

The Ambassador of Nicaragua to Tehran Says the Islamic Republic of Iran Has Progressed Successfully in Generating Science and Technology Despite the Enemies' Campaigns

IRAN NEWS

A Ceremony Was Held in Tehran to Commemorate the Late Brigadier General Hossein Hamedani, One of the Great Iranian Commanders Who Took Part in the Fight Against ISIS in Syria

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IMF Expects Iran's Economy To Grow by 3%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The International Monetary Fund expects Iran's economy will continue to grow in the years to come despite the economic pressure imposed on the country by the United States.

IMF's World Economic Outlook forecasts published on Tuesday showed that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) will increase by 3 percentage points in 2022 and by another 2% next year. The IMF said that Iran's economy had expanded by 4.7% in 2021 despite being subject to a regime of American sanctions that banned the country's crude oil exports while imposing a raft of restrictions on the country's economy.

Iran's economy had contracted for two years to 2020 mainly because of the sanctions and also because of the economic closures caused by the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the country. That comes as various reports and statements by government authorities suggest that Iran has been able to sell increased volumes of oil to Asian customers since the second half of 2021 amid a growing demand for oil that has been caused by the global recovery from the pandemic.

Iran has been offering major discounts on its crude oil shipments in recent years in a bid to get round the US sanctions and sell its oil to Asian customers.

Experts say US sanctions have caused the Iranian economy to diversify away from crude revenues and rely more on its domestic resources. [See Page 7](#)

Iran to Stage Joint Naval Exercise With China, Russia

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A high-ranking Iranian military commander says the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy plans to hold a joint naval exercise with China, Russia and a number of other countries in the northern tip of the Indian Ocean in the near future.

Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said on Wednesday that the forthcoming naval drill is meant to boost up the combat capabilities of Iranian forces, and falls within the framework of maritime diplomacy so as to ensure sustainable security.

He noted that Iran has invited a number of member states of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) - a forum aimed at increasing maritime cooperation among the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region, to take part in the joint exercise.

Some 20 to 30 countries will actively participate in the joint drill, Irani stated, adding that the war games have been designed in accordance with an instruction book compiled by the Iranian Navy.

The Iranian Navy commander also noted that Iran is currently holding a joint naval rescue and relief exercise with a number of friendly states and allies.

Meanwhile, the Iranian and Omani naval forces launched a joint military exercise in the Sea of Oman and the northern parts of the Indian Ocean.

The military exercise, backed by helicopters from both countries and Iranian drones, was held in the presence of the heads of the joint military friendship commissions of the two countries and their members.

Alborz frigate and Tonb replenishment oiler of the Iranian Navy, together with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy's Shahid Nazeri warship and Shahid Yahyaei watercraft participated in the exercise.

The main goals of the naval drill have been declared as developing bilateral military relations and interactions, design and implementation of various training programs at sea, exchanging experiences, and improving the efficiency of the two countries' naval staff.

Furthermore, various scenarios were designed and implemented by the two sides' vessels and naval aircraft, which marked a major leap forward in Wednesday's drill compared to the previous ones.

Riots Enemy Plot Devised in Clumsy Reaction to Nation's Progress



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the recent scattered riots in several Iranian cities have been devised by enemies as a "clumsy," "foolish" and "passive" reaction to the Iranian nation's great moves and innovative progress.

In a meeting with members of the Expediency Council on Wednesday, Ayatollah Khamenei cautioned the country's authorities not to let such "small incidents" distract them from their major duties.

"The Iranian nation made great moves in a short period of time, which were 180 degrees opposite to the global arrogance's policies, and they were forced to react," he said, referring to the United States and other Western powers.

"In this context, by planning and spending money, they brought people including some politicians in America, Europe and some other places to the field," the Leader added.

Protests erupted after the death of Mahsa Amini, who fainted at a police station and was pronounced dead days later at a Tehran hospital on September 16, first in her native province of Kordestan and later in several cities, including the capital Tehran.

Ayatollah Khamenei said enmities toward Iran will continue in various forms as long as the people of Iran take up the flag of Islam and accompany the Islamic Republic. "The only solution is to stand firm," he asserted.

Addressing the Iranian authorities, the Leader said they need to be careful not to be distracted by these "minor incidents" from carrying out their main duties in domestic and international arenas.

"The constructions, great executive works, effective legislation, big judicial works, and important issues in foreign policy should not be sidelined by these minor incidents," he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader reiterated his earlier call on authorities to differentiate between minor acts of vandalism and big roles in the riots.

"Some of these people are either the elements of the enemy or are aligned with the enemy, while some others have been [only] provoked," he said.

He added that cultural programs should be implemented with regard to the second group but the first group should be dealt with by judicial and security authorities.

Muslims' Commonalities Form Religious Civilization

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi has underscored that commonalities of the Muslim nations have shaped a religious civilization in today's world.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the 36th International Islamic Unity Conference, President Raisi felicitated the birth anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.), noting that the late Imam Khomeini had hoisted the flag of unity among Muslims in all around the globe, and now the unity consists of Muslims with all languages, ethnicities, and attitudes.

Muslims enjoy numerous commonalities, which help them stand together and create a religious civilization, the president noted.

All Muslim nations are tasked with enlightening in order to improve the position of Islam and Muslims, he said, they should make it clear that the enemies of the Islamic world are very incapable of finding out the logic.

President Raisi said, "The comprehensiveness of Islam can meet all the needs of today's mankind and contemporary man can create a happy life for himself by relying on God, self-confidence, and religious learning."

The president added, "The comprehensiveness of Islam meets all the needs of contemporary man and gives him the strength to stand against cultures that are not compatible with religious life."

Expressing gratitude to the audience of this conference, Raisi said, "This meeting will lead to a common understanding among all influential figures in the Islamic world regarding the huge capital called religion and religious values; a great capital in the name of religious people and Muslims and believers in religion, as well as Islamic lands, which today with all the material and spiritual wealth are at the disposal of Muslims."

Raisi also considered educated young people with a tendency towards spirituality, the spirit of resistance and standing against the enemy, being ready to take risks in the path of a religious life and the educated human resources of the Islamic world as other great assets of the Islamic world and pointed out, "The thinkers of the Islamic world are a great asset who are ready to stand together from various fields, universities and scientific and research centers against atheistic thinking, secular trend, takfiri and extremist thinking."

Pointing out that men and women in Islamic countries are ready to unite in the name of religion and frustrate the enemies, the President stressed the need to think to understand the tricks of the enemy in the field of downplaying the abilities of Muslims and exaggerating their own incapacity and said, "The flag that Imam Khomeini (RA) raised was the flag of unity between all Muslims all over the world, with all dialects, in all regions and with all viewpoints."

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U.S.'s Fake Grandeur Fading

For decades or better to say for a century, the U.S. has turned into a super power and a utopic destination for innocent people from any part of the world but it seems its grandeur and power is diminishing and countries gradually realizing this fade and they resist against this country's bullies.

Some decades ago countries like Cuba, Bolivia and East European countries were the only countries resisting against the U.S. domination and fought for their independence and dignity and since 1979, a new global political phenomena, named the Islamic Republic of Iran, formed a new front for resistance against the West and its bullies and this resistance is gradually giving courage to other countries to stand against the U.S. excessive demands and it has been a big shock and hit to the U.S. grandeur in the world.

On Wednesday, once again a sign of fading in the U.S. grandeur was seen when the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) stood against the U.S. excessive demands and it angered the U.S.

OPEC+, which groups the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers including Russia, refused to raise output to lower oil prices despite pressure from major consumers, including the United States.

Energy ministers from OPEC+ met in person at the group's Vienna headquarters on Wednesday for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. They discussed production targets after a drop in oil prices.

The cut could spur a recovery in oil prices that have dropped to about \$90 from \$120 three months ago. [See Page 7](#)

FM Warns EU of Reciprocal Move If It Imposes Restrictive Measures

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has warned that Tehran will take reciprocal action if the European Union (EU) imposes any restrictive measures against the Islamic Republic over the recent riots in the country.

In a tweet, Amirabdollahian said he relayed the warning during a phone conversation with his French counterpart Catherine Colonna.

The top Iranian diplomat said that both sides agreed that "mutual respect and benefit override relations," and that "violence and terror should be confronted."

"I objected to Europe's interference in our internal affairs," he said, stressing that Iran will reciprocate if EU restrictive measures applied."

Protests erupted over the death of the 22-year-old Iranian woman, who fainted at a police station and was pronounced dead at a Tehran hospital on September 16, first in her native province of Kordestan and later in several cities, including the capital Tehran.

Immediately after Amini's death, Iran's President Ebrahim Reisi ordered a thorough investigation into the case and an official report published on Friday said her death had been caused by an illness rather than alleged blows to the head or other vital body organs.

What started as peaceful protests took a violent turn after unruly protesters fatally attacked policemen and indulged in vandalism against public property in several cities.

On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted a resolution with regard to recent riots in Iran, calling on the EU officials to impose sanctions against Iranian officials who have been involved in an alleged crackdown on protests.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the resolution as "meddlesome" and "baseless," vowing to give an "appropriate" response to the imposition of any restrictive measures against Iranian people.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has already summoned Frances's chargé d'affaires to Tehran to protest meddlesome measures by the French government in Iran's domestic affairs and its stance about riots instigated by counterrevolutionary elements across the country.

Nicaraguan Ambassador Hails Islamic Republic Technologies

ARAK (IRNA) - Nicaragua's Ambassador to Tehran Isaac Lenin Bravo Jaen said on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic of Iran is successful in the science and technology production despite all enemies' assaults.

The ambassador made the remarks speaking at the 2022 Iran Stone Expo- an international exhibition which started work in Nimvar, Mahallat, in central Iranian province of Arak. Lenin Bravo also said Iran enjoys great capacities in the mineral and industrial areas. The 2022 Iran Stone Expo is open as of today for four days.

