issues but this document suits the interests of all countries, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on Monday.

"Some uncoordinated issues still remain there that need to be worked through. Undoubtedly, the JCPOA meets the interests of all states," the Kremlin official said, commenting on Washington's statement that, while the talks on the JCPOA hit a dead end, the revival of the deal suits US interests.

Sherman earlier claimed, "We're at a stalemate in the sense that Iran, in the latest round of negotiations, has given us back a pretty tough response, one that's unacceptable to us. We've sent back a message about what we believe is necessary and what are critical elements here. And this is in Iran's court."

The United States, under former president Donald Trump, abandoned the Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018 and reinstated unilateral sanctions that the agreement had lifted.

The talks to salvage the agreement kicked off in the Austrian capital city of Vienna in April last year, months after Joe Biden succeeded Trump, with the intention of examining Washington's seriousness in rejoining the deal and removing anti-Iran sanctions.

Despite notable progress, the U.S. indecisiveness and procrastination caused multiple interruptions in the marathon talks.

Iranian officials have, time and again, asserted that upon potentially lifting the sanctions, Washington should be able to guarantee that it would not return the bans again.

Iranian foreign minister recently said that an agreement is possible if the American side adopts a realistic approach towards the JCPOA negotiations.

108 Yemenis Killed by Mines, Cluster Bombs Since Truce

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A report says at least 108 Yemeni civilians have been killed by landmines, cluster bombs, and other fatal remnants of the Saudi-led war since April, when a UN-brokered truce came into effect in the impoverished Arab country.

The Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC), a human rights body based in the capital Sana'a, provided the information on Sunday.

As many as 216 others, it added, had also been wounded during the period by the same causes.

The coalition invaded Yemen in March 2015 to return a Riyadh-friendly government back to power. It has fallen short of the objective so far, while killing around 13,000 Yemenis and creating the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations-mediated ceasefire came into force on April 2, and has been extended twice ever since. Many reports, though, have blamed the invading coalition for numerous violations of the agreement.

The YEMAC said Yemen is in need of proper supplies that could help it carry out bomb disposal operations throughout the country.

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Agreements Reached in Uzbekistan Must Be Implemented

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Speaking about the achievements of his participation in recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization Conference, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that the good agreements in that visit with different countries must be implemented soon.

President Raisi who was speaking at his Sunday evening cabinet meeting referred to the grandeur of this year's great Arabaen rally, which he said was unique from many points of the view, including the number of its participants and the efforts made to provide fine services for them. He also said that the Stock Exchange Market and the foreign currency market are both in need of proper management to bring economic peace of mind for the people.

Nuclear Issues Might Be Discussed During President Visit to New York

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's senior diplomat says that there is no defined plan to discuss the sanctions-lifting negotiations during President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi's visit to the United States but does not rule out a possible meeting in this regard.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani briefed on the latest developments in Iran's foreign affairs and answered a number of questions raised by the correspondents.

Regarding the visit of Iranian President Raisi to New York to attend the UNGA meeting, Kanaani stated that Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs and Top Iranian negotiator in the Vienna talks Ali Bagheri Kani is accompanying president Raisi during his trip to the U.S.

Answering a question on the possibility of holding a meeting in New York regarding negotiations to lift sanctions, the senior Iranian diplomat stated, "There is no defined program to talk about sanctions lifting negotiations within the framework of this trip, but international meetings are a good opportunity for political meetings and marginal talks between the officials of countries and an opportunity to exchange views on bilateral, regional and multilateral and international issues of interest."

"I do not rule out the possibility that there will be talks on the nuclear issue and sanctions lifting negotiations on the sidelines of the meeting," he continued, saying that Iran naturally uses every opportunity to express its views on issues of mutual and international interest.

Saying that Iran has never left the negotiation table and considers negotiations as a proper, logical, and reasonable way to resolve disputes, Kanaani emphasized, "Iran will use every opportunity to express its constructive and rational views."

He added that the UN General Assembly is one of the opportunities for Iran in this regard. In response to the question over the possibility of holding a meeting between Iran's foreign minister and Bagheri and the U.S. officials in New York, Kanaani cited, "We will not have any bilateral dialogue with the U.S. officials in New York, and the president clearly and transparently expressed Iran's point of view."

He added that regarding sanctions lifting negotiations, communication and contacts continue through the European Union coordinator, and any developments in this field will take place within this framework.

"Bagheri's trip has nothing to do with the bilateral dialogue with US officials on the nuclear issue or any other issues," the senior diplomat stressed.

Speaking about the Azerbaijan-Armenia recent escalation of tensions, Kanaani stressed, "The frank and clear position of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the developments in the South Caucasus region has been officially expressed many times at different levels and there is no ambiguity."



"Unfortunately, since Tuesday of last week, we witnessed the beginning of new border conflicts between the two countries of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia, which has led to the death and injury of a large number of both sides. Based on the neighborhood policy and trying to help constructively to resolve regional crises, Iran started political efforts as soon as possible," he noted.

The senior Iranian diplomat added that the Prime Minister of Armenia had a conversation with the President of Iran and during which President Raisi expressed the views and positions of Iran regarding the issue and conveyed his political recommendations to the Armenian side.

He added that the two top diplomats of Iran and Azerbaijan also held a telephone conversation and discussed the issue.

"As before, Iran, which had not spared any help to end the conflicts since the beginning of the crisis, acted quickly and tried to establish a ceasefire and return peace to the borders of the two countries with diplomatic efforts. Iran's principled positions are clear and we believe in the necessity of using political approaches and solutions to end conflicts and reduce tension and enter into political dialogues to resolve the differences between the two countries," Kanaani continued.

Answering another question over the resumption of relations between Hamas and Syria and the role of Iran and Hezbollah in this regard, the Iranian foreign ministry spokesman noted that the Syrian government was a good and warm host for Palestinian Resistance groups and currents for many years, and as a result of the developments of the past years, unfortunately, the long-standing relations between Hamas and the Syrian government was also damaged.

He went on to say that developments of recent years showed that the main threat to the peace, stability and security of all regional parties, including Syria, and to all parties in the region who believe in the necessity of convergence to maintain peace and stability, is the Zionist regime.

Kanaani also added that with the efforts of regional parties and those interested in peace, stability and security in the region, including Iran and Hezbollah, and the positive efforts of Russia, the warming of Syria's relations with Hamas can be witnessed.

"Convergence between the currents of resistance can help to strengthen the peace and stability and security of the region," he stressed.

VP for Science, Technology Steps Down

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi has accepted the resignation by his vice president for science and technology Sorena Sattari after holding the position for nine years since the previous administration.



Sorena Sattari, the son of martyred commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Air Force Mansour Sattari, is a mechanical engineering expert and has held various posts related to scientific fields.

President Raisi designated Ruhollah Dehghani Firoozabadi, an aerospace engineering professor at Tehran-based Sharif University of Technology, for the post.

In a decree, President Raisi praised Dehghani Firoozabadi as a highly qualified figure and wished him success.

China-Iran Direct Railway To Be Launched Soon

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Managing Director of the Road and Urban Development Ministry for commercialization affairs Amin Tarfa'a said: We are trying to launch a direct railway from China to Iran, which is a positive sign in the framework of supporting and reinforcing membership in the Shanghai Organization in the transit and transportation sector.

Tarfa'a said Membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization can pave the ground for creating economic stickiness and increasing trade capacity between countries;

When the capacity of trade between countries increases, transportation and transit will also experience growth, he added.

In line with increasing cooperation with China, we are trying to revive the direct railway from China to Iran, which starts from Shanghai, he stated.

He called for removing obstacles on trade with other countries aiming to have positive effect on transit.

Russian Business Delegation in Tehran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran was to a large delegation of representatives from Russian businesses and companies on September 19 days after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the planned visit in a meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Iran's trade ministry (MIMT) spokesman said on Sunday that a delegation of 100 people representing 65 Russian companies will hold three days of talks with Iranian counterparts in Tehran starting Monday.

Qalibaf said more than 750 face-to-face meetings have been planned between Iranian and Russian businesses over the visit.

He said the Russian delegation visiting Tehran will comprise of representatives from various companies, including manufacturers of food products, agricultural machinery, pharmaceuticals and leading suppliers of communication equipment.

The MIMT official said Russia plans to dispatch at least 10 other business delegations to Iran until the end of this year.

Qalibaf said members of provincial chambers of commerce from across Iran will attend the planned meetings with the Russian delegation.

Tehran Serious About Nuclear Deal That Secures National Interests



TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian foreign minister says Tehran is serious about reaching a nuclear deal with the world powers, adding Tehran's "relations with the whole world have improved" since the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi took office.

Hossein Amirabdollahian in an article in the government's official newspaper Iran wrote that Tehran seeks an agreement that guarantees its economic benefits and has been the party that has tabled the largest number of initiatives during the Vienna talks.

He said the ball is in the court of the US and it is for Washington to make a political decision to bring the negotiations to fruition and pave the way for an agreement in the near future.

The U.S. is yet to respond to Iran's latest proposals on the draft text of the agreement to revive the nuclear deal.

Tehran's call for guarantees that the U.S. will not withdraw from the deal again and will not re-impose anti-Iran sanctions is reportedly a key bone of contention between the two sides.

