

Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **144,478** With **Seven** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

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Constitution Recognizes Rally Not Riot

TEHRAN (IP) – The Guardian Council Spokesman says the country's Constitution has recognized the right for people's peaceful rallies, not riots.

In his weekly press conference, Hadi Tahan Nazif told reporters that the Iranian law recognized the peaceful gatherings, but in the recent developments, the rallies shifted to rebels.

Unrest and brawls were instigated under the pretext of Mahsa Amini's death.

Mahsa, 22, died due to a sudden heart attack in a police center in Tehran on Tuesday, September 13, after being taken there for violation of dress codes along with some other women.

With regard to the recent unrest in the country and the effect of the officials' positions to it on their status before the Guardian Council, Tahan Nazif said the council announced its position, and the words of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution determined the benchmarks over the unrest.

He said the protests shifted to riots, but the people of the country separated themselves from the rioters.

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Iran, UAE Target Reaching \$30b Annual Trade In 2 Years

TEHRAN (MNA) - Targeting \$30 billion trade between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the next two years is on the agenda of the trade organizations of the two countries, according to an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Farzad Piltan, the director-general of TPO's Office of West Asian Countries, said the UAE is considered as one of the important countries in Iran's foreign trade.

Pointing out that the balance of trade volume between the two countries has always been in favor of the UAE, Piltan added: "According to the plans, balancing, maintaining and improving the level of trade relations between the two countries is on the agenda of trade organizations."

"Considering the position and capacities and facilities that the UAE has for the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation at the regional and international level, by removing trade barriers and increasing export standards and insurances, we can reach \$30 billion trade with the UAE", the TPO official added.

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Enemies Failed in Using Iranian Universities to Reach Their Goals



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Referring to the footprints of the enemy in recent riots in the country, President Ebrahim Raisi says that Iranian university students and professors will not allow the false dreams of the enemy to come true.

Speaking in a ceremony held on the occasion of the start of the New Academic Year (2022-2023) at Alzahra University, Ebrahim Raisi pointed to the recent riots in the country over the death of a 22-year-old Iranian woman, Mahsa Amini, and said that the enemy thought that it could pursue its malicious plots in the country through universities.

But the enemy was unaware of the vigilance of Iranian university students and professors that they do not let the enemy's false dreams to come true, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the negotiations on Iran nuclear deal, saying, "From the beginning, we announced that we will not leave the negotiation table, but we will commit to honorable negotiations, and today the logic of the Islamic Republic of Iran is accepted in the world."

The United States, under former President Donald Trump, abandoned the agreement in May 2018 and reinstated unilateral sanctions that the agreement had lifted.

The talks to salvage the agreement kicked off in 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 US' indecisiveness and procrastination caused multiple interruptions in the marathon talks.

Raisi clarified, "When an educated Iranian woman presents an important scientific achievement at the world level and is placed on a platform, the flag of the Islamic Republic is raised and the national anthem of Iran is played, this creates strength for the country".

Stating that science and knowledge are important components of power and ability, Ayatollah Raisi said, "Today, the country has achieved high levels of power and ability with the efforts of professors and students. While in the past we needed to import barbed wire in this country and we were denied the same, today we have achieved amazing progress in various scientific and industrial fields despite the most extensive sanctions, and with God's help, this path will continue".

In another part of his speech, the President congratulated the new students and stated, "Devote all your efforts to research, and the government will also use all its efforts to provide the necessary equipment and facilities for you".

Raisi described solving the concern of employment for male and female students as one of the tasks of the government and said, "The government considers the university as its think tank and expects universities and scientific centers to come to the aid of the government with new ideas and initiatives".

Raisi continued his speech by referring to the traces of the enemy in the recent riots and stated, "The enemy thought that they could follow their desires inside the university, unaware that our students and professors were awake and would not allow the enemy's false dreams to come true".

He Raisi explained the logic of the government in the negotiations to lift the sanctions and the enemy's attempt to impose its conditions on Iran and said, "We announced from the beginning that we would not leave the negotiation table, but we would stick to honorable negotiations, and today the logic of the Islamic Republic of Iran is accepted in the world".

Iran Remains Top Rice Supplier to Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - New figures by the Iranian customs office (IRICA) show that rice imports into the country have reached new records amid government efforts to contain rampant prices of high-end domestic varieties of rice.

A report by Iran's Tasnim news agency cited IRICA figures showing that Iran's rice imports had topped \$1.096 billion in the five calendar months to August 22.

The figure is a record high and is equivalent to Iran's entire annual rice imports. It comes after the Iranian government lifted a seasonal ban on rice imports that normally coincides with rice harvest period in Iran in summer.

IRICA figures showed that Iran had imported \$583.61 million worth of rice from India over the five months to late August. Rice imports from Pakistan rose to \$350.4 million over the April-August period, showed IRICA figures which indicated that Iran had imported some \$79.77 million worth of rice from Thailand over the same period.

Sources from Iran's food retail association told Tasnim that there has been a surge in demand for Pakistani varieties of rice in the Iranian market in recent months mainly because of their affordability and the fact that they are much more comparable to Iranian rice varieties. However, demand for Indian rice remained high in the Iran over the five months to late August because Indian varieties were still the cheapest in the market, said the report.

Citing IRICA figures, the report said that rice imports into Iran from the United Arab Emirates, the top re-exporting hub in the Persian Gulf, reached \$60.95 million in April-August, adding that imports through Iranian free economic zones had amounted to \$21.63 million over the same period.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Denmark, Land of Peace Or Den of Terrorists?

Countries like Denmark, Sweden and Norway or better to say the Scandinavian countries have always been considered as safe countries for living and even political activities, and many refugees and sometimes terrorists take shelter in those countries for peace and living in a place without violence but those countries in recent decades have turned unsafe for their residents and especially for refugees.

On Friday, Copenhagen, the capital city of Denmark, witnessed another sign of violence while the police forces were so sluggish in controlling the violence. According to reports, the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran was the main target and was attacked while the police forces reacted slowly but finally arrested the attacker.

Danish police said later on Friday that it has arrested the 32-year-old man who attacked the Iranian embassy in Copenhagen. The man, an Iranian citizen, had been stopped by an employee before entering the embassy building, police said, according to Reuters.

He will have reportedly a court hearing at Copenhagen city court and will be charged with two counts of vandalism, for violence, and for breaching a section of the penal code that deals with crimes against people with diplomatic status.

This is not the first time that embassies of the Islamic Republic of Iran become the targets for attack and the host countries remain onlookers in a way that attackers continue their crimes.

According to the international conventions and diplomatic principles, the host countries are fully in charge of protecting the embassies. Western countries expect other countries to fully protect their diplomats and embassies while they turn into a onlooker when they should do their job of protection for other countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Reacting to this attack, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian lashed out at Denmark for failing to ensure the security of the Islamic Republic's embassy and ambassador in Copenhagen after an armed assailant broke into the diplomatic site.

In a phone call with Iranian Ambassador to Copenhagen Afsaneh Nadipour on Friday, Amirabdollahian said it is a shame that such an attack happens against a "female ambassador with diplomatic impunity in the heart of Europe."

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Tehran Slams Meddlesome EU Parliament Resolution

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Foreign Ministry has condemned a resolution adopted by the European Parliament against Tehran as "meddlesome" and "baseless", vowing to give an "appropriate" response to the imposition of any restrictive measures against Iranian people.

"The resolution entails baseless and biased presumptions against the Islamic Republic of Iran and hence is void and lacks any value," ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said in a statement.

The remarks come as MEPs, on Thursday, adopted a resolution with regard to recent riots in Iran, calling the EU officials to impose sanctions against Iranian officials who have been involved in an alleged crackdown on protests.

The resolution "unjustly and under fictitious titles" criticizes confrontation against organized violent actions and attacks against public properties and lives of people, the spokesman said, reminding the European officials that "many designers and inducers of riots are carrying out their hostile actions against the Islamic Republic of Iran mainly from Europe."

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Iran's IRGC Navy Force Stage Large-Scale Parade

TEHRAN (MNA) – Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Force launched a large-scale parade at the 2nd Naval District of waters of the Persian Gulf in Bushehr.

In this ceremony, IRGC naval vessels paraded in the waters of the Persian Gulf on the occasion of the anniversary of martyr Nader Mahdavi, a former IRGC Navy Commander, and his companions. On Oct. 8, 1987, Nader Mahdavi, along with nine of his companions from the Marines of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, fought directly with the American forces who trespassed the territorial waters of Iran near the Persian Gulf region and were martyred by the US terrorist forces. For this purpose, October 8 has been named as the day of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy.

Iran Preparing to Face Enemies' Hybrid Threats

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran is facing hybrid threats from the foes in different arenas, so the country is getting ready to stand against the menace, said the chief of staff for the Armed Forces of Iran on Saturday.

Chief of Staff for the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran Major General Mohammad Bagheri made the remarks in the 13th edition of Malek Ashtar Festival in Tehran, referring to Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's emphasis on the need for upgrading the might of the armed forces.

Congratulating Iran's National Police Week, Bagheri noted that given the current security situation of the Islamic country, which has been hatched by enemies' plots, the services and efforts by police forces throughout the country are being appreciated.

The general added that foes have resorted to a small excuse in a bid to create a big plot against the Islamic Revolution aiming at hindering the progress of the country, but the great nation expressed support for the holy system.

The enemies tried to deceive Iranian youths and teenagers into accepting their fake stories on social media platforms in order to create unrest and riot, he said, adding that the police and paramilitary forces are tasked with reinforcing security and tranquility in the country while respecting laws and regulations.

He also urged the commanders of armed forces to select qualified personnel and improve staff's skills and expertise, noting that enough information on social media and cyberspace as well as media literacy will help people stand against threats and



harms of the platforms, so all commanders should be vigilant in this respect.

