

Four Cities in Iran Have Turned Red in the Latest Update of the Iranian Ministry of Health's Coronavirus Pandemic Map That Shows the Severity of the Outbreak of the Disease

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Iran to File Lawsuit Against U.S. for Role in Unrest

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says it will file a lawsuit against the United States for its direct role and involvement in the recent unrest in the country.

A court in Tehran will determine the damage caused and will issue the necessary verdict against the US, said Kazem Gharibabadi, Deputy Chief of the Iranian Judiciary and secretary of the High Council for Human Rights.

Gharibabadi talked about how destructive the role the US-funded Iran International and BBC Persian TV Networks played in instigating violence, mobilizing the riots, and sabotaging public and private property in Iran.

"These two networks and their agents should be added to the list of terrorist groups and individuals. Also, documented cases about the actions of these networks are being compiled and judicial actions will be pursued against them in domestic and foreign courts soon."

Gharibabadi went on to say, "in the meantime, the role of the countries that host and support these networks, that is, England and Saudi Arabia, will not be neglected by the relevant governmental apparatuses." He also pointed out to the attacks against Iranian diplomatic places and persons that took place in some countries.

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Iran Sees 40% Rise in Exports Despite Sanctions



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi has said that Iran witnessed a rise of 40% in its exports in the past year and a 13% growth in non-oil exports this year, despite the ongoing US sanctions.

Raisi said that the Iranian nation, just as it excelled in the Imposed War, will also win and excel in the sanctions war with the participation of economic actors and producers.

"Exporters and producers are the officers of the sanctions war, and they should strive to win this battle," the president said at a ceremony on National Day of Export on October 21, noting that all efforts should be taken towards production and development of basic technology.

"The committees that work for the growth of exports and removing the obstacles facing exporters should pay more attention to the views and opinions of exporters than others," he added.

Last year's 40% growth in exports is an indication of economic practitioners' determination to promote exports, despite the harsh US sanctions which are imposed to prevent the country from achieving any growth and force it into being a consumer country, Raisi said.

"The imposition of sanctions on the Islamic Iran is all for the country not to grow, not to produce and export, not to be productive and to be a consumer," he further stressed.

"This year, all our efforts should be made towards achieving growth in production, especially knowledge-based and technology-based production," he said, in reference to the naming of this year by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

The president further pointed out that "only then we will witness a real growth, an increase in production, the elimination of unemployment and the production of goods in the region and the world."

Commenting on the expansion of economic relations with the regional countries, Raisi said, "We must revive Iran's share in the economic interactions of the region, including in the transit of goods, monetary and financial circulation and other economic fields."

Raisi said Iran's rivals do not want the country to prosper.

"They officially say this and act on it. Wherever Iranian economic actors are present and want to market and offer goods, [rivals] create obstacles so that these goods do not have a market. This is a war of wills," he explained.

The president also described the connection with the economic infrastructures of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the removal of obstacles to relations with neighboring countries as good news for the country's economy and progress.

Iran's National Day of Exports was celebrated on Sunday in a ceremony attended by a number of senior officials including First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Reza Rahmani, the acting minister for industry, mining and trade, and Mohammad Shariatmadari, who has been suggested for the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare.

Iran Oil Products Export Climbs 40% in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) - The value of Iran's oil products export increased 40 percent in the first half of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the board director of Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters Union (OPEX) announced.

Hamid Hosseini said while the six-month export indicates 40 percent growth in value, it fell 20 percent in weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Major export products included liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), polymers, methanol, bitumen and industrial lubricants, he said.

"It is hoped that we can maintain the 55 percent share of downstream oil and gas industries in the country's exports", Hosseini further noted.

The expansion of trade diplomacy, and the activation of chambers of commerce, one of whose tasks is marketing, can be a solution for the development of the share of downstream oil industries, the board director of Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters Union (OPEX), who is also an energy expert, further commented.

Tehran Censures EU-UK Statement

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Tehran, IRNA - Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani has categorically condemned a statement issued by the European Union (EU) and Britain, which claimed that Iran-made drones are being used in Ukraine war.

Kanaani said on Saturday that the accusation is firmly unfounded and that the imposition of new sanctions on Iran by foreign ministers of the European Union plus the British government is completely ruled out.

The spokesman also noted that Tehran dismisses baseless allegations concerning delivery of drone for the use in Ukraine.

The Islamic Republic has always underscored that all member states of the United Nations should respect objectives and principles of the UN Charter as well as international rights including independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, he noted, adding that Iran backs peace and instant secession of hostility in Ukraine through a political process.

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All Iranian Crew Members of Venezuelan Plane Released

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry says all five Iranian crew members of a Venezuelan plane, who had been confined in Argentina since June at the request of the United States, have been released and they are on their way back to Iran.

Nasser Kanaani said in a statement that the Iranian nationals have been freed after 129 days of diplomatic efforts as well as legal and consular campaigns jointly conducted by Iranian and Venezuelan officials.

He stated that an Argentinean investigating judge has eventually ruled that the documents and evidence given by the plaintiffs, namely the umbrella organization of Argentina's Jewish community (DAIA) and two Jewish members of the National Congress of Argentina, were inadmissible and inauthentic.

Accordingly, it ordered the release of the Iranian crew of the plane by lifting a ban on their travel.

Meanwhile, Venezuelan Minister of Transport Ramon Velásquez has expressed happiness over the freedom of all crew members of the plane, whom he said were kidnapped by the Argentine judiciary.

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Turkey Calls for End to Embargoes On Iran, Venezuela

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey has called for removal of Western sanctions on Iran and Venezuela amid the global energy crisis triggered by Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, and the fact that skyrocketing energy prices are compounding a cost-of-living crisis for hundreds of millions of people.

"The entire world needs Venezuela's oil and natural gas... On the other side, there is an embargo on the Iranian oil," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a news conference in the country's southern province of Mersin on Friday.

"Remove these sanctions... if you want the prices to drop, remove the embargoes on the countries that will offer their products to the market," he added.

"You cannot solve the problem by threatening a country," the top Turkish diplomat pointed out.

Back in August, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji warned of a global energy crisis this winter, saying Tehran stands ready to increase its oil exports by a significant amount if sanctions are removed from the country.

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JCPOA Revival Hinges Entirely on U.S. Will

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's permanent representative to the international organizations in Vienna says the fate of the Vienna talks on reviving the Iran nuclear deal depends entirely on Washington's seriousness.

Speaking with Russia's Izvestia newspaper, Mikhail Ulyanov noted that the ball on the fate of the deal, or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is in the US' court.

"The completion of the negotiations at this stage, whether successful or unsuccessful, depends almost entirely on the United States and on their readiness to negotiate and seek an acceptable compromise," he said.

According to the diplomat, Washington "suspended" the negotiation process due to the upcoming US congressional elections on November 8, 2022.

The last round of talks did not end "negatively," he said, expressing optimism that the negotiations would be completed after the US election in late November.

The Russian diplomat also believes that an agreement between the parties can be reached "in a very short time" as just a few issues have remained and they just need a "political will."

The current crisis over Iran's nuclear program was created in May 2018, when former US president Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the 2015 nuclear deal and imposed tough economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic under what he called the "maximum pressure" policy. The talks to salvage the agreement kicked off in the Austrian capital of Vienna in April last year, months after Joe Biden succeeded Trump, with the intention of examining Washington's seriousness in rejoining the deal and removing anti-Iran sanctions.

Earlier this week, US special envoy for Iran Robert Malley said the negotiations are "not even on the agenda," in a gesture aimed at blaming Iran for the stalled diplomatic process.

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No Security Problem Exists on Iran-Afghanistan Border

MASHHAD (IRNA) - The commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Border Guards Brigadier General Ahmad Ali Goudarzi said that there are currently no significant security problems on Iran's borders with Afghanistan.

During his visit to the borders of Taybad and Dowqarun, General Goudarzi said that all border units in the east of the country have been upgraded compared to the past and the security of the borders is stable. He added that where negotiations are needed with Afghanistan, necessary meetings and coordination would be held in terms of diplomacy.

Iran Not to Retreat From Its Red Lines

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said on Saturday that Iran has received the US' message and will take steps within the red lines of the Islamic Republic.

Following a meeting with the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Iran's top diplomat made remarks on the negotiations surrounding the removal of the imposed sanctions.

Amirabdollahian, at the head of a high-ranking delegation, arrived in the Armenian capital on Thursday (October 20).

Iran will not make any concessions to the American side, he said, noting that the country will take actions based on the logic and within the framework of the agreement considering the red lines of the Islamic Republic.

He went on to say, "We will never leave the negotiating table."

A message has been received from the US three days ago, he said, adding that the Americans are in hurry to reach the agreement point with Iran.

While Americans continue to exchange their messages with Iran, they are seeking to fan the flames of the issues that have taken place inside Iran, he said.

He said that the US was after piling political and psychological pressure on Iran to force Tehran to make concessions in the talks.

Commenting on statements by US officials who said that talks on the removal of sanctions are off the agenda, he pointed out that Americans' remarks and actions contradict each other. The agency's accusations against Iran's nuclear program should be resolved, he said, adding that Iran received a message from the US three days ago. Iran will not make an agreement in which the IAEA will politically pressure the country, he noted.

"We will not make any concessions to the American side," he reaffirmed.

Meanwhile Amirabdollahian stressed bilateral cooperation between Tehran and



Yerevan, saying that Iran considers the security of Armenia as its own security and the security of the region.

He made the remarks addressing the inauguration ceremony of Iran's consulate in Kapan.

He offered Iran's readiness to open the Consulate General of Armenia in Tabriz, saying that Iran's decision to establish a Consulate General in Kapan shows the long-standing relations between the two countries.