Also on relations between Iran and the world countries, Amirabdollahian added the current administration has "made a new choice" based on a "correct" understanding of the international order to expand its relations with all countries around the world, while giving priority to the "look to Asia" and "focus on neighborliness".

Iran Not Allow Slightest Action Against Country Independence

TEHRAN (MNA) - Army commander said that the Islamic Republic has hoisted the flag of independence of the country in the world and has not allowed any actions against the country's independence.

Iran's Army Commander Major General Seyyed Abdolrahim Mousavi made the remarks at the closing ceremony of a training course at the army university in Tehran on Monday.

He pointed to the massive Arabaen marches this year and extended his gratitude to the Law Enforcement servicemen's role, whose military students were also part of the army-run training course, in magnificently holding the annual religious event.

"According to the constitution, the army of the Islamic Republic has the duty to protect the independence and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said, adding, "Today, the sacred establishment of the



Islamic Republic of Iran, thanks to the blood of the martyrs including the martyrs from the time of the Holy Defense (8-year defense against Saddam regime of Iraq), is moving forward and getting stronger and stronger and more powerful as time passes. This establishment has hoisted the flag of our country's independence in the world and has not allowed the enemy to take the smallest action against the country's independence."

Major General Mousavi further said, "In spite of all the threats and hostile actions and the imposed eight-year war and threats following the Iraqi-imposed war exercised by the enemies of the Islamic Revolution, not an iota of the holy land of this country has been handed over to the enemies, and as the territorial integrity of this country has been preserved to date, it will be protected from now on as well."

President Orders Thorough Probe Into Amini's Case

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says he has ordered a thorough probe into the case of a young woman who collapsed at a police station last Tuesday and died three days later after she was transferred to a hospital in the Iranian capital.

In a Sunday phone call, the Iranian president condoled with the family members of the 22-year-old woman, identified as Mahsa Amini.

"I was informed of this incident when I was on a trip in Uzbekistan [to attend the latest Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit]. I immediately ordered my colleagues [in the administration] to investigate this as a special case," he told Amini's family.

Raisi assured the family of the deceased woman that every effort will be made to protect her rights.

"Rest assured that I will demand the concerned state bodies to follow up on this case until all its aspects come into the light," he added.

Immediately after Amini's death on Friday, Raisi ordered Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi to investigate the details of the incident with "urgency and precision" and to submit a report on the results. A special committee has been established to investigate different aspects of Amini's death.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Vahidi said the country's forensic experts are looking into the case.

"Forensic examinations are underway. These examinations are thorough, painstaking and comprehensive. Therefore, we must wait until forensic experts reach a conclusion and present their final opinion," the minister added.

Tehran, Brasilia Mull Over Expanding Agricultural Cooperation

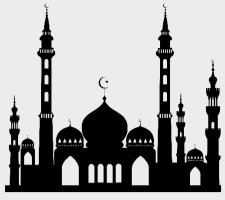
TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Ambassador to Brazil and the President of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) Celso Moretti discussed expanding cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on practical ways to expand cooperation between Iran and Brazil in the field of agriculture.

They also reviewed the latest status of Iran-Brazil joint projects in various sectors, including soybeans and fisheries, as well as new agricultural technologies.

Cooperation between the knowledge-based companies of the two countries and using modern technologies in the field of agriculture was one of the most important issues discussed in this meeting. Describing agriculture as the basis of the relations between the two countries, the Iranian envoy expressed Iran's readiness to use Brazil's extensive research capacities in various fields of agriculture.

Expansion of cooperation and exchange of experience with Iran is one of the priorities of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, Moretti said for his part.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:57
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:22
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:27
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:51

56. He said, "Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who created them (from nothing): and I am a witness to this (Truth).
57. "And by Allah, I have a plan for your idols - after ye go away and turn your backs"..

Surah 21. The Prophets (56 - 57)

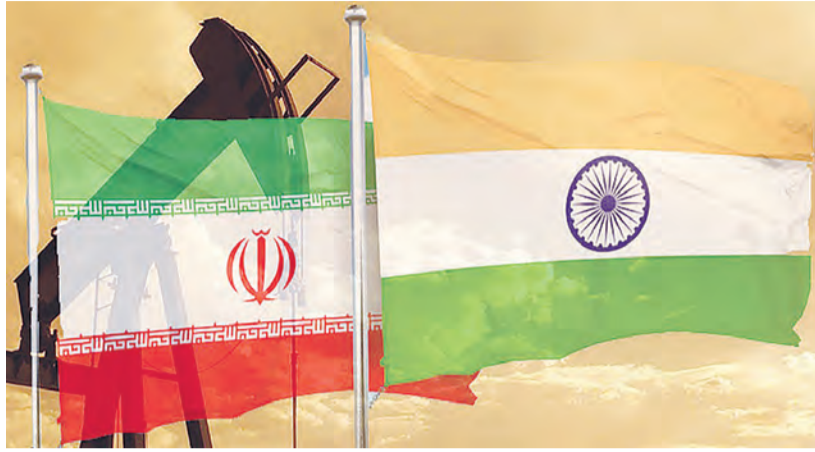
India's Policy Is To Buy Cheap Oil

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Former Iran's Ambassador to India says that India is not ready to risk its economic interests for the sake of Iran or any country but in case sanctions against Iran are lifted, it will try to get closer to Iran and will resume its oil imports from Iran.

Speaking to ILNA, Mr. Mohammad Hussein Bani Asadi touched upon Iran's oil exchanges with India and said that since almost 2020, India has fully stopped buying Iran crude oil and it had no official oil purchase from Iran. He added that India has not had any direct imports of oil and other oil products from Iran but since the outbreak of Russia-Ukraine war and restriction in the market and sanctions on Russia, India has become one of Russia's oil market and since energy is Achilles' Heel of India, this country seeks diversity in receiving energy from different sources. He went on to say that India first seeks diversifying sources for receiving energy and secondly it seeks buying cheap oil and it means it buys from every country selling with cheaper price. And therefore, New Delhi will buy from it and welcome it even it is ready to buy cheaper oil from Chinese intermediaries, he added.

Bani Asadi noted that now Russia has provided an occasion for Indians and it gives



more discount while Russia has had good trade and military ties with India since its independence. He added that since the collapse of USSR, India has tried to cut its independence on Russian arms and now Israel is India's major arms supplier to but despite all ups and downs, cooperation of India and Russia is very vast and Russia's oil has created new opportunity for this country to broaden ties with India.

The former ambassador to New Delhi said that since India seeks cheaper oil, it can resume buying oil from Iran in case the sanctions against Iran are removed but it is very difficult for Iran to regain Indian's market because some of the refineries have changed their feeding systems.

Before former U.S. President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions, Iran was the third oil supplier to India and it exported 23.9m tons of crude in 2018-9 but after the sanctions were reimposed, the oil exports to India came to a halt.

South Pars Daily Gas Production At About 615 mcm

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Average daily production of natural gas in Iran's South Pars gas field has stood at 614.7 million cubic meters (mcm) during the first five months of the current



Iranian calendar year (March 21 – August 22), the managing director of South Pars Gas Company (SPGC) said.

Ahmad Bahoush made the remarks in a meeting of SPGC managers with the head of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) which is in charge of the offshore section of the field, Shana reported.

During the meeting, the officials discussed the necessary measures that should be taken to prepare the complex for a sustained supply of gas during the cold season.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

SPGC is in charge of the refineries of the complex on shore, while POGC operates the platforms of the field offshore.

Earlier this year, a report published by the Oil Ministry's Planning Directorate showed that the capacity of Iran's daily natural gas production exceeded 1,000 mcm in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to the report, the country's natural gas production capacity registered the mentioned record for the first time in the previous year when gas production from the South Pars gas field increased by more than four percent compared to the preceding year (1399).

South Pars field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Iran, Qatar Sign World's Largest Saffron Trade Agreement

TEHRAN (MNA) – The largest trade agreement in the field of saffron between Iran and Qatar was signed in the presence of political and economic figures of the two countries.

The agreement was reached during the meeting of Qatari Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari with Iran's Ambassador to Doha Hamidreza Dehghani.

In the meeting, which was attended by some officials and businessmen of the two countries, Qatar's finance minister emphasized his country's support for trade relations with Iran and added that Qatar is ready to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of saffron processing according to international standards.

The Iranian ambassador, for his part, called for the development of Tehran-Doha economic relations.

Following this meeting, a commercial contract for the transfer and processing of 200 tons of Iranian saffron with an initial value of 300 million dollars was concluded between Iranian and Qatari businessmen.

According to this contract, the first shipment of Iranian saffron will be sent to Qatar on October 1, 2022.

North-South Corridor to Develop Iran, Russia Economies

TABRIZ (IRNA) - The president of Tatarstan Republic of Russian Federation said that the north-south corridor will lead to development of the Iran-Russia economic transactions.

President Rustam Minnikhanov who was speaking at an economic meeting between Tatarstan Republic and East Azarbaijan province, said that the north-south corridor needs to be activated as soon as possible and Tatarstan welcomes joining it, to transfer its various types of export products, import many types of goods from Iran, and from other countries around the globe through Iran.