The authorities and commanders should become familiar with the current situation and make families, personnel, and other social groups aware of the developments, he urged.

The Iranian armed forces should have political and religious insights along with progress in identifying enemies' methods and equipment, he said, calling on all those who are responsible to use advanced ways to prevent from lagging behind.

The foes tried to sow discord among armed forces, but they could not achieve their goal thanks to coordination and cooperation among all sectors of the military forces, he argued.

As the Commander in Chief of the Islamic Revolution has underscored the need for paying heed to hybrid threats, we are facing joint pressures in terms of military, security, cultural, and other emerging threats, so we should make ourselves ready to stand against all threats, he said.

In conclusion, the major general called for futuristic research concerning the identification of threats, saying that studies should be based on full preparation to stand against future threats.

Tehran Hosting Summit on Transit Cooperation With Central Asia

TEHRAN (MNA) - The first summit on transit cooperation between Iran and five central Asian countries including Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, kicked off in Tehran on Saturday, IRIB reported.

According to Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari, during the two-day event, challenges and opportunities of expanding transit collaboration between Iran and the mentioned Central Asian nations will be explored.

"This gathering will lead to the adoption of a more coordinated policy among the present countries, and hopefully result in providing solutions for the obstacles regarding transit cooperation," Safari said at the opening ceremony of the summit.

The official stated that Iran is seeking to reach common policies with Central Asian countries in order to achieve an annual 20-million-ton transit goal.

"Iran will provide transit routes to its landlocked neighbors to achieve this goal," Safari said.

Emphasizing the need for the development of international transit corridors passing through Iran, he added: "We must create a management system for such corridors in order to use for improving rail, sea, and air routes."

"We will soon hold an international conference in this field," he said.

Also speaking at the summit, Deputy Transport Minister Shahriyar Afandizadeh said: "Due to the formation of the current constructive and interactive atmosphere in the field of international transportation and transit among the present members, and considering Iran's bilateral and multilateral agreements with other countries, a new chapter will be opened in the country's transportation and transit collaborations."

"We hope this summit will lead to reaching smart and purposeful decisions for the cooperation among all members in such a way that favorable conditions are provided for the development of infrastructure and transportation facilities," he said.

Mahsa Amini's Death Caused by Illness

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Legal Medicine Organization has released the results of its investigation into the case of Mahsa Amini, saying that her controversial death was caused by an illness rather than alleged blows to the head or other vital body organs.

The official medical report was released on Friday, some three weeks after the 22-year-old Iranian woman fainted at a police station and was pronounced dead days later on September 16 at a Tehran hospital.

"According to hospital documents, the study of CT scans of the brain and lungs, results of physical examination of the body and an autopsy, and pathological tests, the death of the individual was not caused by blows to her head, vital organs and limbs," said the report.

Amini had undergone a craniopharyngioma surgery at the age of eight which led to the eruption of disorders in the hypothalamus and hypophysis gland, said the report, adding that the deceased used to take hydrocortisone, levothyroxine, and desmopressin as medication.

According to the report, Amini fainted on September 13, leading to a heartbeat interruption and blood pressure decrease as her body was not able to adjust to the new conditions considering her illness.

Ineffective cardiopulmonary resuscitation in the early minutes caused severe brain hypoxia, said the report, adding that she was pronounced dead on September 16 at Kasra Hospital due to multiple organ failure despite all efforts to save her.

Detained Students of 3 Universities Freed

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Students of Amirkabir University of Technology, Shahid Beheshti University, and the University of Tehran have been released from police custody in the capital Tehran, Iran.

The three universities' officials have issued statements, underlining that those students of these academic centers that were arrested during the recent unrest have been freed.

President of Amirkabir University of Technology Hassan Ghodspour said that the management of the university started negotiations for the release of the arrested students from day one, so the students were freed in several stages, and now in the last step, two students have been freed. Ghodspour pointed to the inappropriate behavior of some students during the recent gatherings, noting that students of the Amirkabir University of Technology raised their demands and asked their questions in a proper manner, so the officials of the university replied to them appropriately.

He went on to say that issues can be resolved by the use of rational dialogue and in a scientific atmosphere, adding that the presence of unauthorized people in academic centers, who try to disrupt order, is condemned.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations Department of Shahid Beheshti University announced in a communique that all of the students of the university arrested within the last two weeks have been released from detention following efforts made by university officials.

Moreover, Deputy Head of the University of Tehran for Student Affairs Alireza Vajhi said that most students of the university have been released, and based on coordination made between the academic center and the authorities, there would not be any student in custody within three days.

30% Increase in Trade Among Caspian Littoral Sates

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance said that the capacities of the energy, transit, and trade sectors are excellent opportunities to expand the cooperation of the Caspian Sea countries.

Ehsan Khandouzi stated that these capacities had not been used well due to some obstacles. He added that with the start of a unique interaction between the five coastal countries of the Caspian Sea in the last year, the trade between these states has increased by 30%.

The Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran said that the target set for 2025 is much higher than the 30% increase in trade between the coastal countries of the Caspian Sea.

Leader Condolences Passing of Iranian Poet Moayed

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has expressed his condolences over the demise of the prominent religious poet Seyyed Reza Moayed.

In a message on Saturday, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution condoled the demise of the prominent religious poet Seyed Reza Moayed to his bereaved family and the literary community of Khorasan.

The Leader praised Moayed for his "pleasant and eloquent poems", his character, and his commitment to the causes of religious teachings and values. Ayatollah Khamenei also prayed to God Almighty to bestow divine forgiveness on him among martyrs, who he always promoted their remembrance circles with his poems.

2.3m Tons of Commodities Traded on IME Last Week

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,309,000 tons of commodities with a total trading value of nearly \$525m, logging growths of 17% and 34% in volume and value of trades compared with the week before that.



According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 1,893,000 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$317m.

On this floor the IME sold 1,186,231 tons of cement, 205,000 tons of iron ore, 354,903 tons of steel, 120,000 tons of sponge iron, 17,200 tons of zinc, 7,325 tons of aluminum, 4,544 tons of copper, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 20 kg of gold bars and 35 truck.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 400,259 tons of commodities worth nearly \$202m.

Commodities traded on this floor included 89,569 tons of polymeric products, 98,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 45,500 tons of lube cut, 33,070 tons of chemicals, 2,500 tons of sulfur, 2,264 tons of base oil, 1,015 tons of insulation and 124,370 tons of bitumen.

The IME also traded within the same week 15,748 tons of commodities on its side market.

Iran Export of Gas Condensate, Petrochemicals at 39% Growth

TEHRAN (MNA) – Statistics of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade said that export of petrochemicals and gas condensates in the first four months of the current year (from March 21 to July 23) increased 38.8 percent.

In this period, the export of petrochemicals and gas condensates registered a 38.8 percent hike as compared to the same period of last year.

Another statistic indicated that Iran's export of hand-woven carpets and handicrafts registered a 4.7 percent growth from March 21 to July 23.

Over 35.7 million tons of products, valued at \$17.3 billion, were exported from the country, showing a 6.4 percent decline and also a 22 percent hike in weight and value respectively.

Accordingly, the imports of non-oil goods into the country showed a 12.2 percent decline and a 16.8 percent hike in weight and value respectively, the report added.

Based on the report of the ministry country's foreign trade value in the first four months of the current year hit about \$28.9 billion, the rate of which stood at about \$36.5 billion in the last year's corresponding period.

Serbia, Iran Discuss Economic, Political Collaborations



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Serbian and Iranian officials have held talks on expansion of cooperation in political and economic arenas both at bilateral and international levels.

Iran's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Political Issues Ali Bagheri Kani met with Serbian Foreign Minister Nikola Selaković and his Undersecretary Nemanja Starović separately in Belgrade.

In the meeting with the Serbian foreign minister, Bagheri Kani underscored that Serbia and Iran are expected to take common stances at international level relying on alignment in cooperation with independent states in order to strengthen peace and stability in the world.

Referring to a recent meeting between presidents of Serbia and Iran on the sidelines of the 77 UN General Assembly in New York, he stressed the need for expanding all-out ties between Belgrade and Tehran.

He also expressed hope that exchange of high-ranking delegations between the two countries would happen in the near future to pursue development of mutual ties in political, economic, military, cultural and scientific areas.

The Serbian minister and the Iranian deputy foreign minister censured the United States' double standards, when it comes to human rights, noting that Belgrade and Tehran do not support the policy of imposing sanctions on any nation.

During a meeting with the undersecretary of the Serbian foreign minister, Bagheri Kani called for speeding up the initiation of negotiations on signing a memorandum of understanding between the two countries.

On tourism industry, the Iranian official underlined that there is good capacity to expand mutual cooperation in this regard, urging for more efforts to facilitate tourism coordination.

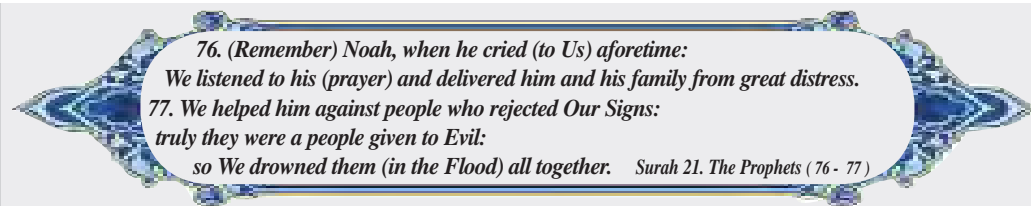
Nemanja Starović, for his part, said that the increasing interaction between ministries of foreign affairs of these two countries indicates that both ministries are determined to implement objectives proposed by presidents of Serbia and Iran.