Our policy is to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity, and my colleagues at the Iranian Embassy in Yerevan are trying to boost the economic cooperation between the two countries, he stated.

He added that Syunik Province is one of the main corridors from north to south, and we consider Armenia as one of the important transit routes between north and south.

We will cooperate with the Armenian government to expand this transit route and speed up the movement of truckers and passengers.

Meanwhile, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said that Iran has always been and will be a partner for Armenia, and the two sides enjoy cooperation in political, economic, energy

Be sure that you will always be supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia for your successful mission, he noted.

Weekly Trade Volume On IME Up by 25%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,944,251 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$771m,



logging growths of 25% and 48% in volume and value of trades compared with the week before that.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,507,000 tons of commodities worth more than \$552m.

On this floor the IME sold 1,255,339 tons of cement, 404,000 tons of iron ore, 746,854 tons of steel, 85,000 tons of sponge iron, 3,250 tons of zinc, 7,325 tons of aluminum, 7,249 tons of copper, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 39 tons of precious metals concentrate, 29 kg of gold bars and 400 tons of coke.

Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 431,055 tons of commodities worth more than \$208m.

Commodities traded on this floor included 85,969 tons of polymeric products, 123,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 30,500 tons of lube cut, 35,662 tons of chemicals, 200 tons of sulfur, 3,303 tons of base oil, 640 tons of insulation and 115,630 tons of bitumen.

The IME also traded within the same week 5,833 tons of commodities on its side market.

Envoy Calls for Using Effective Mechanisms for Removing Sanctions Barriers



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan emphasized the importance of increasing communication between the business community and businessmen of Iran and Pakistan, and called for using effective mechanisms to remove obstacles caused by unilateral and unlawful sanctions.

Mohammad Ali Hosseini made the remarks in a meeting with Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI).

Referring to the recent developments in the bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan, especially in the commercial and economic fields, he said that boosting the communication between businessmen and increasing the exchange of delegations between the chambers of commerce of the two countries is inevitable.

Pointing to the upcoming visit of the head of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce to Pakistan and the important economic events in the cities of Karachi and Lahore, he underlined taking effective steps to facilitate trade between the two countries.

The two sides emphasized the need for communication between the Iranian and Pakistani businessmen, a barter trade system, and taking advantage of border markets to facilitate trade on the common borders.

Meanwhile, Iqbal Sheikh offered the readiness of related institutions in the public and private sectors of Pakistan to help develop bilateral trade with Iran.

He called for an increase in holding exhibition events between the two countries to introduce mutual capabilities and capacities.

Iran Calls for Developing Relations With Turkey

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili said on Saturday that the policy of the 13th government is to develop relations with neighbors, especially Turkey.

Esmaeili left Tehran for Istanbul on Friday to participate in the 12th Conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Information Ministers.

During a meeting with the Spokesman of the Turkey Presidential Palace Fakhreddin Altin in Turkey on Saturday, Esmaeili stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's determination to develop bilateral relations with Turkey.

Referring to the cultural commonalities between Iran and Turkey, he underlined that it is necessary to be together for convergence in the Islamic world and the success of each one is considered the success of the two friendly and neighboring countries in the region.

Turkey and Iran have common enemies who are trying to separate Islamic countries, Esmaeili said,



adding that the Iranian 13th government's policy is to neighborhood communications.

Describing cyberspace and western media's attempts as a tool for distorting the face of the Islamic world, he reiterated that the enemies' media are trying to show a violent face of Islam, while Iran and Turkey can jointly thwart the foes' plans.

Altin, for his part, said that today they are in a geographical zone where foreign forces have endangered the security of the region, and the cooperation of both friendly states and the region can help resolve this issue by deepening cultural ties. He expressed hope that the bilateral press and information cooperation document between Turkey and Iran would be inked during the upcoming visit of the presidents of the two countries.

The theme of this year's OIC ministerial meeting in Istanbul is "Condemning Misinformation and Islamophobia", and Mohammad-Mahdi Esmaeili represents the Islamic Republic of Iran in it.

Tajikistan Proposes New Regional Transit Corridor

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Transport of Tajikistan Azim Ibrohim has suggested a new multi-dimensional corridor among China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey.

Ibrohim made the remarks at an international conference on logistics and its benefits in developing transportation between Tajikistan and other regional nations, proposing a new corridor for transit of commodities from China to Turkey via Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran.

The minister went on to say that the section of the new corridor, which is located in Tajikistan, has been opened in Kulob city in Khatlon region, southern Tajikistan.

He also mentioned that goods are expected to be transited by the use of different methods, such as railways, trucks, ships, and airplanes.

Pointing to the fact that the multi-dimensional corridor between China and Turkey would help revitalize the grand Silk Road, the Tajik minister said that the use of the corridor will decrease distance and cost of transportation, which will also enhance economic uniformity, so it would be more effective than other existing corridors.

Issues such as electronic bill of lading and online booking system are being scrutinized, he noted, saying that such equipment will simplify logistic procedures.

The economic and practical transportation system would provide Tajikistan with the opportunity to improve its own economic, social and political unity along with utilizing its geographical situation to play a role as a transit corridor between East and West countries of the region.



IONS Meeting Held in Iran to Strengthen Indian Ocean Security

TEHRAN (MNA) - The third meeting of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) maritime security working group was held in Tehran with the participation of the member countries of the meeting.

Hosted by the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a series of biennial meetings between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region.

It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, discuss regional maritime issues, and promote friendly relationships among the member states.

Representatives of the naval forces of India, Pakistan, Thailand, Bangladesh and Oman were present at the meeting.

Referring to the holding of the third meeting of the IONS Maritime Security Working Group in Tehran, the Deputy Coordinator of Iran's Navy said that the meeting was held with the focus of creating convergence between the member countries.

Rear Admiral Baloch added that foreign countries in the Indian Ocean are using various technologies, including unmanned vessels, and regardless of maritime laws, have made the region insecure.

The countries of the Indian Ocean region must enact laws according to the security conditions of the region; otherwise, we will witness unfortunate incidents in the near future, he noted.

Direct access to open waters for coastal countries is considered a great opportunity for progress, the correct exploitation of which will lead to an increase in national wealth and prosperity, and this will be achieved in the shadow of stable and all-round security, Baloch said.

Sanctions Indicate Canada's Desperation in Facing Iran



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The recent sanctions imposed by the Canadian government against the Islamic Republic show the inefficiency of the Western sanction policy as well as their desperation in dealing with Iran, an Iranian official believes.

Member of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Guardian Council Hadi Tahan Nazif has written in a memo titled "Hollow Drum of Sanctions" that the lack of legitimacy in the international relations system has caused emergence of unilateral sanction regimes by certain governments, which challenges many accepted norms.

Given the fact that a government cannot pursue imposition of unilateral sanction on another government at the international level, the Canadian government imposed some sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities based on its own internal laws, which target even the Iranian Guardian Council and a number of its members.

The recent sanctions indicate that the Canadian government not only supports the unrest in Iran but also intervenes in Iranian internal affairs, he said, adding that such measures can be reacted by filing lawsuits at the United Nations and other international communities as part of Tehran's diplomatic reaction to the move.

The diplomatic response can end up in a legal effort at the ultra-national level in order to nullify the legal effects of the measure of the Canadian government, he added.

Facts and figures on the ground show that the United States' long-run sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran have borne no fruit for Washington, so the Canadian act would be fruitless, the Iranian official argued, adding that because numerous entities and individuals of the Islamic establishment have been under US's sanction regime, the new embargo merely implies an outdated policy.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:48
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:37
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:54
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:18

95. But there is a ban on any population which We have destroyed: that they shall not return,
96. Until the Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every hill.

Surah 21. The Prophets (95 - 96)

Iran Trade Agreements With Indonesia, Pakistan And Turkey Underway

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization says trade agreements with countries like Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey are underway and they are being revived and through reforming the ties, the country trade the forex with the least expense and highest speed.

Speaking on the 26th National Export Day ceremony, Alireza Payman-Pak talked about the current condition of broadening trade and measures for boosting the trade especially in the field of exports during the 13th government and noted that one of the important measures was to eradicate hurdles in way of trade especially removing some problematic policies for trade. He added that there were some problems for return of forex from exports but the country through some methods and solutions has resolved this problem and now forex earnings are returned to the country with the least expense and highest speed.

Payman-Pak then pointed to the programs of the Trade Promotion Organization and said that the organization has organized the presence of the delegations in international exhibitions like in Moscow and it had good achievements and the organization has some targeted plans for presence in the exhibitions.

He pointed to the programs for presence in new and emerging markets like Africa, Eurasia and Southeast Asia and added that since the beginning of the year, 40 trade



delegations from Africa have visited Iran and next year 31 purchase managers from big Russian and Belarus companies are to visit Tehran for important agreements.

Payman-Pak went on to say that some actions have taken to remove monetary, banking and logistic hurdles in trade and said that some trade agreements like Eurasian agreement had been ignored in the past but during the current government have been implemented and it can create new markets for Iranian goods and trade agreements with other countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and other states are underway and being revived.

He noted that due to providing export infrastructure under the current government, exports last year rose 40% comparing to the preceding year and the exports have increased by 13% in the first half of the year comparing to the same period last year.

Payman-Pak added that currently Export Guarantee Fund of the country has agreements with 10 countries which can boost the trade and the guarantee could replace LCs.

Transit of Goods From Lamerd Zone Exceeds \$804m

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Lamerd Special Economic Zone on the eve of the National Export Day said that the volume of imports and exports of goods in this industrial and mining center has surpassed \$804m.