He said that one of the important privileges of the north-south corridor is facilitating the imports and exports of all kinds of good through the northern parts of Iran and the southern parts of Russia, and this will not only benefit Iran and Russia, but can be of great importance for their neighboring countries, as well.

Minnikhanov said that the main objective of his visit of Tabriz is expansion of trade transactions between Kazan and Tabriz, expressing hope that by supporting the various industrial and commercial private sector companies the two countries will be able to launch important joint project.

The governor of East Azarbaijan, too, in the meeting that the capacities and capabilities of the economic, trade, commercial, cultural and industrial sectors are very high, and expansion of Tabriz-Kazan relations in



the framework of the major Tehran-Moscow policies can act as the generating engine of those transactions.

Abedin Khorram said that economic relations will be the main axis of Tabriz-Kazan cooperation, as both Iran and Russia are under the tough conditions of

sanctions and in need of expansion of bilateral relations, that it's getting broader and stronger with the passage of each new day.

Meanwhile in the meeting, the chairman of the Tabriz Chamber of Commerce said that the volume of trade between Iran and Russia is not proportional to the history of bilateral relations.

Younes Jael said that due to the recent sanctions against Russia, it is surprising that Russian banks comply with sanctions against Iranian businessmen.

He urged the Iranian and Russian banks to be active in the field of rial-ruble exchange.

He added that Iran is a valuable opportunity for Russia thanks to its access to the Middle East and North Africa.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he highlighted the role of the Tabriz Chamber of Commerce in forming a suitable joint working group to be active in Russian Federation exports.

These capacities can be used for exporting Russian goods to Iran's neighboring states like Pakistan and Iraq, Jael said.

He also stressed the importance of launching the Anzali- Makhachkala- Astrakhan shipping line.

Half of Iran's Passenger Planes Not Operational

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - An official of Iran's air travel services said on Sunday that the reason behind a lack of plane tickets is that more than half of the country's aircraft are grounded.

Omid Khansari, a member of the board of directors of the southwestern province of Khuzestan's Air Travel and Tourism Services, told ISNA that "Most of the planes owned by the airlines are grounded because they need parts and it is impossible to provide them due to the sanctions."

He added that only about 120 to 130 airplanes out of about 340 airplanes owned by the airlines are operational.

Confirming the same data, Alireza Pakfetrat, the representative of Shiraz in parliament, said in August that

due to sanctions the quantity and quality of Iran's aviation industry are decreasing day by day, noting that the number of passenger planes that remain operational have decreased as well as the number of flights in the country.

Alireza Barkhor, the deputy chairman of the Association of Iranian Airlines, also said last year that more than 50 percent of passenger planes are not working due to lack of spare parts, particularly engines.

Meanwhile on Sunday the pilot of a Sukhoi Su-22 fighter jet of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) ejected safely after his plane had an accident in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan.

The Russian-made fighter-bomber belonging to the IRGC Aerospace Force faced a technical failure on Sunday evening when it was conducting

an operation in the southern province.

The military plane was flown to non-residential areas thanks to the pilot's skilled response, a statement said.

The pilot landed safely after activating the ejection seat system, it added.

A similar accident involving the same fighter jet happened in the province of Fars in August.

Iran to Become SCO's Transit Gateway

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Chairman of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce said that Islamic Republic of Iran will become the transit gateway of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Majidreza Hariri made the comments in an interview with Iranian media on Sunday afternoon and stated that the geographical location of Iran lays the ground for considering Iran as a western gate of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and can be a transit route connecting member countries of the Organization.

Stating that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established with the military and security goals, he put the current number of its members at eight.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Hariri pointed to the trade relations of the member countries of SCO, and noted that Russia and China do their trade exchanges with their national currency, so that Iran can take advantage of this method and opportunity, because, this Organization provides a lot of potentials to create opportunities for cooperation.

India and China are recognized as highly energy-consuming countries, and Iran and Russia possess the largest fossil fuel reserves which will make energy transactions easier by establishing cooperation through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Hariri emphasized.

In addition, Russia and China have bilateral exchanges with each other, which provides the basis for the development of relations between the member countries, the Chairman of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce added.

CBI Says Loan-to-Deposit Ratio Rose 0.1% to 81.1% in August

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Central Bank of Iran (CBI) figures show the ratio of deposits that Iranian commercial banks lent out to customers rose slightly in the calendar month to late August to reach 81.1%.

CBI said on Sunday that the loan-to-deposit ratio in Iran had risen 0.1% year on year in August, adding that the figure was an increase of 2.1% against the end of the last Iranian calendar year in late March.

However, the top bank said the ratio of deposits that commercial banks lent out in August in the province of Tehran, where the capital is located, was 90.1%. It reported the highest regional loan-to-deposit ratio in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, a small province located in southwest of Iran.

Total deposits rose 35.5% year on year in August to reach 61,512 trillion rials (\$193.7 billion) while total loans increased by 34.9% over the same period to reach 44,850 trillion rials (\$141.25 billion), showed CBI figures.

Banks in the province of Tehran accounted for more than 53% of the deposits and nearly 61% of the loans in the calendar month to late August, said the CBI, adding that the large share was because big companies and government firms are headquartered in the capital city.

Thousands Take Part in Anti-Gov't Protest in Moldova

CHISINAU (Dispatches) - At least 5,000 people rallied in Moldova's capital on Sunday, demanding the resignation of the government and pro-Western President Maia Sandu, blaming them for high inflation and rising energy prices.

Moldova buys its gas from the Russian gas giant Gazprom under a contract that was drawn up last year. The price fluctuates monthly and is calculated from the spot price for gas and oil depending on the season. Spot prices have soared this year.

"Moldova is now in clinical death, to which the current authorities have brought it," said Dinu Turcanu, a politician from an opposition party of Ilan Shor, a businessman convicted of fraud in connection with a \$1 billion bank scandal.



UK Claims Russia Widens Strikes On Ukrainian Civilian Targets



IZIUM (Dispatches) - Russia has widened its strikes on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure in the past week following setbacks on the battlefield and is likely to expand its target range further, Britain said on Sunday.

Ukrainians who returned to the northeastern area retaken in Kyiv's lightning advance earlier this month were searching for their dead while Russian artillery and air strikes kept pounding targets across Ukraine's east.

Five civilians were killed in Russian attacks in the eastern Donetsk region over the past day and in Nikopol, further west, several dozen residential buildings, gas pipelines and power lines were hit, regional governors said on Sunday.

Britain's defense ministry said Russian strikes at civilian infrastructure, including a power grid and a dam, have intensified over the past seven days.

"As it faces setbacks on the front lines, Russia has likely extended the locations it is prepared to strike in an attempt to directly undermine the morale of the Ukrainian people and government," it said in an intelligence update.

On Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in a video address that authorities had found a mass grave containing the bodies of 17 soldiers in Iziyum, some of which he said bore signs of torture.

Residents of Iziyum have been searching for dead relatives at a forest grave site where emergency workers began exhuming bodies last week. The causes of death for those at the grave site have not yet been established, although residents say some died in an air strike.

Ukrainian officials said last week they had found 440 bodies in the woodlands near Iziyum. They said most of the dead were civilians and the causes of death had not been established.

The Kremlin has not commented on the discovery of the graves, but in the past Moscow has repeatedly denied deliberately attacking civilians or committing atrocities.

Making his way between graves and trees at the forest site where exhumations were underway, Volodymyr Kolesnyk was trying to match numbers written on wooden crosses with names on a neatly handwritten list to locate relatives who he said died in an air strike in the early days of the war. Kolesnyk said he got the list from a local funeral company that dug the graves.

"They buried the bodies in bags, without coffins, without anything. I was not allowed here at first. They (Russians) said it was mined and asked to wait," he told Reuters on Saturday.

Oleksandr Ilienko, the chief of the prosecutor's office for the Kharkiv region, told Reuters at the site on Friday: "One of the bodies (found) has evidence of a ligature pattern and a rope around the neck, tied hands," adding that there were signs of violent death causes for other bodies but they would undergo forensic examination.

Iziyum's mayor said on Sunday that work at the site would continue for another two weeks.

"The exhumation is underway, the graves are being dug up and all the remains are being transported to Kharkiv," Valery Marchenko told state television.

In the village of Kozacha Lopan, some 45 km (30 miles) north of Kharkiv and just some 5 km (3 miles) from the Russian border, a Reuters reporter was taken to a squalid cellar with rooms fitted with iron bars, which local officials said had served as a makeshift prison during the occupation. Local district mayor Vyacheslav Zadorenko said the rooms had been used as a "torture cellar" to detain civilians. Reuters was unable to verify those accounts.

Elsewhere in the region, residents of towns recaptured after six months of Russian occupation, were returning with a mixture of joy and trepidation.

Strong Earthquake Hits Southeastern Taiwan

TAIPEI (Dispatches) - A 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit the sparsely populated southeastern part of Taiwan on Sunday, the island's weather bureau said, derailing train carriages, causing a convenience store to collapse and trapping hundreds on mountain roads.

The weather bureau said the epicentre was in Taitung county, and followed a 6.4 magnitude temblor on Saturday evening in the same area, which caused no casualties.

The U.S. Geological Survey measured Sunday's quake at a magnitude 7.2 and at a depth of 10 km (six miles).