According to the Serbian official, tradesmen in Serbia are keen on expanding ties with their Iranian partners.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:51
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:55
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:43
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:06



Iran to Begin E-Trade With Russia, Iraq, Turkey

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of National Post Company of the Islamic Republic of Iran says the company has started talks for e-trade with Russia and Iraq and Turkey.

Speaking in a press conference which was held on the occasion of World Post Day, Mahmoud Liaee pointed to the low postal services per capita in Iran, and added that the postal services per capita in the developed countries is a big number for example China has the biggest postal services per capita in the world.

He went on to say that the postal services per capita is 7, adding that almost 50% of the postal activities in the country is done by National Post Company.

Liaee reiterated that the company is run based on the incomes and if it cannot make money, it will be unable to upgrade its infrastructures for serving the people.

He added that the company offers some 170 postal services to the citizens, adding that the company is an establishment body and in the world some part of the post is under the control of the government and establishment. He reiterated that the developed countries are struggling with the problems like Iran's post company is struggling and tariff is the main problem.

Liaee stressed that the company is working to become a platform in order to minimize the government's control. He also said that this year the postal tariffs have



not changed base on the real costs and the company suffers losses.

He admitted recent unrests and disrupt in the internet system have reduced the revenues of the company by one-thirds. He said that for years officials have urged businessmen to shift their online businesses to the domestic platforms to avoid losses during the internet disrupt but unfortunately businesses have not paid any attention and now they are suffering.

On the international e-trade, he said that international post services are underway like previous years as some countries receive the parcels but they refrain from sending their postal parcels to Iran and the company has tried hard to stop this one-sided trade and it could normalize postal relation with South Korea but still some countries have not normalized postal cooperation with Iran.

Liaee went on to say that National Post Company intends to broaden its international e-trade and it has taken some actions for cooperation with Iraq, Turkey and Turkey and talks with a Russian post company has started for using platforms of each other for sales and sending logistics.

HOSCO, Tuka Foolad Sign MoU On Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) and Tuka Foolad Holding signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in line with boosting synergy among the affiliate companies of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) group.

In the ceremony for signing the MoU, the CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company Mr. Ataollah Maroufkhani said that the MoU was signed in line with emphasizes of the CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company for more synergy among the affiliate companies of the group for development and progress.

The MoU was signed between the CEO of HOSCO Mr. Maroufkhani and the CEO of Tuka Foolad Holding Mr. Ahmad Reza Sabzevari in presence of some officials of both companies.

After signing the deal, Maroufkhani pointed to the capabilities of HOSCO and said that HOSCO enjoys many considerable advantages like having the most advanced technologies for steel production, placing near the free waters and having several developmental projects in hands like Hormoz Simin Star, new sponge iron and hot rolling units. He added that HOSCO is considered as the most apt company of Mobarakeh Steel Company Group for investment and it is a good ground for investment.

He noted that HOSCO is shining like a star in MSC group and in the country and has been turned into a reputed global brand.

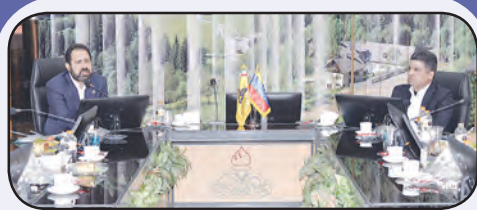
Maroufkhani went on to say that the CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company Dr. Tayyebnia seeks more synergy among the companies of the group and this MoU for cooperation between Tuka and HOSCO is signed in this regard.

He expressed hope with more synergy among the companies of the group, favorable results for development would happen.

Meanwhile the CEO of Tuka Foolad Holding Mr. Sabzevari, for his part, pointed to the capabilities of his holding which is active in different fields.

He added that MSC owns 53% of shares of Tuka and Tuka owns the most specialized support and backup in the national steel industry chain and HOSCO is a strategic point and it is the strong point of MSC group.

Tehran, Caracas Keen on Developing Gas Relations



TEHRAN (Shana) -- The CEO of Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company and the Vice President of Venezuela Oil Company in gas affairs met and discussed cooperation in the field of gas and equipment supply.

During the meeting, Reza Noshadi from Iran, told Juan Santana that there are very good relations between Iran and Venezuela, emphasizing the need to operationalize the items agreed in the previous negotiations.

"Iranian companies manufacture the most complex equipment with the best quality and according to the latest international standards," he said.

He continued: Relying on these potentialities, 10 gas pressure boosting stations and 7 storage plans are being implemented at the same time, which is a unique record.

The CEO of Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company further said: "This company, by relying on its brilliant background, is regarded as the largest developer of gas projects in the world, and is capable of implementing operational plans abroad and is interested in designing and supplying goods and implementing overseas projects in line with the latest standards."

Juan Santana, Vice President of Venezuela Oil Company for gas affairs, also expressed his satisfaction with his trip to Tehran, and announced his country's plan to open a joint cooperation office in Iran.

"Venezuela is interested in exploiting Iran's experiences in LNG production projects, gas liquefaction, construction of gas pressure boosting facilities, gas refineries and pipeline," he said.

Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company, on behalf of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), has recently signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Mines of Venezuela.

Iran Ready to Attract Russian Capital in Oil, Gas Projects

TEHRAN (MNA) - Oil Minister announced the readiness of the Iranian administration to attract the capital of Russians in the oil and gas sector.

Javad Owji, in a meeting with 100 economic activists of the Russian Federation, which was held on the sidelines of the second Caspian Economic Conference, discussed the existing agreements worth \$40 billion between the two countries.

"The Iranian administration is ready for the investment of Russian economic activists in the oil and gas sector, participation in fields, swapping of oil products, and exporting petrochemical products," he said.

In this meeting, Mohammad Mokhber, the first vice president, considered the creation of free zones as one of the ways to neutralize the sanctions, and said, "We should not be satisfied with the current volume of exchanges in the Astrakhan Free Zone, but a comprehensive plan should be designed and the development of economic cooperation should be provided."

"We must use the existing capacities such as the Caspian Economic Conference, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Union in such a way that the people of the countries in the region benefit from these opportunities," he added.

The first vice president stated, "Iran and Russia's economic operators should consider their ceiling much higher than the current level and by identifying mutual capacities and advantages, as well as the exchange of economic and trade delegations, improve the level of relations between them and the volume of trade exchanges."

Tehran Ready to Provide Russian Stores With Agricultural Products

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has expressed readiness to pave the way for Iranian companies to supply dairy and agricultural products to Russia's chain stores.

Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak made the remarks in a meeting with representatives of a Russian chain store on the sidelines of the second day of the Caspian Economic Forum in Moscow on Friday.

Payman-Pak also invited the Russian group to visit Iran and become familiar with Iranian companies' capabilities in order to sign contracts.

He also held talks with one of banking officials of Russia, underlining the need for developing banking cooperation between the two friendly countries, using local currencies, securing financial sources for implementation of projects, and issuing securities.

In the end of the Caspian Economic Forum, the TPO chairman said in the presence of Iranian first Vice President Mohammad Mokhber as well ministers of economy, oil and agriculture participated, and economic players in Russia that the allocated ratio on tariffs of agricultural products should be omitted for goods, which have been mentioned in the free trade memorandum of understanding of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the near future.

Resolving transportation and logistical problems especially in the Caspian Sea as well as issues related to finance and customs measures, exchange of trade and economic delegations, identification of capacities of Russia and Iran in particular in agriculture, oil, gas and petrochemical sectors were among the topics discussed in the meeting.



Iran's 4-Month Paper Production up 4.3% yr/yr

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran produced 390,700 tons of paper in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), according to the data released by Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

The ministry's data show that the country's paper output has increased 4.3 percent in the four-month period of this year from that of the previous year, IRIB reported.

The head of the Iranian Syndicate of Paper and Cardboard Manufacturers says that considering the country's potentials and capacities Iran could easily become a hub for the supply of mentioned products in the region.

"Due to the general conditions and available facilities, Iran has the potential to become a regional production hub in many industries including the paper and cardboard sector," Abolfazl Roghani Golpayegani told IRNA in June 2021.

Biggest Environmental Project of Isfahan Refinery Comes on Stream

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Head of Production of Isfahan Oil Refining Company says the biggest environmental project of the company for refining gas oil in Isfahan Refinery has come on operation and joined the grid.

Asghar Saberi said that with implementation of this gigantic project, all gas oil produced by the company will be Euro 5 and in accordance with the modern standards and offered to the compatriots, and said that this is the gift of the company to the dear compatriots on the occasion of the anniversary of the day Imam Mahdi (AS) was appointed as Imam.

He added that with implementation of this macro national project, the amount of sulfur in 23m liters of produced gas oil will decrease from 10,000 ppm to below 10 ppm.

He went on to say that the project of refining gas oil or desulfurization of Isfahan Oil Refining Company will have great impact on clearing the air of cities and towns of Isfahan Province.

Saberi then noted that in this environmental project, around 300 tons of sulfur per day will be removed from the produced gas oil, and stipulated that the obtained sulfur is produced as granulated and is offered to the demanding companies.



90% Progress in Water Supply Project in Lay Siah Village

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - Under a jihadi water supply project, the water supply to the Lay Siah village complex of Naeen in Province Isfahan Province has progressed 90% and it is predicted it will come on stream in two months.



The manager of Water and Wastewater Company of Naeen (ABFA of Naeen) Mr. Mohammad Ali Abbasi pointed to the establishment of the jihadi water supply headquarters in the energy ministry for water supply to 10,000 villages in 31 provinces of the country, adding that water supply to villages of Naeen in the form of this project has started since March 2022 and it has been decided that in the first phase, 54 villages in Naeen would enjoy access to sustainable drinking water.

He added that in the first phase of the jihadi water supply project to Naeen villages, implementation of the pipe-laying operation in two village complexes of Lay Siah, Kouhestan and Baharestan for 123 kilometers was put on the agenda.