Iran Against Whatever Geopolitical Changes In Regional Borders

TEHRAN (Dispatches - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian asserts that Iran is opposed to whatever changes across the region that could amount to violation of the regional countries' official contours.

The top diplomat made the remarks in a meeting with Georg Papuyan, the visiting head of the Iran-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group, in Tehran on Tuesday.

Amirabdollahian pointed to the Islamic Republic's principled position of attaching respect to countries' national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The foreign minister said Tehran was unequivocally opposed to whatever action that could affect changes to international borders or bring about geopolitical transformations in the region. In the same context, Amirabdollahian demanded peaceful resolution of Armenia and neighboring Azerbaijan's differences concerning the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but has been populated by ethnic Armenians.

Last month, simmering tensions between the estranged neighbors caused a fresh



flare-up over the region, leaving nearly 100 soldiers dead on both sides. This was the most recent flare-up in tensions between the two Caucasus countries since thousands were killed in a 44-day war over the territory that ended in November 2020.

Back then, Iran expressed "serious concern" over the deadly upheaval, announcing its readiness to mediate between the countries.

Amirabdollahian, meanwhile, appraised the quality of Iran and Armenia's relations as "good and progressive," underlining the Islamic Republic's intention towards further expansion of the ties.

For his part, the Armenian official likewise evaluated the status of the bilateral ties as favorable, expressing gratitude towards the Islamic Republic over its positions concerning regional developments.

Iran Condolences Venezuela Over Deadly Flood

TEHRAN (IP) - The Spokesman of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended condolences of the Islamic Republic to the Venezuelan nation and government over the victims of the recent flood and landslide in the country.

Rescue workers using drones and trained dogs have searched for survivors following a massive landslide in central Venezuela, as the death toll rose to 34 and residents described harrowing tales of escape from the water and mud.

Plight began when torrential rains caused by Hurricane Julia unleashed mudslides and floods that destroyed several mountainside neighborhoods in Las Tejerias.

Several people were killed, scores were lost, and many homes were destroyed.

On Monday, Venezuelan officials said at least 34 people died in the flooding, and 60 are missing following the worst natural disaster to hit the cash-strapped South American country in recent years.

The Spokesman of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Kanaani, expressed the Iranian nation and government's condolence to the people and government of Venezuela, especially the family of the victims.

Iran to Severely Punish Organizers of Foreign-Backed Riots

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Judiciary says the body will decisively punish the lead foreign-backed perpetrators in the recent riots, which erupted following the death of a young Iranian woman.



"Taking a stance in the face of the US and Zionism is the rational demand of Muslim nations which requires a convincing and sufficient response," spokesman Massoud Setayeshi told reporters during a press conference in Tehran.

Protests erupted after the death of Mahsa Amini, who fainted at a police station and was pronounced dead days later at a Tehran hospital on September 16, first in her native province of Kordestan and later in several cities, including the capital Tehran.

Immediately after Amini's death, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi ordered a thorough investigation into the case, which led to an official report published on Friday saying her death had been caused by an illness rather than alleged blows to her head or other vital body organs.

What started as peaceful protests took a violent turn after unruly protesters fatally attacked policemen and indulged in vandalism against public property in several cities.

Setayeshi expressed hope that Unity Week, which coincides with the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), would open a new chapter in reinforcing unity in Iran and across the world.

He expressed sympathy with Amini's family and said the Judiciary pays attention to all the people who were injured and faced problems in the recent incidents.

"We pay attention to the people who came to the scene unknowingly and got into trouble," the spokesman said.

He also extended his condolences to the families of those who were killed in defense of the country and its people.

He warned that the enemy is always trying to create ambiguity and chaos, cause problems for people, sow discord among them, and disrupt the country's peace, security, welfare and progress.

The recent incidents in the country also caused economic problems, he said, emphasizing that everything is clear now and there is no room for ambiguity.

He pointed out that Iran's Coroner Office has issued "transparent and scientific" reports about Amini's death, and now is the time to make up for the measures that have been conducted against a number of Iranian citizens and damages to public, state and private properties.

He also slammed foreign media and political propaganda which sparked the riots as one of the "biggest atrocities committed against the Iranian nation" and highlighted the importance of pursuing such moves until the rights of the Iranian people are preserved.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Setayeshi said 1,700 individuals who were arrested during the unrest have been released on bail.

"We take pride in the fact that the number of detainees is minimal now and it includes people who had an agenda in these events," he added.

Tehran, Sofia Confer on Bilateral, Int'l Issues

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian held a telephone conversation with his Bulgarian counterpart Nikolay Milkov over a host of bilateral, regional and international issues.

During the conversation, the top diplomats referred to good relations between Tehran and Sofia and underlined the need to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Amirabdollahian and Milkov described this occasion as a good opportunity to study and further expand bilateral ties in various fields.

They also spoke about different areas of potential and real economic cooperation between Iran and Bulgaria and expressed hope that the 20th joint economic commission will be held in the near future.

Milkov then welcomed some proposed ideas and voiced hope all parties to the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA, will return to the agreement.

He pointed to Bulgaria's membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors, stressing that Sofia will fulfill its commitments to play a fair and sincere role in the IAEA and to support the rights of all nations at the agency.

Foreign-Backed Terror Groups Lead Riots in Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi has said that foreign-backed terror groups in northern Iraq were leading the riots in Iran to foment sedition and set off secession.

Vahidi said that the riots are "planned, supported, and led by separatist terror groups," including the so-called Komala Party, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Party of Free Life of Kurdistan, also known as PJAK, which have a history of cooperation with the Zionist regime and were once hired by the Western countries and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as mercenaries.

They also committed crimes and conducted terrorist operations in Iran, he added.

Over the past few days violent riots have erupted across the country as well as in Sanandaj, the capital city of Kurdistan province, however, he said, Iran's Kurdish population who are seeking peace, security and development separated themselves from the rioters.

"Iran's army and law enforcement forces have firmly dealt with the rioters and their leaders and will continue to do so to neutralize their fruitless efforts," he warned.

The US, the Zionist regime and separatist terror groups are definitely happy with the riots in Iran and these acts against the national interest, the minister said.

IRGC Arrests Individual Working for Israel

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Intelligence forces of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have arrested an individual working for Israeli spy services in the southeastern province of Kerman.

The head of the Justice Department in Kerman, Hojjatoleslam Ebrahim Hamidi, said that the detainee had been involved in espionage activities for the Zionist regime and "intended to carry out anti-security measures and acts of sabotage" in the province, Tasnim news agency reported.

The plot was, however, thwarted thanks to the vigilance of the IRGC's Intelligence Organization, he added.

The judicial official said the man — whose identity was not disclosed — was operating in Iran under the guise of a businessman. He had traveled to different countries with the goal of transferring information and receiving training from Israeli operatives for sabotage operations, he added.

The last destination prior to his detention had been Erbil, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, Hamidi said.

The individual was reported to be using social media platforms and encrypted software to communicate with the Israeli regime's spy and military agencies.

The detainee, the report said, intended to leave the

country to meet with an Israeli agent in one of the regional countries and receive a new mission, but he was arrested before leaving the country.

Cuban Envoy Praises Iran's Stone Industry Global Fame

ARAK (IRNA) - Cuba's ambassador to Iran said that Iran's stone industry is of global fame.

Cuban Ambassador Alberto Gonzalez Casals on Tuesday attended and gave a speech at the opening ceremony of the 14th International Stone Expo in Mahallat, central Iran.

Gonzalez Casals said that Iran's stone industry is of high quality and variety and Cuban businesses are ready to work with Iranian companies in this sector.

The ambassador said that Cuba does not have large mines like Iran's and is ready to purchase Iranian products and leverage Iranian technology in this regard.

He also noted that Iran and Cuba could neutralize sanctions against both countries through serious collaborations, urging Iran to focus on Latin America.

The Cuban diplomat vowed that his country would hold an exhibition of Iranian products, including stone industry and mining.



Anti-Revolution Groups Involved In Iran Destabilization Project

TEHRAN (IRNA) - An Iranian lawmaker said that Iran's Ministry of Intelligence has briefed members of parliament on the involvement of anti-Revolution groups in Iran's destabilization project.

Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Parliament's Islamic Revolution Faction, said that a senior intelligence ministry official briefed the lawmakers on the recent unrest in Iran and received their comments.

According to the discussions made in this session, Amouei said, the recent developments both had social grounds and were affected by the enemies of the revolution in the framework of cognitive war to destabilize Iran.

The lawmakers said that the reports presented in the session showed that the information elicited from the riot leaders arrested in the unrest suggested the engagement of various anti-Revolution groups in the unrest.

The lawmakers, according to Amouei, urged decisive crack-down on the elements affiliated with the belligerent groups who want to destabilize Iranian society.

Tehran Rejects US National Security Advisor Claims

TEHRAN (IFP) - Mohammad Jamshidi, a senior advisor to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has hit back at US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's recent anti-Iran comment.

Sullivan had said in a tweet that the world is watching Iran's events and claimed that Raisi had described Iranian protesters "flies". Jamshidi denied this and said the Iranian president actually described foreign governments who stimulate anti-government riots as "flies".

Jamshidi also slammed Sullivan's advisors as "biased", saying they feed the US national security advisor with what he called "fake news". He also said such comments by US officials are meant to portray the Democratic part as strong.

Jamshidi then advised Sullivan to hide the Biden administration's 30+ requests to meet with the Iranian delegation in New York if they want to project strength. Iran says foreign governments, the US included, have no right to interfere with the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic. It also says the US and other Western governments only seek to worsen tension in Iran by siding with protesters.



PRAYER TIME

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

82. And of the evil ones, were some who dived for him,
and did other work besides; and it was We Who guarded them.
83. And (remember) Job, when He cried to his Lord, "Truly distress has seized me,
but Thou art the Most Merciful of those that are merciful."