Congratulating the Export Day, Ehsan Ansari said that in the first half of year, some 13,000 tons of goods worth of \$263m have been exported to 3 countries from the customs office of Lamerd Special Economic Zone. He added that major exported goods has been aluminum ingot and Turkey, China and Azerbaijan have been the major purchasers of exported goods from Lamerd Special Economic Zone.

He pointed to the impact of exports on development of region and said that non-oil exports not only itself reinforces the national self-sufficient in earning forex but also makes stronger small and big economic enterprises.

Ansari said that establishment of big exporting companies specially in the special economic zone for protection and development of export markets is of the main economic achievements of export-centered economy for the zone, adding that of course it needs the national determination of the executive bodies.

Touching upon foreign investment in this zone, he said that if the condition is provided for the presence of the foreign investors in the special zone, winning the exporting market targets for foreign investors will be easier and the trade balance of the country will increase.

Ansari noted that the government is determined to enjoy foreign investment because cheap labor force as well as access to raw materials and closeness to the world trade markets and restoration of North-South Corridor can undo resolve the problem of foreign investors' presence in the zone. He reiterated that the zone also welcomes any Iranian investor for investment in the zone.

He went on to say that neighboring states and European countries can be good capacity for exports of products from this zone.

Ansari reiterated that Lamerd Special Economic Zone due to closeness to the sea and facilities for exports like wharfs which is important factor for exports and the zone gives some tax exemptions for boosting production and exports and it has also international airport and it also have rail access to the national rail network.

South Pars Complexes Closing Ranks to Boost Output

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The CEO of the Pars Special Energy Economic Zone Organization said the cooperation of three key South Pars complexes (Special Zone Organization, South Pars Gas Complex and Pars Oil and Gas Company) on the production path and by-products has been smoothed out.

According to Pars Special Energy Economic Zone Organization, Sekhvat Asadi congratulated the 24th anniversary of the establishment of the South Pars Gas Complex and welcomed the holding of a joint meeting with Pars Oil and Gas Company and the South Pars Gas Complex, expressing hope that forming joint working groups and holding such meetings would be fruitful for enhanced production and processing of natural gas and by-products.

He added: "One of the flagship programs of the Pars Special Energy Economic Zone Organization from the onset is to create an atmosphere of cooperation and empathy between the three important regional complexes (Pars Special Energy Economic Zone Organization, South Pars Gas Complex and Pars Oil and Gas Company) and pave the way for stable production of natural gas and by-products." The CEO of Pars Special Energy Economic Zone Organization emphasized: "The first priority is sustainable gas production, the managers and employees of all three South Pars complexes are fully prepared for the well-being and comfort of the compatriots in order to enter the cold season of the year."

Investment Contracts in Iran Oil and Gas Attractive

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Oil minister has said that the investment contracts in Iran's oil and gas sector have been arranged to attract investors.

Javad Owji stated that Turkish companies could invest in Iran's oil and gas sector, and investment contracts in Iran's oil and gas sector are very attractive.

He stressed that companies investing in Iran's oil and gas industry could take gas, oil, oil products, and petrochemical products for themselves.

Owji also stated that in 2021, about 12.5 billion dollars of Iranian petrochemical products had been exported.

Iran's oil minister noted over 250 billion dollars is the financial burden of investment in Iran's oil and gas industry sector, and projects with the priority of ensuring energy security, increasing gas production, and increasing oil and petrochemical production are on the agenda.

Owji who was in Ankara, Turkey, discussed extension of the gas contract and energy trade in a meeting with the country's energy and economic officials during his visit to neighboring Turkey.

He met and talked with Fatih Dönmez and Nureddin Nebati, respectively the ministers of energy and economy of Turkey, and at the same time, the head of the Central Bank of Turkey and major companies active in the energy sector of this country.



One of the highlights of Mr. Owji's discussions with Turkish officials was the extension of Iran's gas export contract to Turkey, the principles of which are agreed upon by both parties, and it was decided to form a joint working group to work on the issue of contract extension.

The current 25-year contract for the export of Iranian gas to Turkey will expire in 2026.

In this trip, the two sides discussed increasing the amount of Iran's gas exports to Turkey and building a new gas export pipeline to ramp up the capacity of gas transmission through this route.

During the visit of the Iranian petroleum minister to Turkey, two scenarios of increasing gas exports through a new contract or in the form of an extension of the previous contract were discussed.

In addition, there was a discussion and exchange of views about the reduction of the import tariff of petrochemical products from Iran to Turkey.

The other focal points of the negotiations in this short and intensive trip were inviting Turkish companies and investors to invest in projects in the upstream and downstream sectors of Iran's energy sector, unveiling and explaining new investment contracts in the energy, oil and gas sector and trade in petroleum products.

Road Transit Through Iran Rises 38% in H1 on Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - The transit of commodities through the Iranian roads network increased by 38 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the first half of the preceding year, the head of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization announced.

Dariyush Amani said, "We have 26 border terminals with 15 neighboring countries, and with the good potentials we have in the country's road transport, more than 80 percent of the country's transport is carried out through roads".

Transit of commodities through the Iranian roads network increased by 98 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year, the director-general of Transit and International Transportation Affairs Bureau of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) said.

According to Javad Hedayati, over 9.3 million tons of goods were transited via the country in the previous year. Meanwhile, as previously announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), transit of commodities through Iran increased 22 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Alireza Moghadasi said that 7.028 million tons of commodities have been transited via the country in the six-month period.

After seven years of reduction in the transit of goods from the country, the growth path of transit resumed in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20) and with the passage of 12.65 million tons of goods through Iran, a growth of 68 percent was achieved, the spokesman of IRICA has previously noted.

The 68-percent growth in transit last year and the 39-percent rise in the first two months of this year promise to reach 15 million tons of goods passing through Iran in the current year, which has been unprecedented in the entire history of the country, Ruhollah Latifi added.

Textile, Clothing Exports Up 12% in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) - The weight of exports from Iran's clothing and textile industries increased by 12 percent in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), compared to the figure for the preceding year's first half, a deputy with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade said.

Mohammad-Mehdi Baradaran said the country's petrochemical plants have increased their production of raw materials for the clothing industry and that has resulted in increasing the production of clothing and garments in the country, IRIB reported.

tender announcement No.24-1401 (renewed)

Gol Gohar Mining and Industrial Company (Public Joint Stock Company) intends to purchase "70,000 metric tons of iron ore required by processing plants" by holding a public tender through qualified manufacturers and suppliers. Therefore, in order to obtain the tender documents, the applicants can refer to the company's website at WWW.GEG.IR at the tender and auction section and download the mentioned documents along with the suppliers' evaluation questionnaire form. The deadline for delivery of envelopes is 2:00 pm on Sunday 2022 November 6 at the office of the Complex Trading Commission or the Secretariat of the Tehran Central Office. Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company is free to accept or reject any of the offers without mentioning the reason and without compensation.

Golgohar mining and industrial company

Kish INVEX2022 Event and International Exchange Exhibition on Kish Island

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Kish INVEX2022 event comprised of the 14th Exhibition of Iran's Investment Opportunities and 9th International Exhibition on Exchange, Banking, Insurance and Privatization was held on Kish Island last week.

kish 2022 INVEX

The event was opened last Monday in presence of Vice-President on Science and Technology, caretaker of Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Free Zones, Head of Privatization Organization, and Head of Iran Markazi Insurance Company.

Some 250 companies and private and state organizations put on display their achievements and presented national investment opportunities in 90 pavilions.

The three-day event was welcomed by the enthusiasts in the fields of banking, exchange, banking and insurance.

On the sidelines of holding INVEX2022 Exhibition, the participants pointed to the role of national smart platforms in boosting businesses and Dr. Reza Daliri reiterated that technology is becoming more colorful in the life of the people and investment in this sector will definitely grow but nobody can predict the future. He reiterated that the traditional market does not meet the demands of the software of the businesses any longer, adding that the monitoring system in the country is traditional and despite growth in the banking sector, there are still some concerns in this field.

He then pointed to the current condition of insurance in the country and said that the process should be modernized and eased for the insurance industry in order to penetrate among the public.

Meanwhile deputy governor of Tehran Province Mr. Heshmatollah Asgari said that over 100 projects and investment opportunities of Tehran Province for attracting investors were presented in the 14th exhibition of Iran's Investment Opportunities and they are ready for cooperation and involvement of investors.

U.S. Jan 6 Capitol Riot Panel Issues Subpoena to Trump

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The House of Representatives committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by Donald Trump supporters said it had sent a subpoena to the former president demanding he provide documents and testimony under oath.

The subpoena requires documents to be submitted to the Jan. 6 select committee by Nov. 4 and Trump to appear for deposition testimony beginning on or about Nov. 14. "As demonstrated in our hearings, we have assembled overwhelming evidence, including from dozens of your former appointees and staff, that you personally orchestrated and oversaw a multi-part effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election and to obstruct the peaceful transition of power," the committee wrote in a letter to Trump.



Hungary Gets Exemption From Planned EU Gas Price Cap

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Hungary's prime minister said that an agreement had been reached at the EU summit in Brussels that any future EU gas price cap will not apply to long-term gas supply deals like the 15-year deal that Hungary has with Russia's Gazprom.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on his Facebook page that "We got an exemption from the gas price cap so that will not jeopardize Hungary's security of gas supply."

He also said that even if there is a joint gas procurement in Europe "that will not be mandatory for Hungary."



Meloni Takes Charge as Italy PM



ROME (Dispatches) - Giorgia Meloni was named as Italy's first woman prime minister and chose her cabinet team, setting her seal on the country's most right-wing government since World War Two.