He noted that the length of pipe-laying operation in Lay Siah is 43 kilometers and so far 35 kilometers of it has been implemented while it has been decided in the first phase of the project to provide sustainably the required water for 31 villages of Lay Siah Complex.

Abbasi further said that for this project construction of 6 pumping stations has been put on the agenda, adding that so far 4 pumping stations have been built and two more are under construction.

On the water supply to 23 villages in Baharestan and Kouhestan Complexes, he said that the length of pipe-laying of these complexes is 80 kilometers and due to lack of enough credit, so far 5 kilometers of this project has been implemented.

Abbasi also said that so far 186 villages are under water supply coverage of ABFA of Naeen, adding that drinking water of 105 villages is provided by water tankers.

U.S. Adds 31 Chinese Entities To Export Control List

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States on Friday added 31 Chinese companies, including memory chip maker YMTC Yangtze Memory Technologies Co, to a list of entities that U.S. officials could not inspect to verify they can be trusted to responsibly handle sensitive technology exports.

The U.S. also removed nine entities from the “unverified list,” including Wuxi Biologics, which was placed on the list in February sending its shares plummeting on the news.

U.S. exporters must conduct additional due diligence before sending goods to companies on the list and may have to apply for more licenses.



Zuma Set Free After Prison Term Ends

CAPE TOWN (Dispatches) - Former South African president Jacob Zuma has been set free following the expiry of his prison sentence for contempt of court, the government department said.

Zuma received a 15-month sentence last year after he ignored instructions to participate in a corruption inquiry.

He handed himself in on July 7 last year to begin his sentence, triggering the worst violence South Africa had seen in years as his angry supporters took to the streets.



Biden Claims Putin’s Nuclear Threat Brings Risk of Armageddon



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin’s threat to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine has brought the world closer to “Armageddon” than at any time since the Cold-War Cuban Missile Crisis, U.S. President Joe Biden said.

With his seven-month invasion unravelling, Putin celebrated his 70th birthday on Friday with fawning praise from some officials but little public fuss. That was a contrast to just a week ago when he staged a huge concert on Red Square to proclaim the annexation of nearly a fifth of Ukrainian land.

In a clear repudiation of Putin’s record, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Russia’s most prominent human rights group, Memorial, which Moscow shut down over the past year. A Ukrainian human rights group and a jailed campaigner against abuses by the pro-Russian government in Belarus were also awarded.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Kyiv’s forces were swiftly recapturing more territory, including more than 500 square kilometres in the south where they burst through a second major front this week.

Russia’s failings on the battlefield have brought unusual public recrimination from Kremlin allies, with one Russian-installed leader in occupied Ukrainian territory going so far as to suggest Putin’s defence minister should have shot himself.

Biden said the prospect of defeat could make Putin desperate enough to use nuclear weapons, the biggest risk since U.S. President John Kennedy and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev faced off over missiles in Cuba in 1962.

“We have not faced the prospect of Armageddon since Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis,” Biden said in New York.

Putin was “not joking when he talks about potential use of tactical nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons, because his military is, you might say, is significantly underperforming,” Biden said.

The Nobel Peace Prize for Memorial, the rights group shut down in Russia as illegal “foreign agents” last December,

was the most open rebuke of Moscow’s record by the prize committee since it bestowed the award on Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov in 1975. Sakharov had been named Memorial’s first chairman shortly before his death in 1989.

Memorial was honored along with jailed Belarusian activist Ales Byalyatski and Ukraine’s Center for Civil Liberties. Committee Chair Berit Reiss-Andersen denied the awards were a statement against Putin.

“We always give the prize for something and to something, and not against someone,” she told reporters. He Russian group, now operating in exile, said the award recognised its colleagues who continue to suffer “unspeakable attacks and reprisals” in Russia.

“It encourages us in our resolve to support our Russian colleagues to continue their work at a new location, despite the forced dissolution of MEMORIAL International in Moscow,” said a statement by Memorial board member Anke Giesen to Reuters.

In Geneva, the U.N. Human Rights Council passed a motion to appoint an independent expert on human rights abuse allegations in Russia, accusing Moscow of creating a “climate of fear” through repression and violence.

It was the first time the body had set up a “special rapporteur” to examine the record of one of a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council. Russia said it showed the West was using the United Nations for political ends.

Putin was shown on state television meeting leaders of other ex-Soviet allies at an informal summit in St Petersburg on Friday, but commentators mentioned his birthday only in passing.

Belarus, Russia, Ukraine Rights Activists Win Nobel Peace Prize

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Jailed activist Ales Bialiatski from Belarus, the Russian organisation Memorial and the Ukrainian Center for Civil Liberties group have won the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to document rights abuses.

The announcement was made at the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Norway’s capital, Oslo.

“The Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to honor three outstanding champions of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence in the neighbor countries Belarus, Russia and Ukraine,” said Committee Chair Berit Reiss-Andersen, who also called on Belarus to release Bialiatski from prison.

The Nobel Peace Prize, worth 10 million Swedish crowns, or about \$900,000, will be presented in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, who founded the awards in his 1895 will.

“The Peace Prize laureates represent civil society in their home countries. They have for many years promoted the right to criticize power and protect the fundamental rights of citizens,” the Norwegian Nobel Committee said in its citation.

“They have made an outstanding effort to document war crimes, human right abuses and the abuse of power. Together they demonstrate the significance of civil society for peace and democracy.” The office the human rights group Memorial in Moscow

Memorial said that winning the award was recognition of its human rights work and of colleagues who continue to suffer “unspeakable attacks and reprisals” in Russia. “It encourages us in our resolve to support our Russian colleagues to continue their work at a new location, despite the forced dissolution of MEMORIAL International in Moscow,” said a statement by Memorial board member Anke Giesen to Reuters news agency.

As for the Center for Civil Liberties, its representative Volodymyr Yavorskyi told the Associated Press news agency that the award was important because “for many years we worked in a country that was invisible”.

Arch foes Armenia and Azerbaijan have been locked in a decades-long territorial dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region – situated in Muslim-majority Azerbaijan with mostly Christian Armenian residents.

Last month, at least 286 people were killed on both sides before a United States-brokered truce ended the worst clashes since 2020, when simmering tensions escalated into all-out war.

The conflict killed more than 6,500 people in six weeks before a Russian-brokered ceasefire saw Armenia cede swaths of territory it had controlled for decades.

The two ex-Soviet neighbors have long seen Moscow’s influence in the volatile Caucasus region. But Moscow is visibly losing sway as it turns its attention to Ukraine – allowing for the US and the EU to take a leading role in mediating the Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization process.



Armenia, Azerbaijan Agree to Civilian EU Mission Alongside Border

YEREVAN (Dispatches) - Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to a civilian EU mission alongside their border, where the worst fighting between the two countries since 2020 killed more than 200 people last month, according to the European Council.

The mission that will start by the end of this month aims to help delineate the border between the two countries for a maximum of two months, the council said.

The agreement was reached after Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev, Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, France’s President Emmanuel Macron and European Council President Charles Michel met in Prague on Thursday on the margins of the first gathering of the European Political Community.

“Armenia and Azerbaijan confirmed their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Alma Ata 1991 Declaration through which both recognize each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,” the European Council said.

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South Korea, U.S. Stage Drills With Aircraft Carrier

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea and the United States began joint maritime exercises with a U.S. aircraft carrier, South Korea’s military said, a day after it scrambled fighter jets in reaction to an apparent North Korean bombing drill.

The maritime drills will take place in waters off South Korea’s east coast on Oct. 7-8, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said. The drills come after North Korea launched a pair of ballistic missiles into the sea on Thursday, and later flew warplanes near the border with the South.

“We will continue to strengthen our operational capabilities and readiness to respond to any provocations by North Korea through joint drills with ... the USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group,” South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

The U.S. strike group already participated in trilateral missile defense exercises with warships from Japan and South Korea this week, prompted by a test on Tuesday in which North Korea launched a ballistic missile that overflew part of Japan.

Senior defense officials from Japan, South Korea and the United States discussed the latest developments in a call on Friday, condemning the North Korean launches and agreeing that recent trilateral maritime drills have improved their ability to respond to North Korea, South Korea’s ministry of defense said in a statement.

In a meeting with South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup, Admiral John Aquilino, the commander

of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, said North Korea’s provocations seriously threaten the security of the region. He emphasized that his forces would actively support efforts to deter and respond to the North Korean threat, the ministry said in a separate statement.

Lee also held a meeting of senior officials to discuss the latest launches and to evaluate South Korea’s “three-axis” defense system designed to counter North Korea’s military threats, including war plans that call for preemptive strikes if necessary.

“He emphasized the need to deliver a clear message that nuclear and missile development will only create a more difficult situation for North Korea,” the defense ministry said in a statement.

The rare bombing drill by at least eight North Korean fighter jets and four bombers on Thursday prompted the South to deploy 30 fighters. The warplanes swarmed each side of the heavily fortified border amid rising tensions over a string of missile tests by Pyongyang.

On Thursday North Korea condemned the United States for repositioning the aircraft carrier near the peninsula, saying it posed a serious threat to the stability of the situation.

In the statement, the North Korean foreign ministry also criticized Washington for calling a United Nations Security Council meeting over the launches, saying they were a “just countermeasure” to the joint U.S.-South Korea drills.



Solomon Islands PM Says Foreign Military Sites Never Allowed

LONDON (Dispatches) - Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has said that foreign military installations will never be established in his country, an apparent reference to a security pact he signed with China earlier this year.

Sogavare made his comments during a meeting with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Canberra on Thursday, the state-run Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) reported.

“Solomon Islands will not do anything that will undermine its own national security and jeopardize the security of any or all (Pacific Island) Forum countries,” Sogavare said, according to an SIBC report.