Azerbaijan Slams Pelosi's Unfair Comments

BAKU (Dispatches) - Azerbaijan condemned U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for saying that Baku had started a border conflict with Armenia during her visit to Yerevan. Pelosi's remarks that Azerbaijan had conducted an "illegal" assault on Armenia's sovereignty was "unsubstantiated and unfair" and dealt a serious blow to peace efforts, said Azerbaijan.

"The unsubstantiated and unfair accusations leveled by Pelosi against Azerbaijan are unacceptable," Azerbaijan's foreign ministry said in a statement. "Pelosi is known as a pro-Armenian politician," the statement added.

"This is a serious blow to the efforts to normalize relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan," said the foreign ministry. Azerbaijan repeated its position that the recent fighting was the result of "a large-scale military provocation" by Armenia, a narrative rejected by Armenia.

Earlier Sunday, Pelosi condemned what she described as an "illegal" attack by Azerbaijan on Armenia that sparked the worst fighting since their 2020 war.

Baku and Yerevan have accused each other of initiating the border clashes on Tuesday, which claimed the lives of more than 200 people.

"We strongly condemn those attacks — on behalf of Congress — which threaten (the) prospects of the much-needed peace agreement," Pelosi told a news conference in Yerevan.

"Armenia has particular importance to us because of the focus on security following an illegal and deadly attack by Azerbaijan on the Armenian territory."

Pelosi said the attack was an "assault on (the) sovereignty of Armenia".

Hostilities between the Caucasus arch foes ended overnight on Thursday thanks to mediation by the U.S., Armenian parliament speaker Alen Simonyan said.



Kyrgyz-Tajik Border Conflict Death Toll Rises to 81

BISHKEK (Dispatches) - Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan said on Sunday the death toll from their border conflict had risen to 81 people, as a fragile ceasefire held between two Central Asian nations for a second day and their mutual ally Russia urged a de-escalation.

The former Soviet republics clashed over a border dispute on Sept. 14-16, accusing each other of using tanks, mortars, rocket artillery and assault drones to attack outposts and nearby settlements.

Central Asian border issues largely stem from the Soviet era when Moscow tried to divide the region between groups whose settlements were often located amidst those of other ethnicities.

Kyrgyzstan on Sunday reported 46 deaths from the earlier fighting and has also said it evacuated about 137,000 people from the conflict area. The government declared Sept. 19 a day of mourning for the victims.

Kyrgyz media, which described the conflict as an invasion, reported on Sunday some of the evacuees have already started returning to their homes.

Tajikistan also reported its casualties on Sunday, saying that 35 people were killed. It has not reported any mass evacuations from the area.

Tajikistan's foreign ministry said Kyrgyzstan continued a media campaign against it and noted that Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov used the term "enemy" to refer to Tajikistan in his Saturday address.

The two sides agreed a ceasefire on Sept. 16 which has largely held up despite several alleged incidents of shelling.

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by telephone to Japarov and Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon on Sunday, the Kremlin said.

Putin urged the sides to prevent further escalation and to take measures to resolve the situation "exclusively by peaceful, political and diplomatic means as soon as possible", offering assistance, his office said in a statement.

Hurricane Fiona Barrels Toward Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN (Dispatches) - The powerful storm Fiona has strengthened into a hurricane as it barrels toward Puerto Rico, threatening to slam the U.S. territory with life-threatening flash floods and mudslides, according to the National Hurricane Center's latest update.

The storm, which has already been blamed for one death, was about 80 kilometers south of the city of Ponce with maximum sustained winds near 130 kilometers per hour, clearing the threshold for hurricane strength, the NHC said.

Torrential rains and mudslides were also forecast for the Dominican Republic as the storm progresses northwestward.

"On the forecast track, the center of Fiona will approach Puerto Rico this morning, and move near or over Puerto Rico this afternoon or evening," the NHC said in an update at 11:00 a.m. (1500 GMT).

U.S. President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for Puerto Rico on Sunday, a move that authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to coordinate

disaster relief operations and provide emergency protective measures.

Puerto Rico, a Caribbean island of 3.3 million people, could be hit by up to 25 inches (63.5 cm) of rain.

"These rains will produce life-threatening flash flooding and urban flooding across Puerto Rico and the eastern Dominican Republic, along with mudslides and landslides in areas of higher terrain," the NHC said.

Puerto Rico's grid remains fragile after Hurricane Maria in September 2017 caused the largest blackout in U.S. history. In that category 5 storm, 1.5 million customers lost electricity with 80% of power lines knocked out.

Authorities have opened about 80 shelters and closed beaches and casinos, and residents were urged to seek shelter.

The one death reported so far from Fiona was in the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, after heavy rains swept away his house in the Basse-Terre district, authorities said on Saturday.



EU Moves to Cut Hungary Funding Over Damaging Democracy



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union executive recommended suspending some 7.5 billion euros in funding for Hungary over corruption, the first such case in the 27-nation bloc under a new sanction meant to better protect the rule of law.

The EU introduced the new financial sanction two years ago precisely in response to what it says amounts to the undermining of democracy in Poland and Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orban subdued courts, media, NGOs and academia, as well as restricting the rights of migrants, gays and women during more than a decade in power.

"It's about breaches of the rule of law compromising the use and management of EU funds," said EU Budget Commissioner Johannes Hahn. "We cannot conclude that the EU budget is sufficiently protected."

He highlighted systemic irregularities in Hungary's public procurement laws, insufficient safeguards against conflicts of interest, weaknesses in effective prosecution and shortcomings in other anti-graft measures.

Hahn said the Commission was recommending the suspension of about a third of cohesion funds envisaged for Hungary from the bloc's shared budget for 2021-27 worth a total of 1.1 trillion euros.

The 7.5 billion euros in question amounts to 5% of the country's estimated 2022 GDP. EU countries now have up to three months to decide on the proposal.

Hahn said Hungary's latest promise to address EU criticisms was a significant step in the right direction but must still be translated into new laws and practical actions before the bloc would be reassured.

Development Minister Tibor Navracscics, in charge of negotiations with the EU, said Hungary would meet all 17 of its commitments made to the European Commission to stave off the loss of any EU funding.

"Hungary did not make commitments to befuddle the Commission," Navracscics told a news conference. "We have made commitments that we know can be implemented ... therefore, we will not be facing a loss of funds."

Orban's government proposed creating a new anti-graft agency in recent weeks as Budapest came under pressure to secure money for the ailing economy and forint, the worst-performing currency in the EU's east.

Spanish Islanders Struggle One Year After Volcanic Eruption



MADRID (Dispatches) - "Our plan now is... there are no plans," said a tearful Leticia Sanchez Garcia, a year after her house was buried under lava from a volcano that erupted on the Spanish island of La Palma.

After living with friends for months, the 34-year-old was finally able to move in May, along with her partner and three young children, into a prefabricated wooden house provided by the government.

Yet for her and many others on the tiny isle, part of the Canary Islands chain off Africa's northwest coast, life remains difficult.

On Monday, it will be a year to the day since the Tajogaite volcano -- previously known as Cumbre Vieja for the ridge on which it sits -- erupted.

A year on, Sanchez and others like her face an uncertain future.

Sanchez works as a geriatric nursing assistant, but her contract expires in December.

Her partner lost his job when the banana plantation where he worked was destroyed by the volcano. Now he is employed by the local government as a street sweeper but his contract too ends in December.

The family can stay in the three-bedroom house for one year for free.

"I am still in denial," she admitted, sitting on the patio of her new house in Los Llanos de Aridane, the economic centre of the island of around 83,000 people.

"I still think I will return one day."

From the patio, Garcia can see the volcano that upended her life and the mountain slope where her house once stood. But she avoids looking in that direction, she said.

She missed her "garden, her chickens, making plans with friends".

The volcano rumbled for 85 days, ejecting ash and rivers of lava that swallowed up more than a 1,000 homes.

It also destroyed schools, churches and health centres, cut off highways and suffocated the lush banana plantations that drive the island's economy.

So far, the government has provided more than 500 million euros (\$500 million) towards temporary housing, road repairs, clearing ash and financial support to people who lost their jobs.

But many locals complain that the pace of reconstruction is too slow.

Applications for public aid are complex, they say: craftsmen are often booked out, building materials scarce and construction permits too slow in coming.

So far, only five of the 121 prefabricated houses bought by the government have been allotted to people left homeless by the volcano, says the regional government.

Around 250 people whose homes were destroyed are still living in hotels, according to the Platform of Victims of the Volcano, which lobbies for those who lost their property.

Another 150 are staying with friends and family.

"No one died in the eruption," said the group's president, Juan Fernando Perez Martin, a 70-year-old former high school teacher who has polio.

"But some of us would rather be dead than suffer all these strong emotions, all these problems we are facing."

His house, which was adapted for his wheelchair, was buried under more than 20 metres (65 feet) of molten rock.

Frustrated by the delays in getting government aid, he took out a bank loan to buy a more modest house in the central town of El Paso and adapt it for his disability. He lives there with his Mexican wife.

One of the few items they were able to take when they fled their previous home was a portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which now features prominently in their kitchen.