Meloni, head of the nationalist Brothers of Italy, swept to victory in an election last month in alliance with Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Matteo Salvini's League.

Her government - Italy's 68th since 1946 - will replace a national unity administration led by former European Central Bank head Mario Draghi, who attended a European Union summit in Brussels on Friday in one of his last acts as prime minister.

She faces daunting challenges, notably a looming recession, rising energy bills and how to present a united front over the Ukraine war.

Meloni, 45, named Giancarlo Giorgetti of the League party as her economy minister and said the foreign ministry will go to Antonio Tajani from Forza Italia.

"Giorgia Meloni has accepted the mandate and has presented her list of ministers," presidential official Ugo Zampetti told reporters after she held talks with President Sergio Mattarella in his Quirinale palace in Rome.

The list of ministers read out by Meloni, who has transformed the fortunes of the Brothers of Italy but has only limited ministerial experience, included just six other women.

In all, nine ministries were handed out to Brothers of Italy politicians and five each to the League and Forza Italia, with technocrats given a further five cabinet posts.

Italian President Mattarella meets leaders of the conservative bloc that won the 2022 general election, in Rome

The new government will be formally sworn in on Saturday morning, after which it will face confidence votes in both houses of parliament next week.

Although the process of putting together a new administration has been rapid by Italian standards, it has exposed tensions in the coalition, with Berlusconi repeatedly appearing to try to undermine Meloni's authority.

Berlusconi, who is 86, and sits in the Senate, as expected did not take a cabinet role.

League leader Salvini, whose authority was dented by his party's relatively poor showing in the election, will be infrastructure minister.

Among other top cabinet posts, the interior ministry went to Matteo Piantedosi, a career civil servant with no party affiliation, and the defence ministry to Guido Crosetto, one of the founders of Brothers of Italy.

Meloni stressed this week that her administration would be firmly pro-NATO and pro-European. "Anyone who does not agree with this cornerstone cannot be part of the government," she said.

She asserted her authority after Berlusconi told Forza Italia lawmakers that he blamed Ukraine for the war there and said he had exchanged gifts and "sweet letters" with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Race to Be Next UK PM Begins as Momentum Grows Behind Johnson

LONDON (Dispatches) - Four senior ministers threw their weight behind Boris Johnson to return as British prime minister, after Liz Truss's resignation triggered a contest to quickly replace her as Conservative Party leader.

Former defense minister Penny Mordaunt became the first candidate to officially declare, but Johnson and Rishi Sunak, once his finance minister, led potential contenders as candidates canvassed support ahead of voting next week.

With the Conservatives holding a large majority in parliament and able to ignore calls for a general election for another two years, the new party leader will become prime minister - Britain's fifth in six years.

Those seeking to replace Truss, who quit on Thursday after six chaotic weeks, must secure 100 nominations from Conservative lawmakers by Monday. Truss herself succeeded Johnson after he was ousted by his colleagues in July.

The party hopes the contest will revive its ailing fortunes. Opinion polls suggest the Conservatives would be all but wiped out if a national election were held now. Johnson has not formally announced he will run but momentum was growing behind him, with business minister Jacob Rees-Mogg, levelling-up minister Simon Clarke and president of



U.N. Unanimously Passes Haiti Sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The U.N. Security Council approved sanctions allowing it to impose an asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo on anyone who threatens the peace or stability of Haiti, naming the Caribbean country's most powerful gangster as its first target.

The 15-member council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution, which imposes the sanctions on gang leader Jimmy Cheriez, a former policeman known locally by his alias "Barbecue."

The resolution was drafted by the United States and Mexico.

"We're sending a clear message to the bad actors that are holding Haiti hostage: The international community will not stand idly by while you wreak havoc on the Haitian people," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said in a speech after the council vote.

She described the new sanctions regime as an "initial answer to the calls for help" from Haitians struggling with an escalating humanitarian disaster, adding that another resolution is being written that could authorize a non-U.N. mission to boost security and allow humanitarian aid to flow to the crisis-racked island nation, which is the most impoverished country of the Americas.

Thomas-Greenfield did not say when it would be presented to the council for a vote, but other diplomats have said that could happen as early as next week.

The text of Friday's resolution blames Cheriez for engaging "in acts that threaten the peace, security, and stability of Haiti" as well as accusing him of human rights abuses.

Last month, gangs led by Cheriez blocked the entrance to the Varreux fuel terminal just outside the capital Port-au-Prince, to protest a government announcement to cut fuel subsidies.

Gasoline and diesel supplies have mostly dried up since then and Haitians also face a shortage of drinking water amid a deadly outbreak of cholera, following chaos unleashed by last year's presidential assassination and deadly earthquake.

Ukraine Troops Claim Russian Woes Could Preface Pullback in South

KYIV (Dispatches) - To the Ukrainian soldiers entrenched north of the Russian-held city of Kherson, a recent drop-off in Russian shellfire and armor movements signals that their foes dug into a nearby tree line are suffering serious manpower, supply and hardware woes.

That may mean the Russians are preparing to abandon their defense of the provincial capital and retreat across the Dnipro River, the soldiers said when Reuters visited their positions on Friday.

"We understand that they are low on ammunition. We understand they are short of cannon fodder, and we understand their equipment is defective," said Fugas, 38, the nom de guerre of the commander of the 600-man unit deployed in the southern province of Mykolaiv, bordering Kherson.

The Russians "are constantly suffering losses in this sector, and we're trying to do everything we can so they leave this place as fast as possible," continued Fugas, a stocky man who in civilian life co-owned an agricultural business in the western Lviv region.

Ukrainian forces began moving in August to reclaim Kherson, a strategically important ship-building centre on the sprawling Dnipro River. In recent weeks, they have driven the Russians back 20-30 kms (13-20 miles) on parts of the battlefield.

Kherson province is one of four partially occupied

regions that Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sept. 30 proclaimed part of Russia, the largest annexation of territory in Europe since World War Two.

Three weeks later, there are signs that the Ukrainian drive may be forcing Putin to concede ground in Kherson and pull his forces back to the Dnipro's southern bank.

Russian-appointed occupation authorities this week began evacuating thousands of civilians from Kherson to the southern bank, denounced by Kyiv as forced deportations.

Sergei Surovkin, an air force general tapped this month to command Russia's invasion forces, conceded this week that the Kherson situation was "very difficult" and Moscow was "not ruling out difficult decisions."

The sector of the front visited by Reuters on Friday was largely quiet.

The occasional crump of an exploding artillery shell sounded across flat fields. Flocks of partridges shot from bushes and long-legged herons stood in ponds near tiny villages that have been devastated by shellfire.

The Ukrainian unit was deployed in trenches dug into one of the countless tree lines that divide the fields, difficult terrain for the Russians to defend against well-armed determined troops backed by long-range artillery and heavy armor.



Sweden Lists Concrete Actions on Turkey's Concerns Over NATO Bid



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Sweden has taken "concrete action" to address Turkey's concerns over its NATO membership bid, including stepping up counter-terrorism efforts against Kurdish militants, Stockholm told Ankara in a letter dated Oct. 6 and seen by Reuters.

The two-page letter gives 14 examples of steps taken by Sweden to show it "is fully committed to the implementation" of a memorandum it signed with Turkey and Finland in June, which resulted in NATO member Turkey lifting its veto of their applications to the trans-Atlantic security alliance.

Sweden and Finland launched their bids to join NATO in May in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but ran into objections from Turkey, which accuses the two Nordic countries of harbouring what it says are militants from the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and other groups.

Stockholm and Helsinki deny harbouring terrorists but have pledged to cooperate with Ankara to fully address its security concerns, and to lift arms embargoes. Yet Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan said as recently as Oct. 6 that its demands had not yet been met.

In its letter to Turkey, Sweden said that "concrete action has been taken on all core elements of the trilateral agreement".

Sweden's security and counter-terrorism police, Sapo, "has intensified its work against the PKK", and it made "a high-level visit" to Turkey in September for meetings with Turkey's MIT intelligence agency, the letter said.

Sweden's foreign ministry and the communications arm of Erdogan's office each did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the letter.

Swedish officials delivered the letter, which was not previously reported, to Erdogan's office and the foreign ministry at the weekend, a source familiar with the situation said, requesting anonymity due to sensitivity over it.

The letter was meant to reassure Turkey of Sweden's efforts amid ongoing bilateral talks and to encourage ultimate approval of the NATO membership bid, the source added.

Aerospace Manufacturers Placing Orders Earlier To Beat Parts Shortages



ORLANDO (Dispatches) - The shortage of parts from chips to windshields that has held back plane production will run into at least 2023 - and manufacturers are spending more to tackle the problem, aerospace executives said.

Manufacturers are ordering material as far as two years in advance – a break with just-in-time models used previously to restrain costs – and dispatching specialized staff to keep production lines running, executives said at the world’s largest business jet show in Orlando, which ended on Thursday.

However, parts shortages are expected to continue dogging U.S. planemakers and large aerospace suppliers, which report quarterly earnings next week.

Supply-chain disruptions cost aerospace and defense companies an average of \$160 million in lost revenue for the prior year, according to a first-quarter survey of aerospace companies, said Jennifer Bisceglie, chief executive of supply-chain risk management company Interos.

Executives from Honeywell International Inc, Textron Aviation and General Dynamics Corp’s Gulfstream Aerospace told Reuters at the National Business Aviation Association show they are taking greater steps to back suppliers.

Vipul Gupta, vice president and general manager of Honeywell Aerospace Avionics, said his division is ordering parts two years out, compared with previous lead times of roughly 60 days to 10 months, depending on the component.

For simple avionics components, lead times have increased to roughly one year, compared with 90 days in the past. Honeywell makes products like avionics and engines for business jets and flight management systems for commercial jets.