“Solomon Islands will never be used for foreign military installations or institutions of foreign countries,” the prime minister said.

“About China, this is a sensitive issue we discussed and I assured Australia when I met with Anthony Albanese yesterday that we will not allow such to happen,” Sogavare said in a written reply to questions sent by the AFP news agency.

Previously, Sogavare had said that China would be permitted to build wharves and airports, which could be useful for civilian and military purposes.

Australia, the United States and New Zealand had expressed growing concern that the security pact would lead to China setting up a military outpost on their doorstep in the Pacific region.

Tensions between Honiara and Canberra increased more recently when Sogavare blasted an offer from Australia to fund the Solomons’ next election. Australia offered to fund the election to prevent a delay in voting, which Sogavare said would be necessary as the country was unable to fund the Pacific Games and an election in the same year.

Sogavare blasted Canberra’s offer as interference, but then later accepted it.

In a joint statement issued by Albanese’s office after their meeting on Thursday, the leaders said they had discussed bilateral ties, the climate crisis, and “shared aspirations for a peaceful, prosperous and resilient Pacific”.



OPEC+ Move Reignites Americans' Top Worry Ahead of November Midterms

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A production cut by the OPEC+ oil cartel is reigniting U.S. voters' No. 1 fear - high inflation - and handing a potential boost to Republican candidates less than five weeks before the Nov. 8 midterm elections.

President Joe Biden's White House has condemned the announced cut to production targets by the Saudi Arabia-led cartel, which sent energy prices higher after they had eased from summer highs.

The move late in the campaign season unsettled a growing consensus that Biden's Democrats could stem their losses in the U.S. House of Representatives -- though they are still expected to lose their narrow majority. Democrats are still favored to hold their razor-thin Senate majority.

But political strategists from both parties say Democrats' hopes in either chamber could take a hit as voters across the country find themselves forking over more money at the pump.

"No Democrat wants an environment where people have to spend more money," said Joel Payne, a Democratic strategist who worked on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

Republicans have pounced on the issue.

"Under Biden - OPEC controls our destiny rather than American energy independence," Pat Harrigan, a Republican House candidate in North Carolina, said in a tweet.

Republicans have hammered Democrats all year over inflation, which has reached four-decade highs as gasoline prices surged with Russia's March invasion of Ukraine. Moscow is also a member of OPEC+ and played a role in the cartel's decision this week to cut output.

Inflation is a major reason that Biden's public approval rating has remained below 50% for more than a year, weighing on his party's congressional candidates. Control of either chamber of Congress could allow Republicans to bring Biden's legislative agenda to a halt and launch potentially damaging investigations.

Republicans argue for loosening government restrictions on U.S. energy production as a way to lower costs. Biden's Democrats have responded to high inflation with a \$430 billion package signed into law in August which lowers healthcare costs and encourages clean energy.

Payne, the Democratic consultant, said the party should try to blunt the negative impact of the energy shock by showing voters they are trying to address the issue.

Biden said on Wednesday he will continue releasing oil "as necessary" from the government's stock of reserves to combat high prices, and has called on Congress to find ways to reduce OPEC+'s power over prices.

"OPEC must be held responsible for this action," said U.S. Representative Mike Thompson, a moderate Democrat from California who has voted for proposals that would open OPEC to antitrust lawsuits but which have yet to win full congressional approval.

Voters, including Biden's Democrats, overwhelmingly cite inflation as their top concern, an echo of the 1970s energy crisis that helped Republican Ronald Reagan unseat Democratic President Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll completed Oct. 3 showed inflation was the No. 1 concern for 30% of registered voters, including a fifth of Democrats and two fifths of Republicans. Much smaller shares said their top worry was unemployment, crime or immigration.

Respondents cited inflation as their biggest personal concern eight times more often than they cited worries about someone in their household losing their job.

Moreover, 41% of registered voters said Republicans had the best approach for handling inflation, compared with 30% who picked Democrats.



Click Chemistry, Nobel-Winning Science That May Change the World

PARIS (Dispatches) - The Nobel Chemistry Prize was awarded to three scientists for their work on click chemistry, a way to snap molecules together like Lego that experts say will soon "change the world".

But how exactly does it work?

Imagine two people walking through a mostly empty room towards each other then shaking hands.

"That's how a classical chemical reaction is done," said Benjamin Schumann, a chemist at Imperial College, London.

But what if there was lots of furniture and other people clogging up the room?

"They might not meet each other," Schumann said.

Now imagine those people were molecules, tiny groups of atoms that form the basis of chemistry.

"Click chemistry makes it possible for two molecules that are in an environment where you have lots of other things around" to meet and join with each other, he told AFP.

The way click chemistry snaps together molecular building blocks is also often compared to Lego.

But Carolyn Bertozzi, who shared this year's chemistry Nobel with Barry Sharpless and Morten Meldal, said it would take a very special kind of Lego.

Even if two Legos were "surrounded by millions of other very similar plastic toys" they would only click in to each other, she told AFP.

Around the year 2000, Sharpless and Meldal separately discovered a specific chemical reaction using copper ions as a catalyst which "changed the playing field" and became "the cream of the crop", said Silvia Diez-Gonzalez, a chemist at the Imperial College, London.

Copper has many advantages, including that reactions could involve water and be done at room temperature rather than at high heat which can complicate matters.

This particular way of connecting molecules was far more flexible, efficient and targeted than had ever been possible before.

Since its discovery, chemists have been finding out all the different kinds of molecular architecture they can build with their special new Lego blocks.

"The applications are almost endless," said Tom Brown, a British chemist at Oxford University that has worked on DNA click chemistry.

But there was one problem with using copper as a catalyst. It can be toxic for the cells of living organisms -- such as humans.

So Bertozzi built on the foundations of Sharpless and Meldal's work, designing a copperless "way of using click chemistry with biological systems without killing them," Diez-Gonzalez said.

Previously the molecules clicked together in a straight flat line -- like a seat belt -- but Bertozzi discovered that forcing them "to be a bit bent" made the reaction more stable, Diez-Gonzalez said.

Bertozzi called the field she created bioorthogonal chemistry -- orthogonal means intersecting at right angles.

Diez-Gonzalez said she was "a bit surprised" that the field had been awarded with a Nobel so soon, because "there are not that many commercial applications out there yet".

But the future looks bright.

"We're kind of at the tip of the iceberg," said American Chemical Society President Angela Wilson, adding that this "chemistry is going to change the world."



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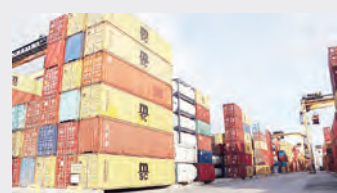


Exports in Turkish Lira Up 182% YoY in September

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Exports in Turkish lira increased by 182% in September compared to the same month of the previous year, reaching TL 16.3 billion (\$877.2 million), according to the official data.

The overall exports in last month rose by 9.2% year-over-year, amounted to \$22.6 billion, according to the report by Anadolu Agency (AA) which cited data from the Trade Ministry.

In September, foreign trade volume increased by 26% compared to the same period of 2021 and reached \$55.6 billion, while imports reached \$33 billion due to the increase in energy and commodity prices.



IMF Chief Urges Action as Global Recession Risks Rise

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva urged global policymakers to take concerted action to avoid a "dangerous 'new normal,'" as the risks of a worldwide recession are driven ever higher by repeated economic shocks.

In a speech ahead of the fund's annual meetings next week, the IMF's managing director said it was critical to "stabilize the global economy by addressing the most immediate challenges" -- including rampant inflation.

Policymakers need to act together to "prevent this period of heightened fragility from becoming a dangerous 'new normal,'" Georgieva said.

But she warned the process will be painful -- and that if central banks move too aggressively to tamp down price pressures, it could trigger a "prolonged" economic downturn.

Finance ministers and central bank governors from more than 180 nations will gather next week in Washington for the first fully in-person meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank since 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Faced with the "darkening global outlook ... the risks of recession are rising," Georgieva said -- announcing that the crisis lender plans to once again downgrade its 2023 forecast for the world economy, in the forecasts due to be published next week for the annual meeting.

One-third of countries are expected to see at least two quarters of contraction, and "even when growth is positive, it will feel like a recession" because of rising prices eroding incomes, she said.

The fund in July slashed its growth forecast for this year to 3.2 percent, and for next year to 2.9 percent -- the third consecutive downgrade.

The meetings come at a difficult time for the global economy, with the pandemic largely under control, but soaring inflation and rising interest rates now threatening to reverberate around the globe and choke off nascent recoveries.

"In less than three years we lived through shock, after shock, after shock," Georgieva said in her speech at Georgetown University.

Global supply snarls already were a challenge as demand surged following the pandemic slowdown, fueling inflation worldwide, and strains worsened in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine -- which Georgieva called a "senseless war" -- sending food and food prices soaring.

"Far from being transitory, inflation has become more persistent," and acting before high prices become entrenched is a key challenge for policymakers, Georgieva said -- warning that "the cost of a policy misstep can be enormous."

"Not tightening enough would cause inflation to become deanchored and entrenched," but moving "too much and too fast -- and doing so in a synchronized manner across countries -- could push many economies into prolonged recession," she said.

Despite the risks, central banks need to continue "act decisively."

"This is not easy, and it will not be without pain in the near term," she cautioned. "But the key is to avoid much greater and longer-lasting pain for everyone later on."

South Korea Transfers \$780m to Turkish Central Bank

ANKARA (Dispatches) - South Korea made a transfer worth \$780 million to Turkey's central bank last week, a portion of the \$2 billion agreed under a swap deal signed in 2021, two bankers told Reuters.

The total amount transferred to Turkey from South Korea under the deal is now worth almost \$1 billion, said bankers, citing calculations based on the central bank's balance sheet and reserves data.

The Turkish central bank did not comment on the issue.