Children, Women Hit By Disease in Pakistan's Stagnant Waters After Floods



KARACHI (Dispatches) - Children and women are becoming more vulnerable as tens of thousands of people suffer from infectious and water-borne diseases in flood-hit Pakistan, government data showed and UNICEF said on Friday, as the total death toll from the inundation surpassed 1,500.

As flood waters begin to drain away, which officials say may take two to six months in different areas, the flooded regions have become infested with diseases including malaria, dengue fever, diarrhoea and skin problems, the southern Sindh provincial government said in a report issued.

"Stagnant water is giving rise to the water-borne diseases," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in his address to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit being held in Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

"Children getting malaria and diarrhoea ... all kinds of diseases," he said, adding, "millions of people are living under open sky." Women and children in poor health and/or malnourished are particularly vulnerable to any diseases.

The Sindh report said more than 90,000 people were treated on Thursday alone in the province, which has been the hardest hit by the cataclysmic floods.

It confirmed 588 malaria cases with another 10,604 suspected cases, in addition to the 17,977 diarrhoea and 20,064 skin disease cases reported on Thursday. A total of 2.3 million patients have been treated since July 1 in the field and mobile hospitals set up in the flooded region.

Record monsoon rains in south and southwest Pakistan and glacial melt in northern areas triggered the flooding that has impacted nearly 33 million people in the South Asian nation of 220 million, sweeping away homes, crops, bridges, roads and livestock in damages estimated at \$30 billion.

The losses will slash the country's GDP growth to around 3% from the estimated target of 5% set out in the budget at a time when it had narrowly escaped defaulting on its debt amid a balance of payment crisis.

Pakistan was already reeling from economic blows when the floods hit, with its foreign reserves falling to as low as one month's worth of imports and its current account deficit widening.

The economy has yet to show any positive response to Islamabad resuming an IMF program that had been delayed since early this year. The Pakistani rupee has been tumbling and inflation has topped 27%.

The National Disaster Management Authority has reported 1,508 deaths due to the floods so far, including 536 children and 308 women.

Hundreds of thousands of people who have been displaced are in dire need of food, shelter, clean drinking water, toilets and medicines.

Many have been sleeping in the open by the side of elevated highways.

"I have been in flood-affected areas for the past two days. The situation for families is beyond bleak, and the stories I heard paint a desperate picture," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan.

"All of us on the ground see malnourished children battling diarrhoea and malaria, dengue fever, and many with painful skin conditions," he said in a statement.

He said a lot of the mothers were anaemic and malnourished themselves, and with very low-weight babies that are exhausted or ill and unable to breastfeed.

Millions of families are now living with little more than rags to protect themselves from the scorching sun as temperatures in some areas pass 40 degrees Celsius, Fadil said.

The UNHCR said an estimated 16 million children have been impacted, and at least 3.4 million girls and boys remain in need of immediate, lifesaving support.



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Ukraine Receives \$1.5b in New Financial Aid

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal thanked the United States for its support after Ukraine received a further \$1.5 billion in international financial assistance.

"The state budget of Ukraine received a grant of \$1.5 billion. This is the last tranche of \$4.5 billion aid from the United States from WorldBank Trust Fund," Shmyhal tweeted. He said the funds would be used to reimburse budget expenditure for pension payments and social assistance programs.



Tunisia Hikes Cooking Gas, Fuel Prices in Bid to Cut Subsidies

TUNIS (Dispatches) - Tunisia is raising the price of cooking gas cylinders by 14 percent and fuel by 3 percent as part of a plan to reduce energy subsidies, a policy change wanted by the country's international lenders.

The energy ministry on Saturday said the cooking gas price will increase to 8.80 dinars (\$2.75), the first raise in 12 years.

The petrol price will be raised on Tuesday to 2.40 dinars per litre, a 3 percent increase, the ministry said in a statement.

The rise in fuel prices is the fourth this year. Tunisia expects its budget deficit will expand to 9.7 percent of gross domestic product in 2022, up from a previously expected 6.7 percent, due to the stronger dollar and a sharp increase in grain and energy prices.

The North Africa country, suffering from its worst financial crisis, is trying to agree on a new financing program with the International Monetary Fund.

The energy balance deficit doubled to \$1.87bn in the first eight months of 2022 compared with \$910m last year, driven by the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Earlier this month, Hamish Kinnear, Middle East and North Africa analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, told Middle East Eye that Tunisia is one of the main countries in the region dependent on food and fuel imports and "exposed to high international prices".

At the time, he warned that Tunisia, widely seen as the epicentre of the Arab Spring, remains "vulnerable to civil unrest risk".

After a referendum vote on Tunisia's new constitution in July, plagued by a low turnout and a boycott from opposition groups, President Kais Saied consolidated his one-man rule, rolling back the country's democratic experiment.

"Political chaos [in Tunisia] is hampering efforts to secure economic aid from international financial institutions like the IMF, though any deal with the IMF is likely to include austerity measures that provoke further civil unrest," said Kinnear.

Meanwhile Tunisia expects to reach a deal with the International Monetary Fund in coming weeks on a loan of between \$2 billion and \$4 billion over three years, the central bank governor said on Sunday.

Tunisia, which is suffering its worst financial crisis, is seeking to secure an IMF loan to save public finances from collapse.

"The size is still under negotiation and I think it will be between \$2 billion and \$4 billion, we hope to reach a staff level deal in coming weeks," Marouan Abassi told Reuters.

The government and the powerful UGTT union last week signed a deal to boost public sector wages by 5%, a step that may ease social tensions. But they did not announce any further agreement on reforms needed for an IMF bailout.

Abassi said the wage deal was an important step for negotiations with the IMF and will give a clear view of wages' weight in GDP in coming years.

"It will give us a clear vision about the wage mass that is expected to decline in the coming years," he added.

Fitch Ratings said on Friday that Tunisia's wage agreement raises the likelihood of an IMF deal.

Euro Area Sees Annual 4% Rise in Q2 2022 Labor Costs

LONDON (Dispatches) - In the second quarter of 2022, the hourly labor costs rose by 4.0 per cent in the euro area and by 4.4 per cent in the European Union (EU), compared with the same quarter of the previous year. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

The Labor Cost Index is a short-term indicator showing the development of hourly labor costs incurred by employers, in nominal terms, that is without adjusting for price developments. It is calculated dividing the labor cost in national currency by the number of hours worked, according to a press release by Eurostat. Therefore, the development of variables, labor costs and hours worked, affect the evolution of the index (base year = 2016).

The two main components of labour costs are wages and salaries and non-wage costs. In the euro area, wages and salaries per hour worked increased by 4.1 per cent, while the non-wage component rose by 3.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2022, compared with the same quarter of the previous year. In the EU, hourly wages and salaries increased by 4.5 per cent and the non-wage component by 4.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2022.

In the second quarter of 2022 compared with the same quarter of the previous year, hourly labour costs in the euro area rose by 4.3 per cent in the (mainly) non-business economy and by 3.9 per cent in the business economy: +2.2 per cent in industry, +2.8 per cent in construction, and +4.9 per cent in services. In the EU, hourly labor cost grew by 4.2 per cent in the (mainly) non-business economy and by 4.4 per cent in the business economy: +2.9 per cent in industry, +3.3 per cent in construction, and +5.3 per cent in services.



Canada May Need a Recession to Cool Down Inflation

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - The underlying pressures driving inflation in Canada are likely to peak in the fourth quarter of this year, economists told Reuters, though most see signs fast rising prices are becoming entrenched and warn a recession may be needed to avoid a spiral.

Canada's inflation data for August will be released on Tuesday, with analysts forecasting the headline rate will edge down to 7.3%, from 7.6% in July and a four-decade high of 8.1% in June.

But all eyes will be on the three core measures of inflation - CPI Common, CPI Median and CPI Trim - which taken together are seen as a better indicator of underlying price pressures. The average of the three hit a record high of 5.3% in July.

Six of eight economists surveyed by Reuters see core inflation peaking in the fourth quarter as underlying domestic and global pressures start to ease, though the path back to the 2% target will not be brisk.

"Rapidly cooling growth, the pullback in housing prices, and less pressure on supply chains will help cap core inflation relatively soon," said Doug Porter, chief economist at BMO Capital Markets.

"However, we believe that it will be sticky, and will descend only slowly through 2023," he added.

The broadening of price increases, increased wage settlements, as well as rising consumer and business inflation expectations are signs that inflation is becoming more entrenched in the economy, economists told Reuters. Six of eight said they see signs of entrenchment. That is an outcome that the Bank of Canada has hoped to avoid, saying it would require more aggressive interest rate hikes to bring inflation back under control.

ADB's Ongoing Sovereign Portfolio in Pakistan Includes 48 Loans Worth \$8.42b

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The ongoing sovereign portfolio of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Pakistan includes 48 loans and three grants worth of \$8.42 billion.

According to the member fact sheet released by the ADB, in 2021, ADB's loan and grant disbursements to Pakistan amounted to \$1.31 billion, comprising \$0.3 billion in program lending and \$1.01 billion from project lending and \$3 million from grants.

The report said the ADB's country partnership strategy 2021-2025 for Pakistan focuses on

three priorities—improving economic management, building resilience, and boosting competitiveness and private sector development, a private television channel Saturday quoted ADB report as having said.