“The story is very simple: getting our forecast right and putting the demand in front of our suppliers a lot earlier,” Gupta said. “It provides a very clear picture for our suppliers on what they need to deliver.”

Gupta said his division would support European planemaker Airbus SE’s (AIR.PA) longer-term production goal of 75 A320 family jets a month in 2025, up from around 50 in 2022. Some manufacturers have questioned whether a battered supply chain could keep up with the target. read more read more

“If they want to execute 75, we will execute 75,” he said.

Smaller suppliers, struggling with higher costs and labor shortages, are pushing manufacturers to order many months in advance to assuage concerns over a possible economic slowdown.

But ordering earlier also means making payments sooner, raising working capital, and delaying when manufacturers can recoup expenses on the plane or part’s delivery.

To mitigate additional costs, some private planemakers are asking customers for larger deposits on jets before delivery, said one corporate planemaker executive who asked not to be identified.

Business aviation rebounded faster than commercial traffic in the United States last year as wealthy travelers opted to fly on private jets and avoid crowded airports during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gulfstream Aerospace orders roughly six months to a year out, compared with a previous “just in time” strategy, President Mark Burns said.

Burns said the company’s robust order book has more than offset any possible impact on working capital. Longer lead times also add an additional risk of unwanted inventory in the event of a downturn, analysts say.

“The longer lead times stay high, the more of a risk to earnings in our view,” Bank of America Global Research analyst Andrew Obin said.

Apps Help Rooftop Solar Shine For Indian Homes



CHENNAI (Dispatches) - Just six months ago, New Delhi-based Avdesh Kumar was a painter struggling to find enough work. Now, the newly-trained solar technician’s phone pings with several job requests each day.

Having recently joined renewable power company SunEdison, Kumar is a key link between India’s growing number of rooftop solar providers and citizens switching to green energy at home. “Until a few months back ... I didn’t know this was even a job and that there was demand for it,” the 34-year-old told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from his home in India’s capital.

“But now I have four or five client visits a day,” Kumar said, explaining how using SunEdison’s app has helped him meet growing demand for maintenance work from rooftop solar panel owners to keep their standalone systems functioning efficiently. It is one of a few such digital platforms - including AHA Solar Rooftop Helper, SunPro+ and the Surya Mitra app - that have sprung up to match solar maintenance experts in search of work with customers who need cleaning and repair services.

Providing such services more efficiently is considered essential to help promote and meet the targets of India’s renewable energy push, which is aiming to move the South Asian country away from its reliance on fossil fuels including coal. This month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed a major clean energy project to make Modhera in western Gujarat state the nation’s first 24/7 solar-powered village, with citizens producing their own electricity from 1,300 rooftop systems.

The key to the project’s success - and ensuring sustained power generation - will depend on good maintenance of the systems, researchers say, pointing to numerous examples of poor after-sales service resulting in defunct rooftop solar projects. “In villages, if a battery becomes defunct, the solar lamps connected to it switch off and remain that way,” said Aviram Sharma, assistant professor at Bihar’s Nalanda University, who has carried out research on solar micro-grids in rural areas.

Remote villages lack shops where people can get a solar system repaired, unlike with mobile phones, he said. “As a result, it stops working forever,” Sharma added.

India has fallen behind on its goal to install 40 gigawatts (GW) of rooftop solar power capacity by the end of 2022. An April report by consultancy firm JMK Research and the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), a non-profit, projected a 25GW deficit in capacity this year.

The high cost of installing solar systems - which can range from 40,000 to 80,000 Indian rupees (\$482-964) for a 1-kilowatt system - has deterred many would-be consumers, providers say. For the steadily growing numbers of rooftop solar owners across India, meanwhile, keeping them working is the main worry.

“Our market survey has shown that early adopters of rooftop solar have had very bad experiences,” said Vivek Kumar, who heads operations and maintenance at SunEdison. “No one is selling the experience of going solar to a consumer. It is sold as a one-time investment which ends with installation. Maintenance is not discussed,” he added.

A vital pillar of India’s renewable energy push is to create a workforce that can operate the solar and wind plants being set up across the country to meet rising demand for electricity.

However, six years since the inception of a national skills programme, less than a third of the nearly 80,000 participants trained to install solar panels, connect them to grids and maintain batteries have found jobs, government data shows. Meanwhile, residents find it hard to get their solar energy systems fixed when they have a problem, consumer groups say.



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Visa, Mastercard Profits Expected to Jump

LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S. card companies are expected to benefit as pandemic-weary consumers continue to fuel demand for travel, one of the biggest contributors to revenue, despite rising inflation. With more companies resuming business travel and people planning vacations, Visa Inc, Mastercard and American Express are likely to see a jump in cross border volume, according to analysts. "So far, despite the macro, you continue to see a somewhat stable consumer," Wedbush Securities analyst Moshe Katri said, adding that monthly data from Visa and Mastercard showed no hit to payments or cross-border volumes.



Weak Oil Demand to Lower PCC Economic Growth in 2023

BENGALURU (Dispatches) - Economic growth in the six-member Persian Gulf Cooperation Council will remain strong but slow significantly next year as high oil prices hurt demand for the commodity, a Reuters poll showed.

Crude prices, a key catalyst for Persian Gulf economies, have fallen more than 30% from a near 14-year high of \$139 in March as global recession fears and weak demand, especially in China, outweighed support from a large cut to the OPEC+ supply target.

China, the world's largest crude oil importer, has been fighting COVID-19 flare-ups and stuck to a zero-COVID-19 policy that is weighing heavily on economic activity and global oil demand.

China is a major revenue source for the region and the Oct. 10-19 Reuters poll showed overall growth in the six economies comprising the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) would slow to 4.2% next year compared with 6.6% in 2022.

"PGCC countries have benefited from sharply higher oil prices, turning budget deficits into surpluses, and increased oil production which has bumped up GDP growth. However, the outlook for 2023 is more challenging, given the strength of the U.S. dollar," noted Khatija Haque, head of research and chief economist at Emirates NBD.

"There is some downside risk to our 2023 growth forecast if OPEC+ intervenes to reduce output in the face of weakening oil demand next year, and as higher borrowing costs could weigh on consumption."

Saudi Arabia, the region's largest economy and world-leading exporter of crude oil, and Kuwait were both expected to grow 3.5% in 2023, down from this year's respective 8.1% and 7.6% forecasts.

Among other PGCC economies, growth was expected to drop next year in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman, while in Bahrain growth was forecast to slow to 3.0% compared with 3.4% this year.

The boon for these economies is low inflation as prices of consumer goods are controlled by government subsidies and price caps at a time when other developed economies are facing multi-decade high price increases.

Inflation was expected to dip in all PGCC economies next year. Qatar, Kuwait and UAE were expected to experience slightly higher inflation compared to other members at near 3% next year, still down from over 4% in 2022.

"The low level of Saudi price inflation is largely due to the decision to keep the fuel price in Saudi Arabia at the July 2021-level; this was not the case in the UAE and Qatar," said Ralf Wiegert of S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"Aggressive rate hikes by the U.S. Fed will further disadvantage the Persian Gulf countries' external competitiveness as their currencies are tied to the USD."

As other economies reduce their reliance on oil Gulf countries are diversifying their revenue streams. Analysts say even though oil GDP may decline next year non-oil growth could perform at the same level or better.

"A common feature is the emphasis on tourism, which features prominently in the UAE. Saudi tourism plans are particularly impressive," said Wiegert.

U.S. Container Imports Tumble

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - After more than two years of surging demand, the volume of container imports coming through U.S. ports has tumbled sharply, raising questions about where a sector once tracked as a supply-chain stress point will hit bottom.

Container import volumes across all U.S. ports hit an all-time high in May and pulled back slightly before plunging in August and September. That put the indicator close to the levels last seen in 2019, before the pandemic and a surge in demand for shipments of furniture, clothing and appliances, according to data tracked by Descartes Datamyne.

The question is whether the trendline - an indicator for strength of consumption, the wider economy and trade - flattens out in the coming months, relieving a source of supply-chain distress that had driven prices higher, or whether the boom turns to an outright bust with a potential recession looming, analysts told Reuters.

Goods packed in ocean containers account for roughly 25% of U.S. imports and many of the purchases made by consumers, whose spending fuels as much as 70% of U.S. economic activity. Volume surged as much as 40% from 2019 levels during the pandemic as retailers raced to meet soaring demand for goods.

That surprise surge clogged ports and spawned cascading delays, leading to delayed deliveries of everything from pharmacy supplies to Peloton exercise bikes. As recently as March, the Biden administration supply chain task force had tracked container imports as part of a "dashboard" to monitor the distress in the distribution of goods and a contributor to higher prices.

"We're going back to 2019," said transportation economist Walter Kemmsies, who believes consumers are reverting to their historical spending split of 70% on services and 30% on goods.



European Gas Prices Fall Again

LONDON (Dispatches) - Benchmark prices for natural gas in Europe fell again on Friday, pushing back toward their lowest in four months after Germany gave in to EU pressure for a mechanism to cap wholesale prices over the coming winter.

Front-month futures for the Dutch TTF contract, which serves as a benchmark for northwest Europe, were down 9.9% at 114.60 euros a megawatt-hour, approaching the low of 107.3 EUR/MWh that they hit earlier in the week.

At a meeting of EU heads of government which stretched into the small hours of Friday morning, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz dropped his opposition to EU Commission proposals - backed by France and others - to apply a 'dynamic price cap' to the TTF and possibly other futures contracts. While the precise details of the mechanism still need to be ironed out, it may help prevent the kind of spikes seen earlier in the summer, when the market had to adjust to the loss of Russian gas supplies due to the fallout of the Ukraine war.