Surah 21. The Prophets (82 - 83)

Demand for Natural Gas Expected to Surge By 6% This Winter

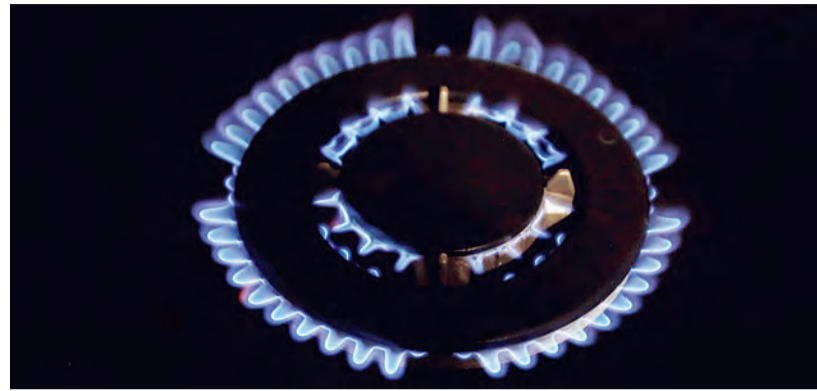
TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's state gas company the NIGC says domestic demand for natural gas is expected to increase by around 6% this winter.

NIGC's head of dispatching operations Mohammad Reza Joulayi said on Tuesday that demand for natural gas had hit an all-time record of 720 million cubic meters (mcm) per day over the cold winter days last year.

Joulayi said household and business sector demand for gas could reach nearly 700 mcm per day over the winter months.

Iran is the third largest producer of gas in the world after the United States and Russia but it is also the fourth largest global consumer after the US, Russia and China.

The country has ramped up output from its giant gas reserve in the south in recent years but increased demand from households and businesses, especially in northern regions, has forced the government to consider imports from Russia or Turkmenistan.



That comes as Iran is also a major exporter of gas through pipelines to Turkey and Iraq. Joulayi said progress had been made in gas import talks although he would not elaborate on more details.

Another official at the National Iranian Gas Company said on Tuesday that Iran's gas production had increased by some 4 billion cubic meters (bcm) over the six months to late September compared with the same period last year.

Ahmad Zamani, who leads NIGC's production coordination and supervision department, said current output from Iranian gas fields is around 1 bcm per day of which some 840-850 mcm is turned into sweet gas and supplied to the Iranian gas grid for consumption in various sectors.

India's Far-Sighted Investment in Chabahar Port for Trade With Central Asia

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - In recent years India has embraced an ambitious and expansive vision for foreign trade in the Central Asian region. India's trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia has long been hindered by an inability to access land routes through Pakistan.

The development of Iran's new port at Chabahar has transformed India's trading prospects in the region by allowing India a trade route that bypasses Pakistan altogether.

Alongside the development of the Chabahar Port, a number of investments have been made in projects intended to develop physical connectivity in the Central Asian region.

In 2018, Uzbekistan began a railway project connecting Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif near the Uzbek border. This railway line will connect to the Chabahar-Zahedan railway line along the Afghanistan-Iran border which is projected to be concluded in 2024.

In 2020, India, Iran and Uzbekistan established a trilateral working group to coordinate joint use of the Chabahar Port and work on various connectivity projects in the region with a particular emphasis on the Shahid Beheshti Terminal at the Chabahar Port.

In 2022, following hostilities in Ukraine, India and Russia have established enormous trade volumes in agricultural produce and energy resources. Russia's need for more reliable trading partners for its exports has served to validate the existing emphasis on regional connectivity while also presenting a fresh case for further investment and accelerated development.

The changing geopolitical scenario has worked to India's advantage in a number of ways. Firstly, with energy prices increasing globally and fears of food shortages abounding, fears of inflation are well-founded and countries are scrambling to ensure energy and food security for their populations.

India is no exception and has explicitly placed the needs and livelihoods of its population above ideological posturing. With Europe seeking to avoid trade with Russia to the extent possible and a number of additional sanctions and price caps being mulled, Russia is eager to find a source for its exports of food, fertilizers and energy.

The environment of sanctions and curbs has afforded India a valuable opportunity to meet these needs at attractive prices. India is seeking to convert this temporary benefit to something more permanent according to Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC) analyst Mika Takehara.

According to Takehara, Indian experts and policy-makers are considering increasing Russian oil imports to 30 PC of India's total intake by buying on the spot market while reducing their dependence on long-term contracts with Middle Eastern exporters.

Simultaneously, Indian state-run corporations such as Bharat Petroleum are reportedly attempting to negotiate long-term oil deals with Russia. In addition to providing India with an avenue for energy and food security, elevated trade volumes with Russia have served as proof of concept for the viability and value of the International North-South Corridor (INSTC) as a route capable of handling large volumes of trade as well as making a convincing case for more investment on connectivity projects around the INSTC.

A number of recent conferences including the recent meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have produced a broad consensus amongst Central Asian Nations, Iran, Russia and India that underlines the importance of the INSTC, the Chabahar Port.

Finally, the establishment of this route has served to free India of the difficulties caused by its geographic location and Pakistan's obstruction of regional trade. In addition, the INSTC affords India an alternative route to operate in and an opportunity to counter-balance China's attempted monopolization of trade routes in the region through its Belt and Roads Initiative (BRI) and investments in Pakistan.

The prospects of the INSTC appear to be brighter in the long run as a project conceived and furthered through the mutual interest of a large number of nations in contrast with the BRI which is intended purely to further Chinese strategic interests and has greatly aggrieved local residents and generated much backlash in many of the locations where its projects have been established.

India has invested substantial time, attention and capital in the development of the Chabahar Port and infrastructure and connectivity in Afghanistan. With the Chabahar Port operational, the INSTC emerging as a viable trading route and increased investment in regional connectivity in the offing, this investment is beginning to bear fruit.

India's efforts in this regard have greatly expanded her influence in Iran and Afghanistan and provided India with a prominent role in Central Asia. The emergence of a viable trading route that bypasses Pakistan offers an alternative to the Chinese Silk Roads project and serves to protect crucial Indian imports against supply shocks and offers valuable alternatives at attractive prices. In time, the focus on INSTC and the Chabahar Port could prove to be one of India's most shrewd decisions. (ANI)

Iran Can Be a Safe Energy Transfer Corridor

TEHRAN (Shana) - A senior expert in energy economics says: "In the absence of investment and access to the necessary technologies to realize production from Iran's share of reserves in the Caspian Sea, the most important step is to enter the oil and gas swap sector and convert the opportunity in the territorial geography of the country to leap towards becoming a safe energy transfer corridor."



Fereydoun Barkeshli stated that Iran's energy policies have been focused on the southern part of the country during the past decades, and after the development of the South Pars gas field, this policy has been strengthened.

He pointed out that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of newly independent republics and the entry of international oil and gas companies, the Caspian Sea was considered a source of energy for the world and neighboring countries, and stated: "During the two decades after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the Islamic Republic of Iran was mainly focused on the legal aspects and the way of division. However, the other neighbors, independent of the legal status of the sea, engaged in drilling and exploitation with the cooperation of international companies."

The collapse of the Soviet Union on December 8, 1991, was one of the most important geopolitical events of the century in which two world wars took place. The leaders of the socialist republics of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine signed an agreement in Belarus on this day, according to which the dissolution of the Soviet Union was announced and ended the work of the Soviet Union from that moment. The document also announced the creation of the Commonwealth of the Independent States, which included most of the former Soviet republics. Kazakhstan was the last member republic of the former Soviet Union to declare independence.

The senior expert in energy economics stated that in the years after the establishment of the so-called newly independent republic, there were no sanctions against Iran except the one imposed by the United States (1981) by other countries, and clarified: "In any case, the Iranian part of the Caspian Sea is deep and has more rich gas resources, so the need to access technology and international financial resources is almost inevitable."

Barkeshli continued: "The countries along the Caspian Sea mostly started exploitation by signing attractive contracts with companies that own technology and capital, although the US and Europe seriously entered the scene of the Caspian Sea energy equations with geostrategic motives."

He pointed out that the slowness and lack of national determination and planning held Iran back to some extent compared to other countries in the region, adding: "Of course, the greatness of South Pars also aggravated Iran's neglect of the Caspian resources."

The senior expert in energy economics added: "In the absence of investment and access to the necessary technologies in producing from the reserves of Iran's share, the most important thing that can be done is the widespread entry into oil and gas swap plans and the conversion of opportunities in the country's territorial geography to jump towards becoming a safe energy transfer corridor."

By stating that Iran's oil and gas sector is widely scattered and versatile, Barkeshli said: "Several thousand kilometers of oil and gas transmission lines across the country can be connected to entry points and transmission to other neighboring countries with limited investment."

He said: "Right now, the battle of corridors or energy corridor strategy is one of the most important geostrategic issues in the world. How to optimize this situation and get the maximum short-term and long-term benefits requires consultation and strong diplomacy with the main players."

14th Int'l Iran Stone Expo Opens in Central Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) - The 14th International Iranian Stone Exhibition (Iran Stone Expo) opened on Tuesday in the city of Mahallat, located in the central Markazi Province.

This exhibition is being held for four days in an area of 90,000 square meters with an exhibition area of 32,000 meters.

Over 32,000 tons of stones from 500 mines in 29 provinces are being showcased at the exhibition.

Iranian Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, three ambassadors, as well as two charges d'affaires, participated in the opening ceremony of the exhibition, and 16 training courses are planned to execute on the sidelines of the exhibition.

The exhibition is to be held from October 11 to 14 in Markazi Province, Mahallat. The Islamic Republic of Iran is home to 60 billion tons of proven mineral reserves with 68 varieties.

Generating 88k MW Electricity Is Iran's Privilege in SCO

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Deputy Minister of Energy for Electricity and Energy Affairs said generating 88,000 megawatts of electricity by the Islamic Republic of Iran is a salient advantage it has after joining Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The existence of more than 88,000 megawatt electricity capacity in the country is an asset for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Homayoon Haeri stated.