Turkey's central bank has swap deals in local currencies with several of its counterparts worth a total of \$28 billion. It signed a deal with China for \$6 billion, with Qatar for \$15 billion, with the United Arab Emirates for around \$5 billion.

The Turkish central bank's reserves have declined sharply in recent years, mainly due to market interventions totaling \$128 billion in 2019-2020 to support the lira. It has taken more indirect steps to stop the currency's decline this year, taking on a more dominant role in the forex market. Its net forex reserves stood at \$9.72 billion as of Sept. 30, data showed on Thursday, up from a 20-year low of \$6.07 billion it touched in July.

The bank has built up its reserves through swap deals and more recently through newly opened depo accounts in dollars or euros. During periods when reserves rose, President Tayyip Erdogan had said "friendly countries are supporting" the central bank.

Azeri SOCAR has a depo account worth 1 billion euros at the Turkish central bank, while another central bank, the name of which has not been disclosed, has an account worth almost \$2 billion.

Moody's Says Credit Suisse Could Suffer \$3b Loss in 2022

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Rating agency Moody's Investors Service expects losses for Credit Suisse to swell to \$3 billion by year-end, potentially bringing its core capital below the key 13% level, Moody's lead analyst on the bank told Reuters.

Credit Suisse has reported 1.9 billion francs (\$1.92 billion) of losses in the first half of the year. In July, the bank said it expected to operate with a common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio of between 13% and 14% for the rest of 2022.

"We are forecasting further losses in the second half of the year," said Alessandro Roccati, senior vice president in the financial institutions group of the rating agency. "We're looking at \$3 billion losses for the full year, which means the CET1 is going to be slightly below 13%."

If the core capital ratio stays "consistently" below 13% it would be "credit negative" for the bank, Roccati said in an interview.

The Swiss lender has been battered by scandals and losses and is racing through a restructuring plan under new Chief Executive Ulrich Koerner. Wild market swings and a social media storm are making it increasingly difficult for the bank to stem losses and regain its footing. Moody's downgraded its rating on Credit Suisse in August and has since kept its negative outlook. The downgrade reflected how difficult it will be for Credit Suisse to reposition its investment bank amid slowing economic growth and bumpy markets. Earlier Thursday, S&P Global (NYSE:SPGI) affirmed its rating and said the outlook remains negative for the bank. "The current market environment is not supportive of restructuring and is not supportive of Credit Suisse's current capital market business model," Roccati said. "Deteriorating market conditions have affected the potential realization value of businesses they were considering to sell."

In July, Credit Suisse announced its second strategy review in a year and replaced its chief executive, bringing in restructuring expert Koerner to prune its investment banking arm and cut more than \$1 billion in costs. The bank is considering measures to scale back its investment bank into a "capital-light, advisory-led" business, and is evaluating a sale of its securitized products business.

Credit Suisse's U.S. businesses focusing on structured products and leveraged finance previously generated big profits because of low interest rates, but those fortunes have now changed. "Now clearly, interest rates are significantly increased. And the credit conditions are not benign anymore." "The kind of business model, which is in any case geared towards sort of high yield products and complex products, is not a business which will deliver strong profits."

ECB Says Forceful Rate Hikes Needed In Inflation Fight

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank does not believe slowing economic activity will be enough to tame inflation alone, meaning "forceful" interest rate hikes were still needed, according to minutes published on Friday.

The ECB lifted rates by a historic 0.75 percentage points at its last meeting in September to pull down eurozone consumer prices, which have hit an all-time high.

Higher prices -- particularly of energy following Russia's invasion of Ukraine -- are expected to slow economic activity and potentially trigger a recession, which could naturally lead to inflation dropping.

But the ECB's governing council believes "the expected weakening in economic activity would not be sufficient to reduce inflation to a significant extent", according to minutes of its September 8 meeting.

The slowdown "would not in itself bring projected inflation back to (the ECB's two-per cent) target," they said.

The 25-member council faced a "difficult challenge of ensuring that inflation returned to target in a timely manner without unnecessarily exacerbating an economic downturn", the notes showed.

But they argued growth concerns should not stop a "needed forceful increase in interest rates".

The ECB believes that "acting forcefully now could avoid the need to increase interest rates more sharply later in the economic cycle when the economy was slowing down", according to the minutes.

ECB president Christine Lagarde has already signalled the Frankfurt-based institution will continue to hike rates to bring inflation down in the 19-member eurozone.

The minutes showed that a "very large number of members" of the governing council called for a 75-basis-point hike, although some initially preferred a 50-basis-point increase.

Andrew Kenningham, of Capital Economics, said the minutes "suggest that the ECB would rather tighten policy aggressively before a recession takes hold", and predicted a 100-basis-point hike at its next meeting in late October.

Porsche Overtakes Volkswagen as Europe's Most Valuable Carmaker



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Porsche took pole position as Europe's most valuable automaker on Thursday, overtaking former parent Volkswagen as the price of the sportscar maker's newly-listed shares sped higher.

Although Porsche shares had fallen below its listing price on Monday to 81 euros, in line with a wider fall in markets, they rose to 93 euros (\$91.95) earlier on Thursday, giving the sportscar brand a market valuation of 85 billion euros.

They later eased to 91.04 euros by 1308 GMT but the company's valuation was still well above that of Volkswagen at just under 84 billion euros.

Porsche's share price regained momentum after investment banks involved in its flotation had purchased almost 3.8 million shares for 312.8 million euros as part of the so-called greenshoe option, designed to support a listing.

Volkswagen is valued at 77.7 billion euros with Mercedes-Benz third among European carmakers with a 57.2 billion euro valuation, followed by BMW at 47.5 billion euros and Stellantis at 39.7 billion.

"Inflation data from Europe and the United States, recent worries over energy supply in Europe and the escalation of the war in Ukraine last Thursday led to fluctuations which made small-scale stabilisation measures necessary," a spokesperson for Volkswagen said.

Porsche is the fifth most valuable listed company in Germany, after Linde, SAP, Deutsche Telekom and Siemens, and the 25th most valuable stock in Europe, above giants like Glencore.

The shares purchased between Sept 29. and Oct 4. represented around 11% of the total trading volume since the listing, the spokesperson added, consisting of around 34 million shares.

Overall, up to 14.85 million shares worth 1.2 billion euros are available via the greenshoe option in the four weeks after the offering as a stabilisation measure.

Bank of America acquired the shares for between 81 - 82.50 euros, compared to the original issue price of 82.50, it said in a statement on Wednesday.

World Bank Cuts India's Growth Forecast to 6.5%

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The World Bank trimmed India's growth forecast for this financial year by a full percentage point and predicted a 9.5% contraction in crisis-hit Sri Lanka, as rising commodity prices and debt trouble hit economies in South Asia.

Growth estimates for the region - comprising India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives - were revised down to 5.8% from 6.8% forecast in June. India's forecast was trimmed to 6.5% from 7.5%.

The bank cited the impact of war in Ukraine, which has caused a rise in commodity prices, and the uneven recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. It forecast inflation in the region rising to 9.2% this year before gradually subsiding.

"Private investment growth is likely to be dampened by heightened uncertainty and higher financing costs," the World Bank said in its twice-a-year report on South Asia, noting that slowing global demand will impact the country's exports.

Afghanistan was excluded from the regional report as it had not released national account data since the Taliban took power in August 2021.

The region's economies grew at 7.8% in 2021, when most were recovering from the pandemic slump.

Last week, the Reserve Bank of India cut its growth forecast to 7% from an earlier estimate of 7.2% after raising the benchmark repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.9% as it battles to contain high inflation - seen to remain above 6% until early 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic, swings in global liquidity and commodity prices along with weather disasters had hit the regional economies in a rapid succession.

"In the face of these shocks, countries need to build stronger fiscal and monetary buffers," said Martin Raiser, World Bank Vice President for South Asia, urging the governments to use scarce resources to protect people.

The World Bank also urged the governments to ease restrictions on labor movement by introducing flexible visa policies and support migrant workers to protect long-term development prospects.



Iran, Oman Money Transfer Network to Be Launched

TEHRAN (IP) - The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization announced the launch of a money transfer network for Iranian companies and businessmen in Oman.

The relations between Iran and Oman in the last few decades, despite the tensions in the Persian Gulf and America's efforts to intensify Iranophobia, have always been

based on mutual respect and interests.

Omani officials believe that close relations with Iran are based on realism and consider Iran a great neighbor.

The two countries do not have any territorial and border disputes with each other; Iran's support for Oman has been positively and permanently imprinted in Oman's historical memory.



World Bank Spent Almost \$15b on Fossil Fuel Projects Since Paris Deal

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The World Bank has pumped \$14.8 billion into fossil fuel projects globally in the period following the landmark Paris climate accord, a report said.

Though the multilateral lender pledged in 2018 to end financing for upstream oil and gas, the move failed to include indirect financing via intermediaries, according to the report compiled by an NGO coalition called The Big Shift Global.

It comes amid growing pressure on US President Joe Biden to fire World Bank chief David Malpass, a Trump appointee who has dodged questions about the reality of human-driven climate change.

"Each time the World Bank invests in another fossil fuel project, it fuels more climate disaster," said Sophie Richmond of the Big Shift Campaign. "There is no justification for using taxpayers' money to exacerbate the climate crisis."

Under the 2015 Paris deal, world leaders committed to limiting long-term warming to 1.5 Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) to avert devastating outcomes for the planet's future habitability.

The biggest project listed in the report, called "Investing in Climate Disaster: World Bank Finance for Fossil Fuels," was the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline in Azerbaijan, funded in 2018 to the tune of \$1.1 billion.

"It serves to perpetuate on-going use of fossil gas in Europe," the report said, while noting that while the pipeline may increase gas export revenues, market volatility makes it an unreliable source of income.