The Commission is hoping to reach a final agreement on the mechanism at another meeting of Energy Ministers on Tuesday.

The loss of Russian supplies had driven fears that EU member states may have to ration gas during the coming winter, but such fears have receded in recent days and weeks, as almost all member states have met their targets early for filling their gas storage facilities. That has allowed spot prices to fall sharply, helped by temperatures that have been slightly warmer than usual for October.

World Halal Market Projected to Reach \$10 Trillion in 5 Years

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The size of the world halal market, which includes a huge sector from finance to food, tourism, textiles, cosmetics, medicine and chemistry has exceeded \$7 trillion, and according to the sector's players, it will reach \$10 trillion in the next five years.

Turkey, which has become a base of the halal market with both its geopolitical position and the projects it carries out, has tripled its share in this market in the last five years, reaching over \$150 billion. Sector

players, who rolled up their sleeves to increase this share to over \$400 billion, accelerated their work for the 8th World Halal Summit and the 9th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Halal Expo Fair, the world's largest "halal organization."

World Halal Summit Council Chairperson and Discover Events head Yunus Ete said in a press release Wednesday that the world halal market has grown more than twice in size in the last five years.

Explaining that the COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on this rapid growth, Ete said: "One of the foundations of halal products is hygiene. During the pandemic period, people's interest in healthy and hygienic products increased. This increased the interest in halal. Therefore, the market entered a rapid growth momentum."

He emphasized that the world halal market is running toward \$10 trillion, saying: "It is estimated that Islamic finance will reach a size of \$3.5 trillion, food and beverage industry to \$2 trillion, halal tourism industry to \$400 billion, cosmetics industry to \$200 billion and modest fashion to over \$240 billion."

"The halal economy is also expected to shape the global market in the near future," Ete said. Noting that they realized the potential in this market years ago and started their work for the Halal Summit and Fair, Ete said, "With our regular organization every year, we have made our country the base of the world halal market and contributed to Türkiye's increasing its share in the halal market."

Turkey's share in the halal market has been growing every year, Ete said, and that the country's share has already exceeded \$150 billion, yet, "we still have a long way to go."

"With the active work of the Halal Accreditation Agency, which continues its activities in our country, and the events we organize, such as Halal Expo, we aim to increase Turkey's share in the halal market to over \$400 billion in five years," he said.

The 9th OIC Halal Expo Fair will be held at Istanbul Expo Center between Nov. 24-27 this year.

India Rice Export Curbs To End a Decade of Price Stability

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India's recent curbs on rice exports could trigger a rally in global prices after more than a decade of stability, traders said, as New Delhi's protectionist move coincides with falling output in other major producers and rising global demand.

Uneven monsoon rains hit rice planting in India, prompting the export restrictions in September, and floods have cut output in Pakistan even as consumption has grown in top importers such as Bangladesh and the Philippines. That's why forecasters are saying global demand will outstrip production in 2022/23.

This is bad for Asian and African countries that use rice as a staple, some of which import as much as 60 per cent of their supply.

Since India — the world's biggest rice exporter — banned exports of broken rice and slapped a 20 per cent export tax on some non-basmati varieties, global rice prices have jumped more than 10 per cent. Last month, the Food and Agriculture Organisation's global rice price index rose 2.2 per cent to hit an 18-month high.

"The international market has gone up and it will go up further," said Nitin Gupta, vice president for Olam India's rice business.

Governments worldwide had already been struggling to tame food inflation because of Covid-19 disruptions to production and supply chains, and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine removed millions of tons of foodstuffs from global markets, pushing inflation to a record earlier this year.

Still, before India implemented its export curbs a few months ago, industry and government officials in Asia were saying rice prices would hold steady due to ample stocks.

Rice, unlike wheat, was insulated from the Russia-Ukraine war as neither country is a big producer, and supplies of the grain had remained relatively steady during the Covid-related disruptions for other foodstuffs.

Now, however, top exporters Thailand and Vietnam sit on insufficient inventories to make up for India's curb on exports and widespread output losses. Global rice inventories could fall to their lowest in at least five years in 2023, three global traders said, citing internal assessments.

"Since India cornered 40 per cent of the global trade, it's not easy for others to replace falling Indian shipments when demand is rising from leading importers," Gupta said.

The US Agriculture Department (USDA) has cut its global rice production estimate for 2022/23 to 508 million tonnes, the lowest in four years. Just a month ago, the agency was expecting output for the year at 512 million tonnes.

France, Spain and Portugal Agree to Build Barcelona-Marseille Gas Pipeline



MADRID (Dispatches) - Spain, Portugal and France said they will build a sea-based pipeline to carry hydrogen and gas between Barcelona and Marseille, substituting plans to extend the so-called MidCat pipeline across the Pyrenees that France opposed.

The route, dubbed BarMar, will mainly be used to pump green hydrogen and other renewable gases but will also temporarily allow for the transportation of a "limited amount" of natural gas to help alleviate Europe's energy crisis, Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa said.

Europe is scrambling to secure alternative energy supplies in the face of a squeeze from Russia which has progressively cut gas flows after the West imposed sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February.

The pipeline "is a response to calls for solidarity from our European partners in the face of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's blackmail", Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez told reporters in Brussels, where the three leaders met on Thursday.

French President Emmanuel Macron said it was "imperative that Europe remains united".

The BarMar resolves a stand-off between Spain and Portugal, which wanted to extend the MidCat pipeline so that they could sell gas to central Europe, and France, which argued that the pipeline would take too long to build to resolve short-term supply issues.

"It's good news, one of Europe's oldest blockades has been overcome," Costa said.

Spain and France also agreed to speed up an electricity interconnection through the Bay of Biscay and identify and work on other connections between the two national grids, according to a joint statement.

The leaders of the three countries agreed to meet again in Alicante, Spain, on Dec. 9 to decide on a construction timeline and how it will be financed.

Amid resistance from France, Spain and Italy had previously broached the idea of building an underwater pipeline between the two countries.

Suitable Model Requires to Deal With Cyber Threats

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's Passive Defense Organization Chief announces the preparation of a suitable model to deal with cyber threats.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 5th National Conference on Urban Defense, Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali stated: "We examined the new threats affecting urban areas. The attack on Tehran Municipality and other infrastructure was investigated,

and patterns were prepared to deal with them."

Referring to filtering Instagram and WhatsApp, Jalali further said that platforms used as social networks usually have to carry out their actions within the framework of the laws and regulations of the countries. The main issue and priority everyone should be committed to is maintaining safety for the people.



Europe's Alternatives If Russia Shuts Off Gas Supply

LONDON (Dispatches) - Unexplained damage to the Nord Stream pipelines that run under the Baltic Sea have dashed hopes that Russian gas flow to Germany will resume anytime soon.

Nord Stream 1 had been idle since the end of August for maintenance work, prompting concerns about supply to Europe if the outage was extended.

It has also cut off supply to several European countries such as Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Poland, and reduced flows via other pipelines since launching what Moscow calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

The following outlines Europe's options.

Russia typically supplies about 40% of Europe's natural gas, mostly by pipeline. Deliveries last year were around 155 billion cubic metres (bcm).

Via Ukraine the gas goes mainly to Austria, Italy, Slovakia and other east European states. The Ukrainian transmission system operator has declared force majeure at the Sokhranovka entry point pipeline that runs through Russian-occupied territory in the east of the country.

But around 42 million cubic metres (mcm) per day is still pumped through Ukraine via the Sudzha route.

Alternative routes to Europe that do not go via Ukraine include the Yamal-Europe pipeline, which crosses Belarus and Poland to Germany.

The Yamal-Europe pipeline has a 33 bcm capacity, around a sixth of Russian gas exports to Europe. Flows have been reversed to flow eastward between Poland and Germany since the start of this year and been declining.

Moscow has placed sanctions on the owner of the Polish part of the Yamal-Europe pipeline. However, Poland can manage without reverse gas flow on the Yamal pipeline, its climate minister has said.

Both Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines, built to supply Russian gas to Europe via Germany, were damaged by blasts and will need major rebuilding works. Germany halted certification of the new Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia because of the Ukraine war so it never went into operation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed in October to build a gas hub in Turkey as an alternative supply route — a plan backed by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

Russia has also said it could pump gas via a Nord Stream 2 line which wasn't damaged, but Germany has not agreed to this.

Some countries have alternative supply options and Europe's gas network is linked up so supplies can be shared, although the global gas market was tight even before the Ukraine crisis.

Germany, Europe's biggest consumer of Russian gas, can import gas from Britain, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands via pipelines.

Norway, Europe's second biggest gas supplier behind Russia, has been raising production to help the European Union towards its target of ending reliance on Russian fossil fuels by 2027.

Britain's Centrica has signed a deal with Norway's Equinor for extra supply for the next three winters. Britain does not rely on Russian gas and can also export to Europe via pipelines.

Southern Europe can receive Azeri gas via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline to Italy and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) through Turkey.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports to Europe have increased from producers such as the United States, Qatar and other countries.

But unplanned disruptions in these countries due to production capacity, incidents and climate hazards can squeeze supply.

Europe's LNG terminals also have limited capacity for extra imports and multiples ships carrying LNG are unable to secure slots to offload their cargo. Those ships may start looking for alternative ports outside Europe if the backlog remains.



Germany is among several countries who want to build new LNG terminals. It plans to build five.

Poland, which relies on Russia for about 50% of its gas consumption or around 10 bcm, has said it can source gas via two links with Germany.

The Baltic Pipe from Norway to Poland via Denmark started operations on Oct. 1, although it is initially being filled with gas from Germany. It has a capacity of up to 10 bcm/year.