To date, ADB has committed 723 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance totaling \$37 billion to Pakistan. Cumulative loan and grant disbursements to Pakistan amount to \$28.27 billion. These were financed by regular and concessional ordinary capital resources, the Asian Development Fund, and other special funds.

ADB's support to Pakistan's coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response in 2021 included a \$500 million loan in August to help procure and deploy safe and effective vaccine, and a \$603 million loan—of which \$3 million is from the ADF—for an integrated social protection program to strengthen Pakistan's flagship Ehsaas program. The loan is complemented by a \$24 million grant from the Education Above All Foundation.

The program builds on an earlier \$500 million loan under ADB's COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Program and a \$300 million emergency assistance loan to strengthen Pakistan's public health response to shield the poorest families from the pandemic. ADB committed \$300 million for the construction of the Balakot hydropower plant on the Kunhar river near Balakot City in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By 2027, the plant will add 1,143-gigawatt hours of clean energy annually to the country's energy mix, enhancing the energy sector's reliability and sustainability, the report added.

Another \$300 million policy-based loan was committed to supporting reforms to strengthen Pakistan's energy sector and improve its financial sustainability. The program will help reduce and manage the accumulated cash shortfall across the power supply chain known as circular debt. ADB continued to strengthen Pakistan's finance sector, develop competitive capital markets, and encourage private sector investment.

Russia Vows To Continue Mir Bankcard Expansion

LONDON (Dispatches) - Russia's central bank pledged to keep expanding the number of countries that accept its Mir bank cards after new U.S. sanctions targeting people and entities accused of helping Moscow skirt financial sanctions.

The United States on Thursday sanctioned the chief executive of the Bank of Russia's National Card Payment System (NSPK), which runs Mir, saying it was seeking to hold the Russian government accountable for its Feb. 24 invasion and continuing war against Ukraine.

"Russia has scrambled to find new ways to process payments and conduct transactions," the U.S. Treasury said. "Directly and indirectly, Russia's financial technocrats have supported the Kremlin's unprovoked war" against Ukraine.

The importance of Mir cards for Russians rose substantially this year after U.S. payments firms Visa Inc and Mastercard Inc suspended operations in Russia and their cards that were issued in Russia stopped working abroad.

Cuba, South Korea, Turkey, Vietnam and a handful of former Soviet republics accept Mir, which means both "peace" and "world" in Russian, with others such as Iran intending to follow suit soon.

NSPK and Mir themselves are not themselves sanctioned, and U.S. analysts said the U.S. move aimed to keep them from being used to evade U.S. sanctions rather than to prevent Russian tourists from paying for their hotel bills abroad.

The central bank said Mir cards and other NSPK services would continue working as usual in Russia. "Foreign partners themselves take decisions about opening their infrastructure to accept Mir cards," the central bank said. "At the same time, we intend to continue dialogue about

expanding the geography of Mir card acceptance."

The U.S. Treasury said it had blacklisted 22 individuals, including four financial executives whose actions could support Russia's war effort by helping it evade financial sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine.

The four included Vladimir Komlev, the head of NSPK. "Russia created its own state-run card payment system in 2014 out of fear of U.S. and European sanctions," the Treasury said. "In his role, Komlev has promoted the Mir network in other countries, which ultimately could assist Russia in circumventing international sanctions."

The Treasury said "non-U.S. financial institutions that enter into new or expanded agreements with NSPK risk supporting Russia's efforts to evade U.S. sanctions through the expanded use of the MIR National Payment System outside the territory of the Russian Federation."

Rosneft Up in Arms After Germany Seizes Assets



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's government took control of Rosneft's assets, including three oil refineries, as Berlin moved to take sweeping control of its energy industry to secure supplies and sever decades of deep dependence on Moscow.

Rosneft said the move amounted to an expropriation of equity assets in which it had invested €4.6bn for refining capacity, according to a company statement.

The Russian company said it will "consider all possible measures to protect its shareholders, including legal action".

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's administration pulled the trigger after months of talks as the government moved to ensure Kremlin involvement in its key refineries did not become a threat in its preparations to stop buying Russian crude by the end of the year.

Despite the asset seizure, Rosneft said it was "ready to discuss possible parameters of a new contract on condition of guarantees for payment for raw materials supplied".

Alongside its move for the Rosneft unit, Scholz's administration is in advanced talks to take over Uniper and two other major gas importers, Bloomberg reported.

Germany is pressing ahead with a historic overhaul of its economy just two and half years after the Covid-19 pandemic, grabbing control over a huge chunk of its industrial base to prevent shortages and blackouts this winter. A decision on the next moves could come within days.

The need for action is urgent, with Uniper losing €100m a day as it tries to replace Russian gas to maintain deliveries to local utilities and manufacturers.

"Over the next few months, we'll have to continue to preserve critical infrastructure to achieve energy independence," said Verena Hubertz, a leading legislator for Scholz's Social Democrats. "Further measures will follow."

Iran, S.Korea Ink MoU on Development of Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The heads of the standards organizations of Iran and South Korea emphasized on the development of cooperation within the framework of signing the executive program and memorandum of understanding (MoU) on mutual cooperation.

Head of the National Standard Organization of Iran, Mehdi Eslampanah, met and talked with South Korea's head of

standards on the sideline of ISO Annual Meeting 2022.

During the meeting, the two sides emphasized on the development of cooperation within the framework of the memorandum of understanding and the signing of the executive plan and memorandum of understanding (MoU) on mutual cooperation.



UN Summit Returns in Person to World of Divisions

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The UN General Assembly is back in person after the pandemic disruption but in a world as full of crises as ever, with the war in Ukraine set to pit the West against Russia.

Some 150 world leaders will descend on New York for a week of diplomacy, with all required to come in person to speak save one -- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, granted an exception as he leads the fight against Russian invaders.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, speaking ahead of the summit that formally begins Tuesday, said that the world's divisions "are the widest they have been since at least the Cold War."

"Our world is blighted by war, battered by climate chaos, scarred by hate and shamed by poverty, hunger and inequality," Guterres said.

"As fractures deepen and trust evaporates, we need to come together around solutions."

For the two previous years, the annual meeting that jams traffic through Midtown Manhattan had been a more subdued affair with leaders allowed to send in videos.

The General Assembly voted Friday to let Zelensky speak by video. Seven nations voted against including Russia, saying that the right should be extended to all leaders, with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as Chinese President Xi Jinping, not planning to travel to New York.

Several US adversaries are expected, however, including Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, defying loud protests from their opponents in the United States.

Richard Gowan, who follows the United Nations for the International Crisis Group, said that Zelensky's speech will "get 1,000 times more attention than most in-person speeches by other leaders."

"But Zelensky has to be careful. A lot of non-Western politicians are resentful of the West's focus on Ukraine and worry that the war is distracting international attention from issues like the global food crisis," he said.

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, acknowledged the concerns, saying that despite discussions on Ukraine, "it will not be the only thing that we're dealing with."

"We cannot ignore the rest of the world and what is happening in the rest of the world, the impact of climate change, the impact of the pandemic, conflicts elsewhere in the world," she said.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday will co-chair a summit on food security with the African Union, European Union and Spain as high global prices -- worsened by the invasion of major grain producer Ukraine -- bring new hunger around the world.



French President Emmanuel Macron's office said that he will seek "dialogue with our partners from the South to avoid planting this idea that it's the West against the rest."

Despite the shift toward normalcy, the schedule of the General Assembly was scrambled by the death of Queen Elizabeth II. US President Joe Biden, who traditionally would have been one of the first speakers Tuesday and who would have led the food summit, will instead speak Wednesday.

And with Covid concerns lingering, the United Nations is still limiting the size of delegations and requiring the wearing of masks in the towering headquarters on the East River.

Prime Minister Liz Truss, who took office two days before the death of Britain's longest-reigning monarch, will fly after the funeral to the United Nations on her first foreign trip since taking office.

The UN summit will also mark a fresh occasion to build momentum on global action on climate change, amid mounting signs that the planet is descending into dangerous levels of warming.

"We have run out of time to waste," said Ambassador Walton Webson of Antigua and Barbuda, heading the Alliance of Small Island States.

"Our islands are being hit with more severe and more frequent climate impacts and recovery comes at the cost of our development," he said.

Guterres said he will use the week to speak frankly with leaders amid guarded hopes for further progress on climate during the next climate summit, COP27, in Egypt in November.

Iran Opens UN Fight...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran, however, said the freezing of the funds breached the 1955 Treaty of Amity with the United States, an agreement signed before Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution severed relations between the countries.

Tehran argued the United States had illegally seized Iranian financial assets and those of Iranian companies -- and with Iran's clerical regime facing economic difficulties after sanctions and runaway consumer prices, resolving the case is crucial.

In turn Washington had unsuccessfully tried to disqualify the lawsuit by arguing that Iran's "unclean hands" -- a reference to Tehran's suspected backing of terrorist groups -- should disqualify its lawsuit to recover the \$2 billion of assets.

The U.S. announced in October 2018 that it was pulling out of the Treaty of Amity after the ICJ in a separate case ordered Washington to lift nuclear-related sanctions on humanitarian goods for Iran.