He also said that the high potential of Iran's electricity grid both in terms of production and internal electricity networks are sufficient condition for presence of Iran in Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Turning to the construction of power plants, Haeri pointed out that Iran enjoys high potentials and capabilities in the construction of power plants which can be very effective in exchanging energy with the SCO's member states.

Earlier, Iranian Minister of Energy Ali Akbar Mehrabian had said that exchanging electricity with the SCO member states will be put atop agenda, adding that Iran has presently established electricity exchange with some of SCO member states.

Iran-Serbia Air Cooperation Agreement Forwarded to Gov't by Majlis

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a letter to the President, the Speaker of the Islamic Council notified the law of the Air Service Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

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The air service agreement between Iran and Serbia was sent to the parliament previously after being approved by the cabinet and now has been ratified by the parliament and sent back to the government.

This agreement was signed with the aim of using air services in the exchange of goods, passenger transportation and expansion of international mail (postal services) and it strengthens economic relations and other areas of cooperation between the two countries, a previous report on the agreement published on the parliament website said.

Iran, Oman Confer on Bilateral Issues of Interest



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Affairs Mehdi Safari in a meeting with Omani officials on Tuesday reviewed the mutual issues of interest.

Safari met and held talks with the Governor of the Central Bank of Oman Taher bin Salem Al-Omari, the Under Secretary for Diplomatic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali Al-Harthy, and Chairman of Oman National Investments Development Company Abdulsalam Almurshidi.

They exchanged views on developing cooperation in economic and trade, investment, transportation, transit as well as joint projects.

Earlier, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a meeting with Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq at the Al Alam Palace said that the trade cooperation of Iran and Oman lags behind the two sides' political relations, calling for bolstering mutual ties in the trade fields.

During President Raesi's latest visit to Oman, a delegation of 50 Iranian businessmen and economic activists were accompanying the president, and 12 cooperation documents were signed between Tehran and Muscat in the areas of political, economic and trade relations plus energy, transportation, science, environment, sports, as well as diplomatic cooperation.

Iraqi Parliament to Vote Thursday on New President



BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq's parliament will convene this week for a session meant to elect a new president, the speaker's office said on Tuesday, but divisions which have led to a year-long political deadlock may still obstruct progress.

Lawmakers will meet on Thursday, more than a year since an Oct. 10, 2021 parliamentary election in which populist Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr emerged as the biggest winner but failed to rally enough support to form a government.

Sadr has withdrawn his 73 parliamentarians from the assembly and in August announced he would quit politics, prompting the worst violence in Baghdad for years when his loyalists stormed a government palace and fought rival Shi'ite groups, most of whom are backed by Iran and have heavily armed paramilitary wings.

China Steps Up Anti-COVID Measures in Megacities



BEIJING (Dispatches) - Shanghai and other big Chinese cities, including Shenzhen, have ramped up testing for COVID-19 as infections rise, with some local authorities hastily closing schools, entertainment venues and tourist spots.

Infections have risen to the highest since August, with the uptick coming after increased domestic travel during the National Day "Golden Week" earlier this month.

Authorities reported 2,089 new local infections for Oct. 10, the most since Aug. 20.

While many of the cases were found in tourist destinations, including scenic spots in the northern region of Inner Mongolia, megacities that are often the source of well-travelled tourists have started to report more cases this week.

Biden to Re-Evaluate Saudi Ties After OPEC Snub



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden is to "re-evaluate" the US relationship with Riyadh, the White House said Tuesday, after a Saudi-led coalition of oil-producing nations sided with Russia to slash output.

The 13-nation OPEC cartel and its 10 allies headed by Moscow angered the White House last week with its decision to reduce output by two million barrels a day from November -- raising fears that oil prices could soar.

"I think the president's been very clear that this is a relationship that we need to continue to re-evaluate, that we need to be willing to revisit," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told CNN.

"Certainly in light of the OPEC decision, I think that's where he is."

The OPEC decision was widely seen as a diplomatic slap in the face, since Biden traveled to Saudi Arabia in July and met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, despite vowing to make the kingdom an international "pariah" following the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

It also comes at a sensitive moment for Biden's Democratic party, as it faces November midterm elections with rising consumer prices a key Republican talking point.

Kirby added that Biden was "willing to work with Congress to think through what that relationship (with Saudi Arabia) ought to look like going forward," although he clarified that no formal discussions had yet begun.

His remarks came a day after Bob Menendez, the Democratic chairman of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called for Washington to halt all cooperation with Riyadh.

Menendez said the kingdom had decided to "underwrite" Russia's war in Ukraine with a move he denounced as a concession to Moscow that would hurt the global economy.

"The United States must immediately freeze all aspects of our cooperation with Saudi Arabia, including any arms sales and security cooperation beyond what is absolutely necessary to defend US personnel and interests," Menendez said.

"As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I will not greenlight any cooperation with Riyadh until the kingdom reassesses its position with respect to the war in Ukraine."

The partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia was sealed after World War II, providing the kingdom with military protection in exchange for American access to oil.

Fraught with crises, the relationship was revived by Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, whose single term saw Riyadh accounting for a quarter of US arms exports, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Continuing the rapprochement, Biden's State Department announced in August that Saudi Arabia would buy 300 Patriot MIM-104E missile systems, which can be used to bring down at long-range incoming ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as attacking aircraft.

Ukraine Seeks More Western Air Defense Help



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy continued his appeals to leaders of the Group of Seven nations on Tuesday for more air defense capabilities as the G7 vowed to support Kyiv for "as long as it takes."

NATO said it was closely monitoring Russia's nuclear forces following a string of Russian battlefield defeats in Ukraine and that the allies were also boosting security around key infrastructure after recent attacks on Baltic Sea gas pipelines.

Russian missiles again hit Ukrainian cities but with less intensity than on Monday, when dozens of strikes killed 19 people, wounded more than 100 and knocked out power across the country in Moscow's biggest aerial offensive since the start of its invasion on Feb. 24. More missile strikes killed at least one person in the southeastern Ukrainian town of Zaporizhzhia and part of the western city of Lviv without power, local officials said. Air raid sirens earlier wailed across Ukraine for a second day.

"When Ukraine receives a sufficient quantity of modern and effective air defence systems, the key element of Russia's terror, rocket strikes, will cease to work," Zelenskyy told G7 leaders at a virtual meeting where he again ruled out peace talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine on Tuesday received the first of four IRIS-T air defense systems Germany promised to supply, a German defense ministry source said.

The White House later said the United States was speeding up the shipment of sophisticated NASAMS air defenses to Ukraine. Washington has already provided more than \$16.8 billion worth of security aid to Ukraine during the war.

Zelenskyy's government has mixed gratitude for such aid with continued pleas for more powerful weapons and faster deliveries.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called on allies to swiftly disburse current commitments to Ukraine. The G7 - which groups the United States, Germany, France, Japan, Britain, Italy and Canada - pledged continued "financial, humanitarian, military, diplomatic and legal support... for as long as it takes" to Ukraine, it said in a statement.

U.S. President Joe Biden called both Aoun and Lapid on Tuesday to congratulate them.

The agreement is meant to resolve a territorial dispute in the eastern Mediterranean Sea in an area where Lebanon aims to explore for natural gas. Israel is already producing natural gas at fields nearby.

It sets a border between Lebanese and Israeli waters for the first time and also establishes a mechanism for both countries to get royalties from TotalEnergies' exploration of an offshore gas field that straddles the boundary.

The deal does not touch on their shared land border, where Israel and Lebanese armed group Hezbollah have clashed repeatedly in recent decades.

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Thousands Protest Increased Violence in Pakistan's Swat Valley

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Thousands of people have rallied in Pakistan's Swat Valley to protest against growing insecurity following the killing of a local school bus driver who was shot by an unknown assailant.

Chanting slogans against the increasing number of killings in the area, protesters took to the streets on Tuesday afternoon in Nishat Chowk, demanding that the government do more to ensure the safety of residents there.

Ahmed Shah, spokesperson for Swat Qaumi Jirga, a representative body of local residents, said more than 15,000 people had attended the protest - the sixth in the past two months.

"We held one protest last week but the one today is among the largest demonstrations ever in Swat," he told Al Jazeera.

Fawad Khan, an activist with Swat Olasi Pason (Swat People's Movement), who was at Tuesday's protest, told Al Jazeera that there had been a clear increase in violent incidents in the region.

"We are demanding the government control the terrorist elements who are back and spreading terror here," he said. "We must be given protection, which is our constitutional right."

According to police officials, the latest incident of violence took place in Mingora on Monday morning when the school bus driver was shot dead by a man riding a motorcycle.

Hussain Ahmed, 33, was driving two young students, one of whom was wounded and taken to hospital before being discharged.

Police officials told Al Jazeera they have ruled out "terrorism" since this was a targeted attack on an individual, but they are continuing to investigate. They added that there has been no claim of responsibility for the attack so far.

Monday's attack came a day after the 10th anniversary of the shooting of Malala Yousafzai by the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP or Pakistan Taliban) when she was a schoolgirl.

Mohsin Dawar, a member of Pakistan's National Assembly, condemned the latest attack and said this should be a wake-up call for the state. Speaking to Al Jazeera, Dawar said that he has voiced concerns about the increased presence of "militants" in the area since he joined parliament, but nothing has been done.

"Mainstream Pakistan perhaps does not realise the severity of the situation because they are not feeling the heat yet," he said. "If Pakistan's political and military leadership does not sit together to resolve this menace, I fear that in coming days the situation will be out of control."

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, a civil rights group, also issued a statement on Monday saying that residents of Swat are justified in holding security forces responsible.



Hundreds Search for Signs of Relatives Following Venezuela Floods



LAS TEJERIAS (Dispatches) - Hundreds of Venezuelans roamed the streets of Las Tejerias, digging and searching for missing relatives after devastating floods swept through the town over the weekend, leaving many wondering where they would now live.

"I want them to give me a house for my children because I was left homeless. I was left with nothing," said Yolimar Marin, 22, while sitting in a school serving as a shelter for victims of floods that swept through Las Tejerias on Saturday night.