The opening of a Danish terminal for Norwegian gas to be pumped through the new Baltic Pipe pipeline to Poland has been delayed by almost two weeks to Nov. 1.

Poland also commissioned a new gas link with Slovakia in August and asked the Commission end-September to provide funding for a new gas pipeline connecting the Czech Republic to its network and LNG terminals.

Spain and Germany has been pushing for the construction of a new gas connection through the Pyrenees mountains but France opposed the initiative, saying new LNG terminals, which can be made to float, would be a quicker and cheaper option than a new pipeline.

Several nations can seek to fill any gap in energy supplies by turning to electricity imports via interconnectors from their neighbours or by boosting power generation from nuclear, renewables, hydropower or coal.

Nuclear availability is falling in Belgium, Britain, France and Germany with plants facing outages as they age, are decommissioned or phased out. Hydro levels have been falling this summer due to low rainfall and a heatwave.

Europe has been trying to shift from coal to meet climate targets but some plants have been switched back to secure enough energy for this winter and to curb rising energy prices.

Energy ministers agreed that all EU countries should voluntarily cut gas use by 15% from August to March, compared with their average annual use during 2017-2021 and introduced EU-wide targets for refilling gas storage.

Countries across Europe are also preparing for possible power shortages, blackouts and energy rationing. France launched a national energy savings plan to reduce energy consumption while Britain has warned of three-hour planned power cuts for homes and businesses as a last resort.

The European Commission has proposed a package of emergency measures to tackle the energy crisis, including for member states to start jointly buying gas.

Iran to File Lawsuit...

FROM PAGE 1

"All diplomatic places and agents must be immune from any aggression, assault and damage, and the hosting country must fulfill its duty and take all the necessary measures in order to protect and prevent any attack and damage to diplomatic places and agents."

On September 30, Iran's Intelligence Ministry said the United States and the United Kingdom were "directly" involved in the recent riots across the country.

Dozens of terrorists affiliated with the Zionist regime and anti-revolution groups have been detained during the recent days of unrest, the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry underscored the behind-the-scenes circumstances surrounding the foreign-backed riots that followed the death of a 22-year-old woman from Kurdistan, named Mahsa Amini, who collapsed in a police station and died in hospital despite intensive medical care and resuscitation efforts.

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry said that the major elements behind the riots were largely foreign citizens, members of the anti-Iran terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) in Albania, and individuals working with other anti-revolution terror outfits.

Tehran Censures...

FROM PAGE 1

The aforementioned sides (EU plus Britain) continue to create anti-Iran atmosphere by resorting to provide a deceitful interpretation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 in a bid to create an unfounded link between their accusations and the resolution, he warned.

Condemning the European sides' deception in dealing with Iran, he said that the great Iranian nation would not forget that certain European countries, who provided the Saddam's Baath regime in Iraq with chemical weapons are hands in glove with the then Iraqi regime in attacking the Iranian nation; so, the Islamic Republic holds the Europeans accountable for Saddam Hussain's crimes in Iran.

The Islamic Republic considered the provocative attitude of the European Union and Britain as part of a preplanned scenario, which is in contradiction with their fake claims of supporting peace and sustainable stability in the world, Kanaani argued.

The spokesman also described the Europeans' acts as destructive, stipulating that the Iranian government spares no boundaries to react to any irresponsible measure, and that it will not hesitate to defend the rights of the Iranian nation.

All Iranian Crew...

FROM PAGE 1

Back on September 13, an Argentine appeals court ruled that 11 Venezuelans and one Iranian traveling on board the plane could depart.

Authorities called on the judge to conclude investigation into the remaining seven crew within 10 days.

The Boeing 747 cargo plane, sold by Iranian company Mahan Air to Venezuelan airline Emtrasur, was immobilized by Argentine officials at Ezeiza International Airport as both Venezuela and Iran, which signed a 20-year cooperation accord in June, are under draconian US sanctions.

In early August, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro accused the US of trying "to steal from us a gigantic, modern cargo airplane."

The Emtrasur plane, with a shipment of auto parts, first entered Argentina on June 6 from Mexico but, unable to refuel in the Argentinean capital of Buenos Aires due to US sanctions against Caracas, it left for Uruguay two days later.

After Uruguayan authorities refused it access, the plane flew back to Argentina where its crew was detained in a hotel following a request from a US court.

JCPOA...

FROM PAGE 1

Malley claimed that the standstill in the talks came because Iran's position is "inconsistent with a return to the deal" and that Iran makes "demands that have nothing to do with the JCPOA."

Asked about the prospects of the talks, Malley said, "It's not the focus because there's no movement... We will see whether this is a government that is interested in reaching that deal. But at this point, the focus is on what's happening around because the talks are stalled."

Iran has demanded that the United States provide assurances that it would not leave the JCPOA again before it could reenter the agreement. Washington has refused to give a legally enforceable guarantee, leaving Iranian negotiators suspicious of the Biden administration's seriousness in the talks.

Automakers to Double Spending on EVs, Batteries To \$1.2 Trillion by 2030

LONDON (Dispatches) - The world's top automakers are planning to spend nearly \$1.2 trillion through 2030 to develop and produce millions of electric vehicles, along with the batteries and raw materials to support that production, according to a Reuters analysis of public data and projections released by those companies.

The EV investment figure, which has not previously been published, dwarfs previous investment estimates by Reuters and is more than twice the most recent calculation published just a year ago. To put the figure in context, Alphabet, the parent company of Google and Waymo, has a market cap of \$1.3 trillion.

Automakers have forecast plans to build 54 million battery electric vehicles in 2030, representing more than 50% of total vehicle production, according to the analysis.

To support that unprecedented level of EVs, carmakers and their battery partners are planning to install 5.8 terawatt-hours of battery production capacity by 2030, according to data from Benchmark Mineral Intelligence and the manufacturers.

Leading the charge is Tesla, where Chief Executive Elon Musk has outlined an audacious plan to build 20 million EVs in 2030, requiring an estimated 3 terawatt-hours of batteries. Musk in late October said Tesla already is working on a smaller vehicle platform targeted to cost half as much as the Model 3 and Model Y.

While Tesla has not fully disclosed its spending plans, such exponential growth - a 13-fold increase over the estimated 1.5 million vehicles it hopes to sell this year - will come at a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars, according to a Reuters analysis of Tesla's financial disclosures and forecasts for global EV demand, and battery and battery mineral production. Germany's Volkswagen, while lagging behind Tesla, has ambitious plans through the end of the decade, targeting well over \$100 billion to build out its global EV portfolio, add new battery "gigafactories" in Europe and North America and lock up supplies of key raw materials.



Energy Crisis Tests Resilience of Italian Businesses

MILAN (Dispatches) - Italian media had only just begun talking about the threat of winter gas rationing when Marco Checchi sprung into action to ensure bottle top maker Pelliconi would continue to supply customers including Coca-Cola, Heineken and Guinness.

Pelliconi, which produces 35 billion bottle tops a year, mostly in Italy but also in Egypt and China, stepped up production of energy-intensive semi-finished goods, invested in solar panels and commissioned a prototype of a new digital printer for metal sheets that did not require gas ovens.

"When you run a business, if you keep hearing on the news that gas supplies are at risk, you've got to do something. It's not like you can start screaming and stamping your foot when they actually do halt flows for two hours a day," Checchi told Reuters.

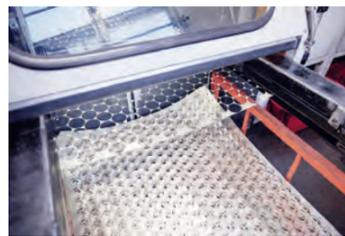
Like other Italian businesses wrestling with the energy crisis sparked by the Ukraine war, Pelliconi has seen costs for electricity and gas more than triple in relation to turnover this year, compounding problems posed by higher steel prices.

In some cases it has been able to pass on almost two thirds of the cost increases to its customers and plans to further hike prices next year.

Higher prices contributed to the 16.2% rise in manufacturing turnover Italy reported in July on a calendar adjusted basis, but volumes also increased by 1.7%. That broadly compares with a 0.8% yearly drop in Germany.

Traditionally the laggard among the biggest euro zone economies, Italy has experienced a more vigorous post-pandemic rebound in terms of industrial output than France and Germany, Intesa Sanpaolo economist Paolo Mameli said.

After growth exceeded expectations in the first half, the situation has worsened rapidly and the government now expects the Italian economy to have shrunk in the third quarter, with the contraction seen lasting until mid-2023.



Turkey Calls for...

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking a day after a meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, a body known as OPEC+, on August 4, Owji reiterated Iran's previous statements that the country will be able to immediately return to an oil export figure of nearly 2.8 million barrels per day (bpd) that was seen before US sanctions were imposed on the country in 2018.

"As the largest holder of (combined) oil and gas resources in the world, we are ready to increase our crude oil output to the pre-sanctions level in the least time possible," Owji said.

He noted, however, that continued political standoffs with major oil suppliers, including Iran, could lead to a major energy crisis in Europe and elsewhere this winter.

He expressed hope that Western governments would adopt a more logical approach in dealing with the oil issue as he insisted that increased oil and gas supplies from Iran would help restore balance and calm to the global markets.

"This winter will be very significant for the Europeans and for the entire world and they (governments) should think now," the minister added.

Gabriel Signs New Long-Term Contract

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal have confirmed that Gabriel Magalhaes has signed a new long-term contract and Mikel Arteta has praised the in-form defender.

PA News Agency understands that the centre-back has agreed a long-term contract extension after holding talks with his agent and Arsenal's hierarchy on Friday.