The ICJ is the top court of the United Nations and was set up after World War II to resolve disputes between member states. Its rulings are binding and cannot be appealed, but it has no means of enforcing them.

Monday's hearing, to which U.S. representatives are set to reply on Wednesday, came as hopes fade to revive a 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and the West which gives Iran sanctions relief in return for restricting its nuclear program.

IAEA...

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All of Iran's nuclear activities are under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, he underscored.

Today, about 2% of the world's nuclear capacity is related to Iran, while around 25% of inspections are carried out on Iran's nuclear facilities, he said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency and its director general must protect the agency's legal status, he noted.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, many countries did not cooperate to issue resolutions against Iran, and this had a good message, he stated.

Iran's definitive proposal is to raise the issue of the Middle East free of nuclear weapons at the IAEA General Assembly, he said.

Iran Non-Oil...

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The SCI said that the agriculture sector experienced negative growth of 3.7 percent, while the industries and mines sector grew six percent, and the services sector's growth stood at 4.5 percent in the previous year.

According to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report released on June 7, the Iranian economy is projected to grow by 3.7 percent in 2022, while the average global economic growth is seen at 2.9 percent in the said year.

"Output in the Islamic Republic of Iran is expected to grow by 3.7 percent in 2022, boosted by the waning of the pandemic and higher oil prices," the bank said in the report.

"Iran's economy continues its gradual recovery that started in mid-2020, driven by the oil sector and services. However, water and energy shortages led to a contraction of the agriculture and industry sectors," the report said.

A recovery in Iran's oil and service sectors (11.7 and 6.5 percent growth, respectively) -- following a return of global and domestic activity after the start of the pandemic -- led to a five percent year-on-year growth in late 2021-early 2022, the bank said.

The bank puts Iran's economic growth at 4.1 percent in 2021 and about 3.4 percent in 2020.

108 Yemenis Killed...

FROM PAGE 1

The truce has ordered that the Yemeni authorities be provided with the required means that could help them dig up the unexploded devices. The Saudi-led coalition was, however, preventing their provision amid an all-out siege that it has been enforcing on Yemen since starting the war in 2015, the report added.

As part of its efforts to implement the siege, the Saudi-led coalition has been preventing the country from exporting its oil, despite Sana'a's heavy dependence on crude sales' revenues. Yemeni officials say the coalition has so far impounded at least 12 tankers laden with overseas-bound oil.

The Saudi-led coalition has also been culpable for destroying thousands of water provision facilities, including dams, and contaminating Yemen's water supplies.

Last month, Abdul Karim al-Safiani, deputy director of Yemen's Water Resource Organization, said he had discovered high levels of radioactive substances and toxic metals in freshwater resources in Yemen's maritime province of al-Hudaydah.

India Welcomes Back Cheetahs, 70 Years After Local Extinction



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Eight Namibian cheetahs arrived in India, decades after their local extinction, in an ambitious project to reintroduce the spotted big cats that has divided experts on its prospects.

Officials say the project is the world's first intercontinental relocation of cheetahs, the planet's fastest land animal. The five females and three males were moved from a game park in Namibia aboard a chartered Boeing 747 dubbed "Cat plane" for an 11-hour flight.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presided over the release at Kuno National Park, a wildlife sanctuary 320 kilometres (200 miles) south of New Delhi selected for its abundant prey and grasslands.

"Today the cheetah has returned to the soil of India," Modi said in a video address after their arrival, which coincided with the leader's 72nd birthday.

"The nature loving consciousness of India has also awakened with full force," he added. "We must not allow our efforts to fail."

Each of the animals, aged between two and five and a half, have been fitted with a satellite collar to monitor their movements.

They will initially be kept in a quarantine enclosure for about a month before being released in the open forest areas of the park.

Critics have warned the creatures may struggle to adapt to the Indian habitat.

A significant number of leopards are present in the park, and conservation scientist Ravi Chellam said that cubs could fall prey to feral dogs and other carnivores.

Under the government's current action plan, "the prospects for a viable, wild and free-ranging population of cheetahs getting established in India is bleak," he told AFP.

"The habitats should have been prepared first before bringing the cats from Namibia," he added. "It is like us moving to a new city with only a sub-optimal place to stay -- Not a nice situation at all."

But organisers are unfazed.

"Cheetahs are very adaptable and (I'm) assuming that they will adapt well into this environment," said Dr Laurie Marker, founder of the Namibia-based charity Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), which has been central to the project logistics.

"I don't have a lot of worries," she told AFP.

Antiguans Mull Cutting Ties With British Monarchy



ST. JOHN'S (AFP) -- Republican movements may be gaining steam in British realms across the globe, but in the tiny Caribbean paradise of Antigua and Barbuda, residents have decidedly mixed feelings about their leaders' push to break that final link.

Days after the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Antigua and Barbuda became the first of the 14 remaining realms now ruled over by her son, Charles, to openly float the idea of replacing the British monarch as its head of state.

Doing so would not be "an act of hostility" but "the final step to complete the circle of independence," Prime Minister Gaston Browne told British broadcaster ITV news, saying that he hopes to hold a referendum on the matter within the next three years.

Whether his people want to take that step is an open question, admitted Browne's chief of staff Lionel Hurst during an interview at the prime minister's office overlooking the port capital of St John's in the country's main island, Antigua.

"We're not sure yet," he said Friday. If Browne wins the next general election, which must be held by 2023, the years before any referendum would be spent "selling the idea" to Antiguan and Barbudans.

On St John's busy Market Street, most residents agreed the idea would need to be sold. "I think we should stay with the crown. This country cannot manage on its own," 53-year-old Leonie Barker told AFP after buying groceries ahead of Tropical Storm Fiona, due to brush past the island Friday night.

Others said that it was too early to take a stand. Education and engagement on the idea are needed, 58-year-old Peter Thomas said.

"I think we have reached a stage in life (where) we would like to be on our own, but are we ready? That's the next story," he said.

Fashion designer and singer Kelly Richardson also said islanders needed more information, adding that he did not think it was "a bad idea."

"I'm open to changes," he told AFP from behind dark sunglasses.

Some could see potential on both sides.

Antigua has already come far since independence in 1981, local cameraman JC Cornelius argued, so when it comes to removing the queen as head of state -- "why not?"

But then again, he added, "unity and one love is really key. So, being with the queen... I mean, why not?"

The matter, he said, would require "some nice diligent consideration."

Browne's hoped-for referendum would come nearly 400 years after Britain first colonized Antigua in 1632, followed by neighboring Barbuda in 1678.

Settlers began growing sugar on the islands -- but with Indigenous Caribbean people dying by the thousands across the region, they imported African slaves to tend the profitable crop.

Emancipation finally came in 1833, and many of Antigua and Barbuda's 97,000 people today are the descendants of slaves.

The country, whose economy is now heavily dependent on tourism, has been an independent nation for more than four decades -- but, argues government spokesman Hurst, it's a funny kind of independence.

"The monarchy is in England, we don't deceive ourselves," he told AFP.

"It's kind of less than independence when your head of state is determined not by you, but by a tradition that lies 6,000 miles away." Any control Britain exerts is mostly procedural, however, he said -- and breaking away from that is "symbolic."

"In large part it will have a psychological impact on the people of Antigua and Barbuda, that is its primary purpose," he said.

Whether the younger generations are as impacted by the wounds of the past, however, also appears to be a question of some debate.

Generation Z's biggest concern is not the nation's psyche but development, 19-year-old student Kemani Sinclair told AFP, gesturing at the colorful buildings around the center of St John's -- some of which have fallen into disrepair.

Monza Claim First Serie A Win To End Juve's Unbeaten Start

MONZA (Dispatches) - Monza won their first ever match in Serie A after stunning 10-man Juventus 1-0 to pile more pressure on under-fire Massimiliano Allegri. Christian Gytkjaer netted a historic goal 15 minutes from the end at the U-Power Stadium to move the club owned by Silvio Berlusconi off the bottom of the table and end Juve's unbeaten start to the season. Monza took their first three points of the campaign in their first match under Raffaele Palladino, who replaced sacked Giovanni Stroppa on Tuesday.

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India Fast Bowler Shami Out of Australia T20s

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India fast bowler Mohammed Shami has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been ruled out of the three Twenty20 internationals at home against Australia, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said. After the three-match series, starting in Mohali on Tuesday, India will play another three games at home against South Africa as they continue their preparations for the T20 World Cup in Australia starting in less than a month's time.

Canada Advances to Davis Cup Knockout Stage

LONDON (Dispatches) - Felix Auger-Aliassime defeated Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia, to guarantee Canada's men's tennis team a spot in the quarterfinal stage of the Davis Cup Finals.

A day after Auger-Aliassime upset Carlos Alcaraz — the world's newest top-ranked player — to lead Canada past Spain, the Montreal native dispatched Kecmanovic, 6-3, 6-4.

"I'm really happy," said No. 13 Auger-Aliassime. "It's the best feeling not only to win important wins for myself, but also for the team. It's very nice to see a smile on everyone's face and make the team happy and proud."

The Davis Cup quarterfinals are Nov. 22-27 in Malaga, Spain.

Canada was defeated 2-1 by Serbia on Saturday, after Vasek Pospisil was forced to withdraw from the doubles match due to injury.