Though electricity and cellphone coverage has been restored to the town of some 73,000 people, it remains without running water, according to Reuters witnesses.

"We lost everything," said Marin, accompanied by her two children and husband Devis Manrique, 30. The floods carried mud, rocks, trees and other debris into the town in Venezuela's Aragua state, destroying houses and businesses.

Government officials who visited Las Tejerias, about 67 kilometers (41.6 miles) southwest from capital Caracas, promised to recover all the houses and businesses affected.

Also at the shelter was Gabriel Castillo, 32, who worked at a hairdressing salon. He told of his search for any sign of his mother in the destruction, even if just her arm.

Castillo was saved after waking up to the noise of the flood, he said. He left home to see what was happening but his mother and aunt were still inside the house when it was buried by mud.

More than 1,000 homes were destroyed or damaged, officials said on Monday, while at least 36 people were killed and another 56 people remain missing.

On Tuesday housewife Jennifer Galindez, 46, buried her one-year-old granddaughter Estefania, who drowned after flood water swept into Galindez's home. Galindez's husband, who had a leg amputated due to severe diabetes, remains missing.

Danger of \$4 Trillion Hole in World Outlook Haunts IMF

LONDON (Dispatches) - Global finance chiefs gather in Washington in the coming days with the warning of a possible \$4 trillion loss in the world's economic output ringing in their ears.

That's the Germany-sized hole in the growth outlook through 2026 that International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva identified last week as a looming risk.

She'll play host as central bankers, finance ministers and others confront the fallout on the global economy of rampant inflation, aggressive monetary-policy tightening, rising debt and the biggest ground war in Europe since World War II.

That the IMF and World Bank annual meetings will be fully in-person for the first time since the outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020, showing progress in bringing the pandemic to heel, will be of limited comfort given other headaches.

The current confluence of economic, climate and security crises makes it unlike anything global policy makers have seen since 1945. Yet certain elements, such as the emerging-market havoc wreaked by Federal Reserve interest-rate hikes in the early 1980s, chime with the present predicament.

"The big question for the meetings is, 'What are we going to do in terms of the institutional response to this, beyond business as usual,'" Masood Ahmed, president of the Washington-based Center for Global Development, said last week.

Here's a quick look at some issues officials will grapple with:

World Economic Outlook: the IMF releases this on Tuesday. Georgieva said last week that the 2023 global growth forecast of 2.9% will be lowered.

Ukraine: the country Vladimir Putin's forces invaded in February will stay in focus, from the impact of a depleted grain harvest to Russia's gas squeeze on Europe. The IMF board on Friday approved a \$1.3 billion loan for Ukraine, its first lending to the nation since early March.

Food Prices: the IMF board last month approved a new emergency finance "food shock window" to help nations hurt by rising agricultural costs. The UK: the country remains vulnerable after market turmoil forced a partial U-turn on a tax-cut package from new Prime Minister Liz Truss's government that was panned by the IMF.

The Fed: US tightening is hurting other economies. IMF calculations show 60% of low-income countries and a quarter of emerging markets at or near debt distress.

Climate: the crisis is only getting worse, as shown recently by disasters from flooding in Pakistan to a hurricane that slammed Puerto Rico and Florida.

Elsewhere this week, a faster core inflation reading in the US, UK financial stability news, a South Korean rate hike and the Nobel Prize for economics will be among highlights.



In the US, the consumer price index is the highlight in the coming week. The Labor Department's report on Thursday will offer Fed officials a snapshot of how inflationary pressures are evolving after a series of huge interest-rate increases.

Economists estimate the CPI rose 8.1% in September from a year ago, marking a deceleration from the prior month's 8.3% annual increase as energy prices settled back. However, excluding fuel and food, the so-called core CPI is still accelerating -- it's expected to show a 6.5% annual gain, versus 6.3% in August.

An increase of that magnitude in the core measure would match the largest advance since 1982, illustrating stubborn inflation and keeping the pump primed for a fourth-straight 75 basis-point rate increase at the Fed's November meeting.

Investors will hear from a number of US central bankers in the coming week, including Vice Chair Lael Brainard and regional Fed presidents Loretta Mester, Charles Evans and James Bullard. Minutes of the Fed's September meeting will be released on Wednesday.

Other data include figures on prices paid to US producers. So-called wholesale inflation has shown signs of moderating as commodity prices weaken amid concerns about a global economic slowdown.

The week will be capped by retail sales data. Economists forecast a modest monthly advance in September, helped by a pickup in purchases of motor vehicles. Excluding cars, the value of retail sales is seen declining for a second month. Because the figures aren't adjusted for inflation, the data suggest demand for merchandise slowed in the third quarter.

Bank of Korea Governor Rhee Chang-yong may resort to a mini U-turn on the scale of rate hikes. While he returned to the usual quarter-point increment in August, many economists see him opting

for a move twice that size on Wednesday as the Fed's rapid tightening piles pressure on the won.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore is seen set to tighten for a fifth straight meeting, while the State Bank of Pakistan is expected to keep the benchmark rate steady for a third.

Assistant Governor Luci Ellis may shed light on the Reserve Bank of Australia's latest thinking on policy following its pivot to smaller hikes.

Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda and Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki will be in Washington for the IMF meetings, with the yen's movements still under close scrutiny.

Meanwhile, China is being hit by a rebound in Covid-19 cases following the week-long National Day holiday, just as the country's top leaders gather in Beijing for a meeting with President Xi Jinping.

The week kicks off with announcement of the Nobel Prize for economics on Monday. The award was established by Sweden's Riksbank in 1968, adding a sixth category to existing prizes for physics, chemistry, medicine, peace and literature. Three U.S.-based academics won in 2021 for work using experiments that draw on real-life situations to revolutionize empirical research.

The Bank of England's Financial Policy Committee will take center stage on Wednesday, a sure-fire sign the UK is facing significant issues.

The panel, responsible for emergency intervention to prevent a bond-market spiral last month, will release a record of its latest meeting. That may offer insights into whether officials see a risk of renewed turmoil that already plagued pension funds following Britain's mini-budget. It may also address the implications of a sharp increase in mortgage rates. BOE Governor Andrew Bailey is among several officials due to speak in the coming week, many of whom will appear at or around the IMF meetings.

Similarly, several other officials from around Europe will speak in Washington or nearby. European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, and Thomas Jordan, her Swiss National Bank counterpart, are both scheduled to deliver remarks.

In terms of European data, the UK will offer the most significant news. Jobs and growth reports may paint a richer picture of how the British economy is faring amid soaring rates and high inflation.

Euro-zone industrial production on Wednesday is likely to have partially rebounded in August after a much bigger decline the previous month.

Inflation data will take prominence throughout the rest of the region. In Hungary on Tuesday, the pace of price growth may reach close to 20%, while on Thursday, Sweden's key measure is expected to exceed 9%. Israel and Egypt will release inflation reports as well.

Further south, Ghana's measure of price growth is expected to be more than triple the ceiling of the central bank's 10% target for a third straight month.

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Turkey Extends Existing Contracts With Gas Suppliers

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey extended the existing contracts with gas suppliers and signed new contracts on liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the sake of overcoming the economic crisis. This was reported by the TV channel Oda TV, citing sources in the Ministry of Energy of the Republic.

The main supplier of gas to Turkey is Russia. Bloomberg reported earlier that Ankara has asked Moscow to postpone some of its payments for natural gas until 2024 in order to mitigate the economic damage from rising energy prices.



CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA (CICA)

30 YEARS
Anniversary
Happy
CICA Day



1992

2022

Conference on CICA to Open Today in Kazakhstan

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Astana, the capital of Republic of Kazakhstan, today (Thursday) will host the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) where delegates and reporters from many countries.

On Oct. 5, CICA celebrated 30 years since its establishment. The idea to create a conference on peace in Asia was first introduced by the First President Nursultan Nazarbayev back in 1992, at the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The sixth CICA summit, which begins today on Oct. 12 in Astana, will gather member states and international organizations to discuss cooperation measures to promote peace, security, and stability in Asia, and is expected to transform the summit into a full-fledged international organization.

The conference may offer a new course for promoting security systems for rapidly developing Asian countries, says Bulat Auelbayev, the chief expert at the Almaty branch of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (KazISS) in an interview.

Kazakhstan, located at the continental junction, has rightfully directed its attention towards rapidly developing Asian countries, said Auelbayev. "This part of the world [Asia], the cradle of ancient cultures and civilizations, is currently a patchwork of political systems, economic models, ideological and religious views."

According to him, modern Asia already largely determines the direction of the process of globalization. The economies of Asian countries are developing at a high rate, but their military potential is also growing. With the general rise in competition for resources, risks of armed conflict are also possible, he said.

"Asian countries began to steadily demonstrate the will to a new equitable system of international relations and to acquire the features of a post-industrial society. The model of Asian modernization began to lead a number of states out of the Third World category and away from westernization patterns," he added.

With the continuous shift of world development towards Asia, the need for security structures on a broad geographic scale is relevant and in demand, said Auelbayev. In this regard, Kazakhstan's proposal to create its own platform resonated widely.

"CICA has already become an effective international platform with broad support. An important area of Kazakhstan's foreign policy remains the promotion of a stable security system," he said. Today, CICA is the largest regional intergovernmental forum in Asia with 27 member states, along with nine countries and five international organizations having observer status.

Addressing the transformation of the summit into an organization, Auelbayev said "The transformation will be possible given a combination of concomitant factors. For example, most countries on the Asian continent will have to adapt to the conditions of globalization and integrate into the world's political and economic processes. Unlike Europe, Asia still has many poor states."

The final round of negotiations mapping out the documents that will transform the summit into a formal organization took place last week.

China Beats Japan in Global Innovation

BEIJING (Dispatches) - This is according to the recently published ranking of the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2022. China ranks 11th out of 132 countries ranked, ahead of Japan, which ranks 13th. Still, China's place is well below the US, which ranks 2nd, behind Switzerland, which ranks 1st.