The World Bank Group's own assessment stated the project was "expected to have potentially significant adverse social and environmental impacts that are diverse, irreversible, or unprecedented."

These impacts included "landscape, water quality, air quality, noise levels, waste water, solid waste, hazardous waste, biodiversity, worker health and safety and communities health and safety during construction and operation and physical and economic resettlement."

Despite this, the project was given the green light.

Another project highlighted was the construction of two coal plants in Indonesia called Java 9 and 10, where the Bank supplied \$65 million in indirect funds -- despite the fact



that the Java and Bali grid is already experiencing 40 percent oversupply of electricity.

"It is obvious that the new Java 9 & 10 coal-fired power plants will bring more disaster in terms of environmental, social and health issues, in an area already covered with coal plants and industries," said Yuyun Indradi of Trend Asia, an NGO that promotes clean energy.

The report's authors also rejected the Bank's treatment of natural gas as a "bridge" between fossil fuels and renewable energy, saying it crowded out needed investments in clean energy.

In a statement to AFP, the World Bank said, "We dispute the findings of the report: it makes inaccurate assumptions about the World Bank Group's lending.

"In fiscal year 2022, the Bank Group delivered a record \$31.7 billion for climate-related investments, to help communities around the world respond to the climate crisis, and build a safer and cleaner future."

France Unveils Plans For Avoiding Winter Power Cuts



PARIS (Dispatches) - The French government announced a package of measures on Thursday aimed at curtailing energy consumption nationwide to avoid possible power cuts or energy shortages as Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupts gas supplies to western Europe.

The French government on Thursday launched a package of measures aimed at cutting the country's energy consumption by 10 percent in the hope of getting through the winter without power cuts.

Energy Transition Minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher told a crowd -- which included several cabinet ministers, business leaders and other officials -- that the target was "only the first step" towards an objective of cutting energy use by 40 percent by 2050.

"Urgent action is needed," she said, calling for "a general mobilization" in favor of restraint in energy use which should lead to a 10-percent reduction in energy use within two years compared to its 2019 level.

"Our fight does not end with the winter of 2022-2023," she added.

Energy prices, already on the rise at the end of last year, spiked further after Russia's invasion of Ukraine which caused severe disruptions in gas supplies to western Europe.

The energy plan comes a day after the announcement that French gas reserves are at 100 percent but experts warn this may not be enough, depending on the severity of the coming winter.

To avoid shortages, the government recommended a host of measures, including less heating and lighting, more remote work for staff in government services and boosting carpooling.

The government hoped citizens and businesses would voluntarily follow the suggestions, which Pannier-Runacher said were not meant as "punitive ecology".

Earlier Thursday, President Emmanuel Macron told business leaders: "If we all mobilize to meet this objective, we will get through the winter even in the most unfavorable scenarios."

He said the aim of the plan was not less production or declining economic growth.

"Restraint simply means becoming more efficient," he said. A key recommendation is to cap indoor temperatures at 19 degrees Celsius (66 Fahrenheit) although, said Pannier-Runacher, "there will be no temperature police" checking on compliance.

Households, businesses and administrations should also start heating two weeks later this autumn and winter, and end heating two weeks earlier than usual.

The temperature of public indoor sports facilities will be cut by two degrees Celsius, and that of the water in public swimming pools by one degree.

Month Before COP27, Host Egypt Faces Heat Over Rights, Climate Action

CAIRO (Dispatches) - A month before Egypt hosts the UN climate change conference, Cairo is finalizing the list of world leaders coming as it weathers criticism over its human rights and environmental records.

Cairo voiced disappointment that King Charles III, a long-time champion of the environment, cancelled a plan to attend and speak at COP27 after Britain's Prime Minister Liss Truss reportedly objected.

"We hope this does not signal Britain stepping back from the global climate change movement" after it chaired last year's COP in Glasgow, a COP spokesman was quoted as saying by the Guardian daily.

Egypt will from November 6 host the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Critics have questioned the choice of venue, pointing to Egypt's mixed record on the environment and on civil rights, with thousands of dissidents in jail, including Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, who has been on a hunger strike for months.

Human Rights Watch warned that Egypt may "try to use its role as the COP27 presidency to promote an image of openness and tolerance, although political oppression under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government has caused one of the country's worst human rights crises in decades".

Protests of the kind that have sought to spur action at past climate summits are expected to be muted, and civil society groups have been relegated to a building away from the main venue.

"We have already been told that only registered protests are allowed," said Patience Nabukalu, of the Ugandan branch of activist group Fridays For Future.

High room rates for hotels in the resort town will keep away many activists, especially from Africa, she said, adding: "Where are the victims in this COP?"

The conference will once more seek to boost global efforts to slow the climate crisis that is intensifying natural disasters, from wildfires to severe storms such as Hurricane Ian that just hit Florida.

Egypt itself faces major threats, from soaring temperatures in its vast desert areas to rising seas flooding its breadbasket the Nile River delta.

But the summit comes as global attention is focused on other turmoil, from Russia's war in Ukraine, which is driving sky-high food and energy prices, to crises from Iran to Taiwan to North Korea.

Constitution Recognizes...

FROM PAGE 1

In response to a question about the reforms of the Morality Police mechanism for confronting those women violating the dress code of the country, the spokesman said that if any bill is proposed by the Parliament or the High Council of Cultural Revolution, the guardian council would examine it.

Still, with regard to the reforms to the election law, he said the law had to be decided upon by the lawmakers themselves, and the council would examine it in the last step.

The spokesman of the supervisory body of the country, however, said that those officials elected by the people came from different political parties and must claim responsibility for their shortcomings.

He also said that the legal body had not found the possibility of electronic voting against Sharia and the Constitution.

Tahan Nazif stressed that the next plan is to amend

Article 122 of the Parliament's Internal Regulations Law, which is about the possibility of electronic voting, which was not found to be against Sharia and the Constitution.

The spokesperson of the Guardian Council explained more about the fund for special and incurable diseases, saying:

"It was received from the government and was approved in the first stage without any problems, and we hope that with this facility, we will witness a situation where the pain of these loved ones will be reduced."

He continued: "The next fundamental thing is to amend the statutes of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, which was not found to be contrary to Sharia and the Constitution. We examined 7 articles of the statutes in the Guardian Council, and the texts and drafts were similar, we had a few problems and ambiguities regarding all of them."

Tehran Slams...

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"The resolution showed that the European Parliament is continuing its selective behavior towards the great Iranian nation as the Parliament, despite its claims, has never issued any human rights resolution to condemn inhumane sanctions against Iranian people," he added.

He noted that an investigation into the death of Mahsa Amini is underway according to internal laws and upon order of senior officials of the country and "not for pleasing others."

The case of Ms Amini is "just an excuse" for hardline members of the EU Parliament to continue their "animosity" against the Islamic Republic of Iran, added the spokesman.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready for bilateral interaction with all parties based on mutual respect and interests, however, it will firmly stand against any effort to impose pressure or resort to restrictive measures against Iranian people and will give an appropriate reciprocal response to it," Kan'ani stressed.

Denmark, Land of Peace or...

FROM PAGE 1

He also criticized the Danish police for their belated response to the intrusion.

The envoy then briefed the foreign minister on the circumstances surrounding the attack, saying, "After trespassing on the embassy's premises, the assailant, carrying a cold weapon, started to threaten, terrorize and cause damage to the vehicles in the parking lot of the embassy."

"Unfortunately, despite the previous official warnings, the Danish police arrived at the embassy with considerable delay," Nadipour added.

The director general of West Europe at the Iranian Foreign Ministry also summoned Denmark's ambassador to Tehran to officially protest over a lack of security for Iran's embassy and its diplomats.

During a meeting, the Danish ambassador was reminded of the responsibility of the host government to protect the diplomatic missions of other countries and of the need for the Danish government to adhere to its international obligations in that regard.

In response, the Danish ambassador apologized for the incident, saying security measures will be strengthened after the incident.

He added that he will immediately convey Iran's protest to Copenhagen.

A couple of days ago such a similar anti-Iran offence happened in Sweden and Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Sweden's chargé d'affaires to protest an attack on the Iranian embassy in Stockholm.

The Swedish diplomat was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry in the absence of the ambassador to convey the Islamic Republic's strong protest with regard to the Swedish police's failure to take the fully required security measures in accordance with the Vienna Convention.

These countries which claim of freedom of expression and observing international laws are even themselves unable to observe the simplest international principle which is to protect fully the diplomatic mission.

We have not yet forgotten the action of European countries when the British Embassy and Saudi Arabia Embassy in Tehran were attacked by some protesters in the country. They reacted as if the Islamic Republic of Iran has committed crime and decided to withdraw their envoys and when it is their turn, they forget their obligations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran once again warns the European countries not to side with the anti-Islamic Revolution protesters and offenders and it wants them to abide by the international diplomatic laws.

Unfortunately European countries in recent days have joined rioters inside Iran through their verbal encouragement and support but they are better to stay away from the rioters and mind their own businesses.

The Scandinavian countries, which have turned into the haven for terrorists as Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has reiterated, are better to expel terrorists from their lands if they really seek peace and stability otherwise those terrorists will continue such violent acts and will tarnish their reputation as lands of tranquility.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is patient but enemies should not test its patience because they may face a strong response and Tehran wants peaceful relations with all countries but it will defend its rights and the anti-revolutionaries are better to remain quiet because they are so petty to shake the pillars of the Islamic Revolution.

Iran, UAE...

FROM PAGE 1

In a report, released in mid-September, the Research Center of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) stated that the United Arab Emirates' new strategies for inking free trade agreements with India and Turkey is going to further enhance the Islamic Republic's mediatory role in the region.

As one of Iran's top trade partners in the region, UAE has always been a hot market for Iranian businessmen and traders and the expansion of this country's economic relations with Iran's neighbors could positively impact Iranian trade with them as well.