But Auger-Aliassime's win had already given Canada the final point needed to guarantee a top-two finish in Group B.

"I was a bit tired, but pushing myself was all worth it," he said. "I'm really happy that I came and played with the level I did to get Canada through to the quarters. I'm really happy for the team. In the end, it's all worth it."

Auger-Aliassime continued to rely on his service, racking up nine aces and giving up only nine points on serve. He won the first set for the first time in the tournament, and didn't look back. In the second set, he didn't face a single breakpoint.

Canada's chances to qualify for the knockout stage looked shaky earlier in the day when 20-year-old Gabriel Diallo of Quebec City lost to Laslo Djere, 6-2, 6-2, in his Davis Cup debut.

"It was an honour to be selected by my country," said Diallo, who's ranked No. 334. "It's something I'd been dreaming about since I was a little kid. I'm super grateful to be here.

It's obviously not the result I wanted, but I'm going to try and learn as much as possible. I think it's just going to make me better, and I just have to keep my head down and work 20 times harder."

Diallo, No. 334, was coming off a victory at last month's Granby National Bank Championships.



Captain Frank Dancevic selected No. 141 Vasek Pospisil and No. 247 Alexis Galarneau for the doubles match, but after only 18 minutes of play, Pospisil was forced to retire.

Despite the loss to Serbia, Dancevic was proud of his team's efforts in Valencia.

"It's been an incredible week, from the start to today. All the players and staff — it's just been so much positive energy from all sides," he said. "The guys, they played incredible tennis. There are a few matches where we were down in the third set, and we easily could have lost them. We just kept fighting until the end."

Meanwhile in Glasgow, Botić van de Zandschulp and Tallon Griekspoor won their singles against Americans Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul for the Netherlands to finish top of their Davis Cup Finals group with a 2-1 win.

Van de Zandschulp settled the tie when he defeated Fritz, the world No. 12, 6-4, 7-6 (3) after Griekspoor opened with a 7-5, 7-6 (3) victory over Paul.

The Dutch had an unassailable 2-0 lead, then Rajeev Ram and Jack Sock earned some compensation for the Americans by winning their doubles against Wesley Koolhof and Matwe Middelkoop.

The United States and Netherlands were already assured of reaching the quarterfinals with two wins each in Group D. As group winner, the Dutch next face the runner-up in Group C, either Australia or Germany.

Also on Saturday, Croatia defeated Argentina 3-0 for its second win after losing its opener to Italy.

France defeated Belgium 2-1 in Group C, where Australia and Germany were already assured of reaching the final eight.



Murray said he was hoping for a "special" final chance to share a court with Roger Federer at next week's Laver Cup in London and possibly team up to play doubles before the Swiss great retires from the sport.

Federer, 41, who redefined the sport with his artistry and grace and collected 20 Grand Slam titles, announced on Thursday that injury issues meant he would call time on his glittering career after the men's team event.

Murray and Federer will join fellow "Big Four" members Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic when they play on the same team for the first time at the Sept. 23-25 Laver Cup.

"Maybe I (will) get the opportunity to share a court with him in doubles or something like that. That would be really special," Murray said after he and Joe Salisbury lost a deciding doubles tie for Britain in the Davis Cup on Friday.

"I don't know how much he will be able to play. I haven't spoken to him about that."

Murray lost the 2012 Wimbledon final to Federer before beating him to Olympic gold, while the pair also contested the Australian Open and US Open finals.

Canelo Cruises to Victory Over Golovkin In Trilogy Clash

LAS VEGAS (Dispatches) - Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez brought an end to his bitter rivalry with Gennadiy Golovkin on Saturday as the Mexican won the fighters' trilogy fight on a unanimous decision to retain the undisputed super middleweight world title in Las Vegas.

Alvarez was rarely troubled as his 40-year-old opponent, the current undisputed middleweight champion, struggled to match the energy and work rate of the title holder, who defeated Golovkin for the second time in three meetings.

The pair previously fought in the same T-Mobile Arena for the middleweight title in 2017 and 2018, with a draw controversially declared in the first fight before Alvarez won the second on a split decision.

But this contest bore few of the hallmarks of either of those absorbing encounters, with Alvarez controlling the center of the ring for the majority of the fight and dominating with his faster hand speed.

The win was the perfect return to form for the 32-year-old after losing for only the second time in his career in his previous fight, when he was defeated by WBA light heavyweight champion Dmitry Bivol in May.

Golovkin was second-best throughout the first two-thirds of the fight before he finally came to life in the ninth round, rattling the champion with a left hook and increasing his output.

The Kazakh, however, had left himself far too much to do and Alvarez retained his titles with a 116-112, 115-113 and 115-113 outcome on the judges' scorecards that leaves Golovkin's future in the sport in doubt.

Foss Wins Cycling World Time-Trial Crown

WOLLONGONG (Dispatches) - Norway's Tobias Foss pulled off a huge upset to dethrone two-time defending champion Filippo Ganna and claim a maiden time-trial title at cycling's road world championships in Australia.

The 25-year-old conquered the 34.2 kilometre (21.2 miles) circuit in 40min 02.78sec to edge Swiss powerhouse Stefan Kung by 2.95sec.

Guardiola Trusts Grealish Unconditionally



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said he has always retained his trust in Jack Grealish after the midfielder scored his first goal of the season in a 3-0 Premier League victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Grealish opened the scoring after having been criticized for a lackluster performance in the Champions League win over Borussia Dortmund, as well as a lack of goals and assists since his £100 million (RM523 million) transfer from Aston Villa last year.

"I've always said if you are here, it's because I trust them unconditionally, all of them. I know them," Guardiola told reporters after the win.

"He scored a goal and it was a good performance. Every time he has the ball it's one-against-one against the full-back all the time.

"OK, he didn't score or assist (in previous games), but it's a question of time," he said. "Of course I am happy for him, for the victory, for his incredible personality to play."

Guardiola added that he liked what he saw of the partnership between Erling Haaland and Julian Alvarez, with the pair playing side by side towards the end of the match after Alvarez was brought on in the 71st minute.

"We have two prolific strikers, and this was the second time I've seen Erling and Julian together, in the last minutes like against Bournemouth, and I like it," Guardiola added. "They can be a little bit more aggressive, they have a sense for goal."

"It's nice with two important players leaving (Raheem Sterling and Gabriel Jesus), to add and still have the tendency to score goals and create a lot of chances. "We have that feeling that when we change the gear, we can create a lot of chances in just a few minutes."

Arsenal Beat Brentford to Regain Top Spot

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal moved back to the top of the Premier League as goals from William Saliba, Gabriel Jesus and Fabio Vieira put the gloss on a dominant performance to beat Brentford 3-0.

Injuries to captain Martin Odegaard and Oleksandr Zinchenko had stretched Mikel Arteta's squad to the extent that 15-year-old Ethan Nwaneri came off the bench late to become the youngest player in Premier League history.

However, the Gunners showed no sign of weakness at a ground where they were beaten 2-0 last season to move back one point above Manchester City and Tottenham at the top of the table.

The match had been moved forward two hours to help ease police pressures around Queen Elizabeth II's funeral and Britain's longest serving monarch was remembered in a minute's silence before kick-off.

Once the action did get underway, it was one way traffic for 45 minutes as Arsenal bounced back in style from their sole defeat of the season away to Manchester United two weeks ago.

Gabriel Martinelli should have opened the scoring within two minutes as he fluffed his shot from Granit Xhaka's cut-back.

It took just 15 minutes more for Arsenal to make the breakthrough when Saliba flicked Bukayo Saka's corner in off the far post.

Jesus also used his head to score his fourth goal in seven Premier League games since joining from Manchester City as he powered home another enticing delivery from Xhaka.



Bastianini Nails Aragon MotoGP On Last Lap

ALCANIZ (Dispatches) - Enea Bastianini won the Aragon MotoGP with a last lap overtake after mayhem at the start as world champion Fabio Quartararo crashed out to put a severe dent in his hopes of retaining the title.

Bastianini shaded Francesco Bagnaia following a nerve-jangling duel over the closing laps to deny the factory Ducati rider a fifth straight win by four-tenths of a second.

With Quartararo the victim of first lap drama pole-sitter Bagnaia moved to within 10 points of Yamaha's defending champion with five races remaining.

"Enea did an incredible job all weekend, he was very competitive," said Bagnaia, who will have the race winner as his teammate next season.

"Fabio (Quartararo) was unlucky. I tried to do my best, but on the last lap I didn't feel I was able to retake Enea as these 10 points are important so I did okay."

"It was a really nice race for me," said Bastianini, on a Ducati satellite bike.

"I made some mistakes but on the last lap I was in a position to attack this time to win. Amazing!"

Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro took third at the end of a breathless 15th round of the championship which saw six-time world champion Marc Marquez's hopes of a dream return after 112 days out turn into a nightmare.

It was Marquez's Honda that Quartararo clipped, sending the Frenchman slithering across the track as his Aragon curse continued at the Motorland circuit where he has never made the podium.

Seconds later Honda's Japanese rider Takaaki Nakagami also hit the deck, after contact again with Marquez, who was forced to retire with damage to his bike.