Published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the GII measures how much different countries spend on research and development (R&D), intellectual property (IP) and venture capital – activities that eventually lead to new products and processes that increase productivity.

China's most recent innovation ranking has changed significantly from a decade ago when the world's second largest economy was ranked 35th, well behind Japan, which ranked 22nd.

Global innovation is essential for any country to compete efficiently and effectively in international markets. This is especially true for emerging markets like China, which are attempting to shift from imitation-driven growth to innovation-driven growth. Only then can these economies emerge from what development economists call the middle-income trap and become developed economies.

Most emerging markets have never made this transition. As a result, they continue to "emerge" or revert to marginal and underdevelopment status. Most Latin American and some African and Southeast Asian countries fall into this category.

Nevertheless, global innovation rankings based on investments in research and development, patent applications and venture capital must be interpreted with caution. They do not always lead to the development of new products and processes that increase a nation's productivity and competitiveness in world markets.

Economists distinguish between two types of innovation, marginal innovation and radical innovation. Edge innovations enhance existing technologies and have a small lasting impact on a nation's competitiveness in global markets. For example, Japan's office technologies in the 1980s, which improved America's office technologies, had little lasting impact on the country's global competitiveness.

Radical or breakthrough innovations fuel a new wave of disruptive technologies. They create entirely new industries, markets, and business models that profoundly impact the country's economy to compete in global markets. For example, radical innovations such as Microsoft's Windows operating system, Intel and Qualcomm chips, and Apple's smartphone have had a lasting impact on America's competitiveness in global markets. They can explain the country's continued top ranking in almost every innovation index.

Nevertheless, the development of radical innovations requires Schumpeter's entrepreneurial spirit – the discovery and exploitation of new market opportunities and the introduction of products and processes.

Global Economy Contracts for Second Month Running

LONDON (Dispatches) - Global economic output contracted for a second straight month in September, adding to signs that businesses around the world are reporting the toughest conditions outside of pandemic lockdowns since the global financial crisis.

Manufacturing is being hit by rising prices, weakened demand and slumping trade, as well as a shift towards inventory reduction after the stock building seen at the height of the pandemic. In the service sector, consumer focused firms are likewise suffering falling demand due to the cost-of-living crisis. However, rising interest rates are also driving an increasingly severe downturn in financial services, led by a slump in real estate activity.

Meanwhile, cost pressures globally remain elevated, though trends vary by region. While cost inflation showed further signs of moderating in the US and many emerging markets, helping support demand in some cases, inflationary pressures intensified in Europe due to the energy crisis. These varying inflation pressures played a part not only in driving disparities in current demand conditions, but also greatly affected future output expectations, which have deteriorated markedly in Europe. Mainland China also saw business optimism fade further amid concerns over the economic outlook.

The focus now shifts to whether any further cooling of cost pressures can help stimulate growth and offset the adverse impact of rising interest rates, notably on housing markets.

Global business activity contracted for a second successive month in September, according to PMI survey data compiled by S&P Global and sponsored by JPMorgan. Although the headline PMI, measuring output of both manufacturing and services, rose from 49.3 in August to 49.7 in September, signalling only a marginal decline in activity and a moderation in the rate of contraction, the latest reading rounds off the worst calendar quarter since 2009 if pandemic-related lockdowns are excluded.

Service sector output remained unchanged after falling in August, registering the second-worst monthly performance since early-2020. Manufacturing output meanwhile fell for a second consecutive month, also declining at the second-steepest rate since early-2020 (April 2022 saw a marginally larger decline).

Looking into more detail among broad industry groups, basic material manufacturers reported the sharpest drop in global output, followed by financial services providers. Of note, output of both consumer services and consumer goods fell at increased rates. In fact, only tech firms and industrials reported higher output in September.

Pakistan to Get \$2b Funds in Flood Support From WB

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - World Bank Saturday announced the allocation of \$2 billion in funds from existing projects for emergency operations in flood-affected areas to support Pakistan as the cash-strapped nation seeks funding following the climate-induced catastrophe.

Bank's Country Director Najy Benhassine, during a meeting with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, informed him that around \$1.5 billion in funds would be mobilised this year due to an emergency situation.

The floods caused by abnormal monsoon rains and glacial melt have submerged huge swathes of the South Asian country and killed nearly 1,700 people, the majority of them children and women. The finance minister briefed Benhassine about the economic challenges that the country is currently facing. He said that the present government is cognizant of these issues and is taking pragmatic steps to resolve bottlenecks to growth.

"The present government is committed to setting the economy on a sustainable and inclusive growth path," Dar told the World Bank official according to a statement issued by the Finance Division.

During the meeting, Dar appreciated the World Bank for being a source of support in pursuing reform agenda and implementing various development projects for the country.

He further said that Pakistan values the financial and technical support provided by the World Bank for the institutional reforms and economic development of the country.

Earlier this week, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced providing flood-relief support of \$2.3-2.5 billion to Pakistan.

Turkey Seeks Visa Facilitation to Europe at PACE

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The Schengen visa-related problems of Turkish citizens, which have turned into an ordeal recently, are on the agenda of the General Assembly of The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Seeking visa facilitation to EU member states, Ankara aims to ensure that visa decisions are taken to the judiciary and the Schengen Information System are standardized for all countries.

Stating that a possible recommendation decision from PACE's General Assembly would raise awareness, Ziya Altunyaliz, a member of the Turkish delegation to PACE, said, "There is a serious increase in the refusal rates for all countries. It was 4 percent for Turkey in 2017 and 2018, but is 17 percent today."

The "right to free movement of persons," which is expressed in the European Convention on Human Rights and which is one of the main aims of the European Union, is considered a human right, Altunyaliz noted, warning of the "violation of human rights risk" in case of the refusals' continuation.

When included in a recommendation, member states are required to add it to their legislation, he noted. "After that, we propose the establishment of a monitoring committee to determine whether these recommendations are implemented or not."

All Schengen countries should have standard, uniform and clear regulations on how the process works, according to Altunyaliz.

Turkey also wants the visa process to proceed in a more dialogical manner and the citizens to be able to receive at least a part of the money they pay if their application is refused.

"If one has missing documents and information, a period of time should be given for this and the application not be rejected immediately. Let them complete this as they pay money," Altunyaliz said.

The authorities should get in touch with the applicants, he also suggested, saying, "We want at least partial refunds unless the application is justifiably denied."

Turkish people spend some 100 million euros annually to obtain Schengen visas, according to Ayhan Zeytinoglu, the head of the Economic Development Foundation (IKV).

Head of the European Union Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut said earlier, the recent rejections were mainly due to fake and incomplete documents.

Ukrainian Economy to Shrink At Rate Eight Times That of Russia



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Ukraine's economy will shrink at a rate eight times that of Russia this year as a result of the war triggered by Moscow's invasion in February, the World Bank has estimated.

In its latest report on Europe and central Asia, the Washington-based institution said the Ukrainian economy would contract by 35% in 2022, compared with a 4.5% fall in Russian GDP.

Earlier estimates had suggested the Kremlin faced a bigger economic hit this year, but the World Bank said the impact of sanctions had so far been less severe than forecast.

Kyiv has been making military advances in recent weeks, and since April the Ukrainian economy has shown signs of growth. Yet the Bank said recovery would be slow and the cost of repairing the damage inflicted by the war would be enormous. It put the cost at a minimum of \$349bn (£303bn) – more than one-and-a-half times the country's prewar gross domestic product.

Ukraine was already Europe's poorest country even before the war began in February this year, but more than seven months of conflict meant a third of its population of 44 million had been displaced and 60% were living below the national poverty line.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine has triggered one of the biggest human displacement crises and exacted a heavy toll on human and economic life," said Anna Bjerde, World Bank vice-president for the Europe and Central Asia region.

"Ukraine continues to need enormous financial support as the war needlessly rages on as well as for recovery and reconstruction projects that could be quickly initiated."

Inflation had accelerated rapidly, reaching an annual rate of just under 24% in April, with high food price inflation hurting families, particularly the poor.

Boeing Runs Off Runway At Mehrabad Airport

TEHRAN (IP) - A plane of Taban Airlines had an accident while taking off from Mehrabad Airport to Mashhad and ran off the runway.

According to Mirakbar Razavi, the spokesperson of the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran, all the passengers and crew of this flight are in perfect health and they have all

been transferred to the terminal. Airline experts are on the runway and are investigating the causes of this accident.

He added: "Due to a malfunction in the aircraft's braking system, the aircraft ran off the runway during takeoff, and during this incident, Mehrabad Airport's 29R runway was closed for a while."



U.S. Election Offices Tighten Security for Nov. 8 Midterms

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - When voters in Jefferson County, Colorado, cast their ballots in the Nov. 8 midterm election, they will see security guards stationed outside the busiest polling centers.

At an election office in Flagstaff, Arizona, voters will encounter bulletproof glass and need to press a buzzer to enter. In Tallahassee, Florida, election workers will count ballots in a building that has been newly toughened with walls made of the super-strong fiber Kevlar.

Spurred by a deluge of threats and intimidating behavior by conspiracy theorists and others upset over former President Donald Trump's 2020 election defeat, some election officials across the United States are fortifying their operations as they ramp up for another divisive election.

A Reuters survey of 30 election offices found that 15 have enhanced security in various ways, from installing panic buttons to hiring extra security guards to holding active-shooter and de-escalation training.

Reuters focused on offices in battleground states and offices that had openly expressed a need for security improvements, for example in congressional testimony. While the survey does not speak to how widespread such moves are, it does show how election officials are responding to threats in parts of the country where the election will likely be decided.

Election officials around the country said they were coordinating more closely with local law enforcement to respond quickly to disturbances. Many have also trained workers in de-escalating conflicts and evading active shooters.