Based on the mentioned report, the UAE has recently focused on forming free trade agreements with a range of countries including India, Britain, Turkey, South Korea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Kenya.

Also, this country is a member of a large set of trade-related international organizations and treaties the most important of which are the World Trade Organization, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, the GCC-EFTA Free Trade Agreement, and the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area.



Wembanyana Gets Early Taste of NBA

HENDERSON (Dispatches) - With an 8-foot (2.42m) wingspan and the smooth shooting touch of a point guard despite his towering frame, French prodigy Victor Wembanyama didn't disappoint in his first US appearance.

Wembanyana, 18, flew to Nevada with his French league team to showcase the skills that many informed observers believe will make him the number one pick in next year's NBA draft.

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Neto to Miss World Cup Due to Ankle Injury

LONDON (Dispatches) - Wolverhampton Wanderers and Portugal winger Pedro Neto will undergo surgery on an ankle injury and miss the upcoming World Cup in Qatar, his Premier League team said.

The 22-year-old picked up the injury in the first half of Wolves' 2-0 league defeat away by West Ham United last weekend.

The World Cup is due to begin in Qatar on November 20, with Portugal starting their campaign on November 24 against Ghana in Group H.

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SPORTS

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Nadal Not Thinking About Retirement

MADRID (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal's longtime rival and close friend Roger Federer had an emotional retirement event last month at the Laver Cup in London, but the Spaniard says he has no immediate plans to follow suit.

That is good news for tennis considering that the sport lost both Federer and Serena Williams last month.

"I am not thinking about my retirement," the 36-year-old 22-time Grand Slam champion said in an interview. "When it will be, it will be. Despite my body did not work lately, my mind says I still want to keep going."

Nadal won the first two legs of the calendar Grand Slam in 2022 at the Australian and French Opens, but the second half of his year was once again impacted by injury.

He suffered an abdominal tear that forced him to withdraw ahead of his Wimbledon semifinal with Nick Kyrgios, and then lost to American Frances Tiafoe in the fourth round of the U.S. Open.

"It could have been an extraordinary season, but it has been marred by the continual inconvenience he has had," Toni said.

"The results went well because he won Australia and Roland-Garros, but you leave with a bitter taste in your mouth. "At Wimbledon, he couldn't play a semifinal when he was playing well and was a clear candidate for the title; there were also problems in New York."

"What an athlete wants above all else is to be well and play, and also win."

It is a testament to Nadal's talent, mental strength and physical prowess that he is the all-time men's leader with 22 majors yet he has missed 11 Grand Slam events stretching back to his debut in 2003 and has also pulled out during a Slam five times.

"I think that as long as he feels he has a chance of winning, he will continue," Toni Nadal, Rafa's uncle, told Diario AS.

Fan Dies in Argentina, Match Abandoned

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - A soccer fan died in Argentina and the match between Gimnasia La Plata and Boca Juniors was abandoned on Thursday after tear gas fired by police outside the venue drifted into the stadium and made it difficult for players and spectators to breathe.

The circumstances surrounding the death were unclear but Sergio Berni, security minister for Buenos Aires province, told local television that the fan died of a heart problem as he was leaving the Juan Carmelo Zerillo Stadium in La Plata.

The incident comes five days after a stampede at a soccer game in Indonesia killed at least 131 people when fans tried to flee a riot and tear gas fired by police in one of the world's worst sporting disasters.

According to authorities in Argentina, Gimnasia fans were trying to force their way into the stadium which was already full, and police used rubber bullets and tear gas to force them back.

Players were seen covering their faces, while supporters entered the field as they tried to escape the tear gas. The Argentine top-flight match was stopped after nine minutes.

ESPN quoted Gimnasia player Leonardo Morales as saying: "My two-year-old son couldn't breathe. We feel desperate and worried about all the people in the stands."

"We were playing a normal football game and it turned it into this and the feeling that our relatives almost died."

Sevilla Bring Back Sampaoli as Coach

MADRID (Dispatches) - Argentine Jorge Sampaoli will return to Sevilla after being named as the replacement for axed coach Julien Lopetegui.

The club said Sampaoli had "signed for the remainder of the season and one more, until June 30, 2024, and this afternoon will lead his first training session."

Sampaoli, 62, previously coached Sevilla in the 2016-17 season.

He took over in July 2016 from Unai Emery, who had guided them to a third straight Europa League victory and was hired by Paris Saint-Germain.

"When he sees that he has no options, if he goes to a tournament and has no chance of winning, I don't think he will play. In the end, he has won too much to fold badly."

Toni compared Nadal to Federer, who is five years older at 41.



"Federer went five years without winning a Grand Slam (between 2012 and 2017), but he was there, he made semifinals, finals?" he said. "He knew he could win. In fact, after five years he won three more because he felt he had a chance. That's what marks the way."

"How much time does Rafa have left? I don't know, it will clearly depend on his rivals, on his body."

"Rafael plays for him, he doesn't think about whether Carlos Alcaraz, David Ferrer or even [Novak] Djokovic is there."

The Paris-Bercy Masters 1000 is one of the biggest events of the final stage of the tennis year. In the past, some tennis players used to skip this tournament in order to rest and prepare for the ATP Finals (perhaps if they were already qualified), but now the Paris tournament will see everyone in the spotlight, a tournament which has nothing to envy to the four Grand Slam tournaments.

It will be the first Masters 1000 in history with Carlos Alcaraz as number one in the world. The Spanish phenomenon will have to defend against the double assault of Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal. The Serb is the defending champion and will want to show everyone that, despite a peculiar year, he is still number one.



Slam semi-final, said he had been "solid from the start" of the 71-minute quarter-final.

Tiafoe Cruises Into Tokyo Semis

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Jet-lagged Frances Tiafoe flew into the Japan Open semi-finals in straight sets, clinching each with an ace to beat Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic 6-0, 6-4.

The fourth-seeded Tiafoe faces unseeded Kwon Soon-woo of South Korea in the last four on Saturday in Tokyo.

The American, who beat Rafael Nadal at the US Open on the way to his first Grand Slam semi-final, said he had been "solid from the start" of the 71-minute quarter-final.

"Great tennis today," he said. "I was moving really well, I hit the ball really well from the back of the court."

The 24-year-old Tiafoe, the world number 19, said he had been struggling to adapt to the Tokyo time zone.

"I've been really bad and jet-lagged, so I've probably been sleeping pretty early and waking up really early," he said.

Kwon beat Spain's Pedro Martinez 6-3, 6-0, and Tiafoe said it would be "cool" to play the South Korean — who he faced at the Tokyo Olympics.

"Kwon's a great player. He's been playing really well this week, so it's going to be cool to play him, we practise sometimes in Florida."

Barcelona Predict Record Revenues, Rising Profits

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona on Thursday forecast profits of 274 million euros (270.7 million dollars) this season and record revenues of 1.255 billion euros.

"It's a conservative budget," Barca's financial vice-president Eduard Romeu said, as the club released figures for the 2021/22 financial year and forecasts for the current campaign. Barcelona said the revenue figure included more than 450 million euros from the sale of long-term television and other rights.

The Catalans said in the year just ended they made a profit of 98 million euros after taxes, with operating income of 1.017 billion euros and expenses of 856 million euros.

That followed two loss-making seasons during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Barca said they were "back on the road to profit and looking to initiate a new virtuous circle".

The budget for next year predicts expenses of 1.065 billion euros, of which 656 million euros would go on the sporting wage bill.

Romeu said salaries had been cut from 617 euros for the 2020/21 season to 518 million euros last season.

New player signings and a lack of departures have led to expectations of an increase this season.

"We were planning for a more significant reduction in the salary bill," Romeu said, adding that even so, the club would be happy to take Lionel Messi back.

"Messi is an asset for Barca and has the doors open," Romeu said.

"It is a matter for the sporting management and if the sporting management want it, we will get to work on that objective."

In the 2020/21 season Barcelona posted losses of 481 million euros and blamed them for not being able to renew their all-time record scorer's contract, leading him to sign for Paris Saint-Germain on a free transfer.

Romeu lamented that he had not been able to persuade other high-priced stars to leave.

"There are a number of contracts that have a very high cost and between this season and next season they disappear," said Romeu, adding that he wants to achieve a balance by the 2024/25 season.



Messi Says 2022 World Cup Will Surely Be His Last

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentina captain Lionel Messi said Thursday that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar will "surely" be the last of his career.

"It's my last World Cup, surely. I feel good physically, I was able to do a very good pre-season this year, which I couldn't do last year. It was essential to get to where I am, with a good state of mind and a lot of hope," the 35-year-old told ESPN Argentina.

Messi, who is due to appear in his fifth World Cup, made his international debut in 2005 and has since won 164 caps for Argentina and is the country's all-time record scorer with 90 goals.

In the interview, which took place in Paris where Messi plays for Paris Saint-Germain, he admitted he was nervous about the impending tournament in Qatar.

"There is anxiety, nerves about the World Cup," he said. "We can't wait for it to start."

Messi's international debut as a substitute against Hungary in 2005 lasted just two minutes before he was sent off but he quickly established himself in the national team set-up and travelled to Germany for his first World Cup in 2006.

He went on to play in the 2010 edition in South Africa, 2014 in Brazil, where Argentina reached the final, and 2018 in Russia.

The current side, under the management of Lionel Scaloni has now gone 35 games without defeat and is likely to figure as one of the pre-tournament favorites for the Qatar tournament.

"We have reached a good moment, with a very well-equipped and very strong group, but anything can happen," said Messi.

"All the games are very difficult. The favorites are not always the ones who end up winning or taking the path that one expected."

"Argentina is always a candidate because of its history and what it means. But we are not the only favorites, there are other teams that are above us."