The Gunners spent around £27m to sign the 24-year-old from Lille in 2020. He has already played 83 times for the Premier League side.

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Maignan Unavailable For Milan Until January

MILAN (Dispatches) - Mike Maignan will be unavailable for AC Milan until January due to a calf injury, coach Stefano Pioli said on Friday, casting doubt on the France international's chances of going to the World Cup.

Goalkeeper Maignan injured himself in training on Wednesday while preparing to make his Milan return after picking up the same knock on international duty last month.

Clippers Celebrate Leonard Return With Win Over Lakers

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Kawhi Leonard marked his first NBA game in more than a year with 14 points and seven rebounds to help the Los Angeles Clippers down the crosstown rival Lakers 103-97.

The Clippers, who hope Leonard's return from a torn knee ligament will take them to a first NBA title, beat the 17-time champion Lakers for the eighth straight time.

Paul George scored 15 points and John Wall chipped in 15 in his first game for the Clips. "It's amazing," Leonard said of playing on a full-strength Clippers team. "You see tonight, everybody is out there contributing on the defensive end and on the offensive end."

Leonard, who won titles with the San Antonio Spurs and Raptors, came off the bench for the first time since 2013 and played 21 minutes.

"I feel good," Leonard said, adding that coming off the bench wasn't a tough adjustment. "I pretty much do my same routine, keep my focus and tell myself it's something that'll help in the long run," said Leonard, who entered the contest with six minutes left in the second quarter and promptly drained two shots.

For the Lakers, it was a second straight defeat to start the season, but coach Darvin Ham said he liked the fight he saw from LeBron James, Anthony Davis and company.

James finished with 20 points and 10 rebounds and Davis scored 25 points with eight rebounds despite hurting his back in a hard fall in the third quarter.

"We had a no-quit mentality," said Ham, whose assessment that the Lakers were "trending in the right direction" was echoed by Davis.

"Our competitive spirit was there," Davis said. "We did a good job on all their guys defensively. We've just got to do a better job of making shots."

Russell Westbrook had another nightmarish outing, scoring just two points on free throws as he went 0-for-11 from the field.

He did contribute defensively as the Lakers erased two sizeable deficits.

A 17-0 scoring run gave the Clippers a 15-point lead in the third quarter.

The Lakers battled back and took a two-point lead in the fourth quarter before the Clippers pulled away again.

James said it was an improvement on the Lakers' season-opening loss to the Golden State Warriors.



"We played the right way," James said. "I think we made another step forward today."

The day's other game was a back and forth affair as Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Milwaukee Bucks withstood a fourth-quarter surge from the 76ers to launch their NBA season with a 90-88 victory in Philadelphia.

Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Antetokounmpo, who led the Bucks to the 2021 title, flirted with a triple-double with 21 points, 18 rebounds and eight assists as the Bucks handed the Sixers their second defeat of the fledgling season.

James Harden scored 16 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter to lead a Philadelphia comeback bid that featured a 13-0 scoring run and saw the 76ers take the lead at 86-84 with less than two minutes to play.

It was their first lead since the opening basket of the contest, but they couldn't build on it.

Wesley Matthews' three-pointer with 23.8 seconds remaining gave Milwaukee an 89-88 lead with 25.7 seconds remaining.

With four seconds to play Harden drove from the left and spun to the rim but couldn't convert and Brook Lopez finally sealed it for the Bucks with a free throw and an intentional miss that bounced off the rim and back into his hands in the waning moments.

"I think we did a great job just keeping our composure," Antetokounmpo said. "We had the lead, we lost the lead. They were playing good, they were moving the ball."

"Harden got hot, was making shots, was getting his teammates involved. We kept our composure, we kept trusting one another."



Gerrard Sacked By Aston Villa

LONDON (Dispatches) - Steven Gerrard was fired 90 minutes after Aston Villa fell to an embarrassing 3-0 defeat by Fulham at Craven Cottage.

Villa are out of the bottom three only on goals scored and, with the travelling support repeatedly booing Gerrard, the club decided to take swift action.

The 42-year-old has been in the job for less than a year and has been unable to make a success of his first management role in English football.

"We would like to thank Steven for his hard work and commitment and wish him well for the future," a Villa spokesman said.

The club announced on Friday morning that first-team coach Aaron Danks will take charge of Sunday's game against Brentford.

Villa also confirmed that five members of Gerrard's backroom team - Gary McAllister, Neil Critchley, Tom Culshaw, Jordan Milsom and Scott Mason - have also left the club.

"The board has come to this decision following a full evaluation of results and performances over the calendar year," said the club's CEO, Christian Purslow.

"We were clear when we appointed Steven that we set an objective of continuous improvement, but that has not been achieved despite everybody's best efforts and we believe the time is right to make these changes now."

Ribery Announces Retirement From Football

MILAN (Dispatches) - Former France and Bayern Munich attacking midfielder Franck Ribery announced his retirement from football after succumbing to a persistent knee injury which kept him out of action for Serie A club Salernitana.

A World Cup runner-up with France in 2006, Ribery's greatest successes came at Bayern Munich, where over 12 seasons he won nine league titles and the 2013 Champions League.

"The ball stops. The feelings inside me do not," 39-year-old Ribery wrote on social media in English, French, Italian and German.

"Thanks to everyone for this great adventure."

Ribery hasn't featured for Salernitana, who he joined in 2021 after playing for Fiorentina, since their opening day loss to Roma and his retirement had been rumoured for several weeks.

Two weeks ago Ribery's agent Davide Lippi told AFP that the 39-year-old will "very likely" end his career.

Salernitana announced that they had rescinded the 39-year-old's contract with "mutual consent".

They thanked him "for the passion, dedication and commitment he gave to his work, for wearing the captain's armband with maximum respect" last season when Salernitana completed a miracle escape act on the final day.

Salernitana also confirmed that now Ribery has decided to hang up his boots he will take up a non-playing role.

The club had said earlier this month that they were talking with the Frenchman about a position.

Owner Danilo Iervolino said ahead of their 2-1 win over Verona that "we will give him a role, whatever he wants, in the timeframe and way that he wants".

"Franck is a great both on and off the pitch. He is very charismatic. He can attract talent and talk to young people. He gets the best out of everyone and is a leader," said Iervolino.

"I see him alongside me in a managerial role but if he wants to do something more coaching related that also fine."



Spurs Could Be Without Kulusevski Until After World Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Forward Dejan Kulusevski may not feature for Tottenham Hotspur until after the World Cup, manager Antonio Conte said on Friday, after the Sweden international suffered a setback while recovering from a hamstring injury.

Kulusevski, 22, has been a key player for Spurs since joining from Juventus in January. He has missed their last six games

after sustaining the injury on international duty.

Conte had said on Monday that Kulusevski was close to full fitness but now fears he might only return after the Nov. 14-Dec. 25 break for the World Cup.

"His recovery was going well and then one day the situation worsened. When this type of

situation happens, you have to restart," Conte told reporters before Tottenham host Newcastle United on Sunday.

"I think we have to wait a bit of time to see him with us again."

Richarlison also remains sidelined due to a calf injury but Emerson Royal is available after serving a three-game suspension.

Conte joked he may have to lace up his boots to help his team, with Lucas Moura a long-term absentee.

"We have in this moment (Harry) Kane and Heung-min Son in good health. Fingers crossed, I hope they continue to stay that way or I'll have to think about putting my shoes on to play," Conte said.

Tottenham are third in the table, level on 23 points with Manchester City and four behind Arsenal, and will hope to bounce back after Wednesday's 2-0 defeat at Manchester United.

Argentina Fear No One at World Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi says Argentina to not fear any team at the World Cup but he urged fans to stay calm with the tournament in Qatar less than a month away.

Copa America champions Argentina, unbeaten in 35 games since 2019, were drawn with Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Poland in Group C as they look to win their first World Cup title since 1986.

"Today we are doing well and people are excited and think that we will come back with the Cup, but it is not like that," Argentina captain Messi told broadcaster Directv Sports.

"The World Cup is very difficult, many things have to happen (to win it), not only that we are doing well, many things that can leave you out and there are many teams that want the same as us and that are doing well."

"We are eager, we are going to fight, we are not afraid of anyone because we are ready to play against anyone, but with peace of mind."

Argentina began their 2018 World Cup campaign with a 1-1 draw against Iceland - a game in which Messi missed a penalty - and finished second in their group before being knocked out by eventual winners France in the last 16.

Messi thinks opening match against Saudi Arabia on Nov. 22 will be key to the team's chances.



Halep to Fight to Clean Name After Doping Suspension

PARIS (Dispatches) - Former world number one Simona Halep said she will "fight until the end" to prove she did not knowingly take a prohibited substance after she was provisionally suspended for doping.

A sample that Halep provided during the US Open in August showed traces of Roxadustat, a drug that stimulates the production of red blood cells and is used in the treatment of patients with kidney problems, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) said.

Halep, the current world number nine, said the positive test was "the biggest shock of my life".

"Throughout my whole career, the idea of cheating never even crossed my mind once, as it is totally against all the values I have been educated with," the Romanian tweeted.

The 31-year-old said an "extremely low quantity" of the substance had been found in her body. "I will fight until the end to prove that I never knowingly took any prohibited substance and I have faith that sooner or later, the truth will come out," Halep added.

The 2018 French Open and 2019 Wimbledon champion had ended her season in mid-September after having nose surgery.

She said that in February she had considered ending her career but she began working with Serena Williams' former coach Patrick Mouratoglou and her form briefly rebounded.

She reached the semi-finals at Wimbledon this year and won in Toronto to reach No.6 in the rankings in August before slipping back to ninth.