Until recently, such threats to safety were seen as hypothetical in a country that has seen few instances of election-related violence since the civil rights battles of the 1960s, when the presence of armed officers sometimes intimidated rather than reassured Black voters.

Now those risks are seen as real, said Tammy Patrick, a senior adviser at the Democracy Fund, a nonpartisan public-interest group founded by entrepreneur and Democratic donor Pierre Omidyar.

"The likelihood that they could occur has definitely increased, so everyone is taking that to heart," she said.

Election officials in 12 states, including some who have paid for moderate security improvements, said they have not received enough money to make their desired upgrades due to bureaucratic hurdles.

In Champaign County, Illinois, clerk Aaron Ammons would like to install metal detectors at his office, where visitors have filmed staff and the layout of the space in what he described as a threatening manner.

"It makes us feel like we're targets, or we're not a priority in the same way our men and women in uniform are. And we're on the front lines of democracy just like they are," said Ammons.

Ammons gave testimony to Congress in August that he and his wife received anonymous messages threatening their daughter's life ahead of the 2020 election,



and he told Reuters he recently saw someone filming his house.

The Justice Department says it has investigated more than 1,000 messages to election workers since the 2020 election, including more than 100 that could warrant prosecution. Reuters documented the campaign of fear being waged against election workers in a series of investigative reports.

Seven cases have been charged so far. The first sentence came Thursday, when a Nebraska man received 18 months in prison for threatening an election official.

One in five U.S. election officials said that they were unlikely to stay in their job through 2024, when Americans will go to the polls again to elect a president, according to a survey by the Brennan Center for Justice that was released in March. They cited stress, attacks by politicians and impending retirement as reasons.

The lingering bitterness from the 2020 election has also spooked many of the temporary workers who check in voters, count ballots and perform other tasks that make elections possible, officials say.

Philadelphia has boosted pay for election day workers from \$120 to \$250 to help recruiting efforts that have been complicated by fears of harassment, as well as a tight labor market, said Omar Sabir, one of the city's three election commissioners. After receiving death threats in 2020, he himself changed his travel patterns.

"You've got to keep your head on a swivel," Sabir said. "Sometimes I have nightmares thinking about that, somebody walking up and causing me harm."

Many election officials blame disinformation, such as Trump's baseless claims about election fraud in the 2020 election, for the surge in threats.

U.S.'s Fake...

FROM PAGE 1

The decision enraged the White House and Western countries which expected the group to increase production for lowering the oil price in the market which has caused economic problems in the Western states.



Reacting to this logical and brave decision, the White House said OPEC+ is "aligning" with Russia after the bloc announced it was cutting oil production by 2m barrels per day, defying US pressure.

"It's clear that OPEC+ is aligning with Russia with today's announcement," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said aboard Air Force One.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in a statement President Joe Biden was disappointed with OPEC+ to cut production quotas. Washington has reportedly put significant lobbying at work to counter the move.

The next releases will continue "as appropriate to protect American consumers and promote energy security and (Biden) is directing the secretary of energy to explore any additional responsible actions to continue increasing domestic production in the immediate term," the statement said.

But those reserves are quickly emptying after record withdrawals ordered by the Biden administration, which started in March. The reserves are now at their lowest level since July 1984 and it is not clear when the administration plans to purchase a refill.

This move was so shocking that a group of Democratic lawmakers introduced a bill to end Washington's military support for Saudi Arabia and the UAE as the Biden administration is mulling a response to the recent OPEC+ decision to cut output by two millions barrels a day.

In the House, Representatives Tom Malinowski, Sean Casten and Susan Wild put forward a bill that seeks to slash American military support for Saudi Arabia and the UAE and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the oil-rich countries.

"We see no reason why American troops and contractors should continue to provide this service to countries that are actively working against us," the lawmakers said, accusing the oil-producing countries of siding with Russia.

The decision by OPEC+ puts Biden and the Democratic Party in a bind by potentially kickstarting fuel price hikes, just five weeks ahead of midterm elections where the Republicans hope to take control of Congress.

Pointing to Biden Administration's efforts to "repair" relationship with Riyadh in a bid to stabilize the energy market, the lawmakers said that "Saudi Arabia and the UAE have now answered our overtures with a slap in the face that will hurt American consumers and undermine our national interests."

It seems now OPEC+ members have realized the power of their weapon, oil, in confronting with the super powers, something which had been neglected in the past and the recent developments in the world have awakened the OPEC members and now they are not ready to sell their oil for cheap prices to please the West.

The OPEC+ move was another alarming bell for the U.S. to realize the era of bully and milking the smaller countries has ended and Washington will be unable to dictate itself on the OPEC members under different pretexts and vows of protecting those countries against attacks because the U.S. just thinks of its profits and it does not give of damn to the interests of other countries and the best recent example for this claim are Afghanistan and Syria.

The OPEC+ members have realized oil and fuel is their winning card and it is a weapon much more powerful than Western weapons, and countries now believe that the end of U.S. hegemony is reaching its end and they find more courageous to stand against the excessive demands of any bullying country.

FM Warns EU of...

FROM PAGE 1

What started as peaceful protests took a violent turn after unruly protesters fatally attacked policemen and indulged in vandalism against public property in several cities.

On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted a resolution with regard to recent riots in Iran, calling on the EU officials to impose sanctions against Iranian officials who have been involved in an alleged crackdown on protests.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the resolution as "meddlesome" and "baseless," vowing to give an "appropriate" response to the imposition of any restrictive measures against Iranian people.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has already summoned Frances's chargé d'affaires to Tehran to protest meddlesome measures by the French government in Iran's domestic affairs and its stance about riots instigated by counterrevolutionary elements across the country.

National Exports Day Ceremony Slated to Be Held on Oct. 22

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) is going to hold the National Exports Day ceremony in collaboration with Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on October 22.

As the TPO portal reported, the 26th National Exports Day ceremony is going to be attended by high-ranking officials including President Ebrahim Raisi.

Like the previous years, the country's top exporters are going to be honored in the current year's event, the official said.

According to TPO, this year, more than 600 export companies from different product and service groups have been assessed in order to select distinguished exporters, and the finalists will be announced at the National Export Day ceremony.

The 25th National Exports Day ceremony was held by TPO in collaboration with ICCIMA on December 13, 2021.

The ceremony was attended by senior officials including the First Vice President Mohammad

Mokhber, Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari, and the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Reza Fatemi Amin.

During the event, the country's top exporters were also introduced and honored.

Last year, the performance of about 500 exporters was assessed in order to identify the top exporters, out of which two exporters were rewarded with Export Honorary Medals, seven exporters were recognized as excellent exporters, 37 exporters were recognized as national exporters and five exporters were celebrated as good exporters.

Iranians Mark Hafez Day At His Tomb in Shiraz



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian people and other lovers of Hafez from different countries will pay a visit to his tomb on October 12th to mark the Hafez Day.

October 12th is celebrated as Hafez Day in Iran. Many authors, scholars, and lovers from around the world come to Iran on this day to mark the occasion in Hafez's tomb in Shiraz. People gather at the tomb of Hafez to read his poems and hold special ceremonies.

Built in 1935, the tomb of Hafez is designed by a well-known French architect and archeologist Andre Godard. The tomb and its surrounding gardens are one of the greatest tourist attractions in Shiraz.

Born in (1315-1390), one of the most chaotic times in history, Khajeh Shamseddin Mohammad Hafez-e Shirazi is considered one of the greatest Iranian poets and mystics. The reason that he is called Hafez is the fact that he memorized the whole Quran. He is also entitled "Lisan Ul-Gheyb", which means the language of the unseen.

Although Hafez is considered one of the most prominent poets in Iran and even across the world, his life is shrouded in mystery. There are various ideas and comments about his life but there is no single reliable source to rely on in this regard.

Hafez is believed to have been influenced by many authors before him like Omar Khayyam (who is also one of the most significant Iranian figures in mathematics, astronomy, and poetry). However, many critics symbolize Hafez as a bee that flies over different flowers to make the most delicious honey.

IMF Expects Iran's Economy...

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The IMF figures about Iran's economic growth are consistent with recent data published by The World Bank which indicate that Iran's economy grew by 4.7% last year.

The World Bank forecasts show that Iran's economy will grow by 2.9% this year and by 2.2% next year.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has doubled down on criticism of the chancellor's mini-budget, days after warning it will fuel rising prices.

The body, which works to stabilise economic growth, admitted tax cuts announced by Kwasi Kwarteng would boost growth in the short-term.

But it said the cuts would "complicate the fight" against soaring prices.

It expects high prices to last longer in the UK with only Slovakia out of the eurozone set to see higher inflation. Inflation, which measures how the cost of living changes over time, is expected to peak at about 11.3% before the end of the year in the UK, according to the IMF's latest assessment of the global economy.

In each of the next two years, it expects price rises will average at about 9% - far above the Bank of England's target of 2%. Although the UK economy is set to grow the fastest of the major economies included in the G7 group this year, it is projected to grind to a near-halt next year, with it expanding by just 0.3%.

The most recent figures included in the report by the influential financial institution do not fully, however, take into account the UK chancellor's recent mini-budget.

IMF Expects Iran's Economy...

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As to the issue of Palestine, he noted that certain people thought that the way to survive the occupied land comes from negotiating table, but we have seen that consensus with the Zionists is doomed to failure and the resistance movement has come out victorious.

Raisi also criticized those who pursue normalization of ties with the Zionist regime, noting that there are differences between governments and their people over the issue of normalization because the Islamic citizens do not accept political ties with the Zionists.

The United States and the Zionist regime are seeking to sow discord among Muslim nations in order to follow up their own interests and find markets for their weapons as well as marginalize the first and foremost

issue of the Islamic world, which is the liberation of Palestine and the Holy al-Quds.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the fight against terrorism and extremism, noting that the Islamic Republic of Iran has put the confrontation on its agenda, but the US has supported terrorism in the region and assassinated Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was fighting terrorism.

The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought holds the International Islamic Unity Conference every year concurrent with the Islamic Unity Week from October 9 to 14. The conference was held in the last couple of years in the form of an online webinar due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Tiger Hits New Ranking Low

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Former world number one Tiger Woods, recovering from severe leg injuries in a 2021 car crash, sank to a career-low 1,206th in the world golf rankings released. The 15-time major winner, second only to the record 18 won by Jack Nicklaus on the all-time list, fell seven spots below his previous worst mark, which came in 2017 after back surgery. Woods spent a record 683 weeks atop the world rankings but tumbled after numerous back and leg injuries.

Liverpool Star Diaz Ruled Out Until After World Cup

LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - Liverpool forward Luis Diaz is set to be sidelined until after the World Cup due to a knee injury, according to reports. Diaz suffered the injury during the first half of Liverpool's 3-2 defeat at Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday. The 25-year-old Colombian left the Emirates Stadium on crutches with his knee in a brace. Scans have revealed Diaz does not require surgery, but it has been reported the injury will keep him out until after the World Cup, which starts on November 20.

Rublev Keeps on Running In Race To Turin

LONDON (Dispatches) - It was a good week for Andrey Rublev at the Astana Open, but there is no let up for the 24-year-old as he seeks to boost his qualification hopes for the Nitto ATP Finals.

Rublev powered to the semi-finals at the ATP 500 event in the Kazakh capital before falling to Stefanos Tsitsipas in three sets. Despite that disappointment, the 11-time tour-level titlist collected 180 valuable points to consolidate his place in sixth in the Pepperstone ATP Live Race To Turin.

This week, he has the chance to press his claims further when he takes to court at the Gijon Open. Rublev (who has 3,235 points in the Live Race) is the top seed at the ATP 250 event, and a title run in Spain would move him within 70 points of fifth-placed Daniil Medvedev (3,555).

Should he qualify, it would be a third consecutive appearance for Rublev at the end-of-year event, to be held at the Pala Alpitour in Turin from 13-20 November.

Now right behind Rublev in the Race is Taylor Fritz (2,885 points). The American's maiden ATP 500 crown at the Rakuten Japan Open Tennis Championships in Tokyo propelled him three spots to seventh as he chases his debut appearance at the Nitto ATP Finals.

As a result of lifting his 90th tour-level trophy in Astana, Novak Djokovic (2,720 points) became the fifth confirmed qualifier for the eight-man season finale. The Serbian's triumph not only lifted him to 10th in the Live Race, but also guaranteed the five-time Nitto ATP Finals champion a Top 20 finish — high enough to book his spot thanks to his Wimbledon triumph in July.



Meanwhile Danielle Collins, in her first match since the U.S. Open, upset seventh-seeded Caroline Garcia of France 6-2, 7-6 (4) in the first round of the San Diego Open.

Collins, a 28-year-old Florida native, reached her first Grand Slam final in January, when she fell to Ashleigh Barty for the Australian Open title. She made early exits at the French Open and Wimbledon before reaching the fourth round at the U.S. Open.

Collins overcame a rocky serving performance that saw her put just 48 percent of her first serves in play while logging more double faults (seven) than aces (five). Her next opponent will be Italy's Martina Trevisan, who defeated Colombia's Camila Osorio 6-3, 6-4.

Three other U.S. players won first-round matches: Madison Keys, Coco Vandeweghe and qualifier Louisa Chirico. Canada's Bianca Andreescu topped Russian lucky loser Liudmila Samsonova 7-6 (1), 4-6, 6-2 in the last match of the night.

Germany's Jule Niemeier and Italy's Jasmine Paolini posted upset wins in the first round at Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Niemeier got past third-seeded Ana Bogdan of Romania 7-6 (5), 6-2, and Paolini knocked out sixth-seeded Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine 5-7, 6-3, 6-4.

Niemeier had eight double faults to Bogdan's one, but she came through in key moments, converting five of her seven break points. Paolini fell behind by two service breaks in the third set but won five of the last six games to pull away.

Also advancing to the second round were eighth-seeded Anna Bondar of Hungary, Dayana Yastremska of Ukraine, Anna Blinkova of Russia and Ysaline Bonaventure of Belgium.



Messi to Headline Maradona Match for Peace

ROME (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi will headline a star-studded lineup for a 'match for peace' in tribute to fellow Argentina football great Diego Maradona on November 14 in Rome, organizers announced.

In addition to Messi, former Brazilian star Ronaldinho, Italian World Cup winner Gianluigi Buffon and Roma's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho confirmed their presence in a video published by the WEPLAYFORPEACE platform for the third edition of the "match for peace" organised by a Foundation created by Pope Francis.

The video was uploaded on October 10, to signify 10/10, in tribute to the number 10 jersey worn by Maradona during his career. His nickname was 'el ultimo Diez' (the last 10).

Former World Cup winner Maradona died aged 60 of heart failure in November 2020.

The match will take place on November 14 at the Olympic Stadium in Rome, less than a week before the start of the World Cup in Qatar.

Stuttgart Fire American Manager Matarazzo

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bundesliga side VfB Stuttgart have fired their American manager Pellegrino Matarazzo, the club confirmed late on Monday afternoon.

The 44-year-old took over with the team in the second division halfway through the 2019-20 season, bringing them back to the top flight with a second-placed finish.

Stuttgart narrowly avoided relegation in 2021-22 on goal difference and sit second last this campaign. With zero wins after nine games, Stuttgart are the only Bundesliga team without a win.

Stuttgart lost 1-0 at home to table-topping Union Berlin on Sunday. German media speculated the manager would be given one last chance against last-placed Bochum next Saturday, but ultimately decided the coach's time had come.

In a statement, Matarazzo thanked fans for the "intense and beautiful years with many incredible moments and memories that will last forever."

"VfB is something special that you only understand if you are a part of it. I wish this team, this club and these fans, all the best."

Stuttgart Sporting Director Sven Mislintat, who was previously employed in the same position at Arsenal and Borussia Dortmund, thanked Matarazzo.

"We started the new season with high hopes. Unfortunately, the results so far have not fulfilled these hopes. We are now at a point where we are convinced that (the firing) is inevitable."

More Than 1,300 Fans Banned From World Cup By UK Home Office

LONDON (Dispatches) - More than 1,300 fans from England and Wales with banning orders will not be allowed to travel to Qatar for this year's World Cup, the UK's Home Office has said.

The new measures, which come into effect from Friday, prevent supporters with a history of football-related violence from making the trip to the sport's showpiece event, which kicks off on Nov. 20 and runs till Dec. 18.

Pacquiao to Fight in S. Korea



SEOUL (Dispatches) - Filipino boxing great Manny Pacquiao will fight in an exhibition match in South Korea this winter to raise money for war-torn Ukraine, the event's organizers announced Tuesday. Pacquiao, the only eight-division world champion in boxing history, will take on the South Korean mixed martial artist DK Yoo at 11am. on December 11 at the Korea International Exhibition Centre (KINTEX) in Goyang, Yonhap news agency reported.

Proceeds from the match will be donated to help relief and recovery efforts in Ukraine. Pacquiao, 43, had his last official fight in August 2021. The upcoming exhibition will be contested under boxing rules over six two-minute rounds. Both fighters will don 10-ounce gloves.

"I am very thankful for this opportunity and excited for the exhibition," Yonhap reported Pacquiao said at a press conference in Seoul announcing the details of the match. "The fight is real. We will try to knock each other out. That's why we need to work hard."

Pacquiao said he will use the upcoming bout to decide if he wants to return to professional boxing or if he will stay on the exhibition circuit.

"It depends. We will see the result on Dec 11," Pacquiao said with a smile. His career record stands at 62 wins (39 KOs), eight losses and two draws.

Yoo, who has built a sizable following on YouTube with clips showing fighting techniques, said he will embrace the challenge of fighting one of the all-time greats, according to Yonhap.

Red Bull Found Guilty of Breaching F1 Cost Cap

PARIS (Dispatches) - Red Bull and Aston Martin have been found in breach of Formula 1 financial rules, the motor sports governing body (FIA) announced, saying any punishment would be decided at a later date.

The FIA said a review of the teams had found that Red Bull, home of world champion Max Verstappen, "is considered to be in procedural and minor overspend breaches of the Financial Regulations" with Aston Martin "in procedural breach of the financial regulations."

The FIA said it was "currently determining the appropriate course of action to be taken." A "minor overspend breach", the statement said, is less than 5 percent of a team's total cap and can "result in financial penalties and/or minor sporting penalties."

The FIA said its 'Cost Cap Administration' had finished a review of the financial documentation submitted by each team for 2021 and "issued certificates of compliance to seven of the ten".

The third exception was Williams, where there had been a problem with "a previous procedural breach" which the team had "remediated" in a "timely, cooperative and transparent manner".

The statement stressed that because the season under review was the first with a cost cap, the FIA had limited itself "to reviewing the submissions made by the competitors and that no full formal investigations were launched."

The statement said that the first option for the Cost Cap Administration was to agree a settlement with the team involved.



Hectic Schedule Part And Parcel of Life in Premier League

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min says players must remember they are living their dreams by playing in the Premier League, even if the demanding schedule is taking its toll.

Domestic leagues and UEFA have been trying to cram in fixtures before the World Cup starts on Nov. 20. Spurs are due to play 10 matches before the tournament begins in Qatar, starting with Champions League game against Eintracht Frankfurt.

Son, 30, said travelling for matches and spending time away from home can be difficult but it was part of life as a professional player.

"When you think about, when you were a kid what was your dream? Probably everyone is going to say playing in the Premier League," Son told the London Evening Standard.

"So we're living the dream and we can never forget these moments. I know there are tired moments and it's mentally and physically really difficult."

"But we were born to do this, we love to do this and we should enjoy it. And obviously the more you enjoy it, the more happiness will be here. I know it's tough moments but we should bring more happiness and it will be more enjoyable."

Son will lead South Korea at the World Cup, where they are in Group H alongside Portugal, Ghana and Uruguay.

